

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND HUNGARY

Edited by

Anna Molnár – Éva Jakusné Harnos – Mariann Tánczos



LUDOVIKA
UNIVERSITY PRESS

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC
AUTONOMY AND HUNGARY

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND HUNGARY

Edited by

Anna Molnár –

Éva Jakusné Harnos – Mariann Tánczos



LUDOVIKA
UNIVERSITY PRESS

BUDAPEST, 2026

TKP₂₀₂₁-NVA-16 has been implemented with the support provided by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund, financed under the TKP₂₀₂₁-NVA funding scheme.



Revised by Péter Rada

Authors

Balázs Bartóki-Gönczy
Tamás Csiki Varga
András Edl
Gergely Fejérdy
Katalin Horváth

András Mező
Anna Molnár
Dóra Molnár
Gábor Papp
Imre Porkoláb

Gyula Speck
Lili Takács
Péter Tálás
Mariann Tanczos

Published by the Ludovika University of Public Service, Ludovika University Press

Responsible for publishing: Gergely Deli, Rector

Address: HU-1083 Budapest, Ludovika tér 2.

Contact: kiadvanyok@uni-nke.hu

Managing Editor: Kata Inzsöl

Copy Editor: Zsuzsánna Gergely

Layout Editor: László Körösi

Printed and bound in Hungary

ISBN 978-963-653-348-9 (Hardback) | ISBN 978-963-653-350-2 (ePub)

ISBN 978-963-653-349-6 (ePDF)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.36250/01328_00

© Editors, authors, 2026

© The publisher, 2026

The electronic version of this book is licensed under
the CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 international license.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>



CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	7
-----------------	---

PART ONE EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

ANNA MOLNÁR The Concepts of European Strategic Autonomy and European Sovereignty	11
MARIANN TÁNCZOS – ANNA MOLNÁR The European Peace Facility and its Contribution to European Strategic Autonomy	35
KATALIN HORVÁTH Supranationalism in European Defence – What Defence Industry Brings to the Table	57
MARIANN TÁNCZOS – ANDRÁS MEZŐ Resilience – An Asset of European Strategic Autonomy	77

PART TWO THE POLICY AREAS OF STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY

BALÁZS BARTÓKI-GÖNCZY – ANDRÁS EDL The Role of the Space Segment in European Strategic Autonomy	97
GÁBOR PAPP Diversification as the Cornerstone of the EU's Energy Autonomy	115

IMRE PORKOLÁB

Achieving Strategic Autonomy through Defence Innovation 141

DÓRA MOLNÁR

Digital Sovereignty of the European Union 159

PART THREE

NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICIES AND EUROPEAN STRATEGIC
AUTONOMY IN NATIONAL POLITICS

TAMÁS CSIKI VARGA – PÉTER TÁLAS

Hungary 181

GYULA SPECK

Germany 203

GERGELY FEJÉRDY

European Strategic Autonomy and France 229

ANNA MOLNÁR – LILI TAKÁCS

Italy 249

PÉTER TÁLAS

Poland 269

Notes on Contributors

295

FOREWORD

Our book offers a multi-perspective discussion of European strategic autonomy or European sovereignty by highlighting the parallelism and overlaps between the two concepts during their development. The writers of the studies examine and analyse factors which may reinforce or, on the contrary, weaken the processes pointing towards some form of European strategic autonomy. The aim of the volume is manifold. Firstly, it provides a general overview on the history of European strategic autonomy and its building blocks. Secondly, in parallel with this, it offers the outline of the effects of the Russian aggression in Ukraine on European defence and strategic autonomy. Thirdly, it gives an outlook on the future of strategic autonomy.

The volume comprises three parts. Part I examines the historical background, the clarification of the concept, the role of the European Peace Facility, defence industry and resilience building in laying the foundations for European strategic autonomy. Part II discusses the process taking shape in specific policy areas of the European Union, including space and energy policy, defence innovation and efforts for digital sovereignty, while Part III places under scrutiny the interrelationships between national defence policies and the objective of European strategic autonomy in the case of three core members of the European Union, Germany, France and Italy, as well as two new members, Poland and Hungary. This part discusses the Member States' views on European strategic autonomy and sovereignty.

The edition of the volume was completed in 2025 and authors made all effort to include available up-to-date data. Although processes related to European strategic autonomy are unfolding fast, we hope that this book will prove a meaningful contribution to an in-depth understanding of this complex issue. We recommend the overview provided to students and researchers of EU affairs and international security and defence policy.

Budapest, 8 June 2026

Anna Molnár and Éva Jakusné Harnos

PART ONE

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

Anna Molnár

THE CONCEPTS OF EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY

INTRODUCTION

Since the unprovoked Russian aggression in Ukraine and, as a consequence of that, the return of realpolitik in Europe, the EU has had to adapt to the changing security environment. It has become evident that economic power alone is not enough to shape international relations. Over the past decade, the discussions about European security have moved towards military related issues, with more and more reference to strategic autonomy, European sovereignty and the creation of the European Defence Union in relation to crisis management tools. The latest developments in the international system have incited the EU to focus on the realisation of the defence internal market launching new regulations and financial tools for boosting defence industry and capability development.

It is not obvious for the EU to transform from a peace project to a defence and security community. The idea of the European integration project was built on the visionary objectives of peace and prosperity. Following the failed attempts to create the European Defence Community and the European Political Community during the 1950s, the issue of defence cooperation practically disappeared from the agenda of the development of European integration until the 1990s. The signatories of the Treaties of Rome, which aimed to create primarily an economic integration and did not mention European foreign, security or defence policy, virtually recognised that the security of Western Europe in the post-World War II era was guaranteed by the United States of America through NATO. The transatlantic relationship became a cornerstone for European security.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was created by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. In the absence of EU instruments for crisis management and intervention, the wars in the former Yugoslavia highlighted the deficiencies of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the need to further integrate and Europeanise it. The war in Ukraine gave new impetus to the additional development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) launched in 1999 (BERGMANN–MÜLLER 2021). While the Franco–British St. Malo Declaration

in 1998 emphasised the need of the EU's ability to act autonomously (CVCE 1998), the Franco–German declaration in 2023, on the sixtieth anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, emphasised Europe's strategic sovereignty, digital sovereignty and highlighted the strengthening of European defence (Élysée 2023).

Over the last decade, during the Juncker and the von der Leyen commissions, the role of the European Commission in the field of European defence industrial issues has grown steadily, even though the amendment of the EU's treaties has not happened, and the EU's institutional system has not changed. It is no coincidence that one of Ursula von der Leyen's six priorities for the next European Commission as a candidate for a second mandate between 2024 and 2029 was the strengthening of the competitiveness of the European defence industry and thus the creation of the European Defence Union (VON DER LEYEN 2024a).

The concepts of the European Defence Union, strategic autonomy, open strategic autonomy, European sovereignty or strategic sovereignty have nowadays become key issues of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy. Although these terms have been traditionally used in relation to the functioning of states, nowadays they often appear in connection with the supranational institutional system of the European Union (CSERNATONI 2022; MICHAELS–SUS 2024; ROCH–OLEART 2024). It is no coincidence, since the EU – as a result of its unusual development – is no longer a traditional international organisation with intergovernmental characteristics, it can be considered a kind of *sui generis* international actor. However, the EU cannot be marked as autonomous or sovereign in the field of defence, nor has the area of security and defence become a truly common policy. There is no political will to create a European army, as this would require a real constitutional reform, supranational and federal system at the EU level. Despite the fact that, within the EU, the control of the armed forces is a matter of purely national competence, the slow integration of this policy area has started.

In addition to the EU's economic power, there have been calls in recent years for the EU to become a military power, i.e. to be able to act independently in a crisis management situation. At present, the EU is a political community that is militarily dependent on the hard power of the United States through NATO. As a result, its ability to act autonomously is partially limited. Since in Europe only the United Kingdom and France have full-spectrum military capabilities, and other European states have only limited national self-defence capabilities, most of them need to be members of a military alliance. Since 1949, NATO, which now has 32 members, has provided this protective umbrella. While with the U.K.'s decision to leave the EU, the EU has fewer capabilities, this choice has also provided a window of opportunity for strengthening European defence (MOLNÁR–HORVÁTH s. a.).

THE CONCEPTS OF EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY IN THE LITERATURE

The EU's strategic autonomy can be interpreted as a partial capacity to act; it is a core element of European sovereignty, which in a broader sense means the capacity to act on its own, and to determine its destiny in the fields of economy, security and technological development by more European financial investment and legislative power. It is important to emphasise that nowadays these concepts are used not only in relation to defence, but above all referring to the fields of economy, digitalisation and technological innovation. Hellendoorn argues that "financial trends are closely linked to questions of national security and geopolitics. They are implicated in the erosion of the Atlantic order and the fragility of Western societies, and in the strategic challenges being faced by Europe in particular" (HELLENDORRN 2025: 99).

Although, of the concepts of autonomy and sovereignty, the latter is the most controversial in relation to the European Union, even the issue of strategic autonomy has raised concerns and the need to clarify the relationship with NATO (BORRELL 2020). The concept of European sovereignty can be interpreted more broadly, which has led to legal and constitutional disputes (BIFULCO–NATO 2020: 25–28; ROCH–OLEART 2024).

The question of sovereignty is more complex, because it is one of the fundamental principles of international law. The concept of state sovereignty was created by the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648. In case of states, sovereignty means self-determination and full control over autonomous actions, i.e. the state exercises supreme authority over its own territory and population. *De jure* sovereignty means the legitimacy of power (that is, consent of the people, the right to exercise power), and *de facto* sovereignty means the possession of power, the real ability to act. The concept of sovereignty corresponds to a legal status (*de jure* sovereignty), i.e. real legislative power over political processes. And autonomy means the actual situation (*de facto* sovereignty), i.e. the ability to implement policy decisions. Thus, a state can be sovereign in the legal sense even without being actually strategically autonomous, i.e. truly capable of action (HELD 1990).

To date, a very large body of literature has dealt with the concepts of "strategic autonomy" and "sovereignty" in relation to the European Union. Some of the literature on the subject has drawn attention to the overly broad and symbolic meaning of these concepts, while others have highlighted the problems related to the feasibility of the concepts in the context of transatlantic relations (OLSEN 2022; CAMPORINI et al. 2017; BRUSTLEIN 2018). Brustlein emphasised that the concept of the EU's strategic autonomy could raise concerns among European partners, as it

may remind them of a Gaullist turn, the weakening of transatlantic relations and the strengthening of French influence (BRUSTLEIN 2018: 2). Lippert et al. have extended the concept of strategic autonomy beyond defence to economy, energy supply and the Eurozone (LIPPERT et al. 2019). Grevi identified economy, technology, and security and defence as the main areas for European strategic autonomy (GREVI 2019). Franke and Varma define it as a concept aimed at promoting a stronger, more independent EU at a time of increasing geopolitical competition (FRANKE–VARMA 2019). In their 2020 opinion article, Josep Borrell and Thierry Breton already emphasised the need for autonomy and sovereignty in relation to the supply chain crisis experienced during the pandemic (BORRELL–BRETON 2020). In 2021, following the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, underlined the link between European strategic autonomy and European values (GRESSANI–MICHEL 2021), as it should be developed in accordance with European principles and values. We have to emphasise that European sovereignty does not contradict national sovereignty as it boosts the capacity to manage the future of the EU's Member States and address common challenges. According to the priorities of the European Council, the EU will assist a more sovereign Europe (European Council 2024: 2).

It is important to note that the two terms are often used interchangeably, and their meanings overlap, but there are different meanings of “strategic autonomy” and “strategic sovereignty”. According to Fiott “strategic sovereignty” may sound more positive because it emphasises what the EU can do, while “autonomy” refers to independence from others. On the other hand, sovereignty is more closely related to the concept of national sovereignty, with which most people identify it, rather than with European sovereignty (FIOTT 2021; European Parliament 2022; MOLNÁR – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS 2024).

According to Brack et al. there are two opposing interpretations of sovereignty:

“One is the state-centred and puts forward that sovereignty is located at one particular level of power, the parliament and government emanating from it. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the post-sovereigntist understanding conceives the concept in a multi-level approach. It imagines sovereignty through new lenses, arguing from the outset that the concept itself has become outdated, being challenged by globalisation and integration” (BRACK et al. 2019: 6).

Although there is no reference to the exercise of sovereignty at European level in the founding and amending treaties of the EU, and even the Court of Justice of the EU does not refer to it, there are perceptions that point to shared sovereignty at

the European level and to some extent of limited sovereignty at the national level (WALLACE 1999; BRACK et al. 2019; BIFULCO–NATO 2020; ROCH–OLEART 2024: 548–549). The classical approach to international law largely rejects the idea that there could be any real legislative transfer or (constitutional) pluralism between the different levels of decision-making in the EU, since the EU’s legislative powers are merely transferred, emanating from the will of the states. According to the classical view, sovereignty is not derivative, but original, and true sovereignty is not possible without a federal structure. According to another approach, the concept of supremacy actually refers to the sovereignty of the EU. Although supremacy is obviously different from sovereignty, the primacy of EU law over national law affects the question of sovereignty (BIFULCO–NATO 2020; WALKER 2013; MOLNÁR – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS 2024).

According to the post-sovereigntist approach, the EU is able to take legislative decisions and implement its policies on behalf of the EU as a whole in the areas within its competence. This essentially includes the autonomy of the EU as a legally unified entity with exclusive competencies in certain areas both externally and internally. While the concept of supranational sovereignty remains a political taboo, the idea of “European sovereignty” has recently been embraced by French President Emmanuel Macron, particularly in relation to trade, immigration or security issues. Csernatoni underlines that the EU-level communication related to “strategic autonomy” and “sovereignty” shapes collective thinking for EU-level policy formation in various policy areas. Csernatoni argues that the broad and still not fully defined meaning of these terms helps to create a more unified image of the European Union as a strategically independent and technologically sovereign actor (CSERNATONI 2022: 395–396; MOLNÁR – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS 2024).

THE CONCEPTS IN EU OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND SPEECHES

The CSDP has developed only since the late 1990s after the disappointing and devastating experience of the Yugoslav wars when the EU was not able to intervene on its own and stop the war. European leaders launched the integration process of European defence, overcoming the taboo of closer defence cooperation that had developed after the failure of the European Defence Community in 1954 (DE VASCONCELOS 2009). It is no coincidence that the wars in Yugoslavia became a driving force for closer cooperation. The milestone in this process was the St. Malo Declaration by France and the United Kingdom in 1998, which emphasised

the need for the EU to have the capacity to take autonomous actions. In the early 2000s, the legal background and the decision-making structures for security and defence policy were developed, and consequently the EU launched its first CSDP missions and operations (MOLNÁR – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS 2023).

The European security strategy of 2003 recommended the creation of a strategic culture that “fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention” (Council of the European Union 2003: 13). The term of strategic autonomy was first officially mentioned in the conclusions of the 2013 European Council. Since the Lisbon Treaty (2009), defence policy was discussed for the first time at the level of heads of state and government in 2013. The document considered the strengthening of the European defence industry and the development of defence capabilities the main conditions for strategic autonomy and for the ability to act with partners (European Council 2013).

In 2016, the EU’s global strategy emphasised the development of European defence capabilities, the promotion of strategic autonomy and the strengthening of the EU as a security community (European External Action Service 2016a: 14–20). This issue has already become one of the key messages of many official documents and speeches at Member State and EU levels. In the Council conclusions of November 2016, the concept of strategic autonomy was defined more precisely: “To act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible” (Council of the European Union 2016: 2).

Since 2016, following the adoption of the EU global strategy and the Brexit referendum, the integration process in the area of the EU CSDP has accelerated. For both the U.K. and the European Union, the U.K.’s exit from the EU brought profound changes (European Movement International 2023). It is important to stress that more defence-related initiatives have been implemented after the Global Strategy than in the previous two decades. Although the realisation of the European army is not on the agenda, there are more and more discussions about the realisation of the European Defence Union and strategic autonomy, and many initiatives have been launched not only to strengthen European defence capabilities (the Permanent Structured Cooperation [PESCO], the Coordinated Annual Defence Review [CARD], the European Defence Fund [EDF] and the Military Planning and Conduct Capabilities [MPCC], the European Peace Facility [EPF], the development of Rapid Deployment Capacity [RDC] and regulations on Common Procurement), but also to brake long-lasting taboos of European defence. However, none of these initiatives fully lived up to the initial high expectations in terms of their scale and ambition, and the implementation of strategic autonomy has been subject to criticisms (MOLNÁR 2022; CAMPORINI et al. 2017).

One of the taboo-breaking decisions was the creation of the EDF, which made it possible to spend EU budget on defence industry, thus on armaments (RODRIGUES 2023: 1154). According to Article 41.2 of the Treaty on the European Union “expenditure arising from operations having military or defence implications” cannot be financed by the EU budget. The establishment of the EDF is based on the EU’s competence to support the competitiveness of the European industry and research, and not on competences in the framework of CFSP and CSDP. The legal basis for establishing the EDF was Articles 173 and 182 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) to support competitiveness of European industry. According to Vroege, having chosen this legal basis has led to criticism (VROEGE 2023). In 2018, the second implementation report of the Global Strategy emphasised the importance of the European Commission’s proposition to establish the European Defence Fund in enhancing strategic autonomy (European External Action Service 2018: 7). The third implementation report of the EU GS stated that the solid foundations for a European Security and Defence Union and European strategic autonomy have been set during the previous three years. The document recommended to further develop 1. the intelligence support to decision-making; 2. the common strategic culture; 3. interoperability; 4. the command and control structures; 5. defence cooperation to retain and develop Member States’ single set of forces; 6. technology and cyber (European External Action Service 2019: 12).

The 2018 State of the Union address of the President of the European Commission highlighted that due to the geopolitical situation, the moment of European sovereignty had come. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the Commission stated that it was time for Europe to take its destiny into its own hands and to play a role, as a Union, in shaping global affairs as a more sovereign actor in international relations. According to his vision, European sovereignty is born of Member States’ national sovereignty and does not replace it. Sharing sovereignty makes them stronger. He also emphasised that this process does not mean the militarisation of the European Union; it means becoming more autonomous and living up to the EU’s global responsibilities (JUNCKER 2018).

In 2019, the new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen declared to lead a ‘geopolitical Commission’ during her presidency and Josep Borrell, the new High Representative of the Union (HR/VP), said that the EU must “learn the language of power” (FIOTT 2020). The necessity to create strategic autonomy and technological sovereignty was emphasised in the Strategic Compass adopted by the Council in 2022 (Council of the European Union 2022). Although the 2016 Council Conclusions already provided definitional guidelines, the official definition of the concept of strategic autonomy has not yet been developed at the EU level.

The concept can be summarised as the ability of the EU to ensure its own security and act autonomously on land, in the air, at sea, in space and in cyberspace. It must also be able to project power, effectively respond to external crises, and finally, take independent decisions in the field of defence policy (BISCOP 2017; VARGA 2017; BISCOP 2018a; FIOTT 2018; DE SUTTER 2020: 14; MEYER et al. 2020). Member States have different interests and positions on the concept (VON WEITERSHAUSEN et al. 2020; GRÜLL–LAWTON 2020; RECCHIA 2020; SILVA–SELDEN 2020). Today this concept has an extended meaning, additionally including economic, technological and energy policies. Spain with the Netherlands published a non-paper on ESA arguing that it is important to combine an open economy with the reduction of some strategic dependencies in order to avoid protectionism. The document promotes the idea of open strategic autonomy (OSA) (Government of the Netherlands 2023). In 2023, the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU prepared a non-paper in close consultation with the 27 Member States and the EU institutions in order to contribute to the development of “a comprehensive, balanced and forward-looking approach to ensure the EU’s Open Strategic Autonomy and global leadership by 2030” (Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2023). The Spanish presidency identified OSA as a tool for reindustrialisation of Europe and not as a tool exclusively for CSDP (ORŁOWSKI 2023). Open Strategic Autonomy aims to guarantee that

“the EU has the capacity to cope alone if necessary but without ruling out cooperation whenever possible. It goes some steps beyond smart supply chain management by taking into account geopolitics as well as economic factors. It relies on foresight to identify threats and ensures resilience by anticipating the required responses” (European Parliament 2023a; MOLNÁR 2024).

EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY

It would be very difficult to examine these concepts without mentioning the French President Emmanuel Macron who has become one of the most important proponents of strategic autonomy and European sovereignty. In September 2017, Macron’s speech at the Sorbonne described the autonomy debate in the context of the rise of “nationalism, identitarianism, protectionism and isolationist sovereignty”. Instead of “strategic autonomy”, the French president used the terms of autonomous operating capability and European sovereignty in a general sense in the field of defence. In his view, there are six key elements for realising European sovereignty:

1. security and defence; 2. control of borders; 3. partnership with Africa; 4. ecological transition; 5. digital technology; and 6. industrial and monetary economic power (MACRON 2017; European Parliament 2022).

In 2018, during his speech at an ambassadors' conference, Macron highlighted the need to build strategic autonomy at the European level. He explained this by drawing a comparison with the United States or China, as the EU cannot be considered a power with strategic autonomy (MACRON 2018). In recent years, the French president has emphasised the need to strengthen the EU's foreign, security and defence policy in order to protect European civilisation and the liberal world order (STAUNTON 2022).

In April 2024, Macron's speech at the Sorbonne focused again on the concept of European sovereignty, remarkably, he mentioned it 21 times. He proposed "to build a more united, more sovereign and more democratic Europe". He stated that the concept of European sovereignty "seemed very French" and "has gradually taken route across Europe". In his views, the strengthening of European sovereignty was essentially due to six important steps during the previous years. First, the introduction of common debt in order to finance the Recovery and Resilience Facility was a choice of the united Europe. He quoted Chancellor Scholz, who called that decision a "Hamiltonian moment". Second, EU Member States were able to prove strategic unity concerning policy areas belonging to national competence, such as in the field of health, energy policy and defence in times of crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Third, the EU members began to prepare the conditions to realise technological and industrial sovereignty. He highlighted that strategic autonomy "was the choice to end strategic dependencies in key sectors, from semiconductors to critical raw materials". He called it "strategy of autonomy". Fourth, the introduction of the Green Deal and adoption of legislation regarding digital and energy transition can be considered fundamental choices. Fifth, the renewing consideration of geographic neighbourhood means the new enlargement policy towards Eastern Europe and the launch of the European Political Community. Macron gives a definition of European sovereignty:

"But what does it mean to be sovereign in this changing world? What does sovereign mean when I am telling you that Europe might die? It means that we must rise to the three challenges of our time, to this acceleration of history and its dramatization. Hence the solution lies in our ability – because the rules of the game have changed regarding each of these points – to make huge strategic decisions, to embrace paradigm shifts, and to address them with strength, prosperity and humanism. And it is these three points I would like to speak about today. I think that it is with strength,

prosperity and humanism that we give substance, if you will, to this European sovereignty and enable Europe to be a continent that will not disappear, a political project that holds its ground in this world and at this time when it is being threatened more than ever.

It's simple, a power Europe is a Europe that commands respect and ensures its security. It is a Europe that recognises that it has borders and protects them. It is a Europe that sees the risks to which it is exposed and prepares for them. To achieve this, we must break out from some kind of strategic guardianship. Why? Because implicitly, we were designed that way. After the Second World War, many European countries agreed – as was often imposed on them – to delegate their security to others because we did not want them to rearm too quickly. And, as I said earlier, we have to a certain extent delegate everything that is strategic in our world: our energy to Russia, our security – not in the case of France, but several of our partners – to the United States and equally critical prospects to China. We need to take them back. That is what strategic autonomy is all about.”

Macron explains that strategic autonomy means to take back control over energy from Russia, over security from the USA and control over prosperity and industry from China. In order to reach strategic autonomy he proposes three main actions (strength, prosperity and humanism): firstly, further integration in the field of defence, and effective protection of borders, secondly, to build a new growth and production model and thirdly, to promote humanism and European values. Scaling up defence means increasing defence capabilities, the creation of “genuine strategic cohesion” between European armed forces, “launching a second stage of the European Intervention Initiative” e.g. “through the creation of a European Military Academy, to train future European military and civil leaders to deal with security and defence issues”, and the effective implementation of the strategic compass, use of European debt and investment to finance the development of defence industry and a more effective control over European borders. He also stressed that this means the building of the “European pillar of NATO”. In his views, the new prosperity pact is based on green transition, digitalisation, simplification of regulations, industrialisation, reform of energy and agriculture policy at EU level, new trade agreements with third countries promoting EU standards (“Made in Europe”), reform of the economic security instruments, promotion of technology and innovation, increase in common borrowing capacity (EU debt). According to Macron, European “means defending a certain idea of humankind that places free, rational, enlightened individuals above all else. It means saying that from Paris to

Warsaw, from Lisbon to Odessa, we have a unique relationship with freedom and justice” (MACRON 2024).

EU AND NATO COOPERATION

When the European Strategic Autonomy is mentioned, most people think about the potential duplication of NATO’s assets by the EU. Although the two organisations share the same values and the majority of their members, the relationship between NATO and the EU has been conflictual one since the creation of the (European) Common Security and Defence Policy: it has been based as much on shared values, interests and common threats as on rivalry. During the Cold War, the roles of NATO and the EU’s predecessor, the European Communities (EC), in the international system were clearly separated: NATO was founded as an organisation and military alliance for collective defence and the European Communities functioned primarily as an organisation for economic and political integration.

As the two organisations have evolved since the 1990s, there has been some convergence in their roles in terms of security and defence responsibilities. Explaining the relationship between NATO and the EU became more important since the late 1990s, when the Western European Union was integrated into the EU and the CSDP became integral part of the CFSP.

During that period, fundamental questions had to be addressed: the future role of NATO and the EU, the possibility of the EU developing its own defence capabilities, and the relationship of the EU to NATO structures. With regard to the future relationship, Madeleine Albright, then U.S. Secretary of State, set out the three *Ds*: no diminution of NATO, no discrimination and no duplication. At a press conference in 1998, she stated:

“There is a reason for the Europeans to find an identity in their own defence, but this is a thing that cannot be a duplication or discrimination. It is a manner by which the Europeans can share in the work of NATO. It is something that cannot hurt NATO because this is the most important alliance. But we think it is very important that the Europeans work in this manner because it is something that helps us in burden sharing” (ALBRIGHT 1998).

NATO has gradually become more open to collective and cooperative security-related tasks, and has begun to play an increasingly important role in crisis management and peacekeeping operations outside its territory. The two organisations have different

instruments for crisis management that complement each other's. Although 24 of the EU's 27 Member States are also members of NATO, this convergence has not necessarily led to an improvement in their relations until 2016, on the contrary, in many cases has even increased competition (MOLNÁR 2019).

Formal cooperation for crisis management between the two organisations was institutionalised by the Berlin Plus Agreement in 2003 in order to avoid potential duplication with NATO and thus the EU had access to NATO's crisis management capabilities (European External Action Service 2016b; MOLNÁR 2018). Long-term cooperation was hampered by the Turkish–Cypriot conflict. Following Cyprus's accession to the EU in 2004, it was no longer possible to launch a new CSDP operation under the Berlin Plus agreement. On the part of NATO, Turkey and on the part of the EU, Cyprus has blocked further cooperation, as Turkey does not recognise Cyprus, and Northern Cyprus is recognised only by Turkey.

As a result of the Treaties' changes, the EU's crisis management structures and the decision-making processes have evolved and the EU has begun to play an important role in international relations. Due to the mutual assistance/defence clause (Article 42.7) introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union has been transformed from a certain security community based on cooperative security structures into an international security organisation that also reinforces the collective defence of the Member States. It is no coincidence that the unofficial name of this article changes from time to time, and the terms of 'mutual defence clause' or 'mutual assistance clause' are used as synonyms (European Parliament s. a.; European Parliament 2015). Nowadays, official EU documents and websites prefer to use the term of 'mutual assistance clause'. This avoids potential duplication and emphasises complementarity between the two organisations (MOLNÁR 2019).

Obviously, if an external crisis requires a military response, the question is which organisation Europeans should act through. According to Biscop, neither NATO nor the EU have their own armed forces, so they rely on the pool of their Member States' capabilities (BISCOP 2018b). Europe is still dependent on the U.S. for its security, and the EU's ability to project military power is limited. Compared to NATO, the EU has much smaller capabilities: while the EU Military Staff consists of 200 people, NATO can rely on around 7,000 personnel within its command and control structures.

After the accession of Cyprus to the EU, a period of slow evolution or even "frozen" cooperation followed between NATO and the EU; during that period nothing substantial happened and cooperation between the two organisations remained occasional or informal (ΠΑΠΑΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ 2019). Despite the ongoing declarations on

closer cooperation between the European Union and NATO, clear and measurable results had not been achieved until the turning point in 2016 (MOLNÁR 2019).

Recent years have seen an increase in traditional and hybrid threats and the security environment worsened, which have once again acted as an incentive to strengthen the EU in the field of defence, while at the same time, to enhance cooperation with NATO. It is no coincidence that in 2015, a report prepared by Javier Solana, former High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, former NATO Secretary General, identified the realisation of the European Defence Union (EDU) as the ultimate goal of European integration in defence (SOLANA 2015: 6). For NATO, 2014 marked a turning point, as the Alliance began to return to its original collective defence tasks.

Until the Brexit referendum in 2016, there was less and less chance for real improvement between NATO and the EU, whose relationship could still be described as competitive. The British have always been suspicious of the EU's attempts to gain more autonomy in this area. In 2016, the possibility of the U.K. leaving the EU gave a new impetus to strengthening the EU's defence policy and, consequently, the EU–NATO relationship as the strongest military power was leaving the EU. All this would not have been enough on its own, but the deterioration of relations between the West and Russia since 2014, the weakening of multilateral world order, the outcome of the U.S. presidential election, and the changes in the security perceptions of EU Member States all acted as catalysts for enhancing the relationship between the two organisations. NATO and the EU have been forced by the weakening of multilateralism and the rise of new great power politics in the international system to improve their linkage and thereby bolster their current position as international security providers. The implementation of the EU Global Strategy has accelerated this process.

Since 2016, three NATO–EU joint declarations (2016, 2018, 2023) were signed by the representatives of NATO and the EU to enhance the cooperation in seven areas: countering hybrid threats; operational cooperation including maritime and migration issues; cybersecurity and defence; defence capabilities; defence industry and research; exercises; and support for capacity-building efforts and resilience of Western Balkan and Eastern and Southern partners (NATO 2016; Council of the European Union 2023; MOLNÁR 2019).

Since 2016, the cooperation between the EU and NATO has clearly improved, with various formal and informal meetings, information exchanges, joint seminars and training sessions and with the convergence of strategic documents. In the past, the relationship between the two organisations was compared to a Sisyphean task many times: when some success is achieved, all progress is reversed, and

the process is repeated (PAPAIOANNOU 2019). The year 2016 marked a turning point in the history of EU–NATO relations, followed by an acceleration of several events. Significant progress has been made, and staff-to-staff cooperation, reciprocal briefing of the representatives of NATO and the EU have become a daily routine (MOLNÁR 2019). Despite the partial results achieved so far, there is still room for improvement, as at the diplomatic level the PSC–NAC ambassadorial meetings have not been organised since February 2022 due to the conflict between Cyprus and Turkey. At the operational level, effective cooperation between the EU’s Operation Irini and NATO’s Sea Guardian is also hampered by that conflict.

The Russian aggression in Ukraine led to a clarification of the roles of the two organisations, NATO’s collective defence role is undisputed, it is primarily responsible for territorial defence and deterrence, and the EU is playing a decisive role in supporting Ukraine with its comprehensive and integrated crisis management tools (sanctions against Russia and provision of military training, weapons and ammunition). The war in Ukraine has led to a division of labour between the EU and NATO. Implementation reports of the Strategic Compass state that NATO’s core responsibility is collective defence that must be strengthened. The latest report also stated that the European Union can be a “valuable global security partner” through becoming “a strong European pillar within NATO” (European External Action Service 2024: 6).

THE IDEA OF THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION AND THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY

The idea of the European Security and Defence Union (ESDU) appeared first during the debate on the Constitutional Treaty at the European Convention on the Future of Europe in 2002, when the institutional framework, decision-making processes and the first EU missions and operations were launched in the framework of the newly created policy area the (European) Common Security and Defence Policy. At that time the idea proposed by France and Germany was rejected by the more Atlanticist EU Member States (NOVÁKY 2017). Thus, neither the draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe nor the Lisbon Treaty mentioned the creation of the ESDU (*Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe* 2004).

In 2017, the Juncker European Commission’s “Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence”, mentioned the gradual creation of a European Security and Defence Union (ESDU), which demands a greater alignment of strategic cultures, a common threat analysis, appropriate responses, joint decision-making and action,

and greater financial solidarity at the European level (European Commission 2017). In 2017, in his annual speech on the State of the European Union, Jean-Claude Juncker expressed the need for the EU to become a fully-fledged European Defence Union by 2025 (JUNCKER 2017). Although the definition of the ESDU or EDU is still unclear, the gradual realisation of deeper European defence cooperation began after the adoption of the GS.

Since the appearance of the term of the European strategic autonomy, this concept was closely linked to the idea of the EDU and thus to deficiencies of the European defence industry. The war in Ukraine highlighted the shortcomings and problems resulting from the undersized, fragmented and underfunded European defence industry. Just a few weeks after the Russian invasion, at the informal European Council in Versailles on 11 March 2022, EU Member States expressed their commitment to enhancing the European defence technological and industrial basis and asked the European Commission to continue planning in that policy area (European Council 2022).

The idea of the EDU has also appeared repeatedly in Ursula von der Leyen's speeches. In 2023 she expressed that the EU had started to build the EDU (European Commission 2023). She also stated that, in connection with the realisation of a fully-fledged European Defence Union, the Commission had started to develop a European Defence Industrial Strategy (European Defence Agency 2023a; European Defence Agency 2023b).

The Russian war in Ukraine presented both a major challenge and a window of opportunity for the development of European defence industry. In 2022, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy expressed several goals in their joint communication entitled "On the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward" (European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2022).

In July 2022, the European Commission proposed two legal incentives for the joint procurement of defence products: the adoption of the "European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act" (EDIRPA), and the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP). Due to the increased demand, the Commission presented on 3 May 2023 a further proposal for the adoption of the regulation establishing the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP). The ASAP regulation was published in July 2023 and the EDIRPA Regulation in autumn 2023 (European Parliament 2023b). In November 2023, the EU defence ministers, meeting in the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency, adopted the EU Capability Development Priorities for 2023. The document provides a basis for

the EU's defence planning process and for all defence initiatives. The military realities observed on the ground in Ukraine are reflected in the 22 priorities (European Defence Agency 2023c).

In March 2024, the European Commission and the High Representative published the EU's first defence industrial strategy, which aims to increase the resilience of European defence industry through collaborative research, investment, production and procurement actions. This strategy provides concrete indicators for the European defence industrial policy. It invites Member States to 1. "procure at least 40% of defence equipment in a collaborative manner by 2030"; 2. "by 2030, the value of intra-EU defence trade represents at least 35% of the value of the EU defence market"; and 3. "to make steady progress towards procuring at least 50% of their defence investments within the EU by 2030 and 60% by 2035" (European Commission 2024: 15).

In July 2024, Ursula von der Leyen emphasised the need to build a true European Defence Union as a candidate for a second mandate as president of the European Commission between 2024 and 2029. She stated that

"Member States will retain responsibility for their national security and their armies. And NATO will remain the pillar of our collective defence. But we all know very well that our spending on defence is too low and ineffective. Our foreign spending is too great. We must therefore create a single market for defence. We must invest more in high-end defence capabilities. In other words, Europe must continue along the path laid down by the Versailles Declaration. We need to invest more. We need to invest together. And we must set up common European projects. For example, a comprehensive aerial defence system – a European Air Shield, not only to protect our airspace but as a strong symbol of European unity in defence matters" (VON DER LEYEN 2024b).

In her program she promised to

"appoint a Commissioner for Defence, who will work closely with the next High Representative – Vice-President in accordance with the Treaty. To frame the new approach and to identify our investment needs we will jointly present a White Paper on the Future of European Defence in the first 100 days of the mandate" (VON DER LEYEN 2024b: 13).

Although the EU has not realised the creation of the European Defence Union, it has made significant steps (BRITZ 2023). The implementation of innovative initiatives (i.e. PESCO, EDF, MPCC, etc.) indicates these efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

The Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2022 can be considered a watershed or game changer for European defence. It had an impact on both capability development and political decisions. The European Union has taken important steps towards achieving the realisation of European Strategic Autonomy and the European Defence Union, despite the existing challenges, criticism and questions surrounding their implementation. Structural barriers, persisting differences in EU Member States' strategic cultures, as well as their relationship with NATO, are likely to continue to constrain the full realisation of the ESA and the EDU.

The reinforced role of the European Commission implies the EU's efforts to play a real security provider in the international system. It is no coincidence that the President of the European Commission has appointed a Commissioner for Defence and Space, and promised to publish a white paper on the future of European defence in the first 100 days of her mandate.

REFERENCES

- ALBRIGHT, Madeleine (1998): *Press Conference, by US Secretary of State Albright*. Online: <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981208x.htm>
- BERGMANN, Julian – MÜLLER, Patrick (2021): Failing Forward in the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy: The Integration of EU Crisis Management. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(10), 1669–1687. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1954064>
- BIFULCO, Raffaele – NATO, Alessandro (2020): *The Concept of Sovereignty in the EU – Past, Present and the Future*. Online: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/documents/downloadPublic?documentIds=080166e5ceba74fo&appId=PPGMS>
- BISCOP, Sven (2017): European Defence: What's in the CARDS for PESCO? *Security Policy Brief*, (91), 1–6. Online: <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2017/10/SPB91-Biscop.pdf?type=pdf>
- BISCOP, Sven (2018a): *European Strategy. New Future for an Old Power*. New York: Routledge.
- BISCOP, Sven (2018b): EU–NATO Relations: A Long-Term Perspective. *Nação e Defesa*, (150), 85–93. Online: <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2018/11/NeD150.pdf>
- BORRELL, Josep (2020): *Why European Strategic Autonomy Matters*. Online: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/89865/why-european-strategic-autonomy-matters_en

- BORRELL, Josep – BRETON, Thierry (2020): *For a United, Resilient and Sovereign Europe*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/united-resilient-and-sovereign-europe-thierry-breton_en
- BRACK, Nathalie – COMAN, Ramona – CRESPIY, Amandine (2019): Sovereignty Conflicts in the European Union. *Les Cahiers du Cevipol*, 4(4), 3–30. Online: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-cahiers-du-cevipol-2019-4-page-3.htm>
- BRITZ, Malena (2023): European Defence Policy: Between Flexible Integration and a Defence Union. In ENGELBREKT, Antonina Bakardjieva – EKMAN, Per – MICHALSKI, Anna – OXELHEIM, Lars (eds.): *The EU between Federal Union and Flexible Integration*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 215–238. Online: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22397-6_9
- BRUSTLEIN, Corentin (2018): European Strategic Autonomy: Balancing Ambition and Responsibility. *Éditoriaux de l'Ifri*, 16 November 2018. Online: <https://www.ifri.org/en/editorials/european-strategic-autonomy-balancing-ambition-and-responsibility>
- CAMPORINI, Vincenzo – HARTLEY, Keith – MAULNY, Jean-Pierre – ZANDEE, Dick (2017): European Preference, Strategic Autonomy and European Defence Fund. *Armament Industry European Research Group (ARES)*, November 2017. Online: <https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Ares-22-Report-Nov-2017.pdf>
- Council of the European Union (2003): *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf>
- Council of the European Union (2016): *Conclusions on Implementing the EU Global Strategy in the Area of Security and Defence*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22459/eugs-conclusions-st14149en16.pdf>
- Council of the European Union (2022): *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. For a European Union that Protects Its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>
- Council of the European Union (2023): *Eighth Progress Report on the Implementation of the Common Set of Proposals Endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016, and 5 December 2017*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/65076/st10254-en23.pdf>
- CERNATONI, Raluca (2022): The EU's Hegemonic Imaginaries: From European Strategic Autonomy in Defence to Technological Sovereignty. *European Security*, 31(3), 395–415. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2022.2103370>
- CVCE (1998): *Joint Declaration Issued at the British–French Summit (Saint-Malo, France, 4 December 1998)*. Online: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/franco_british_st_malo_declaration_4_december_1998-en-f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc8of24f.html
- DE SUTTER, Camille (2020): Europe's Road to Strategic Autonomy: Summarising the Concrete Steps Taken. *Finabel*, 3 June 2020. Online: <https://finabel.org/europes-road-to-strategic-autonomy-summarising-the-concrete-steps-taken/>
- DE VASCONCELOS, Álvaro (2009): Introduction – 2020: Defence beyond the Transatlantic Paradigm. In DE VASCONCELOS, Álvaro (ed.): *What Ambitions for European Defence in 2020?* Condé-sur-Noireau: EU Institute for Security Studies, 15–26. Online: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/What_ambitions_for_European_defence_in_2020_o.pdf
- Élysée (2023): French–German Declaration. *Élysée*, 22 January 2023. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2023/01/22/french-german-declaration>
- European Commission (2017): *Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/reflection-paper-defence_en.pdf

- European Commission (2023): *2023 State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ov/speech_23_4426
- European Commission (2024): *Our Common Defence Industrial Strategy*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edis-our-common-defence-industrial-strategy_en
- European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2022): *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward*. Online: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/join_2022_24_2_en_act_part1_v3_1.pdf
- European Council (2013): *European Council 19/20 December 2013 Conclusions*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-217-2013-INIT/en/pdf>
- European Council (2022): *Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government, Versailles Declaration 10 and 11 March 2022*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf>
- European Council (2024): *Strategic Agenda 2024–2029*. Online: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44ldqfl2/2024_557_new-strategic-agenda.pdf
- European Defence Agency (2023a): *President von der Leyen Unveils Plans for Defence Strategy at EDA Conference*. EDA, 30 November 2023. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2023/11/30/president-von-der-leyen-unveils-plans-for-defence-industrial-strategy-at-eda-conference>
- European Defence Agency (2023b): *The 2023 EU Capability Development Priorities*. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/brochures/qu-03-23-421-en-n-web.pdf>
- European Defence Agency (2023c): *EU Defence Ministers Agree to Prioritise 22 Military Capabilities to Bolster European Armed Forces*. EDA, 14 November 2023. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2023/11/14/eu-defence-ministers-agree-to-prioritise-22-military-capabilities-to-bolster-european-armed-forces>
- European External Action Service (2016a): *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_o.pdf
- European External Action Service (2016b): *Shaping of a Common Security and Defence Policy*. Online: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/5388/shaping-of-a-common-security-and-defence-policy_en
- European External Action Service (2018): *Implementing the Global Strategy. Year 2*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_annual_report_year_2.pdf
- European External Action Service (2019): *The European Union's Global Strategy. Three Years on. Looking Forward*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_global_strategy_2019.pdf
- European External Action Service (2024): *Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2024-progress-report-implementation-strategic-compass-security-and-defence_en
- European Movement International (2023): *The Future of EU–UK Cooperation on Security and Defence. Policy Position*. Online: <https://cdn-europeanmovementeu.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EMI-Policy-Position-The-Future-of-EU-UK-Cooperation-on-Security-and-Defence.pdf>

- European Parliament (2015): *The EU's Mutual Assistance Clause: The First Ever Activation of Article 42(7) TEU*. Online: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2015\)572799](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2015)572799)
- European Parliament (2022): *EU Strategic Autonomy 2013–2023: From Concept to Capacity*. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733589](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)733589)
- European Parliament (2023a): *What If Open Strategic Autonomy Could Break the Cycle of Recurring Crises?* Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/747420/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)747420_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/747420/EPRS_ATA(2023)747420_EN.pdf)
- European Parliament (2023b): *Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023 on Supporting Ammunition Production (ASAP)*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R1525&qid=1695904709752>
- European Parliament (s. a.): *Mutual Defence Clause*. Online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/mutual_defence.html
- FIOTT, Daniel (2018): *Strategic Autonomy: Towards 'European Sovereignty' in Defence?* *EUISS Brief*, (12), 1–8. Online: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%2012_Strategic%20Autonomy.pdf
- FIOTT, Daniel (2020): *Uncharted Territory? Towards a Common Threat Analysis and a Strategic Compass for EU Security and Defence*. Online: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%2016%20Strategic%20Compass_o.pdf
- FIOTT, Daniel ed. (2021): *European Sovereignty. Strategy and Interdependence*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2815/649889>
- FRANKE, Ulrike – VARMA, Tara (2019): *Independence Play: Europe's Pursuit of Strategic Autonomy*. *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 18 July 2019. Online: https://ecfr.eu/special/independence_play_europes_pursuit_of_strategic_autonomy/
- Government of the Netherlands (2023): *The Security Strategy for the Kingdom of the Netherlands*. Online: <https://www.government.nl/documents/publications/2023/04/03/security-strategy-for-the-kingdom-of-the-netherlands>
- GRESSANI, Gilles – MICHEL, Charles (2021): *Elements for a Doctrine: In Conversation with Charles Michel*. *Groupe d'études géopolitiques*, 8 September 2021. Online: <https://geopolitique.eu/en/2021/09/08/elements-for-a-doctrine-in-conversation-with-charles-michel/>
- GREVI, Giovanni (2019): *Strategic Autonomy for European Choices: The Key to Europe's Shaping Power*. *European Policy Centre*, 19 July 2019. Online: https://www.epc.eu/content/PDF/2019/190719_Strategicautonomy_GG.pdf
- GRÜLL, Philipp – LAWTON, Sarah (2020): *Sovereignty and Solidarity: Germany's Plans for the EU's Foreign Policy*. *Euractiv*, 29 June 2020. Online: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/sovereignty-and-solidarity-germanys-plans-for-the-eus-foreign-policy/>
- HELD, David (1990): *Political Theory and the Modern State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- HELLEDOORN, Elmar (2025): *Finance, Strategy and European Autonomy*. *Survival*, 67(1), 99–122. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2025.2459014>
- JUNCKER, Jean-Claude (2017): *President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address 2017*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_17_3165
- JUNCKER, Jean-Claude (2018): *State of the Union 2018: The Hour of European Sovereignty*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/soteu2018-speech_en_o.pdf

- LIPPERT, Barbara – VON ONDARZA, Nicolai – PERTHES, Volker eds. (2019): *European Strategic Autonomy. Actors, Issues, Conflicts of Interests*. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, 2019/RP 04. Online: <https://doi.org/10.18449/2019RP04>
- MACRON, Emmanuel (2017): *Initiative pour l'Europe – Discours d'Emmanuel Macron pour une Europe souveraine, unie, démocratique*. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique>
- MACRON, Emmanuel (2018): Speech by the President of the French Republic at the Conference of Ambassadors. *Élysée*, 27 August 2018. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2018/08/27/speech-by-the-president-of-the-french-republic-at-the-conference-of-ambassadors>
- MACRON, Emmanuel (2024): *Europe Speech*. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-22625-en.pdf>
- MICHAELS, Eva – SUS, Monica (2024): (Not) Coming of Age? Unpacking the European Union's Quest for Strategic Autonomy in Security and Defence. *European Security*, 33(3), 383–405. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2024.2376603>
- MEYER, Christoph O. – WILKINSON, Benedict – BESCH, Sophia – JONES, Ben (2020): *CSDP Defence Capabilities Development. 10 Years of CSDP. Four In-depth Analyses Requested by the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence of the European Parliament (EP)*. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2861/08725>
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2018): *Az Európai Unió külkapcsolati rendszere és eszközei. A külkapcsolatoktól a kül-, a biztonság- és védelempolitikáig*. Budapest: Dialóg Campus.
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2019): The Renaissance of EU–NATO Relations in Light of the EU's Attempt at Autonomy. In BARANYI, Tamás – STEPPER, Péter (eds.): *NATO in the 21st Century. A Central European Perspective*. Budapest: Antall József Tudásközpont, 239–257.
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2022): The Idea of a European Security and Defence Union. In MOLNÁR, Anna – FIOTT, Daniel – ASDERAKI, Foteini – PAILE-CALVO, Sylvain (eds.): *Challenges of the Common Security and Defence Policy. ESDC 2nd Summer University Book*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 19–36.
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2024): The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy in the Context of European Strategic Autonomy. In ZOMBORY, Katarzyna – SZILÁGYI, János Ede (eds.): *Shielding Europe with the Common Security and Defence Policy*. Miskolc–Budapest: Central European Academic Publishing, 35–72.
- MOLNÁR, Anna – HORVÁTH, Katalin (s. a.): *Stratégiai autonómia – európai szuverenitás. Elméleti áttekintés*. Manuscript.
- MOLNÁR, Anna – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS, Éva (2023): The Postmodernity of the European Union: A Discourse Analysis of State of the Union Addresses. *The International Spectator*, 58(1), 58–74. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2022.2149177>
- MOLNÁR, Anna – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS, Éva (2024): From Quasi-Sovereignty to Full Sovereignty? The Interpretations of Strategic Autonomy and Sovereignty in the European Union. *Annals of the Croatian Political Science Association*, 21(1), 95–116. Online: <https://doi.org/10.20901/an.21.02>
- NATO (2016): *Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

- NOVÁKY, Niklas (2017): The European Security and Defence Union: How Should It Look Like? *Vocal Europe*, 13 November 2017. Online: <https://www.vocaleurope.eu/the-european-security-and-defence-union-how-should-it-look-like/>
- OLSEN, Gorm Rye (2022): Transatlantic Cooperation in Flux: Europe's Small and Cautious Steps towards "Strategic Autonomy". *Defence Studies*, 22(4), 609–623. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2110477>
- ORŁOWSKI, Tomasz (2023): *European Strategic Autonomy Remains Conveniently Broadly Defined*. Online: <https://visegradinsight.eu/european-strategic-autonomy-remains-conveniently-broadly-defined/>
- PAPAIIOANNOU, Alexandros (2019): *Strengthening EU–NATO Relations*. Online: <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/07/16/strengthening-eu-nato-relations/index.html>
- RECCHIA, Stefano (2020): A Legitimate Sphere of Influence: Understanding France's Turn to Multilateralism in Africa. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43(4), 508–533. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1733985>
- ROCH, Juan – OLEART, Alvaro (2024): How 'European Sovereignty' Became Mainstream: The Geopoliticisation of the EU's 'Sovereign Turn' by pro-EU Executive Actors. *Journal of European Integration*, 46(4), 545–565. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2024.2326831>
- RODRIGUES, Stéphane (2023): Financing European Defence: The End of Budgetary Taboos. *European Papers*, 8(3), 1155–1177. Online: <https://www.europeanpapers.eu/en/europeanforum/financing-european-defence-end-budgetary-taboos>
- SILVA, Paul M. II – SELDEN, Zachary (2020): Economic Interdependence and Economic Sanctions: A Case Study of European Union Sanctions on Russia. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 33(2), 229–251. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1660857>
- SOLANA, Javier (2015): *Report of a CEPS Task Force. More Union in European Defence*. Online: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/bruessel/12160.pdf>
- Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (2023): *Resilient EU2023. A Future-oriented Approach to Reinforce the EU's Open Strategic Autonomy and Global Leadership*. Online: <https://futuros.gob.es/sites/default/files/2023-09/RESILIENTEU2030.pdf>
- STAUNTON, Eglantine (2022): 'France Is Back': Macron's European Policy to Rescue 'European Civilisation' and the Liberal International Order. *Third World Quarterly*, 43(1), 18–34. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1994384>
- Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe* (2004). Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2004%3A310%3ATOC>
- VARGA, Gergely (2017): Towards European Strategic Autonomy? Evaluating the New CSDP Initiatives. *KKI Elemzések*, (7), 1–24. Online: https://kki.hu/assets/upload/07_KKI-Studies_CSDP_VargaG_20171003.pdf
- VON DER LEYEN, Ursula (2024a): *Statement at the European Parliament Plenary by President Ursula von der Leyen, candidate for a second mandate 2024–2029*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_24_3871
- VON DER LEYEN, Ursula (2024b): *Europe's Choice. Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2024–2029*. Online: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf
- VON WEITERSHAUSEN, Inez – SCHÄFER, David – WESSELS, Wolfgang (2020): A 'Primus Inter Pares' in EU Foreign Policy? – German Leadership in the European Council during the Libyan

- and Ukrainian Crises. *German Politics*, 29(1), 42–58. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2019.1583328>
- VROEGE, Bram (2023): Strategic Autonomy in Military Production: The EDF and the Constitutional Limits to EU Defence-Industrial Spending Power. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 28(4), 341–362. Online: <https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2023026>
- WALKER, Neil (2013): Constitutionalising Enlargement, Enlarging Constitutionalism. *European Law Journal*, 9(3), 365–385. Online: <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/4117>
- WALLACE, William (1999): The Sharing of Sovereignty: The European Paradox. *Political Studies*, 47(3), 503–521. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00214>

FURTHER READING

- DAMEN, Mario (2022): EU Strategic Autonomy 2013–2023. From Concept to Capacity. Briefing. *EU Strategic Autonomy Monitor*, July 2022. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733589/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733589_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733589/EPRS_BRI(2022)733589_EN.pdf)

THE EUROPEAN PEACE FACILITY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

INTRODUCTION

The increasing tensions between Russia and Ukraine since 2014 created a deteriorating security environment for the EU as well. This, and the negotiations on the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) opened a niche for the creation of a more adequate answer to the issue of financing EU CSDP action, and widening the scope of the geographically limited APF. The EU started the formulation of its new tool, the European Peace Facility (EPF) in 2017 accordingly, and established it in 2021.

Financing the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military missions and operations of the EU was always a contentious issue for Member States. The limitation of financing EU CSDP missions and operations has become tangible when deploying those in crisis situations. As the EU budget cannot be used for financing military operations, other tools were required. The African Peace Facility (APF) was created in 2003 (ACP-EC Council of Ministers 2003) and the Athena Mechanism in 2004 (European Council 2004). In the framework of these financial instruments the provision of lethal equipment (weapons or ammunition) was not allowed (FIOTT 2018). The African Peace Facility was created to provide assistance to the African Union in development and peace support with re-distributing the unallocated budget of the European Development Fund (ACP-EC Council of Ministers 2003). In 2021 the EPF replaced the AFP and the Athena Mechanism. The common costs of military missions and operations were financed through the off-budget Athena Mechanism between 2004 and 2021. This tool was not designed to cover 100% of the costs, but only about 10–20% of them on average. Otherwise, costs fall where they lie, meaning that Member States are responsible for their own expenses to finance their own participation in EU CSDP missions and operations (FIOTT 2018).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 set the EPF in motion among other instruments. As a result, the total budget ceiling was increased and reached more than EUR 17 billion for the period between 2021 and 2027. This is more than a three-fold increase since the establishment of the tool in 2021 with a budget ceiling of EUR

5.69 billion (European Council 2021a). It has become one of the most important EU tools to finance Ukraine to be able to defend its territorial integrity and protect citizens against the Russian aggression. In the framework of the EPF, EUR 6.1 billion have been mobilised for the military support of Ukraine (European Commission 2023; 2024). To be able to finance this, following multiple budget ceiling raises, listed in Table 1, in March 2024, the Council of the European Union decided to increase the financial recourses of the European Peace Facility again by EUR 5 billion, and secure this support for Ukraine, by creating the Ukraine Assistance Fund (UAF) inside the EPF (Council of the European Union 2024). It is worth mentioning that the flexible decision-making tool of the constructive abstention was used by the neutral countries (Austria, Malta and Ireland) and by Hungary during the decisions regarding the EPF.

Table 1. *EPF budget ceilings, raises, UAF budget*

EPF budget ceiling March 2021 (billion EUR)	EPF budget ceiling raise March 2023 (billion EUR)	EPF budget ceiling raise June 2023 (billion EUR)	EPF budget ceiling raise March 2024 (billion EUR)	Total EPF budget ceiling (billion EUR)	UAF budget (billion EUR)
5.69	2.29	4.06	5	17	6.1

Source: Compiled by Mariann Tánczos based on European Council data.

With the implementation of the EPF, the European Union provided lethal equipment to a partner country for the first time. This decision is deemed to be in accordance with international law, particularly in light of the context of self-defence and collective countermeasures against the violation of international law (RUTIGLIANO 2022: 404–405).

In this chapter the historical background, the financial and institutional framework, the decision-making processes and the implementation of the EPF are introduced.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW TOOL

In June 2017, based on the experience of the European External Action Service (EEAS), a Task Force was established to revise all the financial tools available to the service. The aim of the Task Force was to better align these tools to the priorities and consequently improve financial support for the EU's set objectives in the field of the CFSP. As a result of the revision, the Athena Mechanism was examined, and

in 2018, then High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), Federica Mogherini introduced the idea of the European Peace Facility (EPF) to replace it (PUIG SOLER 2021: 103). The HR/VP has a primordial role in proposing new decisions regarding CFSP and CSDP. Accordingly, the new financial instrument was mentioned first officially by HR/VP Mogherini at the “Building on Vision, Forward to Action: Delivering on EU Security and Defence” event in Brussels, in 2017. Mogherini said that the EEAS and the European Commission were preparing the next MFF for the period between 2021 and 2027, and the HR/VP would propose the establishment of the European Peace Facility, “financed and managed together with [our] Member States”. The main goal of the new financial tool was to plan and deploy EU military missions more efficiently, and also “to support partners in dealing with our shared security challenges” (European External Action Service 2017). In November 2018, the Council of the European Union endorsed the proposal, and invited the preparatory bodies to continue the elaboration of the new tool (European Council 2018).

Meanwhile, negotiations on the 2021–2027 MFF started. During the negotiations, the EPF was established to be an off-budget tool, with a planned EUR 10.5 billion financial framework (MOLNÁR 2019: 233). Besides the Athena Mechanism, the EPF included the African Peace Facility as well. It did so to enhance solidarity and to arm the EU with a more flexible and comprehensive tool (SERRANO 2020: 34). In February 2018, the European Commission published its ambitious priorities regarding the seven-year long budgetary period. The document emphasised that although the European Defence Fund had the potential to increase the EU’s strategic autonomy and the competitiveness of European defence industry. However, due to the restrictions of the EU Treaties, the EU budget is not able to finance all EU actions in the field of security and defence. That is why a “separate funding mechanism of around EUR 10 billion for the 2021–2027 period” to complement other programmes financed directly by EU budget was proposed in order to increase “the EU’s ability to financially support operations with defence implications” (European Commission 2018a). The Commission Communication “A Modern Budget for a Union that Protects, Empowers and Defends” (May 2018) proposed explicitly the creation of the European Peace Facility in order to improve the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the EU actions in the field of Common Security and Defence Policy (European Commission 2018b). In December 2020, the EU Council reached a political agreement to use the European Peace Facility to finance military and defence-related external activities as well. The proposed new tool, the EPF, together with the also newly established Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), supports partner countries in the prevention

and management of crises, strengthening their resilience. Following the negotiations, the EPF was established on 22 March 2021, with the budget of 5.69 billion EUR for the 2021–2027 MFF (European Council 2021a).

Main changes introduced

Besides melting two previously existing tools together, significant changes had been introduced in the EPF. The new off-budget financial instrument, although not in the EU's official budget, but financed by the Member States directly, was prepared to become part of the EU's crisis management toolbox. It aimed to make the EU "a more efficient and responsive global security provider". The new instrument is funded by Member States' annual GNI-based contributions (European External Action Service 2018; DENECKERE 2019). The budget of the EPF was designed in order to be available for the common costs of CSDP military operations and for Assistance Measures in support of third countries or international organisations. It facilitates rapid deployment outside the EU and supports flexibility (PUIG SOLER 2021: 103–109).

The new instrument consists of two pillars, as it is used for the financing of 1. common costs of military missions or operations; and 2. assistance measures for third countries. In the framework of the first pillar, the Athena Mechanism, the funding of the CSDP military missions and operations was brought under the new instrument. Regarding these developments, the budget increased, and up to 30% of the operational costs of the military missions and operations could be covered instead of the former 10 to 20%, as well as some expenses of the European Union's Battlegroups (EU BGs). The common costs which can be covered under the EPF are in the logistics, administrative and infrastructural area. This means transportation to and from the operational theatre, obtaining buildings for accommodation and headquarters, medical costs, communication and acquisition of information. The pool of common costs did not change significantly, only the running costs, and the costs of redeployment were added to its scope. Additionally, the funding of added commonalities of the costs of the EU BGs appeared in the new financial tool. This includes redeployment transport, running costs and a deployment readiness package for 10 days. Besides this, the EPF can also finance military exercises (European Council 2021a). The changes in the funding of CSDP military missions and operations took an immediate effect: in July 2021 when the EUTM Mozambique was established, the EPF was decided to cover 45% of the common costs of the mission (European Council 2021b: 4).

The changes introduced to the APF pillar were even more significant. The territorial limitations¹ of the former tool were abandoned completely. The EPF allows financial support for partner countries both in Africa and the EU's neighbourhood and beyond to strengthen their resilience (PUIG SOLER 2021: 103–109). Eventually, the EPF became a global tool, together with the NDICI. This fits into the EU's Global Strategy of 2016, which described the EU as a responsible global actor of security and prosperity (European External Action Service 2016: 17–18). However, the most debated and significant change in the tool is the possibility to provide lethal platforms (concrete military support) in a bilateral manner to third countries. This is a feature which was not possible under the framework of the APF, or any other EU instrument, including the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace before (BERGMANN–MÜLLER 2021: 1676). The Africa related Cotonou Partnership Agreement,² which has a trade pillar, introduced everything but arms trade policy in 2000 to support the enforcement of United Nations' arms embargos (VECSEY 2019: 71). The framework of the agreement reached until 2023, and the new framework agreement, the Samoa Agreement was signed on 15 November 2023 (European Council 2024a). The new agreement also abandoned the *everything but arms policy*, fitting well into the “strategic reorientation” of the Strategic Compass (FIOTT 2023: 450).

The provision of lethal platforms to EU partner countries was widely criticised since the introduction of the tool. First, during the negotiations of establishing the EPF, some Member States, like neutral countries opposed the possibility of providing lethal platforms, while others saw this as an opportunity to boost their arms export. Thus, accusations emerged that the EU moved forward in the CSDP area imperfectly, and too fast (BERGMANN–MÜLLER 2021: 1670). Others claimed that the EPF became the EU's primary funding tool to provide financial support for military purposes outside of the EU's borders (FOTIDIADIS–SCHMIDT 2022). Further criticism highlights that the new tool closed a niche for countries like Turkey and Russia to provide lethal weapon platforms to African countries. The EPF is enhancing hard security, which fits into the integrated approach (FERRANDO 2021: 2). The war

¹ The African Peace Facility was created to support the African Union solely, even though the decision to create it was made in the framework of the cooperation between African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Union (ACP-EC Council of Ministers 2003), thus in its original form the tool could not finance any assistance measures applied outside of Africa.

² The Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) was signed on 23 June 2000 between the EU and 79 members of the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, originally running for 20 years. The CPA rested on three pillars, development cooperation, political cooperation, and economic and trade cooperation (VECSEY 2019: 70–71).

in Ukraine and recent developments in regard to the allocation of the EPF budget changed the perspectives. It became one of the main tools to support Ukraine. The budget of the EPF also complements other EU programmes with a security and defence focus or component, together with the European Defence Fund, the NDICI and the Connecting Europe Facility, which has a separate allocation for the Military Mobility.

The EU topped up the EPF multiple times, the last time so far on 18 March 2024 by EUR 5 billion, which sum is allocated to the newly established Ukraine Assistance Fund, which is a multi-annual envelope in military support under the European Peace Facility (EPF). The new financial instrument was proposed by HR/VP Josep Borrell during the Informal Foreign Affairs Council on Defence in August 2023 (BORRELL 2023; 2024: 89). After heated discussions Hungary decided to use constructive abstention during the final vote in the Council of the European Union, which allowed to establish this new tool (BARIGAZZI 2024).

In 2024 the EPF has a total budget over EUR 17 billion for the period 2021–2027 (European Council 2024b). The assistance measure pillar of the EPF was utilised in favour of 26 entities until September 2024, mostly countries, but the African Union mission in Somalia and the Balkan Medical Task Force were also included (European Council 2024b). Although the majority of available resources supports Ukraine, Table 2 shows that the geographical scope of the tool is indeed wide, the EPF is utilised as intended, as a global tool. The main geographical focus remains on the Neighbourhood Policy region and Africa. The table shows that since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine a significant shift towards the east occurred, more funds were allocated to Ukraine through the assistance measure pillar of the EPF.

The management of the EPF

The EPF being a tool of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Council and the Council of the European Union (the Council) set the strategic priorities along which the EPF action must be organised and the Council primarily makes decisions regarding the EPF. The EPF as an off-budget tool remains dependent on Member State decision on the operations, assistance measures and finance (European Council 2021a: 19–20). Although the Council decides unanimously, financing does not have to happen by all member states. According to the council decision on establishing the EPF, if a Member State chooses to abstain from a vote,

Table 2. *EPF assistance measures adopted between 2021 and 2024*

2021		2022		2023		2024	
Entity	Assistance measure (million EUR)	Entity	Assistance measure (million EUR)	Entity	Assistance measure (million EUR)	Entity	Assistance measure (million EUR)
African Union	130	African Union	600	Georgia	30	Moldova	50
Mozambique	44	Mozambique	60	Moldova	40	African Union mission in Somalia	70
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10	Bosnia and Herzegovina	10	Ukraine	2,500	Mauritania	15
Georgia	12.75	Georgia	20	African Union mission in Somalia	85	Somalia	40
Moldova	7	Moldovan Armed Forces	40	Niger	44.7	Benin	35
Moldovan Armed Forces		Ukraine	3,116	Jordan	7	Ghana	25
Ukraine	31	Balkan Medical Task Force	6	Somalia	26	Côte d'Ivoire	15
Mali	24	African Union mission in Somalia	120	North Macedonia	9	Kenya	20
		Niger	25	Democratic Republic of the Congo	20	Albania	13
		Lebanon	6	Benin	11.75	Armenia	10
		Mauritania	12	Yaoundé Architecture	21	Ukraine	5,000
		Rwanda	20				

Source: Compiled by Mariann Tanczos based on European Council data.

it is not obliged to contribute to the financing of the operation in question based on Article 31(1) and Article 41(2) of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU 2008: 33; European Council 2021a: 19). The EPF has

“legal capacity, in particular to hold bank accounts, acquire, hold or dispose of assets, supplies and services, employ staff, enter into contracts, agreements and administrative arrangements, discharge its liabilities and be a party to legal proceedings, as required in order to implement this Decision. The Facility shall not have the purpose, or the effect, of making a profit” (European Council 2021a: 18).

This latter statement is important in light of the assistance measures provided to Ukraine, which required further tools to enhance transparency.

The large scale support to Ukraine raised concerns about the transparency of the new tool, since it is argued that the EPF has no sufficient control and oversight. Directly diverted from this, Maletta and Héau argued that the use of the tool as an arms trading platform will worsen the security situation in already volatile regions (MALETTA–HÉAU 2022: 2–8). EU Member States moreover provided weapon systems and equipment from their own, existing stocks, which did not necessarily meet the needs of the Ukrainian army. To address this problem, and provide Ukraine with useable and needed weapons, the EU Military Staff set up a mechanism to control and coordinate the supply and demand. Under this pretext Ukraine can send its requests, which specify which equipment is needed, and Member State donations can be sent accordingly (BILQUIN–IMMENKAMP 2022).

The EPF is under the management of the Facility Committee, which is “composed of a representative of each Member State”. This body includes an administrator for operation, the operation commander of each operation, an administrator for assistance measures and an accounting officer for operations and an accounting officer for assistance measures. The Secretary-General of the Council provides the administrator for operations and the accounting officer for operations together with the staff. The HR/VP is responsible for ensuring the implementation of Council decisions. In order to implement the assistance measures (with the exception of assistance measures implemented by an operation) the HR/VP is assisted by the administrator for assistance measures and the accounting officer for assistance measures. The High Representative exercises this responsibility with the support of the European Commission (European Council 2021a: 21).

The European Commission also has a crucial role in the administration of the EPF. The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments within the European Commission

“acts as administrator for assistance measures. The Commission also acts as accounting officer and internal auditor for assistance measures through the Directorate-General for Budget and the Internal Audit Service respectively. The administrator is in charge of the financial implementation of assistance measures” (European Commission 2024).

The Facility Committee (EPF Committee) is chaired by a representative of the rotating presidency of the Council. The EPF Committee adopts the annual budget and the amending budgets of the Facility, it also approves the annual accounts. The EPF Committee’s decisions are binding (European Council 2021a: 22–23).

THE EPF AS A TOOL OF STRATEGIC AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF CSDP MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

The Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2022 can be considered a game changer for European defence. The new financial instrument allowed the EU to become a real security provider. It had an impact on both capability development and political decisions regarding the future of European defence. Although it was criticised for militarising the European Union, it has become the flagship for military support of Ukraine (KARJALAINEN–MUSTASILTA 2023). The Strategic Compass of 2022, while its drafting started before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, was rewritten according to the EU’s security situation to become the Union’s first dedicated security and defence strategy. Its uniqueness also shows in its reception. This time, besides the European Commission, which endorsed multiple conclusions in this policy area, EU Heads of State and Government also welcomed the document. The Compass, besides openly naming Russia as a threat to the EU’s security, drew up over 80 priority actions, one of them to scale up the EU’s military action (FIOTT 2023: 450). One of the most important tools in this regard fell to the EPF, which was seen in the Compass as a financial instrument to enable CSDP action (Council of the European Union 2022: 17).

The EPF has fulfilled its role with mixed results so far, as it covers the common costs of the EU CSDP military missions and operations at a varying rate. This amount can, however, be significantly higher than the Athena Mechanism contribution before. As of September 2024 four military missions and four military operations were eligible to benefit from the EPF, as well as a recently established Coordinated Maritime Presence, the EU Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea (EU SDI GoG) (European External Action Service 2024a). Regarding EU CSDP action in the military domain, Africa seems to be the primary geographical area, with seven military interventions of some

Table 3. *EU military missions and operations benefiting from the EPF*

No.	Military mission (non-executive) ³	Military operation (executive)	Other (coordinated maritime presence)
1.	EUMAM Mozambique	EUFOR Althea	EU SDI GoG
2.	EUTM RCA	EUNAVFOR MED Irini	
3.	EUTM Somalia	EUNAVFOR Atalanta	
4.	EUMAM Ukraine	EUNAVFOR Aspides	

Source: Compiled by Mariann Tánczos based on European External Action Service 2024a.

kind on the continent, or in the vicinity of its shores, based on the list provided by Table 3. The remaining two military missions are located in Europe, one of them deployed close to, and the other within the EU's borders.

EPF financing shows a wider scale of variation among the missions and operations than their geographical location. EUMAM Mozambique, the most recent mission of the EU, established on 1 September 2024, did not inherit the 45% of EPF contribution for the common costs from its predecessor, EUTM Mozambique. The EU decided to cease EPF funding for the mission due to its transformation to an assistance model (European Council 2024c). Despite their eligibility, EUMAM Mozambique is not the only EU mission or operation which does not receive EPF funding. EUTM Somalia is also not benefiting from EPF funds (European Council 2022a). EUNAVFOR Atalanta falls into the same category with no funding allocated to it from the EPF (European Council 2022b). Although the EPF was hailed as an instrument to provide significant contribution for financing CSDP military action, regarding EUNAVFOR MED Irini the Council decided to set the reference amount of common costs provided by the EPF at only 15% of the total EUR 16.9 million (European Council 2023a). EUTM RCA was granted with a reference amount of EUR 5.84 million in common costs until 19 September 2025, of which 30% can be financed under the EPF (European Council 2024d). EUNAVFOR Aspides, the EU's most recent military operation got EUR 8 million as the reference amount of common

³ The distinction between non-executive and executive mandates are related to the tasks the different military missions and operations carry out. In this sense, non-executive mandates are focused more on advisory and training tasks operating from the background. While executive military operations are taking over the tasks or acting instead of local security forces (TSITSIKOSTAS 2021: 87; HORNYÁK–TÁNCZOS 2024: 119).

costs, of which 60% can be financed through the EPF (European Council 2024e). The Coordinated Maritime Presence at the Gulf of Guinea, however, containing a civilian and a military pillar is eligible for funding from the EPF. The military pillar of the EU SDI GoG was set at EUR 179,000 reference amount of common costs, of which 45% can be financed by the EPF (European Council 2023b).

While EPF contribution to CSDP missions and operations shows a rather mixed image, it must be assessed in comprehension with the provided Assistance Measures. Data on EUFOR Althea do not provide information on the financial amount provided by the EPF, notwithstanding the host country did not remain without funding from the instrument. The EU contributed assistance measures to Bosnia and Herzegovina both in 2021 and 2022 with the total amount of EUR 20 million. Mozambique also received funds from the EPF Assistance Measures pillar in 2021 and 2022 with the total sum of EUR 104 million. Somalia is in a similar situation, however, in addition to adopted assistance measures benefitting the country, the African Union mission in Somalia also received significant financial support in 2023 and 2024 from the EPF, totalling EUR 221 million. Additionally, the African Union also received EUR 730 million altogether from the EPF during 2021 and 2022. This amount could also be allocated to African Union missions, like the one in Somalia (DINCĂ 2023: 135–137). It must also be considered that these sums of funding, just as with the EPF funding of CSDP military missions and operations can be used in a specified time period, for example the funding of EUTM RCA is defined for one calendar year (European Council 2024d).

In the context of Ukraine, two CSDP missions were active in 2024. The EUAM Ukraine, a civilian mission funded through the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget was established in 2014 (European Council 2014). The EUMAM Ukraine, however, is a military mission, providing training for the Ukrainian military. The idea to deploy an EU training mission to Ukraine first emerged in 2021, when Kyiv turned to HR/VP Josep Borrell for assistance. Consensus was not reached among the Member States in 2021 about establishing a new training mission because of the uncertain situation at the Northeastern borders of Ukraine (WAGNER–VECSEY 2022: 4).

The unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, changed the situation significantly, and the European Union Military Assistance Mission in the support of Ukraine was launched on 17 October 2022, with Hungary's constructive abstention from the vote (HOEFFLER et al. 2024: 3238).

“The strategic objective of EUMAM Ukraine shall be to contribute to enhancing the military capability of Ukraine's Armed Forces (UAF) to regenerate and to effectively conduct operations, in order to allow Ukraine to defend its territorial integrity

within its internationally recognised borders, effectively exercise its sovereignty and protect the civilians in Ukraine” (European Council 2022c: 87).

As a military capacity building and training mission, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability is the operations headquarters of EUMAM Ukraine. The mission, however, has a not-so-usual element, as it is deployed within the borders of the European Union as a temporary measure. All activities are conducted within the framework of a multinational Combined Arms Training Command (CAT-C) headquartered in Poland, a multinational Special Training Command (STC) responsible for training activities in Germany, and in various locations across the European Union. It is a unique feature, since according to Article 42(1) of the Treaty on the European Union, CSDP action must take place outside of the territory of Member States (WAGNER-VECSEY 2022: 6; European External Action Service 2024b).

The EUMAM Ukraine mission also benefitted from the EPF in multiple ways. Assistance Measures were provided through the mission since its establishment in 2022 worth EUR 255 million (European External Action Service 2024b). The financial reference amount of common costs for the duration of the two-year-long mandate was set at EUR 106.7 million, of which 30% goes for commitments and 30% for payments. Besides the military operations pillar, the EPF plays a key role in complementing the work of the EU’s CSDP effort in Ukraine with financing assistance measures as well. The transportation costs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces from Ukraine to the training bases in Germany and Poland, between training locations and return, real life support, medical expenses and evacuation are financed by the EPF. These are costs which can fit under the EPF common costs in the active phase of the mission. However, the Council also decided to cover some operational costs, including personal training kits besides petroleum, and maintenance of the equipment used in training temporarily from EPF budget (European Council 2022c: 90). Altogether, the European Peace Facility provides the following equipment and services through EUMAM Ukraine: ammunition, unspecified military equipment, lethal platforms for defensive purposes, transportation and maintenance (European External Action Service 2024b). At its establishment, the objective of the mission was to train 30,000 soldiers by the end of 2023 (HOFER 2023: 1703). The estimated figure of trained troops was even higher, reaching 40,000 by the end of the year as a result of the EU’s efforts (NIZHNIKAU-MOSHES 2024: 496). By May 2024, the number of UAF personnel trained by EUMAM Ukraine reached 52,000, the equivalent of 15 brigade units, and the EU expected to conclude the training of two more brigade units until the end of summer in the same year (European External Action Service 2024b). The EU provides both individual and collective training

to UAF personnel at different levels, from basic training to specialised levels as junior leadership training from section to brigade level. EU training also includes operation training from company to brigade level, including live fire exercises (European Council 2022c: 87).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EPF FOR EUROPEAN
STRATEGIC AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE RUSSO–UKRAINIAN WAR

The Member States could provide lethal weapon systems for a country under attack for the first time under any EU financial instrument. This novelty, however, brought its own problems, since bilateral aid was not well coordinated and supply initially failed to meet demand. With the establishment of the clearing house cell under the EU Military Staff, the situation was normalised, and Ukraine could update its list of demands daily. Besides solving issues in the supply and demand realm, it must be noted that under the EPF, Member States can be reimbursed for their donations (BILQUIN–IMMENKAMP 2022; HOFFFLER et al. 2024: 3237). This does not mean a complete reimbursement, just a certain percentage. At the beginning of 2022 an initial 85% reimbursement was planned, but the quickly mounting sum in assistance measures for Ukraine (it jumped from EUR 31 million in 2021 to EUR 3.1 billion in the course of 2022) caused a significant drop in the figures. In October 2022 calculations showed that a maximum of 46% of the costs could be reimbursed (BARIGAZZI 2022). This was, however, only the start of the reform of the EPF. During the course of 2024, further changes were negotiated in order to establish a more fitting tool to support Ukraine. Germany requested the amount of bilateral donations to be deduced from the reimbursable costs, and France demanded further restrictions, namely that only EU made equipment can be funded through the EPF framework. While the German request was partially met, allowing the reimbursement of 50% of bilaterally provided equipment, the French demand is likely to become the norm in the long-term (HOEFFLER et al. 2024: 3237; BARIGAZZI 2024).

The Strategic Compass, besides underlying the importance of the EPF in financing military operations, makes it clear that the assistance measure pillar of the tool is also important. This importance translates into providing lethal platforms to the partners of the EU to support EU military action in the respective regions. The Compass views the EPF as a tool to complement the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument, building defence capacity globally (Council of the European Union 2022: 44). The EPF, with providing lethal platforms thus

started a *defensive weaponisation* of the EU's partners under its Assistance Measures pillar (FIOTT 2023: 449).

Launched in 2021, the EPF has proved to be a very flexible tool when it came to European action. Its global scope, off-budget nature, and the two pillars (military operations and assistance measures) provided the EU with a very adaptive instrument (HAUCK 2022; FIOTT 2023: 451). The focus of the EPF had been shifted in response to the war in Ukraine. While previously it was considered the main tool to finance African peace and security projects, by 2022 it was clearly a tool to support the Ukrainian war effort (HAUCK 2022). Until the end of 2022, the EU provided EUR 3.1 billion in six tranches, each including a package of approximately EUR 500 million, of which EUR 450–490 million was covering lethal platforms and the remaining EUR 10–50 million financed equipment and supplies, for example protective gear, fuel, first aid kits and even maintenance and repair for previously donated assets (WAGNER–VECSEY 2022:8). These data show that flexibility was needed regarding both pillars of the EPF, since first the geographical scope shifted from Africa to Ukraine, then the Assistance Measures pillar gained momentum, as it is shown in Table 2.

On 1 February 2024, the European Commission confirmed its strong commitment towards supporting Ukraine, which translated into the establishment of the Ukraine Assistance Fund. The total budget of the EPF was raised to EUR 17 billion for the period between 2021 and 2027. Within it, by 2024 the EU provided a total of EUR 6.1 billion military support to Ukraine through the EPF (European Commission 2023; 2024). A total of EUR 11 billion will be allocated to Ukraine from the EPF budget, while the remaining sum will be available to support other regions globally (BARIGAZZI 2024). Although Member State contributions far surpassed the EPF, standing now at EUR 32.9 billion (European Council 2024f), the EPF created a common European brand, and despite the fact that the institution of constructive abstention was practiced by the neutral countries of Austria, Malta and Ireland, it contributed to enhanced solidarity within the EU (HOEFFLER et al. 2024: 3236–3237). Norway also contributed to the support of Ukraine through the EPF. Two tranches of voluntary support were announced, the first in October 2022 to the EUMAM Ukraine, and the second in February 2023 to support Ukraine through the Assistance Measures pillar of the EPF. The first tranche of support was EUR 14.5 million, while the second amounted to EUR 22 million (European Council 2023c).

The allocated money, however, is not spent immediately. On the establishment of the EPF, the Council of the European Union determined annual financial ceilings, by allocating the budget evenly in the period of 2021–2027. With the extensive support to Ukraine and the increased budget of the EPF, the yearly financial ceiling also changed, however, the aim to keep it somewhat even remained, which is visible from Table 4.

Table 4. *The evolution of EPF yearly financial ceiling*

	2021 (million EUR)	2022 (million EUR)	2023 (million EUR)	2024 (million EUR)	2025 (million EUR)	2026 (million EUR)	2027 (million EUR)
24 March 2021	420	540	720	900	980	1,000	1,132
13 March 2023	399	591	980	1,800	1,375	1,400	1,434
26 June 2023	399	591	980	2,785	2,380	2,425	2,480
18 March 2024	399	591	980	2,785	4,047	4,092	4,146

Source: Compiled by Mariann Tánczos based on European Council 2021a; 2023d; 2023e; 2024g.

The Council of the European Union established the Ukraine Assistance Fund on 18 March 2024 after intense negotiations with Member States to meet all requests. The Ukraine Assistance Fund was established within the framework of the EPF, providing a dedicated tool for the support of Ukraine only, with the benefit of regulating rules of contribution and reimbursement separately from the general EPF budget. In practice it means that the earlier mentioned German request of limited reimbursement of bilateral donations, and the French request regarding prioritising EU and Norway made equipment were embedded in the new tool. Additionally, to avoid veto caused deadlocks in the financial support for Ukraine, those Member States who earlier abstained from a vote are not contributing to the budget of the Ukraine Assistance Fund, but should make additional contributions to other assistance measures (European Council 2024g).

The allocated money, however, does not translate into hard cash immediately. Member States have to conclude contracts which include the detailed rules on payments. The payments can be requested in several instalments, lump sums, or they can be delayed for even several years (WAGNER–VECSEY 2022: 9). Besides the hard contracts on coordinated donations, the EPF also includes elements of “creative accounting”, as future annual contributions for the EPF can be deduced from the contributions, meaning that if a Member State donates equipment to

Ukraine it can count it as contribution to the EPF, and pay less to the actual budget with that amount (HANKE VELA – CHIAPPA 2024).

Despite the difficulties in decision-making, budget allocation and contributions, the EPF is considered an important tool not just for providing assistance for Ukraine. The EPF can also be seen as a tool to boost EU defence industry cooperation and arms modernisation. These can be explained through the detailed regulations of the EPF and the Ukrainian Assistance Facility. Firstly, Member States can be reimbursed for their donations to Ukraine, of which the benefit can be twofold. Soviet-era (operational) weapon systems and ammunition were welcome in Ukraine, which created a market for these items. Member States have been, or will be reimbursed to some extent for their stock sweeping. Moreover, the incoming, or unspent budget can be translated into the procurement of modern military equipment both on the national and EU levels (FIOTT 2023: 452). While the donation of obsolete Soviet-era equipment to Ukraine raised questions, the current regulations ensure that nobody loses on the deal.

Secondly, when the Council of the European Union amended the decision on establishing the EPF in 2024, one of the criteria for Member State contribution reimbursement was that the donation must be an EU or Norway made weapon system. This, in itself means that further procurements must be coordinated, and will mean an increased interest in EU made items.

The tools to coordinate defence procurement were discussed during a meeting in Versailles among EU Heads of State and Government on 10–11 March 2022. As Member States started to donate their Soviet-era weapon systems to Ukraine, the need for the replenishment of the stocks had arisen. Of course, modern equipment was agreed to be acquired, preferably from the EU defence industry, and defence spending was to be increased in general. These requirements were met, at least new tools to enhance coordinated procurement were established, like the Regulation for the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act. This will allow the creation of the European Defence Investment Programme (FIOTT 2023: 452). All of these developments, however, occurred in the realm of European defence industry and had an indirect connection to the EPF. It is, nevertheless, undebatable that the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the return of conventional war to Europe set the EU's integration in the area of defence into motion.

Despite the interconnectedness of EU tools in the area of defence, the role of EPF in European strategic autonomy can be contextualised in itself. The new financial tool enabled the EU to respond to any crisis globally, stepping in the place of the previously limited scope of the African Peace Facility. EU Member States can provide partners with lethal platforms through the EPF in order to support CSDP action,

eliminating two of the difficulties of EU external actions. Thus, the EU does not have to wait for its global partner's response in order to make a difference on the Ukrainian battlefields. The EPF and the pledges of individual EU Member States were even able to ensure a matching U.S. support to Ukraine in equipment. After Germany announced its decision to send main battle tanks, Leopard 2s to Ukraine, the U.S. followed suit by pledging 31 M1 Abrams tanks (GOULD 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The Russian invasion created a deteriorating security environment for the EU, and induced a strategic reorientation towards territorial defence within the community. The deeper sense of togetherness stepped up the integration of CSDP, utilising the EPF as a glue to complete the imperfections of the policy area. The employment of the EPF required real solidarity among the Member States because of its off-budget nature, and the need for unanimity in its decision making. The utilisation of constructive abstention made this exceptional financial tool possible to maintain. From 2021 to 2024, it seemed that this heightened sense of solidarity could set the EPF in motion and operationalise it in a unified manner. However, long-term employment of the tool, and a looming strategic fatigue could reintroduce rifts into the utilisation of this instrument (HOEFFLER et al. 2024: 3237).

The total budget ceiling of the instrument was increased three times until 2024 and it reached more than EUR 17 billion for the period between 2021 and 2027. It has become one of the most important tools for Ukraine to defend its territorial integrity and protect citizens against the Russian aggression. In the framework of the EPF, EUR 6.1 billion has been mobilised for the military support of Ukraine so far (European Commission 2023; 2024). With the latest increase of the budget ceiling, in March 2024, the Council of the European Union also decided on the creation of the Ukraine Assistance Fund inside the EPF (European Council 2024b). Although constructive abstention was utilised by multiple countries along the utilisation of the EPF, it is noteworthy that the EU is still committed to supporting Ukraine.

Considering that the war started in early 2022, on 24 February, Ukraine's Western supporters at least in Europe are still interested to provide their eastern neighbour with material to defend its territories and to keep up its war effort. The U.S. shows a slightly different picture in 2024, a presidential election year. Signs of strategic fatigue over the war in Ukraine are also showing in the ongoing U.S. presidential election campaign. It will thus fall to the EU to incentivise on its new-found togetherness to keep Ukraine in the spotlight, and show that it can act autonomously.

The EPF has so far proved to be an important tool in the practical implementation of EU measures. It is indeed a flexible tool, which can be adapted according to the situation, in this case focusing on Ukraine instead of Africa. Both pillars of the EPF, military operations and assistance measures were utilised in order to maximise the EU's efforts in Ukraine. It is yet not clear how these actions contribute to European strategic autonomy, which will fall to future analysis on the question.

In February 2024, Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, during her visit in Athens emphasised:

“Indeed, it's time to reassess our strategic autonomy, ensuring our citizens feel safe and protected, capable of standing on our own. We already possess the European Peace Facility (EPF), and we should explore how we can integrate it into the European framework. A genuine security and defence union is essential, one that complements rather than competes with NATO, preserving the autonomy of each member-state while ensuring collective defence in the event of an attack. This is particularly crucial today. Take a look at events unfolding in the Red Sea, which impact shipping, security, and maritime domains. Discussions are currently under way in the European Parliament regarding the potential upgrading of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the creation of a commissioner for defence. In the next Commission term, seamless cooperation between the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a commissioner for defence, and the European Parliament should be prioritized” (KOSTULAS 2024).

REFERENCES

- ACP-EC Council of Ministers (2003): *Decision No 3/2003 of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers of 11 December 2003 on the Use of Resources from the Long-Term Development Envelope of the Ninth EDF for the Creation of a Peace Facility for Africa*. Online: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22003D0003\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22003D0003(01))
- BARIGAZZI, Jacopo (2022): EU's Weapons Kitty Runs Dry as Ukraine Seeks More Arms. *Politico*, 14 October 2022. Online: <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-weapon-fund-ukraine-russia-war/>
- BARIGAZZI, Jacopo (2024): EU Cash for Ukraine: The Bloc Agrees on a €5B Weapons Fund. *Politico*, 13 March 2024. Online: <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-cash-ukraine-bloc-agree-5-billion-euro-weapon-fund/>
- BERGMANN, Julian – MÜLLER, Patrick (2021): Failing Forward in the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy: The Integration of EU Crisis Management. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(10), 1669–1687. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1954064>

- BILQUIN, Bruno – IMMENKAMP, Beatrix (2022): Russia's War on Ukraine: The EU's Financing of Military Assistance to Ukraine. *European Parliamentary Research Service*, 30 March 2022. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729301/EPRS_ATA\(2022\)729301_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729301/EPRS_ATA(2022)729301_EN.pdf)
- BORRELL, Josep (2023): Informal Foreign Affairs Council (Defence): Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the press conference. *EEAS Press Team*, 31 August 2023. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/informal-foreign-affairs-council-defence-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-press-o_en
- BORRELL, Josep (2024): *Europe between Two Wars*. *EU Foreign Policy in 2023*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2871/10332>
- Council of the European Union (2022): *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. For a European Union that Protects Its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>
- Council of the European Union (2024): *Ukraine Assistance Fund: Council Allocates €5 Billion under the European Peace Facility to Support Ukraine Militarily*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/03/18/ukraine-assistance-fund-council-allocates-5-billion-under-the-european-peace-facility-to-support-ukraine-militarily/>
- DENECKERE, Matthias (2019): *The Uncharted Path towards a European Peace Facility*. Online: [DP-248-The-uncharted-path-towards-a-European-Peace-Facility-ECDPM-March-2019.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/104000/DP-248-The-uncharted-path-towards-a-European-Peace-Facility-ECDPM-March-2019.pdf)
- DINCĂ, Andreea (2023): The European Peace Facility in Action: Rethinking EU–Africa Partnership on Peace and Security? *Political Studies Forum*, 4(1), 123–147. Online: <https://doi.org/10.58441/psfv4i1.23>
- European Commission (2018a): *A New, Modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that Delivers Efficiently on Its Priorities Post-2020. The European Commission's Contribution to the Informal Leaders' Meeting on 23 February 2018*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0098>
- European Commission (2018b): *A Modern Budget for a Union that Protects, Empowers and Defends*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0171>
- European Commission (2023): *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*. Online: https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-assistance-ukraine_en#support-for-military-equipment-and-training
- European Commission (2024) *European Peace Facility*. Online: https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/european-peace-facility_en
- European Council (2004): *Council Decision 2004/197/CFSP of 23 February 2004 Establishing a Mechanism to Administer the Financing of the Common Costs of European Union Operations Having Military or Defence Implications*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2004/197/2005-02-01/eng/pdf>
- European Council (2014): *Council Decision 2014/486/CFSP of 22 July 2014 on the European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine)*. Online: <https://www.euam-ukraine.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/CELEX3A32014D04863AEN3ATXT.pdf>
- European Council (2021a): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 Establishing a European Peace Facility, and Repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D0509&from=EN>

- European Council (2021b): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1143 of 12 July 2021 on a European Union Military Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique)*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D1143>
- European Council (2022a): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2443 of 12 December 2022 Amending Decision 2010/96/CFSP on a European Union Military Mission to Contribute to the Training of Somali Security Forces*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022D2443>
- European Council (2022b): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2441 of 12 December 2022 Amending Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP on a European Union Military Operation to Contribute to the Deterrence, Prevention and Repression of Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery Off the Somali Coast*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D2441>
- European Council (2022c): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/1968 of 17 October 2022 on a European Union Military Assistance Mission in Support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine)*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D1968>
- European Council (2023a): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/653 of 20 March 2023 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 on the European Union Military Operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI)*. Online: <https://www.operationirini.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Council-Decision-IRINI-EXTENSION-mandate-2025-March23.pdf>
- European Council (2023b): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1599 of 3 August 2023 on a European Union Security and Defence Initiative in Support of West African Countries of the Gulf of Guinea*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023D1599>
- European Council (2023c): *Norway: Second Norwegian Financial Contribution to the European Peace Facility*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/25/norway-second-norwegian-financial-contribution-to-the-european-peace-facility/>
- European Council (2023d): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/577 of 13 March 2023 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 Establishing a European Peace Facility*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023D0577&qid=1725787139936>
- European Council (2023e): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1304 of 26 June 2023 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 Establishing a European Peace Facility*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023D1304&qid=1725787139936>
- European Council (2024a): *Samoa Agreement*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/samoa-agreement/>
- European Council (2024b): *Timeline – European Peace Facility*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility/timeline-european-peace-facility/>
- European Council (2024c): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1354 of 14 May 2024 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2021/1143 on a European Union Military Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique)*. Online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202401354
- European Council (2024d): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/2396 of 6 September 2024 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2016/610 on a European Union CSDP Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA)*. Online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202402396&qid=1727120362413
- European Council (2024e): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 of 8 February 2024 on a European Union Maritime Security Operation to Safeguard Freedom of Navigation in Relation to the Red Sea*

- Crisis* (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES). Online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202400583
- European Council (2024f): *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/eu-solidarity-ukraine/>
- European Council (2024g): *Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/890 of 18 March 2024 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 Establishing a European Peace Facility*. Online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202400890
- European External Action Service (2016): *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_o.pdf
- European External Action Service (2017): *Speech by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the "Building on Vision, Forward to Action: Delivering on EU Security and Defence" event*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/37355_en
- European External Action Service (2018): *European Peace Facility. An EU Off-budget Fund to Build Peace and Strengthen International Security*. Online: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/46285/european-peace-facility-eu-budget-fund-build-peace-and-strengthen-international-security_en
- European External Action Service (2024a): *Missions and Operations*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/missions-and-operations_en
- European External Action Service (2024b): *European Union Military Assistance Mission Ukraine*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/2024-EUMAMUkraine_02.pdf
- FERRANDO, Megan (2021): *Is the European Peace Facility Really about Peace? Centre for European Reform*, 17 December 2021. Online: https://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/insight_MF_EPF_17.12.21-fin.pdf
- FLOTT, Daniel (2018): *The Multiannual Financial Framework and European Defence*. *Intereconomics*, 53(6), 311–315. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-018-0774-z>
- FLOTT, Daniel (2023): *In Every Crisis an Opportunity? European Union Integration in Defence and the War on Ukraine*. *Journal of European Integration*, 45(3), 447–462. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2023.2183395>
- FOTIDIADIS, Apostolis – SCHMIDT, Nico (2022): *The European Peace Facility, an Unsecured Gun on EU's Table*. *Investigate Europe*, 29 March 2022. Online: <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/en/2022/european-peace-facility-controversy/>
- GOULD, Joe (2023): *In Reversal, US to Send 31 Abrams Tanks to Ukraine*. *Defense News*, 25 January 2023. Online: <https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2023/01/25/in-reversal-us-to-send-31-abrams-tanks-to-ukraine/>
- HANKE VELA, Jakob – CHIAPPA, Claudia (2024): *The Truth behind the EU's New €5B Weapons Fund for Kyiv*. *Politico*, 14 March 2024. Online: <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-weapons-fund-ukraine-war/>
- HAUCK, Volker (2022): *The European Peace Facility and Ukraine: Implications for Africa–Europe Relations*. *ECDPM*, 14 March 2022. Online: <https://ecdpm.org/work/european-peace-facility-ukraine-implications-africa-europe-relations>

- HOEFFLER, Catherine – HOFMANN, Stéphanie C. – MÉRAND, Frédéric (2024): The Polycrisis and EU Security and Defence Competences. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 31(10), 3224–3248. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2024.2362762>
- HOFER, Alexandra (2023): The EU and Its Member States at War in Ukraine? Collective Self-defence, Neutrality and Party Status in the Russo–Ukraine War. *European Papers*, 8(3), 1697–1740. Online: <https://doi.org/10.15166/2499-8249/737>
- HORNYÁK, Veronika – TÁNCZOS, Mariann (2024): EU Missions and Operations. In MOLNÁR, Anna – MOLNÁR, Dóra – SZENTE-VARGA, Mónika (eds.): *International Security Organisations*. Budapest: Ludovika University Press, 109–128.
- KARJALAINEN, Tyyne – MUSTASILTA, Katariina (2023): European Peace Facility: From a Conflict Prevention Tool to a Defender of Security and Geopolitical Interests. *Finnish Institute of International Affairs, TEPSA Briefs*, (5), 1–8. Online: https://www.tepsa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Brief-European-Peace-Facility_Katariina-and-Tyyne.pdf
- KOSTULAS, Vassilis (2024): Interview with Roberta Metsola: 'It Is Time' for Strategic Autonomy in the EU. Online: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/opinion/interviews/1232570/it-is-time-for-strategic-autonomy-in-the-eu/>
- MALETTA, Giovanna – HÉAU, Lauriane (2022): Funding Arms Transfers through the European Peace Facility. *SIPRI*, 1–26. Online: <https://doi.org/10.55163/OELZ9733>
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2019): Az Athéné Mechanizmus. In KRAJNC, Zoltán (ed.): *Hadtudományi Lexikon*. Budapest: Dialóg Campus.
- NIZHNIKAU, Ryhor – MOSHES, Arkady (2024): The War in Ukraine, the EU's Geopolitical Awakening and Implications for the 'Contested Neighbourhood.' *Policy Studies*, 45(3–4), 489–506. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2024.2306972>
- PUIG SOLER, Sebastian (2021): The European Peace Facility. In REHRL, Jochen (ed.): *Handbook on CSDP, the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*. Vienna: Directorate for Security Policy of the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Austria, 103–107.
- RUTIGLIANO, Stefania (2022): Accountability for the Misuse of Provided Weapons in the Framework of the New European Peace Facility. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 27(3), 401–416. Online: <https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2022029>
- SERRANO, Pedro (2020): Truth and Dare. A Personal Reflection on 20 Years of CSDP. In FLOTT, Daniel (ed.): *The CSDP in 2020. The EU's Legacy and Ambition in Security and Defence*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 16–37. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2815/22734>
- TEU (2008): *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:FULL>
- TSITSIKOSTAS, Georgios (2021): Challenges of Military Operations and Missions. In REHRL, Jochen (ed.): *Handbook on CSDP, the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*. Vienna: Directorate for Security Policy of the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Austria, 86–91.
- VECSEY, Mariann (2019): The EU and Africa. In GÁLIK, Zoltán – MOLNÁR, Anna (eds.): *Regional and Bilateral Relations of the European Union*. Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 65–94.
- WAGNER, Péter – VECSEY, Mariann (2022): Az Európai Unió új támogatómissziója Ukrajnában. *KKI Elemzések*, (70), 1–10. Online: <https://doi.org/10.47683/KKIElemzések.KE-2022.70>

Katalin Horváth

SUPRANATIONALISM
IN EUROPEAN DEFENCE – WHAT DEFENCE
INDUSTRY BRINGS TO THE TABLE

ANALYSIS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The geopolitical upheaval associated with the transformation of the international system from the unipolar world order dominated by the U.S. to a more traditional multipolar order based on a balance of power has had many consequences. Although this process in the EU is routinely linked to the Russian–Ukrainian war, that is a rather short-sighted perspective and concentrates on the present and on what is happening in Europe’s immediate vicinity. We believe we have to make sense of this development in a broader perspective both in space and time. We have to connect this to the past, to the series of events and perceptions that led to the Russian–Ukrainian war, and to the future as well, to the potential future war that might not be far off between the U.S. and China, using Taiwan as a pretext/proxy.

The reason why this broader perspective is important is that many still seem to believe that once the Russian–Ukrainian war stops, we have a chance to go back to “normal”, and European defence can be conducted in much the same manner it has been conducted since the end of the Second World War. That is, led and mostly financed by the U.S., in the framework of NATO, a military alliance that serves as a vehicle of U.S. power in Europe and an institutionalised continuation of the alliance that was formed during the Second World War against the Axis powers.

NATO by its very existence discourages European defence integration so as not to allow the EU to become a rival power to the U.S., while at the same time criticises European states for not taking their own defence seriously, not spending enough and letting their national armies atrophy. This situation has changed somewhat since the events leading up to the Russian attack on Ukraine: most European NATO allies are spending significantly more on defence, and making real efforts, especially the Eastern flank allies, to build their national armed forces. However, the logic of doing so has not changed, European states still think about defence overwhelmingly in terms of national defence, as an exclusive national competence and an issue at the

heart of their national sovereignty. This means that the fragmentation of European defence is still very real and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU still has a limited level of ambition, that of crisis management, leaving the defence of Europe to NATO, so, in effect, mostly to the U.S. (FIOTT 2023; MOLNÁR 2022; MOLNÁR – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS 2023; 2024).

However, in the EU, the shock of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the recent shock of the new U.S. approach by the second Trump Administration to handling the situation by negotiation a peace and normalising U.S. relations with Russia, is causing changes not only at the national, but also at the EU level. Still, in the timid EU fashion, Europeans are not talking about independence, or the necessity of establishing a European army. Talk is still only about strategic autonomy. The lack of a true European foreign and security policy (which CFSP is not) and a true European defence that could hold on its own, still makes Europeans stick to the alliance with the U.S., even though there is a general uneasiness and scepticism about how long that alliance will hold in the future (FIOTT 2018).

In this chapter I will describe the process of moving from intergovernmental European defence to supranational European defence. Intergovernmental European defence was the paradigm that has existed for the last quarter century after the end of the Cold War: NATO being responsible militarily for the defence of Europe and the EU doing only crisis management on an intergovernmental basis, operating by consensus. During this time, the EU invented first the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), then turned that into a common policy, the CSDP with the Lisbon Treaty. These policies were being responsible for EU crisis management only, not for the territorial defence of the Union. In the EU we also have collective defence, much like in NATO (the EU version is the Mutual Assistance Clause in the Lisbon Treaty), which says that for EU Member States that are also NATO allies, their collective defence will be done in NATO. However, as in NATO, so too in EU collective defence there is no common defence, the Allies and Member States are responsible for their own territorial defence nationally, and collective defence only means that they are mutually responsible for each other, as well.

The slowly emerging new defence paradigm in the EU is about going beyond the intergovernmental level and crisis management, and moving into the supranational level and territorial defence as well. This includes, and is a large part built on, the emergence of the European Commission as a relatively new player in European defence, coming from the competitiveness and industrial policy angle, and using its regulatory and budgetary powers to good effect.

EU DEFENCE INDUSTRY

After the Russian–Ukrainian war broke out, the EU reacted fast, and most of those initial reactions were related to defence procurement and defence industry. The war showed that high intensity conflict can return to Europe, and Europeans are not prepared for it. It also showed that neither is the U.S. prepared enough to support both itself and Europe, including Ukraine, with defence products at a scale and speed needed in a high intensity conventional war. Most European states and the U.S. pooled and transferred defence equipment as soon as their processes would allow, however, that was still not enough, and by depleting European equipment, also made another need apparent, the replenishment of European stockpiles of equipment. Even the U.S. defence industry was not able to ramp up fast enough to produce enough ammunition, and desperate attempts were made in both the U.S. and Europe to speed up production.

The problems in Europe with regard to defence industry are greater than those in the U.S.: both the U.S. Defense Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB) (WILKINSON 2020) and the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) were optimised for peacetime, but at least the U.S. is a single political entity and, as a consequence, has a consolidated and united defence industry. The U.S. “only” had to ramp up production for war. However, Europe is not so fortunate, we are facing the dual problems of our defence industry being geared for peace, and of fragmentation along the lines of nation states, and as such, having no common defence industrial base. EDTIB and a “single market for defence” are policy objectives, not reality: the EU Member States (those few that do have any defence industry worthy of the name) have national defence industrial bases. The natural amalgamation and consolidation of the EDTIB has started already to a limited extent, without any political push due to the forces of globalisation (European Defence Agency 2012). But that process will not produce a true EDTIB and true European Defence Equipment Market (EDEM) without top-down political and economic intervention (European Defence Agency s. a.a).

The effects of the war led the EU institutions to issue what in the Brussels lingo is called DIGA (Defence Investment Gap Analysis), a document by EU institutions (European Commission 2024a), identifying the problems and recommending solutions. Right after that, the institutions have created the Defence Joint Procurement Task Force (DJPTF) (European Defence Agency 2022), which was a fast-acting clearing house by the European Commission, the European Defence Agency and the European External Action Service to coordinate and deconflict the common procurement of defence products by EU Member States for Ukraine

and for the Member States. Europe also reacted by launching two emergency instruments, namely, regulations that the EU co-legislators, the Council and the European Parliament passed in record time: EDIRPA (European Commission s. a.a) and ASAP (European Commission s. a.b). The process leading to EDIRPA was launched first, but it proved too slow, so ASAP was launched later and passed before EDIRPA, to deal with immediate need for ammunition. ASAP set a true record: from the proposal of the regulation by the Commission until its adoption by the co-legislators and entering into force: the EU did ASAP in 2 months (ANDERSSON 2023). (The normal legislative process, even if it is expedited, takes at least 18 months, and, if it is not urgent, it might take several years.) These two regulations are very much related to the ongoing war and have thus been conceived in a totally different paradigm than the regulations before the war, which were the first of their kind (defence industrial and defence research, and technological in nature): the EDF, and its two precursor programs, the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) and Preparatory Action for Defence Research (PADR)¹ (European Commission 2024b; s. a.e; s. a.f).

Now, after the emergency situation has been dealt with as much as the EU could deal with it at the defence industrial front, the EU is again turning to non-emergency EU regulations in the field of defence industry, which have longer term structural policy objectives relating to the reinforcement of the EDTIB, not the war. At the time of writing this chapter, the Council of the European Union is formally discussing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIP) regulation, and aims to adopt the general approach (that is, the Council mandate) as soon as possible so that the trilogue discussions among the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament can start. The intention is to have the co-legislators adopt EDIP by the summer of 2025 and, after its entry into force, set up the EDIP Programme Committee without delay and start the implementation of EDIP, issuing the first calls for proposals before 2025 comes to a close (European Commission s. a.c).

EDIP is conceived as a bridging programme, meaning it will be the bridge between the emergency instruments of EDIRPA and ASAP and the next 7-year financial framework of the EU, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), starting in 2028. EDIP will cover the years 2025–2027. All currently running and under preparation EU defence industrial and defence innovation/research and

¹ Preparatory Action for Defence Research (which is not a regulation, only a Commission action) see European Commission s. a.f.

technology programs² are under the current MFF, so they will all end in 2027 or earlier. It is an open question whether for the MFF the Commission will propose one overarching defence program, merging the current EDF and EDIP and their objectives into one (not to mention other defence-related programs financed from the EU budget, such as military mobility), or it will propose an “EDF2” and an “EDIP2” (under whatever names) (DELASNERIE 2024).

One thing, though, is certain: the Commission intends to spend an order of magnitude more money on defence in the next MFF. The programs enumerated above all have relatively limited budgets, all of them together barely amounting to 20 billion euros. The political level of ambition that the previous Commissioner for the Internal Market Thierry Breton expressed in a speech was 100 billion euros for defence, and the president of the new Commission, Ursula von der Leyen has talked about a 500 billion gap in European defence we have to fill. We will see what the first defence commissioner, now that defence has been promoted to have its own commissioner within the Commission, the former Lithuanian Prime Minister, Andrius Kubilius, will propose in the awaited White Paper on European defence in March 2025, and what Member States will be prepared to agree on for defence, also taking into account all the other policy objectives the Union budget has to serve (DELASNERIE 2024).

Let us examine the most important issues regarding European defence industry. One of the biggest issues is the Europeanisation of supply chains (which are now at higher industrial tiers about 90% still national due to trust and security of supply issues, although at lower tiers and in the civilian sector, supply chains are already much more multinational in Europe). The other challenge is to increase funding available to the industry by orders of magnitude. This funding can come from three sources: national, European (EU budget) and private financing (banks, equities, etc). The EU, with the leadership of the Commission, is also taking great strides towards using more and more of the EU budget on defence (based on its competence in competitiveness and industrial policy), mostly on defence industry.

In terms of private funding, the European Investment Bank has recently changed its lending policy, making funding defence industry companies much easier, and it is working on next steps. Other investment and commercial banks will very probably follow suit and an enormous amount of money can flow into European defence. There is now a brewing consensus to have the funds nationally spent on defence be an exception to the accounting for national deficit under the Stability

² Those are EDF, ASAP, EDIRPA and EDIP. The implementation of the EDIDP and PADR programs has already been finished.

and Growth Pact. There is also a debate, although here there are deep divides among Member States, about issuing common debt for defence spending, the idea of the so-called “Eurobonds”.

Another issue is underinvestment in defence, which has been happening for decades in Europe, and although it has improved somewhat in the last decade, there are still hundreds of billions of euros missing from this sector. This problem itself is twofold: we are not spending enough either nationally or at the EU level, but also, what we do spend, we spend in a fragmented, ineffective way. One distinct problem is that without Treaty change, we cannot legally spend EU budget money on defence (Article 41.2 of the Treaty on the European Union prohibits that). Thus what we do spend is on defence industry, research and technology, military mobility and we are taking great pains, also in the framework of the EDIP negotiations, to avoid spending on anything that could be unlawful. Yet another issue is favouring the products of the U.S. defence industry over the products of the EDTIB, and procuring 60% (before the war) to 80% (since the war started) of our defence equipment from third countries, mainly the U.S. (European Commission 2024c: 15–16). This is the greatest issue within EDIP, and one year after EDIP has been proposed by the Commission, we still have not found a workable compromise (elements can already be known: 65% of the components have to be of EU origin, and those activities that want funding must have European design authority over the product). Also, money is not all, defence industry also needs skilled workforce, knowledge transfer and training, and raw materials.

At the same time, NATO is trying to copy, to the extent it can, the process of the EU turning toward defence industry, based on the Defence Production Action Plan adopted at the Vilnius summit in 2023. Since NATO cannot provide funds for defence industry, it is hoping to use money contributed by the allies for implementing this action plan. We can see both in NATO and in the EU the lobbying of the U.S. for strengthening what they call the “TDTIB”, the transatlantic defence technological and industrial base. This is obviously an Atlanticist concept and attempt to counteract the EU efforts for strengthening the EDTIB, which the U.S. dislikes for fear of losing influence and market share in Europe. This competition between the EDTIB and TDTIB approaches also manifests as the debate within EDIP on defence industrial protectionism (“buy European” approach) and the “flexible” approach, which would allow U.S. (and other third country) components in those EU defence products with which companies would be applying for EU financial support from EDIP.

The defence industrial reinforcement efforts of the EU serve a double objective. The industrial objective is to support the European Defence Technological and

Industrial Base, by creating a single market in defence products, contributing to the competitiveness of the EU globally by reinforcing its defence industry, supporting the technological independence, the design authority, the intellectual property rights, the defence innovation power of the EU, creating jobs, improving exports of European defence products, and creating wealth and prosperity. The defence objective is the mass production of defence products needed by the armed forces of EU Member States, ensuring their timely availability in the quantity and quality needed, ensuring security of supply and the resilience of the EU's defence industrial capacity, and reducing the Union's reliance on third countries. These two objectives can also be described as defence readiness, meaning, most importantly, having the right military capabilities, and the basis that underpins that, which is defence industrial readiness (which can roughly be seen as equal to having an effective and strong EDTIB).

However, these two policy objectives have two distinctive legal bases in the two Treaties. The first Treaty is the TEU (TEU 2012) (foreign, security and defence policy legal bases), which is the basis for military capabilities that are still a national competence and CSDP is only a framework for intergovernmental cooperation in capability development (and operations). The Commission has no competence with regard to the tasks described in the TEU. The other Treaty is the TFEU (TFEU 2012) (defence industrial and competitiveness legal bases), which is where the Commission has varied competence, sometimes exclusive, sometimes shared with the Member States, meaning that the Commission has a very strong competence and role in defence industry, which is seen as part of the internal market. This is the reason why the Commission has "infiltrated" European defence from the industrial (and space) angle.

The Commission acts independently of the governments of Member States, for the general interest of the EU, and is accountable to the European Parliament. This is very similar to how national governments of the Member States are acting in the interest of their countries and are accountable to their national parliaments. Thus, we have a parallel, quasi federal structure on top of the national political structures in the EU. The consequence of this is that the "fight" for European defence is between two types of sovereignty and vision for the future: that exercised at the national level, which up to now has been and still mostly is the sole player regarding defence (this is laid down in the Treaties). The second vision is a European defence that is pooled and exercised at the EU (federal) level, which is not a reality, but more or less a political objective of those quasi-federal institutions: the EP and the Commission.

The above general political situation translates to defence predictably. The Member States themselves have different views about this, which, to make

matters more complex, also changes over time and is not even unitary within a state, different national ministries and political parties holding sometimes very different views. However, in general, Member States hold on to their prerogatives and sole competence regarding defence, but have to endure the encroachment by the Commission, since very simply, they need the money and the regulatory power the Commission can bring to the table in defence. The Commission has exclusive competence over the programming and implementation of the EU budget, which is done using the communitarian method (by comitology).

No EU Member State has the financial means to develop and support a full spectrum force package, some defence capabilities and infrastructure of European scale are beyond the reach of any one of them. The Member States thus need a large dose of EU budget money to subsidise European defence, to complement national defence spending. But the money comes with a political price: the Commission will have more and more influence over European defence itself, which in time might lead to a Hamiltonian moment, when it has to be decided whether the Member States are politically ready to pool sovereignty in defence and move to a European Defence Union, commonly operated and financed from the EU budget, not only in words, but also in deeds.

EDIS AND EDIP

The European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) (European Commission s. a.g) and EDIP, which have been issued by the Commission (and in the case of EDIS, as a joint communication together with the EEAS) on 5 March 2024, are making strides in the above direction. The stated aim of EDIS is to spend more, better and European in order to reach defence industrial readiness in Europe (ramping up industrial capacities, manufacturing enough European defence products). EDIS draws the lessons of the Russian–Ukrainian war, pointing to the need of a paradigm change from emergency instruments to strategic efforts to strengthen the EDTIB. EDIS enumerates a plethora of new measures that are mostly also found in EDIP, which is the first step of the implementation of EDIS (European Commission s. a.d). Below follows a summarising table about the measures in EDIP (European Commission 2024c: 50).

EDIP, as seen above, has three pillars. The first is the Programme, which unites and continues the common procurement logic of EDIRPA and the defence industrial reinforcement logic of ASAP, where we can expect 2–3 calls for proposals for each type of projects over the years 2025–2027. The first pillar also creates other new

Table 1. *EDIP measures*

Specific objective	Legal basis	Pillar	Measure
Strengthen the competitiveness and responsiveness of the EDTIB	Article 173 TFEU	Pillar 1	The programme (EDIRPA and ASAP intervention logic) FAST (fund to support the supply chain) EDPCI (European Defence Projects of Common Interest) Military Sales Mechanism (catalogue, capacity building, readiness pools) SEAP (Structure for European Armament Programs)
Enhance the ability of the EDTIB to ensure the timely availability and supply of defence products	Article 114 TFEU	Pillar 2	Military Sales Mechanism (solidarity clause) Security of Supply regime
Contribute to the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of the Ukrainian DTIB	Article 212 TFEU	Pillar 3	USI (Ukraine Support Instrument, extension of the EDIRPA and ASAP intervention logic to Ukraine and Ukrainian businesses)

Source: Compiled by the author based on European Commission 2024c: 50.

instruments, such as the Structure for European Armament Programs (SEAPs), the European Defence Projects of Common Interest (EDPCI), the rudimentary beginnings of an “EU FMS”, which is loosely based on the FMS system of the U.S., but has broader objectives due to EU specificities, and a support fund for SMEs working in or intending to enter the defence industry (CLAPP 2024; European Defence Agency s. a.b).

The second pillar is the regulatory pillar, which will stay on the books beyond 2027 as well, creating an EU wide defence Security of Supply (SoS) regime. In this regard, EDIP is a hybrid instrument, both a programme and a classic regulation in terms of creating new legal rules in the area of defence industry. The third pillar is the Ukraine Support Instrument, which basically mirrors the Programme, but for the benefit of Ukraine, and serves to support the reconstruction of the Ukrainian DTIB and common procurement of defence products for and together with Ukraine.

EDIP also intends to increase the competitiveness, industrial capacity and resilience of the EDTIB by financing through calls for proposals and granting funding to the winners’ defence industrial collaborative actions, common procurement

actions and by helping the transfer of successful EU prototypes resulting from EDF projects into mass production. The use of products and components from third states in EDIP is a question of delicate balance. We have to make sure that the European defence industry can use components from third countries (especially electronics, chips) for the foreseeable time, as we are dependent on components (and raw materials) coming from outside the EU. We must protect and support our own industry, but we can only reduce our dependence gradually, so as not to leave our own industry behind, and exclude the defence industry of most Member States from EU funding because of their integration into global industrial supply chains (FIOTT 2023).

At the same time, while reducing our dependence on outside components, we also have to open our largely national supply chains to each other and build up truly European supply chains topped by European defence industry primes, improving cross-border cooperation. This needs a level of trust, also in the field of security of supply, which does not exist at the moment, so we have to build something new and unprecedented at the EU level, including an EU level Security of Supply regime. The EDIP SoS regime proposed by the Commission has as one of its major measures, the Priority Rated Orders (PROs), which would make sure that in a supply crisis, defence industry gets precedence over civilian industry when it has to compete with civilian industry for critical inputs. If this SoS regime is approved, PROs can only be placed on civilian companies, while defence companies would be subject to priority rated requests (PRRs) in similar situations, since when the EU-wide SoS regime was proposed for the first time in the ASAP regulation, Member States rejected it partly because of lack of time to properly discuss it, and partly because PROs in that regime were proposed for defence companies as well, and Member States saw that as a major affront to national sovereignty.

EDIS, building on and intending to supersede the benchmarks related to collaborative defence procurement and R&T, defined three targets: intra-EU defence trade should reach at least 35% of the EU defence market, Member States should procure at least 50% of their defence products from the EDTIB by 2030 and at least 60% by 2035, and common procurement should amount to at least 40% of all defence investment by 2030. These targets, along with EDIS as a whole, are set in a Commission–EEAS joint communication, which the Council has not discussed and has not adopted, and the Member States are certainly not shy about refusing to own them. EDIS is the vision of mostly the Commission about the future directions of the development of European defence industry.

EDIS also outlines the vision regarding the EDPCI, which are also a proposed measure in EDIP. The idea is to secure access to contested spaces for the EU, these

being defined as air, maritime, space, hybrid and cyberspace. EDIS says the EU should have European defence infrastructure in place – or at least in an advanced stage of development – by 2035 that is required to secure Europe’s access to these contested spaces. Examples for this infrastructure are integrated air and missile defence, space surveillance assets, maritime assets, etc. It is worthy of notice that EDIS has covered with EDPCIs all military domains with the notable exception of land, the first and most traditional domain, over which the Member States feel the most concern with regard to their national sovereignty and control.

There is another hiatus EDIS has tried to quite literally bridge, with what is called in the EDIS the “Defence Industrial Readiness Board” (DIRP), which the Hungarian Presidency of the Council since then renamed the EDIS Board, to differentiate it from the EDIP Board (these were two formats of the DIRP in the original Commission proposal for EDIP). The EDIP Board is to advise the Commission during the implementation of the EU Security of Supply regime. In accordance with this, the Hungarian Presidency of the Council has, after separating the two formats of the DIRP into the EDIS Board and the EDIP Board, renamed the EDIP Board the Defence Security of Supply Board during the negotiations on EDIP, which is now responsible for managing the SoS regime only.

The EDIS Board is a much more complex issue, and a fascinating example of a political-legal “bricolage” attempt to solve a problem which cannot otherwise be solved in the political and legal framework we currently have. The current legal framework in which European defence has to operate is schizophrenic: as we have said, we have two EU Treaties, the TEU and the TFEU, and both regulate parts of European defence, with nothing ensuring a coherent overall defence policy at the EU level. We can think of the two Treaties as the left and right brain of the EU, with no corpus callosum to link them and making sure they can work as one.

The EDIS Board has been conceived to act as a bridge between the two Treaties, to link the political-military side of European defence (TEU Title V, CFSP/CSDP) with the economic-industrial competitiveness side of European defence (TFEU, the newly emerging defence industrial policy of the EU). However, Member States were not supportive of the idea of the EDIS Board, and the Commission seems to have abandoned it, so now it can be reasonably said that the idea is dead.

EU DEFENCE PLANNING

The EDIS Board, if it had gained traction, would have taken the aggregated Capability Development Plan (CDP) priorities agreed by the EU defence ministers as a result

of the EU capability development process, and further refined those priorities in order to define the critical capability requirements. It would then have looked at what procurement needs those capability requirements/priorities generate, and what the EDTIB can actually produce. It would have determined where the defence industrial capacity gaps are, and would have come up with development priorities with regard to defence industry. This linking of the two Treaties and ensuring they work together coherently would have contributed to a more coherent European defence system (European Defence Agency 2023).

Without the EDIS Board, we have no forum to discuss EU military capability planning and budgeting/programming together. This means that after the White Paper comes out in March 2025, and hopefully at around the same time a peace is brokered and the Russian–Ukrainian war ends, we will have to find another way, another forum to bring coherence to European defence. We need to come up with an institutionalised way of linking the military capability needs of the armed forces of the EU with the programs available under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The EU has no defence planning system. Right now the allocation of EU funds to our defence industry and defence procurement is not linked to what our armed forces need, only to defence industrial policy.

According to the relevant regulations, including EDIP, the Commission has to take into account the Capability Development Plan (CDP), which is supposed to ensure that the funding priorities of the programs correlate to the capability priorities of the EU. How does the Commission take the CDP into account? The same way as the national defence planning processes of the Member States do: it does not, because it cannot be done. This is not due to any political ill will towards the CDP or CARD, it is a matter of trying to use an orange as a hammer: the instrument is not right for the job. Both the CDP and CARD are capability development instruments that have been envisaged and established within the intergovernmental paradigm of the European Defence Agency. They are not defence planning instruments and they do not work in the new, partly supranational world of European defence.

The CDP encompasses anything and everything: it is so wide with regard to what military capabilities are, priorities for the EU (virtually all of them) that “taking the CDP into account” in practice means: open it and find the justification for what we want to fund anyway. Other than no real prioritisation in the CDP, the even bigger problem is that the CDP does not quantify the defence capability requirements of the EU, because the CDP is a capability development instrument, not a defence planning instrument. This means that at EU level, we have no idea how many of which forces, units, platforms, weapons, etc. the EU needs.

The situation is due to several factors. One is, the agreed EU level of ambition we have is only for crisis management. Territorial defence is left to NATO. We do have the Headline Goal process that has been made circular a few years ago and is based on the “ancient” Capability Development Mechanism (CDM), which is the basis for the capability development process in the EU. The requirements for crisis management are determined in the Requirement Catalogue every few years, against which Member States voluntarily offer capability contributions in the Force Catalogue, and we compare the two and define and prioritise the capability shortfalls in the Progress Catalogue. The prioritised list of capability shortfalls is the result of the Headline Goal Process, and this is the most important input into the CDP, called Strand A (the other important strands are the long-term vision about military capabilities and operational lessons learned) (MAURO 2019). We also more or less know what the territorial defence needs of the EU are, or at least we can intelligently infer from the Minimum Capability Requirements (MCR) in the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) (NATO Allied Command Transformation s. a.). The NATO MCR is defined within the NDPP every four years for all the military tasks of NATO taken together, but most of the requirements come from its most important core task, the territorial defence of Europe.

The MCR, as all of NATO, is based on the Atlanticist idea of European defence, which is that Europe cannot (and should not be able to) defend itself and needs help from the U.S., so about half of the forces in the event of a major war against Europe would come from the U.S. Not to mention the need for shipping those forces over from North America, and again, not to mention the U.S. nuclear umbrella over Europe. We can mostly equate the forces identified in the MCR for the defence of Europe with the capability requirements that Europe would have in case of autonomous European defence, since NATO is not designed to defend the North American continent at all. Supreme Allied Commander Europe’s (SACEUR) area of responsibility excludes the territory of the U.S. and Canada, and only includes Europe and the part of the Atlantic Ocean over which transportation of U.S. forces to Europe would happen (NATO 2022).

NATO is also the reason why there is no EU defence planning, only NATO defence planning, so currently the NDPP contains the best data for what the EU needs in terms of capabilities. However, the relevant data in the NDPP is of course highly classified and only shared with NATO Allies. Due to the political problems between the EU and NATO caused by the Turkish–Greek frozen conflict over Cyprus, and the clash of the Atlanticist and Europeanist visions of European defence, there still is no security of information agreement between them, and no way of sharing this information. However, EU and NATO membership overlaps to a large extent,

so EU Member States are aware of capability requirements, and those that are NATO allies as well are regularly apportioned their fair share of them as capability targets in the NDPP process.

Allies that are also EU Member States of course see the whole MCR and the capability target packages of other Allies as well. But none of them has either the willingness, the authorisation or the responsibility to think in terms of the whole of the EU. The EU institutions and agencies responsible for capability development, such as the EEAS (and inside it, the EUMS), the European Commission and the EDA do have the responsibility and the task to think in terms of the whole EU, but they do not have the whole data set from NATO, only those parts of the data that the Allies who are also EU Member States decide to share with the EU as well. (In practice, these Allies mostly offer the same forces and capabilities to the EU as to NATO.)

The political decision has never been made to identify what the EU would need to defend itself in a high intensity war without U.S. support. In other words, the EU political level of ambition is still only for the limited scope of crisis management, and that is what the military level of ambition, the headline goal process takes into account. The CDP and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), another capability development instrument managed by the EDA (without explicit political tasking to do this) go beyond assessing capability requirements based only on crisis management, and also take into account wider needs (European Defence Agency 2024). Still, they do not do defence planning and they do not “plan” for territorial defence either. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is also ambiguous in this regard, since it has been originally conceived 20 years ago to constitute a step by step roadmap to establishing a European army. However, due to lack of political will, PESCO has been the famous “sleeping beauty” of CSDP for almost a decade between the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the eventual activation of PESCO in 2017. After that, PESCO has also stalled. In the PESCO framework Member States have generated so far 5 waves of PESCO projects (which are traditional intergovernmental cooperation projects), and declared in the PESCO Council Decision that the objective of PESCO is to provide the full spectrum capability package for the EU (for which, no steps have been taken). Right now, we have only 11 project proposals for the 6th wave of PESCO projects, so it can be safely said that PESCO is basically dead. The surest way of knowing that is that we are doing PESCO Strategic Reviews (always a bad sign) and talking about the “revitalisation” of PESCO (BISCOP 2020).

EDIS says the EDIS Board is for the “joint programming and procurement function”, which was supposed to be the defence planning function, but the

Commission and the EEAS chose to use a vaguer workaround expression, since defence planning firmly belongs to the national competence of Member States, as the “hard” side of defence policy, making decisions on how much to spend on what capabilities. At the national level most Member States have more or less developed defence planning processes. The NDPP is intergovernmental in nature, aggregating the military requirements, then apportioning them and leaving the planning, programming, budgeting and procuring to the allied states. NDPP does not have a budget, only the Allies spend on NATO capability targets, out of their own national defence budgets. (NATO’s civilian and military budgets are not for military capabilities, and for allied programs, such as AGS and others, the Allies pay from their own budgets.) This paradigm is not a surprise: NATO is not a supranational body but an intergovernmental alliance of sovereign nations, so it has no supranational level.

What we do not have is an EU level, supranational defence planning process, which would provide an agreed, planned and prioritised input to the EU budget regarding defence. Without this second, parallel process above national defence planning processes, there is very little tangible data orienting the EU budget spending on defence.

Establishing an EU defence planning process would require a political decision, which would also have to include deconflicting with NDPP. Within NDPP, EU allies could be apportioned their capability targets not nationally, but all EU allies together: the EU “caucus”, or European pillar of NATO could be apportioned an EU capability target package. In laymen’s terms, the U.S. and Europe would divide who needs to come up with what military capabilities to be able to respond to NATO’s level of ambition and carry out its military tasks. This of course, is only a valid train of thought in case NATO survives the second Trump Administration.

EU Member States had sole competence for European defence for about 25–30 years and have made little to no progress toward an EU that would be capable of actually defending itself, or at the very least, deal with the crises in its neighbourhood. The inability to deal with the crisis in the Balkans was the reason why the U.S. had to act and why ESDP was invented by the U.K. and France in Saint-Malo in 1998, and since then, we have thoroughly proved that without a top down political push, the Member States lack the political will and direction to go beyond national and allied defence. Common defence of the EU as an objective is enshrined in the TEU, in Article 42.2. Mutual assistance (which was supposed to be called mutual defence but had to be called assistance because of the militarily neutral Member States), or the “EU article V” is laid down in Article 42.7. PESCO, enshrined in Article 42.6, was supposed to be the gradual path towards the European Army. None of these

provisions are one inch closer to implementation than they were when this text was originally conceived as part of the EU Constitution, later reinvented as the Lisbon Treaty, more than 20 years ago (BISCOPE 2020).

We will see what the future brings and if the double shock of ending the Russian–Ukrainian war by the U.S. and Russia going over the heads of both the EU and Ukraine, and the downgrading or even dissolution of NATO by the U.S. will lead to the EU finally taking charge of its own defence.

WHAT EUROPEAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY BRINGS TO THE TABLE

The EU entering a new policy area, defence industry, is an organic consequence of the world changing and the EU adapting. Defence cannot exist without industry; defence industry is the natural basis for any credible European defence. Defence industry connects to defence on the demand side through defence planning, and on the supply side through industrial planning. None of these exist yet at the EU supranational level, so in the first few years of this process and in the first few defence programs financed from the Union budget, they were, and still are linked only in an ad hoc manner.

What defence industry thus will bring to the table of European defence is this:

- ♦ funding: EU level funding complements national funding
- ♦ defence planning: EU level prioritisation and defence planning complements national prioritisation and defence planning
- ♦ legislation: defence moves from a strictly national competence, and intergovernmental cooperation (CSDP) into a partly communitarian process, since in anything that gets funded from the EU budget, the Commission has powers of initiation and implementation, establishing and implementing European policy objectives together with the co-legislators, the Council and the EP
- ♦ European Defence Union: all of this will in time naturally turn European defence into an integral part of the European economy and lead to a European Defence Union
- ♦ European Army: the remaining issue will be the size of the European army generated, its tasks (crisis management only or also territorial defence) and its relation to national armies (delineation of tasks), and the political will and extent of pooling national sovereignty in the field of defence based on the principle of subsidiarity

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

An EU Defence Union could be defined as a militarily credible, capable EU that has strategic independence, a true European foreign policy, a true European defence policy, defence readiness and both the strong defence industrial base and the strong military capabilities it needs to defend the Union, its citizens, its land territory, borders, infrastructure, airspace, maritime space and outer space against both hybrid and conventional attacks. On top of defending the European Union itself, the EU also has to be able to defend its interests and values in a multipolar world.

A Defence Union could and, if we are serious about taking responsibility for European defence, should encompass these elements:

- ♦ a strategic defence objective set out in a Defence White Book agreed by the Council, that would replace the Strategic Compass, and that would take into account the White Paper by the Commission and the European External Action Service
- ♦ this defence objective could be a European Defence Union, setting the political and military level of ambition that the EU should be able to militarily defend itself, and its interests globally
- ♦ reinforced structures in the EU institutions for defence; the full-fledged defence committee in the EP and having a defence commissioner have already happened, further steps could be: a DG Defence in the Commission, a Defence Affairs Council as a new Council formation, reorganising relevant EEAS defence related structures under the Defence Commissioner, transferring the EDA also under the Defence Commissioner, reinforcing the role of the HR/VP as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the EU, cleaning the portfolio of the EEAS and turning it into an EU level Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ♦ tying Union funding through Union defence programs to this strategic objective
- ♦ reinforced European military capabilities and defence infrastructure through European Defence Projects of Common Interest (EDPCI), starting with an integrated air and missile defence shield, cyber, maritime and space defence capabilities, strategic enablers for operations and the Rapid Deployment Capability
- ♦ reinforced EDTIB through EDIP, EDF and their follow-on programs under the next MFF (producing and buying European defence products, reducing strategic dependency)
- ♦ establishing a common European force, starting on the basis of the RDC, not replacing national armed forces, but creating a Union force that is able

to do both crisis management and territorial defence and that can be used for EU military operations, to be financed entirely from a common fund (building on the EPF)

- ♦ turning the EU capability planning process into an EU defence planning process, and linking EU defence planning to EU defence industrial planning
- ♦ amending the Treaties and making sure that defence can be financed from the EU budget

In this way, the subsidiarity principle would be honoured as well, by pooling sovereignty in terms of defence planning and defence industrial reinforcement where this can only be done effectively at the supranational level, and leaving everything below this level to Member States.

REFERENCES

- ANDERSSON, Jan Joel (2023): *Buying Weapons Together (Or Not)*. *EUISS Brief*, (7), 1–8. Online: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_7_Common%20defence%20procurement_o.pdf
- BISCOP, Sven (2020): *European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance*. *EUIDEA Policy Papers*, (1), 2–16. Online: https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/euidea_pp_1.pdf
- CLAPP, Sebastian (2024): *EU Defence Industry Programme and Strategy*. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2024/760362/EPRS_ATA\(2024\)760362_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2024/760362/EPRS_ATA(2024)760362_EN.pdf)
- DELASNERIE, Alix (2024): *Multiannual Financial Framework*. Online: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/29/multiannual-financial-framework>
- European Commission (2024a): *Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/defence-investment-gaps-analysis-and-way-forward_en
- European Commission (2024b): *EDF Developing Tomorrow's Defence Capabilities*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf-official-webpage-european-commission_en
- European Commission (2024c): *Commission Staff Working Document on EDIP*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/commission-staff-working-document-edip_en
- European Commission (s. a.a): *EDIRPA Procuring together Defence Capabilities*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edirpa-procuring-together-defence-capabilities_en
- European Commission (s. a.b): *ASAP Boosting Defence Production*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/asap-boosting-defence-production_en
- European Commission (s. a.c): *EDIP. The Future of Defence*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edip-future-defence_en
- European Commission (s. a.d): *EDIS. Our Common Industrial Strategy*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edis-our-common-defence-industrial-strategy_en

- European Commission (s. a.e): *European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-industrial-development-programme-edidp_en
- European Commission (s. a.f): *Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR)*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/preparatory-action-defence-research-padr_en
- European Commission (s. a.g): *The European Defence Industrial Strategy at a Glance*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edis-our-common-defence-industrial-strategy_en
- European Defence Agency (2012): *European Defence Technological and Industrial Dependencies*. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/european-defence-technology-and-industrial-dependencies>
- European Defence Agency (2022): *Joint Procurement: EU Task Force Presents Conclusions of First Phase*. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2022/10/14/joint-procurement-eu-task-force-presents-conclusions-of-first-phase>
- European Defence Agency (2023): *Capability Development Plan*. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/capability-development-plan>
- European Defence Agency (2024): *Coordinated Annual Review on Defence*. Online: [https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/EU-defence-initiatives/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-\(card\)](https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/EU-defence-initiatives/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-(card))
- European Defence Agency (s. a.a): *A Guide to the EDA's New European Defence Equipment Market*. Online: https://eda.europa.eu/docs/documents/EDA_Guide_to_EDEM
- European Defence Agency (s. a.b): *European Armaments Co-operation Strategy*. Online: https://eda.europa.eu/docs/documents/EDA_European_Armaments_Co-operation_Strategy
- FIOTT, Daniel (2018): Strategic Autonomy: Towards 'European Sovereignty' in Defence? *EUISS Brief*, (12), 1–8. Online: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%2012__Strategic%20Autonomy.pdf
- FIOTT, Daniel (2023): In Every Crisis an Opportunity? European Union Integration in Defence and the War in Ukraine. *Journal of European Integration*, 45(3), 447–462. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2023.2183395>
- MAURO, Frédéric (2019): *EU Defence: The White Book Implementation Process*. Online: <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ProgEurope-MAURO-Eng-6-March-2019.pdf>
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2022): The Idea of a European Security and Defence Union. In MOLNÁR, Anna – FIOTT, Daniel – ASDERAKI, Foteini – PAILE-CALVO, Sylvain (eds.): *Challenges of the Common Security and Defence Policy. ESDC 2nd Summer University Book*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 19–36. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2855/361636>
- MOLNÁR, Anna – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS, Éva (2023): The Postmodernity of the European Union: A Discourse Analysis of State of the Union Addresses. *The International Spectator*, 58(1), 58–74. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2022.2149177>
- MOLNÁR, Anna – JAKUSNÉ HARNOS, Éva (2024): From Quasi-Sovereignty to Full Sovereignty? The Interpretations of Strategic Autonomy and Sovereignty in the European Union. *Annals of the Croatian Political Science Association*, 21(1), 95–116. Online: <https://doi.org/10.20901/an.21.02>
- NATO (2022): *Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50110.htm

- NATO Allied Command Transformation (s. a.): *Allied Command Transformation's Role in the NATO Defence Planning Process*. Online: <https://www.act.nato.int/allied-command-transformations-role-in-the-nato-defence-planning-process/>
- TEU (2012): *Consolidated Version of the Treaty of European Union*. Online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF
- TFEU (2012): *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT:en:PDF>
- WILKINSON, Benedict (2020): The EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base. *European Parliament*, January 2020. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2861/048197>

RESILIENCE – AN ASSET OF EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

THE INTRODUCTION OF RESILIENCE TO THE EU'S FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE

Resilience is a very versatile concept, which was utilised in different contexts with different meanings over time. Its connection with strategic autonomy was made recently, when European strategic documents started to use the two concepts next to each other. However, the concept of resilience appeared in the European Union's (EU) strategic thinking as early as 2012, it was used with a narrow focus on food security (TOCCI 2020: 177). Only the European Union's Global Strategy (EUGS) of 2016 elevated it to one of the main interwoven motifs in the text. Resilience thus became one of the main ideas around which the EU's external action revolves (WAGNER-ANHOLT 2016: 414–415). Besides its external aspects, the concept was set to be applied internally as well in protecting democracies and critical infrastructure within the Union, for instance (European External Action Service 2016: 15–22). The concept became part of the everyday vocabulary of the EU, but mainly because of its versatility it is difficult to grasp what resilience means in practice. As it is a highly adaptable concept, it raises questions regarding its implementation. The “how”-s in this field can affect how European strategic autonomy can be put into practice.

The EU had been very vague on resilience to preserve its appeal in all of the domains it wishes to utilise it to reach its aims. Meanwhile, this ambiguousness raised concerns among academics on multiple aspects of the concept: how it is going to be applied to define crises, what are its implications on the concept of crises (WAGNER-ANHOLT 2016: 419–422; ULGEN 2016: 46) and how can the EU ensure that it is not building resilient authoritarian regimes (BISOP 2016: 2). This latter criticism was challenged as repressive regimes cannot be resilient, just immensely stable, which pitfall becomes visible during the occurrence of an external shock (TOCCI 2020: 181).

Despite the reception in academia, the EU's formulation of resilience as one of its main concepts towards the future has its merits as well. Resilience is claimed

to be an interdisciplinary tool, which resonates with multiple domains of policy communities (TOCCI 2017: 70). The aim to build resilient states is a more attractive expression than fragile and failed states, thus the European Neighbourhood Policy states are more willing to accept it. The concept is also more consistent with the EU's comprehensive and integrated approach (JOSEPH–JUNCOS 2019: 1002–1003). It is in line with the concept of principled pragmatism as well, also introduced by the EUGS, providing a “middle ground” between over-ambitious democracy and peace building and under-ambitious stability building in the neighbourhood (WAGNER–ANHOLT 2016: 415). This latter aspect, however, was also criticised as the EU must have a point of decision if it is going to pursue a principled or a pragmatic approach, as both is impossible to follow (JUNCOS 2017: 2). The third idea behind the utilisation of the concept lies in its dynamic nature. Resilience is not merely the act of surviving a shock and bouncing back to the original state, but it includes adaptation (TOCCI 2020: 181). In an ever more contested global order, and amidst heightened great power rivalry, the ability to adapt means survival. The borrowed term, however, raises concerns exactly about its flexibility, which is claimed to provide a mere constructive ambiguity for the EU (BARGUÉS 2021: 6).

This controversy in academia gives a difficult setting to assess how resilience contributes to European strategic autonomy. It is clear, however, that the expression is well received in the very areas it was intended to be utilised in the first place. It resonated well with European Neighbourhood Policy countries (JOSEPH–JUNCOS 2019: 1002–1003), it brought together European Union Member States' decision-makers (TOCCI 2020: 176) and finally gave a point of connection to the security and development policy communities (TOCCI 2017: 70). According to this, resilience can be a useful asset of European strategic autonomy in the field of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), if utilised with care.

TERMINOLOGY

The interpretation of resilience within the EU and academia had faced controversy because of the broad and multidisciplinary application of the concept. The inconsistency between the different terminologies is not just a technical issue but points to fundamental disagreements about the concept. Therefore a guide of the terminology is offered here to disentangle the multifaceted idea of resilience.

Double interpretation. Resilience, derived from the Latin word “resilire” meaning jumping or springing back, refers to the capacity of states, societies, communities and individuals to effectively handle, endure, adjust to and bounce back from unexpected

events and difficult situations. Resilience was a familiar term for the EU academics and community of interest in 2016; however, at that time, resilience was mostly associated with the humanitarian field, namely food security. In 2016, the EU Global Strategy identified resilience as one of the top five priorities for the EU's global involvement. Primarily, it provided a more extensive understanding of resilience, which extended beyond just humanitarian intervention and encompassed various policy domains. The introduction of the concept of resilience was intended to bring together policy sectors that had hitherto been strictly separated. Unfortunately, from the very beginning, there has been an inherent ambiguity, the security community always meant "state resistance" by resilience, while development, humanitarian and human rights policy-makers have tended to think of resilience as "social flexibility" (TOCCI 2020: 2–3).

Local or state-level resiliency. While the EU considered resilience in 2012 a primary objective, a "goal in itself", in 2017 it was already considered a tool, "a means not an end" to achieve greater governance and stability in external affairs. The purpose of this security shift in EU resilience thinking was to enhance the predictability and manageability of Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. The disadvantage of the turn was that EU agencies ceased to engage with local communities (e.g. municipalities, civil society groups, refugees, youth, women and media as target groups), and they lifted their focus to state governance. As a consequence, the local ownership of the resilience-related projects was denied. In summary, the concept of resilience as a narrative of the EU has been completely "governmentalised", focusing on security, by integrating engineered resilience into national policy frameworks. Resilience governance involves the establishment or acknowledgment of "negotiated moral communities" that have the ability to organise themselves in response to the common reality. How can EU effectively support these "negotiated moral communities" in an underdeveloped region, considering the constant challenges they face such as everyday hardships, ruthless dictators, widespread corruption and diminishing prospects for a better life? How can we develop resilience so as to avoid the entrapments of compliance and dependency? The EU must prioritise the examination of self-organisation within the broader framework of governance networks. This form of governance can be characterised as "guided self-organisation", which operates through a networked system of shared interests and rules. It involves initiating change at the local level, while receiving support from the global level, and then adapting and reflecting on itself through an ongoing process. This approach eliminates the need for foreign interference, allowing local abilities, customs and knowledge to serve as both the methods and objectives of intervention. This is an enduring process and adaptation, and the EU appears to be only at the early stages to find the answers (KOROSTELEVA 2020: 247–257).

EU understanding, the broad interpretation. The central idea of the EU's resilience concept is the "ability to resist and regenerate" and to be "crisis-proof" in disasters and other challenging situations. The EU is a political and economic union with a broader mandate that includes economic stability, social policies and political cooperation, thus the EU's resilience terminology includes non-military aspects such as economic resilience, foreign policy, public health and environmental sustainability. The broad initial understanding of resilience was "the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, to adapt, and to quickly recover from stresses and shocks"; this definition was distilled in the EUGS as the "ability to remain functional and capable in the face of an external threat or danger, or to resume functioning rapidly following any disruption" (IATE s. a.). This definition implies long-term development and ability to change drastically after a strategic shock.

NATO understanding, the narrow interpretation. NATO, which cooperates closely with the EU on many issues, has a similar idea, albeit in more general terms: "The ability of a functional unit to continue to perform a required function in the presence of faults or errors." NATO prioritises collective defence, deterrence and military readiness; therefore, resilience efforts are closely tied to maintaining and enhancing military capabilities and defence-related infrastructure. Broadly speaking, NATO resilience is always associated with an emergency, and refers to the preparation and planning of the government institutions and systems related to the delivery of essential services to withstand acute shocks and protracted crises; however, it does not indicate the required capacity to reform and modify itself in the long run.

Internal and external resilience. There are two distinct interpretations of the phrase, which can be categorised as internal and external resilience. Both aspects are equally crucial for comprehending the new CFSP. In the external interpretation of the term, resilience exclusively refers to security-relevant challenges and the ability to withstand attacks, shocks and challenges from the outside. Where resilience is interpreted as internal, it refers mostly to legal challenges or legislative acts in nature. In this context, all counter-actions against the EU's legislation and practice to be adopted by Member States are threats to Europe. They include all breaches of European law by member states or other legal entities as well as explicit attacks (BENDIEK 2017: 14–15).

Resilience is a feature of complex and democratic social systems. Resilience is the act of an entity in response to internal or external strategic shocks, it means deliberate and structured changes, slight modification, or complete transformation of the entity to preserve itself. Resilience-as-quality means that the entity is aware of its external environment, can self-(re)organise its components, and enhance their performance by using its inherent strength. For adaptive governance based on resilience as

self-organisation, there is a need to shift from viewing resilience solely as a quality of a system to recognising it as an analytical framework for governance that encompasses complexity in its entirety (KOROSTEVA 2020: 252). Resilience-as-thinking allows a more adaptable approach to governance by emphasising self-governance at the local and individual levels. It vests local authorities and civil initiatives with capabilities to adjust and gain knowledge internally to sustain their essential activities in the face of strategic challenges. Resilience as-quality and as-thinking is an attribute of a complex social system, in which large networks cooperate with no central control and with a simple *modus operandi*. This results in complex collective behaviour, advanced information processing, and adaptation through learning or evolution. A resilient state and society can change, reform and transform because resilience is a dynamic concept. From this perspective, a resilient society is democratic, based on institutional confidence and sustainable development (TOCCI 2019: 6; BENDIEK 2017: 14). According to the EU's stance, the resilience of the EaP nations can only be enhanced by a certain level of adoption of the EU's standards. At the same time, it is a contradiction again, since the resilience complexity theory fundamentally challenged the theory of liberal peacebuilding policy, as it emphasised localism, bottom-up spontaneous self-organisation and the empowerment of local actors, instead of prescribing top-down universal solutions (NATORSKI 2023: 1088–1090). This means that directing policies towards building resilience remained an idealistic aspiration, rather than a tangible reality because resilience, just like democracy, may be supported, but not artificially created (KOROSTEVA 2020: 245).

Increased security, or/and extended activity? The current focus is on realism in spreading European values called *principled pragmatism* (referred to as such in the EU Global Strategy) (BENDIEK 2017: 13). *Principled pragmatism*, considered by some academics as almost an oxymoron, shows that the understanding of resilience is somewhat still ambiguous: some argue that resilience increases stability and security, while others refer to resilience as providing increased bottom-up agency through a humanitarian perspective. The EU has adopted both interpretations of resilience as a means to promote stability and order (interest) and at the same time, it aims to uphold the humanitarian and norms-based agenda (values) that forms the basis of its normative power paradigm (NATORSKI 2023: 1076). The duplex approach resulted in a lack of substantial measurable effects for resilience. Thus, EU resilience is sometimes described as *defensive* and is considered only as an effective tool for security governance, which helps create *buffer zones* that prevent dangers from reaching Europe by ensuring that neighbouring countries are robust to those threats. According to other opinions, EU resilience is an extension of neoliberal governance to redefining its influence through externally developed practices

(KOROSTELEVA 2020: 243). Either way, the EU disregarded the preferences of partner countries, whenever these preferences differed from its perspective. This aggressive, top-down, norm-based approach in resilience-building neglected any substantial political discourses and subsequent consensus-building, ultimately excluding the local ownership. The role of *the local* was simply to agree and implement the externally developed policy templates (PETROVA–DELCOUR 2020: 354).

RESILIENCE AND EU STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

The EU utilised the concept of resilience years before the introduction of the EU's Global Strategy of 2016. The then narrowly interpreted concept grew in its scope and meaning over time, but it remained still enigmatic and flexible to provide a universal tool for EU foreign policy. It was therefore not evident how the concept of resilience can be an asset to promote strategic autonomy.

At first, resilience was considered the main theme of the EU's foreign policy before strategic autonomy (WAGNER–ANHOLT 2016; MOLNÁR 2024). Some even write about a resilience turn, claiming it to be the EU's key idea to deal with both internal and external challenges (NITOIU–SIMIONOV 2023: 1074–1076). This approach was contested by academia over time, claiming that with the new High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) taking office in 2019, the EU's foreign policy goals changed, and a realist turn occurred gradually in the previously more liberal approach as HR/VP Borrell continued to focus on strengthening resilience, but the return of geopolitical tensions called for a pragmatic and realist approach (BARGUÉS 2021: 6–8). This idea was supported by HR/VP Borrell's rhetoric, in which he argued for the primacy of strategic autonomy (BORRELL 2020a; 2020b; 2020c). The shift is striking, since resilience was the product of the EU's liberal, value-based approach (WAGNER–ANHOLT 2016: 415), while strategic autonomy is the result of the forced implementation of interest-based geopolitical approach (VARMA 2024: 69). The EU's pragmatic approach is clear from both perspectives, it just needs a clarification what is the state of play in 2024. As Biscop argued, the EUGS is the revival of “*Realpolitik* with European characteristics” (BISCOP 2019: 30), which means that the EU will not pursue idealistic non-achievable goals, or follow power politics (BISCOP 2019: 30–33; TOCCI 2020: 179). The middle ground between these is *principled pragmatism*, an idea also introduced by the EUGS, which translates to lowering aims, but defending values. The EU realised that it cannot build democracy in some states with which it must cooperate on various issues in defence of the community's values, like countering terrorism (BISCOP 2016: 2–3).

The return of an EU-style *Realpolitik* in the EUGS is also important in the sense that it reintroduced a geopolitical approach to European strategic thinking (BISOP 2019: 32–33), which is in line with the community's characteristics as a security community (MOLNÁR–TÁNCZOS 2024: 93–99), and regional security complex theory (BUZAN 2003: 141; KELLY 2007: 200–209). The reintroduction was necessary, as geopolitical tensions were gradually growing, and if the EU wanted to live up to its self-made image as a security provider, it needed to give adequate answers to the changing security situation in its immediate neighbourhood. The idea looks similar to that in the European Security Strategy of 2003, and in the EUGS, too, the community aims to address its immediate neighbours, *the ring of friends*, the destabilisation of which circle would have an impact on the European Community's vital interests (BISOP 2019: 33). This time, the EU aimed to utilise *principled pragmatism*, an approach between idealism and power politics (BISOP 2019: 32), to build resilience in its surrounding regions to prevent their potential further destabilisation.

In this light it is not a surprise that the EUGS mentions the terms *resilient* and *resilience* 41 times in different contexts throughout the text (European External Action Service 2016). It is also clear from the document that the emphasis is on the external nexus, as expected, since resilience was intended as a foreign policy tool (TOCCI 2017: 70–71; NOVÁK-VARRÓ 2021: 36–37). Aside from the goal of creating resilient countries in the EU's neighbourhood, the community aims for a wider geographical scope by including migration origin and transit countries, too, under the same umbrella. The EU's peace policy, particularly long-term peacebuilding also includes resilience as an important element to build (European External Action Service 2016: 50–51). The concept in this sense offers a “middle ground between over-ambitious liberal peacebuilding and the under-ambitious objective of stability” (WAGNER–ANHOLT 2016: 415). Resilience was not chosen to replace the EU's liberal peace goals, and its stance as a normative power, but to achieve these aims in reality (TOCCI 2020: 180). Thus, resilience was set to be applied to desertification, food scarcity, the fight against terrorism, the protection of human rights, migration, infrastructure, education and many more (BISOP 2019: 33). This created the concern that the new concept introduced in the EUGS will justify all EU actions, regardless of their nature (ULGEN 2016: 46). The ambiguity remained when the EU introduced its Strategic Compass (Compass) in 2022, for neither the EUGS nor the Compass described how the concept of resilience should be operationalised. It remained a prominent element of the European strategic documents, since the Compass mentions the term 51 times. This document is more inward looking than the EUGS: it includes more aspects of the internal nexus of resilience, listing

the EU's resilience against cyber and hybrid threats and the resilience of the European defence industry and technology as important factors (European External Action Service 2022).

Despite its intensive use in EU documents, the enthusiasm for the rather ambiguous term, resilience, started to fade when the geopolitical approach of the EUGS was reinforced by the outbreak of the Russo–Ukrainian war in 2022. The turn occurred even before that, when the new HR/VP, Josep Borrell, who replaced Federica Mogherini in 2019, took office. HR/VP Borrell emphasised the geopolitical approach even more, stating that the EU has to learn to speak *the language of power* in its foreign policy (BORRELL 2020a), and claiming that the EU's strategic theatre is more and more contested (BORRELL 2021). The vision of a more assertive EU amidst the changing world order caused a change in the priorities of the EUGS. HR/VP Borrell emphasised more strategic autonomy over the vague concept of resilience, which provided the EU's foreign policy with constructive ambiguity (BARGUÉS 2021: 6). Notwithstanding the constructiveness of the concept of resilience, the EU needs to achieve its strategic autonomy to obtain the freedom of action and safeguard its values and interests (BISCOPE 2020: 1015–1020).

With the strengthening great power rivalry, the strategic turn towards *Realpolitik*, and with that to a more geopolitical approach, the formulation of European strategic autonomy became a priority. To ensure that the EU can act alone, internal resilience became important. As Covid-19 showed the interconnectedness of the supply chains (BISCOPE 2020: 1017), resilience is needed to supply the EU with the ability to recuperate fast in strategic fields in case of an external shock.

RESILIENCE IN THE INTERNAL–EXTERNAL NEXUS

The role of resilience in connection with strategic autonomy changed over time. Both internal and external resilience are needed to achieve strategic autonomy. The EU's internal resilience ensures its ability to act, while external resilience building strengthens the community's sense of security, in parallel with achieving its interests, especially in its neighbourhood. Specifically, European strategic autonomy lies in a stronger European defence industry and a greater independence from external actors in defining the EU's external priorities (MIRÓ 2023: 317). Thus, resilience in both the internal and external nexus is important to comprehend how these areas contribute to achieving strategic autonomy.

A resilient European defence industry

The aim for a resilient European defence industry was not articulated explicitly in the EUGS. Instead, the strategy claimed that “a sustainable, innovative and competitive European defence industry is essential for Europe’s strategic autonomy and for a credible CSDP” (European External Action Service 2016: 46). The strategy therefore called for a strong European defence industry, but progress in this area has been slow. As a step to advance the EU’s objective, in 2017 Member States intensified their efforts in utilising the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and the European Defence Fund (EDF) was created to meet European demands on a more effective defence capacity (MIRÓ 2023: 328). Despite the willingness to strengthen the European defence industry, the area got its own Directorate-General only in 2019 (GOTKOWSKA 2019). The creation of the position of Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) was in line with the EU’s aims to build a “solid European defence industry” (European External Action Service 2016: 11).

The Strategic Compass showcases a continued EU interest in boosting the European defence industry, which theme was strongly motivated by the events preceding the release of the document. The war in Ukraine raised two concerns regarding European defence industry at the birth of the Compass. In 2022 competitiveness and funding were found to be the most vital elements in engaging with defence industry (European External Action Service 2022: 46–50). Two years later, the annual review of the Compass announced the creation of a European Defence Industrial Strategy, which called to strengthen the defence industry’s competitiveness and resilience. According to the review, securing the supply chains is one of the major contributors towards a more resilient European defence industry (European External Action Service 2024: 8–30).

Resilience in the European Defence Industrial Strategy is written in the language of the security community, which understands the concept through a solely security lens. This can be illustrated by the following examples: understanding resilience in the context of Member State defence spending (European Commission 2024: 10), or stating that resilience must be commensurate with the threat level (European Commission 2024: 14). This shows that the security community does not shy away from utilising the concept after the *realist turn* in EU policy, which subordinates resilience to strategic autonomy. The strategy itself calls for a speedy adaptation in the sector to the increasing global threats and to the return of conventional war into Europe (European Commission 2024: 2). This is the first call for resilience in the strategy, in the sense as Nathalie Tocci described the concept as one to call for not only a “baseline functioning”, but also for adaptation (TOCCI 2020: 181).

The document also claims the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB) as the main driving force of a resilient Europe (European Commission 2024: 2), which statement correlates with the EDTIB's involvement in multiple policy areas: it is important from both the perspective of security and economy. The EU identified the cross-border supply chains of the EDTIB as a vulnerability in the strategic field (European Commission 2024: 5), and as such, its resilience is important to enable EU action in crisis scenarios.

A whole chapter of the strategy, entitled “Achieving readiness and resilience through partnerships” is dedicated to discuss the resilience of the European defence industry (European Commission 2024: 28). This motif appeared first in the EUGS, where the EU sought for a closer relationship across the Atlantic to strengthen its own resilience (European External Action Service 2016: 36). The European Defence Industrial Strategy lists three tiers of partners to consider in order to “achieve resilience”, Ukraine, NATO and other international partners (European Commission 2024: 30). Achieving resilience through partnership seemingly translates to the interdisciplinary meaning of the concept, including adaptation. However, the wording of the text strongly signals that primarily the EU's security is understood behind it. Since the text is closely related to European defence, it is logical that the concept is viewed exclusively through a security lens.

Conclusively, resilience in the context of the European defence industry mostly bears security connotations, while it also appears to be accommodating the idea of adaptation as well. In EU strategic documents regarding defence industry, resilience is understood as the security of the community, as suggested by the security community's understanding of the concept as state resistance (TOCCI 2020: 1–2). Following the footsteps of the EUGS and the Strategic Compass, the European Defence Industrial Strategy of 2024 also does not define what it understands by the term of resilience.

Resilience in the neighbourhood

Is it possible to externally design resilience, as believed in the policy world, and if not, how can resilience be built in practice? The EU's answer to this question was clearly to transfer the responsibility to the EaP nations, therefore significantly enhancing EaP ownership, thus the current rhetoric portrays the *neighbouring states as being responsible* for developing their own resilience and effectively addressing frozen conflicts or managing geopolitical constraints. EU support for the development of resilience means the facilitation of an all-inclusive political review

process that encourages open discussion, especially: a tailored cooperation agenda, recognition of differentiation to enhancing resilience; wide societal engagement at all stages of policy-making in addition to the state level; a wide and demand-driven scope of resilience, including resilience of state, society, institutions and policies (PETROVA–DELCOUR 2020: 353). The EU's CSDP resilience definition puts emphasis on the ability of functioning in case of a crisis (IATE s. a.).

European security depends on the cooperation between EU and NATO. Under a framework, the Berlin Plus Agreement, the EU is authorised to draw on NATO assets and capabilities for its military operations. The close cooperation of the two organisations is common interest. The effective defence of the EU's territory relies on close cooperation between the EU and NATO. The establishment of the EU defence union was a specific request from NATO, thus all actions in foreign, security and defence policy automatically *enhance NATO or at the very least complement its capabilities*.¹ The collaboration has seven fields of action: defence against hybrid threats, early warning and situational awareness, parallel operations in identical areas, cybersecurity and cyber defence, interoperable capabilities, defence industry and research as well as exercises *to reinforce the resilience of the EU and NATO partners* (BENDIEK 2017: 19).

The Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)² was the most immediate and targeted initiative in addressing the crisis in Ukraine by the European Commission, with the objective of mitigating its consequences. Nevertheless, only three decisions (regarding civilian protection, de-mining and socio-economic data in the Azov Sea region) explicitly mentioned resilience in their titles, and only two decisions (concerning community-led peacebuilding and the reintegration of veterans; and countering disinformation) incorporated resilience into their general objectives. The lack of consideration of resilience thinking is due to the planning process for these projects as it does not contain the complexity features that underlie resilience thinking. However, the EU utilised additional resources in Ukraine through the European Neighbourhood Instrument and its successor the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation instrument – Global Europe, managed by the European Council, to assist in implementing policy reforms. The 2015 revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was seen as a setback however, since its priority shifted from democratisation to stabilisation (to build a resilient neighbourhood) (DEKANOZISHVILI 2020: 300). The targeted local level actors were too weak to sustain a bottom-up integration, and in the short term it failed the

¹ E.g. the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell's task is to pool information from security authorities in NATO and EU states, EU institutions and partner states.

² 19 European Commission Decisions were adopted within the framework of IcSP.

target countries in essence (LAVENEX 2017: 67). The purpose of these projects was to facilitate the fulfilment of obligations outlined in the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement, which signals the inherent misconceptualisation of the ENP as the direct continuation of the EU’s Enlargement Policy (KELLEY 2006: 30), rather than directly addressing the immediate needs of Ukraine and the consequences of the war. However, it was acknowledged that resilience necessitates a comprehensive strategy, highlighting the need of localism, bottom-up initiatives, spontaneous self-organisation, and the empowering of local actors, rather than imposing top-down universal answers. The failure of EU interventions can be attributed to the absence of this complexity in the dominant project management practices. The established EU institutional frameworks for project planning and implementation prescribe a sequential and hierarchical approach to post-conflict actions. Given this limited presence of resilience-as-thinking in the practices, there was a minimal opportunity in Ukraine to improve positive feedback loops and utilise authentic local knowledge and self-organisation. The only positive example remained the EU4ResilientRegions program, which focused on the Eastern and Southern parts of Ukraine to enhance their overall resilience and promote local peacebuilding efforts (NATORSKI 2023: 1087–1099).

The confidence in EU values, namely that resilience can only be built up by applying Western standards resulted in limited local ownership in Ukraine. Therefore, the EU’s efforts could be seen as a type of neoliberal governance, to promote effective governance at the state level rather than empower local communities (PETROVA–DELCOUR 2020: 354). Instead of assisting in decentralising and empowering local communities to address their own needs, EU resilience projects sponsored establishing institutions that would be standard in “normal” democracies, such as professional police, judges, doctors, administrators and a dependable and regulated army. This also included promoting state-level economic development and enhancing capabilities for early warning and risk assessment. Whereas the Russo–Ukrainian war illustrated the power of local communities, and their ability to resist a violent military invasion through the local self-organisation. The natural resilience of the Ukrainian nation has allowed the continuation of essential social services and the establishment of territorial defence. The local authorities and bottom-up civil society entities (informal leaders, influencers) reinforced the general resilience of Ukraine’s overall ability to resist the Russian army and gave the central government more resources to maintain the functioning of the state. It is highly likely that the EU’s initiatives before the war significantly contributed to Ukraine’s societal preparation. For example, several EU projects supported the integration of internally displaced following the occupation of Crimea and the Donbass rebellion.

These efforts reinforced the local capacity to manage the displacement of more than 8 million Ukrainian citizens, thus avoiding a major humanitarian catastrophe. The lesson has to be learned, *local actors may be more knowledgeable* in relation to the activities to be pursued and have enhanced capacity to organise their activities. *Local communities are supposed to be involved* directly in the intervention activities (NATORSKI 2023: 1098). It was ascertained that the local communities must identify their own priorities and futures, and the resources they may need to achieve them. External assistance should be sought, of course, when necessary. Enabling local communities to take control of their own future is an appealing idea, as it provides an opportunity to expand the EU's influence and, more importantly, to establish a stronger connection with local entities to maintain sustainable government (KOROSTELEVA 2020: 243–248).

The EU's illusion of solving the internal problems of the EaP countries (e.g. lack of reserve capacity, dysfunctional institutions, stagnant markets) by engineering intervention from outside has led to the risk of losing the powerful ability of resilience as a form of self-governance. Instead, EaP countries' resilience is becoming trapped in a cycle of relying on EU intervention and focusing solely on maintaining security (KOROSTELEVA 2020: 243–244). The planning and implementation of Ukrainian IcSP projects followed a standardised process codified in the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) Manual. This organisational handbook specifies predefined, stereotyped procedures and templates for planning projects, and the detailed methodology follows a technocratic, linear, bureaucratic and centralised management approach. There was a top-down approach and there was neither place for consultation with local authorities, nor request for feedback.³ The standardised approach does not include localisation and self-organisation empowerment as part of the organisational methodology. The project implementation practices adhered to the initial design, and they were never transferred to local control (local ownership). The example above demonstrates that resilience is portrayed as the protection of the stability of states during times of crisis, rather than a way to empower local communities impacted by destabilising violence and threats, thus remaining a rhetorical device rather than novel approach (NATORSKI 2023: 1091).

Since 2015, the European concern about migration has overshadowed many policy areas. While significant security threats such as climate change and the erosion of the nuclear arms control regime have been extensively discussed by experts, the issue of migration has consistently been a top priority for many EU governments,

³ The 29 EU interventions in Ukraine do not report any genuine process of consultations that would reflect a space for embracing local concerns and priorities.

as well as the Council of Ministers and European Council. The European approach to Libya has been significantly impacted by an *excessive focus on migration*. While the EU proudly emphasised that two significantly different “resilience-related” goals, namely, the control of migration and establishing an effective government in Libya are reconcilable, the contradictions between these two “resilience-related” goals became obvious. The EU assisted local authorities and militias to control migration, but this containment approach worked against the goal of building a resilient Libyan state, as it weakened the central government (TOCCI 2019: 9).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The concept of resilience in EU policy emerged as a result of external pressures and is primarily an acknowledgement of geopolitical constraints and realist thinking (TOCCI 2020: 178). The previous paradigm (influence through the transmission of EU values) seems to have been profoundly changed by the new concept, from a liberal value-based tool to the instrument to implement a realist idea: European strategic autonomy. It offers a realistic middle ground between over-ambitious and under-ambitious perspectives, providing the geometrical centre between peacebuilding and promoting stability. Resilience was chosen to be included in the EUGS for multiple reasons. The concept is utilised by different policy communities, which was resonating well with the aim that the strategy is global in scope and has all the EU’s policy areas, tools and instruments at its disposal (TOCCI 2020: 178). The versatility of the concept ensures its applicability in all policy domains throughout the internal and the external nexus of the EU’s foreign policy. The revival of geopolitics in the European strategic thinking also needed a new concept to rely on, to find the middle ground between unfulfillable aims, such as building democracies, and unprincipled power politics (BISOP 2019: 32). The ambiguity of the term is also intended, as it answers the complexity of the global environment (TOCCI 2020: 181). In spite of the wide utilisation of the term resilience in EU documents, it was never operationalised by either strategic document (EUGS, Strategic Compass).

Resilience is intertwined with principled pragmatism and the idea of strategic autonomy. First, resilience was included in the EU’s strategic thinking in support of its liberal self-image. Then the gradually growing geopolitical tensions turned it into a tool to find the EU’s own path towards a realist turn through principled pragmatism. In this sense, resilience provides the EU with a concept to remain true to its original, value-based liberal foreign policy approach, but also utilise elements

suiting the harsh reality of revived geopolitical rivalry. It can also be utilised both in the internal and the external nexus of the European policy landscape, exploiting the enigmatic nature of the concept. The concept appeared in European strategic thinking when the geopolitical approach was introduced in it, but it was never elaborated in either of the strategic document. It is suggested that a resilience turn occurred with the revival of *Realpolitik* in Europe. However, the concept was the main theme of the EUGS, and it slowly became an asset to achieve European strategic autonomy.

The geopolitical turn, and the EU's new-found realist approach in strategic thinking was induced by the heightened great power rivalry, and the return of war in Europe. The more contested European strategic theatre includes multiple policy areas, such as industry, digital, competition and Common Security and Defence Policy, where multiple external actors are challenging the EU. The incumbent HR/VP Josep Borrell realised quickly that resilience is not the leitmotif, but the instrument of EU strategy to achieve strategic autonomy in the growing global disorder.

Resilience became and remained an important aspect of the European strategic thinking. Its internal and external utilisation includes the European defence industry, which can be considered one of the principal elements to achieve strategic autonomy. In this policy field, based on the strategic documents, resilience is interpreted as state resistance, and viewed solely through a security lens, which is obvious from the wording of relevant documents. While, in the external nexus, the most discussed and researched policy area which considers resilience is the European Neighbourhood Policy, which includes the EU's immediate surroundings. Both areas underline that the EU accepted the reality that surrounds it and put the concept of resilience into work to achieve strategic autonomy.

Nevertheless, the terminology is far from clear in its interpretation for the various policy sectors and close allies. If resilience means state stability, it requires a top-down approach, but if it is a means strengthening local communities and building resilience, it requires a bottom-up approach at project management. If this is a concept that can only be used in military conflicts, as NATO thinks, then much more precise and measurable outcomes need to be attributed to it for building and evaluating resilience. If resilience is inward-looking, it is primarily about internal EU cohesion vis-à-vis rebellious Member States, if it is outward-looking, it is only about meeting security challenges and leaving the responsibility for implementation to neighbouring states (externalisation). If resilience is a category of thinking, an analytic framework of governance, then it implies a non-linear, complex way of thinking about the self-organising and survival capacity of local communities; if it is seen only as a quality of the state, it is seen as capability of awareness of the external environment, and ability for self-(re)organisation.

REFERENCES

- BARGUÉS, Pol (2021): From 'Resilience' to Strategic Autonomy: A Shift in the Implementation of the Global Strategy? *EU-LISTCO Policy Papers*, (9), 1–16. Online: <https://10.5281/zenodo.4548133>
- BENDIEK, Annegret (2017): A Paradigm Shift in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy: From Transformation to Resilience. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, 2017/RP 11. Online: https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/research_papers/2017RP11_bdk.pdf
- BISCOP, Sven (2016): *The EU Global Strategy: Realpolitik with European Characteristics*. Online: <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2016/06/SPB75.pdf?type=pdf>
- BISCOP, Sven (2019): *European Strategy in the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge.
- BISCOP, Sven (2020): No Peace from Corona: Defining EU Strategy for the 2020s. *Journal of European Integration*, 42(8), 1009–1023. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2020.1852230>
- BORRELL, Josep (2020a): Embracing Europe's Power. *Project Syndicate*, 8 February 2020. Online: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/embracing-europe-s-power-by-josep-borrell-2020-02?barrier=access-spaylog>
- BORRELL, Josep (2020b): *Multilateralism and European Strategic Autonomy in a (post)-Covid World*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/multilateralism-and-european-strategic-autonomy-post-covid-world-%C2%Ao_en
- BORRELL, Josep (2020c): *Why European Strategic Autonomy Matters*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/why-european-strategic-autonomy-matters_en
- BORRELL, Josep (2021): A Strategic Compass for Europe. *Stabroek News*, 16 November 2021. Online: <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2021/11/16/features/project-syndicate/a-strategic-compass-for-europe/>
- BUZAN, Barry (2003): Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post-Cold War World. In SÖDERBAUM, Fredrik – SHAW, Timothy M. (eds.): *Theories of New Regionalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 140–159.
- European Commission (2024): *A New European Defence Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU Readiness through a Responsive and Resilient European Defence Industry*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/643c4a00-oda9-4768-83cd-a5628f5c3063_en?filename=EDIS%20Joint%20Communication.pdf
- European External Action Service (2016): *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Online: https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf
- European External Action Service (2022): *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. For a European Union that Protects Its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf
- European External Action Service (2024): *Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/StrategicCompass_2ndYear_Report_o.pdf
- DEKANOZISHVILI, Mariam (2020): The European Union's Credibility–Expectations Gap in Its European Neighbourhood Policy: Perspectives from Georgia and Ukraine. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 20(2), 289–305. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2020.1767467>

- GOTKOWSKA, Justyna (2019): *DG for Defence Industry and Space in the New European Commission*. Online: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2019-09-18/dg-defence-industry-and-space-new-european-commission>
- IATE (s. a.): *Interactive Terminology for Europe. European Union terminology*. Online: <https://iate.europa.eu/entry/result/3576676/en-en>
- JUNCOS, Ana E. (2017): Resilience as the New EU Foreign Policy Paradigm: A Pragmatist Turn? *European Security*, 26(1), 1–18. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2016.1247809>
- JOSEPH, Jonathan – JUNCOS, Ana E. (2019): Resilience as an Emergent European Project? The EU's Place in the Resilience Turn. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 57(5), 995–1011. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12881>
- KELLEY, Judith (2006): New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44(1), 29–55. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2006.00613.x>
- KELLY, Robert E. (2007): Security Theory in the 'New Regionalism'. *International Studies Review*, 9(2), 197–229. Online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4621805?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- KOROSTELEVA, Elena A. (2020): Reclaiming Resilience Back: A Local Turn in EU External Governance. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(2), 241–262. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1685316>
- LAVENEX, Sandra (2017): On the Fringes of the European Peace Project: The Neighbourhood Policy's Functional Hubris and Political Myopia. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19(1), 63–76. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148116685261>
- MIRÓ, Joan (2023): Responding to the Global Disorder: The EU's Quest for Open Strategic Autonomy. *Global Society*, 37(3), 315–335. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2022.2110042>
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2024): The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy in the Context of European Strategic Autonomy. In ZOMBORY, Katarzyna – SZILÁGYI, János Ede (eds.): *Shielding Europe with the Common Security and Defence Policy. The EU Legal Framework for the Development of an Innovative European Defence Industry in Times of a Changing Global Security Environment*. Miskolc–Budapest: Central European Academic Publishing, 35–72.
- MOLNÁR, Anna – TÁNCZOS, Mariann (2024): The European Union – Security Community. In MOLNÁR, Anna – MOLNÁR, Dóra – SZENTE-VARGA, Mónika (eds.): *International Security Organisations*. Budapest: Ludovika University Press, 93–108.
- NATORSKI, Michal (2023): Resilience in EU Crisis Interventions in Ukraine: A Complexity Perspective. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31(4), 1086–1105. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2022.2097205>
- NITOIU, Cristian – SIMIONOV, Loredana (2023): A New Business as Usual? The Impact of the 'Resilience Turn' on the EU's Foreign Policy and Approach towards the Eastern Neighbourhood. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 31(4), 1073–1085. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2021.2023484>
- NOVÁK-VARRÓ, Virág (2021): Az „ellenálló képesség”, mint a békeépítés eszköze. *Hadtudomány*, 31(3), 32–43. Online: <https://doi.org/10.17047/HADTUD.2021.31.3.32>
- PETROVA, Irina – DELCOUR, Laure (2020): From Principle to Practice? The Resilience–Local Ownership Nexus in the EU Eastern Partnership Policy. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(2), 336–360. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1678280>

- TOCCI, Nathalie (2017): *Framing the EU Global Strategy. A Stronger Europe in a Fragile World*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-55586-7>
- TOCCI, Nathalie (2020): Resilience and the Role of the European Union in the World. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(2), 176–194. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1640342>
- ULGEN, Sinan (2016): Pitfalls of the Global Strategy. *The International Spectator*, 51(3), 45–46. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2016.1216761>
- VARMA, Tara (2024): European Strategic Autonomy: The Path to a Geopolitical Europe. *The Washington Quarterly*, 47(1), 65–83. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01636660X.2024.2327820>
- WAGNER, Wolfgang – ANHOLT, Rosanne (2016): Resilience as the EU Global Strategy's New Leitmotif: Pragmatic, Problematic or Promising? *Contemporary Security Policy*, 37(3), 414–430. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1228034>

PART TWO

THE POLICY AREAS OF STRATEGIC

AUTONOMY AND EUROPEAN

SOVEREIGNTY

Balázs Bartóki-Gönczy – András Edl

THE ROLE OF THE SPACE SEGMENT IN EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

THE CHANGING ROLE OF SPACE IN EUROPEAN STRATEGIC THINKING

European countries, like the European Union as an organisation, are aware of the growing importance of space. They follow closely the space activities of the most important space powers, the United States, China and Russia, but they also try to draw the right lessons from the space activities of other states. The aim is to strengthen the European space sector and, as a result of a specific cooperation, to raise the pan-European presence to a level that puts the old continent on a par with the three major space powers, the United States, China and Russia. In his presentation on 13 October 2022, Kai-Uwe Schrogl an ESA Special Adviser for Political Affairs and President of the International Institute of Space Law stated that, taking into account capacities and autonomy, Europe is currently a spacefaring actor, but not a real space power. They want to reach the above-mentioned goal by 2035, by solving Europe's problems. This would require an increase in the budget to €16.5 billion per year, reaching a third of NASA's budget by 2025 (SCHROGL 2022).

European states have changed their space activities to a large extent, security issues became more important, and the need to strengthen their own space industry has also grown. The European Space Agency (ESA), which is not a body of the European Union, has refrained from strictly military programmes, but has proved to be an excellent partner in other security projects and is successfully developing its own programmes. On 12 May 2021, the European Union Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) was set up to coordinate the large-scale programmes already under way (e.g. Galileo, Copernicus, etc.), to develop the sector and to promote innovation [Regulation (EU) No 2021/696 of the European Parliament and of the Council].

The importance of space is slightly different for each space actor, depending on their capabilities and goals. As Europe is a unique group of nation states and organisations, space has some specific characteristics for Europe. As Michael Sheehan a Professor of International Relations and space policy expert noted back in 2011, an overall European strategy cannot do without space, which is a physical domain where

the actions of other actors have an impact on European interests. Space is also one of the global commons to which free access is necessary. The term ‘commons’ is not a coincidence, since space is also a resource and different space actors derive benefit from its use. This use has not only economic but also military and security benefits. There are two factors that are specifically European: the ‘federative environment’ of space and the ‘field of ethical activity’. The former implies that the specific physical and economic rules of space activities and the scale of the investment required promote cooperation and closer European integration. The latter means that Europe has the opportunity to shape its own space activities on the basis of its own moral principles and to influence issues such as space weaponisation. In Sheehan’s view, the European interest and position of principle would be to minimise or limit space weaponisation (SHEEHAN 2011: 41–54). But this seems to be changing recently, mainly because of Member States like France.

In addition, Europe is also in the process of emphasising the defence aspects of space, which is also reflected in the changing institutional framework. The creation of the EUSPA is also a result of this, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile the supposedly peaceful activities of the ESA with the real exploitation of dual-use capabilities, such as the Galileo navigation satellite system, which is also used by the armed forces of the Member States. In the years to come, there will be intense negotiation and redefinition of which organisation will have which responsibility, area of activity and, above all, operational principles (KLIMBURG-WITJES 2021: 526–546). Two other defining characteristics of the European space strategy are the lack of central governance of the institutions (e.g. ESA is not under governmental control like NASA) and the diverging interests of the Member States (VOGL 2021: 255–264).

EU SPACE POLICIES

EU civil space strategy

The competences of the European Union are set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides that the Union shall develop an autonomous space policy to promote scientific and technological progress, industrial competitiveness and the implementation of EU policies. To this end, it may support joint initiatives, promote research and technological development, and coordinate efforts in space exploration and exploitation (Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ C 326/47, Article 189). However,

the TFEU excludes the possibility of the Union harmonising the legislation of the Member States, i.e. creating a single set of rules for European space activities. The consequence of the latter is that Member States present a very heterogeneous picture of their internal legal systems (BARTÓKI-GÖNCZY 2020: 93–114).

The EU Space Strategy is published by regulation every seven years. It includes the cornerstones of the EU space policy and its most important budgetary figures. The third seven-year cycle (2021–2027) of the EU space policy is laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/696 of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU Regulation 2021/696). The strategy is based on four pillars: the Copernicus programme, the Galileo programme, the EGNOS programme and the Space Situational Awareness (SSA) programme.

The Strategic Compass and the Security and Defence Space Strategy

In his foreword to the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, published on 21 March 2022, Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, speaks of *Europe's geopolitical awakening*. The document emphasises the changing security environment, including the situation in Ukraine, although this is only really highlighted in the preface, as most of the document was written before the outbreak of the war between Russia and Ukraine. Compared with the EU's 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy, this document sets out *a concrete course of action with a specific deadline*. For the European community to actually achieve this, the growing Russian threat has given a rather serious boost. The Strategic Compass also identifies some classic areas for improvement, such as faster and more effective decision-making or the development of command and control systems. It also includes elements such as the creation of an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5,000 troops and the strengthening of intelligence and cyber capabilities. The document gives space the same priority as the high seas, airspace and cyberspace. All of these are areas where the rivalry between states is more pronounced. In case of space, safe, guaranteed and autonomous space access capability is of great importance, as is the global and secure communication network that has been lacking until now (Council of the European Union 2022). It is questionable how far the document can solve the problem of fragmentation between Member States, misallocation of resources or duplication of development. These challenges will remain even though the U.S. has increased the number of troops stationed in Europe as a result

of the Russian–Ukrainian war. Moreover, there is some speculation that this will only be temporary, as the focus will be on the Pacific (WITNEY 2022). It remains to be seen whether European security can be guaranteed without a significant U.S. contribution, especially in space.

The Strategic Compass promised the development of an EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence. A Communication from the European Commission was published in March 2023, laying the foundations for an EU Space Strategy. The Communication focuses on strengthening the security of EU and Member States’ space systems, developing defence capabilities and promoting responsible and sustainable space activities. It is important to underline that space is understood in a broader sense, including all the capabilities and assets that are part of an effective space activity, such as ground infrastructure, but also elements in cyberspace. Among the most important space capabilities are Positioning, Navigation, Timing (PNT), Earth Observation (EO), Secure Communication and the aforementioned Space Situational Awareness. The importance of autonomous access to space, the protection of supply chains and the need to develop the industrial and technological base are also highlighted in the strategy. In addition to improving European capabilities, partnership is, of course, also a top priority, especially with the United States and the United Nations (European Commission 2023a). The European Commission published its proposal on “European Space Law” in April 2024.

Other EU development programmes and documents

In addition to the Strategic Compass, there are a number of smaller parallel programmes and guidance documents. Within the EU Space Programme – Space Research and Innovation, there are a number of strands that address security. Crisis response, maintaining environmental security, satellite navigation, satellite communications, earth observation, border protection all fall under this heading (European Commission 2021a). Another is the Defence Industrial and Space Directorate’s 2022 Management Plan. The document notes the close links and networking with other programmes and the need to create a comprehensive picture. In addition, several other programmes and their expected outputs and timelines are identified (European Commission 2022a). The 2016 Space Strategy for Europe (European Commission 2016a) and the European Defence Action Plan (European Commission 2016b) provided the framework and basis for the programmes presented below.

INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

European Space Agency

The European Space Agency, which is not part of the European Union, is an international organisation for the exploration and exploitation of space, created from the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO) and the European Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO), taking over their rights and obligations. Its Statute was signed by eleven states in 1975. It currently has twenty-two members, with Hungary joining the international organisation as a full member in 2015, the last to do so at the time of writing.

ESA is based in Paris, but has major facilities in Belgium (ESEC, Redu), the Netherlands (ESTEC, Noordwijk), Germany (ESOC, Darmstadt and EAC, Cologne), Italy (ESRIN, Frascati), Spain (CEDE, Villanueva de la Canada) and the U.K. (ECSAT, Harwell). The Council is the decision-making body of ESA, with one vote by each of the Member States. As a general rule, decisions of the Council are taken by simple majority, with some exceptions of course (European Space Agency s. a.). The Council meets as necessary at representative or ministerial level at the ESA headquarters in Paris. The Council elects its President and Vice-Presidents for a two-year term, renewable once for a further one-year term. The Council defines ESA's activities and programmes, the strategy to be followed, approves the annual work plan, the documents and rules governing the basic functioning of the organisation, the budget and decides on the admission of new Member States. The Council is assisted by committees, with four committees (Scientific Programme Committee, Administrative and Financial Committee, Industrial Policy Committee, International Relations Committee) and programme committees for the application programmes. The ESA is headed by a Director-General (Direteur Général), who is the legal representative of the ESA. The Director-General is appointed by the Council for a fixed term, usually four years, by a two-thirds majority of all Member States (GANCZER 2022: 122).

ESA aims to develop and implement European space policy, to recommend possible space objectives for its members, to coordinate member states' policy objectives with other national and international organisations and institutions. ESA cooperates with the European Union to develop a comprehensive European space policy, based on the Framework Agreement concluded between the two organisations on 25 November 2003, which entered into force on 28 May 2004 (Framework Agreement between the European Community and the European Space Agency, OJ L 261/64, 06.08.2004), and the provision of the Lisbon Treaty

of 13 December 2007 which says “the Union shall establish appropriate relations with the European Space Agency” [Article 189(3) TFEU]. On 22 June 2021, the two organisations signed a Financial Partnership Agreement on the implementation of the new European space programme (GANCZER 2022: 123).

EU institutions

Within the European Commission, space related activity is supervised by the Commissioner for Defence and Space (Andrius Kubilius since 2024). Under his leadership there is the department tasked with space issues, the Directorate-General for Defence and Space Industry (DG DEFIS) lead by Timo Pesonen since 2024. The responsibilities of the DG include the development of the European space industry, the implementation of the space strategy, the preparation of legislative proposals and the development of the “key link” between defence and space policy (European Commission 2022a). Within the DG, the Space Directorate covers three areas: general space policy, satellite navigation and earth observation.

In 2021, the new space strategy established the European Union Agency for the Space Programme as the successor to the European Union Agency for the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). The European Union Agency for the Space Programme is working to ensure that Europe can meet its objectives for the deployment of a global navigation satellite system and that users of satellite services can benefit from the European GNSS through the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) and the Agency also supports the development of applications based on Galileo, EGNOS and the EU’s Earth observation programme Copernicus, and coordinates the user aspects of Governmental Satellite Communications (GovSatCom) for key EU policy objectives (European Union Agency for the Space Programme s. a.). The Agency is based in Prague.

Hungary

In case of Hungary, the institutional set-up of the space sector is still evolving, but some major players can already be mentioned. The Department of Space Policy and Space Activities at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade was at the forefront of the Hungarian space activity. This department is under the State Secretary for Security Policy and Energy Security. An important position inside the ministry is the Ministerial Commissioner for Space Research, who reports

directly to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On the codification side, the Department is responsible for preparing the relevant legislation and other public regulatory instruments and also provides technical advice. On the functional side, it develops and coordinates strategies and policies, prepares contracts, liaises with international organisations, represents the Hungarian Government within these organisations, and represents Hungary within ESA and the EU SPA [Official Gazette, Annex to the Hungarian Gazette, 11/2022 (IX.6.) KKM Instruction on the Organisational and Operational Rules of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 4188–4189]. The Ministry also played a major role in the development of the Hungarian space strategy adopted on 18 August 2021. The document sets out in detail the tasks, challenges and opportunities facing Hungarian space activities. The aim is to enable the Hungarian space sector to benefit more from European space activities (Hungary's Space Strategy 2021). Hungary also started a manned space flight program called Hungarian in Orbit (HUNOR) and in March 2024 the country signed an agreement with ESA to receive different kinds of support to implement and better integrate the programme into already running projects.

In 2024, the development of space industry gained importance as it became a task of the Minister of National Economy and responsibilities of Hungary's space activity are split between the two ministries.

In terms of defence and security capabilities in the broader sense, the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) are responsible for developing their own national capabilities. At the same time, there is a need for a Hungarian contribution to NATO and the common European capability, but the conditions must also be created to be able to use the capabilities provided by the allies. In 2021, the building of the appropriate professional staff started with a six-month training course at the University of Debrecen, which was completed by 10 people, who will be able to use their knowledge at the HDF Modernisation Institute, which was set up in 2018, where their tasks will include the development of the necessary doctrines and procedures (SZŰCS 2021). One of its main tasks is to plan the usage of the orbital positions reserved for Hungary and to integrate other space capabilities into the Hungarian armed forces' toolbox. This work has already started since 2007, when a decision was taken to make a core capability of the Hungarian Defence Forces satellite communications capable of serving multiple endpoints and handling variable data traffic. It has since become an integral part of training (BALOGH et al. 2020: 289–320). Such developments will allow closer cooperation with European allies and NATO.

In the field of education and research, opportunities will also be opened up for Hungarian professionals to contribute to the security of Hungary and Europe.

One of the most recent developments is the launch of the UNISPACE three-semester professional training course in 2022, which was set up in partnership with 17 universities. Also important is the launch of a Master's programme in space engineering at the Budapest University of Technology.

It is also important to mention the Hungarian space companies, many of which are already able to play a significant role in international projects. The Hungarian space sector is growing and the government lays great emphasis on cooperating with industry and research organisations. The Hungarian Space Kaleidoscope contains the most important organisations and suppliers for the sector, and since 2019, when the first issue was published, the number has grown considerably. In the 2023–2024 issue more than 120 organisations belonged to the space sector with the additional list of 13 suppliers for the industry. The companies in the sector are already part or wish to be part of the international market and provide services, components and equipment for European companies. It is important to note that Hungarian companies are also involved in defence developments.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EUROPEAN SPACE PROGRAMMES

Copernicus Programme

The programme is the European Union's Earth observation programme. Copernicus currently has six dedicated sets of satellites (among them, satellites known as Sentinels) and around 30 supporting satellites. The Sentinels are specifically designed to meet the needs of Copernicus services and users. Since 2014 (the launch of the first Sentinel 1A satellite) the European Union's objective is to expand the Sentinel satellite network to a fleet of more than 20 satellites. The main users of the Copernicus services are decision-makers and public authorities, who need information to develop environmental legislation and policies, or to make critical decisions in emergencies such as natural disasters or humanitarian crises. Many services can be tailored to specific public or commercial needs, based on the data collected by Copernicus services, Sentinel satellites and supporting programmes, creating new business opportunities. The Copernicus programme is coordinated and managed by the European Commission. The development of the observation infrastructure will be carried out under the auspices of the European Space Agency for the space component and the European Environment Agency and the Member States for the local component (Copernicus s. a.).

Galileo Programme

Perhaps the most important programme of the European Union is the positioning and navigation satellite fleet programme known as Galileo. The now \$250 billion market for precise positioning and navigation is critical to defence capabilities (European Commission 2022c). It is therefore a key issue for autonomy that the EU is not dependent on the systems of other powers. The system offers three services: open access for the public, market operators; protected and enhanced services for designated authorities, defence and law enforcement agencies of Member States; supporting service for search and rescue missions. The programme is overseen by EUSPA and is also managed by a dedicated department within the European Commission's Directorate-General for Defence and Space.

The constellation started deployment and in-orbit operations in 2011 and has been in service since 2016. Until August 2023, 28 satellites were launched. They are orbiting 23,222 km from Earth, excluding two satellites in the wrong orbit due to a failure of the Russian Soyuz launch vehicle. The so-called Walker 27/3/1 constellation, when ready, is planned to consist of 30 satellites, three of which will serve as backup satellites.

In the context of the Galileo Programme, it is also important to mention the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS), which will improve the accuracy of Galileo services by providing three satellites in geostationary orbit (EUSPA 2022).

European Union Government Satellite Communications Programme (EU GovSatCom)

The European Union's Government Satellite Communications programme is part of the EU Space Programme for the period 2021–2027. The idea was first mooted in 2014 and a phased implementation was outlined. In the first phase, the existing communication capabilities of Member States will be harmonised and further developed. Under the current set-up, funding and political support are secured until November 2025, by which time the first phase should be completed (European Defence Agency 2023). The programme aims to build a secure satellite communication system for Member States and the EU. The objectives also include European autonomy in this area, the elimination of fragmentation and the development of new capabilities. Without these, there can be no fast, secure and high-quality information transmission, and without them, there can be

no proper decision-making or autonomous action. Third-party services, even assuming the maximum goodwill of the provider, do not have full transparency of security protocols, improvements may not continue in the direction of the user, the performance and timing of repairs may not be under the user's control, and the service may be terminated more quickly than it could be replaced from other sources. Eliminating these problems increases freedom of action, so it is worth setting up a system of its own in terms of strategic autonomy. The capabilities expected from GovSatCom are grouped into three main families: detection/monitoring, crisis management and support to key infrastructures. The latter include the diplomatic network, the transport network, but also Galileo and Copernicus. The initiative currently has two predecessor programmes, one under the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the other under ESA. The Entrusted programme (GovSatCom 2022), part of the Horizon 2020 grant fund, is also linked to this initiative. The example of ESA shows that, although the organisation is involved in the implementation, budget and competence issues are a major difficulty (KLIMBURG-WITJES 2021).

Space Situational Awareness Programme

The Space Situational Awareness (SSA) or, in American terminology, Space Domain Awareness (SDA) programmes aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extra-planetary environment that impacts on space activities and life on Earth. Three sub-areas can be identified: Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST), Near Earth Objects (NEO) and Space Weather Observation (SWO).

Of the three sub-programmes, SST is perhaps the most important, given that there are now more than a million pieces of tiny man-made debris orbiting the Earth, which threatens space activities and the usefulness of Earth orbit in general (KECSKÉS-MIHÁLKÁ 2022). In addition, in February 2024 there were nearly 10,000 active satellites. Their number has increased dramatically in the last years. The aim of the programme is to enable the EU, through ground-based observatories, to predict collisions (collision avoidance, CA), to monitor the controlled and uncontrolled re-entry of space assets into the atmosphere and to monitor the generation of new space debris in Earth orbit. As the technology is dual-use, it could in principle also be used for military defence purposes. The development and integration of these capabilities, in addition to national efforts, is the task of programmes such as EU-SSA-N (see below).

Near Earth Objects monitoring means tracking hundreds of potentially dangerous asteroids that have been in collision orbit with our planet on numerous occasions

since the Earth's existence more than four and a half billion years ago. Finally, Space Weather Observation plays a very important role, as solar storms reaching the Earth can cause very serious damage to electrical systems, so a signalling system with space-based capabilities can help us to prepare and minimise the damage.

The Secure Connectivity or IRIS² Programme

The Secure Connectivity Initiative (or IRIS²) aims to catch up with Europe in secure space-based communications, an area essential for strategic autonomy. The major space powers have started to build mega constellations with public support, occupying limited frequency ranges and orbital positions. The European gap is already jeopardising the competitiveness of the economy and makes it dependent on non-European players. The aim is to build a reliable, secure and not least economical system that helps government actors to protect critical infrastructure, manage crises and provide other tools to enhance the resilience of states. In addition, the same system would provide high-speed broadband commercial communications throughout Europe. The GovSatCom system and cyber defence are also to be integrated into this system, which is expected to improve the EU's telecommunications infrastructure and economic performance once the programme is successfully completed. According to the original plan, initial service provision would start by 2025 and full readiness with integrated quantum cryptography by 2028 (European Commission 2022b). The French Presidency of the EU can help push through the plans, as Paris has long been a supporter of the idea of European strategic autonomy. Given the orbits needed, the same system could be extended to Africa and the Arctic, further strengthening Europe's position in these regions. The total programme would cost around €6 billion, of which €2.4 billion would be provided by the EU, with the remainder coming from private companies and Member State governments (BORRELL 2022).

OTHER KEY PLAYERS IN EUROPEAN SPACE POLICY

The European Defence Agency (EDA)

The European Defence Agency was set up in 2004 to strengthen European defence. The legal framework of the EDA has undergone several changes and currently has three main objectives: to support the development of Member States' and

the Union's defence capabilities; to stimulate research and development and strengthen the defence industry; to strengthen the link between European policy and the armed forces. The Agency works closely with the European Defence Fund (EDF) and other programmes. Since its creation in 2004, more than 250 R&D programmes have been launched with an estimated budget of €1 billion. The EDA's unique organisational elements are Capability Technology Groups (CapTechs), where national experts, industry and research institutions can meet and freely interact within this forum (European Defence Agency 2022). Since the launch of the EU Global Strategy in 2016, the EDA has also been tasked with facilitating the coordination of national developments, which until then had been rather fragmented. They present annual reports on developments in this area and make recommendations for improvement (*Coordinated Annual Review on Defence* 2017). ESA is also willing to cooperate with the EDA, as they recognise that Europe is lagging behind in this respect and have stressed that ESA is not a civilian organisation strictly speaking, but is intended for peaceful purposes, which may include security components, and ESA is ready to fulfil these (KLIMBURG-WITJES 2021). The four main directions identified for the EDA in space are satellite communications, Earth observation, navigation and space situational awareness (SSA). This is reflected in the Capability Development Plan (CDP). It is worth adding that, in addition to space, the document identifies 10 other priorities reflecting the interests of the Member States (European Defence Agency 2018).

The European Defence Fund (EDF)

Established in 2017, the European Defence Fund aims to finance programmes that will significantly enhance Member States' defence capabilities and ensure their future preparedness for the theatres of war. It also aims to ensure that cooperation to enhance defence capabilities is the norm in the EU. They work in partnership with other funding programmes and funds, including the EU Space Programme, and envisage that the instruments to be used could include VAT waivers, new funding schemes and a reinforcement of the EDF bonus scheme. EDF support is also foreseen in the Strategic Compass (Council of the European Union 2022). The total resources available in 2021 amount to €7.9 billion: of which some €5.3 billion are earmarked for building nationally contributing capabilities, while €2.7 billion are earmarked for research into future threats and challenges. The fund supports research and development and the creation of capabilities, but not the procurement of equipment, which is left to the Member States. Developments

carried out under the Permanent Structured Cooperation (see below) can also benefit from the Fund, with 10% of the costs covered by this resource. To be eligible to apply, three different companies or institutions from at least three EU countries must apply jointly for a grant. The only exceptions to this rule are partnerships for the development of disruptive technologies (two companies from two Member States) (European Commission 2023b). In 2021, EDF launched two calls for proposals in the more specific space segment. The EDF-2021-SPACE-D-SGNS focuses on the development and enhanced protection of space and ground-based navigation technologies. Successful applicants will be involved in research, design, prototyping and testing. The EDF-2021-SPACE-D-EPW call will focus on resilient, jamming-resistant satellite communications. Successful results may also be incorporated into the GovSatCom initiative. Apart from general project umbrella terms there are specific research projects like Odin's Eye II (space-based early warning system), SPIDER (space-based permanent intelligence and reconnaissance) or REACTS (responsive space architecture) (European Commission 2023c). The main areas for funding are research and development. Participating companies could apply for a total of €50 million for these two programmes (European Commission 2021b).

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is an integral part of the European Union's common security and defence policy. It involves cooperating Member States implementing projects that contribute to the security and defence of the EU. PESCO's structure is intended to give priority to strengthening cooperation between Member States, enhancing the EU's strategic autonomy and increasing compatibility. The results will remain in the hands of the Member States, but may also be made available to NATO or the UN (Permanent Structured Cooperation 2022). The fourth wave of the project was launched on 16 November 2021. The total number of projects was then increased to 14, with the number of space-related projects rising to four. Two previous projects have been running since 19 November 2018. The fifth wave of PESCO projects was launched in 2023, and currently the active PESCO projects for space are:

- ♦ The *EU Radio Navigation Solution* (EURAS) project aims to develop and harmonise the Positioning, Navigation, Timing (PNT) capabilities of European forces. The Galileo system and the Public Regulated Service (PRS) it will provide are the main tools to achieve this goal. France is the project leader, but Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy and Poland are also involved.

- ♦ The *European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network* (EU-SSA-N) project aims to build an autonomous, sovereign EU military space situational awareness capability. The aim is to coordinate this with existing civil space surveillance. The system will not only be able to react to man-made threats, but will also be able to detect natural threats. Italy is the coordinating state, but France, Germany and the Netherlands are also involved. The Netherlands is also a major player in space, but the other three members form the backbone of Europe's space capabilities.
- ♦ The *Defence of Space Assets* (DoSA) project aims to increase the EU's operational effectiveness in space by improving resilience, space manoeuvrability and training. It is coordinated by France, with the participation of Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, Portugal and Romania.
- ♦ The *Common Hub for Governmental Imagery* (CoHGI) is aimed at the establishment of a federated system, that allows sharing of classified imagery at European level with members States and other EU entities. The coordinator is Germany accompanied by Austria, France, the Netherlands, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania and Spain (Permanent Structured Cooperation 2024).

At present time, Hungary is not involved in any of these projects. Of course, apart from the ones already mentioned, there are other programmes running and some of them are related to space. Typical examples are navigation, command and control, intelligence or some of the projects that can be classified under cyber capabilities.

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE INDUSTRY

Only a strong and highly developed European space sector can be the basis for European strategic autonomy in space. Europe's space industry is advanced but fraught with problems. These include an open market, not necessarily favourable for European startups; exposure to large foreign companies; the brain drain that threatens Europe; the security of supply chains; limited resources; the slow and complex procurement-development cycle; and a fragmented and incomplete legal environment. There is also the lack of reusable launchers, making it difficult for European launch service providers to compete with companies such as SpaceX or BlueOrigin. It is also worth pointing out that there is no European capability for human spaceflight. In addition, with the phasing out of the Ariane 5 rocket, there is currently no European capability of launching larger satellites into space. After

many years of delay, the Ariane 6 rocket did not have its first live launch until July 2024, but the test was only partially successful due to problems with the upper stage's deorbiting process. The next launch is planned for the early months of 2025, hopefully, this time without any issues. Further investment and technological development are needed, and the geopolitical rivalry in space must be prepared for. Supply chains need to be protected and launch capacities need to be created so that European states can reach space autonomously (Policy Department for External Relations 2020). One example of this effort is the idea of the Launcher Alliance, which was proposed by the European Commission. The idea is to get European companies and contractors behind Arianespace to ensure that the next generation of Ariane 6 rockets will receive the necessary orders, thus providing the necessary resources and support for their development. This is necessary because currently European companies' market share is shrinking and companies like SpaceX gained a significant advantage, even getting contracts from European entities. This is partly due to previous decisions, as in 2014 European designers did not move towards the reusability of rockets. Given that the European space industry is particularly exposed to international competition, in the absence of tariffs protecting SMEs and large public contracts, such an alliance could change this and signal a paradigm shift (POSANER 2022). By the end of 2023, the Launcher Alliance was supported by most countries, but as emphasised for example by Germany, in the future they intend to move away from this model and rather rely on a competition-based launcher environment. At the moment reliable access to space and funding for Ariane would be important, but until late 2024 the launcher alliance did not come into fruition; therefore, support seems to be wavering and not on a sufficient level.

CONCLUSIONS

The European Union has recognised that the space segment is an indispensable element for strengthening its strategic autonomy. This is demonstrated by the third civil space strategy and its key elements like the Copernicus, Galileo and SSA programmes in tandem with the first-ever space security strategy. The European Union is also active in regulatory initiatives, such as the proposals on space traffic regulation and on EU Space Law. However, it should also be noted that Europe's major challenges lie in competitiveness and autonomous capabilities. Due to this – despite the highly advanced programs mentioned previously – Europe cannot be classified as a real space power on par with the U.S., China or Russia. The launcher crisis, and the gap between Ariane 5 and Ariane 6 combined with the issues with

the Vega rockets resulted in a temporary loss of the ability to launch satellites from European soil. Even if Ariane 6 can fly on a regular basis, the launch cost and frequency of launches is expected to be way less competitive than the ones offered by competitors. Besides, Europe has no capability to transport cargo or humans to and from outer space and has no plan to develop a low Earth orbit space station, contrary to its main competitors. These are serious vulnerabilities that should be reduced in the future. Without those, real strategic autonomy is not possible.

Another gap is also being addressed by programmes to establish secure satellite communications. This will complement existing and truly advanced PNT and Earth observation capabilities. Europe's scientific and R&D capabilities are also among the best in the world, and, as a result, European space programmes have achieved considerable success, but unified and clear political will, similar funding as of leading space powers and securing the needed supply of highly skilled professionals still seem to be an issue for the coming years.

Hungary makes significant efforts to strengthen the national space sector and gain more favourable positions in the global space community. Turning the space strategy to reality still has many obstacles in its way, and organisational changes still can add to these challenges until a new, more effective structure is set up. Supporting the education and domestic employment of professionals, foster economic growth and the establishment of startups, make the Hungarian astronaut program a success story, while also acquiring the necessary defence and security capabilities seems to be a multi-layered task, but at the same time worth striving for.

REFERENCES

- BALOGH, János – DRILLA, Attila – KÁRÁNDI, Zsolt – ORBÁN, József (2020): Szemelvények az űrhadviselés múltjából és jelenéből. In VÁRI, Péter (ed.): *Ég és föld közötti kapcsolatok*. Budapest: Wolters Kluwer, 289–320.
- BARTÓKI-GÖNCZY, Balázs (2020): Az űrtevékenységek nemzeti szintű szabályozása – a nemzetközi jogi környezet, valamint az ESA tagállamok gyakorlatának elemzése. *Iustum Aequum Salutare*, 16(4), 93–114.
- BORRELL, Josep F. (2022): *Space and Defence: Protecting Europe and Strengthening Our Capacity to Act*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/space-and-defence-protecting-europe-and-strengthening-our-capacity-act_en
- Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) (2017). Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/coordinated_annual_review_on_defence_card_factsheet.pdf
- Copernicus (s. a.): *Infrastructure Overview*. Online: <https://www.copernicus.eu/en/about-copernicus/infrastructure-overview>

- Council of the European Union (2022): *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. For a European Union that Protects Its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf?fbclid=IwARoagaIPzTx9anHRdx-PRgLd7OSX-eLkabSfinkAlpJN_yPdGIHzTrnO-8rFo
- European Commission (2016a): *Space Strategy for Europe*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DCo705&from=EN>
- European Commission (2016b): *European Defence Action Plan*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DCo950&from=en>
- European Commission (2021a): *Defence Industry and Space: EU Space Programme. Space Research and Innovation*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-space-policy_en
- European Commission (2021b): *Commission Implementing Decision of 30.6.2021 on the Financing of the European Defence Fund Established by Regulation (EU) No 2021/697 of the European Parliament and the Council and the Adoption of the Work Programme for 2021*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-06/edf-wp2021_en.pdf
- European Commission (2022a): *Defence Industry and Space*. Online: https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/defence-industry-and-space_en
- European Commission (2022b): *Questions and Answers: Secure Connectivity*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/QANDA_22_922
- European Commission (2022c): *Galileo*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-space-policy/galileo_en
- European Commission (2023a): *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. European Union Space Strategy for Security and Defence*. Online: [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=JOIN\(2023\)9&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=JOIN(2023)9&lang=en)
- European Commission (2023b): *European Defence Fund*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf_en
- European Commission (2023c): *Result of the EDF 2022 Calls for Proposals*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/calls-proposals/result-edf-2022-calls-proposals_en
- European Defence Agency (2018): *Capability Development Plan*. Online: https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-factsheets/2018-06-28-factsheet_cdpbo20bo3fa4d264cfa776ff000087efof
- European Defence Agency (2022): *Research & Technology*. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/research-technology>
- European Defence Agency (2023): *Governmental Satellite Communications*. Online: [https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/governmental-satellite-communications-\(govsatcom\)](https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/governmental-satellite-communications-(govsatcom))
- European Space Agency (s. a.): *ESA Convention Rules*. Rule 18, point 2. Online: https://www.esa.int/About_Us/Corporate_news/Convention-Rules#Art1.1
- European Union Agency for the Space Programme (s. a.): *EUSPA Overview*. Online: https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-union-agency-space-programme-euspa_en
- EUSPA (2022): *EGNOS Programme*. Online: <https://www.euspa.europa.eu/european-space/egnosc/programme>

- GANCZER, Mónika (2022): Nemzetközi intézményrendszer. In BARTÓKI-GÖNCZY, Balázs – SÜLYÖK, Gábor (eds.): *Világűrjog*. Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 117–130.
- GovSatCom (2022): *GovSatCom – Practical and Technical Information*. Online: https://www.belspo.be/belspo/space/euGovSatcom_tech_en.stm
- Hungary's Space Strategy (2021). Online: <https://space.kormany.hu/download/7/bd/c2000/Magyarorsz%C3%A1g%20%C5%Borstrat%C3%A9gi%C3%A1ja.pdf>
- KECSKÉS, Gábor – MIHÁLKÁ, György (2022): Környezetvédelem és űrszemét. In BARTÓKI-GÖNCZY, Balázs – SÜLYÖK, Gábor (eds.): *Világűrjog*. Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 235–246.
- KLIMBURG-WITJES, Nina (2021): Shifting Articulations of Space and Security: Boundary Work in European Space Policy Making. *European Security*, 30(4) 526–546. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2021.1890039>
- Permanent Structured Cooperation (2022): *PESCO*. Online: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03-23-PESCO-Deepening-defence-cooperation-NewLayout.pdf>
- Permanent Structured Cooperation (2024): *PESCO Projects*. Online: <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/#projects>
- Policy Department for External Relations (2020): *The European Space Sector as an Enabler of EU Strategic Autonomy*. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2020/653620/EXPO_IDA\(2020\)653620_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2020/653620/EXPO_IDA(2020)653620_EN.pdf)
- POSANER, Joshua (2021): Europe's Lack of Rocket 'Audacity' Leaves It Scrambling in the Space Race. *Politico*, 15 January 2021. Online: <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-arianespace-rocket-space-race/>
- SCHROGL, Kai-Uwe (2022): Strategy of the European Space Agency. Conference presentation at the *European Space Policy* conference. Budapest: Ludovika University of Public Service.
- SHEEHAN, Michael (2011): EU Strategy, CSDP and the European Space Programme. *Studia Diplomatica*, 64(1), 41–54. Online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26531481>
- SZÜCS, László (2021): A katonák a civilekkel együtt dolgoznak a magyar űrképesség megteremtésén. *Honvédelem*, 13 May 2021. Online: <https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/a-katonak-a-civilekkel-egyutt-dolgoznak-a-magyar-urkepesseg-megteremtesen.html>
- VOGL, Doris (2021): Encounter in the Low Earth Orbit and Outer Space. In FRANK, Johann – VOGL, Doris (eds.): *China's Footprint in Strategic Spaces of the European Union. New Challenges for a Multi-dimensional EU–China Strategy*. Vienna: Schriftenreihe der Landesverteidigungsakademie, 255–264.
- WITNEY, Nick (2022): *The EU's Strategic Compass: Brand New, already Obsolete*. European Council on Foreign Relations. Online: <https://ecfr.eu/article/the-eus-strategic-compass-brand-new-already-obsolete/>

Gábor Papp

DIVERSIFICATION
AS THE CORNERSTONE OF
THE EU'S ENERGY AUTONOMY

INTRODUCTION

As Vaclav Smil, one of the leading thinkers about energy issues invokes

“Energy is the only universal currency: one of its many forms must be transformed to get anything done. ‘...History acts in unpredictable ways. Events in history, however, necessarily take on a structure or organisation that must accord with their energetic components’” (SMIL 2017: 1).

Being so universal, it is not surprising that energy is a decisive element of politics on both national and international level. However, being part of the European Union's (hereinafter EU) policies, too, for a long time it is quite a new phenomenon that energy appeared in the discourse of strategic autonomy, however, the question of energy security had already popped up periodically due to the Russian–Ukrainian gas disputes in 2006, 2009, 2014. This turn is caused by the unprecedented challenge triggered by the Russian–Ukrainian war, which brings the agenda of energy again back at the centre of attention for the decision-makers and analysts. This study argues that diversification in the field of energy is a core concept which has to be achieved in the case of energy security. Given the fact that natural gas supplies suffered the most serious damage due to the large amount of losses incurred in a relatively short period of time, the study focuses on how natural gas supplies could be diversified or replaced by other sources. At the same time, it must to be underlined that even though energy supply diversification has different ways, divided into external and internal dimensions from a European perspective – as it will be presented later – the EU has to conduct its strategy extremely carefully since some of its unique features like insufficient domestic natural gas production or lack of critical raw materials in its own soil pose a serious handicap in the attempt of diversification. There are at least two significant threats the EU needs to focus on and evade as much as possible: the recreation of a new over-dependent energy relation and the potential political backfires which may arise from inside or from third parties as a consequence of a

Table 1. *Conceptual framework*

From strategic autonomy to energy diversification			
External dimensions of energy diversification		Internal dimensions of energy diversification	
External natural gas supply diversification	External replacement of natural gas by new sources	Internal natural gas supply diversification	Internal replacement of natural gas by new sources
Liquefied natural gas	Hydrogen	Natural gas production	Renewables (solar, wind, hydrogen)
	Electricity	Natural gas consumption curtailment	Nuclear energy
		Energy network integrations	

Source: Compiled by the author.

wrongly conducted, unrealistic energy policy. These threats would be able to erode the EU's strategic autonomy, while the EU is working on strengthening it. Finally, since the REPowerEU plan has linked the need for reduced fossil fuels and fast-forwarded clean transition, not only strategic autonomy but also the whole green transition depends on the success of energy supply diversification.

FROM STRATEGIC AUTONOMY TO ENERGY SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION

At the beginning, energy issues were not part of the discussions about European strategic autonomy. Regarding, for example, the often-cited *St. Malo Declaration* from 1998 as an important step in the history of European strategic autonomy, the concept was grounded on a military, defence-related consideration. "To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises" (CVCE 1998).

Since the St. Malo Declaration, it took 15 years until the explicit use of the term *strategic autonomy* (DAMEN 2022) appeared in the European Council conclusions on common security and defence policy in relation with strengthening Europe's defence industry (European Council 2013), showing that the concept remained predominantly on the same basis during this period. Nevertheless, it had started to change from the upcoming years.

In 2016, the EU published a document called *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security*

Policy in which the linkage between energy and strategic autonomy was highlighted. As it stated: “An appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy is important for Europe’s ability to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders. We will therefore enhance our efforts on defence, cyber, counterterrorism, energy and strategic communications” (European External Action Service 2016: 09). Moreover, energy security also got its own sub-section in this document, as it was listed among the other priorities of the EU’s external action. According to this:

“In line with the goals of the Energy Union, the EU will seek to diversify its energy sources, routes and suppliers, particularly in the gas domain, as well as to promote the highest nuclear safety standards in third countries. Through our energy diplomacy, we will strengthen relations worldwide with reliable energy-producing and transit countries, and support the establishment of infrastructure to allow diversified sources to reach European markets” (European External Action Service 2016: 22).

Around 2021, the concept of strategic autonomy started to change by becoming more inclusive in term of topics and the expression *open strategic autonomy* started to pop up. This can be observed for example in a policy report published by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre in 2021. The document highlights different trends and emerging issues which would have a potential influence on the open strategic autonomy in the long term in five key domains: geopolitics, technology, economy, environment, society. In this document the relation of energy to environment and green transition is highly emphasised (CAGNIN et al. 2021).

In 2023, during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Pedro Sánchez presented a non-paper published by Spain’s National Office of Foresight and Strategy related to open strategic autonomy. The document stressed: “What we need now is a comprehensive framework that allows us to transform this OSA concept and the ongoing measures into a true future-oriented strategy for the EU” and this non-paper “presents a comprehensive, balance and forward-looking open strategic autonomy strategy to ensure the economic security of the EU and its global leadership by 2030 in four critical sectors (energy, digital technology, health and food)” (Spain’s National Office of Foresight and Strategy 2023: 22).

As it can be seen, European strategic autonomy became a widely used expression during the years, which makes it hard to detect its relation with energy. This study tries to present one potential way for the interpretation. For ground zero, the upcoming quasi-definition can be chosen as a core concept “EU strategic autonomy refers to the capacity of the EU to act autonomously – that is, without being dependent on other countries – in strategically important policy areas” (DAMEN 2022: 01).

The next step is to highlight the part of *without being dependent* from it and ask what does it mean *being dependent* in the field of energy? In short, energy dependency means being dependent on a given energy source and its related technology.

If the given energy arrives predominantly from ‘outside’, like in the case of the quasi-definition, energy dependency means supply dependency as well. The extent of supply dependency depends on how highly the given actor relies on the given resource and the given supplier. The greater these values are the lower the potential to act autonomously. In the same logic but from the opposite direction, mitigating energy and supply dependency should lead to regaining/strengthening autonomy. But what could be a tool for mitigate supply dependency and at the same time to regain autonomy? This study argues that these two aims could be achieved together via the implementation of the so-called energy supply diversification. Based on the above-mentioned considerations, diversification could be achieved in two ways in two different dimensions. The first dimension is the external one. In this dimension there are two ways to mitigate supply dependency: rerouting the import of the given resource or start to import other ones.

Regarding the internal dimension, which is the second one, there are also two sets of options. First, by increasing self-production and/or lowering demand of the given resource could mitigate supply dependency, while starting and/or boosting the use of other/new sources would result in lower resource dependency, thus, supply dependency could decrease, too.

In the following sections this frame will be used for the EU’s energy relations in the context of the Russian–Ukrainian war. The study will focus on natural gas, which has a twofold motive. On the one hand, the natural gas situation was by far the most decisive question given, among others, its share in heating, thus threatening the very basics of human needs, while, on the other hand, replacing natural gas is in the heart of the green transition, too, and the two topics, had already been combined into one strategy by the *REPowerEU plan* when it was stated that “REPowerEU is about rapidly reducing our dependence on Russian fossil fuels by fast forwarding the clean transition and joining forces to achieve a more resilient energy system and a true Energy Union” (European Commission 2022a).

EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF ENERGY SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION

The external dimensions of the EU’s energy supply diversification are import centric. Whether it is the question of reshaping and changing the routes or origins of the

natural gas already imported, whether creating new routes for new resources, by doing these the aim behind is to lessen the weight of a certain resource and/or supplier in the energy import mix, thus potentially mitigating supply security risks.

Since the eruption of the war, a big reshaping could be observed in the EU's overall natural gas import structure, while potential new energy networks like green electricity grids or hydrogen pipelines are in strategic consideration.

External natural gas supply diversification

The biggest change related to the external supply diversification is the restructuring of the EU's natural gas import mix regarding especially the parallel trends of the decreasing Russian and the increasing American (U.S.) natural gas import in it.

In 2021, Russian gas export (pipeline and LNG together) covered 45% of the EU's total gas import while the U.S. covered only 5% by its LNG. Within 2 years this scheme had dramatically changed. In 2023, Russian export dropped to 15% of the overall import, moreover around 40% of it arrived as LNG compared to the preceding pipeline dominance (European Council 2024a), which is not surprising since two out of the four Russian natural gas pipeline routes (the Yamal and the Nord Stream 1) had already stopped by the second half of 2022. These two routes had 88 billion cubic metres (bcm) yearly transport capacity. Meanwhile, the U.S. gas export climbed up from that 5% to more than 19% by 2023 and the U.S. became the second largest provider of natural gas for the EU following Norway and its 30% overall contribution to the total gas import mix (European Council 2024a).

What made possible this significant growth was on the one hand the so-called *shale revolution* in the U.S., and on the other hand the EU's already existing and growing LNG receiving infrastructure capacity.

Concerning the former, the *shale revolution* is a complex phenomenon having technological, economic, geopolitical aspects all at once. All in all, the lucky combination of these variables had made the U.S. from a net natural gas importer into the world's biggest LNG exporter country by 2023 within less than 10 years. Meanwhile, its LNG infrastructure is still increasing and will potentially double by 2030 (ZARETSKAYA–OBER 2023).

Concerning the latter, LNG facilities have also shown increasing trends within the EU's territory as well. In 2023, the EU's LNG import capacity had grown by 40 bcm and during 2024 more 30 bcm is expected to come on pipeline (European Council 2024b). Also, in 2023, the EU imported 120 bcm LNG. Given that the total natural gas import of the EU was around 290 bcm that year, this means that around

40% of it arrived as LNG. The largest LNG importers among the EU countries were France, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy (European Council 2024b). Regarding especially the U.S.-origin LNG, the first three countries consecutively receive jointly about more than half of the overall U.S. import by year. In 2021, it was around 14 bcm from 21 bcm, in 2022 37 bcm from 54 bcm, in 2023 37 bcm from 61 bcm (MAKAREWICZ-JALLER 2024).

The measure of the U.S. LNG and the ongoing facility expansion on both sides of the Atlantic raise, however, the geopolitical question of dependency shifting. When a resource or its supplier becomes too decisive in the export share, it will always raise the question of dependency. Paying regard to this premise, the EU and its Member States have to arrange carefully their energy relations. Over reliance could lead to dependency even if the partner is generally a long-term firm ally like the U.S., which in turn may spill over to other domains of the parties' relations. This may weaken the EU's position on any particular subject, because the U.S. would have the chance to use the 'energy card' against the EU to put it under increased pressure in order to achieve its goals, or if its interests require so. What makes this situation extremely difficult and challenging is exactly the task to estimate and to detect where is the line beyond which this 'overreliance spill-over' scenario starts taking shape and actually becomes a relevant geopolitical hazard.

External replacement of natural gas by new sources

In the field of the energy resource diversification, the main aim is to change the already existing energy mix and routes for a new one. In this regard, importing electricity and/or hydrogen instead of natural gas has gained more and more attention and seems to dominate the current European discourse. Although, in their current situation, both options exist rather as strategic plans than already available options. At the same time, the two concepts are connected to each other, thanks to the particular role which both envisage to the African continent.

Africa has already played an important role in the European energy system. While the North African region provides natural gas supply which accounted for 14% of the whole European natural gas import in 2023 (European Council 2024a), Sub-Saharan Africa provides some other crucial natural resources. For example, most of the world cobalt supply – which is a crucial element in accumulator production, thus linked to digital and green transition at the same time – is mined in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Another important element in terms of digitalisation, tantalum, which is used for capacitor production, also arrives predominantly from

the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Meanwhile, platinum group metals (iridium, osmium, palladium, platinum, rhodium, ruthenium) which are essential elements in auto capacitor making are produced mostly in South Africa. Some Sub-Saharan countries like Angola or Nigeria also export natural gas to the global market in the form of LNG.

At the same time, the northern part of Africa is highly abundant in solar and wind energy (International Renewable Energy Agency 2023; Global Solar Atlas 2024; Global Wind Atlas 2024), which unique features make the region an exceptional candidate for installing high scale renewable infrastructures like solar panel parks or wind farms. These facilities would allow the countries of the region to generate green electricity – electricity is said to be green, when it is produced by renewable sources like solar or wind – then directly export it or use it to produce first green hydrogen – hydrogen is considered green, when the electrolysis which is used to produce it via splitting water to oxygen and hydrogen, got its electricity from a renewable source, for example from solar or wind – and then export that one as a commodity. Hydrogen could be exported via pipelines or could be liquefied similarly to natural gas. However, the specific steps of technological implementation are different compared to natural gas, e.g. unique pipelines for transmission or lower temperature for liquefaction. The green electricity and hydrogen gain increasing attention nowadays because besides their potential role of replacing natural gas, their direct production emit no CO₂; therefore, implying these technologies could contribute to achieve climate aims as well.

The EU is willing to become a partner in both scenarios whether it is about electricity or hydrogen and enforce the relations on these two domains, as it can be inferred from multiple documents. One of these is the joint communication entitled *EU External Energy Engagement in a Changing World*, which states that

“Africa is a key partner for the EU [...] African countries can also contribute to the EU's energy security, today with oil and LNG supplies, and in future through green hydrogen and renewable fuels as well as raw materials critical to the green energy transition” (European Commission 2022b).

Another, earlier one is the EU's 2020 hydrogen strategy, which highlighted the potential role of Africa even before the energy and the Russian–Ukrainian crisis emerged.

“Some of the EU's current gas suppliers and countries with a strong potential for renewables are considering opportunities to export renewable electricity or clean

hydrogen to the EU. For example, Africa, due to its abundant renewables potential and in particular North Africa, due to geographic proximity, is a potential supplier of cost-competitive renewable hydrogen to the EU requiring that the deployment of renewable power generation in these countries strongly accelerates” (European Commission 2020: 19).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the EU’s current list of *Projects of Common and Mutual Interest* (hereinafter PCI-PMI) contains an electricity interconnection project between Sicily and Tunisia called *ELMED* (European Commission 2023a: 04). Meanwhile, in 2022 Team Europe proposed a continent-wide Africa–EU *Green Energy Initiative (AEGEI)*, which “aims to increase electricity production and access to energy, promote energy efficiency, create a conducive regulatory environment for private investments and advance market integration” (European Commission 2022c).

Even though energy relations based on renewables between Africa and the EU are generally framed as mutually benefiting, there exists another approach which is less discussed in the West arguing that this relation is founded on exploitation. One of the explicit summaries of this point of view is pointed out by Samuel Furfari former senior official at the EU’s Energy Directorate-General.

“As for hydrogen, REPowerEU sets a target of 10 million tonnes (Mt) of renewable hydrogen production and 10 Mt of hydrogen import by 2030. Ideas are therefore being put forward to use renewable energy produced outside Europe, by producing green hydrogen in Africa, but these are proposals which push towards a new form of colonialism: ecocolonialism. How can we ethically think about producing a luxury product on a continent where not even half of the population is connected to the electricity grid? Not to mention that transport to Europe results in a considerable loss of energy. If Africans had the economic capacity to produce electricity from intermittent renewable sources (as we do with subsidies), they should use it to guarantee access to electricity for local populations rather than produce hydrogen for EU ecologists” (FURFARI 2024: 109–110).

Besides the ethical considerations highlighted by Furfari, tangible tensions against some initiatives have already occurred among the local African population. These originate from the matter of territorial disputes (ALBRECHT – LADEKJÆR GRAVESEN 2023) or the question of water usage (KESKES – HAYTAYAN 2023).

Water alone is a precious natural resource across the whole region, and green technologies are water-dependent. For example, water serves for cooling and cleaning

(European Commission 2019), like it is the case at Noor I concentrated solar power plant (CSP) at the Noor Ouarzazate Solar Complex (Power Technology 2020), which is one of the biggest such facility around the globe. In case of green hydrogen production, the water itself is split into hydrogen and oxygen by renewable-generated electricity, which means that in this particular example without water there is no hydrogen either. Moreover, if renewable infrastructures are deployed to water scarcity areas, water supply has to be solved, especially if these infrastructures were to be used for green hydrogen production. Therefore, scarce resource management related to water supply could be on the one hand difficult and on the other hand conflictual, taken into account that the MENA region is affected by high water stress (Al Jazeera 2023).

One particular case which could represent the complexity of the question of renewables in the MENA region is the example of Tunisia. The country signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the EU in 2023, which contains green energy transition and emphasises renewables and hydrogen production by “speeding up the implementation of Tunisia’s ambitions for renewable energy production” and “the Parties shall endeavour to strengthen the production of renewable hydrogen [...] in Tunisia, which could serve its internal market and international demand, while taking into account the need to protect its water resources”. All in all, “to explore the possibility of strengthening cooperation on supply chains for clean energy technologies and electricity generation in a mutually beneficial manner” (European Commission 2023b). At the same time, a study from 2022 highlights that energy transition has a unique connotation in Tunisia.

“The energy transition could provide answers to the expectations of the Tunisian population who seek to assert their political and economic sovereignty [...]. The Tunisian energy transition is not only a technical challenge but it is the hope of a profound societal change which could be channelled by the Tunisian authorities as a common societal objective for change, within the framework of the slowed political transition by the countless macroeconomic difficulties” (MOKRANI 2022: 20).

The potential import of green electricity and hydrogen to replace natural gas is indeed an opportunity for which the EU has high hopes in relation to Africa, particularly its northern part. However, as it was briefly highlighted in general terms and using the example of Tunisia, these ideas are at least as challenging as they are promising. The EU must therefore arrange its future energy relations with North Africa very prudently to evade any potential political backlashes originated in the accusation of green colonialism or in a badly conducted or failed cooperation based on renewable

energy. This seems to be an especially important task in case of green hydrogen, since the EU laid down imposing benchmarks in the *REPowerEU plan* by 2030, which are openly debated, for example, being called unrealistic (BALANYÁ 2023).

INTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF ENERGY SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION

The internal dimensions of the EU's energy supply diversification are production centric. On the one hand, the EU could try to increase its own natural gas production as well as try to decrease its natural gas demand. In both cases, dependence on supplies could be reduced by decreasing overall dependence on natural gas imports. On the other hand, the EU could develop alternative energy networks to replace natural gas. In this latter case, the EU needs the related technology to be able to do so. However, related to certain green technologies, the EU lacks crucial raw material, which leads to the consequence that even internal production is heavily import reliant as it is the case with solar and wind power. Green hydrogen looks less dependent than the former examples, in return it is the less available option at the moment since the concept is being mostly in strategic phase. Besides renewables, rising interest toward nuclear energy – which could also serve as replacing natural gas in electricity generation – shows a mixed picture.

Internal natural gas supply diversification

Regarding the internal supply diversification, the EU has three main hypothetical options to enhance its possibilities. Increase its own natural gas production, reduce natural gas consumption and create a more integrated energy network, thus increase flexibility, therefore, efficiency.

Regarding the internal natural gas production, the EU shows a decreasing trend. In 2021, overall gas production in the EU was 50.6 bcm (European Commission 2021: 03–04). The biggest producers were the Netherlands with 21 bcm followed by Romania with 8.9 bcm (European Commission 2021: 09). In 2022, gas production dropped by around 7% meaning that it was approximately 47 bcm in total. The main producers remained the same countries highlighted above (Eurostat 2023). According to the available gas reports in 2023, the EU produced 29.7 bcm natural gas until the end of the third quarter, which is 18% less year-on-year; still, the Netherlands goes first and Romania second (European Commission 2023c: 08).

However, changes are expected in the near future and in the medium term at both major producers, which will be in opposite directions, and may also affect their positions. After consecutive earthquakes in the last decade, the Dutch Government decided to advance the closure of the Groningen field from the originally provisioned 2030 target. The field was shut down in October 2023. At the same time “after the closure, the government retained the option to activate up to five drilling sites for a temporary period in case of potential shortage or pressure for volumes in the market” (GHILOTTI 2024), which actually already happened in early 2024. Before its closure during the final year of its operation, Groningen produced 2.4 bcm natural gas, which was around 1% of the total European demand volume and 10% of the Dutch one in 2022 (BEDESCHI 2023).

In the near future Romania will, however, experience the exact opposite trend. In June 2023, the final investment decision was taken in relation to develop the Neptun Deep project. According to the plans, drilling starts in 2024 and production is expected in 2027 at 8 bcm annual capacity, which is almost equal to Romania's total 2022 production.

Regarding the question whether the European countries would like to extend their production, one of the natural gas reports noted an important observation:

“Even amid extreme high wholesale gas prices at the European hubs, domestic production in most of the European countries could not increase significantly, suggesting that there are technical and societal/environmental obstacles (e.g. depleted gas fields, significant resistance from the society for further gas production owing to damages in some countries, etc.) play more important role than economic profitability, which result in permanently dwindling production in the EU. Relatively long lead time to mobilise investment and develop economically viable and socially/environmentally acceptable projects in the densely populated European territory may also have contributed to the overall insignificant increase in domestic gas production” (European Commission 2022d: 07).

In this context one may ask if neither the crises nor the higher economic profit was able to mobilise higher gas production then what would be able to do so?

In addition to internal natural gas production, changing in demand could be an important factor, too, to alter supply security. The EU's overall natural gas consumption, just like its production, shows a declining trend. According to the quarterly gas reports, the EU's total gas consumption amounted to 412 bcm in 2021, 356 bcm in 2022 and 330 bcm by the end of the third quarter of 2023, representing a 10% decrease year-on-year.

In early 2023, the *International Energy Agency* (hereinafter IEA) published an analysis and summarised the key factors that drove the record fall in the natural gas demand in 2022 (ZENIEWSKI et al. 2023). In their analysis they identified overall 10 factors in three key sectors: power, buildings, industry. Going more into the details, several connections can be noticed that may have a decisive role in the future, as well.

For example, one could take notice that the whole decrease was actually 85 bcm instead of 55 bcm. However, there were variables which increased gas consumption. The two notable examples are the lesser output from nuclear power and hydropower. In both cases, the missing volume was replaced mostly by more natural gas usage. These two examples highlight that technological and environmental criteria are also factors to be taken into account in the diversification of future energy supplies.

The former was primarily the result of the French capacity drop, caused by factors including corrosion problems and routine inspections postponed due to Covid-19, which together resulted in such a significant change that a large number of reactors were shut down for a long period of time. In August 2022, at its peak, this ratio was 65%, when none of the 56 reactors were in operation. As a local consequence, France became a net electricity importer in that year, which was unprecedented since 1980 (RTE 2023).

The latter was the consequence of a significant drought affecting mostly the southern European countries and causing troubles around hydropower production, especially in Spain and Italy (LAURO 2022). Considering that 2022 was the 6th hottest year (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2023), and 2023 was the hottest by far (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2024), if the trend lasts longer, serious hydropower outages can be expected in the upcoming years, too.

In addition to the question of natural gas production and consumption, the final element which could influence the internal supply diversification is the condition of the energy systems. The more interconnected a system is, the greater its flexibility, which can improve security of supply by reducing delivery times, enabling larger quantities to be delivered and providing more potential players. This could be applicable to the gas system and the electricity grids as well. Regarding the natural gas infrastructure, some notable expansions since 2022 are the Baltic Pipe, the Greece–Bulgaria interconnector, the Poland–Slovakia interconnector and new LNG facilities in Finland, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Regarding electricity, the aforementioned current PCI list contains more than 20 electricity interconnection projects. Moreover, the EU's *Action Plan for Grids* also emphasised that “an accelerated energy transition requires a shift towards a decentralised, digitalised, integrated and flexible system [...]. In the next seven years, we should double our cross-border transmission infrastructure” (European Commission 2022f).

One particular example representing the need for greater integration of natural gas and electricity networks is Spain. Even though the country receives a great amount of LNG and has huge renewables potential and has presented ambitious hydrogen plans, it is hardly integrated into the European gas and electricity networks, therefore the Iberian Peninsula is often referred to as an energy island (RIBÓ PÉREZ 2023).

Internal replacement of natural gas by new sources

For higher internal diversification of the existing energy production, three ways seem the most probable currently: more renewable energy, nuclear energy and hydrogen. 2023 was a record year regarding renewables. For the first time, more than a quarter of EU electricity (27%) was provided by wind and solar in 2023, up from 23% in 2022. “This drove renewable electricity to a record high of 44%, passing the 40% mark for the first year in the EU’s history” (BROWN–JONES 2024). “Also wind generation reached a major milestone, surpassing gas for the first time” (BROWN–JONES 2024).

In case of substituting fossil fuels and accelerating Europe’s clean energy transition the *REPowerEU* plan envisages a massive buildout of renewable capacity. In this context, the document proposed to increase the already settled target for the share of renewables in gross final consumption from 40% to 45%. The amended *Renewable Energy Directive* in 2023 set out a target of 42.5% while suggesting that “beyond mandatory level, Member States should endeavour to collectively achieve an overall Union renewable energy target of 45% in line with *REPowerEU*” (European Parliament 2023). In this progress, solar and wind power were appointed to play a crucial role.

In case of solar power, 320 GW of solar photovoltaic capacity should be installed by 2025 and almost 600 GW by 2030 (European Commission 2022e). The 2023 solar generation capacity was 260 GW (European Commission s. a.a).

In case of wind power, the target is to reach over 500 GW by 2030 (European Commission 2023d), more than doubling the 2023 capacity of 221 GW (European Commission s. a.b).

Both the *Solar Energy Strategy* and the *European Wind Power Action Plan* estimate the annually required capacity expansion to meet their target. In case of solar power, it is around 45 GW and for the wind power 37 GW. Regarding the last two year’s instalments, new solar capacities were 41 GW and 56 GW, while new wind capacities were 16 GW and 17 GW in 2022 and 2023 respectively (BROWN–JONES 2024). As it can be seen, the EU assigns solar and wind powers as the backbone in its green transition strategy since the *REPowerEU plan* envisioned a total of

1,236 GW renewable energy generation by 2030 (European Commission 2022a). Even though this was measured by 45% share and finally 42.5 was accepted in the amended *Renewable Energy Directive*, so the final target is slightly less, but this does not affect the overall question, notably will the EU be able to achieve its aims? Since, as it can be noticed in terms of installed wind capacities, the EU is already behind its estimated annual projections.

Higher internal installation rate means, on the one hand, more production of the given technology or, on the other, more import of it. Even though the EU has adequate production bases, the lack of necessary raw materials in its soil inevitably means that sooner or later import becomes a must even in case of domestic production. To underpin this statement, the supply chains of solar and wind energy infrastructures with their respective elements need to be examined.

The *Joint Research Centre* (hereinafter JRC) the Commission's science and knowledge service has published its report in 2023 providing systemic and detailed analysis of 15 key technologies which are indispensable in the green and digital transition by assessing supply chain dependencies and forecasting material demands. The study applies a universal 5-stage-long supply chain model; raw materials, processed materials, components, assemblies, super assemblies. At each stage of each technology the global production shares of countries or groups of countries are represented. Note that not every technology owns all the 5 stages as it will be seen regarding the percentages below.

In case of solar photovoltaics, the EU's share is stage by stage 4%–12%–11%–2% respectively. The biggest player of the sector is China, owning 45%–41%–54%–70% respectively. The 70% is more overwhelming in the light of the fact that the second biggest share belongs to the rest of Asia with 10% (CARRARA et al. 2023: 62).

In case of wind turbines, the EU's share is stage by stage 2%–15%–24%–10%–34% respectively. The biggest player in the sector again is China, owning 42%–36%–49%–53%–52% stage by stage respectively (CARRARA et al. 2023: 46).

Even though the gap in the final stage which is related to the manufacturing of wind turbines is the lowest, it is worth mentioning that, since the previous report in 2020, "EU share in global production has decreased from 58% to 34%, while the Chinese share has increased from 23% to 52%" (CARRARA et al. 2023: 47).

Furthermore, in terms of magnet manufacturing, which is an essential element in many wind turbines, China owns more than 90% of it and conducts 63% mining of a group of elements, the so-called *Rare Earth Elements* (hereinafter REEs) from which some are necessary for preparing these magnets (CARRARA et al. 2023: 50).

The REEs are part of a bigger group of elements called *critical raw materials* (hereinafter CRMs) which are "raw materials of a high importance to the economy of

the EU and whose supply is associated with a high risk” (GROHOL–VEEH 2023: 44). This high risk of supply derives from the fact that the production or processing of these raw materials are geographically concentrated. The risk usually refers to a tangible transport issue or to a fear that because of the delicate relations between some of the countries and the EU, politically motivated and conducted supply disruptions could appear. Some CRMs like REEs are also considered *strategic raw materials* (hereinafter SRMs) as well, which in turn reflect their “importance for technologies that support the twin green and digital transition and defence and aerospace objectives” (GROHOL–VEEH 2023: 46).

According to the aforementioned data it looks like the European green transition which is profoundly built on solar and wind power is heavily dependent on China, especially in case of the former, which is, moreover, the more prominent one among those two in terms of projected capacities in the EU's strategy. China, of course, is far from being the only example for this kind of CRMs–SRMs concentration, however, regarding its geopolitical influence, probably the most notable.

By failing to settle the supply security issue of CRMs–SRMs, the EU would risk being the subject of Chinese dominance, which could potentially undermine not just the internal diversification efforts, but the whole course of green transition.

Acknowledging the importance of these raw materials, the EU Commission proposed their regulation in 2023 by the so-called *Critical Raw Material Act* (hereinafter CRM Act) with the general objective “to improve the functioning of the internal market by establishing a framework to ensure the Union's access to a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials” (European Commission 2023e). To achieve this, the regulation among others, proposes three benchmarks:

“(1) Union extraction capacity is able to extract the ores, minerals or concentrates needed to produce at least 10% of the Union's annual consumption of strategic raw materials, to the extent that the Union's reserves allow for this; (2) Union processing capacity, including for all intermediate processing steps, is able to produce at least 40% of the Union's annual consumption of strategic raw materials; (3) Union recycling capacity, including for all intermediate recycling steps, is able to produce at least 15% of the Union's annual consumption of strategic raw materials” (European Commission 2023e).

Besides solar and wind power, there are two other means for replacing natural gas, which are nuclear power and hydrogen. What they have in common is that both receive more and more attention nowadays and are expected to ramp up massively by the upcoming decades.

Different sources have suggested that a new, more supporting narrative for nuclear energy has started to emerge recently. “For the first time since the annual climate summits commenced in 1995, the 198 signatory countries to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) officially called for accelerating the deployment of low-emission technologies including nuclear energy to help achieve deep and rapid decarbonisation, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors such as industry and through the low carbon production of hydrogen” (DONOVAN 2023).

An IEA report published in 2022 suggested that

“there are economic and technical challenges to be overcome, and not all countries will pursue nuclear energy as an option, but rising climate ambitions in many countries and today’s energy crisis offer reasons to take a fresh look at what nuclear energy can deliver [...]. Since that last report, the policy landscape has shifted in ways that favour nuclear energy” (FRASER 2022).

Pro-nuclear public opinion seemed to rise from 2021 to 2022 as well in some EU countries like Belgium, France, Germany, Italy or Spain. A particular element as a related study highlights is that the biggest increase in favour “is particularly strong in countries where anti-nuclear positions are predominant and entrenched such as Italy or Germany” (BRUGIDOU–BOUILLET 2023). The study also argues that in case of support for nuclear energy “the shift from a risk-based framework, due to the health crisis, to an economic-based framework, this time essentially linked to the war in Ukraine, is a factor” (BRUGIDOU–BOUILLET 2023).

The latest symbolic and meaningful sign of the growing interest in nuclear power was the very first *Nuclear Energy Summit* held on 21 March 2024 co-hosted by Belgium and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Brussels, where more than 30 countries and the EU gathered and focused entirely on nuclear energy and presented national statements as well as participated in panel discussions dedicated to relevant aspects of the sector.

During the summit, Ursula von der Leyen had marked four tasks in relation with the nuclear sector: “(1) invest now in climate neutrality 2050, (2) broaden your engagement with clean energy transition, (3) consider the extending of lifetimes of existing plans with full commitment to the highest level of safety and (4) innovate.” She also highlighted: “If the industry and governments can deliver on these tasks then I can see a way forward for nuclear power to make a significant contribution to a rapid safe and secure Net Zero future” (European Commission 2024).

At the same event French President Emmanuel Macron underlined that currently our challenge is to deliver on climate change, improve our sovereignty by securing

our energy and improve our competitiveness. To reconcile these elements, a relevant and consistent energy approach is needed, which is for him reliance on efficiency and innovation, renewables and nuclear energy. In order to do so he also provided his eight remarks which gravitated around these phrases: producing more capacity, financing, securing the industry's value chain, competence, waste management, innovation, interconnection and safety (IAEA 2024).

What Macron says is extremely relevant in at least two respects. On the one hand, nowadays there is a so-called *Nuclear Alliance* forming around France in which “ministers and high-level representatives agreed to work together on a road map to deepen their cooperation and trigger the involvement of the European Union in the field of nuclear energy” (Réunion des pays de l'Alliance du nucléaire 2023). On the other hand, France is the leading country in the EU in terms of nuclear energy capacity.

Throughout the whole summit, the *Small Modular Reactors* (hereinafter SMRs) had come up frequently by different participants and in different situations, which implies that the concept itself within the broader topic of nuclear energy has started to gain more and more attention. It is not surprising, since the concept has the potential to revolutionise the entire sector because it could be produced and installed cheaper, faster and easier.

Considering these factors, SMRs could serve the energy supply diversification attempts in many ways, for example by decentralising the nuclear energy system, the power grid, or contribute to the production of hydrogen. There are around 80 SMR designs and concepts worldwide, while the earliest commercialisation of the technology is expected around 2030.

The recent change and growing prospect around nuclear energy, however, also raise some questions about the future as well, especially regarding the value chain of uranium. Since the element is the most frequently used fuel in nuclear reactors, attempts to increase significantly the nuclear capacities have therefore consequences on the uranium's value chain as well, especially regarding its mining and enrichment. Both cited stages show some concentration similar to the CRMs, nevertheless, not on as high level as in the case of REEs.

In terms of mining, Kazakhstan was the first producer supplying around 40% of the global natural uranium, while the second largest global producer was Canada with around 15% (World Nuclear Association 2023). Meanwhile, regarding enrichment, the main actor is Russia dominating this market segment by around 40% share in 2023 (Enerdata 2024).

In 2022, the EU procured 17% of its natural uranium from Russia, while the figure for enriched uranium was 30%. Other significant partners for the EU were

for natural uranium Kazakhstan (27%), Niger (25%) and Canada (22%). Regarding the enriched uranium, there were no other significant external partners, yet the intra-EU share was 62% (Euratom Supply Agency 2024).

Growing interest, especially on a global scale, could result in more projects and upcoming capacity expansions. In case of the EU, around 50GW new capacity is envisioned by 2050 (Réunion des pays de l'Alliance du nucléaire 2023).

Regarding the growing interest and the central role of uranium, Russia's position in the sector could become more prominent. The potential consequences are hard to guess, but if demand grows significantly, maybe even faster than the supply could cope with it, interruptions along the supply chain and price increases may be expected, just like a stronger Russian influence in the sector. These potential changes could challenge the way for achieving a more profound European strategic autonomy as well.

Finally, the last structural opportunity to diversify the internal energy sector is related to green hydrogen. This energy vector gets probably the most hype even though the distance between related existing infrastructures and future projects is the greatest also.

In addition to its envisioned revolutionary potential as a fuel, thus replacing fossil ones in the transport sector, hydrogen could be used in the energy system as well. Regarding its inter-convertibility, it could be used either as storage or balancing in electricity networks.

The REPowerEU plan set an overall target of 20 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen by 2030 from which 10 million tonnes should be produced domestically and the other 10 would arrive as import. To be able to produce that quantity inside, the EU needs producing capacity and transport infrastructure as well.

Regarding infrastructure, there is already approximately 1,600 km hydrogen pipeline in Europe (MARTIN 2023). These pipelines "at the moment mostly deliver hydrogen from the place of production to the points where it is consumed by specific sectors (such as oil refining or petrochemical industry)" (PATONIA et al. 2023: 6). According to the *Clean Hydrogen Monitor 2023* published by Hydrogen Europe in 2023: "The refining and ammonia sectors together account for 81% of the total consumption of hydrogen in the EU, EFTA, and the UK" (FONSECA et al. 2023: 12).

Regarding the upcoming transporting infrastructure, the *European Hydrogen Backbone's* latest report from November 2023 "highlights a set of 40 concrete projects managed by the EHB's TSO members, representing 31,500 kilometres of hydrogen pipelines with expected commissioning prior to 2030" (European Hydrogen Backbone 2023: 4). The already mentioned PCI-PMI list also contains

hydrogen related projects from which 30 is related to hydrogen infrastructures and interconnections, 17 to electrolyzers and 7 to hydrogen storages.

In addition to the envisioned growing hydrogen transport infrastructure, the increasing demand would mean a growing need for internal production as well, for example, via growing needs for electrolyzers. This scenario, similarly to the case of solar, wind and nuclear power, brings up again the question of supply chain. Thanks to being part of those 15 key technologies which were elaborated, the already cited JRC report deals with the electrolyzers as well which has the duty to split water into oxygen and hydrogen. Actually, the report examines 4 types of electrolyser supply chains.

The average production share of the EU for these 4 types stage by stage were 3%–20%–35%–50%, so a very small share of raw material combined with a quite high one related to manufacture. Here, China is once again an important player with a share of 30%–20%–10%–8%, but less dominant than in the case of renewable energy sources already examined, thanks to the greater diversity of the global market. In terms of raw materials, Africa (24%), Latin America (11%) and the rest of Asia (11%) are the main players, while in terms of components and assemblies, the U.S., Japan and the rest of Europe are the other influential players, with shares ranging from 10% to 30% (CARRARA et al. 2023: 35).

Regarding its potential usage and the EU's market share, it would be tempting to conclude that hydrogen could play a decisive role in replacing natural gas. However, this depends largely on the extent of future use, which undoubtedly promises to be ambitious, but the current infrastructure could hardly be taken into account in this context. Furthermore, as it is intended to be a 'green' energy source, the future of the hydrogen sector in Europe is currently linked to the development of renewables, while only a small percent of the global and European hydrogen production currently comes from electrolysis and renewable energy sources. Most of it is produced using natural gas and a process called "steam reforming".

CONCLUSIONS

The Russian–Ukrainian war had presented an unprecedented challenge to the European Union in the field of energy. As a reaction, the *REPowerEU plan* has emerged, which appoints the speed up of the dual strategy of abandoning Russian fossil fuels and accelerating green transition. Both the challenge and the response can be interpreted in relation to strategic autonomy, since the very essence of these concepts is to act autonomously – that is, without being dependent, thus, autonomy could be increased by reducing high energy dependence. To do so, energy supply

diversification serves as a cornerstone, however, it is itself a complex issue and brings up not just solutions but new challenges, as well.

This becomes more evident by examining the concept in more detail. As the external dimension of the energy supply diversification, which is import centric by nature, the EU could rather reshape the origins of its natural gas import mix or start to look for new resources to replace it. In the case of the former, the significantly increasing LNG import from the U.S. is probably the most noteworthy. While this could be considered a success in the short term, it may raise certain questions in the long term especially in the event of an accidental overreliance, which could pose a challenge to European strategic autonomy, given the shift in dependence from Russia to the U.S. As an alternative to natural gas import, the EU could also import electricity or hydrogen, which, according to the EU's strategic guidelines, should come from renewable sources, mostly by solar or wind power. Africa appears to be a key potential supplier of both electricity and hydrogen in the future, thanks to its unique features in terms of abundant solar and wind energy. Even though the parties involved have already developed strategies and approaches, these opportunities raise technological and political questions, the latter of which could have repercussions for the EU.

As an internal dimension of energy supply diversification, which is production and technology intensive, the EU could instead accelerate its own natural gas production and/or reduce its demand and/or replace it. The former involves events with various consequences, such as the closure of the Groningen gas field in the Netherlands or the envisioned production ramp-up in the future, related to Romania's Neptun Deep project. Although this project is likely to make Romania the EU's number one producer of natural gas, and the amount of natural gas potentially produced from 2027 onwards could be significant at local and regional level, it will be far from being a decisive factor in the overall European gas demand, which is orders of magnitude greater than this. All this is supplemented by the fact that EU countries in general do not seem to be willing to significantly increase their natural gas production, which means that internal natural gas production seems to be a limited option in terms of diversification.

At the same time, renewables (solar, wind and green hydrogen) and nuclear energy could serve as a tool to replace natural gas. In these cases, the EU either has to import the related technology and infrastructure or create and build it out its own by itself. Nuclear energy is undergoing a reappraisal by both the public and politicians, and growing interest could lead to growing demand. In this case, Russia's influence may also increase, as uranium is the most commonly used nuclear fuel and Russia is the world's leading uranium enricher. However, the EU's exposure in this area appears to be lower than for certain key renewable energy raw materials. Concerning the

infrastructure related to solar power, wind power and green hydrogen production, the EU has a good foundation, but in terms of critical raw materials, it is anything but abundant, which means that these elements must be imported. Observing the value chain for these infrastructures reveals that one country, China, has a significant presence in many cases all along the supply chain and for a number of different critical raw materials. Chinese dominance is sometimes so overwhelming that one may say that the whole future of the European green transition project is currently in China's hands. Since the green transition is a key part of energy supply diversification in both practice and in theory, this Chinese dominance could also have a strong impact on the future extent of strategic autonomy.

As a summary, it can be said that energy supply diversification had already reached some serious success and will continue to serve as a cornerstone in the EU's strategy related to energy issues. However, what must be emphasised is that energy supply diversification is far from being an easy fired silver bullet. Rather, it is – as it was elaborated throughout the previous chapters – a really complex multi-level, multi-sectoral, multi-temporal and multi-policy issue. The EU must therefore develop a real masterplan to balance all of these and thereby maximise its strategic autonomy in the field of energy.

REFERENCES

- Al Jazeera (2023): World Water Day: Mapping Water Stress across the Middle East. *Al Jazeera*, 22 March 2023. Online: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/22/world-water-day-mapping-water-stress-across-the-middle-east>
- ALBRECHT, Peter – LADEKJÆR GRAVESEN, Marie (2023): *Three Frontlines in Africa's Resource Conflicts. Green Transitions, Nature Conservation and the Drylands*. Danish Institute for International Studies. Online: <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/three-frontlines-in-africas-resource-conflicts>
- BALANYÁ, Belén (2023): The EU's Hydrogen Plans Are a Dangerous Distraction Driven by Corporate Interests. *Euronews*, 12 October 2023. Online: <https://www.euronews.com/2023/10/12/the-eus-hydrogen-plans-are-a-dangerous-distraction-driven-by-corporate-interests>
- BEDESCHI, Beatrice (2023): Dutch Groningen Gas Field Shuts Down Permanently. *Gas Outlook*, 16 October 2023. Online: <https://gasoutlook.com/analysis/dutch-groningen-gas-field-shuts-down-permanently/>
- BROWN, Sarah – JONES, Dave (2024): European Electricity Review 2024. *Ember*, 7 February 2024. Online: <https://ember-climate.org/insights/research/european-electricity-review-2024/>
- BRUGIDOU, Mathieu – BOUILLET, Jeremy (2023): *A Return to Grace for Nuclear Power in European Public Opinion? Some Elements of a Rapid Paradigm Shift*. Fondation Robert Schuman. Online: <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0662-a-return-to-grace-for-nuclear-power-in-european-public-opinion-some-elements-of-a-rapid-paradigm>

- CAGNIN, Cristiano – MUENCH, Stefan – SCAPOLO, Fabiana – STOERMER, Eckhard – VESNIC ALUJEVIC, Lucia (2021): *Shaping and Securing the EU's Open Strategic Autonomy by 2040 and Beyond*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2760/414963>
- CARRARA, Samuel – BOBBA, Silvia – BLAGOEVA, Darina – ALVES DIAS, Patricia – CAVALLI, Alessandro – GEORGITZIKIS, Konstantinos – GROHOL, Milan – ITUL, Anca – KUZOV, Teodor – LATUNUSSA, Cynthia – LYONS, Lorcan – MALANO, Giorgia – MAURY, Thibaut – PRIOR ARCE, Ángel – SOMERS, Julian – TELSNIIG, Thomas – VEEH, Constanze – WITTMER, Dominic – BLACK, Catriona – PENNINGTON, David – CHRISTOU, Michalis (2023): *Supply Chain Analysis and Material Demand Forecast in Strategic Technologies and Sectors in the EU – A Foresight Study*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2760/386650>
- CVCE (1998): *Joint Declaration Issued at the British–French Summit (Saint-Malo, France, 4 December 1998)*. Online: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/franco_british_st_malo_declaration_4_december_1998-en-f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f.html
- DAMEN, Mario (2022): *EU Strategic Autonomy 2013–2023. From Concept to Capacity*. Briefing. *EU Strategic Autonomy Monitor*, July 2022. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733589](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)733589)
- DONOVAN, Jeffrey (2023): *Nuclear Energy Makes History as Final COP28 Agreement Calls for Faster Deployment*. International Atomic Energy Agency. Online: <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/nuclear-energy-makes-history-as-final-cop28-agreement-calls-for-faster-deployment>
- Enerdata (2024): *The Supply of Enriched Uranium. Dynamics and Challenges Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine*. Online: <https://www.enerdata.net/publications/executive-briefing/uranium-enrichment.html>
- Euratom Supply Agency (2024). *Market Observatory*. Online: https://euratom-supply.ec.europa.eu/activities/market-observatory_en
- European Commission (2019): *Water Consumption Solution for Efficient Concentrated Solar Power*. Online: <https://projects.research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/en/projects/success-stories/all/water-consumption-solution-efficient-concentrated-solar-power>
- European Commission (2020): *A Hydrogen Strategy for a Climate-neutral Europe*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0301>
- European Commission (2021): *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*. Online: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d99eef32-84db-4ebo-99b9-a61cc0cd1419_en?filename=Quarterly%20report%20on%20European%20gas%20markets_Q4%202021.pdf
- European Commission (2022a): *REPowerEU Plan*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:230:FIN&qid=1653033742483>
- European Commission (2022b): *EU External Energy Engagement in a Changing World*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=JOIN:2022:23:FIN>
- European Commission (2022c): *EU–Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package. Africa–EU Green Energy Initiative*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_22_1120
- European Commission (2022d): *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*. Online: <https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/Quarterly%20Report%20on%20European%20Gas%20Markets%20report%20Q4%202022.pdf>

- European Commission (2022e): *EU Solar Energy Strategy*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A221%3AFIN&qid=1653034500503>
- European Commission (2023a): *Annex. The Union List of Projects of Common Interest and Projects of Mutual Interest ('Union List')*. Online: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/3db5e3d1-9989-4d10-93e3-67f5b9ad9103_en?filename=Annex%20PCI%20PMI%20list.pdf
- European Commission (2023b): *Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic and Global Partnership between the European Union and Tunisia*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3887
- European Commission (2023c): *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*. Online: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/64002c8c-5961-4ef2-a576-80ad135fbdde_en?filename=New_Quarterly_Report_on_European_Gas_Markets_Q3_2023.pdf
- European Commission (2023d): *European Wind Power Action Plan*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023DCo669&qid=1702455143415>
- European Commission (2023e): *CRM Act Proposal*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023PCo160>
- European Commission (2023f): *EU Action Plans for Grids*. Online: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/attachment/876888/Factsheet_EU%20Action%20Plan%20for%20Grids.pdf
- European Commission (2024): *Nuclear Energy Summit 2024 – Press Statement by President von der Leyen*. *You Tube*, 21 March 2024. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM-ZmElrTEY>
- European Commission (s. a.a): *Solar Energy*. Online: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/solar-energy_en
- European Commission (s. a.b): *EU Wind Energy*. Online: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/eu-wind-energy_en
- European Council (2013): *European Council Conclusions*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-217-2013-INIT/en/pdf>
- European Council (2024a): *Where Does the EU's Gas Come From?* Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-gas-supply/>
- European Council (2024b): *Liquefied Natural Gas Infrastructure in the EU*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/lng-infrastructure-in-the-eu/#0>
- European Hydrogen Backbone (2023): *Implementation Roadmap – Cross Border Projects and Costs Update*. Online: <https://ehb.eu/files/downloads/EHB-2023-20-Nov-FINAL-design.pdf>
- European External Action Service (2016): *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_o.pdf
- European Parliament (2023): *Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of the European Parliament and of the Council*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023L2413&qid=1699364355105>
- Eurostat (2023): *Natural Gas Supply Statistics*. Online: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/SEPDF/cache/10590.pdf>
- FONSECA, Joana – MURON, Matus – PAWELEC, Grzegorz – YOVCHEV, Ivan Petar – BELLOMO, Nicolas – MUSE, Katarina – KUHN, Maximilian – FRAILE, Daniel – WACIEGA, Kamila – AZZIMONTI, Matteo – BRODIER, Clémence – ALCALDE, Isabel – ANTAL,

- Márton Ivan – MARSILI, Luca – PAFITI, Antigone – ESPITALIER-NOËL, Marie – GIUSTI, Niccolò – DURDEVIC, Dinko (2023): *Clean Hydrogen Monitor 2023*. Hydrogen Europe. Online: https://hydrogeneurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Clean_Hydrogen_Monitor_11-2023_DIGITAL.pdf
- FRASER, Peter – WANNER, Brent – EVERHART, Keith – HERZOG, Antoine – LOPEZ, Luis – HUNGERFORD, Zoe – SCHOENFISCH, Max – CHEN, Yunyou (2022): *Nuclear Power and Secure Energy Transitions. From Today's Challenges to Tomorrow's Clean Energy Systems*. International Energy Agency. Online: <https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/0498c8b8-e17f-4346-9bde-dad2ad4458c4/NuclearPowerandSecureEnergyTransitions.pdf>
- FURFARI, Samuel (2024): *Énergie, mensonges d'état. La destruction organisée de la compétitivité de l'UE*. Paris: L'artilleur.
- GHILOTTI, Davide (2024): Emergency Supplies Brought in from Europe's Largest Gas Field amid Cold Snap. *Upstream*, 8 January 2024. Online: <https://www.upstreamonline.com/energy-security/emergency-supplies-brought-in-from-europes-largest-gas-field-amid-cold-snap/2-1-1580212>
- Global Solar Atlas (2024). Online: <https://globalsolaratlas.info/map?c=10.833306,-35.859375,2>
- Global Wind Atlas (2024). Online: <https://globalwindatlas.info/en/>
- GROHOL, Milan – VEEH, Constanze (2023): *Study on Critical Raw Materials for the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2873/725585>
- IAEA (2024): Livestream of Nuclear Energy Summit 2024. *YouTube*, 21 March 2024. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XtS88WdLLM&t=12042s>
- International Renewable Energy Agency (2023): *North Africa: Policies and Finance for Renewable Energy*. Online: <https://www.irena.org/Publications/2023/Dec/North-Africa-policies-and-finance-for-renewable-energy>
- KESKES, Hanen – HAYTAYAN, Laury (2023): *Energy Transition in the Middle East and North Africa: The Road to COP28*. Natural Resource Governance Institute. Online: <https://resourcegovernance.org/publications/energy-transition-middle-east-and-north-africa-road-cop28>
- LAURO, Irene (2022): The Impact of Droughts on the Energy Mix. *Schroders*, 5 September 2022. Online: <https://www.schroders.com/en-us/us/individual/insights/the-impact-of-droughts-on-the-energy-mix/>
- MAKAREWICZ-JALLER, Maria Ana (2024): *European LNG Tracker*. Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA). Online: <https://ieefa.org/european-lng-tracker>
- MARTIN, Polly (2023): Belgium Approves €250m of Public Funding for Hydrogen Pipelines throughout Country and into Germany. *Hydrogen Insight*, 17 July 2023. Online: <https://www.hydrogeninsight.com/policy/belgium-approves-250m-of-public-funding-for-hydrogen-pipelines-throughout-country-and-into-germany/2-1-1487495>
- MOKRANI, Mohamed Adem (2022): *La transition énergétique en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie*. Natural Resource Governance Institute. Online: https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/documents/la_transition_energetique_en_algerie_au_maroc_en_tunisie.pdf.pdf
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2023): *2022 Was World's 6th-warmest Year on Record*. Online: <https://www.noaa.gov/news/2022-was-worlds-6th-warmest-year-on-record>
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2024): *2023 Was the World's Warmest Year on Record, by Far*. Online: <https://www.noaa.gov/news/2023-was-worlds-warmest-year-on-record-by-far>

- PATONIA, Aliaksei – LENIVOVA, Veronika – POUDINEH, Rahmat – NOLDEN, Christoph (2023): *Hydrogen Pipelines vs. HVDC Lines: Should We Transfer Green Molecules or Electrons?* The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. Online: https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ET27-Hydrogen-pipelines-vs.-HVDC-lines_HG_AP_2.pdf
- RIBÓ PÉREZ, David (2023): *Energy Without Russia. The Consequences of the Ukraine War and the EU Sanctions on the Energy Sector in Europe*. Country Report Spain. Budapest: Friedrich–Ebert–Stiftung. Online: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/20488.pdf>
- Power Technology (2020): *Noor Ouarzazate Solar Complex*. Online: <https://www.power-technology.com/projects/noor-ouarzazate-solar-complex/?cf-view>
- RTE (2023): *Bilan électrique 2022*. Online: <https://analysesetdonnees.rte-france.com/bilan-electrique-synthese>
- Réunion des pays de l'Alliance du nucléaire (2023): *Déclaration commune*. Online: https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/16_05_23_reunion_des_pays_membres_de_l'alliance_du_nucleaire_a_paris.pdf
- SMIL, Vaclav (2017): *Energy and Civilisation. A History*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Spain's National Office of Foresight and Strategy (2023): *Resilient EU2030*. Online: <https://futuros.gob.es/sites/default/files/2023-09/resilienteu2030.pdf>
- World Nuclear Association (2023): *World Uranium Mining Production*. Online: <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/mining-of-uranium/world-uranium-mining-production.aspx>
- ZARETSKAYA, Victoria – OBER, Max (2023): LNG Export Capacity from North America Is Likely to More than Double through 2027. *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, 13 November 2023. Online: <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=60944>
- ZENIEWSKI, Peter – MOLNÁR, Gergely – HUGUES, Paul (2023): Europe's Energy Crisis: What Factors Drove the Record Fall in Natural Gas Demand in 2022? *International Energy Agency*, 14 March 2023. Online: <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/europe-s-energy-crisis-what-factors-drove-the-record-fall-in-natural-gas-demand-in-2022>

Imre Porkoláb

ACHIEVING STRATEGIC AUTONOMY THROUGH DEFENCE INNOVATION

INTRODUCTION

People wonder sometimes if the effort to invent new weapons to wage war will end. Or to bring up a philosophical question from *The Matrix* movie: do we really need to dodge bullets? This is a relevant question, since contemporary conflicts are rapidly changing the ways we provide security and fight wars. While the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and other hot spots in the world rage on, and we see a re-emergence of state-on-state conflict, innovations in warfare seem to be ever present, contributing to strategic success in a variety of ways.

Technology is being developed at an unprecedented pace. Quantum sensors are being designed to detect the faintest disturbances in the environment, AI applications promise to provide “god-like situational awareness”, and biotech research enables humans to make better decisions.

According to the ancient wisdom of Sun Tzu, if we know ourselves and understand the adversary, we can win a thousand battles. But as emergent disruptive technologies (EDTs) create an increasingly interconnected environment, we must focus on ecosystems instead of the traditional adversary. Today’s most prominent strategic dilemma: providing security in the high-tech, rapidly changing VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) (BENNETT–LEMOINE 2014) environment with a multitude of stakeholders is everything but simple.

Providing order and security was relatively simple in the past. The Greek gods sent bolts of lightning and conjured tempests to work their will and humans have been following their example for centuries striving for situations where a clear winner was easily identified. In contemporary conflicts however, complexity creates a multitude of options, so it is more important than ever to communicate a commander’s intent with clarity and simplicity on the contemporary battlefield.

My basic assumption in this book chapter is that the VUCA environment is the new normal, and that in the rapidly changing security environment, innovation must be part of every defence strategist’s toolkit. I believe that defence innovation, and the ability to adapt to new ways of fighting is a strategic tool. The strategic advantage

lies not so much in developing new technologies, but in changing mindsets through rapid adoption, in order to enable the armed forces to achieve competitive advantage.

To support this assumption, I examine recent trends in the EU as well as NATO, to introduce how innovation has influenced strategic thinking and enables strategic decision-makers with opportunities and unprecedented speed to win future wars, and gain lasting strategic advantage.

EU DEFENCE INNOVATION

The European Union formally approved the *Strategic Compass* (Council of the European Union 2022), at a time when we have been experiencing a volatile and uncertain security environment and the return of state-on-state competition in Europe. The Compass gives the European Union an ambitious plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy by 2030.

In order to be able to act rapidly in a VUCA environment, foresight activities and a networked approach to partners are essential to establish a strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity to tackle different types of crises. Member States have committed themselves to enhancing their defence expenditures to reduce critical military and civilian capability gaps and strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

The EU Member States are increasing defence spending to match their security needs and provide further incentives for Member States to engage in collaborative capability development to operate in traditional (land, sea, air) and newly emerging (cyber and space) domains. Defence technological innovation has the potential to reduce technological and industrial dependencies. The new technologies can be tested during regular live exercises on land and at sea, and adopted in an agile manner to enhance military mobility and reinforce the EU's civilian and military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations by promoting a rapid and more flexible decision-making process (European External Action Service 2023).

The EU's tools, such as the Capability Development Plan (CDP) set eleven priorities. The Overarching Strategic Research Agenda (OSRA) provided a systematic and clear mechanism for collaborative European Defence Research. Moreover, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) aims at developing a more structured way to deliver identified capabilities. The European Defence Agency (EDA) promotes, facilitates and manages Research and Technology activities in 15 technology domains (CapTechs) and acts as a facilitator among its militaries, the European Commission and EU bodies.

The European Defence Fund (EDF) was launched in June 2017 with the aim to contribute to strengthening the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the EU's defence industry and to foster defence cooperation through supporting investment in joint defence research, development of prototypes and acquisition of defence equipment and technology (European External Action Service 2023). The EDF became operational in 2021 with a budget of roughly €8 billion for 2021–2027 to cover both capability development and defence research (European Commission 2021).

A relatively new development is a Hub for European Defence Innovation (HEDI) (European Defence Agency 2022) established by the Foreign Affairs Council in May 2021, in order to call for a reinforcement of EDA's role in fostering defence innovation. In March 2022, in the Strategic Compass the Hub for EU Defence Innovation in EDA was also identified as a key step to boost defence technological innovation and fill strategic gaps. Josep Borrell, Head of EDA in May 2022 stated that in less than two months after the adoption of the EU's Strategic Compass, the EU delivered on one of the Compass's main priorities by establishing the European Defence Agency's Defence Innovation Hub (European Defence Agency 2022).

Three steps have been defined to fully exploit the potential of HEDI. The first step will inspire and promote innovation at the European level: the hub will focus on networking and situational awareness activities. The second step will allow the hub to be operational across all activities and services identified in the initial portfolio. This will set the hub at the heart of facilitating defence innovation across Member States and EU institutions. The third step, HEDI 2.0, is proposed as a way to reach the full potential of the hub as an EU-wide platform for cooperative design and experimentation, embedded in the EU capability development process (European Defence Agency 2022).

An important part of the increased budget is set to be invested by EDA in innovation through HEDI. The Agency's Hub for Defence Innovation provides political and societal support for defence innovation as a consequence of the war against Ukraine, facilitates defence innovation as a catalyst for the preservation of full-spectrum deployable and effective combat power against the backdrop of threats, strengthens the defence innovation ecosystem approach through rapid developments in the commercial sector, increases the impact of non-traditional defence players, and helps to stay ahead of the curve by focusing on the development of emerging and disruptive technologies.

Overall, the European Union's innovation framework focuses on three main pillars: identification of a systemic approach, implementation of ideas, and facilitating outreach to both traditional and non-traditional actors.

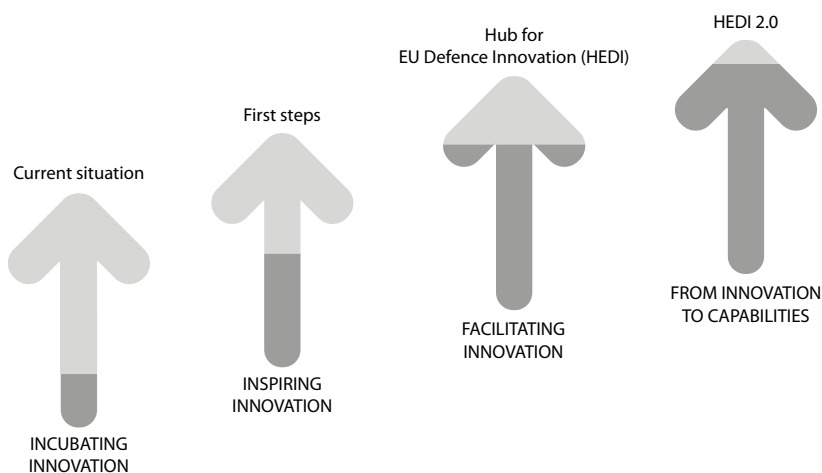


Figure 1. *HEDI's three step approach*
 Source: European Defence Agency 2022

HEDI's vision is to act as a launchpad to ensure the delivery of innovative capabilities to the EU armed forces. Its mission is to stimulate and coordinate cooperation on defence innovation among Member States while ensuring synergies with the European Commission, the European Innovation Council and NATO. The establishment of the governmental European Defence Innovation Network (EDIN) provides mutual support, shares best practices, expertise on issues to be addressed, target audiences and proposed solutions. It is a force multiplier for its participants, allowing problems and solutions to be considered within a European ecosystem. In 2023, the *European Innovation Days* were organised under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency.

The more hostile security environment requires us to make a quantum leap forward and increase our capacity and willingness to act, strengthen our resilience, and invest more and better in our defence capabilities. The European Strategic Compass is to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider, to protect its citizens, to contribute to international peace and security, and to enhance the EU's strategic autonomy and its ability to work with partners to safeguard its values and interests. A stronger and more capable EU in defence innovation will contribute positively to global security and is complementary to NATO's efforts. HEDI is actively collaborating with NATO innovation entities: both DIANA as well as NATO Science and Technology Organisation (STO) are strategic partners.

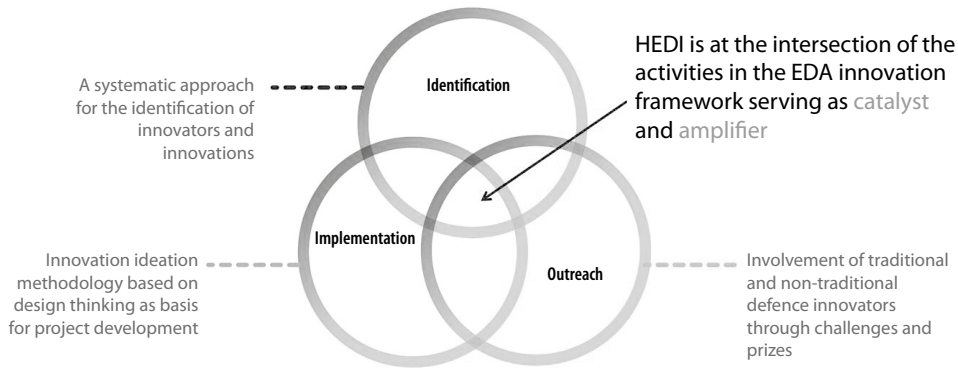


Figure 2. *The three main pillars of the EU's innovation framework*

Source: European Defence Agency 2022

NATO INNOVATION

NATO's innovation effort is spearheaded by the Allied Command Transformation (ACT). The strategic command conducts a significant amount of analysis on strategic foresight (PORKOLÁB–HÖNICH 2021). Two of the most important documents in this area are the *Strategic Foresight Analysis* (SFA), which reviews the processes that will determine the future security environment, and the *Framework for Future Alliance Operations* (FFAO), which provides capability development recommendations based on the SFA for a 15-year horizon.

Both documents are part of a cyclical analytical process: the 2013 SFA report was followed by the first FFAO document in 2015, and the 2017 SFA report was followed by the second FFAO document in 2018. The latest SFA document was published just recently in 2024 (NATO Allied Command Transformation 2023).

The previous SFA and FFAO documents are publicly available and their content is based on open source information and intensive consultation with allied experts. These documents do not have an exclusive technological focus, but they contain important findings on the likely directions and implications of future technological developments. For example, the first SFA publication (2013) already included the ACT's view that monitoring and forecasting technological developments is a necessary task to maintain NATO's technological advantage, and the 2017 SFA publication (NATO Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation 2013) stated that the pace of technological development is increasing and that this may

be to the detriment of defence acquisition processes and interoperability between nations (NATO Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation 2017).

The Strategic Foresight Analysis 2023 (SFA23) provides a shared understanding of the Evolving Security Environment to 2043, thus establishing the context for future thinking for all Allied nations. The renewed foresight cycle, consisting of SFA23, the Future Operating Environment 2024 (FOE24) and deployable foresight analytical capacities, will facilitate collective understanding of future scenarios within the Alliance, as well as augment individual allies' foresight capabilities. The upcoming Future Operating Environment 2024 (FOE24) will address the military problem sets for Allied Warfare Development. FOE24 will also serve as a baseline for further conceptual and strategic thinking.

In 2018, ACT's Strategic Foresight Team looked at specific regions of importance to the Alliance. The purpose of these reports was to contribute to a better visualisation and understanding of the future security environment in regions relevant to NATO security. In 2020, the programme of work supported the *NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept* and *Warfare Development Agenda* development timeline. Accordingly, the development of Regional Perspectives Reports contributed to the understanding of the Allied future operating environment.

These are all capstone documents, but it is important to look beyond NATO's technology-focused strategic foresight for two reasons. On the one hand, strategic foresight activities in recent years have resulted in a number of comprehensive documents with a specific technological focus. On the other hand, the Alliance has been working for years to ensure that the opportunities identified in science and technology can be seized by the Allies, including organisational innovation and accelerated deployment of technologies.

NATO documents that have specifically examined the area of science and technology using the Strategic Foresight methodology and supported NATO innovation have also been present for quite some time. The importance of innovation and technological development as a process that shapes both the present and the future was already highlighted in the final report of the *Multiple Futures Project* in 2009, which draws attention to the fact that the use of technology and innovation can "lead to breakthroughs" in future warfare (NATO Allied Command Transformation 2009). This document points to the need for NATO to develop a comprehensive concept on how to strengthen partnerships with industry and shorten the time between the emergence and deployment of innovative technologies (NATO Allied Command Transformation 2009).

The Technology Trends Survey, published in February 2015, also provides useful insight for those assessing emerging technology trends. Subtitled

“A Thought-Provoking Document to Support NATO’s Defence Planning Process”, the analysis groups technologies into six main categories (NATO Allied Command Transformation 2009). The elements of the list are identified by the BRINES acronym (Biotechnology, Robotics, Information Technology, Nanotechnology and Materials, Energy and Resources, Systems). Two years later, NATO’s Science and Technology Organization published the *Tech Trends Report 2017*, which groups 12 technologies according to whether they will reach peak disruption within the next 6 years, over a 6–20 year time horizon, or beyond 20 years. This technology outlook has also been following the time horizon used by NATO defence planners (NATO Science and Technology Board 2017).

Another definitive and detailed document produced by NATO’s Science and Technology Organisation is the *Science and Technology Trends 2020–2040*, published in March 2020, which looks at a two-decade time horizon. The aim of the report was to map the potential impact of emerging and disruptive technologies on NATO’s military operations, defence capabilities and policy-making space (NATO Science and Technology Organization 2020). Since scientific and technological developments do not take place in a vacuum, the *Science and Technology Trends 2020–2040* report also addresses the social, economic, organisational and protection processes and needs that form the context for technological innovation and development. The annex, which accounts for more than half of the report, takes a look at the current state of the disruptive and emerging technologies, future research directions and the implications for NATO forces.

As a sign of the dynamic change in the processes shaping the Alliance’s security environment, NATO’s Science and Technology Organisation published a new comprehensive document, *Science and Technology Trends 2023–2043*, only three years after the publication of the 2020 publication. Published in spring 2023, the two-volume document is the most comprehensive analysis currently available of how technological developments over the next two decades will shape the Alliance’s security environment and, more specifically, Allied military capabilities. The paper has now expanded the list of emerging and disruptive technologies prioritised by NATO (NATO Science and Technology Organization 2023a; 2023b). The document also addresses the issue of technological convergence, as in many cases the most significant applications may arise from the fusion of different technology areas (e.g. space technologies, hypersonic capabilities and new types of materials).

Another important milestone was the adoption in 2021 of the *Coherent Implementation Strategy on Emerging and Disruptive Technologies*, which aims to maintain NATO’s strategic superiority. This strategy foresees two main efforts in the area of emerging and disruptive technologies: to coordinate the development and

deployment of dual-use technologies at the Alliance level and to provide a forum for coordination between Allies (NATO 2023a). This approach was reaffirmed in the new Strategic Concept 2022, which stated that technological superiority will have an increasing impact on who will prevail on the battlefield and that NATO will increase its investment in emerging and disruptive technologies to maintain the Alliance's interoperability and military advantage (NATO 2022a).

In the Coherent Implementation Strategy, NATO identified seven technology priority areas of strategic importance for the development of defence capabilities: artificial intelligence, data science and computing, autonomous systems, quantum technology, biotechnology and human enhancement technologies, hypersonic technologies and space technology (PORKOLÁB–HÖNICH 2021). This list has since been expanded, with the addition of new types of materials and manufacturing technologies, energy and propulsion systems, and next-generation communication networks (NATO 2023a).

The Alliance has also been working on the preparation of strategic documents dedicated to these technological areas. These include the adoption of the *NATO Artificial Intelligence Strategy* (NATO 2021), the *Implementation Plan for Autonomous Systems* (NATO 2022b), the *Digital Transformation Implementation Strategy* (NATO 2023b), and *NATO's Quantum and Biotechnology Strategies* (NATO 2023a).

It is becoming obvious that in the current defence planning cycle, the above-mentioned long-term considerations are focused on emerging and disruptive technologies and innovation, and NATO collectively believes that the Alliance could lose its technological advantage and even fall behind if it keeps these as longer-term "goals", and therefore the application of emerging and disruptive technologies should be integrated into the short- and medium-term mandatory capability goals.

As NATO has recognised this necessity, the Alliance is working hard to understand and keep pace with the rapidly changing VUCA environment. Part of the response is defence innovation: identifying, developing and adopting the dual-use emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs), which can help us address the myriad of challenges we face on an everyday basis.

However, the days in which disruptive innovations are driven by governments are over. It is now the civilian private sector that pushes the boundaries of technological feasibility. Today's innovators consider the defence sector to be impenetrable, bureaucratic, lacking funding opportunities and without a clear commitment to novelty or pathways to the adoption of their inventions. NATO has realised that there is a need for change, and created DIANA (the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic). In combination with DIANA, the NATO Innovation



Figure 3. *NATO DIANA network 2024 – Accelerator Sites*

Source: NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic 2024



Figure 4. NATO DIANA network 2024 – Test Centres

Source: NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic 2024

Fund – the world’s first multi-sovereign venture capital fund – was also created to represent a radical and progressive response to this challenge.

Staffed by experts in innovation and equipped with an agile and flexible organisational structure, DIANA works directly with leading innovators and entrepreneurs – from early-stage startups to more mature companies – helping them to test their ideas, secure grant funding and get commercial advice to help their businesses succeed.

DIANA is already up and running, with a regional office operating in the U.K., another planned in Canada, and a hub in Estonia. DIANA also has a network of

over twenty accelerator sites and more than 180 test centres in innovation clusters across the Alliance – and this network will continue to grow.

In 2023 pilot challenges for innovators were launched with great success in three key areas: energy resilience (NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic 2023a), secure information sharing (NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic 2023b), and sensing and surveillance (NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic 2023c). 1,300 SMEs from all NATO countries have put forward applications to these challenges, and the winners are working with selected DIANA Accelerators now to develop their capabilities further.

In the long term, DIANA will concentrate on other emerging and disruptive technologies that NATO has identified as priorities. Once it achieves full operating capability in 2025, DIANA will run up to ten challenges per year. Just imagine the sheer amount of technological development opportunities this network creates in the upcoming 2–3 years. It is a hugely exciting moment. DIANA's ambition, together with the NATO Innovation Fund, is to create a globally impactful innovation engine – incubating technologies in a networked manner that help guide us towards a safer and more sustainable world.

The possibilities are far reaching. Perhaps the most important one is the evolution of new clusters of dual-use innovation centres across the Alliance, and the quicker development and adoption of transformative technologies by end-users in Allied nations – in turn, leading to better real-world impacts.

As DIANA quickly becomes a trusted brand – providing innovators with a respected hallmark for future investors, joint venture partners and collaborators, in the next couple of years we will see the effects of de-risking pathways to success, exponentially increasing the number of regional initiatives, and building up a new innovation pipeline.

Way ahead: Rapid adoption

As we have seen in the EU and NATO examples, there are several promising changes to seed up the processes to achieve technological advantage of our forces, but this advantage is being challenged every day. The main problem is not rapid prototyping, but pushing these technologies to the warfighters faster than our adversaries.

For the past ten to fifteen years, western forces have been largely preoccupied with off-the-ground operations and relatively low-tech counterterrorism conflicts. During this time, much of the defence R&D has focused on incremental innovations

in existing systems, and improvements have sought to address existing capability gaps. However, the focus on great power conflicts today is becoming increasingly important, and potential adversaries are seeking to close the technological gap with NATO countries as quickly as possible.

In this defence innovation competition, traditional defence industry research and development processes, increasing production capacity and developing platform-centric capabilities of the armed forces are key, but not sufficient in themselves. Redeploying resources into defence innovation, supporting small businesses and accelerating the deployment of dual-use disruptive technology products are essential to maintain strategic competitive advantage.

So far, I have called for the need to lay the foundations for a more dynamic strategic innovation process, rather than slow and inflexible incremental adaptation, in order to respond effectively to the challenges of long-term strategic competition and emerging technologies. But there is one critical piece that is even more important: rapid adoption.

To resolve this, DIANA's charter addresses the need for developing a rapid adoption service (NATO 2022c). According to the charter, the Rapid Adoption Service will use agile contracting methods to transform emerging and disruptive technologies promoted and protected through DIANA into tangible products for NATO nations and/or NATO to test and systematise. To this end, the rapid deployment mechanism is composed of three strands: the tech-to-market strand, the agile adaptation strand and the rapid procurement strand.

As we can see, DIANA shows the way ahead for nations and NATO enterprise members, to shift focus from solution iteration to prototype delivery and product procurement testing. In order to put adaptation into practice, the DIANA Board of Directors have set up a Rapid Adaptation Expert Group to facilitate the sharing of best practices on agile contracting and rapid adaptation, and their effective testing by small businesses that have already proved themselves in DIANA's challenges and are currently working with accelerator centres.

How can DIANA help allied nations achieve rapid deployment of disruptive technologies developed to solve defence and security problems? The mission of the Rapid Deployment Expert Working Group is to provide innovators with a toolkit to move between various technology readiness levels (TRL). Pushing technologies from TRL₄ to TRL₆ technology maturity levels by developing market introduction, military adaptation and rapid acquisition methodologies, i.e. accelerate prototyping, and bridge the gap between TRL₇ and TRL₉ technology maturity levels, i.e. between prototype demonstration and product deployment in the operational field is especially important.

On the tech-to-market area, it is true that the market uptake of a revolutionary technology fails most of the time not because of problems with the technological foundations, but because not all key players in ecosystem economics are involved, and some critical ecosystem players are left out of the testing. The economic and business requirements of deployment, and the technology's societal licence-to-operate can also shape the definition of the technical problem and the development of solutions at all stages of the RDD&D (research, development, demonstration, deployment) continuum.

At this stage, it is critical to both demonstrate the new technology and the prototype to key stakeholders and decision-makers in a timely manner to assess alignment with market needs and to meet the relevant metrics for the targeted end-user, while also meeting potential venture capital investors.

Looking at agile adaptation, the phenomenon of defence innovation refers to a deliberate technological, organisational and doctrinal shift away from the status quo in order to respond to a new strategic environment and to achieve strategic advantage and competitiveness, including but not limited to warfare (SOARE-POTHIER 2021). Defence structures often limit the flexibility for organisational and doctrinal change, making it difficult to adapt to and effectively integrate new technologies.

Agile adaptation imposes top-down strategic requirements with a lot of support from the top. At the same time, a flexible approach to defining and enforcing requirements is also important to continuously adapt to changing operational needs, threats and technologies (MODIGLIANI et al. 2020). This requires an adaptive requirement system that provides new options for requirement creation, modification and validation, allowing for greater flexibility.

Finally, new thinking is needed on the field of rapid procurement, as well. Once companies commercialise and prototype their dual-use, revolutionary innovation products and services and achieve product-market fit, initial contracting (with both government and commercial partners) remains a challenge.

This is why NATO needs to adapt its own procurement models to the capabilities of startups, which essentially means empowering our procurement professionals to take risks. This requires new ways of financing technologies (involving venture capital) and more agile acquisition models that empower and incentivise the Alliance.

The goal of both nations and the Alliance is to provide breakthrough opportunities for small and medium-sized companies, startups, that provide original solutions, because the defence ecosystem needs the creativity and competition that these smaller entities provide. If fast funding is available, it will broaden the scope of revolutionary innovation efforts and force large companies to compete in the market with new, fresh thinking and actively support smaller players themselves.

HUNGARY'S EFFORTS

Hungary is amongst those nations who would like to make the world and the CEE region a more secure place, and provide lasting peace to our citizens. The government has realised early on that modernisation was absolutely necessary. A five-year strategic preparation has resulted in a massive force modernisation effort launched in 2016. The Hungarian Defence Forces implemented the transformation of its defence capabilities. This initiative is still ongoing and it is a fundamental transformation of the Hungarian defence system, and the modern Hungarian armed forces.

With the massive amount of acquisition of new equipment, the Hungarian Defence Forces entered a new era. The success of the Zrínyi Programme is based on constant renewal, underpinned by the twin pillars of the National Defence Programme and the Force Development Programme. The newly acquired equipment and technological progress entail a transformation of the entire education, training and preparation spectrum. This means that the doctrine, organisation, training, leadership and education will be transformed in parallel with the acquisition of modern equipment, in order to ensure that the Hungarian Defence Forces are prepared to face new threats and challenges.

The programme aims to achieve and maintain military advantage by focusing on the creation of qualitative superiority and timely preparation for the challenges brought about by the dynamically changing security environment.

All this is not happening in a “bubble” in the field of defence, Hungary is working together with countries in our region, notably in the framework of the Visegrád Cooperation (V4), the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC), the Multinational Land Forces (MLF), the Defence Cooperation Initiative (DECI). In order to strengthen regional stability, Hungary is also home to multinational cooperation such as the Central European Multinational Command (HQ MND-C) or the Regional Special Operations Component Command (R-SOCC) (Government of Hungary 2021).

In addition, the force modernisation programme plans to rebuild domestic industrial bases, meaning that it will not only support capability building, but will also contribute to retaining a high-quality workforce and result in more effective capabilities in all respects to support warfighting capabilities (Government of Hungary 2020).

As the development of military equipment takes several years and is usually a very complex, resource-intensive process, it is essential for defence industrial development to quickly and efficiently adapt and integrate existing civilian techniques and methods, develop modular and scalable systems, use open architectures and thereby develop

the domestic industrial base to reduce supply risks and ensure security of supply for equipment deemed important for national security.

Therefore, the Hungarian MoD have also built interface elements, to connect to the existing civilian innovation ecosystem. In 2022, new governmental entities were established within the Ministry of Defence, tasked with rethinking existing R&D processes and laying the foundations for a new defence innovation system. Innovative new defence solutions were created to partner with specialised talent, and to build a knowledge base, as well as agile research facilities. This is why the *Defence Innovation Research Institute* was also created. Its main role is to connect the defence community and the national innovation ecosystem, by continuously refining capability needs and strengthening the links between academia and industry (especially SMEs and startups) through communication of problem areas to be addressed.

A relatively new initiative to create a regional defence innovation enterprise was launched in early 2024. The *Defence Innovation Institute in Central Europe (DIICE)* builds upon the NATO DIANA initiative with a regional focus, and also with an outreach to a region that is critical to regional security in Europe. DIICE strives to become a regional defence innovation powerhouse – incubating dual-use technologies that help guide us towards a safer and more sustainable world.

By reaching out to neighbouring countries as well as towards the Western Balkans, DIICE's goal is to support a new cadre of 'defence innovators and entrepreneurs', who can contribute to this common goal. Hungary's leadership in spearheading a regional initiative to provide the tools necessary to maintain peace and security – augmenting the old-fashioned view of defence – helps to mitigate and prevent future conflicts, and gathers some of the world's best minds on some of the most complex and pressing problems.

Spreading the culture of innovation will be critical. DIICE has the potential to connect and develop technologies together with like-minded organisations in the region and leverage an entrepreneurial mindset. It is not a traditional focal point, but rather facilitates the sharing of ideas to maximise the growth of opportunities for our innovators within the CEE region. A diverse, purpose driven network is very much needed these days to tackle the multitude of acute problems.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

To follow up on my original assumption, the real challenge in innovation is not technological, but more likely a cognitive challenge. The armed forces are a highly

bureaucratic organisation, considered to be slow to change and reluctant to give up traditional ways and preferred, well tested warfighting methodologies (HOLMBERG–ALVINIUS 2019). If that is true, a shift from legacy weapons to autonomous human machine teams is a profound transformation and is one of the greatest challenges for the military, which needs to adapt their mindset to the recent technological tempo very rapidly. Thus, strategic autonomy of the forces hinges on rapid adoption, and these new methods can be very effectively developed and tested through defence innovation systems.

Some might think that the problem itself is not new. In World War I, the airplane was tested in combat, and it was evident that it had important implications for the future of warfare. *Billy Mitchell*, a visionary strategic innovator of that time, argued for a standalone air force, and was immediately opposed by the Army and the Navy (JONES 2019). He eventually became a victim of bureaucratic rivalry, and ended up being court martialled, and convicted of insubordination. He was still there to live and see as prophecies about strategic bombing and the eclipse of the battleship by the airplane were realised.

Another example of a failed strategic innovation attempt was the invention of ballistic missiles by Nazi Germany in World War II. Military leaders saw the great potential of the new technology, but the Army insisted that it should be in charge and the Army Ordnance Command was the best positioned to control them.¹ A huge fight broke out between the services and it continued in spite of the fact that the Navy was able to settle its claims.

Service rivalry is not necessarily a bad thing, in large bureaucratic systems, however, we often seem to lose sight of the mission and the internal fight between various organisations for resources becomes a strategic liability.

All these examples seem to support the idea that developing new technology that has the potential of a strategic surprise or deterrence in and of itself is not the solution. A culture change is necessary to re-write the strategic playbook, and create strategic autonomy, in order to achieve strategic advantage. Defence innovation can help in developing new technologies faster, but, more importantly, it supports the cultural change to rapid adoption, through providing a toolkit for warfighters, the defence enterprise and strategic decision-makers alike.

¹ The Army assigned missile development to Redstone Arsenal under the command of an aggressive and capable ordnance officer, Major General Bruce Medaris. Redstone's resources were greatly strengthened with the arrival in the United States in 1945 of some of the leading German rocket pioneers, including the most famous of them all, Werner von Braun. He and more than 500 specialists had fled south from Peenemunde, where the V-2 missile had been developed, and surrendered to U.S. forces.

If we want to provide security and fight contemporary wars in a VUCA context, then zero-sum strategic games are not the optimal strategic choice. Building up massive armed forces might enable a nation to deter others, but it is not sufficient enough when we are facing a plethora of challenges ranging from nation states through armed groups to terror organisations. If we want to have an “unfair advantage”, we need to create a different playbook and re-write the rules of the game. In today’s ongoing conflict, talent is the new weapon that fuels innovation and small and medium enterprises are the most undervalued weapons in a nation’s strategic arsenal.

Implementing defence innovation means that strategic decision-makers push the emerging and disruptive technologies down to the warfighter faster than the adversaries, and the whole system adapts its doctrine through re-designing the organisational learning methods as well. The end result is changing the mindset of an entire organisation, and re-writing the playbook in order to create strategic advantage.

One might ask how can we keep up with all this? If the traditional approach of Greek gods were heroes sending bolts of lightning, our modern tech-gods of war are more nuanced. The essence of modern warfare is a smart combination of the whole of a nation’s approach to defence as well as strategic deterrence by denial – to prevent adversaries from projecting their power in ways that harm Hungary and its citizens. It is the simple clarity of this mission that makes innovation so valuable. As we face significant major challenges, bold and creative thinking to defence policy must be applied.

REFERENCES

- BENNETT, Nathan – LEMOINE, James G. (2014): What VUCA Really Means for You. *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 2014. Online: <https://hbr.org/2014/01/what-vuca-really-means-for-you>
- Council of the European Union (2022): *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. For a European Union that Protects Its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. Online: https://www.satcen.europa.eu/keydocuments/strategic_compass_en3_web6298d4e4601f2a0001c0f871.pdf
- European Commission (2021): *The European Defence Fund*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/69aa3194-4361-48a5-807b-1a2635b91fe8_en?filename=DEFIS%20_%20EDF%20Factsheet%20_%2030%20June%202021.pdf
- European Defence Agency (2022): *Hub for the EU Defence Innovation Established within EDA*. Online: <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2022/05/17/hub-for-eu-defence-innovation-established-within-eda>

- European External Action Service (2023): *Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/StrategicCompass_1stYear_Report.pdf
- Government of Hungary (2020): *Government Resolution 1163/2020 (IV. 21.) on Hungary's National Security Strategy*. Online: <https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/government-resolution-1163-2020-21st-april.html>
- Government of Hungary (2021): *Government Resolution 1393/2021 (VI. 24.) on the National Military Strategy of Hungary*. Online: <https://defence.hu/news/national-military-strategy-of-hungary.html>
- HOLMBERG, Arita – ALVINIUS, Aida (2019): How Pressure for Change Challenge Military Organizational Characteristics. *Defence Studies*, 19(2), 130–148. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2019.1575698>
- JONES, Minnie L. (2019): William 'Billy' Mitchell 'The Father of the United States Air Force'. *U.S. Army*, 17 October 2019. Online: https://www.army.mil/article/33680/william_billy_mitchell_the_father_of_the_united_states_air_force
- MODIGLIANI, Pete – WARD, Dan – LEWIS, Tyler – MCGEE, Wayne (2020): *Modernizing DoD Requirements Enabling Speed, Agility and Innovation*. MITRE Center for Technology and National Security. Online: <https://www.mitre.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/prs-19-03715-2-modernizing-dod-requirements-enabling-speed-agility-and-innovation.pdf>
- NATO (2021): *Summary of the Artificial Intelligence Strategy*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_187617.htm
- NATO (2022a): *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf
- NATO (2022b): *Summary of NATO's Autonomy Implementation Plan*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_208376.htm
- NATO (2022c): *Charter of the NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic*. Online: <https://acumenresearch.io/charter-of-the-defense-innovation-accelerator-for-the-north-atlantic-diana-program/>
- NATO (2023a): *Emerging and Disruptive Technologies*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_184303.htm
- NATO (2023b): *NATO Consultation, Command and Control Board (C3B) Approves Digital Transformation Implementation Strategy*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_214878.htm
- NATO Allied Command Transformation (2009): *Multiple Future Project Final Report: Annexes*. Online: http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/nato-strategy/20090503_MFP_annexes.pdf
- NATO Allied Command Transformation (2023): *Charting NATO's Strategic Course: The Crucial Role of Strategic Foresight Analysis*. Online: <https://www.act.nato.int/article/sfa-charting-nato-strategic-course/>
- NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (2023a): *Energy Resilience Challenge. Harnessing Microgrid Technologies for Disaster and Conflict Recovery*. Online: https://www.diana.nato.int/resources/site1/general/energy_resilience.pdf
- NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (2023b): *Secure Information Sharing Challenge. Truly Reliable and Unquestionably Secure Technology Challenge (TRUST)*. Online: https://www.diana.nato.int/resources/site1/general/secure_information_sharing_v2.pdf

- NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (2023c): *Sensing and Surveillance Challenge. Sensing the Coastal Undersea Environment*. Online: https://www.diana.nato.int/resources/site1/general/sensing_and_surveillance.pdf
- NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (2024). Online: <https://www.diana.nato.int/map/index.html>
- NATO Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (2013): *Strategic Foresight Analysis 2013 Report*. Online: https://www.act.nato.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/sfa_security_implications.pdf
- NATO Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (2015): *Technology Trends Survey: Future Emerging Technology Trends*. Online: https://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/events/2012/fc_ipr/technology_trend_survey_v3.pdf
- NATO Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (2017): *Strategic Foresight Analysis 2017 Report*. Online: https://www.act.nato.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/171004_sfa_2017_report_txt.pdf
- NATO Science and Technology Board (2017): *Science and Technology Organization Tech Trends Report 2017*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_topics/20180522_TTR_Public_release_final.pdf
- NATO Science and Technology Organization (2020): *Science and Technology Trends 2020–2040: Exploring the S and T Edge*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/4/pdf/190422-ST_Tech_Trends_Report_2020-2040.pdf
- NATO Science and Technology Organization (2023a): *Science and Technology Trends 2023–2043: Across the Physical, Biological, and Information Domains. Volume 1: Overview*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2023/3/pdf/stt23-vol1.pdf
- NATO Science and Technology Organization (2023b): *Science and Technology Trends 2023–2043: Across the Physical, Biological, and Information Domains. Volume 2: Analysis*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2023/3/pdf/stt23-vol2.pdf
- PORKOLÁB, Imre – HÓNICH, Artúr (2021): A NATO útja a DIANA létrehozásáig és főbb fókuszterületei a védelmi innováció keretében [NATO's Path to the Creation of DIANA and Its Main Focus Areas in the Context of Defence Innovation]. *Honvédségi Szemle*, 149(6), 20–35. Online: <https://doi.org/10.35926/HSZ.2021.6.2>
- SOARE, Simona R. – POTHIER, Fabrice (2021): *Leading Edge: Key Drivers of Defence Innovation and the Future of Operational Advantage*. IISS, November 2021. Online: https://www.iiss.org/globalassets/media-library---content--migration/files/research-papers/2021/11/defence-innovation_oct-2021_s10.pdf

Dóra Molnár

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

PAST, PRESENT OR IS IT THE FUTURE?

INTRODUCTION

European Strategic Autonomy was first used in the context of the security and defence of the European Union and was not explicitly defined until the European Union (EU) adopted the EU Global Strategy of 2016, when it was given a broader strategic ambition.¹ Since then, successive events and developments have made strategic autonomy even more attractive and timely. Suffice it to think of the Covid-19 pandemic, concerns about the changing role of the United States in international politics, transatlantic and transpacific tensions in international trade, or the recognition of China as a strategic challenge rival, exacerbated by concerns about its dominance in the world's digital markets. These events, coupled with the EU's recognition that its own smart digitalisation is a prerequisite for the EU's strategic independence, alongside its industrial, energy, defence and sustainability policies, have led to the emergence of European initiatives to strengthen Europe's position as an independent actor and its status and role in world politics and the global economy. The framework for these is called the European Digital Strategic Autonomy (DSA) (STOLWIJK 2022).

The concept of strategic autonomy was incorporated into the political discourse by French President Emmanuel Macron in 2017, following his election, and the terms digital autonomy, digital sovereignty and technological sovereignty have subsequently come to occupy a prominent place in both political discourse and policy documents.

Being autonomous means being able to achieve our key strategic goals free of external influence and dependencies. Achieving digital autonomy in the European

¹ The EU's 2016 Global Strategy puts the security of the Union at the top of its priorities. In this context, it specifically emphasises the strengthening of the Union's strategic autonomy and its role as a security community. This is not without reason, as this is one year after the start of an unprecedented wave of migration, which has had an impact on the European Union the like of which European states have never seen before. On the new features of the migration wave see VECSEY 2019.

Union therefore depends on creating an environment in which we can sufficiently and necessarily exclude technologies and competitive pressures from global competitors, notably from the United States of America (U.S.) and China. However, technological dependency has several dimensions that need to be taken into account in order to achieve digital sovereignty, since, in addition to technical issues, economic, legal, political or even military interference can be an obstacle to the creation of an independent and competitive European digital market, and the two major powers have no interest in supporting the EU's digital autonomy ambitions, thereby strengthening a potential competitor.

Two major triggers can be identified that have significantly boosted the EU's drive for digital sovereignty, especially in recent times. The first is the changing geopolitical landscape² and the emergence of new rules on data control (STOLWIJK 2022), while the second concerns the series of legal actions against major tech companies (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft – or GAFAM), which represent a specific direction for EU legislation (THIEULIN 2019). Against this background, the paper first presents the changing geopolitical landscape, with a particular focus on the actions of the United States and China,³ which are crucial for the EU's ability to achieve digital autonomy, and then outlines the concrete steps the EU has taken in the main areas that can be considered the first milestones on the road to digital autonomy.

“GREAT POWERS” OF CYBERSPACE

Cyberspace, one of the most topical sites of geopolitical struggles, is one of the best historical examples of the emergence of digital dependency. While traditional physical dimensions have been the site of intense competition between great powers throughout history, it is only in the last 30 years that digital technologies and the networks they create have emerged on a large scale and radically reshaped our world. Moreover, unlike physical space, which is mostly shaped by nature, cyberspace is a virtual space created entirely by humanity, and more specifically by the United States of America, which would not exist without the help of excellent scientists and U.S. government funding. Moreover, cyberspace does not easily identify classical

² In this context, we merely refer to developments such as the characteristic features of the multipolar world order, the rise of the Indo-Pacific region and the role of developing countries, and the emergence of China in particular on the world stage.

³ On cybersecurity and cyber diplomacy efforts by great powers see D. MOLNÁR 2022.

resources that could justify the special attention that this intangible site receives in the world political arena.

The major powers playing a dominant role in cyberspace are nowadays well defined around the trio of the United States, China and the European Union, which are actively shaping cyberspace processes and leading the way in related economic investment, and research and development. However, this was not always the case.⁴

With the end of the bipolar world order and the dawn of the global expansion of Pax Americana, few imagined that digital space would one day be the defining issue of world politics. But the U.S. Government's policies at the time foresaw the internet as a tool for global dominance. Already one of the early but perhaps most important strategies of Bill Clinton's first presidency, *The National Information Infrastructure: Agenda for Action (NII)*, published in 1993, set out the following:

"Information is one of the nation's most critical economic resources, for both the service and manufacturing industries, the economy and national security. According to an estimate, two-thirds of U.S. workers are employed in information-related jobs, and the rest in industries that rely heavily on information" (BROWN 1993: 2).

Not only did this make it clear thirty years ago that information is a power that is fought for, possessed and used in the same way as any other resource, but also that the American economy was already built around information.

It is interesting to note that while in the early 1990s Japan seemed to be the most competitive rival to the U.S. (and partly to the EU) in this field, China is now clearly the obvious second, and in some areas the first, country in the technology field. For a country that was economically insignificant in the early 1990s, China's ability to build the advanced digital economy that Europe could have done is extraordinary. Paradoxically, the global opening of the Pax Americana helped a lot. Chinese students turned up en masse at the best universities in the U.S., while U.S. and European manufacturers opened manufacturing plants in China in the hope of cheap labour. Ostensibly, it was all about the U.S. economic advantage, as the brain drain strengthened the U.S. knowledge-intensive economy, while the resulting products could be produced as cheaply as possible in Asia. In the 2000s, however, Chinese engineers and scientists began to return home and put their knowledge to work in Chinese universities and companies. Intellectual property that was taken over by China in the manufacturing process was treated rather loosely by the locals,

⁴ The study focuses only on the state level and does not address the role of the private sector in cybersecurity. It also avoids examining and analysing the behaviour of 'rogue states' (such as Iran or North Korea) in cyberspace and its geopolitical implications.

who copied Western solutions in a way that even bordered on industrial espionage. It is no wonder that, by the 2010s, the intellectual capital and manufacturing capacity to create digital capabilities had been created (ZHANG–ZHOU 2015: xiv–xix). By contrast, European students stayed on after their U.S. studies, young engineers from European universities were lured away in droves by U.S. companies, and the best European academics received substantial grants to continue their research in the U.S.

The third major player in cyberspace is the European Union. The *Bangemann Report* is considered to be the first document that laid the foundations for digital development and the information society in the EU. It was published in May 1994, setting out the path that the European Commission would follow with minor adjustments over the following decades. Three decades later, it is interesting to note the philosophical differences between the American and European visions, which have led to Europe's long-term digital dependence.

First, the document already states in its executive summary that the EU is at a competitive disadvantage (European Commission 1995: 3). This is particularly thought-provoking today, in 2024, as the competitive disadvantage looks set to increase. On the other hand, it sees the key to closing the gap in promoting an entrepreneurial mentality and creating common rules, without the need to allocate additional financial resources (European Commission 1995: 3). Thirdly, it adds that “the current European technology base is sufficient to allow the applications proposed in this report to be deployed without delay” (European Commission 1995: 22) – meaning that no further developments are needed at present, and that they may be needed in the near (or distant) future at the most. I think that the difference in approach between the U.S. and EU documents, which were produced almost simultaneously, is quite obvious. While the ideas in the Agenda (NII) foresaw that the powers competing with the U.S. should be able to offer an alternative and develop their own capabilities in the field of information technology, and this was already known at the time of the Bangemann Report, European policy did not recognise that regulation and market liberalisation alone would not make the region competitive with the U.S. (and later Chinese) competitors in the long term.

The evolution of the U.S.–China–EU triangle

Out of the three geopolitical actors, China is clearly the one that has taken the least expected path over the last thirty years, and even the last 10–15 years. This is above all due to the push for public investment in the digital industry. The 12th Five-Year Plan adopted in 2012 already explicitly supported the strengthening of

the manufacturing capabilities of emerging technologies, and the 13th Five-Year Plan in 2017 put a strong emphasis on the diffusion of technologies such as mobile technology, cloud computing or the Internet of Things. Furthermore, the China 2025 strategy makes it clear that China's goal is to become the strongest "cyber power" (GODEMENT 2018). Again, the fact that the same orientations could only be found years later in the EU strategy documents (see in more detail the previous section) is an indication of the European backlog, and it is also a fact that closing the gap of at least a decade will require an enormous increase in budgetary resources from European Member States, which may not be a priority in wartime, and political obstacles also have to be taken into account. The U.S. has already recognised the emerging Chinese threat in the technological field during the Obama Presidency and has started to block China's activities in this area. During the Trump Presidency, for example, it has used tough sanctions to discourage the entry of Chinese technology companies, from banning 5G technologies and blocking some Chinese mobile phone manufacturers from using U.S. software to attempting to buy up one of the most popular Chinese-owned social networks. Under President Biden, this trend is deliberately continuing, with China as the primary strategic adversary for the U.S., and it is trying its best to maintain its global position and break China's emergence as a (cyber)power. The EU Member States are rather divided on these issues, for example the ban on Chinese 5G technology has only been achieved in the most loyal U.S. allies, despite the presence of major European 5G manufacturers, and this move could contribute to the development and sovereignty of the European digital industry, while reducing the potential national security threat. However, instead of a unified European policy response, in this case too, only one regulatory step, the creation of an EU toolkit on 5G Cybersecurity, has been taken, postponing the solution to the problem for years.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the two great powers, the U.S. and China, includes a number of issues that will leave open the question of cyberspace dominance in the coming decades and will massively influence the EU's moves towards digital autonomy. Perhaps the most important of these is how the post-World War II global policy of multilateralism and international organisations will evolve. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and the annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territories by a member of the UN Security Council will clearly shake up the international order, upset the status quo and could reinforce China's intentions to shape the international order in line with the 21st century balance of power, including a national shift of global (U.S.-dominated) cyberspace towards nationalism, helping to create national networks (splinternets). Europe is not interested in this and supports the maintenance of the current cyberspace in all international fora, but this seems to

be creating an East–West confrontation on digital technology issues, in which it is very difficult to defend European interests.

Another important question is China's intentions towards Russia and Taiwan. Russia's belligerent aggression is punished by the Western world with heavy technological sanctions, so if Russia wants to keep its economy in the 21st century, it has only China to work with. In cyberspace, Russia has been fighting U.S. dominance for decades and exploiting the leverage of technology to achieve its own ends, but its belligerence will cut it off from these opportunities for a longer period, both diplomatically and technically. In cyber diplomacy, however, it has typically moved together with China, so it is likely that intentions will not change, but will be articulated by China in the future, primarily in accordance with its own interests. Thus, Russia will most probably lose its position as a cyber power and become dependent on China, but a united European stance, for example in the area of technological sanctions, is likely to provoke countermeasures on the Russian side. So, it is not enough that the EU's digital industry will lose a significant market, but it can also expect hostile action from Russia in the form of cyberattacks.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION POLICY

The need for regulation was already recognised by the European Union in the mid-2000s and it started to build its cybersecurity framework. As the EU approaches many threats primarily from a civilian perspective, including threats in cyberspace, its focus is on creating a free and open internet, primarily through greater international cooperation and the development of regulatory frameworks.⁵

Creating the framework for digital sovereignty – The 2010s

The highest level of regulation concerns the strategic level. In December 2003, the EU adopted its first security strategy entitled “European Security Strategy. A Secure Europe in a Better World” (Council of the European Union 2003). The document lists the global and specific challenges facing Europe, which do not include cyber threats by name, but already refers to critical infrastructure by highlighting international terrorism and the vulnerability of societies. A milestone in the long process of reviewing the strategy was the report published in December 2008, which already

⁵ For a summary table of EU strategy papers see A. MOLNÁR 2022: 46.

identified cybersecurity as a key challenge. The report refers to the high dependency of modern societies on critical infrastructure, including the world of the Internet. The need to revise the 2003 strategy has become increasingly urgent due to the rapid and dramatic changes in the global environment. The dependence of states on digital technologies has increased dramatically and it has become a strategic interest for the EU to ensure that its citizens have access to secure internet for all. The process of developing the strategy has been slow and it took the European Union around 13 years to adopt the new document. The EU's new security strategy entitled "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy" (European External Action Service 2016), already includes cyberspace as a named and prominent one among the instruments and policies to address the challenges.⁶

The first document specifically addressing the protection of information systems was issued by the EU in 2009: the Commission Communication "Protecting Europe from Large Scale Cyberattacks and Disruptions: Enhancing Preparedness, Security and Resilience" (European Commission 2009). Among the shortcomings, the document highlights that cyber defence exercises at EU level are still at an embryonic stage and that multi-country exercises are rare. It therefore stresses the importance of cooperation with other organisations with established practices in this field, notably the UN, NATO, OECD and G8. A forward-looking finding of the Communication was the need to establish national cyber disaster response teams, with adequate capabilities in both early warning and incident management. The 2009 Communication was revised in 2013. In its report (European Commission 2013a) the Commission Working Group had already separated critical infrastructure protection activities into the three categories of prevention–preparedness–consequence management. It set a deadline of the second half of 2014 for the implementation of the initial objectives.

EU cyber legislation was given a new impetus by the launch in 2010 of a ten-year program called the European Digital Agenda (European Commission 2010), which focused on making cyberspace safe and secure. In 2012, the European Parliament adopted a resolution entitled "Critical Information Infrastructure Protection: Towards Global Cyber-Security" (European Parliament 2011). Although the document could not bind Member States, it set out proposals that were actually implemented in EU countries by the end of 2010. These included the creation of a national cybersecurity strategy, cyber emergency planning, the establishment of a standalone cyber defence organisation and the creation of national legislation,

⁶ For a more detailed analysis of the strategy see MOLNÁR 2016.

all of which are building blocks for digital sovereignty. The EU cybersecurity strategy was only a step from there and was put in place the following year. In 2013, the EU published its first comprehensive cybersecurity strategy, “Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace” (European Commission 2013b). The strategy has made it a top priority to develop the capabilities to prevent, detect and respond to cyberattacks, to reduce cybercrime sharply, to develop an autonomous cyber defence policy and capabilities within the EU’s common security and defence policy, to create the necessary industrial and technological capacities and conditions, and to establish an autonomous EU-level cyber policy as a policy along the lines of the EU’s core values. These priorities have set the organisation ambitious goals, the achievement of which is still ongoing today. However, the strategy only addresses the issues of preventing and responding to the failure or any attacks on European infocommunications systems, leaving unanswered questions such as how the European Union as a whole should respond to a cyberattack on one of its Member States under the Lisbon Treaty clause.

The adoption of the “European Digital Single Market Strategy” in 2015, a very important document for the digital sovereignty of the European Union, set the goal of creating a Digital Single Market for Europe. Its benefits were already recognised by the legislators at the time, including the potential for a significant increase in European GDP⁷ and the creation of new jobs. As regards the former, they already highlighted the booming performance of the big data sector, with an annual growth rate of 40%, seven times faster than the annual growth rate of the IT market.

The latter finding also foreshadowed a new direction for EU legislation to give the EU a competitive edge in an increasingly data-driven economy. After a long consultation process lasting around four years, two landmark pieces of legislation were adopted in 2016: the NIS Directive (Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In 2018, these were followed by the Regulation on a Framework for the Free Flow of Non-Personal Data in the European Union (European Parliament 2018), and in 2019 by the Directive on Open Data and the Re-Use of Public Sector Information (European Parliament 2019). The Data Governance Act (European Parliament 2022) completed the EU’s data protection legislation in 2022, thus completing the EU’s data protection regulation.⁸

⁷ The creation of a European Digital Single Market was then projected to lead to an increase in EU GDP of €415 billion.

⁸ Meanwhile, the EU has also been building the institutional backbone for cybersecurity over the years, which is not covered in this paper. For more on this see KASPER et al. 2021: 7.

*Where does the European Union stand now?
Developments in the 2020s*

The European Union's objective for the coming years and decades, the so-called *European Digital Strategic Autonomy* (DSA), is characterised by, among other things, long-term thinking, the innovation orientation, the knowledge base, the building of a strong consensus framework with partners and allies, the review of telecoms market regulation and the establishment of a strong regulatory framework for data protection, privacy and network security (POGOREL et al. 2022: xi–xii). DSA also represents a delicate balance of power with China. Given the interdependence between Europe and China, the EU wants to establish a clear policy framework that can react quickly to developments and monitor in real time the evolution of the relationship and its impact.

At the beginning of the decade, in 2020, the EU took an important step by adopting a new cybersecurity strategy. Adopted on 16 December 2020, the document entitled “The EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade” (European Commission 2020a) focuses specifically on the framework and opportunities for the EU to build its strategic digital autonomy. It explores how the EU can harness and further increase its resources to become technologically sovereign and makes concrete proposals for the use of three main instruments: regulatory, investment and policy initiatives. To do so, it encourages the EU to act in three areas: 1. resilience, technological sovereignty and leadership; 2. building operational capacity to prevent, deter and respond; and 3. advancing a global and open cyberspace. It is therefore evident that the Union's technological sovereignty is based on the resilience of all services and products, but also on the need to increase cooperation and build additional capacity. When these findings are compared with the Bangemann Report of 1994, there is reason for optimism about the change in the EU narrative and the willingness of the organisation to go further to achieve the desired results, not being satisfied with what has already been achieved.

The European Union's initial misguided vision of a direct public support system is to be corrected by another document: the “Digital Decade for Europe: Objectives for 2030”, adopted on 9 March 2021. The document, called the Digital Compass, sets out the objectives for Europe's successful digital transformation and highlights Europe's ambition to achieve digital sovereignty:

“The EU's ambition is to be digitally sovereign in an open and interconnected world, and to pursue digital policies that empower people and businesses to seize a human centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future. This includes addressing

vulnerabilities and dependencies as well as accelerating investment” (European Commission 2021a).

This is a significant step forward from the approach of previous decades and recognises the need for strategic European investment in digital technologies. The program sets different targets in four areas: training digitally literate citizens and highly skilled digital professionals, building secure, efficient and sustainable digital infrastructures, digital transformation of businesses and digitisation of public services (European Commission 2021c).

It is no coincidence that education and training are the top priority, as they are the be-all and end-all of Europe’s digital autonomy. The issue needs to be approached from two perspectives. On the one hand, there is a need to ensure that the concept of cybersecurity education provides the necessary level of knowledge and operational practices and, on the other hand, to train enough skilled workers to meet the needs of the cybersecurity sector and all sectors that need to interface with and apply cybersecurity services and solutions (European Organisation for Security 2019). Recognising this, several EU initiatives have already been taken to boost digital workforce skills. These include the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition already established in 2016 or the Blueprint for Sectorial Cooperation to identify skills gaps.

Although the Compass sets out objectives and targets, it lacks clearly integrated and coherent policy measures and there are inconsistencies between objectives and targets. To partially address these gaps, on 15 September 2021, the European Commission presented its policy program “Roadmap to the Digital Decade”, which aims at complementing, completing and implementing the vision, objectives and actions of the Digital Compass. With the new program, the Commission proposes an annual cooperation mechanism with Member States consisting of four elements to support them in achieving the 2030 targets: 1. a transparent monitoring system based on an enhanced Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) to measure progress towards the targets; 2. an annual “State of the Digital Decade” report to assess progress and make recommendations; 3. multi-annual strategic roadmaps for each Member State; and 4. a mechanism to support the implementation of multi-country projects.

The Digital Compass (European Commission 2021b) therefore defines cybersecurity as a key element of the EU’s technological sovereignty. In contrast, the Strategic Compass (Council of the European Union 2022: 3), takes a different approach, analysing and assessing cybersecurity in a purely geostrategic context. It clearly states that the EU must deepen partnerships which are in favour of EU values and interests, however, a more tailored and integrated approach to capacity

building is needed, including the need to find the links between military assistance and civilian capacity building, governance, security sector reform, and the capacity to respond to cyberattacks, disinformation and hybrid threats (Council of the European Union 2022: 44).

Defining the latest direction on regulatory issues is clearly necessary to preserve the EU's digital sovereignty in the future. In 2022, the EU adopted two major regulations: the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA). While the former aims at protecting the digital space against illegal content and guaranteeing the protection of users' fundamental rights (the guiding principle being that "what is illegal offline must be illegal online"), the DMA primarily regulates the role of the so-called "gatekeepers", as its main aim is to create a single regulatory framework for digital markets. In this way, it can help economically dependent European companies to enter the market, stimulate innovation and create a free shopping environment for consumers by ensuring quality, fair and competitive prices for digital goods and services.

Finally, as a concluding thought on regulatory issues, the evolution of the regulatory environment for AI should be mentioned. The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence, published back in 2020, was a forward-looking initiative at the time. By today, the EU has already adopted the so-called AI Act (European Parliament 2024) which, at a time when this technology is now being called the 5th Industrial Revolution, is crucial for the EU to remain a viable and competitive player among the technological superpowers.

THE RANGE OF PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

The framework outlined in the previous section is only the theoretical side of the issue, and the major question is how and how successfully it can be translated into practice. Obstacles may arise not only from the Union's bureaucratic system, but also from the creation of financial resources. The European Investment Bank estimates the EU's investment gap to achieve the potential benefits of digital transformation at €65 billion per year (European Investment Bank 2016: 33). Moreover, the Commission estimates that Europe's investment gap in digital transformation with the U.S. and China stands at €125 billion per year (European Commission 2020b: 18). Nevertheless, the EU could not only gain political and strategic capital from these investments, but also expect a significant economic boost, as the cumulative GDP contribution of new digital technologies could reach €2.2 trillion, a very significant increase of 14% compared to the base year 2017 (European Commission 2020c).

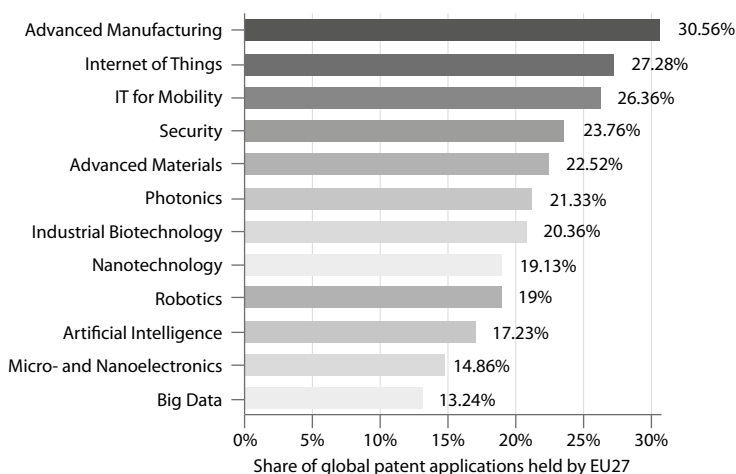


Figure 1. *Strengths and weaknesses of the 27 EU Member States in the production of advanced technologies in 2021*
Source: European Commission 2021d

The European Commission's Advanced Industrial Technologies project (European Commission 2021a) tracks technologies considered to be of strategic importance for the future. These include advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, big data, cloud services, industrial biotechnology, Internet of Things (IoT), micro- and nanoelectronics including semiconductors, nanotechnology, robotics and cybersecurity, among others. Keeping up with technological progress is also a sine qua non for the EU to achieve digital sovereignty and should therefore be a priority for the EU in all segments.

Figure 1 on the current performance of the EU shows how the EU's performance varies across technologies: it has performed exceptionally well in advanced manufacturing, while it also performs well in the categories of Internet of Things, mobility and security. However, there is a huge gap in four areas that are also key to achieving digital autonomy: big data, micro- and nanoelectronics, artificial intelligence and robotics. Overall, only 21.94% of global patent applications for advanced technologies are owned by the EU27, a rather low figure. But the gap is perhaps even more striking when the EU's performance is compared with that of the U.S., China and Japan. Figure 2 shows the performance of these four entities in the segments examined highlighting the EU's vulnerabilities.

Given that we cannot consider digital sovereignty without a strong technological component, the EU's priority development area is to close the technological gap as soon as possible. However, there are several pitfalls. Firstly, there is the question of

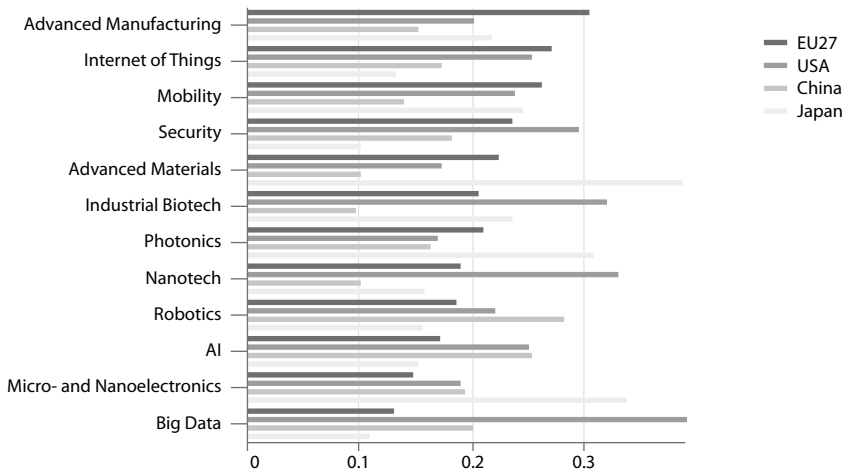


Figure 2. *The European Union's performance compared to other countries*

Source: European Parliament 2021: 20

the extent to which Member States are united in their perception of the importance of this area and their willingness to develop these sensitive areas. On the other hand, the availability of resources may be an issue. And this does not primarily refer to material resources (although these are finite), but to the raw materials needed for production. In this context, the availability of semiconductors is critical, as they are the building blocks of all digital products and thus the main drivers of the accelerating digitalisation industry.

In the last thirty years, the European Union has seen a very sharp decline in this area: while in 1990 the European semiconductor market share stood at 44% worldwide (Automotive News Europe 2021), it has now fallen dramatically to between 8–13% (Semiconductor Industry Association 2020), while the Asian region has a very high share of over 60% (see Figure 3). As a result, the market is dominated by a few leading chipmakers: in 2020, only two companies, TSMC (Taiwan) and Samsung (South Korea), were producing 5nm chips, and in Europe there are no companies producing sub-22nm components (European Commission 2021c). The U.S. company Intel has also postponed the introduction of 7nm components until 2022, which shows the technological complexity of chip manufacturing (European Commission 2021c: 82). At the same time, Intel could be the company that could save Europe: in 2021, it announced that it will set up a state-of-the-art semiconductor manufacturing plant in Europe by 2026, allowing EU companies to produce their own chips in Europe based on their own semiconductor designs (BERTUZZI 2021).

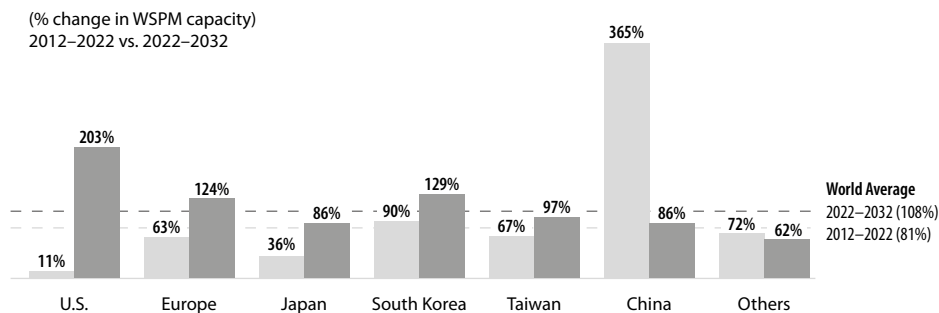


Figure 3. *Changes in global semiconductor capacity*

Source: Semiconductor Industry Association 2024: 10

If this is realised, European supply chains will be strengthened in the medium term. And Intel is on track, with plans to introduce 2 and 1.8nm technology for Intel 20A and 18A by 2024 (CONWAY 2024).

The specific case of Taiwan is particularly relevant for digital independence. This is because roughly two-thirds of the world's chips are currently produced on the island. Among other things, this is why developments in Taiwan in the summer of 2020 (and the more tense period of today) have been a cause for concern, as, if China were to intervene in Taiwanese trade, either by blockade or direct military strike, this would certainly have a longer-term impact on the U.S., Europe and the world's digital economy as a whole, given that the production and supply of basic infrastructure elements of cyberspace, such as computers, mobile devices and networking solutions, will be at stake, not to mention the automotive industry, which is of major importance to European industry. The most urgent step for digital autonomy is therefore to (re)build the semiconductor industry in Europe (HASS-BLANCHETTE 2022).

Finally, it is important to stress that this sector is very intensive in R&D, with up to a third of revenues being returned to research and therefore requires significant capital investment. It is not surprising that China is also at the forefront in this area. It aims to achieve 70% self-sufficiency in chip manufacturing by 2025 and has earmarked \$150 billion over 10 years for this purpose under the "Made in China 2025" program. South Korea plans to invest \$17 billion in next-generation chips by 2029, while the U.S. has a \$25 billion plan for R&D and manufacturing investment over 5 years (European Commission 2021c: 83). And where does the European Union stand in the queue? It seems to be catching up. The entry into force of the European Chips Act on 21 September 2023, which is expected to address the semiconductor shortage and strengthen the EU's technological sovereignty, thereby reinforcing

Europe's technological leadership, is a welcome development. It is expected to mobilise more than €43 billion of public and private investment by 2030 and, together with Member States and international partners, prepare to anticipate future supply chain disruptions and respond rapidly when needed (European Commission 2023).

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Currently, therefore, the U.S. and China are the two actors that can have a meaningful impact on shaping digital autonomy in Europe. The European Union is also actively trying to shape the rules of cyberspace, but the perceived East–West divide significantly reduces the chances of success in achieving its own strategic goals. At the same time, increasing geopolitical tensions are only one of the challenges to digital strategic autonomy. Future threats also include the widespread adoption of the Internet of Things (IoT),⁹ 5G, artificial intelligence, cloud and data-driven business models in both the economy and society, disruptive changes associated with the shift of (sovereign) power towards oligopolistic, trillion-dollar platforms; and the accompanying explosion of cybercrime and cyber threats. And finally, one cannot ignore the radically new technologies already mentioned, such as artificial intelligence, 5G/6G, advanced semiconductors and quantum technologies, most of which are emerging more or less simultaneously, and all of which are fundamental to the future of the EU (TIMMERS 2022: 39–40). In this perspective, it is no coincidence that in 2021 the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) has identified the following seven areas as key areas for the development of the EU's digital strategic autonomy: data security, trusted software platforms, appropriate incident management, trusted hardware platforms, post-quantum cryptography, user-friendly security tools and practices, and digital communications security. At the same time, ENISA added that, while digital autonomy and sovereignty relies on technological leadership – and most importantly on significant R&D – technical leadership alone is not sufficient to ensure sustainable strategic autonomy in the long run. The EU therefore needs the social science dimensions of digital autonomy, as well as a skilled workforce and the right legal and regulatory environment (ENISA 2021).

The time has come for the European Union to take the necessary steps to maintain its strategic autonomy in digital terms. It is important to note, however, that although the European Union is currently primarily a normative power, it has the potential to

⁹ Internet of Things describes a network of “things” (different collected devices and technology) embedded with software, sensors and other technologies to connect and exchange data with other devices and systems while using the internet.

maintain its strategic digital sovereignty as a geopolitical actor. However, if European industry does not shift up a gear and build its own capabilities in these years, it will find itself dependent on the U.S. and China for decades to come. And the loss of digital sovereignty means that Europe will fall out of the 21st century's centres of power and become a sphere of influence for an indefinite period. And while this is not a hopeless situation (think of China and its development over the last twenty years), it is one that can be avoided if the regulatory environment is well designed, and the necessary capacities are in place in time. Today, there is every chance that this will happen.

REFERENCES

- Automotive News Europe (2021): Europe Looks to Secure Chip Supply after 'Naive' Past Approach. *Bloomberg*, 5 May 2021. Online: <https://europe.autonews.com/suppliers/europe-looks-secure-chip-supply-after-naive-past-approach>
- BERTUZZI, Luca (2021): Leading Chip-maker Answers EU Call to Scale up European Capacity. *Euractiv*, 10 June 2021. Online: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/leading-chip-maker-answers-eu-call-to-scale-up-european-capacity>
- BROWN, Ronald Harmon (1993): *The National Information Infrastructure: Agenda for Action*. Executive Office of the President, Information Infrastructure Task Force, September 1993. Online: <https://search.worldcat.org/title/30587669>
- CONWAY, Adam (2024): Intel's Process Roadmap to 2025: Intel 7, 4, 3, 20A, and 18A Explained. *QXDA*, 4 February 2024. Online: <https://www.xda-developers.com/intel-roadmap-2025-explainer>
- Council of the European Union (2003): *European Security Strategy. A Secure Europe in a Better World*. Online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf>
- Council of the European Union (2022): *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. For a European Union that Protects Its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>
- ENISA (2021): *Cybersecurity Research Directions for the EU's Digital Strategic Autonomy*. Online: <https://www.enisa.europa.eu/publications/cybersecurity-research-directions-for-the-eu2019s-digital-strategic-autonomy>
- European Commission (1995): *Europe and the Global Information Society. Recommendations to the European Council. Conference G7 – Report Bangemann*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Online: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/44dad16a-937d-4cb3-be07-0022197d9453>
- European Commission (2009): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Critical Information Infrastructure Protection, COM(2009) 149 final, *Protecting Europe from Large Scale Cyber-Attacks and Disruptions: Enhancing Preparedness, Security and Resilience*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A52009DC0149>

- European Commission (2010): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2010) 245 final, *A Digital Agenda for Europe*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0245:FIN:en:PDF>
- European Commission (2013a): *Staff Working Document on a New Approach to the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection Making European Critical Infrastructures More Secure*. Online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13280-2013-INIT/en/pdf>
- European Commission (2013b): Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, JOIN(2013), 1 final, *Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace*. Online: <https://www.eucybernet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2013-cybersecurity-strategy-of-the-european-union.pdf>
- European Commission (2020a): Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, JOIN(2020) 18 final, *The EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0018>
- European Commission (2020b): *Commission Staff Working Document. Identifying Europe's Recovery Needs*. Online: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0098\(01\)&rid=3](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0098(01)&rid=3)
- European Commission (2020c): *Shaping the Digital Transformation in Europe*. Online: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/shaping-digital-transformation-europe>
- European Commission (2021a): Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council Establishing the 2030 Policy Programme “Path to the Digital Decade”, COM(2021) 574 final. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0574>
- European Commission (2021b): Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2021) 118 final, *2030 Digital Compass: The European Way for the Digital Decade*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0118>
- European Commission (2021c): *Europe's Digital Decade: Digital Targets for 2030*. Online: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_en
- European Commission (2021d): *Advanced Technologies for Industry*. Online: <https://ati.ec.europa.eu/>
- European Commission (2023): *European Chips Act*. Online: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-chips-act_en
- European External Action Service (2016): *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Online: https://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf
- European Investment Bank (2016): *Restoring EU Competitiveness. 2016 updated version*. January 2016. Online: https://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/restoring_eu_competitiveness_en.pdf
- European Organisation for Security (2019): *EU Digital Autonomy: Challenges and Recommendations for the Future of European Digital Transformation. EOS Position Paper*, November 2019. Online: <https://www.eos-eu.com/Files/EOSEUDigitalAutonomyPositionPaper.pdf>
- European Parliament (2011): *Critical Information Infrastructure Protection: Towards Global Cyber-Security*. Resolution 2011/2284. Online: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1479216690655&uri=CELEX:52012IP0237>

- European Parliament (2018): Regulation (EU) 2018/1807 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 on *A Framework for the Free Flow of Non-Personal Data in the European Union*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32018R1807>
- European Parliament (2019): Directive (EU) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on *Open Data and the Re-Use of Public Sector Information*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1024/oj/eng>
- European Parliament (2021): *Europe's Digital Decade and Autonomy*. Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/695465/IPOL_STU\(2021\)695465_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/695465/IPOL_STU(2021)695465_EN.pdf)
- European Parliament (2022): Regulation (EU) 2022/868 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2022 on *European Data Governance and Amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 (Data Governance Act)*. Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/868/oj>
- European Parliament (2024): Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 Laying down Harmonised Rules on Artificial Intelligence and Amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (*Artificial Intelligence Act*). Online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj/eng>
- GODEMENT, François – STANZEL, Angela – PRZYCHODNIAK, Marcin – DRINHAUSEN, Katja – KNIGHT, Adam – KANIA, Elsa B. (2018): *The China Dream Goes Digital: Technology in the Age of Xi. European Council on Foreign Relations*, 25 October 2018. Online: https://ecfr.eu/publication/the_china_dream_digital_technology_in_the_age_of_xi
- HASS, Ryan – BLANCHETTE, Jude (2022): *Central Questions in U.S.–China Relations amid Global Turbulence. Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 21 July 2022. Online: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/central-questions-us-china-relations-amid-global-turbulence>
- KASPER, Agnes – OSULA, Anna-Maria – MOLNÁR, Anna (2021): *EU Cybersecurity and Cyber Diplomacy. IDP Journal of Internet Law and Politics*, (34), 1–15. Online: <https://doi.org/10.7238/idp.voi34.387469>
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2016): *Közös jövőkép, közös cselekvés: erősebb Európa. Az EU globális kül- és biztonságpolitikai stratégiája [Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy]. Nemzet és Biztonság*, 9(2), 75–85.
- MOLNÁR, Anna (2022): *European Union – Cybersecurity*. In MOLNÁR, Anna – MÁRTONFFY, Balázs (eds.): *Cyber Diplomacy from the European Perspective*. Budapest: Ludovika University Press, 43–71. Online: https://doi.org/10.36250/01039_02
- MOLNÁR, Dóra (2022): *Great Power Cyber Diplomacy: China on the International Cyber Platform Accompanied by the United States and Russia. Hadtudomány*, 32(E-szám), 227–241. Online: <https://doi.org/10.17047/Hadtud.2022.32.E.227>
- POGOREL, Gerard – NESTORAS, Antonios – CAPPELLETTI, Francesco eds. (2022): *Decoding EU Digital Strategic Autonomy. Sectors, Issues, and Partners*. Brussels: European Liberal Forum. Online: https://liberalforum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Decoding-EU-Digital-Strategic-Autonomy_ELF-Study_Techno-Politics_vol.1-2.pdf
- Semiconductor Industry Association (2024): *State of the U.S. Semiconductor Industry*. Online: https://www.semiconductors.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/SIA_2024_State-of-Industry-Report.pdf

- STOLWIJK, Claire (2022): Strengthening Digital Sovereignty Makes Europe Less Vulnerable both Politically and Economically. *TNO*, 14 June 2022. Online: <https://www.tno.nl/en/newsroom/insights/2022/06/strengthening-digital-sovereignty-makes>
- THIEULIN, Benoît (2019): *Towards a European Digital Sovereignty Policy*. ESEC's opinion, March 2019. Online: https://www.lecese.fr/sites/default/files/travaux_multilingue/2019_07_souverainete_europeenne_numerique_GB_reduit.pdf
- TIMMERS, Paul (2022): Cybersecurity and Resilience from a Strategic Autonomy Perspective. In POGOREL, Gerard – NESTORAS, Antonios – CAPPELLETTI, Francesco (eds.): *Decoding EU Digital Strategic Autonomy. Sectors, Issues, and Partners*. Brussels: European Liberal Forum. Online: https://liberalforum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Decoding-EU-Digital-Strategic-Autonomy_ELF-Study_Techno-Politics_vol.1-2.pdf
- VECSEY, Mariann (2019): Changes in the Migration Trends from West Africa to Europe. *Hungarian Defence Review*, Special Issue, 147(1–2), 99–116. Online: <https://doi.org/10.35926/HDR.2019.1–2.8>
- ZHANG, Yingying – ZHOU, Yu (2015): *The Source of Innovation in China*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137335067>

PART THREE

NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICIES

AND EUROPEAN STRATEGIC

AUTONOMY IN NATIONAL POLITICS

HUNGARY

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of Hungary's strategic environment that ended the Cold War in the first half of the 1990s was marked by security policy 'pathfinding', but from the middle of the decade onwards, steps were clearly aimed at achieving Euro-Atlantic integration (TÁLAS 2020: 23–29). This process ended in success with NATO accession in 1999 and EU accession in 2004. From that point on we can clearly speak of a new era in foreign, security and defence policy – one that continues to this day. As a result, Hungary, as a member of the Western alliance system, became able to represent and enforce its interests not only in its immediate security environment (in the Carpathian Basin, in the Western Balkans and more broadly in Central Europe), but also in the Transatlantic region and in its neighbourhood.

However, the current alliance framework also means that, in addition to the tasks of territorial defence that dominate the modern understanding of sovereignty, the protection of alliance interests also had an impact on Hungarian security and defence policy considerations for almost two decades that followed NATO and EU accessions. For example, Hungary took on various roles in peacekeeping and crisis management operations in several countries of the European neighbourhood, such as in the Sahel region in Africa (Mali), the Middle East (Iraq) and in Central Asia (Afghanistan). In addition, as a member of the EU and NATO, Hungary also had to pay greater attention to challenges and threats such as terrorism, energy security, or irregular mass migration. In other words, alliance membership also meant that, as a member of the Euro-Atlantic risk community, Hungary became more committed to maintaining our collective security. Regarding the division of tasks and responsibilities, NATO has been the primary stakeholder in tackling hard security (military) threats, also bearing the brunt of Hungary's participation in international missions, while soft security challenges are rather addressed within the EU framework.

This transformation in taking up new responsibilities, ownership and participation was linked to the recognition of Hungarian society and the political elite that Hungary,

with its limited resources and power capabilities, is not capable of guaranteeing its own security against all challenges and all actors of the international system individually. The crises of the 21st century confirmed that the protection of national sovereignty can only be ensured if Hungarian security and defence policy has a broader and more distant focus than its own immediate region. This process has also been depicted in the strategic documents which had been adopted since the turn of the millennium (National Security Strategies in 2002, 2004, 2012, 2020 and National Military Strategies in 2009, 2012, 2021).

The economic background – the dynamic and predictable growth of the national defence budget – necessary for comprehensive defence modernisation became available only from 2015, but it has been sustained since then. Based on the transformation of the threat landscape and allied responses, the planning of the comprehensive national defence and an armed forces modernisation program (2016) enjoyed firm governmental commitment. This commitment has been maintained throughout the execution phase despite economic downturns caused by Covid and the economic fallout of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The program, originally dubbed ‘Zrínyi 2026’, is the largest military modernisation taking place since the end of the Cold War, with the goal of strengthening the active and reservist components of territorial defence as well through expanding the HDF, not only modernising it.

Moreover, the large-scale military modernisation was directly embedded into the development of Hungarian defence industry – either through new investment in international (German, Turkish, French, Israeli) cooperation with the perspective of innovation, or through the foundation of new capacities in national defence industry from research and development, and innovation through production, with the perspective of future arms exports. This means that beyond some off-the-shelf procurement of advanced systems that had no meaningful technological footprint in Hungary (helicopters, aircraft, air defence systems), large-scale co-production and co-development projects have also been initiated (infantry fighting vehicles, mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles). Some of the basic building blocks of arms production, such as gunpowder, explosives, small arms and small-calibre artillery had to be established from scratch.

The Hungarian armed forces modernisation is in line with intensifying regional development efforts, especially since the 2022 escalation of the Russia–Ukraine war that brought back high-intensity conventional warfare to Europe, triggering the strengthening of defence and deterrence capabilities on NATO’s Eastern Flank, and highlighting the need to extend defence industrial production capabilities across Europe.

This chapter will offer an overview and assessment of the transformation of Hungarian defence policy and the development of the Hungarian Defence Forces considering these challenges and responsibilities with an outlook to the 2020s.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF HUNGARY'S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The security environment of Hungary – and of Europe – has been deteriorating in the past decade and a half, as part of which first non-military challenges, and then military threats appeared in the security perception of the Hungarian society and political elite. The most important ones exerting stress on European security and stability were the following: the Russo–Georgian war (2008), the global economic crisis (2008–2009), the ‘Arab Spring’ (2010) and the resulting crises and civil wars that are still with us today (Syria, Libya 2011–), the rise of the so-called ‘Islamic State’ terrorist organisation (ISIS 2014) and radical Islamism-motivated terrorist attacks in Europe (2015–2016), uncontrolled mass migration (2015), then the coronavirus epidemic (2019–2021), the Nagorno–Karabakh war (2020), the escalation of the Russia–Ukraine war (2022–) with subsequent energy and economic crises (2022–2023), and the latest Iran–Israel proxy war involving Hamas in Gaza (2023–) and Hezbollah in Lebanon (2024–) (TÁLAS 2023: 23–43).

Hungary was particularly affected by three strategic shocks in 2014–2015: the Russia–Ukraine (first hybrid, then kinetic) war bringing about the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia and the separatist destabilisation of the Donbas; the emergence and expansion of the Islamic State in the Middle East and subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe; and the refugee and migration crisis targeting Europe primarily across the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan migration routes (BAK et al.: 5–32).

The Russia–Ukraine conflict that started in 2014 and escalated into a full-scale major war in 2022 had more fundamental impacts on the security and defence policy of European and especially Eastern Central European countries than the Arab Spring, the migration crisis and terrorism. The European Union and the United States responded to Russia's breaching of international norms and agreements in 2014 with financial and economic sanctions, while NATO responded by suspending military cooperation with Russia, re-prioritising collective defence (by militarily strengthening the alliance's Eastern Flank countries, increasing Member States' defence spending), and supporting Ukrainian defence forces on a bilateral basis. The defence policy impact of the Russia–Ukraine war is well indicated by the fact that all Central and Eastern European NATO Member States began modernising their

territorial defence capabilities between 2014 and 2018 (TÁLAS – CSIKI VARGA 2024). Hungary also participated in the development and implementation of NATO's and the EU's response, including the strengthening of the alliance's Eastern Flank defence posture, the commitment to achieving the 2% of GDP ratio for the defence budget (CSIKI VARGA 2019: 79), the modernisation of national armed forces, the adoption of the alliance's strategy against hybrid threats (LASCONJARIAS–LARSEN 2015), and the sanctions imposed by the European Union on Russia (CSIKI VARGA 2024).

The 2015 European refugee crisis was perceived as another milestone, as the country has never been exposed to a refugee wave like that, when more than 177 thousand asylum seekers had been registered in the country, and many more passing through towards Western European and Nordic countries. During the year, more asylum seekers arrived in Hungary than in the previous 23 years combined. However, it is important to see that Hungary was not a destination country for migrants arriving from outside Europe but remained a transit country due to its geographical location as a gate to the EU from the Western Balkans. The Hungarian Government responded to the uncontrolled mass movement of people by building a 216-kilometre-long border fence along sections of the Southern border, increasing penalties for illegal border crossing and human trafficking, and introducing a special legal order situation due to the crisis caused by mass immigration. The refugee and migration crisis had a significant impact on Hungarian defence policy in two respects. On the one hand, the government involved the Hungarian Defence Forces in the construction of the border barrier and in managing border protection along the Southern border, and on the other hand, after the Parliament enacted special regulations in the Constitution on an emergency situation due to migration crisis and amended the National Defence Act (Government of Hungary 2015), the military also became involved in the management of migration.¹

Regarding the third strategic shock, contributing to the military tasks of combating international terrorism became an integral part of the international tasks of the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) only after the Madrid attack in March 2004 (not after the 9/11 attacks of 2011) (Government of Hungary 2004, Paragraph 70/c).

¹ This was the first time when the HDF was tasked with supporting the work of domestic agencies and services inland, as implementing law enforcement normally was not comprised in the traditional tasks of the armed forces. Another such occasion was the participation of the HDF in managing the state of emergency in the healthcare crisis caused by the Covid pandemic in 2020–2021.

As an outcome of ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks in Europe in 2015–2016, another emergency situation was codified in 2016, allowing the domestic use of the armed forces in a terrorist threat situation (Government of Hungary 2016a).

Meanwhile, until 2010, the Hungarian Defence Forces had been moving on an almost unbroken trajectory of reducing personnel, the amount of military equipment, and military capabilities since the 1990s, despite joining NATO and the European Union. The last systemic procurements took place in the early 1980s, but since then there had only been episodes of gaining relatively modern equipment (T-72 tanks, MIG-29 fighter aircraft, Mistral air defence systems). In the period since the 1989 change of regime, it was only possible to keep up with the development of military technology on a case-by-case basis, for individual weapon systems (like the multi-purpose Gripen aircraft), while in general the lifecycle extension of the equipment (helicopters, transport aircraft) or the abandonment of capabilities (artillery, tanks) was typical. All of this made the comprehensive modernisation of the HDF inevitable by the 2010s.

HUNGARY'S POSITION IN ALLIED FRAMEWORKS AND THE INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE HDF

The Hungarian political elite considered the assertion of interests in multilateral international organisations, instead of unilateral action, the path designated for the country – and feasible based on its capabilities – in the field of security and defence policy. Since 2010, Central European political – and even defence – cooperation has increasingly been emphasised, as exemplified in the 2020 National Security Strategy. Among Hungary's partners in security and defence, the United States, the Visegrád countries, Poland, Germany and Turkey have been emphasised.

The modernisation of the Hungarian Defence Forces is mainly being carried out by German, French, Turkish and Israeli and not American companies. However, it must be emphasised that the development of the Hungarian military fits into regional trends and the aspirations of NATO led by the United States: although with temporal differences, modernisation is taking place in all Central and Eastern European armed forces, and in several cases, the expansion of the military forces is also taking place – with the strengthening of territorial defence capabilities as a general trend. This means the development of heavy military equipment (armoured vehicles, artillery) and reserve forces (territorial defence), which are also priorities in Hungary.

Hungarian role expansion within NATO

Within NATO, Hungarian politics has represented 'soft Atlanticist' stance from the beginning. Collective defence, enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, has been considered the cornerstone of Hungarian security. The alliance's efforts that sometimes formulate global ambitions (like in the case of out-of-area operations) are received cautiously, in line with the Hungarian society's security perception, which does not have any specified enemy image, and is rather inward-looking, than concerned about the stability of distant regions. At the same time, as defence was not prioritised before 2015, Hungary tried to fulfil its membership obligations despite its low defence budget (reaching only 0.83% of GDP in 2014) through greater participation in allied stabilisation operations in the Balkans (Kosovo Force – KFOR), in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and in Afghanistan (International Security Assistance Force – ISAF) (CSIKI et al. 2012). This unbalanced characteristic only changed after 2015, and during the 2020s, with sustained – even somewhat increased – responsibilities in KFOR and a dynamically increasing defence budget. By this, and the comprehensive development of the Hungarian Defence Forces that are fully in line with NATO's defence planning and is driven by heightened interoperability, Hungary moved from being more of a security consumer into the position of a security provider, clearly strengthening allied efforts. At the same time, Budapest supports NATO's role outside Europe within strong limits.

Hungary's NATO membership also created the opportunity to participate in NATO initiatives, such as contributing to the NATO Response Force (NRF), the airspace policing of Slovenia, the Baltic States, and lately, Slovakia, or the implementation of the Alliance's contingency plans (Readiness Action Plan – RAP) in the 2010s. Furthermore, Hungary hosts NATO organisations such as the NATO Centre of Excellence for Medical Excellence (NATO MILMED CoE) based in Budapest, the Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW) in Pápa, the Communications and Information Squadron (NATO DCIS-M) or the NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) deployed in Székesfehérvár, which is now subordinate to the Hungarian-founded and -led HQ Multinational Division – Central (HQMND-C), which has been integrated into NATO's military command structure.

As early as in 1998, so before joining NATO, the Hungarian Defence Forces offered a light rifle brigade capability for the Alliance's defence – but only two battalion-size battlegroups reached full operational capability by 2007, with serious limitations. This experience showed that, despite the ambition present, lacking capability development and modernisation cannot be ignored. Therefore, one of the cornerstones of the armed forces development program's planning was the

‘adjustment’ and thus the fulfilment of NATO obligations, which in light of the changed security environment currently constitutes of one medium brigade by 2023 and one heavy brigade by 2028 (SZLOSZJÁR 2017: 26–27).

The overall experience and contribution of Hungary within NATO after 25 years of membership can be summarised as ‘role expansion’, including two main areas. From an institutional point of view, the Hungarian MoD, the HDF and the political elite have learnt to cooperate and work together in an alliance currently made up of 32 members, while military capabilities developed from compatibility towards interoperability a greater degree of joint planning and operational conduct. From the point of view of military expertise and lessons learnt, the HDF has undertaken and learnt many new roles through participating in the NATO missions mentioned earlier. Such new roles included supporting reconstruction efforts, force protection, training and mentoring local security forces, and operating the Kabul International Airport, among many others.

Restraint within EU CSDP

Compared to the deep and comprehensive, integrated cooperation of the HDF within NATO frameworks, participation in the European Union’s defence efforts has been more limited in scope. Although Hungary’s accession to the European Union in 2004 brought about significant changes in the country’s foreign relations, it had relatively little impact on Hungarian defence policy, apart from the involvement in the work of the EU’s security and defence policy institutions (TÜRKE 2016: 10–11). A meaningful field of EU defence cooperation has been contribution to EU Battlegroups (BGs), being part of the ‘MLF’ Battlegroup (Italy–Hungary–Slovenia, on stand-by in 2007, 2012), the ‘Visegrád 4’ BG (Poland – Hungary – the Czech Republic – Slovakia, on stand-by in 2016, 2019, 2023), soon to be followed by a German-led BG in 2025. Also, EUFOR Althea became the second largest military peacekeeping mission of the HDF after ISAF. However, this did not mean that the importance of the EU’s toolbox was not recognised in the field of non-military, ‘soft’ security challenges.

Like many other EU Member States’, Hungary’s participation in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is characterised by a particular duality. On the one hand, Hungary participates in all policy initiatives concerning CSDP. Hungary is a member of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and has taken on a role in 13 projects within the framework of PESCO. For example, in the summer of 2022, the European Defence Fund (EDF) awarded support to six multinational research

projects with Hungarian participation for the development of artificial intelligence, 5G communications, satellite technology, sensors and drone technology (European Commission 2022). Meanwhile, Hungary plays a leading role in one PESCO project (EUROSIM, which strengthens the sharing of tactical training and simulation experience) and participates in eight other projects (NÁDUDVARI et al. 2020: 27). As data provided by the Hungarian Ministry of Defence shows, Hungarian soldiers participated in 12 EU operations between 2004 and 2020, with a total of 2,335 troops, the largest number of them deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The high-level political recognition of the Hungarian involvement in the Western Balkans was represented by the appointment of Major General László Sticz to lead EUFOR Althea in 2024.

On the other hand, the Hungarian Government is keen on retaining elements of national sovereignty within the European Union, following a model of 'an integration of strong nation states' in Europe building cooperation in intergovernmental decisions (versus a federalist 'ever-closer union' approach built around sovereignty-sharing). As CSDP has remained an intergovernmental area within the EU, calls for developing 'European armed forces' are only rhetorically supported, while the technical deepening, or the extension of qualified majority voting to new areas have categorically been refused until now (VARGA 2019; NÁDUDVARI–VARGA 2019; MOLNÁR et al. 2020).

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF DEFENCE MODERNISATION

Considering the entire period since NATO accession, it can be said that the transformation and reshaping of the Hungarian Defence Forces was a slow, stagnant process, which was mostly affected by the underfunding of the defence sector and its consequences. Subsequent governments did not move the development of the defence forces forward in the same way: while some had a clear vision of the direction of the transformation of the force, others only wanted to 'operate' the HDF in a manner that it more or less met allied commitments and political expectations, without investing too many resources in substantial capability development.

The reduction of the military force – both in numbers and capabilities, equipment – was a dominant process from 1999 to 2009. The number of personnel of the HDF – first as a result of the strategic review of the first Orbán Government (1998–2022), then the defence review of the Medgyessy Government (2003), and the 'expeditionary army' concept of the second Gyurcsány Government

(2006–2009) – decreased HDF personnel to 23,950 troops by 2007, while the number of military units decreased to 33 by 2009 (Government of Hungary 2007). Moreover, the reductions were mostly carried out through across-the-board cuts, since the political and military leaders (officially) sought to maintain a full-spectrum military force, thus primarily focusing on its quantitative transformation.

Unfortunately, in the first decade of Hungary's NATO membership, no military reform was consistently implemented. Without providing additional resources, it was not possible to counteract the aging of the Hungarian Defence Forces' military equipment, change the practice of depleting existing stocks, or remedy the shortage of personnel in the HDF and the low financial recognition of its personnel (VÉGH 2018: 8).

The Fidesz–KDNP coalition government that came to power in 2010 relatively quickly began to review existing defence policy principles, and between 2010 and 2013 it implemented a number of minor organisational changes within the HDF – like starting to build up the voluntary reserve system, allowing three types of reserves: voluntary operational reserve, voluntary territorial defence reserve, and voluntary defence reserve; integrating the military career and national defence education into the system of public services; and transforming the Hungarian national security structure by establishing the Military National Security Service.

Even though the HDF became an all-voluntary and fully professional force in November 2004, its actual development could only take place after the dynamic increase in the defence budget began in 2016, underpinning the comprehensive National Defence and Armed Forces Development Program, then dubbed 'Zrínyi 2026'.

The strategic objectives and main pillars that make up the framework of this comprehensive national defence and armed forces development program can be mapped indirectly based on the 2020 National Security Strategy (NSS) (Government of Hungary 2020), the 2021 National Military Strategy (NMS) (Government of Hungary 2021), and some policy statements and scientific articles only, because the program's planning directives have remained classified. Specific Defence Industrial Strategies had also been adopted in 2021 and 2023, but these were not publicly disclosed either, thus can only be assessed through secondary sources.

The strategic goal up to 2030 is to create a comprehensive national defence system that can defend against military threats, protect against hybrid challenges, as well as perform civilian crisis management tasks (NSS, Article 126). To this end,

“The Hungarian Defence Forces must comprise well-equipped and well-trained forces in addition to flexible, effectively deployable, sustainable, and adequately

interoperable capabilities while striving to improve their ability to meet qualitative as well as quantitative requirements. In addition to its conventional territorial defence and international crisis management tasks, they must also be capable of contributing to the management of a crisis caused by mass migration or the threat of terrorism, playing a role in the prevention of hybrid attacks, and assisting in the mitigation of the consequences of natural or industrial disasters. The military must be developed to deliver effects in all the operational domains that are relevant to Hungary: land, air and cyberspace alike” (NSS, Article 135).

Therefore, the armed forces development plans did not aim at creating specialised (‘niche’) capabilities, but rather a – relatively – broad spectrum of HDF capabilities. The means of realising these goals were the national defence and armed forces development program (NSS, Articles 27–28), the strengthening of military cyber defence capabilities (NSS, Article 159), and the development of national defence industry (NSS, Articles 2, 5, 6, 28–29, 105, 128, 136) (CSIKI VARGA – TÁLAS 2020: 89–112).

In accordance with the NSS, the National Military Strategy not only clarified the government’s strategic considerations and the views of military commanders on modern warfare that were behind the armed forces development program but also summarised the drivers of the developments between 2016–2021 and set tasks for the 2020s. The strategy organised the tasks of the Hungarian Defence Forces into two comprehensive groups: the national dimension contains nine comprehensive tasks, the international dimension six comprehensive tasks, with numerous sub-tasks.²

An increased ambition and underpinning goals in procurement, personnel and structure can also be observed with a modernisation horizon of 2032. The HDF must become

“a highly mobile joint force that is equipped with modern arms and is capable of rapid reaction and effective intervention simultaneously in several theatres, through possessing information and decision-making superiority, by relying on

² National tasks are the following: defence, deterrence, crisis management, resilience, cooperation with civilian institutions in a whole-of-government approach, national defence (territorial defence, reserve forces, defence logistics, supporting law enforcement), civil–military relations (cultivating patriotism, ownership and defence-related obligations, recruitment), defence economy and representative roles. International tasks are NATO collective defence, international crisis management, host nation support, EU mutual assistance and solidarity; increasing interoperability in multinational formats; participation in regional defence initiatives.

its all-volunteer professional and reserve forces, within both national and allied frameworks” (STICZ – SEPRŐDI-KISS 2020: 6).

As a result, the Hungarian Defence Forces

“will be able to guarantee the security and sovereignty of Hungary both through credible deterrence based on its national capabilities, and within the framework of collective defence, together with allies (benefitting from security guarantees and contributing to strengthening these), as well as through international peace operations that contribute to the stability of the international system by building partnerships, security sector reform, and training” (STICZ – SEPRŐDI-KISS 2020: 6).

To realise these goals, the force structure development plans are built on a four-brigade structure through increasing troop numbers from the current 26,700 active, plus 11,000 reserves to 37,650 active duty plus 20,000 reserve soldiers.

As we can clearly see, technological modernisation has been a central element of the ongoing armed forces development program, which practically encompasses across-the-board procurements in almost every armed service: small and light weapons, ammunition, anti-tank weapons, infantry fighting vehicles, tanks, artillery ranging from mortars to long-range artillery; light and medium utility and multi-purpose helicopters, military transport, training and combat aircraft, air defence and missile defence; command, control and communication, as well as logistics, repair and maintenance capabilities are under modernisation. The current and future development of the national defence technological and industrial base supports this endeavour.

THE ONGOING COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL DEFENCE AND ARMED FORCES MODERNISATION PROGRAM

As we mentioned before, the planning directives and detailed procurement plans of the comprehensive national defence and armed forces modernisation program have not been publicly disclosed, limiting transparency and oversight regarding the realisation of the program. Therefore, one can get a picture of the structuring and sequencing of the modernisation in retrospect, through the overview of recent years’ purchases and the announced medium- and long-term development plans. The program can be divided into two comprehensive phases and several smaller stages to achieve the sub-goals – although this is not an official government narrative.

The first comprehensive phase of the program takes place between 2016–2026, in line with the long-term, ten-year planning cycle of the Hungarian Defence Forces (hence the original name ‘Zrínyi 2026’). The second phase certainly includes the period between 2026–2032, in line with NATO’s current defence planning cycle (Magyar Hírlap 2020). These can be further divided into five smaller stages along the sub-goals.

In the first phase, the program was planned and prepared between 2015–2018, based on a comprehensive assessment of Hungary’s security environment and an analysis of military threats. The first military equipment procurement and defence industry development decisions were made, the first procurement and development agreements were concluded, and then deliveries began. In the fall of 2018, a decision was also made to increase the number of personnel in the Hungarian Defence Forces by nearly eight thousand people, to reach the aforementioned 37,650 active troop number, while the target number of volunteer reservists was set at 20,000 (KÁLMÁNFÍ 2022).

The second phase is the first stage of military equipment procurement and defence industry investments between 2018–2023, and its planning endpoint is achieving the operational capability of the medium rifle brigade offered to NATO. During this phase, procurements began, along with the delivery of military equipment, in several capability development projects of the air force (e.g. H145M helicopters, Zlin training aircraft), in the case of heavy equipment of the ground forces (Leopard 2A4 training tanks, PzH 2000 self-propelled guns), and the modernisation of individual weapons of riflemen (light weapons and small arms, personal equipment). During this phase, assembly and production lines for small arms were built in Kiskunfélegyháza, the Airbus parts factory in Gyula, the Lynx factory in Zalaegerszeg, and the Gidran production lines in Kaposvár. This five-year period laid the foundations for the expansion of military industrial production and the connections between the German and Hungarian military firms (Rheinmetall, Krauss-Maffei Wegmann), while the Hungarian military industrial portfolio was also expanded with two foreign military industrial companies (Hirtenberger Defence Systems, Aero Vodochody).

In the third phase, between 2023–2026, the part of major military assets that was previously contracted and is not purchased through off-the-shelf procurement, are manufactured and delivered, such as the Embraer KC-390 military transport aircraft, L-39NG aircraft, Airbus H225M helicopters for the air force, and the Leopard 2A7+ tanks and Lynxes for the ground forces.

The fourth phase, between 2026–2028, will continue the work aimed at creating the heavy brigade and achieving its operational capability through the delivery of previously ordered military equipment, the training of the personnel for the fielded

equipment, and through military exercises. The end of the phase will be reaching full operational capability of the heavy brigade offered to NATO in 2028.

Finally, in the fifth phase, between 2028–2032 and thereafter, long-term development will take place. The second half of the decade will be a period of ‘finetuning’ the operation of the modern equipment, the cooperation between subunits in national and international frameworks, and the deepening of interoperability, also in terms of possible first operational roles. By the end of the 2020s, the replenishment of the expanded force structure and the related training tasks will represent the greatest human resource challenge facing the Hungarian Defence Forces (CSIKI VARGA 2025).

RECONSTITUTING DEFENCE INDUSTRIAL CAPACITIES

To underpin the above assessed force development goals, subsequent Defence Industrial Strategies identified six clusters around which investments, partnerships and development will be centred in the next decade. These clusters and their flagship projects are as follows:

1. *IVF, APC production and military vehicles manufacturing in Zala, Somogy and Győr counties (Southwest and Northwest Hungary).* As the most important element, the joint venture Rheinmetall Hungary will provide Lynx infantry fighting vehicles (218 pieces, out of which 172 will be manufactured in Zalaegerszeg), supplied with StrikeShield active protection system, including Israeli LR-2 Spyke anti-tank rockets. Future innovation projects might include integrating the Israeli-made Trophy active protection system and Rheinmetall's Oerlikon Skyranger anti-aircraft system to Lynx. Cooperation with Rheinmetall also includes the procurement/manufacturing of 300 armoured personnel carriers, 40 of which bought from Turkish Norul Makina in its original design (Ejder Yalcin), while the remaining 260 will become a Hungarian configuration called Gidran, equipped with a wide range of sensors and flexible in functional fitting (produced in Győr, in cooperation with Hungarian vehicle manufacturer Rába). 4 × 4 vehicles and military trucks will be produced in Kaposvár. This cluster also includes a test range (ZalaZone) and validation laboratories to support innovation, particularly for autonomous vehicles, based on the example of Rheinmetall's Mission Master XT. The design and development of a new 8 × 8 hybrid next generation fighting vehicle in cooperation with Rheinmetall and Krauss-Maffei Wegmann is also

an option, which might even serve as a long-term replacement of the BTR-80 IFV in the HDF (currently unresolved). Furthermore, news of participating in the research and development phase of Rheinmetall's next generation main battle tank, the KF51 Panther – equipped with a 130 mm gun, active defence systems, AI-assisted fire control system, associated drones and a range of sensors – has been aired in 2023 (HUSZÁK 2023).

2. *Aviation industry in Békés county (Southeast Hungary).* A rather small but high-value footprint from Airbus Helicopters will provide for helicopter engine parts' production in Gyula, accompanied by surface treatment for helicopter parts by Satys PSP Hungary Ltd. Brazilian Embraer – from whom HDF procures 2 KC-390 military transport planes – also announced the establishment of an R&D centre in Hungary.
3. *Small arms production in Bács-Kiskun county (Southern Hungary).* Based on the licence of Česká Zbrojovka, MoD Arzenál assembles small arms in Kiskunfélegyháza, together with Unique Alpine machine guns, and the development of Hungarian-designed Gestamen small arms family. Colt CZ Group and N7 Holding Ltd. established a joint venture for small arms production. Dynamit Noble Defence and MoD Arzenál will produce reactive armour (possibly DND ERA to be integrated into the Lynx IFV), as well as anti-tank weapons for light infantry.
4. *Ammunition and explosives production in Veszprém and Fejér counties (Central Hungary).* Rheinmetall Waffe Ammunition develops two facilities in the vicinity of Várpalota: one to manufacture 30, 120 and 155 mm artillery shells (for the Leopard 2 tanks, Lynx IFVs, and PzH-2000 artillery), while the other to produce hexogen / RDX explosives. The relocation of the Hirtenberger Defence Systems' mortar production capacities to this area is to take place in 2024.
5. *Radio and satellite communication systems manufacture in Budapest and Fejér county (Central Hungary).* In the field of defence information technology, communication and space industry, 4iG – a joint venture of Rheinmetall AG (51%), 4iG Ltd. (39%) and MoD EI Ltd. (10%) – is the leading actor, also serving as a systems integrator for network-based C4 functions. 4iG Group has been expanding its portfolio beyond telecommunication services and IT system integration to include space, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), counter-UAV and defence digitalisation. Furthermore, in 2022 4iG acquired an initial 20% stake in Israeli company Spacecom, with an option for further 31% in the next 3 years. From 2024 the orbital slot, currently providing space-based

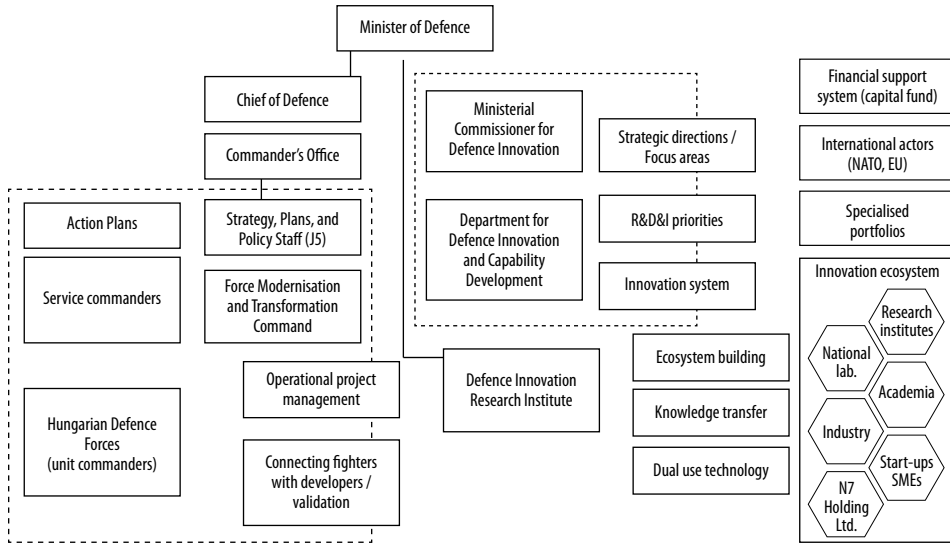


Figure 1. *Research, development and innovation in the Hungarian defence industrial ecosystem*

Source: Compiled by the authors based on VÉGVÁRI 2023: 77.

telecommunication opportunities for Spacecom in lease from Hungary, is occupied by CarpathiaSat, a 4iG joint venture. The slot is planned to be used for launching Hungary's first ever commercial satellite in approximately 5 years' time. Most recently, the 4iG subsidy Remred Space Technologies began to develop a facility (Remtech) in Martonvásár, capable of producing, testing and validating space systems, including satellites up to 400 kilograms, entering the market of low Earth orbit space assets in the coming years.

6. *Radar production in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (Northeast Hungary).* When providing for the procurement of ELM-2084 multi-mission radars (11 pieces) for the HDF, Rheinmetall Canada places the production and later the maintenance of these assets to Nyírtelek.

In sum, one could characterise the next decade of Hungarian defence industry as attempting to grow from a backward garage-operated small enterprise into a well-established national, and in some areas an internationally recognised company with and innovative edge and sizeable arms export potential. Figure 1 summarises how the defence industrial ecosystem has been recreated and is being functionally developed to underpin the development programs described above.

DEFENCE EXPENDITURE TRENDS

Like most European countries, Hungary also went from enjoying the peace dividend of the 1990s to residual financing of the armed forces after the turn of the millennium: only minimal resources were spent on the military, because it was among the last government portfolio elements in order of importance when planning the budget. This was also facilitated by the societal perception of security, because people did not perceive military threats, but rather focused on financial and economic security (RADVÁNYI 2008; ETL-TÁLAS 2020; DEÁK et al. 2022).

After the turn of the millennium, the defence budget stabilised at around 300–330 billion forints until 2008, which, together with the Gripen lease, made any meaningful modernisation impossible. However, from 2009 onwards, even this funding began to decline. Thus, in 2014, a decade after the Hungarian accession to the EU, and 15 years after NATO accession, the defence budget was 54.5 billion forints (17.5%) lower than in 2004. 2015 was the turning point, when, due to the previously mentioned strategic shocks, Hungarian security perception began to change and the improvement in the economic situation made more financial resources available. This drive was also strengthened by the political commitment sealed at the Newport NATO summit to increase its defence spending towards 2% of GDP, expected to be reached by 2024 (CSIKI et al. 2014).

The dynamic and predictable growth of the defence budget was ensured by Government Decree 1273/2016 (Government of Hungary 2016b) that extended the planned period of growth until 2026, assuming an annual growth of 0.1% of GDP, reaching a minimum of 1.79% by 2026. Finally, the significant resource requirement of the program was met through Government Decree 1283/2017 (Government of Hungary 2017a), creating the conditions of providing both for defence modernisation in real terms and meeting the NATO 2% requirement in 2023, one year ahead of schedule (NÉMETH-PALKOVICS 2022). Moreover, the government also set the goal of maintaining this level beyond 2024.

The launch of the national defence and armed forces development program was approved by Government Decree 1298/2017 (Government of Hungary 2017b) after the modernisation and procurement plans were completed in 2016. Following a 'lost decade' between 2004–2014, the defence expenditure increased sevenfold between 2014–2024 by reaching 4.68 billion euros, thus fulfilling both NATO Member States' Wales defence pledge and the commitment to spend a minimum of 20% of defence expenditures on procurements and modernisation (actually exceeding 35% since 2019) (NATO 2024). At the same time, it is also worth pointing out that the increase in resources supporting the modernisation program, initially estimated

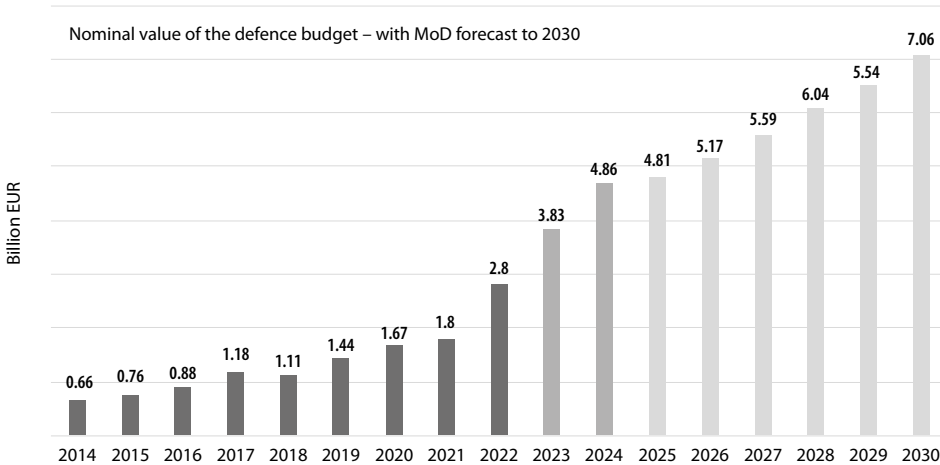


Figure 2. *The Hungarian defence spending trend, 2014–2030*

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Respective Laws on the Central Budget of Hungary, 2013–2024, and MoD forecast for 2025–2030.

at 3,500 billion forints, but a much larger expenditure overall, means nothing more than returning resources that had not been spent in the previous two decades in the national defence subsystem (CSIKI VARGA – LÁZÁR 2021: 6).

The current forecast of the Ministry of Defence to 2030 counts with not only sustaining the 2% GDP ratio but further expanding it by a gradual increase of 0.1% annually, to reach 2.6% by 2030, which would amount to about 7 billion euros (Figure 2). This investment background can stabilise armed forces development and offer substantial development prospects for the defence industrial base as well.

CONCLUSIONS

After significant downsizing and capability losses during the 1990s and continued underfinancing that prevented major modernisation throughout the next decade, a fundamental transformation of the Hungarian Defence Forces began from the mid-2010s. The comprehensive national defence and armed forces modernisation program is the most substantial capability development package since the 1980s, building on pillars of large-scale equipment procurements, the reestablishment of defence industrial capacities with significant international tie-ins to European production chains, the expansion of manpower, and the dynamic expansion of defence expenditures. The program runs fully in line with NATO's defence

planning and capability development processes, which constitute the cornerstone of Hungary's defence and deterrence. These developments, running to the 2030s, make it possible for Hungary to evolve from security consumer to being a security provider within the Alliance.

REFERENCES

- BAK, Pál – NÉMETH, Gergely – SZŐKE, Diána (2020): Foundations of Hungarian Defence Policy. *Hungarian Defence Review*, 148(2), 5–32. Online: <https://doi.org/10.35926/HDR.2020.2.1>
- CSIKI, Tamás – MOLNÁR, Ferenc – VARGA, Gergely (2012): Az Egyesült Államok védelmi stratégiai irányváltásának háttere, elemei, valamint hatásai Európára és Magyarországra [The Background, Elements, and Effects of the Shift in U.S. Defence Strategy on Europe and Hungary]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 5(4), 96–110. Online: <https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/index.php/neb/article/view/4696/3833>
- CSIKI, Tamás – TÁLAS, Péter – VARGA, Gergely (2014): A NATO walesi csúcstalálkozójának napirendje és értékelése [Agenda and Assessment of the NATO Summit in Wales]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 7(4), 112–128. Online: <https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/index.php/neb/article/view/4129/3383>
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás (2019): A magyar védelmi kiadások trendjei, 2004–2019 [Trends in Hungarian Defence Spending, 2004–2019]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 12(1), 76–86. Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2019.1.7>
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás (2025): A Zrínyi Honvédelmi és Haderőfejlesztési Program és a védelmi ipar transzformációja [The Zrínyi Defence and Armed Forces Development Program and the Transformation of the Defence Industry]. In CSIKI VARGA, Tamás – ETL, Alex – TÁLAS, Péter (eds.): *Magyarország védelempolitikája a 21. században. Trendek és folyamatok* [Hungary's Defence Policy in the 21st Century. Trends and Processes]. Manuscript.
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás (2024): Az orosz–ukrán háború hatása Magyarországra [The Impact of the Russian–Ukrainian War on Hungary]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 17(2), 100–115. Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2024.2.7>
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás – LÁZÁR, Zsolt (2021): Filling the Two Percent Gap – An Update on Hungarian Defence Spending Trends. *ISDS Analyses*, (15). Online: https://isds.uni-nke.hu/document/isds-uni-nke-hu/ISDS_Analyses_2021_15.pdf
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás – TÁLAS, Péter (2020): Magyarország új Nemzeti Biztonsági Stratégiájáról [On Hungary's New National Security Strategy]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 13(3), 89–112. Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2020.3.7>
- DEÁK, András György – ETL, Alex – FELMÉRY, Zoltán (2022): A magyar biztonságpercepció jellegzetességei [Characteristics of Hungarian Perceptions of Security]. *SVKI Elemzések*, (3). Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2022.1.4>
- ETL, Alex – TÁLAS, Péter (2020): A magyar biztonságpercepció átalakulása 1999–2019 között [The Transformation of Hungarian Perceptions of Security between 1999 and 2019]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 13(2), 94–112. Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2020.2.7>

- European Commission (2022): *European Defence Fund 2021 Calls for Proposals – Results*. Online: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/calls-proposals/european-defence-fund-2021-calls-proposals-results_en
- Government of Hungary (2004): 2004. évi CV. törvény a honvédelemről és a Magyar Honvédségről [Act CV of 2004 on National Defence and the Hungarian Armed Forces]. Online: <https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=Ao40o1o5.TV>
- Government of Hungary (2007): 106/2007. (XII. 6.) OGY határozat a Magyar Honvédség részletes bontású létszámáról [Parliament Resolution 106/2007 (XII. 6.) on the Detailed Breakdown of the Hungarian Armed Forces' Personnel Numbers]. Online: <https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=ao7ho1o6.OGY>
- Government of Hungary (2015): 2015. évi CXLII. törvény egyes törvények Magyarország államhatárának hatékonyabb védelmével és a tömeges bevándorlás kezelésével összefüggő módosításáról [Act CXLII of 2015 on the Amendment of Certain Acts Relating to the More Effective Protection of Hungary's State Borders and the Management of Mass Immigration]. Online: <https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a150o142.TV>
- Government of Hungary (2016a): Magyarország Alaptörvényének hatodik módosítása [Sixth Amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law]. Online: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A16o0o614.ATV&txtreferer=000000o1.TXT>
- Government of Hungary (2016b): 1273/2016. (VI. 07.) Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról [Government Decree 1273/2016 (VI. 07.) on Securing Budgetary Resources for Defence Expenditures and Creating Conditions for Long-Term Planning]. Online: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A16H1273.KOR&txtreferer=000000o1.TXT>
- Government of Hungary (2017a): 1283/2017. (VI. 02.) Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról szóló 1273/2016. Kormányhatározat módosításáról [Government Decree 1283/2017 (VI. 02.) on the Amendment of Government Decree 1273/2016 on Securing Budgetary Resources for Defence Expenditures and Creating Conditions for Long-Term Planning]. Online: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A17H1283.KOR&txtreferer=000000o3.TXT>
- Government of Hungary (2017b): 1298/2017. (VI. 02.) Kormányhatározat a Zrínyi 2026 Honvédelmi és Haderőfejlesztési Program megvalósításáról [Government Decree 1298/2017 (VI. 02.) on the Implementation of the Zrínyi 2026 Defence and Armed Forces Development Program]. Online: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A17H1298.KOR&txtreferer=000000o1.TXT>
- Government of Hungary (2020): Government Resolution 1163/2020 (IV. 21.) on Hungary's National Security Strategy. Online: <https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/government-resolution-1163-2020-21st-april.html>
- Government of Hungary (2021): Government Resolution 1393/2021 (VI. 24.) on the National Military Strategy of Hungary. Online: <https://defence.hu/news/national-military-strategy-of-hungary.html>
- HUSZÁK, Dániel (2023): Hamarosan Magyarországon gyárthatják Európa legmodernebb tankját [Europe's Most Modern Tank May Soon Be Manufactured in Hungary]. *Portfolio*, 30 August 2023. Online: <https://www.portfolio.hu/global/20230830/hamarosan-magyarorszagon-gyarthatjak-europa-legmodernebb-tankjat-megvalaszoltuk-a-3-legegetobb-kerdest-636099>

- KÁLMÁNFI, Gábor (2022): Modern, erős Magyar Honvédségre van szükség! *Honvédelem*, 23 March 2022. Online: <https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/modern-eros-magyar-honvedsegre-van-szukseg.html>
- LASCONJARIAS, Guillaume – LARSEN, Jeffrey A. (2015): *NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats*. Rome: NATO Defense College.
- Magyar Hírlap (2020): Benkő: Ütemterv szerint halad a haderőfejlesztés [Benkő: Military Development Proceeding According to Schedule]. *Magyar Hírlap*, 27 October 2020. Online: <https://www.magyarhirlap.hu/belfold/20201027-benko-utemterv-szerint-halad-a-haderofejlesztes>
- MOLNÁR, Tamás Levente – CSIKI VARGA, Tamás – ETL, Alex – VARGA, Gergely (2020): Egy hatékonyabb európai külpolitika felé? A minősített többségi szavazásról és az Európai Biztonsági Tanácsról szóló javaslatok értékelése (2.) [Towards a More Effective European Foreign Policy? Evaluating the Proposals on Qualified Majority Voting and the European Security Council (2)]. *KKI Elemzések*, (18). Online: https://kki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/E-2020_18_egy-hatekonyabb_2.pdf
- NÁDUDVARI, Anna – ETL, Alex – BERECHKY, Nikolett (2020): Quo vadis, Pesco? An Analysis of Cooperative Networks and Capability Development Priorities. *ISDS Analyses*, (15). Online: https://real.mtak.hu/108298/1/ISDS_Analyses_2020_15_QuovadisPesco.pdf
- NÁDUDVARI, Anna – VARGA, Gergely (2019): Az európai biztonság- és védelempolitikai kezdeményezések értékelése Magyarország szempontjából (2.) [Evaluation of European Security and Defence Policy Initiatives from Hungarian Perspectives (2)]. *KKI Tanulmányok*, (3). Online: https://hiia.hu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/03_KKI-tanulmany_EU_Varga_201903.pdf
- NATO (2024): *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014–2023)*. Online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_223304.htm
- NÉMETH, Martin – PALKOVICS, Máté (2022): Csiki Varga Tamás: Fegyverkezik Európa, három év alatt kellene megduplázni a magyar védelmi költségvetést [Tamás Csiki Varga: Europe in Arms, Hungary's Defence Budget Should Be Doubled within Three Years]. *Portfolio*, 7 June 2022. Online: <https://www.portfolio.hu/global/20220607/csiki-varga-tamas-fegyverkezik-europa-harom-ev-alatt-kene-megduplazni-a-magyar-vedelmi-koltsegvetest-549039>
- RADVÁNYI, Lajos (2008): A magyar lakosság biztonságfelfogása és értékpreferenciái, 1999–2008 [The Hungarian Population's Perception of Security and Value Preferences, 1999–2008]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 1(2), 9–22. Online: https://nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/cikkek/radvanyi_lajos-a-magyar-lakossag-biztonsagfelfogasa_es_ertekpreferenciai_1999_2008.pdf
- STICZ, László – SEPRŐDI-KISS, Árpád (2020): A Magyar Honvédség képességfejlesztése, egy korszerű haderő megteremtése [Capability Development of the Hungarian Defence Forces, Creation of a Modern Military Force]. *Hadtudomány*, 30(4), 3–19. Online: <http://doi.org/10.17047/HADTUD.2020.30.4.3>
- SZLOSZJÁR, Balázs (2017): Az integrált modell. A dandárképesség jövője – Mennyiség vagy minőség? [The Future of Brigade Capability – Quantity or Quality?] *Honvédségi Szemle*, 145(5), 26–45. Online: <https://kiadvany.magyarhonvedseg.hu/index.php/honvszemle/issue/view/43/44>
- TÁLAS, Péter (2020): Magyarország biztonságpolitikája 1989–2019 között [Hungary's Security Policy between 1989–2019]. *Védelmi Tanulmányok*, (2). Online: https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/VT_2020_2_Talas%20Peter_Magyarorsz%C3%A1g%20biztons%C3%A1gpolitik%C3%A1ja%201989_2019_full.pdf

- TÁLAS, Péter (2023): Security in Central and Eastern Europe in a Period of Strategic Shocks. *Social Horizons*, 3(5), 23–43. Online: <https://scindeks-clanci.ceon.rs/data/pdf/2787-0693/2023/2787-06932305025T.pdf>
- TÁLAS, Péter – CSIKI VARGA, Tamás (2024): Az orosz–ukrán háború hatásainak közös és eltérő vonásai a széles értelemben vett kelet-közép-európai régióban [Common and Differing Features of the Effects of the Russian–Ukrainian War in the Broader Central and Eastern European Region]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 17(2), 195–215. Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2024.2.13>
- TÜRKÉ, András István (2016): Magyarország részvétele az Európai Unió biztonság- és védelempolitikájában: intézményes és jogszabályi háttér [Hungary's Participation in the European Union's Security and Defence Policy: Institutional and Legal Background]. In TÜRKÉ, András István – BESENYŐ, János – WAGNER, Péter (eds.): *Magyarország és a CSDP. Magyar szerepvállalás az Európai Unió közös biztonság- és védelempolitikájában* [Hungary and the CSDP. Hungary's Role in the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy]. Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó.
- VARGA, Gergely (2019): Az európai biztonság- és védelempolitikai kezdeményezések értékelése Magyarország szempontjából (1.) [Evaluation of European Security and Defence Policy Initiatives from Hungarian Perspectives (1)]. *KKI Tanulmányok*, (2). Online: https://hiia.hu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/02_KKI-tanulmany_EU_Varga_201902.pdf
- VÉGH, Ferenc (2018): Honvédségünk a rendszerváltástól napjainkig (2.) [The Hungarian Defence Forces from the Change of Regime to the Present Day]. *Honvédségi Szemle*, 146(4), 3–19. Online: <https://kiadvany.magyarhonvedseg.hu/index.php/honvszemle/article/view/358/342>
- VÉGVÁRI, Zsolt (2023): Fókuszban a védelmi innováció [Defence Innovation in Focus]. *Haditechnika*, 57(Special Issue), 74–77.

Gyula Speck

GERMANY

MISSING A EUROPEAN ZEITENWENDE?

INTRODUCTION

Given that the Western alliance system is the main pillar of German foreign policy, it is reasonable to assume that it is an active promoter and supporter of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (formerly European Security and Defence Policy, ESDP). Three days after the invasion of Ukraine, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a *Zeitenwende* (turning point) in foreign policy, which included a radical reassessment of relations with Russia, a firm commitment to the support of Ukraine and the transformation of the Bundeswehr into a modern deterrent force. As he stressed in his speech in Prague in August 2022, Germany intends to implement this foreign policy change in a Europeanised framework (SCHOLZ, 2022). However, after more than three years, it seems that the *Zeitenwende* has failed to live up to its expectations and is more an adjustment rather than a real turn in security and defence policy. In practice, Germany tends to pursue its national interests and is reluctant to Europeanise the announced *Zeitenwende*. I argue that Germany is both a driving force and an obstacle to a more militarily autonomous European Union.

This chapter looks at Germany's role in the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), its development and implementation. First, the main trends of German security and defence policy are described, followed by Germany's approach to the CSDP, its relationship to European strategic autonomy, its involvement in European defence initiatives and its participation in CSDP operations. The novelty of the following chapter might be that it attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of Germany's role from its involvement in the creation of the European Security and Defence Policy until the latest EU defence initiatives which were launched during the War in Ukraine.

MAIN TRENDS OF GERMANY'S SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

The reunification further strengthened the Federal Republic of Germany as Europe's leading political and economic power. However, this elevated position of power did not result in a radical change in Germany's foreign and security policy role. Germany remained a civilian power, which, as a member of the Western alliance with a normative foreign policy, pursued its interests strictly through multilateral forms of international cooperation (mainly EU, NATO, UN), subordinated itself to international law and supranational institutions, and regarded military force only as a last resort (MAULL 2018). However, because of the cooperative European order that emerged with the end of the Cold War, Germany's security perception changed, focusing more on challenges of global governance rather than on traditional military threats, thus defence spending gradually declined and collective defence capabilities eroded (BAGGER 2018). By the early 2010s, the political elite had become disinterested in security policy issues and focused their attention on the reform process in the Eurozone and the EU (BERTRAM 2015).

The turning point came in 2014 with the increased deterioration of European security: the Russian annexation of Crimea clearly violated international law, civil wars in the Middle East and Africa (Yemen, Syria, Libya) and the rise of terrorist organisations (Islamic State, African jihadist organisations) threatened to destabilise Europe's neighbourhood, and in 2015–2016, the migration crisis and terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and Berlin posed a direct threat. The incoming grand coalition government wanted a radical break with the “culture of restraint” in the face of international criticism and a changing security environment. In their speeches at the Munich Security Conferences in 2014 and 2015, Federal President Joachim Gauck, Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier stressed that Germany, as the world's fourth largest economy, is increasingly exposed to changes in the international security order and must therefore contribute to international peace and security in line with its economic and political weight. The new foreign and security policy narrative, the “Munich Consensus”, was reflected in new strategy documents and actual steps, including Berlin's leading role in the Minsk Agreements, the deployment of the Bundeswehr in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania, the increase of development aid and the increase of defence budget from 1.19% to 1.51% by 2020 (BUNDE 2020; NATO Public Diplomacy Division 2017; NATO Public Diplomacy Division 2023). By 2017, however, the “Munich Consensus” had lost momentum and was ultimately unable to bring about a fundamental paradigm shift in security policy. The main

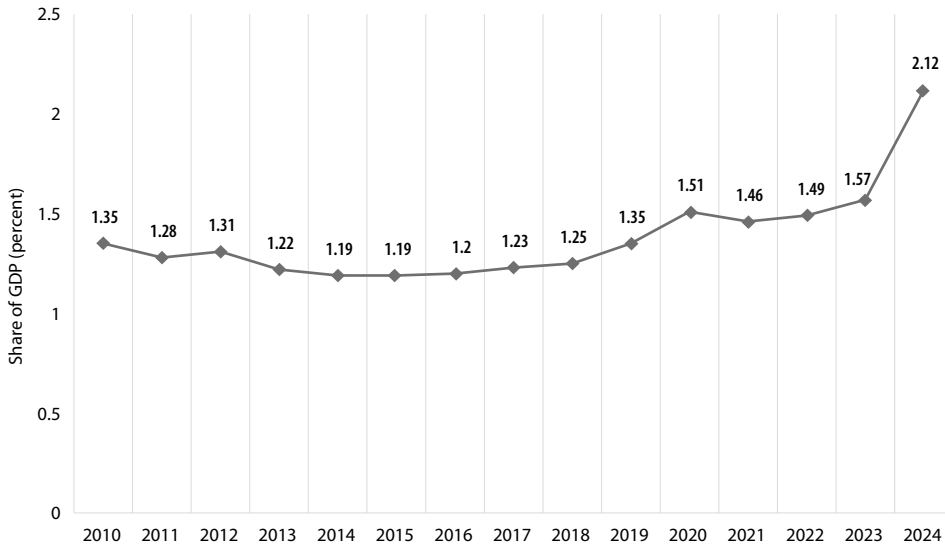


Figure 1. *The development of the German defence budget 2010–2024*
 Source: NATO Public Diplomacy Division 2017; NATO Public
 Diplomacy Division 2023; NATO Public Diplomacy Division 2024

reason for this is that, although there was agreement among political actors on Germany's greater international role, there was no unanimous consensus on how to achieve it (LEONARD–PUGLIERIN 2021).

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has led to a new turn in German foreign and security policy. In his speech to parliament on 27 February 2022, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the *Zeitenwende*, a major shift in foreign and security policy. The *Zeitenwende*'s main defence policy elements were an increase in defence spending to more than 2% of GDP and the creation of a special fund of 100 billion euros to fill the Bundeswehr's capability gap. In addition, Scholz announced support of Ukraine through arms transfers, a break with the previous policy of strict arms exports.¹ Germany also made a definitive break with its policy of *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade) towards Russia, supporting EU sanctions and cancelling the Nord Stream 2 project. Germany announced the European Sky Shield Initiative with 14 European countries. Berlin has initiated its first permanent military deployment in Lithuania with a brigade-sized unit (Zeit Online 2022).

In June 2023, the government published Germany's first national security strategy, an important step forward in German strategic thinking. The strategy

¹ See more on the topic in SPECK 2019.

adopts a broad understanding of security. Its keyword is integrated security, which covers not only the military sector but also the economic, environmental, social and information sectors and seeks to coordinate them. The first pillar of the document is “Wehrhaftigkeit” (robustness), which includes, inter alia, the development of credible deterrence and defence capabilities, the strengthening of the European pillar of the transatlantic alliance and the common foreign and security policy, the development of European defence industry, more active involvement in EU crisis management, and a strengthened arms export policy that takes into account strategic interests. The second pillar of the document is resilience, which covers countering hybrid threats, disaster preparedness and cybersecurity, as well as reducing unilateral economic dependencies and diversifying supply chains, for example by building EU trade partnerships and strengthening the EU internal market. The third pillar of the strategy is sustainability, which covers climate protection, development aid and various areas of human security (Die Bundesregierung 2023).

One of the biggest uncertainties in the *Zeitenwende* is the issue of the special fund for the Bundeswehr (Sondervermögen). Olaf Scholz’s promise in February 2022 that “from now on we will invest more than two per cent of our gross domestic product in defence each year” is open to doubt based on financial planning. Under the special fund law, which was approved by the Bundestag in June 2022, the 2% target is to be achieved by using the special fund over a maximum of 5 years. The 100-billion-euro special fund is therefore counted in the regular defence budget and not on top of it. After the special fund has been spent, the defence budget is to be used to finance defence reform (Bundesministerium der Justiz – Bundesamt für Justiz 2022). However, the parliament approved in 2024 51.95 billion euros while the government’s proposed financial plan provides for 2025–2026 only 52 billion euros and for 2027 51.9 billion euros which are far from the 2% target (Deutscher Bundestag 2023; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2024c). In 2024 the defence budget reached the 2% goal (73 billion euros) but only with the special fund (Deutschlandfunk 2024).²

All in all, the *Zeitenwende* announced by Scholz can rather be seen as an adjustment. The special fund has made defence reform goals more achievable, but it will be hardly able to cover all the Bundeswehr’s needs, and the base defence budget would have to be continuously increased (CSIKI VARGA – ETL 2022). In addition to the financial resources, the same structural problems that accompanied the previous defence reforms persist, in particular the bureaucratic and inefficient procurement system. Furthermore, the defence industry needs to be able to adapt

² After the federal elections of 23 February 2025, Friedrich Merz, the chancellor candidate of the winner CDU–CSU parties, announced that an additional 200-billion-euros special fund should be established to continue the modernisation of the Bundeswehr (FAZ 2025).

to increased defence spending and procurement, as its production capacity has shrunk over the past 30 years, and it is facing supply problems and labour shortages (MÖLLING–SCHÜTZ 2022).

GERMANY'S APPROACH TO CSDP

Berlin's position on the CSDP is crucially shaped by Germany's unique historical past. European integration is ultimately a fundamental component of German identity after 1945. For Germany, European defence cooperation is of symbolic importance, which it sees as a project to maintain and strengthen the political unity of the European Union. Multilateralism and openness to supranational integration were fundamental elements of German foreign policy identity after World War II. Germany rarely acts unilaterally in foreign policy. These elements are also dominant in defence policy. When the Bundeswehr was created, it was designed to always act in a multinational, allied framework. One might therefore reasonably assume that the German politico-military elite is more open to defence integration than other large European states (BUNDE 2021).

The reality is more complex. Although German diplomats have traditionally been more open to a stronger EU role in security and defence policy, the Ministry of Defence and the military leadership have traditionally been socialised within the NATO framework. There is a consensus among the political and military leadership that NATO and the EU contribute to European security in a complementary way. In Berlin's understanding, there is no contradiction between the idea of a transatlantic alliance and European defence, with closer European defence serving to strengthen the European pillar of NATO (BANKA 2023; BUNDE 2021). However, Germany's commitment to the CSDP is less clear. Following the British–French declaration in Saint-Malo,³ the German EU Presidency under the SPD–Green Government played a key role in launching and giving substance to the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) at the Cologne summit in 1999. Although the ESDP was initiated by the British–French couple, there was considerable disagreement between them about its purpose. While Britain wanted to strengthen the European pillar of the transatlantic alliance, France wanted to strengthen European strategic autonomy, as such the German mediating role was of great importance (ALGIERI 2011). Germany, along with France, Belgium and Luxembourg,

³ The St. Malo Declaration, signed in December 1998 by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and French President Jacques Chirac, sought to establish a European security and a defence policy with the aim of making the EU an independent global actor (CVCE 1998).

pushed for a European headquarters for planning and conducting CSDP missions, although the initiative was ultimately vetoed by Great Britain and Member States (ISO-MARKKU – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET 2020). Moreover, Berlin's commitment to ESDP was also heavily influenced by the Iraq War which was incompatible with Germany's civilian power role. Berlin also wanted to avoid being isolated by its position in the Iraq War by seeking to form a coalition with France for European security (MISKIMMON 2007). The social democratic and green coalition government emphasised a broad understanding of security, including political, economic, environmental, social and military dimensions. It was mainly the idea of Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer that civilian crisis management was incorporated into the CSDP and the 2003 European Security Strategy. This German position fits into the concept of civilian power. The Schröder governments also supported the CSDP because 9/11 had decisively changed the German concept of security. As a consequence of the "global war on terror", the main task of the Bundeswehr was now declared to be crisis management rather than territorial defence. For Berlin, the significance of the CSDP lay in the EU's ability to act in its neighbourhood for crisis management. However, the Schröder governments treated the CSDP as a partner of NATO. Berlin decision-makers therefore supported the Berlin Plus Agreement,⁴ which allowed the EU to use NATO capabilities in peace operations (CHAPPELL 2012). In this early period of CSDP, Germany also joined the Franco-British plans for the EU battlegroup concept. Berlin declared that it would take a leading role in three battlegroups and participate in three others (ISO-MARKKU – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET 2020). However, Germany, alongside Great Britain, prevented the Battlegroups from being deployed when other Member States, including France, called for it (MAJOR-MÖLLING 2010).

German commitment to the CSDP waned in the second half of the 2000s. This was largely because the post-2005 governments led by Angela Merkel pursued a different security and defence policy direction. The second Merkel Government was hardly interested in security and defence policy, as it was concentrating rather on the global financial and euro crisis (ISO-MARKKU – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET 2020). Moreover, Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle and Merkel stressed that grouping within the EU, i.e. multi-speed integration, was not acceptable. The German leadership therefore did not follow the Schröder cabinets' commitment to European defence. Berlin did not support the deployment of EU battlegroups in African operations, mainly due to the limited intervention capabilities of the Bundeswehr (BECKER 2013). Germany tried to take the CSDP forward with the Ghent

⁴ See more in REICHARD 2004.

Initiative in 2010. The initiative focused on the pooling and sharing of military capabilities to enable Member States to develop their military capabilities more cost-effectively. The initiative was endorsed by the European Council in December 2013. Germany, however, failed to renew the CSDP because in 2010 France and the U.K. signed the Lancaster House Treaties,⁵ which operated only on a bilateral basis and covered areas not covered by the CSDP, such as nuclear deterrence. Berlin lacked the political will to lead by example. Germany's leading role in the CSDP was also limited by its abstention from the NATO intervention in Libya at the UN Security Council in 2011, thus directly confronting its allies. Merkel rather backed High Representative Catherine Ashton's approach to focus EU military missions on training and capability development. This coincided with Merkel's "doctrine" of strengthening local actors rather than direct military intervention (ISO-MARKKU – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET 2020).

The "Munich Consensus", announced by leading German politicians in 2014–2015, brought back security and defence affairs into German political discourse. Initially, this renewed commitment to European security was not implemented on the CSDP level. However, it was a crucial development that Germany, together with other member states, responded to the French Government's call for the activation of the EU's mutual assistance clause (Treaty of the European Union, Article 42) following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. Germany supported France by sending Tornado reconnaissance jets to Syria and increased its troops in the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) and the United Nations' MINUSMA mission. The main change in the CSDP and the German position was brought about by Brexit and, more importantly, by Donald Trump's actions. The exit of Britain, traditionally sceptical of the CSDP, opened new perspectives for European defence integration. President Trump's statements have led to the conclusion that the U.S. will no longer be committed to European security. Trump's criticisms and transactional approach have led Berlin's decision-makers to reassess Europe's geopolitical role, which was visible in the changed political rhetoric and efforts in the CSDP. Angela Merkel's call in 2017 that "we Europeans really must take our destiny into our own hands" is indicative of this change (FAZ 2017). Merkel's statement was followed by several calls for European autonomous action from German politicians. On a practical level, Ursula von der Leyen, together with her French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian, presented a series of proposals, which were supported by both the European

⁵ The Lancaster House Treaties (or Lancaster House Agreement) include two treaties between the United Kingdom and France for intensified bilateral security and defence cooperation. These cover armaments cooperation, joint work on military doctrine and development of joint military capabilities (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs 2011).

Commission and the European Council. Two of the most important initiatives were the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPC), the first EU command responsible for the operational planning and conduct of non-executive EU missions, and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) capability development programmes. With the support of Italy, Spain as well as four smaller Member States (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland and the Netherlands) the two initiatives were established in 2017 (ISO-MARKKU – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET 2020). The German Presidency in 2020, along with France, also played a key role in the creation of the EU Strategic Compass (SUS 2021).

In case of the early period of CSDP as well as the MPCC and PESCO, it can be clearly seen that Germany was only able and willing to take the lead in CSDP if it could form a coalition with other leading EU Member States. Thus, Germany assumed the role of a “co-leader” in the CSDP (ISO-MARKKU – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET 2020).

The military modernisation announced as part of the *Zeitenwende* in February 2022 has not led to a European turn in German security and defence policy. For Germany, NATO is the cornerstone of European defence, and the Bundeswehr’s planning follows almost exclusively the NATO planning process. Germany’s main interest is to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. Berlin is confident that by relying on NATO, it will bind the United States to Europe in the long term (PUGLIERIN 2024a). This current position is reflected in the strategic documents. Although the 2021 coalition treaty expressed support for CSDP and increased cooperation between the European armed forces (Mehr Fortschritt Wagen 2021), the National Security Strategy published in 2023 identifies NATO as the cornerstone of European and German security (Die Bundesregierung 2023). The latest Defence Policy Guidelines, like previous documents, emphasise the importance of NATO–EU cooperation. The document stresses the complementary nature of the EU in the economic and humanitarian sectors of security (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2023a).

Overall, Germany’s commitment to the CSDP is half-hearted. German public opinion and the political elite are generally characterised by a Europeanised identity (KATZENSTEIN 1997), but other factors also shape security policy practice. According to a 2023 survey by the Bundeswehr Institute of Military History and Social Sciences, more than 60% of the public support the CSDP and Germany’s closer cooperation with its European partners, but only 48% think the EU should be an independent security and defence actor. However, alongside the Europeanised identity, there is a clear anti-militarist attitude. 47% clearly reject the idea of Germany playing a leading military role in the EU (GRAF 2024). This is confirmed by a recent survey by the Körber Stiftung, which found that 71% do not want Germany to be

a leading military power (Körber Stiftung 2023). Political parties are also divided on European defence integration. While the mainstream parties (CDU–CSU, SPD, Greens/Alliance '90) support it in their manifestos, the far-left *Die Linke*, the *Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht* and the far-right *Alternative für Deutschland* (AFD) reject the militarisation of the EU. The parties have traditionally insisted on the Bundestag's control over the armed forces, which Germany's allies often criticise as an obstacle to defence integration (BUNDE 2021; Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht 2024). Thus, Germany's approach to the CSDP is defined by a commitment to multilateralism and integration, which leads to support for the CSDP in principle, and is limited in practice by an anti-militarist stance.

GERMANY AND THE QUESTION OF EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

The discourse on European strategic autonomy has been present in European institutions and Member States for decades, but in Germany, it has been revived by the actions of President Donald Trump. Trump has criticised Germany's defence spending in particular and has also hinted at the withdrawal of 12,000 U.S. troops from Germany. As mentioned above, the German rhetoric emphasised more the need for European autonomy because of the Trump Administration, but President Macron's critical tone towards NATO was not followed. Merkel distanced herself from the French President's statement that NATO is brain dead (BANKA 2023). In her 2020 article, Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer responded to Macron's call for European strategic autonomy by stating: "Illusions of European strategic autonomy must come to an end: Europeans will not be able to replace America's crucial role as a security provider." Furthermore, "we have to acknowledge that, for the foreseeable future, we will remain dependent [on the U.S.]" (KRAMP-KARRENBauer 2020). Similarly, Christoph Heusgen, Merkel's Security Policy Adviser, said about European sovereignty that: "This phrase is misleading, making claims that we cannot meet in the foreseeable future. We cannot secure the Kabul airport to evacuate our citizens without the Americans, let alone conduct major military operations. That is why I think it is presumptuous to talk about European sovereignty" (HEUSGEN 2022). For German decision-makers, European strategic autonomy is compatible with NATO and not an alternative to it. In her 2020 speech following Joe Biden's electoral victory, Merkel expressed that the European calls to do more should be embedded within the transatlantic alliance (BANKA 2023). As Claudia Major put it: "From a German point of view, there is no

contradiction between stronger European commitment and strong transatlantic ties. They are considered mutually reinforcing” (LATO 2021).

After Merkel the new government coalition parties in 2021 emphasised in their coalition treaty the European sovereignty, by which they meant not only the military dimension but also geopolitical, climate, economic and technological autonomy (Mehr Fortschritt Wagen 2021). Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock expressed that “the much-discussed strategic sovereignty is in any case not primarily a military question, but rather an economic and technological one” (BAERBOCK 2021). As Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in his Prague speech in August 2022, European sovereignty means that Europe must take greater responsibility in all fields of security. Thus, unilateral dependencies in the economy, energy and technology must be eliminated. In defence, he stressed joint procurement and development and proposed the creation of a separate permanent council of defence ministers within the Council of the European Union. The Chancellor pledged that Germany would be the leading nation for the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5,000 troops by 2025. For the planning and conducting of EU military operations, he proposed the establishment of a permanent EU headquarters. Scholz envisioned a “geopolitical Europe” which is capable of acting autonomously in the new security environment. For autonomous action, he reiterated the need for qualified majority voting in CFSP, a goal that German politicians have been stressing for decades (SCHOLZ 2022). Scholz also supported Macron’s idea to extend France’s nuclear deterrence to Europe, but this does not mean that the EU will become a nuclear power (Reuters 2024).

Berlin is thus deliberately using the concept of strategic sovereignty, a broader and more neutral concept than strategic autonomy. The phrase of European strategic autonomy is completely non-existent in political statements and strategic documents, Germany wants a strategically sovereign Europe that does not seek autonomy vis-à-vis the United States. This position was clearly reflected in Berlin’s refusal to supply combat vehicles to Ukraine without a decision from Washington. The government decided to buy the F-35s, which Rheinmetall is also involved in the production of, and agreed to buy 60 Chinook helicopters (DW 2023; Reuters 2023). The European Sky Shield Initiative, a joint European missile defence procurement proposed by Berlin, is also largely based on Israeli and U.S. missile defence systems. The German Government has repeatedly stated that, while it supports European defence industrial integration, it gives priority to developing the Bundeswehr’s capabilities as quickly as possible over European projects (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2023a; GKKE 2022). There would likely be a significant change in the German position if the strategic focus of the United States were to shift spectacularly away from

Europe and the defence policy ‘epochal shift’ were to be a real success.⁶ In that case, Germany would be able to act as a more assertive military actor in Europe. Given the Ukraine War and the mixed success of defence developments so far, this scenario seems unlikely in the short term.

GERMANY AND THE CSDP INITIATIVES

Germany’s position on the CSDP initiatives is largely determined by the factors outlined above. Berlin has traditionally been committed to the initiatives in principle and rhetoric, but reluctant to implement them. Contrary to political statements, Berlin’s commitment to European defence industrial policy is modest. In the defence industry, Germany is not willing to cede its sovereignty to the European Union. Berlin is sceptical about the extension of the European Commission’s powers to defence procurement. Germany generally supports CSDP capability projects that are not in conflict with NATO objectives. It sees a complementary role for the EU in areas that are not NATO priorities, such as crisis management operations in Europe’s neighbourhood. More importantly, most German policymakers are not primarily interested in the EU’s military capabilities, but in ensuring that defence cooperation promotes European integration. For Berlin, CSDP initiatives therefore have a strong symbolic significance (BUNDE 2021; PUGLIERIN 2024a).

Of all the CSDP initiatives, PESCO has received the most attention in Germany. Preserving the unity of European integration was crucial to the German position on PESCO. Initially, Paris wanted to use the enhanced cooperation provided by the Lisbon Treaty to bring Member States with the right capabilities to work more closely together to develop intervention capabilities. However, Berlin wanted to preserve European unity after Brexit. It saw the exclusive approach as unnecessary, as Britain, which had been an obstacle to defence integration, had already left the EU. Because of the inclusive approach, Germany only reluctantly joined France’s European Intervention Initiative (EI2), which is outside of the EU framework. The inclusive PESCO, i.e. a programme allowing all Member States and non-EU states to participate, was a political victory for Berlin. It is no coincidence that PESCO received unusual attention in the German media. Moreover, PESCO also

⁶ By the finalisation of this chapter, this seems a possible outcome. After re-elected as president of the U.S., Donald Trump started bilateral negotiations with President Vladimir Putin without the European allies. This act shocked the German political elite. Friedrich Merz, chancellor candidate of the CDU–CSU parties, announced in February 2025 that Europe must gradually reach independence from the U.S. (FURRER 2025).

appeared in the 2018 Coalition Treaty. PESCO enjoyed a wide consensus between the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Bundeswehr, despite the fact that these actors often have different positions on CSDP (BUNDE 2021; MAJOR-MÖLLING 2019).

The German defence industry has modest expectations of PESCO. It is important for them that projects have clear strategic directions. Traditionally, the defence industry has criticised the lack of well-defined defence industrial priorities of German governments. The defence industry often complains that there is no regular consultation between the government and the defence industry, thus the interests of the defence industry are often ignored by the government. In other European countries (e.g. France or Italy), the interaction between the state and the defence industry is stronger (PUGLIERIN 2024a). Moreover, German companies are worried that some PESCO projects could provide an advantage for competitors in the future, for example, the Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle project initiated by Italy (MAJOR-MÖLLING 2019). According to German companies, the *Zeitenwende* in defence policy has still not provided an answer to this problem, as the government still lacks a clear defence industrial strategy, which is a disadvantage against competitors (DGAP 2024).

Critics warned, however, that the inclusive approach took away the real purpose of PESCO which could have been a significant achievement in defence integration. Although the finalised PESCO included projects that were beneficial to Berlin, such as Military Mobility based on EU–NATO cooperation, which facilitates the movement of military units between Member States, these projects have little to do with crisis management capabilities (MAJOR-MÖLLING 2019).

Germany is currently participating in 26 of the 68 active PESCO projects and it is coordinating 10 projects. Germany participates mainly in air traffic and C4ISR⁷ projects.⁸ In comparison, France is active in 45 projects and coordinates 15 projects,

⁷ Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

⁸ These are the following: Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre (EUROSIM); EUFOR Crisis Response Core (EUFOR CROC); Integrated Unmanned Ground System (iUGS); Integrated Unmanned Ground Systems 2 (iUGS2); Anti-Torpedo Torpedo (ATT); Critical Seabed Infrastructure (CSIP); European Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (MALE RPAS Eurodrone); European Attack Helicopters TIGER Mark III; Strategic Air Transport for Outsized Cargo (SATOC); Next Generation Small RPAS (NGSR); Future Medium-size Tactical Cargo; Future Short-Range Air to Air Missile (FSRM); European Secure Software-defined Radio (ESSOR); Strategic Command and Control (C2) System for CSDP Missions and Operations (EMILCOM); Electronic Warfare Capability and Interoperability Programme for Future Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR); Cyber and Information Domain Coordination Center (CIDCC); European Medical Command (EMC);

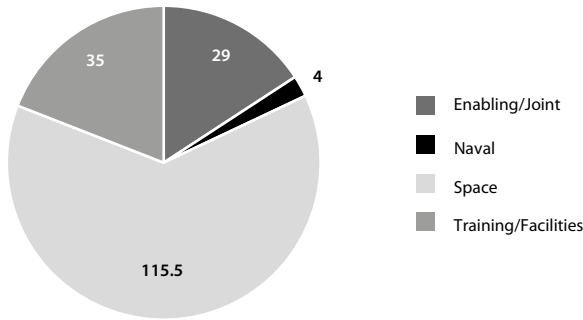


Figure 2. Volume of German coordinated EDF projects in million euros

Source: HELLEMEIER 2023

meanwhile, Italy is in 34 projects and coordinates 13 (PESCO s. a.). However, the German-coordinated projects are often larger than those of the other leading nations. Germany's main PESCO partners are France, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Norway (HELLEMEIER 2023).

Germany's participation in the European Defence Fund (EDF) is twofold. On the one hand, Germany doubled the number of its leading positions in projects in 2021. In 2022, only eight out of 41 EDF projects had no German participation. On the other hand, Germany has reduced its overall participation. In terms of the number of projects involved (31) and the number of participations (85), Germany has moved into second place behind the EDF champion France (32 projects and 96 participations). While the total value of the projects coordinated by Germany is close to 260 million euros, for France it is 894.5 million euros. The two projects led by Germany (in terms of financial volume) were "Odin's Eye II" and "Federates" in 2022. While the former is a space-based missile defence early warning system, the latter is the development of a training and decision simulation facility. Despite the positive attitude of the German defence industry towards EDF, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 11% of German participation. In contrast, Italian and Greek SMEs had shares of 10% and 11% respectively (HELLEMEIER 2023).

According to the Federal Government's 2020 Strategy Paper on Strengthening the Security and Defence Industry, "the European Defence Fund has the potential to be

Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations (NetLogHubs); Military Mobility; Geospatial, Meteorological and Oceanographic (GeoMETOC) Support Coordination Element (GMSCE); Timely Warning and Interception with Space-based TheatER surveillance (TWISTER); Materials and Components for Technological EU Competitiveness (MAC-EU); EU Radio Navigation Solution (EURAS); European Military Space Surveillance Awareness; Common Hub for Governmental Imagery (CoHGI); Defence of Space Assets (DoSA).

an important catalyst for an increasingly integrated European defence industry“ and “the Federal Government will seek to use this instrument to further consolidate the European defence market with the long-term policy goal of using the internal defence market” (Die Bundesregierung 2020: 4). Nevertheless, the German Government’s role in EDF is rather passive. The defence industry has criticised the absence of co-financing the EDF projects in the defence budget planning. Another problem is that the German EDF and PESCO priorities are not in line. Germany is active in the EDF in the maritime and cyber domains contrary to the C4ISR and air traffic PESCO programmes. Overall, in the EDF Germany underperforms given its economic and defence industrial weight (HELLEMEIER 2023). A positive development in this respect is that Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (KMW) and Rheinmetall, together with Italian, Spanish and Swedish companies, are planning to develop a new tank to succeed the Leopard 2. Given its multinational character, the participants plan to involve EDF funds. However, the new cooperation could rival the Franco–German Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) project, which has been under development since 2017 and whose success is highly questionable, given that its progress depends on the lagging Franco–German–Spanish Future Combat Air System (FCAS) project (NTV 2023).

Germany’s reluctance can be observed also in the recent CSDP initiatives. Although the German Government welcomed the new EU efforts, during the negotiation of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP), it objected to an initial proposal that would have allowed the Commission to intervene in the European arms market. German officials, along with their Italian partners, believe that the Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space, headed by French Commissioner Thierry Breton, is serving French national interests. Germany’s defence industrial policy also seeks to bypass the European Defence Agency (EDA). In the joint procurement of 155 mm artillery ammunition for Ukraine, Germany has not joined the framework contracts concluded by the EDA but instead has concluded contracts with the Netherlands, Denmark and Estonia. Berlin considers the EDA hardly efficient and overly bureaucratic. The deteriorating economic situation in Germany currently plays a major role in supporting CSDP initiatives. Germany is the largest donor to the European Peace Facility (EPF) relative to its economic performance. As Germany has been heavily criticised by its Central and Eastern European allies for not supporting Ukraine enough, Berlin has taken the initiative to include in-kind donations in its contributions to the EPF (PUGLIERIN 2024a).

Germany has supported the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), but, following an inclusive approach

similar to PESCO, it has also made EDIRPA eligible for the procurement of equipment from third countries. This decision led to a debate with France. In case of the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP), the German Government, like in the case of ASAP, does not support the extension of the Commission's powers and is not willing to provide additional financial resources for EDIP (SCHÜTTE 2023). Furthermore, Germany does not share France's and Estonia's proposal which would allow the EU to issue Eurobonds to jointly fund common defence projects (PUGLIERIN 2024b).

Overall, Germany tends to pursue its own short-term interests and priorities in CSDP initiatives, weakening the EU's long-term ability to strengthen the European defence industrial base (PUGLIERIN 2024a; SCHÜTTE 2023). Instead of CSDP initiatives involving the transfer of sovereignty, Germany prefers self-initiated bilateral or multilateral defence cooperation. Examples include the Framework Nations Concept, which brings together more than 20 nations, or the Dutch–German or Franco–German bilateral defence cooperation. Berlin can keep these under its control while demonstrating its commitment to European defence (BUNDE 2021).

GERMANY IN THE ESDP/CSDP MISSIONS

Germany's involvement in military ESDP/CSDP operations was made possible by the Constitutional Court ruling in 1994 which allowed the participation of the German armed forces within a collective security organisation. With the Kosovo intervention, Germany broke with its previous culture of military abstention.⁹ Germany played a major role in all EU peace operations in the 2000s, even though in 2007, for example, only four out of 16 operations were entirely civilian. In Operation

⁹ Because of the burden of the pre-1945 historical past, West Germany, and later united Germany, refrained from using military force outside NATO territory. Helmut Kohl, for example, prohibited German soldiers from entering countries occupied by the Wehrmacht in World War II. The restraint was gradually eased by sending German peacekeepers to Somalia and then Bosnia under United Nations mandates. The domestic political debate about the deployment of the Bundeswehr outside of NATO territory to combat missions was finally settled by the Federal Constitutional Court's decision of 1994, which ruled that the Bundeswehr can be deployed in combat missions outside of NATO territory as long as the military operation is carried out within a collective security organisation and the parliament decided about the exact mandate of the mission. The Kosovo case was a major turning point because NATO's aerial campaign against Yugoslavia, in which German Tornado aircraft also took part, lacked a UN mandate. However, the German decision-makers, notably Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer decided that Germany can participate in the military action to prevent the further genocide of Kosovo Albanians.

Concordia,¹⁰ Germany contributed a quarter of all EU troops, and in Operation Althea,¹¹ Germany provided 900 of the 6,000 troops. Importantly, however, these early EU operations were low-intensity crisis management operations, hence the overwhelming support of the German parliament. In contrast, in high-intensity peace operations, Germany favoured NATO, of which Afghanistan is a prime example. Nevertheless, German ESDP participation was an important part of the learning process of the Bundeswehr gaining experience in geographical regions where there were no direct German interests (MISKIMMON 2007).

Of particular importance in this early phase was the participation in the 2006 EUFOR RD Congo operation.¹² The German Government was initially reluctant to take part in the operation, partly because the Bundeswehr did not have the experience for a deployment in Africa. Furthermore, 57% of the German population opposed participation (BECKER 2013). However, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan put increased pressure on Berlin. Additionally, France, which had led Operation Artemis¹³ in Congo in 2003, refused to take over operational leadership. It became clear that Berlin could not avoid taking on greater responsibility, but Merkel made the leadership role strictly conditional on a UN Security Council mandate, the participation of EU Member States and the acceptance of the Congolese Government. The operation was eventually backed by the governing parties and the Greens, as a result, 780 Bundeswehr soldiers were deployed (MISKIMMON 2007). Germany provided the operational command, but France had leadership on the ground. Although Berlin thus crossed a further threshold into a more active military role by taking the lead in an operation in Africa, it has sought to avoid risk throughout the operation. The German Government was not willing to extend the operation.

¹⁰ Operation Concordia, launched in Macedonia in March 2003, was the European Union's first military crisis management operation which was conducted using NATO assets based on the Berlin Plus Agreement.

¹¹ Launched in December 2004, Operation Althea was deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina to ensure the compliance with the Dayton Agreement, replacing NATO's SFOR mission.

¹² The EUFOR RD Congo was a military mission of the EU to support the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the summer 2006 general elections, by providing security to UN personnel and installations, protecting the Kinshasa airport and protecting civilians.

¹³ Operation Artemis was the first autonomous EU military operation outside Europe. It was launched in June 2003 to stabilise the security situation and to ensure the protection of displaced people in Bunia, capital of Ituri province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The EUFOR operation in Chad and the Central African Republic¹⁴ a year later was not supported by most of the EU Member States, including Germany. Berlin officially cited overstretched involvement in Afghanistan, but it questioned the impartiality of the operation and considered it to be unilaterally serving French interests. The overwhelming European rejection ensured that Germany's reluctance did not damage its reputation (BECKER 2013). By the early 2010s, Germany generally shied away from a more active military role in the face of growing opposition to involvement in Afghanistan.

The foreign policy revision initiated by the 'Munich Consensus' resulted in a return to a more active engagement, although in harmony with NATO's defence planning, collective defence became the Bundeswehr's priority once again. Regarding peace operations and crisis management, the renewed international commitment was mainly seen in the participation in the UN MINUSMA operation in Mali, and to a smaller extent in the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali). The participation in MINUSMA was capped at nearly 1,100, while the EUTM was capped at 450 soldiers. Germany's increased presence was mainly motivated by a demonstration of alliance solidarity with France and action against terrorism and irregular migration (THURAU 2020; PLATZ 2019). By 2022–2023 the Bundeswehr ended its participation in the MINUSMA and the EUTM Mali (Bundeswehr – EUTM Mali s. a.).

The National Security Strategy 2023 and the Defence Policy Guidelines have made it more explicit that the Bundeswehr's primary tasks are collective defence and deterrence in the face of the threat posed by Russia. The Defence Policy Guidelines define international crisis management and capacity building of partners within the UN, NATO and EU framework as a secondary task (Die Bundesregierung 2023; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2023a).

In 2024, Germany contributed 237 personnel to EU operations, including 130 soldiers, 38 police officers and 69 civilians, which is lower than the participation in UN peace operations (881 personnel) (ZIF 2023–2024). In April 2024, the Bundeswehr participated in four military CSDP operations:

Germany strongly supported the EU's training mission for Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) in which it played a central role by providing the Multinational Special Training Command in Brandenburg responsible for coordinating and conducting all training measures for the Ukrainian forces in a wide variety of fields (European External Action Service 2023). Most recently, the Bundeswehr's participation in the

¹⁴ The European Union Force Chad and the Central African Republic between February 2008 and March 2009 was mandated by the United Nations to protect civilians, facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid and protect UN personnel in eastern Chad and northeastern Central African Republic.

Table 1. *The Bundeswehr's participation in peace operations in April 2024*

Mission	Location	Number of personnel
EUFOR Althea	Bosnia-Herzegovina	31 (present)
EUNAVFOR MED Irini	Mediterranean	16 (present)
EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger (EUMPM Niger)	Niger	Max. 60 (approved)
EUNAVFOR Aspides	Red Sea	Max. 700 (approved)

Source: Bundeswehr 2024; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2023b; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2024a

EUNAVFOR Aspides operation has attracted significant attention. The operation is aimed at protecting merchant ships against Houthi rebels. The participation of the Bundeswehr frigate Hessen was authorised by the German Parliament in February 2024 (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2024a). Shortly after the deployment, the frigate destroyed two Houthi drones and mistakenly a U.S. drone. The frigate soon also ran out of ammunition (MDR 2024). The ship was withdrawn from operation at the end of April 2024, to be replaced by the Hamburg frigate in August (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2024b).

Since 1991, 12 out of more than 25 Bundeswehr operations abroad have been EU military operations. Despite Germany's limited previous military experience abroad, between 2003 and 2012 it had more troops involved in CSDP operations than either the U.K. or Italy (CHAPPELL 2012; Bundeswehr s. a.). As in almost all military operations outside alliance territory, Germany has adopted a reluctant attitude towards ESDP/CSDP operations. The decision on the Bundeswehr's participation was always taken by the political decision-makers under external pressure, as such, Berlin's behaviour was mainly reactive. The primary motivating factors were alliance solidarity, counterterrorism and the stability export. Germany was mainly involved in military operations which, because of their low intensity, entailed a minimal risk of casualties, but which were a symbolic demonstration of its commitment to the security of Europe. Rather than engaging in peace operations, Berlin sought to build the capacity of local partners through the so-called *Ertüchtigungsinitiative* initiated by the Chancellery (thus it was labelled as the "Merkel doctrine"), under which Germany has provided military equipment, training and advice to local armed forces, for example in Iraq, Nigeria and Mali (Deutscher Bundestag 2017). These capacity-building initiatives are also present in the Bundeswehr's CSDP missions. Finally, in policy statements, strategic documents (such as the 2017 Guidelines for Crisis Management or the National Security Strategy), and mainstream party

programmes (especially by the Greens) civilian crisis management is more strongly emphasised (Die Bundesregierung 2017; Bündnis 90/Die Grünen 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Germany's power and diplomatic influence make its participation in European defence cooperation indispensable. Berlin's importance is most evident in its ability to keep the Member States of the European Union united. Although this has often led to compromises, sometimes at the expense of effectiveness, without Berlin, the CSDP is likely to be much more fragmented. Germany's role is particularly important for small states in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Hungary, as Berlin's inclusive approach allows all states, regardless of their capabilities, to participate and benefit from closer defence cooperation.

From another perspective, however, we see that Germany's role in the CSDP is controversial. As Julian Junk and Christopher Daase put it, there is a tension between rhetoric and practice at the level of ambition (JUNK-DAASE 2013). This contradiction, in our view, can be traced back to an internal conflict within the German civilian power role. According to Hanns W. Maull, the foreign policy of post-1945 (West) Germany is decisively characterised by its avoidance of unilateral solutions and the pursuit of national goals through international cooperation. To make such cooperation effective, it seeks to institutionalise it, even through the transfer of sovereignty. At the same time, German civilian power, learning from its pre-1945 history, refrains from the use of military force, seeing it as the last instrument of foreign policy. In the civilian power role, these two elements, military restraint and a tendency towards integration, conflict with each other and the former aspect prevails most of the time. Germany wants to promote European defence cooperation, but without transferring too much from its national sovereignty. Therefore, German engagement in the CSDP is often rather symbolic (BUNDE 2021; PUGLIERIN 2024b).

Another characteristic of Berlin's policy towards the CSDP, as in its defence policy in general, is that it is often reactive. Germany supported the CSDP when it felt that the transatlantic alliance was in crisis and trust in the United States was declining (see the 2003 Iraq war or during the Trump Presidency). In the event of a second Trump Administration, it may be possible that Berlin's approach to European strategic autonomy will see a new turnaround. Like other European countries, Germany considers the United States a primary partner in the event of a serious security threat. At the same time, Berlin has been able to contribute

to the effective shaping of the CSDP when it has been able to act together with its main European partner, France. However, Berlin has always treated Paris with a certain caution, as it does not wish to be subordinated to French great power ambitions. This perception was one of the determining factors, alongside limited military capabilities, for Germany's reluctance to participate in EU military peace operations in Africa.

Two years after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and Olaf Scholz's *Zeitenwende* speech, Germany's security and defence policy is in a transitional phase. Although Berlin is aware that the cooperative European security order is over, it does not have a clear vision for the defence of Europe. The *Zeitenwende* has yet to be truly embedded in a European framework.

REFERENCES

- ALGIERI, Franco (2011): Deutsche Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik im europäischen Kontext: Das abnehmende Strahlen der Integrationsleuchttürme. In JÄGER, Thomas – HÖSE, Alexander – OPPERMANN, Kai (eds.): *Deutsche Außenpolitik. Sicherheit, Wohlfahrt, Institutionen und Normen*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 126–147. Online: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-93024-4_5
- BAERBOCK, Annalena (2021): Speech by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock on the Occasion of her Inauguration at the Federal Foreign Office. *Federal Foreign Office*, 8 December 2021. Online: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/baerbock-handover/2500506>
- BANKA, Andris (2023): Germany: The Renewed Quest for Strategic Autonomy. In ČESNAKAS, Giedrius – JUOZAITIS, Justinas (eds.): *European Strategic Autonomy and Small States' Security. In the Shadow of Power*. London: Routledge, 51–62. Online: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003324867>
- BAGGER, Thomas (2018): The World According to Germany: Reassessing 1989. *The Washington Quarterly*, 41(4), 53–63. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2018.1558609>
- BECKER, Sophia (2013): Germany and War: Understanding Strategic Culture under the Merkel Government. *Paris Papers de l'IRSEM*, (9). Online: <https://archives.defense.gouv.fr/content/download/250309/2970933/file/2013%20-%209%20-%20Paris%20Paper%20-%20Becker%20-%20Germany.pdf>
- BERTRAM, Christoph (2015): Die Rückgewinnung der Außenpolitik. Die Review 2014 des Außenministers ist ein Anstoß für das Auswärtige Amt wie für die Republik insgesamt. *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik*, 8(1), 89–97. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12399-014-0448-2>
- BUNDE, Tobias (2020): The Munich Consensus. In BUNDE Tobias – HARTMANN, Laura – STÄRK, Franziska – CARR, Randolph – ERBER, Christoph – HAMMELEHLE, Julia – KABUS, Juliane (eds.): *Zeitenwende. Wendezeiten. Special Edition of the Munich Security Report*. Munich: Munich Security Conference. Online: <https://doi.org/10.47342/SBID8214>

- BUNDE, Tobias (2021): Defending European Integration by (Symbolically) Integrating European Defence? Germany and Its Ambivalent Role in European Security and Defence Policy. *Journal of European Integration*, 43(2), 243–259. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2021.1877693>
- Bundesministerium der Justiz – Bundesamt für Justiz (2022): *Gesetz zur Finanzierung der Bundeswehr und zur Errichtung eines „Sondervermögens Bundeswehr“*. Online: <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bwfinvermg/BJNR103010022.html>
- Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (2023a): *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien 2023*. Online: <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/5701724/5ba8d8c460d931164c7boof49994d41d/verteidigungspolitische-richtlinien-2023-data.pdf>
- Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (2023b): *EUMPM Niger: Bundestag stimmt neuer Bundeswehrmission im Sahel zu*. 28 April 2023. Online: <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/eumpm-niger-bundestag-stimmt-neuer-bundeswehrmission-im-sahel-zu-5613668>
- Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (2024a): *EUNAVFOR Aspides: Parlament beschließt Bundeswehrmission im Roten Meer*. 23 February 2024. Online: <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/parlament-beschliesst-bundeswehrmission-im-roten-meer-5746496>
- Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (2024b): *Die Fregatte „Hessen“ beendet EUNAVFOR European Union Naval Force Aspides - Einsatz im südlichen Roten Meer*. 20 April 2024. Online: <https://www.bmvg.de/de/presse/aspides-fregatte-hessen-beendet-einsatz-5774046>
- Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (2024c): *Verteidigungshaushalt*. Online: <https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/verteidigungshaushalt>
- Bundeswehr – EUTM Mali (s. a.): *Europäische Trainingsmission – EUTM Mali*. Online: <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/einsaetze-bundeswehr/abgeschlossene-einsaetze-der-bundeswehr/mali-europaeische-trainingsmission-#:~:text=Die%20Kr%C3%A4fte%20der%20Ausbildungsmission%2C%20das,Bamako%20eingesetzten%20Kr%C3%A4fte%20das%20Land>
- Bundeswehr (2024): *Wie lauten die Einsatzzahlen?* Online: <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/151670-151670>
- Bundeswehr (s. a.): *Abgeschlossene Einsätze und anerkannte Missionen der Bundeswehr*. Online: <https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/einsaetze-bundeswehr/abgeschlossene-einsaetze-der-bundeswehr>
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (2020): *„zu achten und zu schützen...“ Veränderung schafft Halt. Grundsatzprogramm Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*. Online: https://cms.gruene.de/uploads/assets/20200125_Grundsatzprogramm.pdf
- Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (2024): *Programm für die Europawahl 2024*. Online: https://bsw-vg.de/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/BSW_Europawahlprogramm_2024.pdf
- CHAPPELL, Laura (2012): *Germany, Poland and the Common Security and Defence Policy. Converging Security and Defence Perspectives in an Enlarged EU*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137007858>
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás – ETL, Alex (2022): *Forradalom vagy kiigazítás? A német haderő fejlesztésének kérdései az orosz–ukrán háború fényében [Revolution or Adjustment? Issues Surrounding the Development of German Armed Forces in Light of the Russian–Ukrainian War]*. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 15(2), 77–95. Online: <https://doi.org/10.32576/nb.2022.2.5>
- CVCE (1998): *Franco–British St. Malo Declaration (4 December 1998)*. Online: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf

- Deutscher Bundestag (2017): *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Jan van Aken, Christine Buchholz, Annette Groth, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE*. 07 April 2017. Online: <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/18/118/1811889.pdf>
- Deutscher Bundestag (2023): *Finanzplan des Bundes 2023 bis 2027*. Online: <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/078/2007801.pdf>
- Deutschlandfunk (2024): Deutschland gibt erstmals seit Jahrzehnten zwei Prozent seines Bruttoinlandsprodukts für die NATO aus. *Deutschlandfunk*, 21 February 2024. Online: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/deutschland-gibt-erstmal-seit-jahrzehnten-zwei-prozent-seines-bruttoinlandsprodukts-fuer-die-nato-a-100.html>
- DGAP (2024): The Defense Industry: Disruptions and Challenges for Germany and Europe. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*, 11 April 2024. Online: <https://dgap.org/en/mediacenter/dgaps-morning-briefing-geopolitical-challenges/defense-industry-disruptions-and>
- Die Bundesregierung (2017): *Krisen verhindern, Konflikte bewältigen, Frieden fördern. Leitlinien der Bundesregierung*. Online: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/1213498/d98437ca3ba49coec6a46157of56211f/krisen-verhindern-data.pdf>
- Die Bundesregierung (2020): *Strategy Paper of the Federal Government on Strengthening the Security and Defence Industry*. Online: https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Downloads/S-T/strategiepapier-staerkung-sicherits-und-verteidigungsindustrie-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4
- Die Bundesregierung (2023): *Wehrhaft. Resilient. Nachhaltig. Integrierte Sicherheit für Deutschland. Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie*. Online: <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/5636374/38287252c5442b786ac5d0036ebb237b/nationale-sicherheitsstrategie-data.pdf>
- DW (2023): Germany's Rheinmetall Starts Building F-35 Fuselage Plant. *Deutsche Welle*, 8 January 2023. Online: <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-rheinmetall-starts-building-f-35-fuselage-plant/a-66406164>
- European External Action Service (2023): *Infantry Training for Ukraine in Germany with EUMAM UA. EU Military Assistance Mission in Support of Ukraine*, 11 July 2023. Online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eumam-ukraine/infantry-training-ukraine-germany-eumam-ua_en?s=410260
- FAZ (2017): „Wir müssen unser Schicksal wirklich in die eigene Hand nehmen“. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 May 2017. Online: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/angela-merkel-zweifelt-an-zuverlaessigkeit-von-donald-trump-15036287.html>
- FAZ (2025): Merz will offenbar 200 Milliarden Euro für Aufrüstung. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 February 2025. Online: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/bundeswehr-merz-will-offenbar-200-milliarden-euro-fuer-aufruestung-110319262.html>
- FURRER, Konstantin (2025): Merz will «Unabhängigkeit von den USA erreichen». *20 Minuten*, 24 February 2025. Online: <https://www.20min.ch/story/friedrich-merz-trump-ist-das-schicksal-europas-weitgehend-gleichgueltig-103288493>
- GKKE (2022): *Rüstungsexportbericht 2022 der GKKE. Vorgelegt von der GKKE-Fachgruppe Rüstungsexporte. Gemeinsame Konferenz Kirche und Entwicklung*. Online: https://www.gkke.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GKKE_REB_2022.pdf
- GRAF, Timo (2024): *Was bleibt von der Zeitenwende in den Köpfen? Sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitisches Meinungsbild in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2023*. Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr. Online: <https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-zmsbw/files/724/69003946.pdf>

- HELLEMEIER, Lucas F. (2023): Die Rolle Deutschlands im Europäischen Verteidigungsfonds – Vom wohlwollenden Desinteresse zum Führungsland? *Europäische Sicherheit & Technik*, 22 December 2023. Online: <https://esut.de/2023/12/fachbeitraege/45736/die-rolle-deutschlands-im-europaeischen-verteidigungsfonds/>
- HEUSGEN, Christoph (2022): “It’s Presumptuous to Talk about European Sovereignty”. *Internationale Politik Quarterly*, 6 January 2022. Online: <https://ip-quarterly.com/en/its-presumptuous-talk-about-european-sovereignty>
- ISO-MARKKU, Tuomas – MÜLLER-BRANDECK-BOCQUET, Gisela (2020): Towards German Leadership? Germany’s Evolving Role and the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy. *German Politics*, 29(1), 59–78. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2019.1611782>
- JUNK, Julian – DAASE, Christopher (2013): Germany. In BIEHL, Heiko – GIEGERICH, Bastian – JONAS, Alexandra (eds.): *Strategic Cultures in Europe. Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*. Wiesbaden: Springer, 139–152. Online: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-01168-0_11
- KATZENSTEIN, Peter J. (1997): United Germany in an Integrating Europe. In KATZENSTEIN, Peter J. (ed.): *Tamed Power. Germany in Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1–48.
- Körber Stiftung (2023): *The Berlin Pulse. Of Paradigms and Power Shifts*. Online: https://koerberstiftung.de/site/assets/files/34825/the_berlin_pulse_20232024_1.pdf
- KRAMP-KARRENBAUER, Annegret (2020): Europe Still Needs America. *Politico*, 2 November 2020. Online: <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-still-needs-america/>
- LATO (2021): What Preferences for European Strategic Autonomy? Views from France and Germany. *LATO – Latvian Transatlantic Organisation*, 31 March 2021. Online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69TFxcoiykM>
- LEONARD, Mark – PUGLIERIN, Jana (2021): How to Prevent Germany from Becoming Eurosceptic. *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 9 June 2021. Online: <https://ecfr.eu/publication/how-to-prevent-germany-from-becoming-eurosceptic/>
- MAJOR, Claudia – MÖLLING, Christian (2010): EU-Battlegroups. Bilanz und Optionen zur Weiterentwicklung europäischer Krisenreaktionskräfte. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, 2010/S 22. Online: https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/studien/2010_S22_mjr_mlg_ks.pdf
- MAJOR, Claudia – MÖLLING, Christian (2019): PeSCo. The German Perspective. *Armament Industry European Research Group, Policy Paper*, (36). Online: <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Ares-36.pdf>
- MAULL, Hanns W. (2018): Reflective, Hegemonic, Geo-economic, Civilian...? The Puzzle of German Power. *German Politics*, 27(4), 460–478. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2018.1446520>
- MDR (2024): Marinechef verteidigt Angriff der „Hessen“ auf US-Drohne. *MDR*, 29 February 2024. Online: <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/welt/politik/fregatte-hessen-angriff-us-drohne-huthi-munition-100.html>
- Mehr Fortschritt Wagen (2021): *Koalitionsvertrag 2021–2025 zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (SPD), Bündnis 90/Die Grünen und den Freien Demokraten (FDP)*. Online: https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Koalitionsvertrag/Koalitionsvertrag_2021-2025.pdf

- MISKIMMON, Alister (2007): *Germany and the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. Between Europeanisation and National Adaptation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230591523>
- MÖLLING, Christian – SCHÜTZ, Torben (2022): Zeitenwende in der Verteidigungspolitik. *DGAP Policy Brief*, 5 May 2022. Online: <https://dgap.org/de/forschung/publikationen/zeitenwende-der-verteidigungspolitik>
- NATO Public Diplomacy Division (2017): *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017)*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_06/20170629_170629-pr2017-111-en.pdf
- NATO Public Diplomacy Division (2023): *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014–2023)*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2023/7/pdf/230707-def-exp-2023-en.pdf
- NATO Public Diplomacy Division (2024): *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014–2024)*. Online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/6/pdf/240617-def-exp-2024-en.pdf
- NTV (2023): Kommt der Nachfolger für den Leopard-2-Panzer? NTV, 6 September 2023. Online: <https://www.n-tv.de/wirtschaft/Kommt-der-Nachfolger-fuer-den-Leopard-2-Panzer-article24377149.html>
- PESCO (s. a.): *Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)’s Projects – Overview*. Online: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/64627/pesco-projects-overview_-update_2023.pdf
- PLATZ, Christoph (2019): Peacekeeping Labor Mali: Deutschland und der MINUSMA Einsatz. *SIRIUS – Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen*, 3(4), 339–361. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1515/sirius-2019-4003>
- PUGLIERIN, Jana (2024a): Germany’s Perception of the EU Defence Industrial “Toolbox”. *Armament Industry European Research Group (ARES)*, January 2024. Online: <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ARES-91-Comment.pdf>
- PUGLIERIN, Jana (2024b): Germany Needs to Recover Its European Spirit. *Internationale Politik Quarterly*, 22 March 2024. Online: <https://ip-quarterly.com/en/germany-needs-recover-its-european-spirit>
- REICHARD, Martin (2004): Some Legal Issues Concerning the EU–NATO Berlin Plus Agreement. *Nordic Journal of International Law*, 73(1), 37–67. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718107-07301003>
- Reuters (2024): Germany’s Scholz Echoes Macron’s Call for Deeper European Military Cooperation. *Reuters*, 23 May 2024. Online: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germanys-scholz-echoes-macrons-call-deeper-european-military-cooperation-2024-05-23/>
- SCHOLZ, Olaf (2022): Rede von Bundeskanzler Scholz an der Karls-Universität am 29. August 2022 in Prag. *Die Bundesregierung*, 29 August 2022. Online: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/rede-von-bundeskanzler-scholz-an-der-karls-universitaet-am-29-august-2022-in-prag-2079534>
- Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (2011): *Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the French Republic for Defence and Security Co-operation*. London, 2 November 2010. Online: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a75c663ed915d6faf2b594e/8174.pdf>

- SCHÜTTE, Leonard (2023): What Future European Defence and Technological Industrial Basis (EDTIB) Do We Want/Need? The German Case. *Armament Industry European Research Group (ARES)*, September 2023. Online: <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/ARES-85-Comment.pdf>
- SPECK, Gyula (2019): The Changing German Foreign Policy – Germany's Arms Exports Policy between 2013 and 2017. In LÖRINCZ, András (ed.): *SESCO 2018. Security and Sovereignty in the 21st Century. Budapest, 16–17 November 2018 Conference Proceedings*. Budapest: Institute for Cultural Relations Policy, 41–65. Online: http://culturalrelations.org/Files/Conferences/2018SESCO/ICRP-SESCO2018-Conference_Proceedings.pdf
- SUS, Monica (2021): *The EU Strategic Compass' Three Principles: Inclusivity, Integration and Implementation*. The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. Online: <https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Essay-4-The-EU-Strategic-Compass.pdf>
- THURAU, Jens (2020): Sorge um deutsche Soldaten in Mali. *Deutsche Welle*, 19 August 2020. Online: <https://www.dw.com/de/sorge-um-deutsche-soldaten-in-mali/a-54624708>
- Zeit Online (2022): Europäische Nato-Staaten bringen Luftabwehrschirm auf den Weg. *Zeit Online*, 13 October 2022. Online: <https://www.zeit.de/politik/2022-10/europaeische-nato-staaten-planen-gemeinsames-luftabwehr-system>
- ZIF (2023–2024): *Friedenseinsätze 2023/2024*. Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze. Online: https://www.zif-berlin.org/sites/zif-berlin.org/files/2024-01/ZIF-Weltkarte_Friedenseinsaetze_2023_24_o.pdf

Gergely Fejérdy

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND FRANCE

INTRODUCTORY THOUGHTS

The expression “strategic autonomy” is associated with France. It was first mentioned in the so-called “Defence White Paper” published in 1994. The term, which has been common in French public life since the 1990s, first appeared at European level in 2013. The French approach is therefore particularly interesting when it comes to understanding how it is applied at the European level. In order to present the concept of European strategic autonomy from a French perspective, it is essential to examine factors such as France’s current position in the world. It is also important to look at the main traditional principles that have shaped French foreign and defence policy. It is also worth mentioning the international challenges that continue to shape French strategic thinking today. In this context, it is possible to analyse France’s approach to the European Union’s common security and defence policy issues and the objectives set by Paris. The idea of European strategic autonomy, which President Emmanuel Macron has put forward in recent years, is an integral part of the French traditional approach and its response to international challenges. For the governments in Paris, it is not a new realisation that France’s privileged position in the post-Second World War international system has become increasingly eroded and constrained, and even vulnerable in certain areas, with the collapse of the bipolar world order and the intensification of globalisation (BALLADUR 2023). At the same time, and pointing to certain contradictions, it can also be argued that France still has the potential to remain a visible and influential player in world politics. This is what former French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing said when he referred to his country as a “medium-sized power” (TELLENNE 2023).

KEY FACTORS SHAPING FRANCE'S FOREIGN,
SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

France's place in the world

Today, France accounts for less than 1% of the world's population, with 68.4 million inhabitants, and this figure is likely to continue to decrease in the coming years. This is not only because the demographic figures for some regions of the world are increasing, but also because the overall birth rate in the country has been falling since 2011 (PAPON 2023). France is in a relatively good economic position in terms of population, even if it has experienced increasing difficulties in this area in recent decades. This places it seventh among the most industrialised countries. In terms of GDP per capita, France is now only 25th in the world, having been 13th in 1980 (International Monetary Fund s. a.), ahead of the United States (PÉNEAU 2023). The country has also faced significant financial difficulties in recent years, with sovereign debt reaching 110% of GDP by 2024, or €3,101 billion. The French state is increasingly forced to rely directly or indirectly on foreign creditors. In 1993, only one third of French public debt was held by natural or legal persons not resident in France; today it is 53%. This figure was particularly high in 2009 due to the 2008 financial crisis, when 67% of creditors were non-French (La finance pour tous 2024a). The budget has been particularly overwrought recently by the Covid-19 crisis. The general government deficit in 2020 was 8.9% of GDP. It should be noted that France has not been able to balance its public finances in any year since 1975, and has only rarely met the 3% Maastricht requirement (La finance pour tous 2024b). It is worth noting, however, that French people's currency savings reached almost €6,000 billion in 2023 (Fédération Bancaire Française 2024). In France, the population saves substantial amounts of money each year, well above the European average. Governments repeatedly try to encourage the public to invest their money in strategic sectors, but public efforts in this direction have so far produced few tangible results. It is also important to point out the fact that the process of globalisation has significantly transformed the French economy and society in recent decades, as Jérôme Fourquet has described in detail in several books (FOURQUET 2019; FOURQUET–CASSELY 2021; FOURQUET 2023). Among these, it is relevant to underline the process of deindustrialisation (FOURQUET–CASSELY 2021: 21–42). France lost half of its industrial installations between 1995 and 2015. It is the most affected country in Europe in this area. France has lost 2.5 million industrial jobs in the last fifty years (DUFOURCQ 2022). At the same time, the country's economic exposure has increased. In 2021, 17,000 companies employed 2.2 million French

people in the country (LAURENT–MOLDOVAN 2023), a direct consequence of the fact that France is the destination of choice for most foreign investors in Europe (SILBERT 2024). At the same time, foreign trade has also increased significantly. In 2023, French exports accounted for 34% of GDP and imports for 38% of GDP (Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle, énergétique et numérique 2024). It is important to note that there are more French than Germans among the world's 500 most powerful companies (VÉDRINE 2014). France's attractiveness is also demonstrated by the fact that it has been the number one tourist destination for thirty years. Tourism generates 8% of France's GDP each year and provides employment for nearly 2 million people (Ministère de l'économie, des finances et de la souveraineté industrielle, énergétique et numérique 2023). Another important aspect of the situation in France is the fragmentation that has manifested itself in various forms, and which has increased significantly over the last decade. This is not a problem in itself, because diversity is not an obstacle to effective politics, but if society is so divided that it cannot reach consensus on major issues, if it cannot generate pragmatic decisions but becomes a victim of ideological debates, it can go down the road to self-destruction (DE MONTBRIAL 2023: 10–11).

As can be seen above, the globalisation process has generated contradictory results in France. On the one hand, the country is an active participant and beneficiary of this process, but on the other hand, it is also a constant reproducer of many of its negative consequences. The majority of the population has a negative view of globalisation and associates it mainly with the dominance of the United States (FOUGIER 2018).

The main reason behind the French criticism is that for France this process is not only an economic issue, but also a political, cultural and, through them, a direct factor affecting national identity. Globalisation is particularly problematic for the population of this country because it can be interpreted as a direct attack on the French model of universality, rather than as a counterweight to the predominance of the U.S. and, increasingly, China. At the same time, the French are progressively more aware of the fact that the size of their country is such that they are unable to have any real influence on this process, and that it may well be possible to pursue their interests and their vision of the world through a common Europe, often with contradictory political approaches. Paris is all the keener to rely on the European Union because it wants to see it above all as the key to the establishment of a multipolar world order, as a safeguard against the potential excesses and hegemonic ambitions of a single centre of power.

France is in a special position in Europe. One reason is that it has land on several continents of the world. In addition, France is the second largest country in the world

with an exclusive maritime economic zone (EEZ) (DOBELLE 2021). In addition to its territorial assets, an important factor is that France has a large diplomatic network. It should be noted, however, that France has fallen from second to fifth place over the last ten years. The size of its diplomatic network has decreased in recent years, mainly due to financial difficulties (Lowy Institute 2024). France is also a founding member of several international organisations and informal forums. It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council since 1945, member of NATO since 1949. It is a founding member of the Council of Europe, the European Union and Euratom. It is also a founding member and participant in the G7 and G20. France has also been a nuclear-weapon state since 1960. It is one of the 9 nuclear powers currently recognised. The exact number is not publicly available, but it is admitted that the French military has 300 nuclear weapons, the fourth largest arsenal in the world (HAUPAIS 2019). France was the 11th largest military power in the world in 2024, according to the Global Firepower statistics. Not counting Russia, it is second in Europe after Italy in this area since Brexit (Global Fire Power 2023).¹ This is compounded by the importance of France's influence through the French language. One of the instruments for this is the International Francophone Organisation (OIF), which was set up in 1970 and today has 88 member countries. It is also worth pointing out that the population of French-speaking African countries is growing significantly, so that, according to some estimates, it could go from being the fifth most spoken language in Africa to the second or third by 2050 (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2019).

Key factors in French foreign policy thinking

These factors, which seem to be more important from a foreign and security policy point of view, illustrate that France is a middle power that still has considerable influence and means on the international stage, even if it has lost much of its former position in certain areas. It is important to note, however, that the majority of French citizens perceive the trends as mostly negative. According to Hubert Védrine, former French foreign minister and international relations expert, this pessimism is an enormous mistake and will only exacerbate the decline. In his book he underlines that there are many elements of this negative outlook that can be traced back to fear (VÉDRINE 2014: 63–88). The French are worried, among other things, about France's place in the world. They experience the erosion of their country's role as a

¹ In 2023, it was ahead of Italy. In 2020, it was in 7th place.

great power as a kind of identity crisis, in the light of international trends that have affected their lives since the end of the Cold War. The French image of themselves and of their mission is an integral part of their relationship with the outside world. Their perception, rooted in history and based on geographical, demographic and cultural-intellectual foundations, sees France not only as the world's dominant power but also as a kind of universal role model, thanks to its universal mission (VINCZE 2005). It is through foreign policy that the maintenance of the "French greatness" *par excellence* can be achieved. It is not by coincidence that France has always placed and continues to place great emphasis on diplomacy and military strength. Without these two, it is hardly possible to achieve the main objectives that the French have been demanding for centuries in relation to their place in the world.

Traditional principles of French foreign and defence policy

France's first and most important foreign policy objective is independence. In other words, to guarantee the French nation's autonomy of decision and action. This approach does not exclude international cooperation, but seeks to avoid any situation in which France's space for manoeuvre would be restricted. Independence has become a guiding principle in French foreign policy thinking. In this context, the interpretation of French sovereignty has also changed, and the concept has become increasingly widespread that a partial transfer of sovereignty within the European Union does not mean giving up independence, but rather offers an opportunity to recapture within a European framework a national capacity for action that is becoming increasingly difficult in a context of globalisation (VINCZE 2005: 169). An important element in French foreign policy thinking is also the aspiration to a global role and the emphasis on "greatness", which underlines France's international standing and responsibility, and the sense of a civilising mission that goes with it. Defence policy also plays an essential role in the implementation of these principles. In the French conception, foreign and security policy and defence are closely linked. The main objective of France's defence policy is to provide an appropriate military framework for maintaining national autonomy of decision and action and for the implementation of a global presence. The previous is not a target in itself, but an exercise of responsibility and solidarity commensurate with the country's international weight, and a contribution to meeting the challenges facing the world.

Another important premise of French defence policy is that it is autonomous, but not alone. This is illustrated, for example, by the fact that in 1966 General Charles de Gaulle did not withdraw France from NATO, but said no to the integration

process under the leadership of the United States (BOZO 2022). In the French view, sovereignty and strategic autonomy were violated by excessive U.S. control of NATO. The principle of a defence policy open to cooperation also contributes to the traditional Parisian commitment to the gradual development of European security policy autonomy. The 1994 White Paper states, among others things, that “France cannot entrust the defence of its vital interests to others. However, we must not lose sight of the questions raised by the prospect of building a common European defence within the European Union” (Ministère de la Défense 1994). The document establishes that France has the task of acting as the main representative of the European defence identity within NATO and of providing direction and motivation for the creation of the European Union’s defence dimension.

THE FRENCH SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the light of the above, it is clear that Paris is an indispensable player in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). France has a long history of playing this role. As early as 1947, the Treaty of Dunkirk and, a year later, the Treaty of Brussels were a first step in this direction. The so-called European Defence Community (EDC) project, announced in 1950 by the French Minister of Defence, René Pleven, was the first attempt to build an integrated European army, and was specifically linked to France (WASSENBERG 2010). Although the idea was not supported by the French National Assembly in 1954, it can be seen as an important precursor of the later common European security and defence policy, as well as of the initiatives taken in the framework of Franco–German cooperation on this subject. For example, the Elysée Treaty signed in 1963 aims at the approximation of the defence strategies of the two countries, the development of common concepts and even the coordination of arms production. However, concrete progress was only made in the second half of the 1980s. For example, the Franco–German Defence and Security Council was established in 1988, and the Franco–German Corps (BFA) was set up in 1989, with headquarters in Müllheim. France had an interest in military cooperation because it could keep a greater distance from the United States by controlling Bonn and could generate sufficient financial resources for military technology development. After the end of the Cold War, the common security and defence policy in Europe became a more important issue, at the Franco–German initiative (FEJÉRDY 2021: 125–135). After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the two countries continued to give security policy an important role, although they viewed it differently. Attitudes to defence

cooperation at European level were strongly influenced by the relationship with the United States. France, which has always sought greater distance, saw European defence policy as a balance against NATO and, through it, Washington, while Germany saw it more as a complementary pillar. Despite the conflicting concepts, on 6 December 1990 the two Heads of State announced the plan to create a common European foreign and security policy (CFSP), which a year later became the second pillar of the Maastricht Treaty. In 1991 the Franco–German Brigade (BFA) was ready for military operation. On this basis, it was decided, at the La Rochelle summit of 22 May 1992, to create a European corps (EUROCORPS), which was officially set up on 1 October 1993.

Three years later, at the 68th Franco–German Heads of State meeting, an agreement was reached to develop a common defence and security strategy. At the same time, partly as a result of the Franco–American rapprochement of the mid-1990s, Washington agreed to the creation of a so-called European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO. This was a compromise between the French and American conceptions. In the end, however, its implementation did not bring the result Paris had hoped for – greater European autonomy (GORDON 1998). The hostility in Kosovo, the Amsterdam Treaty and changes in British domestic politics also encouraged London to develop the European Union's defence capabilities independently of the United States. It is in this context that the British–French St. Malo Declaration was born, which can clearly be seen as a concrete step towards an independent European defence policy. This meeting confirmed the direction set out in the 1994 White Paper, the French defence strategy (DU RÉAU 2009). The role of Paris was particularly significant in allowing this bilateral agreement to develop within the framework of the European Union. In the spring of 1999, at the initiative of Paris, the 73rd Franco–German Summit held in Toulouse adopted a French proposal for a credible European military capability independent of the United States. This was confirmed at the Cologne European Council and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which is capable of autonomous crisis management, was launched (DUMOULIN 2019). The EU summit in Helsinki in December 1999 was also an important milestone, with a number of key decisions on this issue. First of all, on the creation of a rapid reaction force of 50–60 thousand troops by 2003 and on the creation of a European military corps capable of managing autonomous operations. This is how the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) and the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) were set up, with the active participation of France, at the end of 2000. Both bodies have been chaired by France on several occasions. Still in 1999, the framework for cooperation between NATO and the European Union was restructured, with the European Security

and Defence Identity (ESDI) being renamed the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). At the instigation of France, among others, it was made clear that consultation and cooperation between the European Union and NATO would not affect the Union's decision-making autonomy.

French Heads of State have consistently stressed the importance of the European Union being able to act completely independently of Washington. This was particularly the case during the Iraq crisis (VAÏSSE-LEQUESNE 2013: 119–123), with Paris at the forefront of the various operations launched by the CSDP since 2003. Thus, in its first European crisis management operation, which also mobilised military forces, the operation in Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia, known as EUFOR Concordia, in which 400 troops from 26 countries took part, France was the largest contingent, with 175 troops. Between 2003 and 2009, the European Union launched more than twenty-five stabilisation missions, some of which were purely military and most of which combined civilian means and a military dimension, but all of which were aimed at strengthening stability in crisis-affected areas and all of which involved French troops.

The fear of losing French sovereignty was an important factor in the failure of the ratification of the draft Treaty establishing a European Constitution in France in 2005. In the end, the Lisbon Treaty was agreed at the urging and under the strong guidance of Nicolas Sarkozy, the French President elected in 2007. It made decisive progress in the area of common security and defence policy. The Treaty brought radical change by establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation and a mutual defence clause, and by strengthening the European Defence Agency. The latter was set up in 2004, *inter alia*, to support the European defence industry. Its creation was driven by French ambition. After 1990, France was one of the Western countries with the greatest military industrial potential and it was not secretly keen to use this to control, or at least influence, this sector at European level (GIOVACHINI 2004). The Agency has an important role in coordinating the industrial capabilities and projects of the Member States. For example, it is responsible for European tanker aircraft and pilot training through the OCCAR (Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation), in which France is, of course, involved.

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Common Security and Defence Policy gives the EU the possibility to use civilian and military assets to conduct peace support operations – peacekeeping, peace building, conflict prevention, peace building and peace consolidation. Eleven civilian and three military operations have been successfully completed and several more were ongoing until 2014. France is the largest contributor to this operation. However, the experience gained from the implementation of these operations has also highlighted weaknesses

in the EU's defence policy. Paris has regularly criticised the extremely slow and cumbersome way in which EU defence decisions are taken, because agreements between Member States are slow to reach consensus and often require clauses that are ineffective. France also expressed regular dissatisfaction with the cost of the missions undertaken (MENON 2011). In 2008, the French side also came up with the idea of creating a G6 for defence, in order to increase efficiency and military cooperation within the Union. France wanted to rely primarily on the great countries for security policy, and, most of all, on the then member state Great Britain (see the Lancaster House Treaty of 2010 in Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs 2011), which alone shared the Parisian view that Europeans should be able to deploy military force in the world.

At the same time as the Lisbon Treaty, France withdrew from the NATO Integrated Command. It did so formally in 2009, but the 2008 White Paper already anticipated this. President Nicolas Sarkozy basically justified his decision on the grounds that it would strengthen relations between the United States and the EU, but it would also boost European defence policy by giving it greater confidence among its pro-Atlantic partners (LAVALLÉE 2018). Paris's defence policy ambitions, however, remained ambivalent. France wanted both to remain independent and to have an effective European foreign and security policy. The latter was seen and considered important as a multiplier of strength and power. In 2008, defence policy was an important priority of the French EU Presidency, even if few tangible results were achieved (FEJÉRDY 2009: 94–95). President Sarkozy hoped that, as France, the EU would develop a long-term defence strategy and increase its autonomy in the international arena. On the initiative of Paris, an agreement was reached between several EU Member States to create a European air fleet, a multinational A400M unit and to ensure the interoperability of European maritime aviation. The French also tried – mostly unsuccessfully – to update the European Security Strategy in 2008, put forward a number of institutional proposals in 2011 with the other Weimar countries (Germany and Poland) (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères 2024a) and actively participated in the preparation of the December 2013 European Council meeting on defence. Nevertheless, France has learned its lessons and has invested less and less energy in strategic or institutional debates where it was clear that a consensual solution was unlikely to be found (DE FRANCE 2015). Paradoxically, Paris has adopted a more Anglo-Saxon approach in the early 2010s: gradual, pragmatic and very much focused on capabilities in the field of European defence policy. This has been compounded by the drift in Franco–German relations, particularly after the Libyan intervention.

However, Paris played an important role in the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2011. It also took over the position of Secretary General of the EEAS in order to increase French influence and tried to become a key player in the institutional system during this period (FAURE 2014). Paris was actively involved in all new defence policy initiatives, although it had little real hope of making significant progress on the common security policy at EU level. In 2012, Hubert Védrine pointed out in his analysis for the new French President that European defence was still at an impasse (VÉDRINE 2012). Whenever attempts were made to give it a new impetus, political initiatives were blocked by military conservatism, industrial competition and lack of funding. The French leadership argued that, if there was some good will to revitalise European security policy, few concrete efforts had been made because of financial and internal political difficulties. In particular, Paris deplored the reluctance of European partners to join the French military action in the Sahel, despite the fact that the stabilisation of the region was seen as a key security issue for the Old Continent. France has undertaken military interventions in a number of places to help resolve crises that are of concern to it, but also to the European Union. In December 2013, for example, the international community called on France to help prevent massacres in the Central African Republic (Operation Sangaris). In 2014, France was again involved in the Daech offensive in Iraq, and in 2015, its troops were deployed in Syria as part of the coalition. Paris also sent its aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle to the region as part of Operation Chammal. During François Hollande's presidency, Paris has constantly sought to promote cooperation at the level of the 28, in particular to ensure that France is not the only country to bear the costs of operations that are also in the interests of the European Union. Nevertheless of course, there was always the contradiction of France wanting to involve its partners while at the same time retaining a certain autonomy in the field of defence policy.

At EU level, 2015 was a significant turning point. That year, France was hit by a succession of attacks linked to Islamist terrorism. In February, the murders of the creators of the satirical newspaper "Charlie Hebdo", followed by the horrific series of attacks in Paris in November, shook Europe. On 13 November 2015, Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty, the mutual protection and assistance clause, was activated for the first time. On the French side, there was a growing appreciation that further steps forward were needed in the area of common defence policy (LEGRAND 2015). Already in 2015, EU Member States put a noticeably greater emphasis on military spending. That year, EU countries spent €203 billion on defence, which was around the world's second most important budget, putting the EU second only to the United States. In 2016, with the strong support and partial initiative of Paris, the

European Council adopted the EU Global Strategy for Europe four days after the Brexit vote. This, as is well known, sets out the EU's strategic priorities and defence needs in the international context. Importantly, the document introduces the concept of strategic autonomy, underlining that the European Union should not be content with being a "soft power", but a full-fledged power, capable of autonomy and freedom of action. In his speech of 13 July 2016, the French President François Hollande particularly underlined France's commitment to a more effective European defence policy. He underlined that "it is up to Europeans to take care of their own security and to act autonomously wherever possible" (HOLLANDE 2016). Paris considered it important that not only budgetary efforts but also interoperability should be an essential aspect of the Union. There was also greater French support for military-industrial cooperation, although this remained controversial, as Paris envisioned moves in this direction primarily under French leadership.

On the French side, its commitment to strengthening the common European defence policy has become even more pronounced since 2017, when Emmanuel Macron took office as Head of State. In his famous Sorbonne speech (MACRON 2017) in September 2017, the President proposed that Europe should set up a common intervention force and have a common defence budget and a common doctrine of action. The first concrete step in these ambitious proposals was the signing by nine Member States on 25 June 2018 of a Memorandum of Understanding on the launch of a "European Intervention Initiative". This new enterprise is not part of the institutional framework of PESD, but Paris has given assurances that it will seek to maintain close links with PESD, and in particular with PESCO. Paris has supported all plans to strengthen European defence policy over the past decade. Most particularly, it has tried to move forward in this area together with Germany. This was also enshrined by the leaders of the two countries in the 2019 Aachen Agreement, and in the Franco-German Defence Council meetings held after 2017. In November 2017, the French joined the 22 other Member States that set up the ambitious European Defence Fund (EDF). The concrete inauguration took place in 2021. France is an important player in its creation, as well as in its use. For the period 2021–2027, the French want to make the most of the €7.9 billion managed by the fund, and until 2024 the French European Commissioner Thierry Breton had been working to this end, to some extent in the interests of France (PUGNET – BOURGERY-GONSE 2023). For Paris, the criteria for European support for arms production are not satisfactory, because they are not sufficiently strict and negotiations are still under way between the states concerned (PUGNET 2024). In particular, France has incorporated European defence policy in all its aspects. In 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine made it even clearer to France that Europe's

security can be ensured primarily through its own military efforts. In 2022, the so-called *Antarès* naval and air operation was launched with European partners, which provided defence policy missions in the area from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. In the framework of the European Union, France supported the training of Ukrainian soldiers (EUMAM).

Defence policy was also one of the key topics during the French Presidency of the EU in 2022. In March 2022, in Versailles, France called for the development of a European defence strategy to strengthen the EU's common defence industrial base, to achieve greater strategic autonomy, to develop a European defence strategy in response to the Russian aggression, and to strengthen the initiatives for the joint arms procurement of Member States (EDIRPA) and European military production capabilities (ammunition and missile production, ASAP). The adoption of the so-called Strategic Compass in 2022 was considered a major success by the Parisian leadership, which finally took steps towards the adoption of a common military doctrine and a concrete roadmap up to 2030, also on the French impulse (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères 2024b).

France has also provided support through the European Peace Facility to 22 partners, including Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, and in Africa through the Gulf of Guinea Initiative for Defence and Security. The strengthening of the EU's capacity to defend contested strategic places, in particular the fight against hybrid threats and information manipulation, as well as the adoption of a space security and defence strategy, were also initiated by Paris. President Macron has also created the European Political Community (EPC), which also serves partly defence purposes indirectly, in the interests of greater geopolitical stability. Paris is also an active participant in counterterrorism missions. France is also an essential player in the fight against piracy at sea, including off the coast of Somalia (FRÉCON 2023). French participation in the EUNAVFOR *Aspides* operation, which ensures the protection of maritime trade in the Red Sea, is also self-evident. Without wishing to be exhaustive, it should also be mentioned here that, primarily in defence of European interests, France, although increasingly marginalised on the South Continent, is also trying to promote stability in Africa by providing financial resources, for example in the case of Rwanda (MACRON 2024).

In a speech at the Sorbonne on 25 April 2024, Emmanuel Macron called for the creation of "a credible European defence", capable of defending against even a single Russian attack, alongside NATO. The Head of State of France also raised the possibility that French nuclear weapons could even be used for European defence (QUENTIN 2024). This has caused much controversy, but it shows that France is fully committed to European defence policy.

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY
THROUGH FRENCH PERSPECTIVE

The expression “strategic autonomy” is associated with France. It was first mentioned in the so-called “Defence White Paper” published in 1994. In this document, drawn up by Marceau Long, Édouard Balladour and François Léotard, the term is used above all in the international context after the end of the Cold War, as part of the argument for the preservation of the French nuclear deterrent and as an autonomous national European defence policy objective, under NATO guarantees, assuring independence. Since 1972, France has regularly produced a strategic document covering defence and national security issues, taking into account the risks and threats facing the country and the global response to these challenges. From 1972 to 2013, four White Papers were published. The 2019–2025 military programming law is based on the Strategic Review of Defence and National Security submitted to the President of the Republic on 13 October 2017. Following the Covid-19 pandemic and in view of the complexity of the geostrategic situation, it seemed appropriate to update the strategic review in 2021. In 2013, this type of strategic analysis was published under the name “White Paper”, since 2017 it has been called “National Strategic Review”. In 2022, the last official document setting out this type of forward-looking defence objectives was produced. The concept of “strategic autonomy” has been recurrent in these documents since 1994.

The term, which has been common in French public life since the 1990s, first appeared at European level in 2013. It was then included in the final declaration of the European Council of 19 and 20 December, at the suggestion of France, among others. This document stated that

“Europe must have a more integrated, sustainable, innovative and competitive defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB) to ensure the development and support of its defence capabilities, which will also enable it to increase its strategic autonomy and its capacity to act with its partners.”

At the time, the EU28 therefore saw the strengthening of Europe’s autonomy as a means of building more effective alliances, not denying them. But the French side wanted to go further. This was first voiced in September 2017 by the French President Emmanuel Macron, elected a few months earlier, who, in the famous Sorbonne speech, stressed, among other things, the need to develop a common defence strategy, despite the different sensitivities of the Member States in this area. Paris, therefore, underlined the need to bear in mind the need to create an

independent European defence capability. Macron's statement was made in the context of then U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to cut U.S. funding for NATO, but it went beyond that. This idea has remained a recurrent and important part of the French European discourse. In 2019, in his speech to ambassadors in defence of European civilisation, President Macron went so far as to talk about the importance of establishing European sovereignty, of which strategic autonomy is an inevitable part. Here, moreover, he also drew attention to the threat to the Union posed by the great power policy of the United States and China.

In November 2019, President Macron was even more explicit in an interview with *The Economist*, when he criticised NATO's loss of purpose and direction, calling it "brain dead" and underlining that he no longer believed European countries could rely on the United States for help. The French President thus indirectly stressed the importance of European strategic autonomy.

The outbreak of the coronavirus in 2020 has highlighted the significant dependence of EU Member States on China, not only for specific defence policy issues, but in many other areas that could pose a serious threat. The French side, for example, has been keen to stress the importance of keeping strategic industries in Europe and returning them there, as key factors for the continent's autonomy and, through it, its security. Macron has made this issue, the objective of strengthening Europe's sovereignty and its economic and strategic autonomy in the world, a key point on the agenda of the French Presidency of the European Union in 2022. In the French interpretation, the concept of "strategic autonomy" at European level is not only linked to defence issues in the strict sense, but goes beyond them, as it also sees a need to reduce dependence in other sectors. This is particularly true of the digital sector, but also of many other areas, and for Paris, trade, health and energy are also concerned by this issue, given the interdependence of the world's economies. Following this logic, the so-called "Strategic Compass" was adopted at EU level in 2022, on the initiative of France, as an ambitious action plan to strengthen the European Union's security and defence policy by 2030. In 2023, Macron had already said that France's approach to strategic autonomy had always been ambiguous. On the one hand, there has been a distrust of the French approach to U.S.-led NATO since De Gaulle. Paris fears a worst-case scenario, where Washington, as an ally, may not take its commitments to the defence of the Old Continent seriously, or may use its European military positions to advance its own interests. France is therefore thinking of preparing for such an undesirable turn of events under the heading of strategic autonomy.

At the same time, there is a more assertive consideration, which, for European and French interests, is also pursuing objectives that sometimes even compete with

NATO in order to achieve a much more autonomous defence and foreign policy margin. The latter can be seen, for example, in the idea of expanding the European defence industry to reduce its heavy dependence on U.S. arms.

It should also be noted that it is part of the traditional French strategic culture to define France's role, ambitions and objectives in global affairs in a way that often exceeds the country's capabilities. It is a well-known fact that Paris wishes to use the European Union, among other things, as a means to achieve its vision, even if achieving consensus among the 27 Member States in the field of security and defence seems to be a particularly uncomfortable road. It is no coincidence that Macron is thinking, first of all, of a narrower European cooperation, to which all member states can voluntarily subscribe later.

President Macron and a large part of the French political elite believe that Europe must be ready to defend itself autonomously by 2027 at the latest (BRUGIER-HAROCHE 2023). Despite the fact that the closer we get to this date, the less possible this seems, France is pushing to accelerate the cooperation it has already started in the face of major geopolitical challenges. However, Paris is often at odds with the French view of the confluence of national and European interests, which are not always exactly the same, particularly as the Member States' approach to the issue is far from uniform.

In Paris, they fear excessive U.S. exposure. The French are aware that Europe is currently unable to defend itself, but they are also wary of excessive U.S. dominance. The possible return of Donald Trump worries France because it fears that Europe will very soon be on its own and that the United States will no longer provide security guarantees. However, Paris is increasingly aware that, regardless of the November 2024 scenario, the United States intends to reduce its European defence commitment. As François Heisbourg, a prominent French analyst, points out in his analysis (HEISBOURG 2024).

According to France, there is no alternative to European defence cooperation and the realisation of strategic autonomy, because if this is not achieved, the EU could be destroyed. It is important to note, however, that the aim should be, first and foremost, to pool the military strength of the larger European Member States. Although there is, for example, a Weimar Triangle between Germany, France and Poland, it is difficult to reconcile their interests in the field of defence policy.

Of course, it is important to point out that the French elite is not entirely united. Internal tensions have increased significantly in France in recent years, leading to the strengthening of various radical political formations. President Macron's flight ahead after the 2024 European Parliament elections, when he called for early elections to the legislature, has further exacerbated these internal tensions. Today, France is

finding it harder to make its influence felt at European level, as different views on defence policy issues are emerging among the political elite. However, one idea is constantly present in all French political formations, namely that Europe needs to become more autonomous.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

France has thus traditionally been inescapable in the development of European defence policy, and indeed the driving force behind it. In fact, there is practically no initiative that it has not initiated or participated in over the last 80 years. Today, its political weight may well be in decline even within the EU, but it is still an important player as the only European power with a significant military force and nuclear weapons after the Brexit. In the traditional French conception, securing autonomy and seeking greater room for manoeuvre in strategic areas is essential to preserve sovereignty and assert its interests. For decades, France has periodically examined its geopolitical situation from a number of angles and has prepared a document to help it respond effectively to security challenges. In the French approach, it is important that this traditional defence policy approach is also applied at the European level on a broader scale, taking into account, where possible, Paris' key interests. France's leadership is aware that it cannot achieve the strategic autonomy goals it has set for itself on its own, and that it can only do so with the help of, and in cooperation with its neighbours and close alliances. It is not a question of Paris imposing a French approach and interests on its partners, but rather of a joint search for a common path, where the objective is the same: to guarantee Europe's security.

REFERENCES

- BALLADUR, Édouard (2023): *L'Europe et notre souveraineté. L'Europe est nécessaire, la France aussi*. Online: <https://www.fondapol.org/etude/leurope-et-notre-souverainete/>
- BOZO, Frédéric (2022): *De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic Alliance. Two Strategies for Europe*. Trans. by Susan Emanuel. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- BRUGIER, Camille – HAROCHE, Pierre (2023): L'année de l'autonomie stratégique européenne. *Le Grand Continent*, 11 April 2023. Online: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2023/04/11/2027-lannee-de-lautonomie-strategique-europeenne/>
- DE FRANCE, Olivier (2015): France and the CSDP: A Tin of Paint and a Can of Worms. In FLOTT, Daniel (ed.): *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*. Gent: Academia Press, 29–30.

- DE MONTBRIAL, Thierry (2023): La politique étrangère de la France: un cap pour les trente prochaines années. *Politique étrangère*, (4), 9–22. Online: <https://doi.org/10.3917/pe.214.0009>
- DU RÉAU, Élisabeth (2009): Saint-Malo, 4 décembre 1998. Un tournant dans l’histoire des relations franco-britanniques? *Bulletin de l’Institut Pierre Renouvin*, 30(2), 147–163. Online: <https://doi.org/10.3917/bipr.030.0147>
- DOBELLE, Jean-François (2021): La France, une puissance maritime. *Vie Publique*, 9 August 2021. Online: <https://www.vie-publique.fr/parole-dexpert/281092-la-france-une-puissance-maritime>
- DUFOURCQ, Nicolas (2022): *La désindustrialisation de la France 1995–2015*. Paris: Odile Jacob.
- DUMOULIN, André (2019): Vingt ans de PSDC: Le sommet de Cologne de juin 1999. *Défense et Sécurité Internationale*, (141), 70–75. Online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48605421>
- FAURE, Samuel (2014): *Défense européenne. Bilan et perspectives de la politique conduite par la France 2007–2012*. Online: https://www.eurocite.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/eurocite_samuel_faure_defense_europeenne_bilan_et_perspectives_de_la_politique_conduite_par_la_france.pdf
- Fédération Bancaire Française (2024): *L’épargne des ménages: Un canal de financement de l’économie*. Online: <https://www.fbf.fr/uploads/2024/04/Lepargne-des-menages-mars-2024.pdf>
- FEJÉRDY, Gergely (2009): Tizenkettedik francia EU elnökség. *Kommentár*, 4(2), 87–97.
- FEJÉRDY, Gergely (2021): A francia–német kapcsolatok történelmi gyökerei, jelenkori kihívásai. In TÜRKE, András István (ed.): *Jelenkori Franciaország II. Tanulmányok a jelenkori Franciaországról*. Budapest: L’Harmattan, 114–137.
- FOUGIER, Eddy (2018): Pessimisme vis-à-vis de la mondialisation : un mal bien français. *Les Echos*, 19 March 2018. Online: <https://www.lesechos.fr/idees-debats/cercle/pessimisme-vis-a-vis-de-la-mondialisation-un-mal-bien-francais-131470>
- FOURQUET, Jérôme (2019): *L’archipel français. Naissance d’une nation multiple et divisée*. Paris: Seuil.
- FOURQUET, Jérôme – CASSELY, Jean-Laurent (2021): *La France sous nos yeux. Économie, paysage, nouveaux modes de vie*. Paris: Seuil.
- FOURQUET, Jérôme (2023): *La France d’après. Tableau politique*. Paris: Seuil.
- FRÉCON, Éric (2023): Face à la piraterie la France dispose d’un modèle unique. Online: <https://ihedn.fr/2023/08/28/eric-frecon-face-a-la-piraterie-la-france-dispose-dun-modele-unique/>
- GIOVACHINI, Laurent (2004): L’Agence européenne de défense: un progrès décisif pour l’Union? *Politique étrangère*, 69(1), 177–189. Online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42676575>
- Global Fire Power (2023): *Annual Ranking*. Online: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>
- GORDON, Philippe (1998): *The United States and European Security and Defence Identity in the New NATO*. Online: <https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/noteso4.pdf>
- HAUPAIS, Nicolas (2019): *La France et l’arme nucléaire*. Paris: CNRS.
- HEISBOURG, François (2024): *Un monde sans l’Amérique*. Paris: Odil Jacob.
- HOLLANDE, François (2016): *Déclaration sur les défis et priorités de la politique de défense, à Paris le 13 juillet 2016*. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2016/07/13/declaration-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-sur-les-defis-et-priorites-de-la-politique-de-defense-a-paris-le-13-juillet-2016>
- International Monetary Fund (s. a.): *Real GDP Growth. Annual Percent Change*. Online: https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD

- La finance pour tous (2024a). *La dette publique*. Online: <https://www.lafinancepourtous.com/decryptages/politiques-economiques/economie-francaise/comptes-publics/la-dette-publique/>
- La finance pour tous (2024b). *Le déficit public*. Online: <https://www.lafinancepourtous.com/decryptages/politiques-economiques/economie-francaise/comptes-publics/le-deficit-public/>
- LAURENT, Jérôme – MOLDOVAN, Teodora (2023): *En 2021, 2,2 millions de personnes travaillent dans une entreprise sous contrôle étranger*. Online: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/7717016#consulter>
- LAVALLÉE, Chantal (2018): La défense européenne. In CHÉVRIER, Marc – GUSSE, Isabelle (éds.): *La France depuis de Gaulle*. Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 290–304.
- LEGRAND, Jérôme (2015): *La PSDC profitera-t-elle d'avantages collatéraux après le déclenchement par la France de la clause de défense mutuelle de l'Union européenne?* Online: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/570452/EXPO_IDA\(2015\)570452_FR.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/570452/EXPO_IDA(2015)570452_FR.pdf)
- Lowy Institute (2024): *Global Diplomacy Index*. Online: <https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org/>
- MACRON, Emmanuel (2017): *Initiative pour l'Europe – Discours d'Emmanuel Macron pour une Europe souveraine, unie, démocratique*. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique>
- MACRON, Emmanuel (2024): *Bilan de l'action européenne du président de la république*. Online: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/bilan-de-laction-europeenne-du-president-de-la-republique>
- MENON, Anand (2011): La politique de défense européenne après le traité de Lisbonne. *Politique étrangère*, (2), 375–387. Online: <https://doi.org/10.3917/pe.112.0375>
- Ministère de la Défense (1994): *Livre blanc sur la Défense*. Online: <https://www.vie-publique.fr/files/rapport/pdf/944048700.pdf>
- Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères (2024a): *The Weimar Triangle*. Online: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/poland/the-weimar-triangle/>
- Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères (2024b): *Une boussole stratégique pour renforcer la sécurité et la défense de l'Union européenne à horizon 2030*. Online: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/securite-desarmement-et-non-proliferation/l-europe-de-la-defense/article/une-boussole-strategique-pour-renforcer-la-securite-et-la-defense-de-l-union>
- Ministère de l'économie, des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle, énergétique et numérique (2023): *Le secteur du tourisme en France*. Online: <https://www.entreprises.gouv.fr/fr/tourisme>
- Ministère de l'Économie des Finances et de la Souveraineté industrielle, énergétique et numérique (2024): *Rapport 2024 sur le commerce extérieur de la France*. Direction générale de Trésor. Online: <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2024/02/07/rapport-2024-sur-le-commerce-exterieur-de-la-france>
- Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (2019): *La langue française dans le monde*. Online: <https://www.francophonie.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/LFDM-20Edition-2019-La-langue-fran%C3%A7aise-dans-le-monde.pdf>
- PAPON, Sylvain (2023): *Bilan démographique 2023. En 2023, la fécondité chute, l'espérance de vie se redresse*. Online: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/7750004>
- PÉNEAU, Francis (2023): PIB par habitant: La France n'est plus qu'au 25ème rang mondial. *Fondation IFRAP*, 24 August 2023. Online: <https://www.ifrap.org/europe-et-international/pib-par-habitant-la-france-nest-plus-quau-25eme-rang-mondial>

- PUGNET, Aurélie (2024): Financement européen de la défense : l'industrie française en désaccord sur les critères d'éligibilité. *Euractiv*, 26 September 2024. Online: <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/defense/news/financement-europeen-de-la-defense-lindustrie-francaise-en-desaccord-sur-les-criteres-deligibilite/>
- PUGNET, Aurélie – BOURGERY-GONSE, Théo (2023): Fonds de souveraineté européenne : la France, meilleure alliée de l'industrie de la défense. *Euractiv*, 15 June 2023. Online: <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/defense/news/fonds-de-souverainete-europeenne-la-france-meilleure-alliee-de-lindustrie-de-la-defense/>
- QUENTIN, Matthieu (2024): Emmanuel Macron favorable à l'ouverture du "débat" sur une défense européenne incluant l'arme nucléaire française. *Toute l'Europe*, 29 April 2024. Online: <https://www.touteleurope.eu/vie-politique-des-etats-membres/emmanuel-macron-favorable-a-l-ouverture-du-debat-sur-une-defense-europeenne-incluant-l-arme-nucleaire-francaise/>
- Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (2011): *Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the French Republic for Defence and Security Co-operation*. London, 2 November 2010. Online: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a75c663ed915d6faf2b594e/8174.pdf>
- SILBERT, Nathalie (2024): Malgré des doutes, les investisseurs étrangers restent fidèles à la France. *Les Échos*, 29 February 2024. Online: <https://www.lesechos.fr/economie-france/conjoncture/malgre-des-doutes-les-investisseurs-etrangers-restent-fideles-a-la-france-2079696>
- TELLENNE, Cédric (2023): La France est devenue « une grande puissance moyenne ». In TELLENNE, Cédric (ed.): *Idées reçues sur la géopolitique et la géoéconomie*. Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 127–138.
- VAÏSSE, Maurice – LEQUESNE, Christian (2013): *La politique étrangère de Jacques Chirac*. Paris: Riveneuve Éditions. Online: <https://hal.science/hal-01496760/>
- VÉDRINE, Hubert (2012): *Rapport. Les conséquences du retour de la France dans le commandement militaire intégré de l'OTAN, et sur l'avenir de la relation transatlantique et les perspectives de l'Europe de la Défense*. Online: <https://archives.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/articles/remise-du-rapport-vedrine.html>
- VÉDRINE, Hubert (2014): *La France au défi*. Paris: Fayard.
- VINCZE, Hajnalka (2005): A nagyhatalmi illúzióktól az ambíciók európaizálásáig [From Illusions of Great Power to European Ambitions]. In KISS, J. László (ed.): *Nemzeti identitás és külpolitika az Euróai térségben* [National Identity and Foreign Policy in the Euro-Atlantic Region]. Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 159–169.
- WASSENBERG, Birte (2010): Le Conseil de l'Europe face au Pacte atlantique, l'OTAN et la défense européenne (1949–1954). In WASSENBERG, Birte – FALEG, Giovanni – MŁODECKI, Martin W. (eds.): *L'OTAN et l'Europe. Quel liens pour la sécurité et la défense européenne?* Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang.

ITALY

DEFENCE POLICY AND STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

INTRODUCTION

The strategic framework of Italian foreign policy has been stable since the Second World War, with European integration (EU), Atlanticism (close relations with the United States and NATO) and bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries of the so-called Enlarged Mediterranean (e.g. the Union for the Mediterranean) being the basic orientations and pillars of Italian foreign policy (GILLI et al. 2015). Although the traditional foreign policy framework remained largely intact in the early 1990s, with the birth of the second republic, its focus changed due to the different political values of the often-changing coalition governments. In today's deteriorating security and economic environment – with worsening U.S.–China and U.S.–EU relations, Russian aggression against Ukraine and growing interstate conflicts – the Meloni Government must both meet the sovereigntist and Eurosceptic demands of its electorate and maintain the traditional foreign policy stance while retaining the confidence of international partners (and with them the financial markets).

The goal of this chapter is to investigate the role of Italy in the implementation of initiatives related to the development of European Security and Defence policy and European strategic autonomy. The purpose of the first section is to provide a general picture of the characteristics and main directions of the country's foreign, security and defence policy with a short introduction to historical background. In the following section a general introduction to the concept of bandwagoning is provided. The third section presents Italian military missions and operations abroad. The Italian stance on European strategic autonomy is introduced in the fourth section. The last section examines the Italian participation in the capability development projects of the EU.

MAIN DIRECTIONS OF ITALIAN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

Italy often described itself as a middle power with limited natural and military resources, which can achieve its foreign policy goals by increasing its influence within international organisations and through bilateral relations with major powers. The country's international standing is uncertain and can be summarised as "last among the big and first among the small ones" (BONVICINI-COLOMBO 2011: 12; ANDREATTA 2008).

Italy's foreign policy has often been seen as insignificant (marginalised) and inconsistent compared to the country's economic and demographic weight. After the birth of the republic in 1946, Italian foreign policy was gradually built around three interdependent circles: Atlanticism, Europeanism and Mediterraneanism, among which rapidly changing governments sought to strike a balance due to the bipartisan consensus (PARSI 2016). Atlanticism has been also based on a privileged relationship with the United States and NATO, a relationship which also serves to counterbalance Italy's relatively weak position to influence on the economic and security affairs of the European powers (CROCI-VALIGI 2013). Europeanism includes support for deeper European integration while promoting the EU's ability to act independently (ANDREATTA 2008). The main goal of the geopolitically motivated Mediterraneanism as a foreign policy direction is to extend Italian influence in the Mediterranean region, to achieve regional power status there, and to establish close bilateral and multilateral relations with the so-called "Enlarged Mediterranean" (e.g. within the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean initiative) (DAVIDSON 2011). The area referred to as Enlarged Mediterranean in Italian sources, due to the existing close connections and interactions, includes the Greater Middle East, and so the Gulf area (according to American geopolitical concepts), thus, it is bigger than the MENA region. According to one of the latest Italian strategic documents, the Enlarged Mediterranean indicates the "region of Europe (the Balkans and the Black Sea), the Middle East (the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf), North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf of Guinea" (Ministero della Difesa 2023a).

These three pillars of foreign policy are accepted and maintained by the parties in government and opposition. During the Cold War, Italy's foreign and security policy was largely determined by the international environment, as the country's security was inseparable from Atlantic and European relations. However, the Euro-Atlantic strategic framework was not enough to fully meet Italy's security needs, as Italy was bound to the Mediterranean by interests that were not always meeting

the priorities of the U.S. or European integration, thus, Mediterranean relations of Italy naturally evolved (CARBONE 2007; ALCARO 2010).

Although Italy's foreign and security policy became more active with the collapse of the Soviet Union – the country moved from being a security consumer to a security provider – the new post-Cold War political elites on the right and left continued to link Italy's security to NATO and the EU. Rome's foreign policy towards the Middle East and the Mediterranean has been influenced by the role it has chosen to play in the Euro-Atlantic spectrum. Basically, it depended on the coalition governments whether the respective governments prioritised European relations or bilateral relations with the United States. However, it can be observed that in some cases (e.g. illegal migration, energy security) Italy has gone its own way, because the government has assessed the situation as not being adequately guaranteed by the Euro-Atlantic framework, and such challenges have typically been in the Mediterranean direction (ALCARO 2010).

The new challenges after 1989 and 2001 led in Italy as in other NATO states to doctrinal changes and military reforms. In Italy, one of the stages of this process was building up a professional army in 1999, which meant the end of compulsory conscription. It became evident for the Italian defence policy that to prepare for external threats, reforms should be executed. Home defence exclusively was not enough; and an effective contribution to collective security (UN, NATO, EU) was required. The reforms were aiming at an efficient defence system built on the principle of collective security.

Although the traditional foreign policy framework, which was based on the European integration, Atlanticism and relations with the Enlarged Mediterranean, remained largely intact after the Cold War ended, with the birth of the Second Republic at the beginning of the 1990s its focus changed due to the different political values of the often-changing coalition governments. From the mid-1990s onwards, the foreign policy of centre-right governments focused primarily on national interests and Atlantic values (with strong ties to NATO, the United States and Israel). In addition, foreign relations with countries such as Libya and Russia were characterised by a deepening of bilateral diplomacy driven by personal and economic considerations. In recent decades, the foreign policy of centre-left governments has tended to focus on deepening European integration, being more open towards Arab states and favouring multilateralism over bilateralism. Overall, despite the shifts in emphasis, Italian foreign policy has been characterised by a particular mix of bilateral and multilateral relations related to geopolitical and goeconomic approach and a "Levante approach" focusing on Italian economic and foreign trade interests. The Italian Ministry of Defence's White Paper for International Security and Defence

(2015) emphasised a focus on the Euro-Mediterranean region and also prioritised the European cooperation, especially in military technology and procurement. It also emphasised the importance of strong Atlantic relations (GILLI et al. 2015).

The focus of the governments alternated mainly between the Atlanticist and the European direction, while a cross-party consensus existed on the Mediterranean direction, namely on the growing importance of an independent Italian foreign policy in the Mediterranean region and the assumption of a regional power role in the Mediterranean (CARBONE 2007; DAVIDSON 2011). The Enlarged Mediterranean region is characterised by almost constant political unrest. Energy resources and their access routes have drawn the attention of Western countries to the region, making Italy at the same time vulnerable and difficult to circumvent in terms of control of the region.

The move away from traditional Italian foreign policy became only visible under the first Conte Government, which took power after the 2018 elections. Although the previous framework remained in place, the foreign policy of the coalition of anti-establishment parties (League and Five Star Movement) was characterised by sovereignty and Euroscepticism. The subsequent second government of Giuseppe Conte, and then Mario Draghi's government of national unity, returned to traditional foreign policy orientations (BONVICINI–COLOMBO 2011).

The foreign policy of the right-wing Meloni Government that took office after the 2022 parliamentary elections did not deviate significantly from the previous traditional framework. In today's deteriorating security and economic environment – with worsening U.S.–EU and U.S.–China relations, Russian aggression against Ukraine and growing interstate conflicts – the Meloni Government had to both meet the sovereigntist and Eurosceptic demands of its electorate and maintain traditional foreign policy orientations while retaining the confidence of international partners (and hence the financial markets) in being a trusted and politically and economically stable country. In her first year in power, the Meloni Government acted in continuity with its predecessor led by former ECB head Mario Draghi. Consequently, its core drive was that of fortifying Italy's Atlanticist positioning, expressed through its staunch support for Ukraine and contributions to NATO. Focus on Africa (and the Global South more generally) was one of the stated priorities of the Italian-led G7 in 2024. Although the international partners demonstrated concerns regarding the Meloni Government, Meloni was able to reassure its international partners and the markets regarding the Italian commitments towards the Euro-Atlantic partners (FASOLA–LUCARELLI 2024). One of the most pressing international concerns towards Georgia Meloni was her firm Euroscepticism, however, she toned this down after forming her government. The Meloni Government's attitude

towards the EU can be described as ‘sceptical pragmatism’: it avoids hostile political rhetoric, aware that the European institutions are essential for international success and Italy’s economic stability. At the same time the Government remains sceptical of further European integration, reiterating its view that the European institutions should focus “on the major issues on which the member states cannot act alone”, the Member States “on the issues closest to the lives of citizens, respecting the principle of subsidiarity and thus also strengthening the sovereignty of the Member States” (Governo Italiano 2023).

Following a strong Atlanticist stance serves multiple strategic interests. Demonstrating transatlantic loyalty enhances the government’s credibility within NATO, the broader Western security community, and its European partners. This approach was necessary because both Fratelli d’Italia (FdI) and its coalition partner, the League, were – compared to the other parties – relatively supportive towards Vladimir Putin, had supported Vladimir Putin maintaining a pro-Russian stance after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, opposing sanctions against Russia. However, this stance shifted following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, when FdI unexpectedly supported the Ukrainian cause and fully aligned with the positions of the Draghi Government and the United States (FASOLA–LUCARELLI 2024: 202).

Italy’s foreign and security policy has historically attributed importance to the ‘Enlarged Mediterranean’ as a strategic region for protecting and promoting national interests. Although there has been a shift in foreign policy priorities towards Eastern Europe and the Indo-Pacific, the Enlarged Mediterranean still represents the most important region for Italian strategic interest (FASOLA–LUCARELLI 2024). The Russian aggression in Ukraine provoked a shift in Italy’s defence priorities from the crisis management to territorial defence and conventional operations. It also had a significant impact on the organisation of the armed forces (COTICCHIA–MORO 2023). The rising strategic competition between great powers in Asia has also had an impact on Italian security and defence policy (MOLNÁR–TAKÁCS 2020).

BANDWAGONING

Apart from defining the three circles that constitute the strategic directions of Italian foreign policy, it is important to highlight the major features of Italian foreign policy behaviour as well. According to realist theories of international relations, states can adopt one of two strategies to balance power in an anarchic

international system: they may either form alliances against the most powerful state (balancing) or align themselves with it, thereby pursuing a bandwagoning foreign policy. In bandwagoning behaviour, a weaker state aligns with a stronger, potentially, but not necessarily opposing power, recognising that the stronger ally stands to gain disproportionately from their cooperation. This strategy is typically the only viable option for the weaker party, based on the assumption that it requires a strong partner, as the stronger party will achieve its objectives regardless of the costs.

Since its creation in 1861, Italian foreign policy has been characterised by bandwagoning behaviour. When it was born, an external protector was needed not only to guarantee and safeguard Italy's external security but also its internal cohesion, thus, Italy immediately entered the international arena as a security consumer, which was then a means of survival. Its security and international status also depended on its ability to link up with stronger powers, alliances and coalitions. Italy's involvement in the two world wars is an example of the foreign policy bandwagoning that persisted during and even after the Cold War. The more independent initiatives of Italian foreign policy during the Cold War all concerned areas that were not of primary importance for the East–West confrontation.

The changed security environment of the new world order, which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, generated a lively debate within Italy about the country's international role, but this was only a symbolic and rhetorical debate. Three main arguments justified the preservation of the bandwagoning foreign policy: 1. the defence of Italian national interests (underlined in strategic documents) and security; 2. the enhancement of international status and recognition (by appearing as a trusted partner of a bigger power); 3. the possibility of posing as a country with having a say in key decisions shaping the international system, as had been the case during the Cold War.

Although Italy's increased participation in peacekeeping and crisis management operations after the Cold War enhanced its international image, overshadowing the perception of Italy as merely a security consumer, it did not alter the country's subsequent foreign policy commitment to ensuring its security and maintaining its involvement in international affairs. As in the preceding period, Italy has continued to pursue initiatives for regional autonomous action, aiming to augment its influence rather than disengage from the established alliance system.

Although foreign policy issues are rarely the subject of election campaigns in Italy, they can have a significant impact on the popularity of the government. The divisive nature of foreign policy can either contribute to the fall of a government or bring it to the brink of collapse. It is also influenced by the external environment in which a country's leadership must conduct its foreign policy. Since the end of the Cold

War, Italian governments have been subject to risks, uncertainty arriving from several directions as alliances and threats have become more dynamic than in the bipolar period, and the boundaries between national (domestic) and international (foreign) policy have begun to blur. Since the end of the Cold War, the external threat in response to which Italy's foreign policy is shaped has become much less clear, opening up more space for debate on foreign policy within the state.

ITALIAN MILITARY MISSIONS ABROAD

In the last couple of years, considerable defence sector reforms have been undertaken, while the Italian military is now one of the country's most trusted institutions, largely because of its 'peace missions'. In our days, the second goal of the Italian armed forces – after the defence of the State –

“is the defence of Euro-Atlantic spaces, with the Atlantic Alliance and European partners, actively participating in NATO's consolidated prevention, deterrence and collective defence mechanisms and contributing to the strengthening of the European defence pillar, in a perspective of complementarity of the efforts implemented by NATO and the European Union” (Ministero della Difesa 2023a; Ministero della Difesa 2023b; COTICCHIA – MAZZIOTTI DI CELSO 2023: 1).

Security and defence policy is supposed to support foreign policy goals, especially when security aspects of foreign policy – as it can be seen, for example, in the Mediterranean region – are gaining priority status, but current trends of Italian defence expenditures do not indicate this.

The active engagement of Italy as a robust peacekeeping force marks a departure from the post-World War II era's “low profile”, during which the responsibilities for preparing, deploying and employing the Italian military were predominantly delegated to NATO. Throughout the Cold War, Italy based its participation in collective defence on geopolitical advantages stemming from its geographical location and the use of military bases and infrastructure on its territory granted to the United States.

It was only in the early 1980s that Italy exhibited a shift towards a more dynamic and assertive external stance. The early 1990s, following the Cold War's conclusion, brought a radical transformation in Italy's foreign policy framework, prompting policymakers to grapple with the need to redefine strategic objectives, geopolitical priorities and operational modalities for international actions. The post-bipolar world

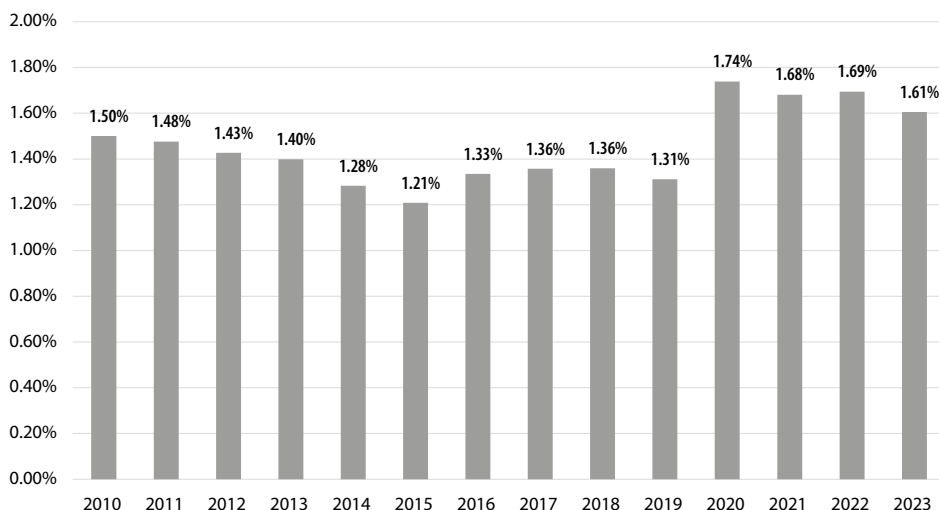


Figure 1. *Italian defence expenditure 2010–2023*

Source: Sipri 2024

heightened Italy's vulnerability due to its proximity to significant "crisis arcs" such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, former Soviet Central Asia, the North African coastal strip, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa. The loss of position rent associated with bipolarity and the certainty of continuous assistance from major allies, particularly the United States, further underscored Italy's strategic challenges.

Although the more active Italian participation in peacekeeping and crisis management operations after the Cold War contributed to the improvement of the country's international image, shadowing the image of Italy as a consumer of security, it did not change Italy's foreign policy willingness to guarantee its security and avoid exclusion from international affairs. As in the previous period, initiatives for regional autonomous action have been maintained, with the aim of increasing Italy's influence rather than pulling it out of the established alliance system.

Italy's engagement in international missions has remained a consistent element in its foreign and defence policy, transcending changes in governing coalitions. These missions are regarded as crucial tools for pursuing national interests, both in theatres directly impacting Italy and those aligned with broader alliance interests. Missions in Libya, the Balkans and Niger, for example, have yielded positive outcomes related to energy supplies, the management of migratory flows, counterterrorism efforts, regional security and socio-economic development in the Mediterranean region – a vital aspect for the Italian economy.

In addition, Italy's involvement in international missions aligns with broader national interests related to the alliance system, Italian positioning within key international organisations, including the UN, EU and NATO, and fostering relations with crucial European and North American allies. This dynamic is particularly evident in regions such as Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan. International missions serve as a pivotal element in the bilateral relationship with the United States, maintaining their relevance over time. Additionally, these missions contribute significantly to diplomatic ties with countries of strategic importance for Italy and the Mediterranean, including Turkey, Israel and Iran (MARRONE–NONES 2020).

These international missions often extend over decades, making it challenging to predict completion goals. Italy's military involvement in Afghanistan stands out as its most significant, demanding and costly mission since the Second World War. Over 50,000 armed forces personnel were deployed, resulting in approximately 700 injuries and 54 fatalities. This commitment was primarily driven by a sense of transatlantic loyalty, as Afghanistan would not typically be at the forefront of Italy's military and strategic priorities. Despite shifts in government, support for this mission remained consistent over two decades, highlighting the enduring importance of transatlantic relations in Italy's strategic calculus. The decision to disengage from Afghanistan only materialised once it became evident that the United States was preparing to withdraw. As Italy began its disengagement from Afghanistan, it redirected resources towards other theatres deemed more immediately relevant to its security, notably the Maghreb and the Sahel regions. The heightened political and security focus on Africa, viewed as a critical extension of the Mediterranean, is also recognised in Rome as a potential asset within the framework of the transatlantic partnership. This shift gains significance as the United States undergoes a reassessment of its global role (CRISTIANI 2021).

Italy perceives the extended Mediterranean region as strategically important, necessitating independent political, diplomatic and military actions to safeguard its strategic and vital interests. The ability to lead multinational coalition forces in this region is considered imperative. In the areas considered to be of strategic importance, the objective of Italian security policy is to be able to take unilateral actions – capabilities and capacities of the Italian armed forces must be developed accordingly – and not to be dependent on third countries. Italy's security interest, also due to its geographical position, lies in the naval freedom of maritime navigation, the security of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, securing energy supplies, keeping illegal migration under control, and the protection of the United States against threats from other major powers (TAYLOR 2019: 13).

Italian military operations also extend within national borders, as in the case of the Sicilian Operation *Vespri Siciliani*, aimed at maintaining law and order and assisting the police against organised crime. In the 2000s, military presence addressed challenges arising from mass immigration and the garbage situation in Naples. The ongoing domestic operation, *Strade Sicure*, initiated in 2008, primarily focuses on enhancing public safety and reducing crime, merging with earlier responses to mass immigration.

In the past decades Italy tried to balance its relatively low, decreasing defence expenditures by actively participating in international missions in the most important conflict zones. Since 2006, Italy is the European country with the highest number of military units involved in UN peacekeeping operations. In 2023, the Italian Armed Forces actively participated in 35 international missions across 24 countries under various multinational coalitions, including the UN, NATO, the European Union and bilateral agreements. Despite the high number of missions, the involvement of military personnel remains fragmented, the Italian *presenzialismo* (the Italian necessity to be present everywhere in order not to be excluded) remains an important characteristic of Italy's foreign and security policy. Notably, the centre of gravity for Italian missions shifted to Eastern Europe following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with over 1,250 military personnel deployed on NATO's eastern flank in Latvia, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Demonstrating reliability to international partners such as the United States and major international organisations like the UN, NATO and the EU has unquestionably been a crucial factor. Furthermore, these operations all exhibited a humanitarian dimension to varying degrees, rendering them justifiable in the context of Article 11 of the Italian Constitution, which unequivocally denounces war as a means of settling international conflicts.

Italy led missions in Iraq, Kosovo, the EU Mission in Somalia (EUTM), EUNAVFOR MED Irini in the Mediterranean, "EMASoH", a mission operating in the Strait of Hormuz, and the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon.

Military missions need to be approved by the Parliament each year. The government's obligation, as per Act 146 of 2016, involves presenting a detailed report on ongoing missions to Parliament by December 31 each year, ensuring transparency and parliamentary input. However, delays in the approval process mean that Parliament may deliberate on missions practically completed at the time of debate. It is important to note that Italian missions consistently receive robust political support across various political parties.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has brought some changes into Italian strategic thinking. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, which represents the return of



Figure 2. *Italian military missions in 2023–2024*
 Source: Compiled by the authors.

conventional warfare between states on the European continent, has made it clear to all European countries that the security of their borders is by no means to be taken for granted. For this reason, Italy plans to focus on defence and deterrence, rather than deploying its military in a variety of international military missions, according to the Documento Programmatico Pluriennale 2023–2025 (DPP). DPP represents one of the most important documents for understanding the direction in which Italian defence is headed. In fact, the DPP provides an update on defence activities and outlines the Ministry's overall direction, defining the policy priorities that the Minister intends to pursue in the use of the financial resources made available during the three-year reference period.

Thus by today it has become apparent that the contribution to the collective security is at the same time the pre-requisite of the country's own security (DASSÙ–MASSARI 2008: 63–64). The Italian foreign policy, particularly in the sense of security policy, plays a really active and important role in the Western Balkans, in the Enlarged Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe.

Several strategic documents, including the ‘Direttiva per la Politica Militare Nazionale’ (May 2022), the ‘Strategia di Sicurezza e Difesa per il Mediterraneo’ (May 2022), the Strategic Concept of the Italian Chief of Staff (September 2022), and the Documento Programmatico Pluriennale della Difesa for the 2023–2025 period (October 2023), confirm that Italian defence policy remains focused on the Enlarged Mediterranean. Italy’s recent military presence in the Indo-Pacific constitutes a small fraction of its overall military deployments. Additionally, Italy’s new contributions to NATO initiatives on the Eastern front do not signal a departure from its established defence policy. Since the end of the Cold War, Italy has consistently been one of NATO’s key contributors. The Army’s decision to invest in tank capabilities further underscores Italy’s pro-NATO and multilateral foreign policy. Defence Undersecretary Rauti highlighted in September 2023 that acquiring German MBTs was necessary to fulfil NATO commitments. Moreover, Italy has maintained its focus on the Enlarged Mediterranean in its international operations. Despite increased commitments in Eastern Europe, Italy has not withdrawn from any other mission, underscoring its determination to balance deterrence against Russia with continued engagement in other regions. For example, Italy increased its troop presence in Bosnia, Kosovo and Niger while also deploying units in Qatar. The number of troops in Kosovo rose from 600 in 2021 to 1,483 in 2022, and in Niger, from approximately 300 in 2021 to over 500 in 2023. Italy also formally approved three bilateral missions in Burkina Faso, Niger and Libya, while other operations, such as the maritime surveillance operation ‘Mare Sicuro’, extended their mandate under the new name ‘Mediterraneo Sicuro’, ensuring a constant presence in the Mediterranean. Several significant drills within national and NATO frameworks took place in the Mediterranean in October–November 2023 (COTICCHIA – MAZZIOTTI DI CELSO 2023: 8).

ITALY’S STANCE ON EUROPEAN STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

For certain nations, such as Germany and Italy – powers defeated in World War II and thus likely to have internalised a negative perception of military use – assuming greater responsibility for their own security remains a contentious issue, often viewed as taboo within the society. The Italian society have preferred using Italy’s military force for international missions, which have a clear and evident peace component. This sentiment does not always align with the political necessities for projecting Italian influence. Consequently, there is a preference to rely on the United States

to intervene militarily. Italy consistently emphasises that strategic autonomy is not about being autonomous from external actors but rather the capability to act independently. Germany and Italy are well-positioned to offer a balanced perspective on EU strategic partnerships with the U.S., the U.K. and NATO because they believe in the complementarity of these frameworks and have invested significant political and military resources in Atlantic alliances, particularly in out-of-area operations and collective defence measures (CRISTIANI 2021).

Italy's vision of strategic autonomy entails the ability to address crises and conflicts in regions surrounding the EU while actively contributing to Europe's collective defence via NATO. Although the Union's institutions will increasingly contribute to this, much will depend on the major European countries, given that defence is predominantly an intergovernmental domain.

To achieve this goal, Italy also promotes greater cooperation between the defence and security industries on both sides of the Atlantic. In the longer term, fostering interoperability between transatlantic security forces and encouraging major players in the respective industries to cooperate can be key to reinforcing both strategic autonomy and the transatlantic bond while also supporting their financial sustainability. There have been several examples of fruitful defence cooperation between Italy and the United States: the F35-Bs program, the delivery of the TH-73A helicopter, and the provision of laser pointers/trackers used in the Common Infrared Countermeasure system, to mention a few.

Rome favours the vision of Europe with a greater presence on the international geopolitical chessboard, arguing that the European integration project must necessarily require Member States to cede more sovereignty, including in defence matters. This was also proved by the fact that Italy, with other 13 EU Defence Ministers (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain), asked Josep Borrell (HR/VP) to establish a new rapid military response capacity (called First Entry Force) for crisis management outside the EU in 2021 (BARBOSA LOBO 2021; MEYER et al. 2022: 4).

However, Italy does not support the idea of creating a common European army, preferring a deeper integration of EU–NATO defence apparatuses, positioning itself as a “hinge” between the Atlantic Alliance and the EU due to its geographical location, history and relational fabric. Another aspect of the debate concerns the extent, both territorial and sectoral, of the application of the concept of autonomy. While France and Germany favour limiting European Strategic Autonomy (ESA) to the closest European neighbourhood, Italy aims for its extension to the wider Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa, areas considered of the highest strategic

interest. Finally, Berlin and Rome interpret ESA in a broader perspective than just security and defence policies, contrasting with the major French focus in this area. This discourse is creating a growing consensus among Member States, defining a path from the traditional interpretation of ESA based on the French model to a new paradigm, currently characterised as “open” strategic autonomy.

As the transatlantic community rethinks its priorities and looks to a future where great power competition looms, reinforcing complementarity and interoperability through joint programs involving European and U.S. defence companies could represent a significant step in rethinking the *raison d'être* of the alliance. From this perspective, Italy could become the European driver of a “transatlantically sustainable” definition of European strategic autonomy.

Since becoming Minister of Defence in 2019, Lorenzo Guerini has consistently stressed the need to shape the evolution of European strategic autonomy, with PESCO being a crucial element, to ensure its consistency and complementarity with the transatlantic alliance. He emphasises that building a common European defence is essential for Europe to play a more effective global role, stressing the importance of pushing the EU to take on greater responsibilities in defence and security, in full synergy with NATO, amidst the indissolubility of the solid transatlantic relationship. Italy stands out as a significant European supporter of the vision of strategic autonomy that is firmly complementary to the transatlantic alliance, while other EU countries – France above all – perceive it differently.

Despite the presence of different official documents related to security and defence, Italy does not have a National Security Strategy literally. The White Paper on International Security and Defence from 2015 can be interpreted as a kind of NSS. The Italian Ministry of Defence annually publishes the Multi-Year Defence Planning Document (*Documento Programmatico Pluriennale*, DPP). This annual decree can also be considered a short-term strategic document for the Italian security and defence policy. The current document for 2023–2025 highlights Italy's support to NATO as an organisation guaranteeing the security of the Euro-Atlantic space. At the same time, it emphasises that Italy will strengthen its contribution to the initiatives and operations of the EU CSDP, supporting its ambition of growing strategic autonomy (Ministero della Difesa 2023b: 16). Although the transatlantic relationship is extremely important for Italy, the Italian Government supported and played a decisive role in the elaboration of the EU GS under the work of Federica Mogherini as former HR/VP. ESA is seen in the country as a complementary tool for national and European security, and not as a tool for decreasing the dependence on Transatlantic relations (ZANDEE et al. 2020: 38).

An important Italian document on European common defence, which offers significant insights into Rome's approach to the issue, is the "Report on the Prospects for the Development of European Common Defence and Cooperation between Intelligence Services", approved by the Parliamentary Committee for the Security of the Republic (Copasir) in July 2022. This report is the final outcome of an extensive investigation conducted by Copasir. The committee hopes that the EU "can establish itself as a leading geopolitical actor", aligning its economic influence with its diplomatic and military weight. Despite the fact that the 27 EU members "spend on defence as much as Russia and China", there has been a "reluctance to adhere to a core principle of the Union: the transfer of national sovereignty in favour of a common European sovereignty". Copasir identifies one of the causes as the EU's foundation on economics and competition, whereas the founding fathers had identified defence and energy as the pillars. Today, however, Copasir notes that Europe depends on the United States for the former and on Russia for the latter. In this context, the creation of a 5,000-strong Rapid Reaction Force, comparable to the unused EU Battlegroups, is seen as a starting point that needs to be integrated into a broader process. However, Copasir realistically acknowledges that the creation of a true "European army" is unlikely due to the traditional autonomy of national armed forces and the prevailing opposition of member state governments and parliaments to potential sovereignty transfers. Instead, the report emphasises the goal of complementing NATO's essential collective defence function with an autonomous European capability to intervene in crises outside NATO's scope but potentially destabilising to the EU's vital interests. According to Copasir, Italy should act as a bridge between the Atlantic Alliance and the EU, given its geographical location, history and relational network. Consistent with this view, the new European defence should not be conceived "as an alternative to the Atlantic Alliance" but rather as an "integrative and complementary pillar" that ensures Europe's security (Ministero della Difesa 2022).

ITALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF THE EU

In our days, France, Italy and Spain with Germany are the "defence frontrunners" in Europe (BLOCKMANS – MACCHIARINI CROSSON 2021). These countries are involved in most EDF and PESCO projects. Originally, the so-called Four Big

European countries were France, Germany, Italy and the U.K., but after Brexit, Spain can be considered one of the Four Big countries that intend to have a decisive role in the development of defence integration in Europe. This is shown by the fact that in 2020, the Ministers of Defence of France, Germany, Italy and Spain proposed to start the elaboration of the *Strategic Compass*, beginning the process with a threat analysis (ZANDEE et al. 2020: 24). Italy plays a major role in the development of the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB).

The multi-year planning document for the period between 2022 and 2024 highlights that the Global Strategy adopted in 2016 defined the achievement of strategic autonomy as a priority objective in the field of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. The objectives related to strategic autonomy concern both technological and industrial as well as operational capability development in order to make the EU a true global security provider. The Italian strategy document pays special attention to the Strategic Compass adopted in 2022. The Italian defence policy plans and activities are in line with the goals set out in it. Among these, it is worth highlighting the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Rapid Deployment Capacity (EURDC), the European Peace Facility (EPF), the hybrid and cyber toolbox. The document highlights that Italy supports the full implementation of a clear European strategy,

“to achieve a more mature and conscious role of the EU on global stage, in synergy, and not in opposition, with the Atlantic Alliance, therefore aimed at giving concrete implementation to the so-called ‘European pillar’ of NATO. In this context, collaboration between Member States (MS) will be sought for the development of common capabilities, which guarantees adequate involvement of national industries, and the effective implementation/strengthening of the aforementioned tools – operational, capacity-building and financial – in support of the Union’s military activities” (Ministero della Difesa 2022: 16).

The Italian approach to capability development suggests a connection between PESCO and the EDF. Although these two initiatives are recognised as distinct and separate, Italy views the former as an incubator for projects to be submitted to the latter (MARRONE 2018: 2). From the Italian perspective, CARD and PESCO are also conceptually linked, as the former reviews the capability development plans of Member States, while the latter aims to cooperatively address the deficiencies in the EU Member States’ armed forces. However, the lack of automatic links between these two initiatives may be a cause for concern.

According to the Italian multi-year planning document for the period between 2023 and 2025, the consolidation of the so-called “European pillar” of NATO remains among the national priorities, through the full realisation of the Integrated Approach of the European Union, the strengthening of synergy and complementarity between the EU and NATO (Ministero della Difesa 2023b: 12).

In recent years, Italy has actively participated in the implementation of EU defence capability development initiatives and projects. From this point of view, one of the most important initiatives for the country is PESCO, within the framework of which it participates in 43 out of 68 projects. Italy leads 13 projects, participates in 36 and is present as an observer in 17. Among the projects, the European Patrol Corvette (EPC) is very important, which aims to jointly develop new types of warships in cooperation with France, Greece and Spain.

Starting in 2019, Italy joined the programs (European Defence Industrial Development Program, EDIDP) created as a precursor to the resources of the European Defence Fund launched by the European Commission for the period between 2021 and 2027. In 2019, two Italian-led projects (FITS4TOP [Leonardo S.p.A] and PEONEER [E-GEOS S.p.A.]) submitted successful project proposals and Italy was involved in the implementation of 7 projects. As a leading nation in 2020, a total of 4 successful proposals (the JEY CUAS [Leonardo S.p.A], INTEGRAL [Vitrociset S.p.A], CARMENTA [Elettronica S.p.A.], VERTIGO [Associazione SAFE]) were presented and Italy participated in 9 others. With co-financing, the Ministry of Defence supported the actors of the defence industry that won the EDIDP calls (Ministero della Difesa 2022: 52–53).

Although Italy has played an active role in PESCO projects and some of the most important defence companies, like the Leonardo S.p.A, Fincantieri or MBDA are located in this Member State, Italian companies play only a modest role in leading EDF projects. Regarding the first EDF call in 2021, Italy leads 5 projects (while France 19, Spain 14, Germany 3) (FREYRIE 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

Italy has become a crucial NATO and EU member post-Cold War due to its strategic location and capabilities. It is a significant player in peacekeeping and crisis response operations. Despite not meeting the 2% GDP defence spending target, Italy’s expertise makes it a valuable ally. Italy focuses on addressing security challenges within the Enlarged Mediterranean, where it is highly active. Additionally, Italy has

contributed to managing threats from the East in recent years. Its strategic location enhances its role in NATO and EU operations. Italy's naval and air capabilities are particularly notable in its contributions to their activities.

European strategic autonomy requires increased defence spending and military capability development by European states. Italy's defence spending has not significantly increased relative to its GDP, and it has reduced the size of its armed forces while modernising equipment. This raises questions about Italy's aspirations for strategic autonomy, especially in the short term, where full independence from the United States may not be in Italy's best interest. The war in Ukraine and the second Trump Administration highlight the importance of autonomy but also the current dependence on the U.S. Despite increasing defence spending within NATO, Italy still views NATO and the U.S. as primary guarantors of security in Europe.

The war in Ukraine has underscored the need for Italy to reassess its defence strategy and spending. While autonomy is a long-term goal, short-term realities necessitate continued cooperation with the U.S. and NATO. Italy is going to the need for autonomy with the practical benefits of NATO membership.

REFERENCES

- ALCARO, Riccardo (2010): Catching the Change of Tide. Italy's Post-Cold War Security Policy. *The International Spectator*, 45(1), 131–145. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932720903562601>
- ANDREATTA, Filippo (2008): Italian Foreign Policy: Domestic Politics, International Requirements and the European Dimension. *Journal of European Integration*, 30(1), 169–181. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036330801959564>
- BARBOSA LOBO, Rita (2021): EU in Talks to Develop First Entry Force. *Finabel*, 24 June 2021. Online: <https://finabel.org/eu-in-talks-to-develop-first-entry-force/>
- BLOCKMANS, Steven – MACCHIARINI CROSSON, Dylan (2019): Differentiated Integration within PESCO. Clusters and Convergence in EU Defence. CEPS, 9 Dec 2019. Online: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/differentiated-integration-within-pesco/>
- BONVICINI, Gianni – COLOMBO, Alessandro (2011): *La politica estera dell'Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- CARBONE, Maurizio (2007): The Domestic Foundations of Italy's Foreign and Development Policies. *West European Politics*, 30(4), 903–923. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380701500371>
- COTICCHIA, Fabricio – MORO, Francesco N. (2023): The Italian Armed Forces and the New Conflicts in Europe. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 15(2), 219–236. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23248823.2023.2191231>

- COTICCHIA, Fabricio – MAZZIOTTI DI CELSO, Matteo (2024): Still on the Same Path? Italian Foreign and Defence Policy in the Enlarged Mediterranean. *Mediterranean Politics*, 30(3), 650–659. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2023.2294252>
- CRISTIANI, Dario (2021): Italy Positions Itself as the Driver of “Transatlantically Sustainable” European Strategic Autonomy. *German Marshall Fund*, 2 September 2021. Online: <https://www.gmfus.org/download/article/19646>
- CROCI, Osvaldo – VALIGI, Marco (2013): Continuity and Change in Italian Foreign Policy: The Case of the International Intervention in Libya. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 5(1), 38–54. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23248823.2013.781373>
- DASSÙ, Marta – MASSARI, Maurizio eds. (2008): *Rapporto 2020. Le scelte di politica estera. Unità di analisi e di programmazione*. Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Online: http://www.esteri.it/mae/doc/Rapporto2020_SceltePoliticaEster_a_090408.pdf
- DAVIDSON, Jason W. (2011): Italy and the U.S.: Prestige, Peace, and the Transatlantic Balance. In CARBONE, Maurizio (ed.): *Italy in the Post-Cold War Order. Adaptation, Bipartisanship, Visibility*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 143–160.
- FASOLA, Nicolò – LUCARELLI, Sonia (2024): The ‘Pragmatic’ Foreign Policy of the Meloni Government: Between ‘Euro-nationalism’, Atlanticism and Mediterranean Activism. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 16(2), 198–213. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23248823.2024.2335847>
- FREYRIE, Michelangelo (2023): Italy Punches Below Its Weight on the European Defence Fund. *IAI Commentaries*, (38). Online: <https://www.iai.it/en/publicazioni/italy-punches-below-its-weight-european-defence-fund>
- GILLI, Andrea – UNGARO, Alessandro R. – MARRONE, Alessandro (2015): The Italian White Paper for International Security and Defence. *The RUSI Journal*, 160(6), 34–41. Online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2015.1122978>
- Governo Italiano (2023): *Le Comunicazioni del presidente Meloni alla Camera, Consiglio europeo del 14–15 dicembre*. Online: <https://www.governo.it/it/articolo/consiglio-europeo-del-14-15-dicembre-comunicazioni-del-presidente-meloni-alla-camera/24561>
- MARRONE, Alessandro – NONES, Michele (2020): Le forze italiane in missione all’estero: trend e rischi. *Documenti IAI*, (03). Online: <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iai2003.pdf>
- MARRONE, Alessandro (2018): PeSCO: The Italian Perspective. *Armament Industry European Research Group, Policy Paper*, (30). Online: <https://www.irisfrance.org/notes/pesco-the-italian-perspective/>
- MARRONE, Alessandro (2021): Nato e difesa Ue tra vecchie e nuove sfide. *Affari Internazionali*, 8 October 2021. Online: <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/archivioaffarinternazionali/2021/10/nato-e-difesa-ue-tra-vecchie-e-nuove-sfide/>
- MEYER, Christoph – VAN OSCH, Ton – REYKERS, Yf (2022): *The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity: This Time, It’s for Real? In-depth Analysis Requested by the Sub-Committee on Security and Defence of the European Parliament (EP)*. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2861/786667>
- Ministero della Difesa (2022): *Documento programmatico pruliennale per il triennio 2022–2024*. Online: https://www.difesa.it/Il_Ministro/Documents/DPP_2022_2024.pdf
- Ministero della Difesa (2023a): *Atto di indirizzo 2023*. Online: https://www.difesa.it/assets/allegati/26763/atto_di_indirizzo_ed_2023_-_final.pdf
- Ministero della Difesa (2023b): *Documento programmatico pruliennale per il triennio 2023–2025*. Online: https://www.difesa.it/assets/allegati/30714/dpp_2023-2025.pdf

- MOLNÁR, Anna – TAKÁCS, Lili (2020): Italy: An Aspiring Mediterranean Middle Power Wavering between Bilateralism and Multilateralism. *Estudios Internacionais: Revista de Relacoes Internacionais*, 8(2), 47–69. Online: <https://doi.org/10.5752/P.2317-773X.2020v8n2p47-69>
- PARSI, Vittorio Emanuele (2016): Italy's Foreign Policy Game: Moving without the Ball. In CARBONE, Maurizio – PIATTONI, Simona (eds.): *Italian Politics. Governing under Constraint*. New York: Berghahn, 118–134.
- Sipri (2024): *Military Expenditure Database*. Online: <https://milex.sipri.org/sipri>
- TAYLOR, Paul (2019): Molto Agitato. Italy and Mediterranean Security. *Friends of Europe*, Summer 2019. Online: https://www.friendsofeurope.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019_foe_sec_pub_italy_web_o.pdf
- ZANDEE, Dick – STOETMAN, Adája (2022): Realising the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity: Opportunities and Pitfalls. *Clingendael Policy Brief*, October 2022. Online: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Policy_brief_Rapid_Deployment_Capacity.pdf

Péter Tálas

POLAND

INTRODUCTION –

ON THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE THAT HAVE SHAPED POLISH STRATEGIC CULTURE AND SECURITY PERCEPTION

The aim of this study is to present how the security and defence policy of Poland, seeing itself as a Central European regional power, has been developing, including the current challenges and capabilities of its armed forces, as well as the development of Polish military reforms, and finally, the Polish roles within NATO and the European Union.¹

Polish is one of those European nations which did not have an independent state during the classical period of European nation development from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century. Moreover, Poland completely lost its independence at the very time (1795) when the idea of modern nationalism was emerging and spreading throughout Europe from France. Before the partitions, Poland had been one of the great powers of Europe for almost two centuries (1466–1667), through which period Polish security was threatened from the south (Turks and Habsburgs) and from the north (Teutonic Knights and Sweden), while from the east only since the time of Peter the Great (1707). The threat from the West covered an even shorter period in Polish history (from the 1760s to 1945). The weak and divided German states and the peoples of Eastern Europe did not pose an existential threat to Poland for centuries. However, from the end of the 18th century until 1989, for more than two hundred years, the most important period in the development of modern nations, the Germans and the Russians became the main actors and often the determining factors of Polish security, and their expansive actions were accompanied by the collapse of the Polish state on several occasions

¹ Even though there was a change of government in Poland in 2024, there is no need to fundamentally differentiate between the PiS and PO-lead governments' defence policies because there is general continuity in, and a united understanding of threat perceptions prioritising Russia, and defence needs centred around national territorial defence capabilities, the bilateral strategic defence relationships with the United States and the primacy of NATO in allied defence.

(1772, 1793, 1795, 1939) and extended periods of occupation (1795–1918, 1939–1944, 1944–1989). Furthermore, their departure was accompanied by the ‘rebirth’ of the Polish state (1918, 1989).

According to many experts, these state collapses, the statelessness, and especially the historical role of the Russian Empire and Germany in these, explain why the struggle for survival became a strong and integral part of Polish national consciousness, and, thus, of the Polish security perception after the re-establishment of independent Poland in 1918 (DAVIES 1991: 14; GRUDZIŃSKI 2008: 72; PAWŁUSZKO 2022: 15–18). Historical events affecting Poland in the 20th century – such as the period of strategic balancing between Germany and the Soviet Union between the two world wars, the fourth partition of the Polish state as a result of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, and its transition to the Soviet sphere of influence after the Second World War – only reinforced this conviction of the non-communist Polish political elite. These also supplemented Polish strategic culture and security perception with a strong demand for hard security guarantees (ZAROBNY 2019: 63–76).

While there is a consensus among experts that Poland has the potential to become a European middle power and that its ambitions should be commensurate with this, we can find much more diverse opinions regarding the practical obstacles to this. While some believe that the German and Russian great power neighbourhood already relativises Poland’s middle power status (TÁLAS 2000; PAWŁUSZKO 2022: 55–59), others believe that the elements of Polish political culture stemming from the lack of a permanent statehood are restraining factors (PAWŁUSZKO 2022: 60–61). These include emotionality, an inward-looking stance, reluctance to reflect and plan, and the distrust towards other actors (ZYBAŁA 2016: 48–49). Still others believe that Poland is unable to meet the criteria of becoming a European middle power in terms of economic performance (BENDYK–BURAS 2022: 6–7), and for this reason they also consider Poland’s increased importance following the escalation of the Russian–Ukrainian war to be only temporary (PAWŁUSZKO 2022: 60). However, there is also a consensus among Polish experts that the main focus of Polish security policy, as a Central European power, should be on the Central and Eastern European region.

These factors also determine Poland’s highly sceptical attitude towards European strategic autonomy. Since the Polish political elite did not see / does not see any strong great power(s) in Europe that would be able to deter Russia, and the behaviour of European continental great powers – like Germany and France – is often considered too permissive towards Russia, Poles look to the United States and the U.S.-led NATO as the main guarantors of Polish security (ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI 2022: 109–110).

THE TRANSFORMING FOCI OF POLISH
SECURITY POLICY AFTER 1989

Polish security policy after the 1989 change of regime can be broadly divided into two major periods: the first covers the 1990s, the period when Poland followed the doctrine of independent security and defence, while the second covers the decades of the 21st century, when Warsaw strengthened its security as a member of alliance systems (OCHYRA-ŻURAWSKA – OCHYRA 2022: 33). While in the first period Poland still had to maintain its mass conscript army, in the second it transitioned to a professional military force, maintaining conscription, but suspending mandatory military service in peacetime (ISAP 2009). In the latter, Poland was also motivated, like other new NATO Member States in Central and Eastern Europe, by its increasing participation in allied missions, to which, according to Polish law, Warsaw was not allowed to send conscript soldiers. Almost all Polish security policy experts frame the country's accession to NATO in 1999 as the most important security policy milestone of the decades since the change of regime in 1989 (CZAPUTOWICZ 2014: 15–31).

Compared to Central and Eastern European countries Warsaw has been extremely sceptical of the European Union's foreign and security policy from the very beginning. In addition to NATO membership and the strategic alliance with the United States, the Polish political elite first officially started talking about EU membership as the third pillar guaranteeing Polish security only in 2009 (KUŹNIAR 2012: 339–340).

Sometimes doubts arose among the Polish political elite regarding NATO's reliability, especially at times when the alliance's reaction to certain security policy developments was not considered decisive enough – for example, regarding the 2008 Russo–Georgian war or the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. When, in parallel, Warsaw did not consider its own military reforms successful enough, this kind of dissatisfaction led to undertaking significant development of its own defence capabilities as a key task after 2012, and actually starting to do so after 2017 (TÁLAS 2014: 17–35; RAUBO 2022).

Based on Polish strategic documents, the years spanning between 1989 and 2023 can be divided into five major periods in terms of changes in Polish security and defence policy:

- ♦ 1989–1999, characterised as a period of providing for the country's security independently
- ♦ 2000–2006, characterised by adaptation efforts following NATO membership (and partly EU membership)
- ♦ 2007–2011, the period of transition to a professional military force

- ♦ 2012–2015, dominated by the strategic review run by the Civic Platform (PO), and subsequently by the Komorowski Doctrine, which turned towards territorial defence and the development of domestic capabilities (Doktryna Komorowskiego 2014: 1–2)
- ♦ 2015– in which Law and Justice (PiS) conducted its own strategic review and embarked on the technical modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces

POLAND'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GREAT POWERS

After the 1989 change of regime, Polish security policy followed the doctrine of assuring its security independently until its accession to NATO in 1999. Since Warsaw's relations with the neighbouring great powers (Germany, the Soviet Union/Russia) and the United States played a decisive role in this, we cannot ignore a brief and sketchy overview of these relations.

Polish–Russian relations

Looking back, one of the biggest changes in Polish–Russian relations was paradoxically not Poland's accession to NATO, but Vladimir Putin's rise to power in 2000. Putin believed from the beginning that Moscow should make a determined effort to reduce the influence of the United States in Eastern and Central Europe, and he also spoke out strongly against NATO's further eastern expansion (ZIĘBA 2018: 9–34; Konferencja Ambasadorów RP 2023: 16–17). However, it was not these steps, or even Poland's accession to the European Union that really cooled Polish–Russian relations, but Poland's support for the colour revolutions in the post-Soviet region – primarily the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004–2005. After this, Moscow threatened Warsaw with the suspension of gas supplies for the first time. The plan to install an element of the long-planned American missile defence system on Polish territory in 2007 also caused tension, and the Russian leadership threatened Warsaw once again, if the plan was implemented (TÁLAS 2007: 1–4).

Regarding Russian ambitions, the Russo–Georgian war of August 2008 was a serious warning for Warsaw, but the Polish and Baltic political leaders failed to draw the attention of the West, which was at the time busy dealing with the international financial and economic crisis (TÁLAS 2014: 17–35).

The Smolensk disaster of 10 April 2010, in which Polish President Lech Kaczyński and his wife, as well as 78 other members of the country's political and military

elite lost their lives, not only devastated Poland, but also sharply and permanently divided political sides. While the left-wing and conservative-liberal political camp believes that it was a terrible accident, which case should be considered investigated, closed and must be overcome (Prezydent.pl 2011), the national-conservative camp, led by the late president's twin brother, Jarosław Kaczyński, denies that there was an accident, suspects an assassination plot, and over the years has built a narrative – not supported by evidence – that Poland was directly targeted by the assassination plot (MTI 2023; ROZGONYI 2023).

Finally, we must definitely mention Russia's military interventions in Ukraine (the illegal annexation of Crimea, the Russian support and maintenance of separatism in eastern Ukraine, and the escalation of the Russian–Ukrainian war after 24 February 2022) as factors that have strengthened the Polish political elite's distrust and fear of Russia. They also defined the starting point of Polish defence policy since 2008 (the Russo–Georgian war) as the aggressive policies and acts of Putin's Russia threaten the security not only of Poland, but of the Central and Eastern European region, furthermore, of the whole of Europe. In addition, they sharpened Russian–Polish antagonism to such an extent that Warsaw became one of the most radical and active advocates and instigators of international military support for Ukraine and of sanctions against Russia.

Polish–German relations

Polish–German relations since 1989 have shown particular contradictions (SCHULZ–HILLEBRAND 2021; Konferencja Ambasadorów RP 2023: 11–13). Although many believe that – similarly to Polish–Russian relations – this bilateral relationship is primarily burdened by historical grievances, according to Polish and German experts, these play at most a secondary or tertiary role in the development and quality of bilateral relations. The same experts define the most important breaking point within contemporary Polish–German relations in 2015, when the national-conservative coalition came to power in Poland. Since then bilateral relations have definitely deteriorated (since 2018 the parties have not even held joint government meetings). Meanwhile, it is also important to see that despite the deterioration of bilateral relations, the rules of cooperation within NATO and the EU protected a number of areas from declining bilaterally (HILLEBRAND 2021: 31).

The Polish–German Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations and Cooperation was signed in June 1991, and both the Polish and German press at that time assessed the agreement as a historical breakthrough, and some even compared it to the

Franco–German reconciliation after World War II. In addition, two factors played a decisive role in the improvement of Polish–German relations: first, the fact that Germany had become Poland’s largest and most important economic partner, second, harmonising relations opened up the possibility of cooperation with the European Communities and NATO for Poland. In other words, Warsaw was convinced that Germany had indeed become one of the most committed supporters of Poland’s integration efforts. So much so, that even Polish experts admit that the successful conclusion of accession negotiations with the EU would not have been possible without the strong support of Berlin (OCHYRA-ŻURAWSKA – OCHYRA 2022: 35).

New points of contention have also risen between the two countries. For example, the German policy on Russia, which has often and sharply been criticised in Warsaw, on a number of related issues – the construction of the Nord Stream 1 and then Nord Stream 2 pipelines, Merkel’s cooperative stance towards Putin – or the issue of minority rights of the Polish population living in Germany (as Berlin is unwilling to recognise Poles living in Germany as an ethnic minority group). On the German side, however, the Polish judicial reform, family and gender policies, and Warsaw’s position on immigration and the deepening of European integration have regularly been criticised (HILLEBRAND 2021: 24).

At the same time, an example of successful cooperation within NATO is the Multinational Corps HQ Northeast in Szczecin, the command in charge of Eastern Flank defence operations of the Alliance. Bilateral military cooperation also has significant results, for example in the field of increasing interoperability of the land forces, such as through the exchange of staff officers, joint training and exercises, or the long-term goal of reassigning battalions of the Polish 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade and the Bundeswehr’s 41st Armoured Grenade Brigade to each other (MALINOWSKI 2021: 86). Public opinion has shown a surprisingly high level of acceptance of the militaries’ assistance to each other’s defence efforts (KUCHARCZYK–ŁADA 2021: 33).

Polish–U.S. relations

Relations between Poland and the United States improved and deepened very quickly after the change of regime. American administrations followed the political transformation of Central and Eastern European countries with special attention, whose largest and most populous diasporas live in the U.S. (WINID 2001: 208–231; MATYSEK 2020: 119–138). The importance of Poland was also clearly indicated by the visits of American presidents, namely George H. W. Bush (1989, 1992), Bill

Clinton (1994, 1997), George W. Bush (2001, 2003, 2007), Barack Obama (2011, 2014, 2016), Donald Trump (2017) and Joe Biden (2022, 2023), respectively. The U.S. Government supported Warsaw in negotiations with Moscow on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Poland, and intelligence sharing between the two countries also rapidly deepened.

Polish foreign and security policy has consistently identified the United States as a 'strategic partner' or 'the most important partner' over the past three decades, although the reality is more nuanced. Law and Justice (PiS) Party indeed views the United States as a strategic partner and the most important guarantor of the security of both Poland and the European continent, and therefore seeks to strengthen bilateral security and defence cooperation with Washington. The Civic Platform (PO), however, prioritised economic, military-technological and scientific cooperation, and sought to develop a more balanced relationship between the United States and the European Union (and Poland) than PiS (MATYSEK 2021: 91–92).

It is important to emphasise, however, that the country's political elite is unanimously committed to Atlanticism. This is underpinned by the fact that, since 1989, Poland has participated in 93 international missions (34 UN, 26 NATO, 14 EU, 10 OSCE, 7 U.S.-led and 2 other), 18 of which are still ongoing, with NATO taking the largest share in term of troops and resources committed. Since 1991, the Polish Armed Forces have participated in seven U.S.-led missions, including those in which Poland was the only Central European participant (Operation Iraqi Freedom) or European contributor (Uphold Democracy). Another sign of the strong security commitment to the U.S. is that the country's defence spending has always been around 2% of GDP over the past thirty years, and even the constitution stipulates a mandatory level of defence spending (currently at 3%, exceeding NATO expectations) (POSTOLKO 2022).

THE ROAD TO NATO AND EU ACCESSION

As most Central and Eastern European countries, Poland also witnessed a heated debate about possible ways of guaranteeing Polish security between 1989 and 1992. During this period, neutrality, the idea of a Central European subregional defence alliance, and cooperative security models based on the OSCE framework were raised as theoretical options besides joining Western defence organisations (OTŁOWSKI 1998: 113–124). Warsaw's decision in favour of the latter stemmed mainly from two realisations. On the one hand, although the transforming security environment in the country's immediate neighbourhood following the end of the Cold War was

clearly favourable, Russia still posed a potential threat from the east (ZAJĄC 2014: 194). On the other hand, after the collapse of the bipolar world order, the United States remained the sole, unrivalled global power in world politics for about a decade, whose interest was vested not only in maintaining an effective operation within NATO but also expanding it, filling the security vacuum in Central Europe (WALTZ 2000: 18–29).

POLISH PARTICIPATION IN NATO

The greatest added value of NATO for Poland lies in collective defence, and the fact that NATO's leading power has been the United States seen by the Polish political elite as the only actor that can credibly deter Russia from aggressive behaviour. Warsaw's insistence on solid security guarantees stems from Poland's geopolitical situation and troubled past. The perceived Russian threat also explains why Poland, as a NATO member has always advocated strengthening the alliance's primary function, collective defence, and has openly criticised any changes that were perceived as undermining this function of shifting NATO's policy focus (e.g. the creation of an autonomous European defence, European duplication of capabilities) (KUŹNIAK 2018: 59). Like most Central European countries, Poland clearly expected an acceptance to a collective defence alliance. Although Poland has participated very actively in the alliance's international operations, and according to some, sometimes even beyond its means, it was always one of those NATO Member States which believed that the alliance's capabilities should be developed in a way that maintained a balance between collective defence and 'out of area' engagements (KLICH 2009: 85–93).

In exchange for solid security guarantees, the Polish governments have shown strong security policy and military commitment and solidarity towards the Alliance and its Member States, primarily towards the United States. Poland took high-stake roles in almost all major NATO missions, and the Polish Government regularly adopted the United States' position in disputes within the Alliance. In fact, it often went further: in 2003, for example, Poland undertook military roles in the United States' Iraq intervention.

Moreover, since the Russo–Georgian war of August 2008, Warsaw – together with the Baltic countries – has perceived Russia as a rapidly growing threat to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, therefore argued that the Alliance should focus much more on the challenges posed by Russia (TÁLAS 2014: 25–27). From then on, Warsaw increasingly emphasised the need of strengthening the Alliance's basic

tasks of collective defence and territorial defence, and in Polish–American relations, the need for any additional security guarantees provided by the United States (EK 2008: 6). Since Poland could not formally achieve the latter bilaterally, Warsaw sought to assume a role in defence issues that would/could make it an inescapably important player. In the past two decades, the best opportunity was provided by the plans to develop a NATO (from 2004 on) or an American (2007–2009) missile defence system deployed in Europe (NYCZ 2013: 63–66; ADAMCZYK 2014: 40–44), as well as the Russian–Ukrainian war from 2014 and its 2022 escalation.

The costly, negative experience in the Iraq and Afghanistan interventions and then stabilisations led to a strong belief that Warsaw should significantly reduce Poland's expeditionary role. This resulted in the 'Komorowski Doctrine' announced in 2013, which summarised the new direction of Poland's security strategy in four points:

1. The Republic of Poland should shift its strategic priorities from expeditionary participation to tasks related to directly ensuring the security and defence of the country.
2. Poland's national defence capabilities provide a key pillar and guarantee of the country's security.
3. In addition to territorial defence, deterrence capabilities should become Polish assets within NATO and the European Union, especially in situations where it is difficult to build consensus within the Alliance.
4. Poland must strengthen its presence and roles internationally, and represent its strategic interests in international organisations, shaping their agenda in accordance with Polish interests (Doktryna Komorowskiego 2014: 1–2).

The new strategic direction of Polish security policy – which also became part of the 2014 Polish National Security Strategy – essentially put the emphasis on the development of national capabilities, while maintaining the prominent role of NATO and the United States in Poland's defence (FRYC 2014: 52–56). As a result, the security of Poland today rests on four fundamental pillars: the development of national capabilities, the collective defence of NATO, the special security relationship with the United States, and Poland's membership in the European Union. As it was shown above, the doctrine of moving towards developing independent military capabilities was adopted well before the 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian support for separatism in eastern Ukraine, which signalled the start of the Russian–Ukrainian war.

Therefore, it was no coincidence that Poland initiated strengthening NATO's eastern flank with a rotational military presence in March 2014 (ZAJĄC 2014: 197–198), which was followed by several further steps at the 2014 Newport Summit to

strengthen collective defence (CSIKI et al. 2014: 113–117). The establishment of four multinational battalion-size battlegroups in 2016 under NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence – with Canadian (in Latvia), American (in Poland), German (in Lithuania) and British (in Estonia) framework nation roles – was a landmark event for Warsaw. As the next step, another four such multinational battlegroups were created in 2022 – with Italian (in Bulgaria), French (in Romania), Czech (in Slovakia) and Hungarian (in Hungary) framework nations – to be increased to brigade level (each with 3–5,000 personnel) by the end of 2023 (CSIKI VARGA – TÁLAS 2023: 4). In addition, the United States also increased the number of American troops in Poland in the bilateral framework, so that more than 10,000 troops are currently stationing in the country, while a forward deployed element of the HQ of the 5th U.S. Corps was deployed to Poznan (Camp Kościuszko) (PISM 2023).

In addition to strengthening NATO's core collective defence mission, Poland has also been one of the most active advocates of the Alliance's enlargement since 1999. This was the case with the Baltic countries (2004) and then the membership of Ukraine and Georgia (2008), as well as Albania, Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020). Polish support for the NATO membership of the Baltic states, Ukraine and Georgia is closely linked to the so-called 'Ukraine–Lithuania–Belarus Doctrine', which assumes that a key guarantee of Poland's security is the independent statehood of these nations (MITROVICS 2023a; 2023b; 2023c).

After 2014 Poland became one of Ukraine's main supporters, and, since 2016, along with the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, it has been one of the most important training and logistical supporters of the Ukrainian armed forces (MIŁOSZ 2022). In response to the Russian troop deployments around Ukraine in 2021, Poland was supplying weapons to Ukraine since early 2022, and following the escalation of the Russian–Ukrainian war, Warsaw has been one of Ukraine's most committed and active supporters (and provided Ukraine with nearly 4 billion Euros worth of aid by mid-2023, including 3 billion Euros (or nearly 1% of Poland's GDP) in military support (Ukraine Support Tracker 2023).

POLISH PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The new Polish political elite that came to power after the change of regime sees the European Union primarily as an international organisation that promotes Poland's economic modernisation (SZYNOL 2014: 211). They consider NATO to be the organisation most relevant to Polish security, and have always opposed any European effort that is believed to potentially weaken the North Atlantic Alliance.

Polish leaders are sceptical of the effectiveness of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), primarily due to the diverging strategic interests of EU Member States. They also see the lack of an integrating force in the EU that the United States represents within NATO.

Although initially very distrustful, Warsaw eventually came to support CSDP between 1999 and 2011, as politically it could not afford to be left out of such an important EU initiative. The first Polish steps took place in May 2003: Warsaw offered 1,500 soldiers to carry out EU crisis management (Petersberg) tasks; then from the spring of 2004 participated in the development of the EU Battlegroup Concept. In 2006, Warsaw decided to establish joint multinational battlegroups (a 'German-led' with Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia; a 'Weimar Battlegroup' with Germany and France, and the 'V4' Battlegroup with the Visegrád countries), and even assumed the role of a framework nation in the latter (ZIĘBA 2012: 160–162). From July 2004, Poland joined the European Defence Agency (EDA). The confidence of Polish decision-makers in CSDP was also significantly boosted by the Lisbon Treaty for its solidarity clause and Article 42.7 on mutual assistance, which also explicitly contains a collective defence provision (BONDE 2009: 41, 146–147). Since 2009, Warsaw has been talking about three external pillars of Poland's security: NATO, the European Union and the United States (KUŹNIAK 2012: 339–343).

However, the support for CSDP and the increased Polish confidence in the EU's defence policy did not mean that Poland also supported the concept of European strategic autonomy. For the reasons mentioned earlier, it also did not see Poland's contribution to EU missions as changing the attitude of European powers towards Polish security needs for stronger support (for example, in relation to Georgia or Ukraine), despite the fact that Poland, the sixth largest country in the EU, ranks fifth in terms of participation in the organisation's military operations (ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI 2022: 113–114).

Moreover, Polish confidence in the European Union as a security policy actor stalled from the end of the 2000s and began to weaken again. The various crises affecting Europe (and more broadly, the West), and the debates surrounding the European Union's crisis management steps played a decisive role in this. Not to mention the fact that since the fall of 2015, a Eurosceptic political force (PiS) came to power in Poland, which was sharply critical of the Union in terms of both its internal and external policies. PiS often portrayed the EU as a threat to Polish sovereignty in its political communication (KUŹNIAK 2018: 66). In addition, previous Polish reservations versus strategic autonomy, such as the lack of a hegemonic European integrating force, the diversity of national security priorities of EU Member States, the lack of a 'European' political nation and the associated European solidarity,

the low level of European defence budgets, and the lack of European military capabilities, persisted (ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI 2022: 109–110). Specific Polish arguments against European autonomy included the German–Russian cooperation in the construction of Nord Stream 2, the (later not realised) sale of Mistral helicopter carriers to Russia by France, and the construction of a Russian military training centre in Mulino (near Nizhny Novgorod) equipped with modern Bundeswehr technology sold by the German company Rheinmetall (ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI 2022: 113–114).

As a result, the national-conservative Polish elite found itself in a very peculiar situation at the end of the 2010s: even though Poland participates in all European defence initiatives – and since it identifies itself as a European middle power, it could not do otherwise – it is far from being as proactive as one would expect from a European middle power. However, many believe that Warsaw manages the EU's common security and defence policy according to its weight: Polish firms are participating in 13 PESCO projects, and are observers in another 17, and also have been coordinating the Special Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTTC) project since 2019. Besides being a member of EDA and several EU Battlegroups, Warsaw has also participated in 14 EU missions since 1994 (three of which are currently ongoing).²

The Russian–Ukrainian war significantly increased Poland's prestige not only within NATO, but also within the European Union. Partly because the escalation confirmed Polish concerns about Russian aggression that had been voiced for years, and partly because the geopolitical situation of the Russian–Ukrainian war permanently increased the importance of Poland, neighbouring Ukraine, and finally also because it once again strengthened the relationship between the United States and Europe, putting the question of European strategic autonomy on hold for a while, which corresponds to Polish strategic aspirations. Another

² Poland participates in the following projects: 1. Military Mobility (coordinator: Netherlands); 2. European Secure Software-Defined Radio – ESSOR (coordinator: France); 3. European Logistics Centre Network and Support for Operations (coordinator: Germany); 4. Maritime Semi-Autonomous Mine Countermeasures – MAS MCM (coordinator: Belgium); 5. Port and Maritime Surveillance and Protection – HARMSPRO (coordinator: Italy); 6. Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cybersecurity (coordinator: Lithuania); 7. EU Radio Navigation Solution – EURAS (coordinator: France); 8. Integrated Unmanned Ground Systems – IUGS (coordinator: Estonia); 9. Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre – EUROSIM (coordinator: Hungary); 10. European Medical Command (coordinator: Germany); 11. EU Collaborative Warfare Capabilities – ECoWAR (coordinator: France); 12. Protection of Space Assets – DoSA (coordinator: France) (Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland 2022).

important factor in increasing its prestige is that Poland is one of the most committed supporters of Ukraine in political, military and humanitarian terms towards Ukraine (BENDYK-BURAS 2022; PAWŁUSZKO 2022: 55–57). Warsaw has also provided support for all EU initiatives aimed at increasing European military capabilities, which could enable the European Union Member States to participate more in the continent's defence, thus relieving the United States of the burden (ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI 2022: 118–121).

THE POLISH ARMED FORCES

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland are designated to safeguard the interests of Poland and conduct armed combat, they are one of the main elements of the Polish defence system and the basis of the country's defence potential. They are also the fundamental institution established for the implementation of Polish security and defence policy (Sejm of the Republic of Poland 2022: Articles 11.1, 11.2). According to the Polish Constitution, their main task is to protect the independence and territorial integrity of Poland, as well as to ensure the security and inviolability of the Polish state borders (Konstytucja RP 2023: Article 26). However, one must see that the importance of these tasks in the Polish case also strongly depends on how the country's political elite judges the actual state of the security environment and its changes; and how it prioritises threats and challenges affecting the country. For example, a serious turning point in the development and status of the Polish military was brought about by NATO accession (1999), participation in the Alliance's international crisis management and stabilisation missions, the global financial and economic crisis (2008–2012), the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2014, and its escalation since 2022, to name just the most important events.

The tasks of the armed forces

In connection with the above-mentioned core functions, the Polish Armed Forces have a number of tasks, which can be grouped into the following three major batches. First, ensuring the defence of the state and resistance to aggression against the state within the framework of allied commitments, i.e. to maintaining the deployability of troops to ensure the protection and inviolability of Poland's borders, to counterterrorism actions and to resolve local or regional armed conflicts, as well as to participation in domestic and foreign defence operations. Second,

participation in stabilising the international security environment and in crisis and humanitarian assistance operations, i.e. peacekeeping and crisis management operations conducted by NATO, the EU and the United Nations, as well as other operations arising from international agreements; and maintaining forces and capabilities suitable for participation in humanitarian operations conducted by international, governmental and other organisations. Third, supporting domestic security and assisting the population, including by controlling and protecting airspace, supporting the protection of land borders and territorial waters, and conducting reconnaissance and intelligence activities. In addition: controlling radioactive, chemical and biological contamination in the country; clearing the territory of explosives and dangerous objects of military origin; conducting search and rescue activities; and supporting state authorities, public administration and the population in responding to threats (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej s. a.).

As can be seen in Polish strategic documents, the tasks of the Armed Forces have gradually been expanding with military elements of countering newly emerging, such as cyber or hybrid, threats.

Currently Poland have been participating in 9 international operations carried out under the auspices of the UN, NATO and the EU. About 1,400 soldiers and military personnel are participating in them. Of these, three CSDP and one UN missions, as well as four NATO operations and one ad-hoc international coalition operations. The Polish Armed Forces are participating with most troops in NATO's KFOR in Kosovo, the UN UNIFIL mission in Lebanon, NATO's tailored Forward Presence (tFP) in Romania and its enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Latvia, and the United States' Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS in the Middle East (Misje s. a.; Misje zagraniczne z udziałem polskich żołnierzy s. a.).

According to the Polish Homeland Defence Act, the armed forces in Poland may participate in disaster management, counterterrorism, the protection of public properties, search and rescue operations, operations aimed at saving or protecting human health and life, cyberspace protection, clearing areas of explosives and hazardous materials of military origin and their disposal, and performing tasks related to crisis management (Sejm of the Republic of Poland 2022: Article 11.3). This has been illustrated in recent years by the response operation to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej 2021; POWAŁKO 2022: 18–39), and involvement of the armed forces in closing the Belarusian–Polish border from irregular mass immigration. For example, in 2022, around 15,000 soldiers were involved in border guard duties, their number was reduced to 1,300 by the summer of 2023, only to be increased again to 10,000 after the Wagner Group appeared in Belarus in July (AL SHEHABI 2023).

The structure and key assets of the armed forces

The Polish Armed Forces have five branches: Land Forces (Wojska Lądowe – WL), Air Force (Siły Powietrzne – SP), Naval Forces (Marynarka Wojenna – MW), as well as Special Operations Forces (Wojska Specjalne – WS), which were declared an independent branch of the Armed Forces in 2007, and Territorial Defence Forces (Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej – WOT), which had been upgraded to an independent branch in 2017 (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej 2023).

Personnel

The official number of professional soldiers in the Polish Armed Forces in the end of 2024 was 205,100 (PAP 2024). This meant that the number of the Polish Armed Forces decreased by 50% compared to 1990 (414,000), and has fallen by only 15% since 1999 (240,000) (ROCHOWICZ 2019). However, it is important to point out that, on the one hand, before joining NATO, during the period of self-sustained security, the size of the army was intentionally kept very high, while on the other hand, the size of the army was the lowest in the first period after the transition to a professional army, that is, between 2010 and 2015 (99,000–100,000, or 41–42% of the 1999 number) (KAJETANOWICZ 2021: 85–97).

The Polish governments communicate to the domestic and international public a higher military strength than the official number underpinned by the budget (for example, 164,100 people in 2022, 172,500 people in 2023) (ISTEL 2023). According to the Polish Ministry of Defence on 28 June 2024, the Polish Armed Forces were consisted of: almost 139,500 professional soldiers; more than 4,800 professional soldiers in training; more than 2,500 soldiers in Voluntary General Military Service (DZSW, Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa) in training; almost 17,500 soldiers in Voluntary General Military Service (DZSW, Dobrowolna Zasadnicza Służba Wojskowa); almost 35,000 soldiers in Territorial Military Service (TSW, Terytorialna Służba Wojskowa) (CIŚLAK 2024). The professional strength of the armed forces (134,362 professional soldiers) as of 31 December 2023 was as follows: 134 generals; 22,574 officers; 52,223 NCOs; 59,421 privates (CIŚLAK 2024).

According to the current force development plans, the strength of the Polish Armed Forces is planned to be increased to 300,000 by 2035, consisting of: 187,127 professional soldiers, 9,373 professional soldiers in training, 3,000 soldiers performing voluntary military service during training (first-year students of military academies), 50,000 soldiers performing voluntary military service and 50,000 non-professional

soldiers performing territorial defence military service (PIEKARSKI 2023: 18; CIŚLAK 2024). It is currently not possible to assess whether demographic processes and budgetary conditions will allow the implementation of this extremely ambitious plan (PIEKARSKI 2023: 33–37).

The organisational structure and equipment of the armed forces

Following the 2012 Defence Review, the transformation of the Polish Land Forces (WL) reached the point of formulating a comprehensive modernisation program covering the entire Polish Armed Forces in 2013 (LIPKA–SMURA 2014: 12). However, this was only partially implemented, partly due to insufficient resources and partly due to the change of government in 2015. The new coalition – similarly to the practice of many Central and Eastern European countries – ordered a new defence review in 2016, citing partly the changes in the security policy environment and partly the previous government's flawed ideas of the defence reform (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej 2016). This resulted in the defence reform program adopted two years later, in November 2018, which is still ongoing after amendments in 2019 and in 2022.

The backbone of the Polish Armed Forces is formed by four divisions of the Land Forces (WL), three of which are mechanised and one is armoured. The Land Forces also have four independent brigades and 11 independent regiments (Military Units s. a.). The main armaments of the ground forces in 2023 consisted of 538 tanks (Leopard 2, PT-91 Twardy, T-72, K2 Black Panther, M1 Abrams), 1981 armoured fighting vehicles (BWP-1, Rosomak Hitfist-30), 701 self-propelled artillery pieces (2S1 Goździk, M120 Rak, 1977 Dana, K9 Thunder, AHS Krab), and 206 multiple rocket launchers (BM-21 Grad, WR-40 Langusta, RM-70/85, M142 HIMARS, K239 Chunmoo) (KUCHARSKI 2019; WACHOWSKI 2020; MICHALUK 2022b; CIŚLAK 2023b; MAŁECKI 2023; SABAK 2023).

According to many experts, the Polish Air Force (SP) was the most developed branch of the Polish Armed Forces after 1990. The Air Force was the first to receive, from the early to mid-2000s, a relatively large amount of modern Polish, European and American equipment and weapons, such as CASA C-295 (2003–2013), F16 (2006–2008) and C-130 (2009–2012) aircraft and Orbiter UAVs (2005) (SZOPA 2022b). Today, the Polish Air Force has two tactical aviation regiments, each consisting of 3 squadrons, an air transport group consisting of 3 squadrons, an air training group consisting of 7 squadrons, an air defence missile brigade, and a radio engineering brigade (PIEKARSKI 2023: 9–10). Two of the tactical aviation regiment's squadrons consist of MiG-29s, one Su-22 and three F-16s. The MiG-29s are

planned to be transferred to Ukraine, while the Su-22s are expected to be withdrawn from service. The air transport group has American C-130 and C-295M CASA and Polish M28 Bryza aircraft commissioned (MICHALUK 2022a; SZOPA 2022a; 2022b; CIŚLAK 2023a), as well as W-3, Mi-8, Mi-17, Mi-2 helicopters. The air training group operates M-346 Bielik, PZL-130 Orlik and M28 Bryza aircraft, as well as SW-4 and Mi-2 helicopters (SZOPA 2022a; 2022b).

Within the Polish Armed Forces, the naval forces were the most poorly financed branch, and suffered the greatest reduction since the change of regime. During the Warsaw Pact period, the Polish Navy had the closest relationship with the Soviet military, as Soviet war plans assigned it a major task by occupying the Jutland Peninsula (Denmark) and ensuring the supremacy of the USSR in the Baltic Sea (LIPKA-SMURA 2014: 73–74). According to experts, in addition to underfunding, the lack of a concept in Polish military thinking regarding the navy, as well as the deep economic crisis hitting Polish shipbuilding, also contributed to this branch of the armed forces becoming the most neglected within the Polish armed forces. Poland's accession to NATO did not change this situation much, as Polish military leaders could not really find the proper function of the navy within the armed forces, thus, this branch has consistently remained de-prioritised (SMURA-OLEKSIEJUK 2022: 8–12). The Polish Navy consists of three major units, the 3rd Naval Flotilla, the 8th Coastal Defence Flotilla and the Naval Air Brigade. In 2023, the main naval units of the Polish Navy included 2 frigates, 2 corvettes, 3 fast attack crafts and 1 submarine – while most of the naval units were aging. The Naval Air Brigade was equipped with PZL M28 aircraft, as well as W-3, SH-2G, Mi-14, Mi-2 and AW101 helicopters (Forsal 2021; WILEWSKI 2023; SMURA-OLEKSIEJUK 2022: 16–18; LIPKA 2022; PIEKARSKI 2023: 10–11).

The Special Operations Forces have been considered an independent branch of the Polish Armed Forces since 2007, which include six independent special operations units (PIEKARSKI 2023: 11). This branch is the best known and most respected part of the Polish Armed Forces due to its successful participation in missions run by NATO and the United States (LIPKA-SMURA 2014: 87–93). It uses Mi-17 and S-70i Black Hawk helicopters to carry out its tasks.

The Territorial Defence Forces (WOT) are the fifth and youngest branch of the Polish Armed Forces, which were classified as an independent branch of the Armed Forces in 2017 after two years of preparation. The territorial defence brigades of the WOT had been established – basically from moving east to west in geographical sense – from 2016 onwards, so that today there are 20 territorial defence brigades covering the whole territory of the country. At the end of 2024, the WOT consisted of 20 brigades (70 battalions and 199 light infantry companies)

with more than 42,500 soldiers, of which 36,000 were territorial military service, 6,400 professional soldiers and 140 active reserve soldiers. In 2016, the original goal of establishing a territorial defence force of 53,000 was set, but this has not yet been achieved (MilMag 2022). The WOT has an independent command and two training centres: the Territorial Defence Forces Training Centre – CSWOT (Toruń), and the Communication and Information Technology Training Centre – CSŁiI (Zegrze), which also houses the command (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej 2023).

OUTLOOK

In the 35 years since the change of regime, Poland has been one of the most sensitive and reactive countries in the Central and Eastern European region to changes in the European security environment. Polish political leaders have tried to seize the most opportunities in the country's alliance systems with great pragmatism, often taking on serious burden to be considered 'a good ally' by its partners and to be able to credibly guarantee the security of Poland and Polish society. At the same time, Poland has also practised harsh criticism and initiated debates within the same relationships if allies were perceived as taking a path that was different from Poland's interests. In the early 2010s, Warsaw realised early that the country's security environment was deteriorating rapidly and that its own armed forces must take on much greater responsibility for sustaining Polish security than before. The Polish political and military elite unequivocally sees the increasingly aggressive Russia as the main cause of this.

This is also one of the main motives of the currently ongoing military reform. Due to the growing threat, the Polish leadership plans to establish two additional combined arms divisions in the land forces, to be stationed in the central part of the country. Due to the threat, it believes that the Polish Air Force should have at least 160 combat aircraft, instead of the current 95–97, and that it is necessary to modernise the helicopter fleet of the armed forces while also reducing the number of types of rotary-wing aircraft, as the Polish military currently operate 11 types of helicopters (CIŚLAK 2023a). It also intends to modernise the naval flotillas, which means not only replacing obsolete ships with a new generation, but also putting new equipment into service, the capabilities of which the Polish Navy has never had before in its history, such as long-range anti-ship missiles (WILEWSKI 2023).

It is easy to see that these ambitious development goals can only be achieved within the framework of a serious and extremely costly modernisation program. That is why the Polish Government plans to spend about 524 billion Zlotys (about 133 billion U.S. dollars) on 24 priority programs for the technical modernisation

of the Polish Armed Forces in the period from 2021 to 2035 (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej 2019). These plans clearly demonstrate that Poland has embarked on an extremely ambitious military development program even by European standards, and intends to create one of the strongest military forces on the continent.

According to Polish experts, the Polish governments may face obstacles upon realising these goals in two areas. On the one hand, from a financial point of view, because it is far from certain that the Polish economy will be able to sustainably generate the resources necessary for the large-scale military modernisation, and on the other hand, in terms of human resources, because it is questionable whether there will be enough suitable candidates for the new military force planned to reach 250–300 thousand troops in the all-volunteer force.

Since the Polish political elite is fundamentally distrustful of the European Union's defence capabilities and the solidarity of Western Member States with regard to the security of Eastern Member States (namely withstanding Russian aggression), they reject the idea and aspirations of European strategic autonomy. This rejection does not mean, however, that Poland does not support or wish to participate in EU security and defence initiatives that could improve and expand the EU's military capabilities. Rather, Poland sees these efforts as complementary to NATO's capabilities, and it seeks to ensure that others also see them as such. From this perspective, the modernisation of the Polish military is a tool with which the Polish Government, in addition to protecting the country and NATO's eastern flank, also seeks to achieve increased political authority and influence to counterbalance the influence of those Member States (especially France and Germany) that it considers to be the most important and influential representatives of European strategic autonomy (ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI 2022: 118–121).

REFERENCES

- ADAMCZYK, Natalia (2014): Znaczenie amerykańskiej tarczy antyrakietowej dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski [The Importance of the U.S. Missile Defence Shield for Poland's National Security]. *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i praktyka*, 15(2), 39–49. Online: <https://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.mhp-fb8f2c6d-1c31-4590-b1eb-d1313eb82f9c>
- AL SHEHABI, Daria (2023): Szef MON: 10 tysięcy żołnierzy na granicy polsko-białoruskiej [Head of the Ministry of National Defence: 10,000 Soldiers on the Polish–Belarusian Border]. *Polska Agencja Prasowa*, 10 August 2023. Online: <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1607026%2Cszef-mon-10-tysiecy-zolnierzy-na-granicy-polsko-bialoruskiej.html>
- BENDYK, Edwin – BURAS, Piotr (2022): Polska wobec wojny, Polska w świecie po wojnie. Zadania na nowy czas [Poland and the War, Poland in the Post-war World. Tasks for a New Era]. *Fundacja*

- Batorego, *Forum Idei*, 1–9. Online: https://www.batory.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/E.Bendyk.P.Buras_Polska.wobec_wojny_Polska.w.swiecie.po_wojnie.pdf
- BONDE, Jens-Peter ed. (2009): *Consolidated Reader-Friendly Edition of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon (2007). Third edition*. Brussels: Foundation for EU Democracy. Online: <http://en.euabc.com/upload/books/lisbon-treaty-3edition.pdf>
- CISŁAK, Jarosław (2023a): Wojska Łądowe 2035. Jakie będą? [Land Forces 2035. What Will They Be Like?] *Defence 24*, 10 July 2023. Online: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/wojska-ladowe-2035-jakie-beda-analiza>
- CISŁAK, Jarosław (2023b): Wielkie zmiany w Wojsku Polskim. Jaka będzie armia za dekadę? [Major Changes in the Polish Army. What Will the Army Look Like in a Decade?] *Defence 24*, 15 August 2023. Online: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/wielkie-zmiany-w-wojsku-polskim-jaka-bedzie-armia-za-dekade-analiza>
- CISŁAK, Jarosław (2024): More Soldiers in the Polish Armed Forces. New Data. *Defence 24*, 7 July 2024. Online: <https://defence24.com/armed-forces/more-soldiers-in-the-polish-armed-forces-new-data-exclusive>
- CSIKI VARGA, Tamás – TÁLAS, Péter (2023): A vilniusi NATO-csúcstalálkozó napirendje [Agenda for the NATO Summit in Vilnius]. *SVKI Elemzések*, (9), 1–7. Online: [https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/SVKI_Elemzesek_2023_9_A_NATO_vilnusi_csucstalalkozojanak_napirendje_\(Csiki%20Varga%20T_Talas%20P\).pdf](https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/SVKI_Elemzesek_2023_9_A_NATO_vilnusi_csucstalalkozojanak_napirendje_(Csiki%20Varga%20T_Talas%20P).pdf)
- CSIKI, Tamás – TÁLAS, Péter – VARGA, Gergely (2014): A NATO walesi csúcstalálkozásának napirendje és értékelése [Agenda and Assessment of the NATO Summit in Wales]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 7(4), 112–128. Online: <https://www.nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/letoltes.php?letolt=602>
- CZAPUTOWICZ, Jacek (2014): Ewolucja polskiej polityki bezpieczeństwa: w kierunku strategicznej samodzielności? [The Evolution of Polish Security Policy: Towards Strategic Independence?] *Studia Politologiczne*, 34(4), 15–31. Online: <http://www.studiapolitologiczne.pl/pdf-115878-45205?filename=Ewolucja%20polskiej.pdf>
- DAVIES, Norman (1991): *Boże igrzysko. Historia Polski*. Tom II. Od roku 1795 [God's Playground. The History of Poland. Volume II. From 1795 Onwards]. Krakow: Znak.
- Doktryna Komorowskiego (2014). Online: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwipgp6UtaAAxXXgPoHHeecA2EQFnoECAoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbn.gov.pl%2Fdownload%2F1%2F15538%2Fdoktrynakomorowskiego-zalozenia.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2o8Mu3OQ_DEhDUXuaAEkm4&opi=89978449
- EK, Carl (2008): Poland's New Government: Background and Issues for the United States. *CRS Report for Congress*, 15 February 2008. Online: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/RS22811.pdf>
- Forsal (2021): MON wraca nad morze i do 2035 r. planuje wydać 60 mld zł na nowe okręty wojenne [The Ministry of National Defence Is Returning to the Sea and Plans to Spend PLN 60 Billion on New Warships by 2035]. *Forsal*, 16 March 2021. Online: <https://forsal.pl/gospodarka/inwestycje/artykuly/8121812,marynarka-wojenna-do-2035-r-plan-wydac-60-mld-zl-nowe-okrety-wojenne.html>
- FRYC, Mariusz (2014): „Doktryna Komorowskiego” – próba scharakteryzowania. Idea, zakres, priorytety, realizacja [“Komorowski's Doctrine” – An Attempt at Characterisation. Idea, Scope,

- Priorities, Implementation]. *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, 2(30), 41–72. Online: <http://www.bbn.gov.pl/download/1/17029/41-72sMariuszFryc.pdf>
- GRUDZIŃSKI, Przemysław (2008): *Państwo inteligentne. Polska poszukiwaniu międzynarodowej roli* [The Intelligent State. Poland in Search of an International Role]. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- HILLEBRAND, Ernst (2021): Dialog głuchoniemych? Stosunki polsko-niemieckie dziś [A Dialogue between the Deaf? Polish–German Relations Today]. In SCHULZ, Justyna – HILLEBRAND, Ernst (eds.): *Między przyjaźnią a frustracją – Polska i Niemcy 30 lat po podpisaniu traktatu o sąsiedztwie* [Between Friendship and Frustration – Poland and Germany 30 Years after Signing the Neighbourhood Treaty]. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 23–34.
- ISAP (2009): *Ustawa z dnia 9 stycznia 2009 r. o zmianie ustawy o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz o zmianie niektórych innych ustaw. Dz.U. 2009 nr 22 poz. 120* [Act of 9 January 2009 Amending the Act on the Universal Duty to Defend the Republic of Poland and Certain Other Acts]. Online: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20090220120>
- ISTEL, Michał (2023): Błaszczak: “mamy 172 500 żołnierzy pod bronią”. Co to za liczba? [Błaszczak: ‘We Have 172,500 Soldiers in Service.’ What Does this Number Mean?] *Konkret* 24, 9 June 2023. Online: <https://konkret24.tvn24.pl/polska/wojsko-polskie-blaszczak-mamy-172-500-zolnierzy-pod-bronia-co-to-za-liczba-st7165347>
- KAJETANOWICZ, Jerzy (2021): Transformacja Sił Zbrojnych RP 1999–2020. Aspekt organizacyjny [Transformation of the Polish Armed Forces 1999–2020. Organisational Aspect]. *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 19, 83–103. Online: <https://doi.org/10.36874/RIESW.2021.1.5>
- KLICH, Bogdan (2009): NATO: A View from Central Europe. *Politique étrangère, Hors série*, (5), 85–93. Online: <https://doi.org/10.3917/pe.hs3.0085>
- Konferencja Ambasadorów RP (2023): *Polska polityka zagraniczna w ruinie. Okres rządów PiS (2015–2023). Problemy wybrane* [Polish Foreign Policy in Ruins. The PiS Government Period (2015–2023). Selected Issues]. Online: <https://ambasadorowiedotorg.files.wordpress.com/2023/10/22.09.2023-polityka-zagraniczna-w-ruinie-1-1.pdf>
- Konstytucja RP (2023). Online: <https://konstytucja.online/>
- KUCHARCZYK, Jacek – ŁADA, Agnieszka (2021): *Polacy i Niemcy we wspólnej Europie: ocena wzajemnych relacji i sytuacji międzynarodowej 30 lat po podpisaniu traktatu o dobrym sąsiedztwie i przyjaznej współpracy* [Poles and Germans in a United Europe: An Assessment of Mutual Relations and the International Situation 30 Years after the Signing of the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation]. *Barometr Polska–Niemcy 2021*. Online: <https://www.isp.org.pl/pl/publikacje/polacy-i-niemcy-we-wspolnej-europie-ocena-wzajemnych-relacji-i-sytuacji-miedzynarodowej-30-lat-po-podpisaniu-traktatu-o-dobrym-sasiedztwie-i-przyjaznej-wspolpracy>
- KUCHARSKI, Bartłomiej (2019): Poznańska propozycja modernizacji BWP-1 [Poznań’s Proposal for the Modernisation of the BWP-1]. *Wojsko i Technika*, (10). Online: <https://zbiam.pl/artykuly/poznanska-propozycja-modernizacji-bwp-1/>
- KUŹNIAR, Roman (2012): *Polityka zagraniczna III Rzeczypospolitej* [Foreign Policy of the Third Republic of Poland]. Warszawa: Scholar.
- KUŹNIAR, Roman (2018): Wspólna polityka bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej [The European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy]. In BARCZ, Jan – DOMARADZKI, Spasimir – KULIGOWSKI, Rafał – SZEWCZYK, Marcin – SZKLARCZYK-AMATI, Eliza (eds.):

- Polska w Unii Europejskiej. Nowe wyzwania* [Poland in the European Union. New Challenges]. Warszawa: Komisja Europejska, Przedstawicielstwo w Polsce, 55–67. Online: <https://doi.org/10.2775/911897>
- LIPKA, Michał (2022): Marynarka wojenna w 1995 r. i 2022 r. Porównanie [The Navy in 1995 and 2022. A Comparison]. *Trojmiasto*, 16 February 2022. Online: <https://www.trojmiasto.pl/wiadomosci/Marynarka-wojenna-w-1995-r-i-2022-r-Porownanie-n164314.html>
- LIPKA, Rafał – SMURA, Tomasz eds. (2014): *Sily Zbrojne RP stan, perspektywy i wyzwania modernizacyjne* [Polish Armed Forces: Current Status, Prospects and Modernisation Challenges]. Warszawa: Kazimierza Pułaskiego. Online: https://pulaski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FKP_Raport_Sily-Zbrojne-RP-%E2%80%93-stan-perspektywy-i-wyzwania-modernizacyjne.pdf
- MALINOWSKI, Krzysztof (2021): Perspektywy współpracy w dziedzinie bezpieczeństwa [Prospects for Cooperation in the Field of Security]. In SCHULZ, Justyna – HILLEBRAND, Ernst (eds.): *Między przyjaźnią a frustracją – Polska i Niemcy 30 lat po podpisaniu traktatu o sąsiedztwie* [Between Friendship and Frustration – Poland and Germany 30 Years after Signing the Neighbourhood Treaty]. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 83–90. Online: https://polska.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/images/events/2021/12_16_Ksiazka/Miedzy_przyjaznia_a_frustracja_.pdf
- MAŁECKI, Mikołaj (2023): Jak będzie wyglądać nowy bojowy wóz piechoty? Rzecznik Agencji Uzbrojenia opowiedział o tym projekcie [What Will the New Infantry Fighting Vehicle Look Like? A Spokesperson for the Armaments Agency Spoke about the Project]. *Polska Agencja Prasowa*, 14 March 2023. Online: <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1547907%2Cjak-będzie-wyglądać-nowy-bojowy-woz-piechoty-rzecznik-agencji-uzbrojenia>
- MATYSEK, Ksymena (2020): Partnerstwo strategiczne jako doktryna i kategoria definiująca relacje polsko-amerykańskie [Strategic Partnership as a Doctrine and Category Defining Polish–American Relations]. *Społeczeństwo i Polityka*, 1(62), 119–138. Online: <https://doi.org/10.34765/sp.0120.a07>
- MATYSEK, Ksymena (2021): Węzłowe elementy relacji polsko-amerykańskich w świetle analizy ramowania [Key Elements of Polish–American Relations in the Light of Framing Analysis]. *Historia i Polityka*, 42(35), 77–94. Online: <https://doi.org/10.12775/HiP.2021.005>
- MICHALUK, Kamil (2022a): Ile samolotów ma Polska? Możliwości bojowe polskiego lotnictwa [How Many Aircraft Does Poland Have? The Combat Capabilities of the Polish Air Force]. *Gazeta.pl*, 10 March 2022. Online: <https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,168571,28196285,ile-samolotow-ma-polska-mozliwosci-bojowe-polskiego-lotnictwa.html>
- MICHALUK, Kamil (2022b): Ile czołgów ma Polska? Stan uzbrojenia polskiej armii [How Many Tanks Does Poland Have? The State of the Polish Army's Armament]. *Gazeta.pl*, 10 March 2022. Online: <https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,168571,28196286,ile-czolgow-ma-polska-stan-uzbrojenia-polskiej-armii.html>
- Military Units (s. a.): *Jednostki wojskowe*. Online: <https://jednostki-wojskowe.pl/>
- MilMag (2022): Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej liczą już 35 tysięcy żołnierzy [The Territorial Defence Forces Now Number 35,000 Soldiers]. *The Military Magazine*, 22 November 2022. Online: <https://milmag.pl/wojska-obrony-terytorialnej-licza-juz-35-tysiecy-zolnierzy/>
- MIŁOSZ, Maciej (2022): Soloch: Polska rozmawia z Ukrainą o dostawach broni [Soloch: Poland Negotiates Arms Supplies with Ukraine]. *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 24 January 2022. Online: <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/kraj/artykuly/8340194,polska-ukraina-dostawy-broni-pawel-soloch-bbn.html>

- Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (2016): *Strategiczny Przegląd Obronny* [Strategic Defence Review]. Ministry of National Defence. Online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa/strategiczny-przegląd-obronny>
- Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (2019): *524 miliardy złotych na modernizację Wojska Polskiego do 2035 roku* [PLN 524 Billion for the Modernisation of the Polish Army by 2035]. Ministry of National Defence. Online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa/524-miliardy-zlotych-na-modernizacje-wojska-polskiego-do-2035-roku>
- Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (2021): *Wojsko Polskie cały czas zaangażowane jest w walkę z Covid-19* [The Polish Army Remains Committed to the Fight against Covid-19]. Ministry of National Defence. Online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa/wojsko-polskie-calz-czas-zaangazowane-jest-w-walke-z-covid-19>
- Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (2022): *Podstawowe informacje o budżecie resortu obrony narodowej na 2022 r* [Basic Information about the Ministry of National Defence Budget for 2022]. Ministry of National Defence. Online: <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/26405540-aaic-49b4-b906-11028df393>
- Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (2023): *Podział limitów stanów średniorocznych żołnierzy i funkcjonariuszy na 2023 r. w ujęciu działów i rozdziałów klasyfikacji budżetowej* [Breakdown of Average Annual Limits for Soldiers and Officers for 2023 by Budget Classification Sections and Chapters]. Ministry of National Defence. Online: <https://www.dz.urz.mon.gov.pl/zasoby/dziennik/pozycje/zalaczniki/2023/02/bzaaczyniki-sig.pdf>
- Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (s. a.): *Sily Zbrojne RP* [Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland]. Ministry of National Defence. Online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa/sily-zbrojne-rp>
- Ministry of National Defence Republic of Poland (2022): *Poland – European Union*. Online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/poland---european-union>
- Misje (s. a.): *Wojsko Polskie* [Polish Armed Forces]. Online: <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/misje/>
- Misje zagraniczne z udziałem polskich żołnierzy (s. a.): *Foreign Missions Involving Polish Soldiers*. Online: <https://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/weterani/miszag/>
- MITROVICS, Miklós (2023a): A lengyel geopolitikai gondolkodás története I. – A kezdetek [The History of Polish Geopolitical Thought I – The Beginnings]. *Horizontok Blog*, 12 July 2023. Online: <https://www.ludovika.hu/blogok/horizontokblog/2023/06/12/a-lengyel-geopolitikai-gondolkodas-tortenete-i-a-kezdetek/>
- MITROVICS, Miklós (2023b): A lengyel geopolitikai gondolkodás története II. – Az újjászülető Lengyelország [The History of Polish Geopolitical Thought II – Poland Reborn]. *Horizontok Blog*, 19 June 2023. Online: <https://www.ludovika.hu/blogok/horizontokblog/2023/06/19/a-lengyel-geopolitikai-gondolkodas-tortenete-ii-resz-az-ujjaszuleto-lengyelorszag/>
- MITROVICS, Miklós (2023c): A lengyel geopolitikai gondolkodás története III. – A „lengyel Ostpolitik” [The History of Polish Geopolitical Thought III – “Polish Ostpolitik”]. *Horizontok Blog*, 28 June 2023. Online: <https://www.ludovika.hu/blogok/horizontokblog/2023/06/28/a-lengyel-geopolitikai-gondolkodas-tortenete-iii-resz-a-lengyel-ostpolitik/>
- MTI (2023): Merénylet címén kezdeményeznek eljárást a szmolenszki légikatasztrófa ügyében [Proceedings Initiated on Grounds of Attempted Murder in Connection with the Smolensk Air Disaster]. *Infostart*, 16 April 2023. Online: <https://infostart.hu/kulfold/2023/04/16/merenylet-cimen-kezdemenyeznek-eljarast-a-szmolenszki-legikatasztrofa-ugyeben>

- NYCZ, Grzegorz (2013): Tarcza antyrakietowa w polityce bezpieczeństwa Polski [The Missile Defence Shield in Polish Security Policy]. In ŻEBROWSKI, Andrzej – JAESCHKE, Andrzej – KŁACZYŃSKI, Robert (eds.): *Bezpieczeństwo RP: historia, ekonomia, polityka: studia z zakresu bezpieczeństwa państwa* [Security of the Republic of Poland: History, Economics, Politics: Studies in the Field of State Security]. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, 57–75. Online: https://rep.up.krakow.pl/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11716/3005/04_tarcza_antyrakietowa_w_polityce_bezpie_nycz.pdf?sequence=1
- OCHYRA-ŻURAWSKA, Katarzyna – OCHYRA, Patryk (2022): Polish Foreign and Security Policy after 1989. *Aviation and Security Issues*, 2(2), 31–46. Online: <https://doi.org/10.55676/asi.v2i2.16>
- OTŁOWSKI, Tomasz (1998): *Polska w procesie integracji z NATO i Unią Zachodnioeuropejską 1991–1998* [Poland in the Process of Integration with NATO and the Western European Union, 1991–1998]. Toruń: Wyd.
- PAP (2024): Rośnie liczba żołnierzy w Polsce. Armia mierzy się jednak z problemem [The Number of Soldiers in Poland Is Growing. However, the Army Is Facing a Problem]. *Polska Agencja Prasowa*, 31 December 2024. Online: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/polscy-zolnierze-odchodza-ze-sluzby-nowej-wladzy-nie-udalo-sie-odwrocic-trendu/tqe80ki>
- PAWŁUSZKO, Tomasz (2022): *Bezpieczeństwo Polski po szczycie NATO w Madrycie* [Poland's Security after the NATO Summit in Madrid]. Warszawa: Instytut Sobieskiego.
- PIEKARSKI, Michał (2023): *Rozbudowa liczebności Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Możliwości i uwarunkowania* [Expansion of the Polish Armed Forces. Possibilities and Conditions]. Warszawa: Kancelaria Senatu. Online: <https://www.senat.gov.pl/gfx/senat/pl/senatekspertyzy/6709/plik/oe-447.pdf>
- PISM (2023): Stała obecność wojsk USA w Polsce wskazuje, że Amerykanie planują trwałe zaangażowanie w regionie [The Permanent Presence of U.S. Troops in Poland Indicates that the Americans Are Planning a Long-term Commitment to the Region]. *Defence 24*, 21 March 2023. Online: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/pism-stala-obecnosc-wojsk-usa-w-polsce-wskazuje-ze-amerykanie-planuja-trwale-zaangazowanie-w-regionie>
- POSTOLKO, Paweł (2022): Ustawa o obronie ojczyzny a postulat zmiany Konstytucji RP [The Homeland Defence Act and the Proposal to Amend the Constitution of the Republic of Poland]. *Russell Bedford Poland*, 24 March 2022. Online: <https://www.russellbedford.pl/aktualnosci/zmiany-w-prawie/item/2538-ustawa-o-obronie-ojczyzny-a-postulat-zmiany-konstytucji-rp.html>
- POWAŁKO, Olga (2022): Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej w walce w pandemię Covid-19 [Territorial Defence Forces in the Fight against the Covid-19 Pandemic]. In KORDONSKI, Roman – KORDONSKA, Aleksandra – MUSZYŃSKI, Łukasz (eds.): *Wojna–konflikt–spór. Obszary rywalizacji w przestrzeni międzynarodowej* [War–Conflict–Dispute. Areas of Rivalry in the International Arena]. Łwów: Olsztyn, 18–39. Online: <https://www.uwm.edu.pl/inp/docs/wojna-4.pdf>
- Prezydent.pl (2011): Prezydent o przyczynie katastrofy smoleńskiej: „sprawa jest w sposób arcybolesny prosta” [The President on the Cause of the Smolensk Disaster: “The Matter Is Extremely Simple”]. *Prezydent.pl*, 1 January 2011. Online: https://www.prezydent.pl/kancelaria/archiwum/archiwum-bronislawa-komorowskiego/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/prezydent-o-przyczynie-katastrofy-smolenskiej-sprawa-jest-w-sposob-arcybolesny-prosta,14055?__cf_chl__tk=V3P8U5sTQ9fB8ix8zzjc.KQYEvqb9sSoPBww66fLd8-1687186009-o-gaNycGzNDTs

- RAUBO, Jacek M. (2022): Czy rzeczywiście dostrzegamy realny obraz NATO? [Do We Really See the True Picture of NATO?]. *Defence 24*, 4 January 2022. Online: <https://defence24.pl/polityka-obronna/czy-rzeczywiscie-dostrzegamy-realny-obraz-nato-opinia>
- ROCHOWICZ, Robert (2019): Ostatnia dekada wojsk lądowych Sił Zbrojnych PRL cz.2 [The Last Decade of the Land Forces of the Polish Armed Forces, Part 2]. *Historia – Wojsko i Technika*, (2). Online: <https://zbiam.pl/artykuly/ostatnia-dekada-wojsk-ladowych-sil-zbrojnych-prl-cz-2/>
- ROZGONYI, Ádám (2023): Az ukrajnai orosz invázió megalajozza a szmolenszki merényletgyanús tragédia perét [The Russian Invasion of Ukraine Fuels the Trial of the Suspected Smolensk Assassination]. *Infostart*, 17 April 2023. Online: <https://infostart.hu/kulfold/2023/04/17/az-ukrajnai-orosz-invazio-megalajozza-a-szmolenszki-merenyletgyanus-tragedia-peret>
- SABAK, Juliusz (2023): Defence 24 DAY: Zniwelować przewagę liczebną przeciwnika: zdolności operacyjne Wojsk Rakietowych i Artylerii [Defence 24 Day: Overcoming the Enemy's Numerical Superiority: The Operational Capabilities of the Rocket Forces and Artillery]. *Defence 24*, 2 June 2023. Online: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/defence24-day-zniwelowac-przewage-liczebną-przeciwnika-zdolnosci-operacyjne-wojsk-rakietowych-i-artylirii>
- SCHULZ, Justyna – HILLEBRAND, Ernst eds. (2021): *Między przyjaźnią a frustracją – Polska i Niemcy 30 lat po podpisaniu traktatu o sąsiedztwie* [Between Friendship and Frustration – Poland and Germany 30 Years after Signing the Neighbourhood Treaty]. Poznań: Instytut Zachodni. Online: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/warschau/18695.pdf>
- Sejm of the Republic of Poland (2022): *Ustawa z dnia 11 marca 2022 r. o obronie Ojczyzny* [Act of 11 March 2022 on the Defence of the Fatherland]. Online: <https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzudziennik-ustaw/obrona-ojczyzny-19220069>
- SMURA, Tomasz – OLEKSIEJUK, Michał (2022): *Jak planować rozwój marynarki wojennej? Doświadczenia polskie i brytyjskie* [How to Plan the Development of the Navy? Polish and British Experiences]. Online: <https://pulaski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Raport-Pulaskiego-Jak-planowac-rozwoj-MW.pdf>
- SZOPA, Maciej (2022a): Coś się zaczyna, coś się kończy. Polskie Siły Powietrzne w 2022 roku [Something Begins, Something Ends. The Polish Air Force in 2022]. *Defence 24*, 30 December 2022. Online: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/cos-sie-zaczyna-cos-sie-konczy-polskie-sily-powietrzne-w-2022-roku-raport>
- SZOPA, Maciej (2022b): *Armie Świata: Siły Powietrzne Rzeczypospolitej* [Armies of the World: The Polish Air Force]. *Defence 24*, 22 July 2022. Online: <https://defence24.pl/sily-zbrojne/armie-swiata-sily-powietrzne-rzeczpospolitej>
- SZYNOL, Monika (2014): Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony UE w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa [The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy in Polish Security Policy]. In CZORNIK, Katarzyna – LAKOMY, Miron (eds.): *Dylematy polityki bezpieczeństwa Polski na początku drugiej dekady XXI wieku* [The Dilemmas of Polish Security Policy at the Beginning of the Second Decade of the 21st Century]. Katowice: Regionalny Ośrodek Debaty Międzynarodowej w Katowicach, 206–225.
- TÁLAS, Péter (2000): A középhatalmi szerep lehetőségei és korlátai Közép-Európában – a lengyel eset [The Possibilities and Limitations of the Middle Power Role in Central Europe – The Polish Case]. *Védelmi Tanulmányok*, (40), 1–108. Online: https://www.academia.edu/38262426/A_k%C3%B6z%C3%A9phatalmi_szerep_lehet%C5%91s%C3%A9gei_%C3%A9s_korl%C3%A1tai_K%C3%B6z%C3%B6p-Eur%C3%B3p%C3%A1ban_a_lengyel_eset

- TÁLAS, Péter (2007): Válaszúton a lengyel atlantizmus? [Polish Atlanticism at a Crossroads?] *ZMNE SVKK Elemzések*, (2). Online: <https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/svkk-elemzesek-2007-2-valaszuton-a-lengyel-atlantizmus-talas-p.original.pdf>
- TÁLAS, Péter (2014): A grúz–orosz háború hatása a kelet-közép-európai biztonságfelfogásra [The Impact of the Georgian–Russian War on Security Perceptions in Central and Eastern Europe]. *Nemzet és Biztonság*, 7(2), 17–35. Online: <http://www.nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/letoltes.php?letolt=532>
- Ukraine Support Tracker (2023). Online: <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>
- WACHOWSKI, Tomasz (2020): Zmodyfikowana DANA-M z Grudziądza [Modified DANA-M from Grudziądz]. *Wojsko i Technika*, (1). Online: <https://zbiam.pl/artykuly/zmodyfikowana-dana-m-z-grudziadz/>
- WALTZ, Kenneth N. (2000): Structural Realism after the Cold War. *International Security*, 25(1), 5–41. Online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2626772>
- WILEWSKI, Krzysztof (2023): Marynarka wojenna – wyczekiwane zmiany [The Navy – Long-awaited Changes]. *Polska Zbrojna*, 4 September 2023. Online: <https://polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/40261?t=Marynarka-wojenna-wyczekiwane-zmiany>
- WINID, Bogusław (2001): Zagadnienia bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego w stosunkach polsko-amerykańskich w latach 1989–2000 [International Security Issues in Polish–American Relations in the Years 1989–2000]. In KUŹNIAK, Roman (ed.): *Polska polityka bezpieczeństwa 1989–2000* [Polish Security Policy 1989–2000]. Warszawa: Scholar, 208–231.
- ZAJĄC, Justyna (2014): NATO w polityce bezpieczeństwa Polski [NATO in Polish Security Policy]. In CZORNIK, Katarzyna – ŁAKOMY, Miron (eds.): *Dylematy polityki bezpieczeństwa Polski na początku drugiej dekady XXI wieku* [The Dilemmas of Polish Security Policy at the Beginning of the Second Decade of the 21st Century]. Katowice: Regionalny Ośrodek Debaty Międzynarodowej w Katowicach, 191–205.
- ZAROBNY, Stanisław (2019): Przemiany w polskiej kulturze strategicznej w kontekście wyzwań i zagrożeń XXI wieku [Changes in Polish Strategic Culture in the Context of the Challenges and Threats of the 21st Century]. *Studia nad bezpieczeństwem*, (4), 63–76. Online: <https://doi.org/10.34858/SNB.1.2019.005>
- ZIĘBA, Ryszard (2012): Polska we wspólnej polityce bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej [Poland in the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy]. *Polityka i Społeczeństwo*, (10), 161–169.
- ZIĘBA, Ryszard (2018): Główne problemy w stosunkach polsko–rosyjskich [Main Problems in Polish–Russian Relations]. *Stosunki Międzynarodowe*, 54(3), 9–34. Online: <https://doi.org/10.7366/020909613201801>
- ZYBAŁA, Andrzej (2016): Polskie kody kulturowe wobec wyzwań przyszłości [Polish Cultural Codes in the Face of Future Challenges]. In SZOMBURG, Jan – LEŚNIEWICZ, Adam (eds.): *Na jakich wartościach oprzeć rozwój Polski?* [What Values Should Poland's Development Be Based On?]. Gdańsk: Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, 47–53. Online: <https://www.kongresobywatelski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/wis-70.pdf>
- ŻURAWSKI VEL GRAJEWSKI, Przemysław (2022): Europejska autonomia strategiczna i europejska suwerenność strategiczna (2017–2022). Część II [European Strategic Autonomy and European Strategic Sovereignty (2017–2022). Part II]. *Kwartalnik Bellona*, 709(2), 83–128. Online: <https://doi.org/10.5604/013001.0016.0858>

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Balázs BARTÓKI-GÖNCZY is Director of the Institute of Aerospace and Telecommunications Law, Eötvös József Research Centre, Ludovika University of Public Service, Associate Professor and Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs at the Faculty of Public Governance and International Studies of the Ludovika University of Public Service.

Tamás CSIKI VARGA is Senior Research Fellow at the John Lukacs Institute for Strategy and Politics, Eötvös József Research Centre, Ludovika University of Public Service.

András EDL is a researcher, space defence and security advisor at the Institute of Space Law and Policy, Ludovika University of Public Service.

Gergely FEJÉRDY is Deputy Director at the Otto von Habsburg Foundation, Assistant Professor at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Senior Researcher at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs.

Katalin HORVÁTH is a policy and institutional relations expert at 4iG Space and Defence Technologies Plc.

Éva JAKUSNÉ HARNOS is Associate Professor at the Department of International Security Studies of the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training of Ludovika University of Public Service.

András MEZŐ is a Reserve Lieutenant Colonel, Chairman of the Security Policy Section of the Hungarian Association of Military Science.

Anna MOLNÁR is Professor and Head of Department at the Department of International Security Studies of the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training of Ludovika University of Public Service.

Dóra MOLNÁR is certified security and defence policy expert, qualified lawyer. She is Associate Professor at the Department of International Security Studies of the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training of Ludovika University of Public Service.

Gábor PAPP is Research Fellow at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, PhD candidate at the John von Neumann University.

Imre PORKOLÁB is Vice Chair of the Board of Directors at NATO Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA).

Gyula SPECK is Assistant Lecturer and earned his PhD from the Doctoral School of Military Sciences of Ludovika University of Public Service.

Lili TAKÁCS earned her PhD from the Doctoral School of Military Sciences of Ludovika University of Public Service.

Péter TÁLAS is Associate Professor at the John Lukacs Institute for Strategy and Politics, Eötvös József Research Centre, Ludovika University of Public Service.

Mariann TÁNCZOS is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Security Studies of the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training of Ludovika University of Public Service.

The issue of European sovereignty, nowadays rather called European strategic autonomy, has been marked by controversy both in the academic and political community. This book is intended to contribute to a clearer understanding of the concept by describing its evolution and analysing its content. The authors of the studies in the volume examine the factors which may underpin and reinforce, or, on the contrary, weaken the idea of the strategic autonomy of the European Union. From this perspective, specific topics are placed under scrutiny: the operation of the European Peace Facility, European defence industry ties and defence innovation, as well as policy areas which may enhance the pace of the development of European strategic autonomy: energy policy, space strategy, digital sovereignty. The final part of the volume investigates how leading powers of the European Union, France, Germany and Italy, and a regional power of East Central Europe, Poland, relate to the construction of the strategic autonomy of the Union. Finally, our homeland's, Hungary's viewpoint and efforts are discussed. We recommend the overview provided by the book to students and researchers of EU affairs and international security and defence policy.

