A EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION: MOVING FORWARD

Report 2022

Fundación Alternativas

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Introduction.
Challenges and Dilemmas of a European Union of Defence

Vicente Palacio

This Fundación Alternativas report on European defence has been carried out at the proposal of the Foundation itself and has the support of SEGENPOL of the Spanish Ministry of Defence.

The main reason this report is being drawn up is the urgent need for an in-depth analysis to assess the current state of the question of the defence of a European Union in a rapidly shifting geopolitical environment. Events such as Brexit or the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in June 2021 clearly pointed to the need for the EU to take its control of its own security and defence very seriously. Today, however, European momentum seems to have slowed and given way to another NATO momentum. The time frame of this paper falls between two important and interconnected milestones: the release of the Strategic Compass in March 2022 and NATO's New Strategic Concept put out in June 2022. Other recent milestones to highlight at the EU level that have had a positive impact on defence are the conclusions reached at the informal meeting of heads of state and government at Versailles (10 and 11 March 2021), the European Council of 23 and 24 March, Emmanuel Macron's winning the French presidential elections in April 2021, and the work done during France's six-month presidency of the Council of the EU.

Against this background, this report provides a valuable mass of detailed analysis on the main aspects of the so-called Europe of defence, incorporating the possibility of advancing along the path of 'strategic autonomy' in the immediate future as a constant horizon. Many questions arise from this baseline.

A common denominator of our report is that the question of a European Union of defence is inseparable from the question of the security and defence framework provided by the Atlantic Alliance, which today still constitutes the foundations of Europe's collective defence as enshrined in the Treaties. From the EU's point of view, insofar as it aspires to become a differentiated geopolitical actor, the question of its own defence, as well as the defence of the European continent and its eastern and southern neighbours, is inseparable from its security and strategic relationship with the US and NATO. The report echoes the current context, in which NATO has gained renewed strength following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. This development has led to announcements of defence budget increases by many European governments –led by Germany– ; it has also led to an unprecedented coordinated response from partners and to new applications for Alliance membership, such as Finland's and Sweden's, traditionally 'neutral' EU member states. At the same time, this report also incorporates important moves in the opposite direction, such as the approval by NATO member Denmark in a referendum held last 1 June of its accession to Community military structures and projects, putting an end to the Danish exception in the EU's common security and defence policy that Copenhagen and Brussels agreed to in 1992.

The NATO Summit in June with the renewal of the Strategic Concept of the Atlantic Alliance is a challenge for the EU to take into account when deciding its ambition level and the space for its own growth as a Union. Clarifying the areas of overlap between the two organisations, the convergences and divergences, is a fundamental task. For example, a coordinated increase in defence budgets, to reach the 2% national target required by NATO, could in turn spur on EU-level promotion and coordination of capabilities. It could also lead to a better distribution of the work in its missions, separately or with others, EU-NATO-UN or regional bodies such as the African Union.

However, although these two spaces are closely connected, they are not the same. It is quite possible that there is no 'perfect compatibility' between the two, and that it will be an uphill climb for the EU to achieve an optimal fit that meets its own needs and interests. The report addresses relevant issues in this regard, for example, regarding a European defence market and technical and operational aspects.

But clearly the greatest difficulty lies in matching up the major strategic visions and interests of an EU that aspires to be a geopolitical actor (and as such endowed with strategic autonomy as a *desideratum*) and the partner-pillar of the Alliance: United States. This can affect many issues, like their positions on Russia, China, and new security threats (cyber, digital, climate). A NATO primacy poses very serious dilemmas for the EU, especially if the turn towards a new West-East Cold War were to grow. Is European dependence on the US in key areas –technology, defence– acceptable and desirable in exchange for continuing to enjoy a certain 'umbrella' of vital security? How should possible internal divisions within the EU in relation to certain US positions be handled? In the coming years, developments could lead the EU to take a nuanced and differentiated, yet firm, position on certain issues with its North American partner. In the current context, it is still too early to provide definitive answers to the crucial question of complementarity and divergence. These and other dynamics of acceleration as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, both at the European defence and NATO levels, will gradually unfold and take on their true dimension in the coming months and years. The difficult path towards a European 'strategic autonomy' poses a number of challenges and dilemmas that are difficult to answer at the current time. But at least –and this is what this report does– one can point out elements that mark the perimeter of what is possible and desirable from the EU's point of view.

It should also be remembered that when we refer to European defence and security we do so as the EU first and foremost. But we also do so as a complex network of memberships and partnerships, where in reality there are no rigid geographical or organisational silos. European defence and security is indivisible, because there is a very marked interdependence. This is why it would be expedient for the EU to have a greater rapport with other actors, European countries outside the EU (Western Balkans), with NATO countries that do not belong to the EU (Turkey), and countries that neither belong to NATO nor to the EU (the post-Soviet space: Ukraine, Georgia, etc).

One must not forget the strong domestic political constraints that can modify the evolution of European defence policy either. One is the EU itself, where the leadership of the Franco-German axis of Emmanuel Macron and Martin Scholz will be tested against national-populist and

anti-EU currents. The other is domestic politics in the US, where Biden's presidency and his push for NATO could suffer a major setback in the event of a loss of one or two legislative chambers in the November 2022 midterms. Of course, there are other factors that are still difficult to gauge in the consolidation of European defence policies, such as the outcome of the war in Ukraine against Putin's Russia, the evolution of relations with China and the Indo-Pacific, and the role of other 'existential' global threats such as climate change, international terrorism, and cyber-crime.

In any case, there are certain lessons to be learned from the accumulated experience of the last three decades of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) from its origins in the war in the Balkans in the 1990s to the multiple out-of-area peace missions, through the concrete developments of the Security Strategies of 2003 (Solana) and 2015 (Mogherini) up to today with High Representative Josep Borrell's Strategic Compass (21 March 2022). The main lesson is that European capabilities should be modernised as long as Europe follows the dual criteria of 'smart spending' (coordination according to common needs) and 'European spending' (and not prolonging technological and therefore political dependence on the US). This stresses the fact that European defence and 'militarisation' are not necessarily the same thing. An increase in national defence budgets seems necessary. The EU's reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has prompted the announcement of an exponential increase –by €100 billion– in military spending by Germany's coalition government as well as by other European governments. It has also activated new mechanisms such as the sending of arms by the member states through the so-called European Peace Fund. However, European military spending (which today amounts to some €250 billion) should not necessarily be to the detriment of social Europe, which is the basis of European stability.

The major underlying question that the report points to is whether to become a 'geopolitical actor' in the multipolar order in the 21st century the EU will be able to build a true European Union of defence, in a strong sense, reflecting a strategic autonomy (a defensive autonomy, as well as a technological and energetic autonomy). In this respect, the Strategic Compass is a new, albeit modest, step in this direction, bringing together instruments currently disconnected –PESCO, CARD, European Defence Fund– adding the 5,000-strong rapid reaction force, the coordination of capabilities, and instruments against new threats: cyber, terrorism, and disinformation. Another big question to be raised in the near future, especially after the war in Ukraine, could be that of a comprehensive collective defence, including the nuclear deterrent (the *force de frappe*) and ensuring European nuclear autonomy. This old question, which is still unanswered, is connected to future political leadership choices within the EU and in particular of European energy policy, mainly France's and Germany's. The connection between European defence and security policy and energy policy is expected to grow tighter. In turn, without energy sovereignty (increasing the EU's self-sufficiency) there will be no real strategic autonomy.

These and many other questions open up a debate on the meaning and ambition of European defence: the European Union of Defence. This report is also intended as a starting point to assist in decision-making at a critical moment of change of tack. After the NATO Summit of 29-30 June 2022, and in the light of the results of the aforementioned Conference on the Future of Europe and the French Presidency of the European Council, we will have more input.

The Spanish presidency of the Council in the second half of 2023 could be an opportunity to give a clearer impetus to concrete initiatives.

In line with this approach, the report is structured in four parts, dedicated to: 1) the definition of the geopolitical context; 2) the Treaties and capabilities; 3) the dynamics of the member states and the EU with NATO; and 4) conclusions and course of action. In seven chapters, the authors address the main issues that shape the question of European defence.

First, **Jesús Núñez Villaverde** analyses the recent geostrategic changes from the European point of view, showing the opportunities, but also the contradictions, that are appearing for the European Union.

Second, **Soledad Segoviano** takes a closer look at the different conflict scenarios marked by geopolitical rivalry but also by close interdependence, from Russia and China to the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the Union, the Indo-Pacific, and the Arctic.

Third, **Maribel Nieto** addresses the fundamental question of the role of the Treaties in CSDP developments and thus of geopolitical Europe and the Europe of defence. From Maastricht, and the EU Treaties to the perspectives resulting from the recent Conference on the Future of Europe and a possible new Convention to revise the Treaties.

Fourth, in a key chapter **Carlos Martí** analyses in detail the problems and difficulties faced by Europeans in developing military capabilities adapted to the current strategic environment and their possible compatibility with NATO.

Fifth, **Beatriz Cózar Murillo** and **Guillem Colom Piella** dissect the achievements of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) since its creation in 2017, pointing to the need for the Strategic Compass to give it greater coordination and effectiveness.

Sixth, the chapter by **Xira Ruiz** emphasises the different positions and dynamics among the member states of the European Union to reinforce defence, with special emphasis on the big four: Germany, France, Italy, and Spain.

Seventh, **Enrique Ayala** analyses from a European point of view the progress of the Strategic Compass, with a view to the NATO Summit in June. Crucial issues and areas of action that need clarification include China, Russia, Turkey, Africa, and Europe's own strategic autonomy.

In the final conclusions section, **Diego López Garrido**, director of the report, offers some basic reflections and points to a number of courses of action derived from the preceding chapters. He signals the need to connect and develop the Europe of defence from concrete steps and in the creation of synergies with other organisations such as NATO. In particular, emphasis is placed on the key institutional issue: replacing the unanimity rule by the qualified majority in the Council on certain foreign, security, and defence policy matters as the best possible way to remove roadblocks and make real progress possible.

1. Geostrategic changes: A European view

Jesús A. Núñez Villaverde

Since the end of the Cold War, we were already aware that the pace of transformation of the international scene was only quickening, exposing the anachronistic and dysfunctional nature of many of the national and international frameworks that had been used to accommodate the interests of the great powers for decades. The outbreak of the financial crisis of 2008, the effects of a Covid pandemic that has not gone away and, seen from Europe at least, the Russian invasion of Ukraine only heighten the sensation of change. With no fixed reference points, stunned by a general uncertainty about what the immediate future holds, we look on anxiously at the collapse of a foundering status quo, with no sign in the short term of the appearance of another capable of satisfactorily piecing together the puzzle resulting from a globalisation that generates deep inequalities; the direct competition between the United States and China for global leadership, and from a series of threats –with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and climate change at the head– that imperil the existence of the human race on this planet.

In these conditions, the European Union (EU) features both as a player destined to contribute directly to the shaping of that new global framework and as a territory in which all the contradictions, inconsistencies, and fears stemming from the enormous interdependence that defines our century are apparent. Returning to Ukraine as an example, should it ultimately be defeated by Moscow, we can immediately envisage a significant rise in totalitarian regimes, with Russia and China as the most visible models, and, in parallel, an even more disquieting growth of Eurosceptic and anti-European movements within the Twenty-Seven. If, on the other hand, Kyiv manages to rise to the Russian challenge and ultimately joins the EU, one might imagine the reinforcement of a rules-based international order.

Whatever the case, what already appears evident in a simple review of the chief actors and variables that might define this new stage in history is that:

- The West's profession of faith in the salvific benefits of the market economy model as the fundamental lever for creating a more just, safer, and more sustainable world has crumbled. Neither China's entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) nor German Ostpolitik and its main motto (Wandel durch Handel[1]) applied to Russia have served to draw those countries towards democracy and the rule of law as we understand them here. On the contrary, the two countries have doubled down on their commitment to authoritarianism and today stand as models for other countries that show no great interest in placing themselves under the Washington-led Western umbrella. Meanwhile,

1 (Political) change through trade.

the number of democratic systems is falling across all continents and the least bad of the political systems is being weakened from within, both by the action of groups that are clearly committed to ways of thinking that appeared to be a thing of the past and by the inaction of those who no longer seem to have anything to offer societies that are increasingly unhappy with the current situation.

- China's challenge to US leadership is the fundamental variable to take into consideration in the geostrategic sphere on a global scale. That means, first of all, that the centre of gravity of world affairs has shifted irreversibly now to the Indo-Pacific theatre, illustrated, if we needed to put a date on it, by the Western withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the forming of the AUKUS alliance[2], which it is foreseeable other countries of the zone, such as Japan, will soon join; not forgetting other initiatives such as the Quad[3]. It is creating a dynamic that will prompt both actors to court the countries of the zone to align them against their rival and raise the tension that rivalry will gradually trigger in every field, from trade to technology, taking in the military, with Taiwan as the thermometer of a strain that is already clearly visible today.

- The EU is still a flawed player on the international stage and there are those who believe it appears doomed to lose clout in the international context. On the one hand, it suffers the burden of its own internal fragmentation, with some countries already deciding to leave the club (the United Kingdom) and others that might take the same path in the future, either because of their own slide into ultranationalism or because they end up openly breaking the common rules of the game. On the other, the accumulative effect of the economic crisis and the pandemic dangerously stokes those who feel they have lost out in a globalisation that is leaving them behind, with the added phenomenon of populist groups that use the Union as the bugbear that is to blame for all ills. And so, in the wake of the rise of increasingly anachronistic nationalist stances, the idea of the Union is dangerously dissipating, while no external player, evidently, is ready to wait for the Twenty-Seven to resolve their disputes and their existential doubts. The political will of its 27 members will determine whether these predictions are borne out and whether the EU can become, as the first European Security Strategy (2003] already stated, a global heavyweight.

- NATO still casts a very long shadow and it has traditionally provided many services to the benefit of its European members, bearing in mind that 21 of the EU member states are also members of the Alliance. In any case, it is a fact that there is a considerable mismatch between the US and European pillars, not just in terms of capabilities but also, sometimes, in relation to their ideas on the priorities of the international agenda. It is obvious, then,

2 Formed by Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the strategic alliance was made known on 15 September 2021.

3 The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Quad, is an informal initiative that began in 2007 and comprises Australia, the United States, India, and Japan.

that the United States currently places the contest with China at the top of its agenda, while many EU countries are looking more towards our southern periphery –North Africa and the Sahel, for instance– as a no less pressing matter for the security of the Old World. Since 2016, the Union has set out its intention of securing strategic autonomy, but we are still some considerable way off reaching that level. And while the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought NATO back to centre stage, with new countries such as Finland and Sweden knocking on its door, that in no way should put a brake on achieving the previously mentioned autonomy that the recent Strategic Compass has only updated.

While there have been several attempts to establish an operational link between the NATO and EU agendas on security and defence matters, exploring their complementarities, it is very clear that, at least for the moment, the issue remains unresolved. That does not mean that they should steer separate courses, but that the fundamental thing, from the EU's point of view, should be to rebalance a relationship in which there are still many more common values and interests than discrepancies.

- Russia, under Vladimir Putin, aspires not only to recover a good part of the territory and influence that the Russian Empire once had, but also to be recognised as a global power. Far from accepting a minor role on the international stage, it means to figure as one of the greats, using all the means available to it, be it its energy riches as a major producer of coal, oil, and gas or its military power as the world's primary nuclear force.

  In its bid to do so, it has already demonstrated its readiness to use force on repeated occasions, even if that means, as it does now in Ukraine, breaking international law, the most basic rules of war, and international humanitarian law. It remains to be seen, depending on how the conflict in Ukraine ends, whether it is resolved to continue its military adventurism or whether it opts for focusing its efforts on an increasingly necessary internal transformation. In any case, we are obliged to repeat once again that security order in Europe can only be established if it has the participation of all its member states and there can be no doubt that also includes Russia.

- The energy transition in which we are already immersed is another of the variables to consider with a view to the future. The EU is at the vanguard of the bid to comply with the stipulations of the Paris Agreement (2015), piloting a process in which it means to sweep along other players less inclined to shoulder the cost associated with a structural change of the current energy model in order to tackle such a troubling threat as climate change. The war in Ukraine is bringing about a strategic realignment that starts with the declared intention of eliminating energy dependence on Moscow. In any case, the fear that the war will drag on, the lack of clear alternatives in the short term for some countries, and the unwillingness on the part of others to shoulder the costs that such a transition entails may end up delaying the adoption of essential measures, as if the threat that climate change poses could brook any further deferment. For the EU, ill-blessed with fossil fuels, the most obvious solution is the commitment to renewable energies, along

with measures to improve energy efficiency and changes in consumption patterns. Yet there is no certainty that it will be the path we take –old habits die hard– in patterns of both individual and collective behaviour.

- The economics-based view prevailing for decades has caused, among other adverse effects, a marked European deindustrialisation and a damaging dependence on external players, with China transformed into the world's factory, even in essential goods and services. As the pandemic triggered by the SARS-CoV-2 virus demonstrated, we found that we had an extremely limited capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to the threat, aware that the model of unequal globalisation that has been developing, particularly since the end of the Cold War, has led to, rather than a desirable interdependence, an unbearable subjugation to questionably reliable suppliers. The instinctive reaction is towards a foolish self-sufficiency, stoked by a resurgence of ultranationalism that does not seem to grasp that national sovereignty has stopped making sense in the 21st century. In that vein, the idea of a deglobalisation is catching on, taken to mean a reduction in the current degree of interdependence in a bid to restore capabilities of one's own so as not to depend on others in strategic areas that are critical to the proper development of national life.

- For some time now the global governance bodies have been showing signs of a considerable malfunction, unable to rise to the challenges that the world poses today. The United Nations (UN) is, in theory at least, the chief administrator of matters of peace and security and the only one with the legitimacy to speak on behalf of the international community. Yet we are still waiting for a reform of its main bodies that measures up to what Kofi Annan was already setting out in 2005[4], with the idea that there can be no development without security, nor security without development, nor one thing or the other if there is not full respect for human rights. Currently, the Economic and Social Council remains a merely consultative body, with no capacity whatsoever to promote a development agenda that incorporates social, political, and economic dimensions in line with the 2030 Agenda. The Security Council, for its part, maintains a structure and decision-making processes that have ceased to be representative and do not reflect the current balance of power among its member states, while at the same time it has not succeeded in functionally incorporating multinational economic players or civil society into its debates and analysis. Nor has the Human Rights Council succeeded in becoming an authority with sufficient power to prevent the constant violations that occur in this field, even if following its reform in 2006 it is a clear improvement on the previous Commission on Human Rights. And what is worse, there is presently no indication of any significant effort to promote the reform of an organisation that is proving increasingly necessary. Ukraine is once again a clear example of the marginalisation of the UN, both

4 On 21 March 2005, he presented the report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all".

in its bid to enforce the rules of the game and to prevent the Russian invasion and, even less so, put an end to a violent conflict that dates back to 2014.

- While in decades past the primary focus of attention in the field of security was obsessively centred on the balance of military might among the different powers, today technological development applied both to the civilian and military economy has acquired paramount importance. Quantum computing, the production of microchips, 5G telecommunications systems and their very varied applications, including those impacting the revived momentum we are seeing in the space race, are triggering fierce competition among the major powers. Competition that is surely going to become fiercer and in which the United States means to stay ahead, while China has gone from being an imitator to become an unquestionable innovator. And it is not clear what position the EU might have in that race. This is not to deny that the Twenty-Seven have considerable potential in any of those fields and that new funds and projects are being approved to improve it and turn it into concrete results, only we are in a race against the clock in which it may very well happen that when we manage to overcome the lingering traces of nationalism seeking to secure greater prominence in each project, the rest of the competitors will have already managed to consolidate as global leaders and there is no option but to bow to them.

- Although the expression may have gone out of vogue it is a fact that, 30 years after the end of the Cold War, we continue to live in a world of “pensée unique” or a single mindset. That was the expression used to describe the situation in which, following the implosion of the Soviet Union –which some interpreted as the end of communism–, only the Western capitalist model, based on the market economy and parliamentary democracy, remained standing. From there, largely following Francis Fukuyama, the march of history was seen as a process that led inexorably to the expansion of that model across the globe, ready, when necessary, to overcome the resistance of certain local elites that could try to hinder change. It was also understood that by following this path the entire planet would end up sharing the same values and principles and, consequently, the advent of a more peaceful world with higher levels of welfare for all was assured.

  The experience accumulated over the last few decades shows that, instead, the development of some is based on the underdevelopment of others and that at the core of the model itself lies the seed of an inequality that, as the OECD reminds us in each of its annual reports, is only growing. Therefore, we are faced with a dynamic that, without having been able to produce a global alternative either in the political or economic field, is producing a great many losers and jeopardising the social peace in ostensibly very different societies.

  In few places on the planet is the accumulated effect of the application of that model more apparent than in the African continent. Inhabited by nearly 1.5 billion people and expected to exceed 2.5 billion by the middle of this century, Africa provides a deeply disturbing picture of underdevelopment and violence. And if today that poses a problem of

extraordinary dimensions in terms of stability, it is very hard to imagine what it might be like in just 28 years if the living standards of its inhabitants do not change substantially.

The EU maintains that Africa is a top priority of its external action and that its intention is to become the continent's preferred partner (with one eye on the advances of China and the United States). Yet in practice there is nothing to suggest that the effort made so far, including the successive summits held between the EU and the African Union[5], will prove sufficient to reverse those dark omens, however much the effort is more significant than any in history. We might predict that while the prevailing view of our neighbours to the south is as a threat –with terrorism and migration flows high on the agenda–, instead of seeing them as an opportunity and as a responsibility to be shared with the Africans themselves, the agenda will remain dominated by a security-based focus that, by definition, means that any other approach takes a back seat. And that, as we have been able to see until now, does not augur an improvement that guarantees the welfare and security of its population and, consequently, our welfare and our security.

- The heedlessness of the past and short-termism dominating the international agenda all too often leads, with each new shock that disrupts our daily routines –be it the pandemic or now the war in Ukraine–, to our appearing ready to rethink everything again. If barely a year ago it was said that the pandemic was going to completely change the rules of the game, and that we would even come off better from the blow received on a global scale, today we remain bound to models and frameworks of action that, in essence, are the same ones we were functioning with before the outbreak. However, none of that means that it is going to be that way again when the war in Ukraine is calling into question not just the European security order, but also relations with Russia on every level. At present, given that the conflict is looking like it will be a war of attrition that grinds on indefinitely, one can assume that the previously mentioned order will remain unbalanced, awaiting a time when sufficient confidence among all the European neighbours is restored to be able to redefine it.

- In the economic field, good news hardly abounds. The accumulated effect of the crisis of 2008, the pandemic, and the war in Ukraine points to a slowdown in the global economy, without ruling out a recession that ends up putting back the structural reforms we need even further. Under those conditions, funding the pro-European cause becomes even harder, however much there is a stream of news about the increase in defence budgets that some member states are announcing. On the one hand, because the military effort does not in itself cover the entire spectrum of outstanding issues and, on the other, because there are many other social and economic priorities that are being neglected precisely because of the confluence of these crises.

5 Six in total, including the most recent one held on 17-18 February this year in Brussels, in which the declaration "A Joint Vision for 2030" was passed.

The convergence of all the variables mentioned so far provides a framework of changes that are already underway, with clear geostrategic implications, and which have a very direct impact on the wellbeing and security of the Twenty-Seven, requiring them to change the course taken so far. It is not, in any case, a framework that is closed or defined from agencies outside the EU itself. Not only will the Union be affected by it, it will also shape it insofar as it decides to act in one way or another. To do so, the first and essential condition is to succeed in boosting its internal cohesion, simultaneously on two fronts. On the one hand, maintaining social peace in such a way that none of its 380 million inhabitants feels they have been left behind, so that they do not listen to the Eurosceptic and anti-European rhetoric that proposes a return to nationalistic ways of thinking that are doomed to failure. That also implies a considerable effort to close the inequality gaps that already characterise our societies, with sustainable community policies that enable people to perceive the advantages of forming part of the most exclusive club in the world in terms of welfare and stability. On the other, endeavouring to eliminate the internal fractures between member states to prevent the tension generated between pro-Europeans, Atlanticists, and those still described as neutral from further weakening a group of countries that is looking at its last chance to become a global heavyweight. Similarly, that means resolutely employing the rules of the game we have given ourselves internally to sanction those that venture to question them.

The goal is to speak with one voice on the world stage, aware that the model followed so far, incremental if not homeopathic, does not suffice. Until now, it has been external variables above all –the British departure from the Union, Donald Trump's open contempt for his European partners and allies, the accumulation of the systemic crisis that broke out in 2008 and the pandemic of 2020, plus growing Russian revisionism– that have most led the EU to the realisation of the need to join forces to equip itself with means of its own with which to defend its own interests. True, sizeable steps have already been taken down that road, bearing in mind the obstacles placed by a nationalism determined to look to the past, but there is still a long way to go. And the challenge, more than one of capabilities –not to hide the shortcomings and deficiencies existing in the field of foreign policy, security, and defence– is one of wills; working on the premise that no member state on its own has any chance whatsoever of being sufficiently significant in the shaping of that new international framework and that, therefore, only together do we stand a chance of contributing to creating a world in line with the values, principles, and interests that we believe it necessary to defend.

The times, moreover, clearly call for multilateralism and multidimensionality. And there is no better example of that than the EU itself, aggregating capabilities and wills from a group of small and medium-sized powers that have realised that war is no good as an instrument for resolving the conflicts that might arise among them and that their own security depends on contributing to a better world. Hence, the option can never be "fortress Europe", closed and insensitive to what goes on outside its borders. That is what was gathered in the first European Security Strategy of 2003 and that is what the Strategic Compass does today. A Compass,

in any case, that must demonstrate a great degree of flexibility to adapt to a scenario in constant flux and with a high level of uncertainty.

Not forgetting, as a coda, that we do not even know what type of European Union we will have in the medium term, when there is already a growing number of candidates to join –with Ukraine at the forefront, but also with Turkey, Moldova, Georgia, and the Balkan countries voicing their aspirations. A process of enlargement that already demonstrated in the past that the existing rules of the game are not effective for accommodating the interests of such diverse countries and for swiftly taking the decisions that the current times demand. To put it another way, carrying out another enlargement without seriously reforming the community decision-making processes may result in greater weakness and irrelevance for the Union itself. An enlargement, in short, that also poses a huge challenge because of what it means in terms of loss of privileges and elimination of inertias that some of its members have used to improve their positions at the cost of others.

And, of course, it remains to be clarified how to fund the effort still required to complete the process that must lead to the Union being a player with sufficient capabilities to defend its interests, precisely at a time when the accumulated effect of the crises appears to require attention to other issues on the political agenda. Nobody said the road was easy.

2. Analysis of conflict scenarios

Soledad Segoviano Monterrubio

2.1. Introduction to the strategic landscape

The EU remains a key global player in several strategic spheres, but the world ceased to be Eurocentric some time ago. And it will not be Eurocentric anytime soon, among other reasons because of the scale of the demographic challenge facing the Union, with a population in clear decline and only getting older. This unquestionable reality will have inevitable consequences in the economic and labour fields, chiefly as a result of the persistent imbalances in the demographic dependency ratio, a circumstance that in the medium to long term will make the Europeans a poorer population too.

Meanwhile, the international strategic landscape is undergoing a process of transformation, moving towards a new, ever more complex, interdependent, and competitive geopolitical, geo-economic, and geotechnical order where connectivity seems set to be the new global geopolitical asset (Gaub, 2019), above, even, such significant variables as recurrent macroeconomic indicators and military spending.

Therefore, the intrinsic complexity of the international system together with interdependence and connectivity are taking shape as major determinants of the power of states and politically minded non-state actors, in such a way that the power of influence, linked to soft power, defined as the capacity to condition, even inspire the conduct of other players through the coordination of multiple and diverse nodes of connection, cooperation, and influence, will be crucial in the definition of a new international order also based on ***multi-nodal power*** (Gaub, 2019:19).

This reality, stemming from the moment of transition and transformation of the global strategic landscape, explains the gradual, and at the same time growing, presence of multiple players of various natures in different geopolitical scenes (Fiott & Lindstrom, 2021), with the clear intention of expanding their capacity for action, intervention, and influence, be it on a global scale, in the framework of the rivalry between the chief poles of power; regionally, with the presence of powers ready to exploit the conditions of instability and fragility present in various regional scenes under constant dynamics of conflict; or at state level where some states (but also non-state actors) engage in the development of nonconventional methods or hybrid tactics (Fiott & Lindstrom, 2021) in defence of their interests, threatening the internal and external security of the Union. Nodal convergence that, moreover, contributes to the exponential intensification of the spiral of risks, challenges, and threats that the EU must address, practically simultaneously (Fiott & Lindstrom, 2021). In 2021 alone we had: the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan; the massive flows of irregular migrants on the borders of Spain and Poland in the framework of the respective strategies of Morocco and Belarus; the tension with Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean; the breakdown of relations between Mo-

rocco and Algeria; recurring jihadist action in the Sahel; the withdrawal from Afghanistan; the mounting geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific; the disagreements between Germany and Russia over the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline; the relentless assertiveness of China; the volatility of energy prices and its inflationary offshoots…

This interconnected system brings a new conception of global politics and, in short, of power, where interdependence is no longer associated so much with cooperation, according to the now obsolete interpretation from the 1970s, but with conflict and strategic competition between the chief poles of power: Russia, China, and the United States. Powers with the desire and capabilities to condition the complex, multifaceted, and multi-nodal relations of multiples actors of different natures, with converging or diverging interests, depending on the diversity of the scenarios, in a game of liquid and unstable coalitions and alliances, often swamped by the overwhelming pace of events. A strategic environment in which the EU is forced to interact by means of a double strategy of containment and response to ensure its security in the face of multiple challenges and threats of a multisectoral, transnational, and transregional nature (Fiott & Lindstrom, 2021).

And the fact is that, as the Strategic Compass says, the EU *is surrounded by instability and conflicts* (Council of the European Union, 2022: 8), by multiple threats such as terrorism, organised crime, hybrid conflicts, or cyberattacks. In addition, it must deal with the hostile and revisionist strategies pursued by authoritarian regimes ready to interfere in elections, exploit the drama of immigration, carry out an illegal annexation, or start an armed aggression in the Union's backyard.

2.2. Multipolar competition: Implications for european security

In this climate of (in)security the EU's strategic autonomy has ceased to be an option and become a necessity, bound to Europe's very stability (Gaub, 2019), as the poles of power –Russia, with its firm geopolitical will; China, with its omnipresent systemic competition; and the United States, with its strategy of containment serving its desire for leadership– are ready to project their rivalry and intervention capability onto strategic areas in the European neighbourhood, exacerbating the destabilising and destructive effects of already complex regional conflicts. It is against this backdrop that the EU is obliged to reinvent itself as a Union, triggering all the mechanisms, initiatives, and resources necessary in defence of its outreach capacity and power of influence in regional arenas that are strategic to the security of the member states and, above all, the security of the EU itself.

2.2.1. Russia

Without a doubt, Russia continues to pose the main security challenge both to the EU and NATO, particularly after the invasion of Ukraine in February. The security relations between the EU and Russia have been marked by a gradual deterioration stemming from the sequence

events such as the war in Georgia in 2008; the annexation of Crimea in 2014; the support for pro-Russian insurgents in Donbas as of 2015, culminating in the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, an act of aggression that constitutes a formidable geopolitical earthquake with large-scale consequences that have still to be seen.

However, in addition to Georgia and Ukraine, the clear geopolitical tension between Russia and the EU has become apparent in other geographical areas. That is the case in Eastern Europe, more specifically in Belarus and Moldova; in the Western Balkans, in the case of Serbia; in the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly in Syria and Libya; but also in the broader African continent, in countries such as Egypt, Angola, or the Central African Republic, in search of the exploitation of strategic resources or the expansion of the arms market.

In accordance with its neo-revisionist view of the so-called liberal international order (Romanova, 2018), Russia resists, if not directly opposes, accepting the normative and diplomatic power and power of security of the EU, based on what Putin's Russia believes is a Western imposition (Dandashly, et al, 2021: 14) that is disdainful of Russia's legitimate security interests. For its part, the EU's policy towards Russia, particularly since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent approval of the EU's Global Strategy in 2016, has gradually shifted from a pragmatic relative coexistence, based on relations of interdependence, especially in the field of energy, towards dynamics of growing confrontation and conflict where the EU has opted to prioritise the criteria of stability and security (Dandashly, et al, 2021: 14) at the expense of its normative power, based on fundamental values and principles.

2.2.2. China

China's growing assertiveness in different sectorial and regional areas poses a significant challenge to the EU's foreign and security policy, given the intrinsic duality emanating from this interrelationship for the Union's security interests. A major economic, technological, and military power seen, simultaneously, as a negotiating and cooperation partner and as a systemic rival, according to the Joint Communication of the Commission and High Representative of the Union of 2019 (EC/HR 2019).

A classification, however, that masks the ambiguity and political pragmatism of the EU in a bid to separate political censure (Maçâes, 2021) of the Chinese regime –particularly where human rights are concerned– from the profitable relations of economic cooperation between two rival partners, in accordance with the calculated aim of camouflaging the latent rivalry when it comes to imposing a normative paradigm that regulates interrelations and flows on the Eurasian supercontinent (Blockman & Hu, 2021) to the benefit of one of the two poles.

This veiled dispute when it comes to defining, or redefining, the international normative order, either from the Western liberal perspective or from an authoritarian point of view, comes on top of other significant dynamics that determine relations between the two partners. Thus,

the penetration in areas of the European neighbourhood via the implementation of self-serving strategies of economic development and connectivity infrastructures; hybrid practices of an invasive nature such as cyber espionage or cyberattacks; as well as the carrying out of joint military manoeuvres with Russia, pose significant challenges and threats to European security, offset, however, by the major benefits deriving from the economic synergies.

2.2.3. The United States

Since the end of the Cold War, the debate on transatlantic relations in terms of security and defence has fluctuated between the concepts of strategic autonomy and strategic dependence. To be precise, three decades ago, when in the defunct WEU, and under French leadership, the so-called *European defence identity* was promoted and subsequently transferred to the NATO arena at the Brussels summit of 1994.

However, the view that the EU should take responsibility for guaranteeing its security in an autonomous manner in the areas of its immediate neighbourhood has been gaining traction since the formulation of the so-called *pivot to Asia* announced by the Obama administration in 2011, against a backdrop of systemic change brought about by China's firm and clear will to lead in the Asia-Pacific region, taken since then to be the new global geopolitical *pivot*.

A change of strategic view that, in a context of economic crisis and gradual withdrawal from theatres of conflict, would require the United States to undertake a reordering of its priorities and goals with the consequent repositioning of efforts, forces, and resources on a global scale. New plans that would necessarily crystallise in the gradual retreat, *retrenchment*, of the American presence in regional strategic arenas such as Europe, the Middle East, or Latin America, which until then had been considered priority areas of influence for the security interests of the United States. In fact, the limited involvement of the Obama administration in the conflicts of Libya and Syria against the backdrop of the Arab Spring, in line with its strategy of *leading from behind*, already pointed Europe to the path it had to take towards its strategic autonomy (Segoviano, 2016).

A permanent feature that, significant differences aside, has been maintained in the US administrations since Obama: with Trump and his resolute rhetoric on *burden sharing* directed at the NATO allies (Dandashly, et al, 2021); and, in the current framework of the Joe Biden presidency, despite a firm commitment to Atlanticism, he has not hesitated to take unilateral decisions such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan or the AUKUS pact, designed to counter the Chinese advances in the Indo-Pacific region.

And the fact is that the United States' strategic priority remains focused on the policy of containment of China, though without going as far as to question the complementarity with the European partners, particularly in the context of the Ukraine war, where the United States, NATO, and the EU have reinforced their alliance through the coordinated action of a multilevel strategy in order to provide a united response to the Russian aggression.

Yet, despite this situation of rapprochement brought on by the war, the differences between the allies remain (within the Union itself and between the United States and the EU) and will surely arise again on such important issues as the process of Ukraine's incorporation into the EU; importing Russian gas; post-conflict relations with Putin's Russia (should it come to that); the reception and integration of 4 million Ukrainian refugees; the creation of a European army; the rollout of 5G technology; and, of course, the cooperation relations between the EU and China, where there are serious discrepancies between the agendas of the United States and its European partners.

2.3. Conflict scenarios in the European neighbourhood

This multipolar and systemic competition is inevitably projected onto the different geographical areas where, in a context of decline of US power, multiple players, especially the regional powers involved, are jockeying to impose *their* particular regional order. An order that allows them to shape, impose, and project their security interests in arenas of constant instability, where the dynamics between chaos and securitisation prolong and complicate, still further if possible, the already complex nature of the innumerable active conflicts in the different regional areas. It is here where the EU must be capable of establishing its own rules of the game in defence of its security interests, since, as the Strategic Compass states, *where the EU is not active and effective in promoting its interests, others fill the space* (Council of the European Union, 2022: 8).

The Balkans region, the eastern neighbourhood, including the areas of the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, the southern neighbourhood, the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the Arctic, are the priority regional arenas identified in the Compass. Environments that face constant challenges, *strategic intimidations* (Council of the European Union, 2022: 9), or threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states involved, which end up affecting the security of the European borders.

2.3.1. Western Balkans

The countries of the Western Balkans are the closest neighbours to the EU's borders. Because of this proximity, and with the hope of contributing to their democratic stabilisation, the Thessaloniki European Council of 2003 decided to open the process of negotiations for the future accession of all the countries of the so-called Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), created in 1999 in the framework of the relations between the EU and the countries of this region. Following the incorporation of Slovenia in 2004, and Croatia in 2003, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro, the current North Macedonia, and Serbia are still waiting, though they are at different stages of the process: Serbia and Montenegro are already in talks; Albania and North Macedonia are official candidates but pending because of Bulgaria's veto, while Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo are only considered possible candidates.

As the years go by, the initial optimism has waned, giving way to so-called "enlargement fatigue" (Milosevich-Juaristi, 2021), caused by the failure to fulfil the expectations of accession. Meanwhile, the countless territorial and border conflicts (between Serbia and Kosovo; between Kosovo and Montenegro; between Republika Srpska and the weakened central government of Bosnia) have degenerated into an unsustainable status quo (Milosevich-Juaristi, 2021). Namely, Bosnia Herzegovina is on the verge of a split because of the constant nationalist tension, where the Serb separatists have threatened to push ahead with the creation of their own army; for their part, Serbia and Kosovo persist in an alarming escalation of tension, reaching flash points such as the mobilisation of military forces on the border in November 2021.

A backdrop of confrontation where the reformist political parties, champions of a pro-European line, are in clear decline in the face of the unstoppable rise of nationalist forces (Scazzieri, 2021a), which are poised to exploit the feelings of frustration and disenchantment with the lack of prospects as far as the future of accession is concerned. In fact, this situation of stagnation has only bred a general rejection of the EU among their populations, giving rise to the growing influence of Russia and China in the region, and all in spite of the significant financial assistance channelled by the Union[1], by way of pre-accession, to facilitate the gradual adoption of the community acquis by the candidate countries (Milosevich-Juaristi, 2021). A conditionality, however, that Russia or China do not demand in their respective economic investment strategies, ready to strengthen their presence in the region and fill the power vacuum stemming from the West's lack of dynamism. In the case of Russia, exploiting these countries' energy dependence; in the case of China, offering ambitious programmes of investment in infrastructure in the framework of the Silk Road initiative.

2.3.2. Eastern Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood shared between Russia and the EU covers a vast sweep of territory taking in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and countries of the Caucasus such as Azerbaijan and Armenia. An extensive geographical area of over 1 million square kilometres moulded by the constant geopolitical competition between the two poles. The successive enlargements of 2004 and 2007 placed the EU on the borders of a highly unstable and conflictive region, conceived of by Russia as an area of security and containment against what it describes as continuous expansionist advances by Western political-military alliances that are hostile to Russia's legitimate interests.

For its part, the EU has chosen to pursue a policy of cooperation based on soft power (Legucka and Wtodkowska, 2021: 38) in order to attract and bind the economic and political paths of these countries to the model of liberal democracy and to the advantages following from the process of European integration. This was the spirit of the EU Eastern Partnership (EaP)

1 14 billion euros between 2021 and 2027, according to the figures provided by Milosevich-Juaristi

–devised as a dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)–, introduced in May 2009, to promote cooperation between the member states of the EU and their neighbours from Eastern Europe (Belarus[2], Moldova, and Ukraine) and the South Caucasus (Armenia and Azerbaijan).

It is an initiative that Russia has tried to counter through various mechanisms, using both soft power, such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), an agreement signed in May 2014 following the annexation of Crimea and in which Russia, Belarus, Armenia, and Kirgizstan participate as part of an ambitious economic integration project driven by Russia to consolidate a pivotal economic bloc between the EU and China; or through hard power procedures, based on the simultaneous use of force and the political recognition of states or pseudo-states such as Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, or Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the particular case of the annexation of Crimea.

In this context of confrontation over dominions between the EU and Russia, China too has found a way in through its usual practices based on economic assistance programmes and investment in infrastructure linked to its huge Silk Road connectivity project. Policies that without having an adverse geopolitical impact on the interests of the Union, do involve implicit support for authoritarian regimes in the region, which certainly undermines the EU's normative agenda in the zone (Dandashly, et al, 2021: 20).

2.3.3. Black Sea-Caspian

Until the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the broad Black Sea-Caspian region took a back seat in the EU's order of strategic and security priorities. Basically, this extensive geographical zone was seen simply as a broad space of connectivity and economic expansion, suitable for the transport of goods and the development of energy routes, in line with the Black Sea Synergy initiative (Meister, 2021), a platform for regional cooperation established in 2007 in the framework of the incorporation of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU and designed as an instrument of connection to strengthen relations with the regions and countries of the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and Southeastern Europe.

Russia, meanwhile, has always viewed the Black Sea region as an irreplaceable springboard of power and influence through the Turkish straits towards other geopolitical epicentres such as the Mediterranean, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, or Southern Europe, strategic areas that pose significant security challenges, but also important windows of opportunity for Russia in matters such as the arms trade, energy, or the deployment of new military bases.

Therefore, following the annexation of Crimea, Putin's Russia has engaged in an ambitious project to modernise and rearm the base at Sebastopol, home to the Black Sea Fleet, with a view to creating an A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) zone that prevents hostile powers from

2 On 28 June 2021, Belarus decided to suspend its participation in the Eastern Partnership, see: "EU relations with Belarus": https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/

entering a region of vital importance to Russia's security interests. The deployment of combat aircraft, the modernisation of the Black Sea Fleet, with the incorporation of sophisticated nuclear attack submarines and new destroyers, the installation of advanced weapons systems, or the upgrading of the radar system (Treviño, 2022), are some of the initiatives pushed by the Kremlin to reinforce that zone for blocking rival external interference.

And the fact is that Crimea and the Black Sea are at the epicentre of the geopolitical cross drawn by the Kremlin, where two lines of strategic projection vital to Russia converge: the north-south axis, a vertical line connecting the Arctic and the Black Sea, and the east-west axis, a horizontal line along which the balances between China and the Euro-Atlantic environment are spread. A geopolitical cross centred on the Black Sea, on which the defence of Russia's existential interests are coordinated against what are considered constant challenges and provocations on the part of the West, such as the Three Seas initiative (3SI), promoted by Poland and Croatia in 2015 (Méndez Pérez, 2021); NATO's reinforced presence in the Black Sea, in accordance with the commitments undertaken at the Warsaw summit in 2016; or the Sea Breeze 2021 operation, the latest military manoeuvres exercise carried out by NATO for over two decades now, under the leadership of the United States and Ukraine in the waters of the Black Sea between June and July 2021, in order to bring Ukraine up to NATO standards with a view to possible integration into the Alliance in the future.

2.3.4. Eastern Mediterranean

The Eastern Mediterranean basin (EastMed), a space of interconnection between the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, and the Red Sea, through the Suez Canal, and located at the meeting point of three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa, is an area of considerable geostrategic value shaped, however, by the struggle for power and geopolitical fragmentation (Sánchez Tapia, 2020: 105) stemming from a turbulent history, with major cultural, religious, and economic differences and disagreements that have been accentuated by the relatively recent discovery of huge hydrocarbons reserves. The important discoveries of several deposits of oil and gas, particularly the Aphrodite, Tamar, and Leviathan fields in the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and Israel between 2009 and 2011 (Segoviano, 2015), together with the discoveries of the giant Zohr reservoirs, in the territorial waters of Egypt, and Calypso, once again in waters of the Republic of Cyprus, starting in 2015, have attracted the interest of several regional and extra-regional players –the United States, Russia, China, France, Italy, as well as the EU itself–, which are poised to position themselves in exploration, production, and exploitation activities (Sánchez Tapia, 2020) in search of economic gains and geopolitical advantage.

But it is in the exploration phase where there has been the greatest tension, given the determination of the coastal states to claim sovereignty over their respective EEZs. Of particular importance is the dispute between Cyprus and Turkey, in that the seven blocks identified by the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) for exploration and ex-

ploitation encroach on the 12 areas declared by the Republic of Cyprus and put up for tender to various Western and non-Western energy companies (Sánchez Tapia, 2020: 142). These initiatives have degenerated into a situation of alarming escalation, where Turkey has been quick to project a coercive diplomacy, deploying its Navy not only to harass and impede the activities of companies such as Italy's ENI or the French firm Total, but also to escort the unilateral operations of Turkish exploration and drilling ships off the coasts of Greece and Cyprus, which prompted the Council of the EU of 15 July 2019 to impose sanctions on Turkey (Council of the EU, 2019).

Similarly, the search for export options for the resources has further exacerbated, if possible, the tense relations with Turkey. The EastMed pipeline project, with an initial capacity of 10 billion cubic metres a year and a length of 2,000 km, from the fields of Israel and Cyprus to interconnection points on the coasts of Greece and Italy, through the continental shelf claimed by Turkey, did not include Erdogan, whose reaction came in the shape of the signing of a maritime delimitation agreement with the Libyan government in Tripoli in November 2019, which would be bolstered by a military cooperation deal. An initiative that, in turn, would trigger the response, in September 2020, of Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Jordan, and Italy, the signatories of the Founding Charter of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), conceived of as a forum of regional gas cooperation, leaving Turkey out.

In turn, this landscape of energy competition has given way to a gradual, and alarming, militarisation of the zone with the growing presence of air and sea forces from the coastal countries and powers from outside the region. A deployment that has heightened Turkey's perception of a threat. It is resolved to guarantee its military superiority in the area through the development of an ambitious investment and modernisation programme for the year 2030 (Sánchez Tapia, 2020: 151). This includes the acquisition of the sophisticated S-400, a Russian-made air defence system, which prompted the United States' decision to expel Turkey (Rodríguez, 2021) from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter international programme to produce a latest generation combat aircraft, with which Turkey aimed to revamp its air force, thus straining relations between the NATO partners.

And the fact is that since the failed coup against Erdogan in July 2016 and the United States' support for the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), predominantly Syrian Kurds, in the context of the fight against Islamic State, Turkish foreign policy has been making a gradual strategic shift towards more pragmatic cooperation with Putin's Russia. A policy designed to compartmentalise (Rodríguez, 2021) the contentious issues on the Russian-Turkish bilateral agenda so that possible conflicts and disagreements from openly opposing positions, as in the cases of Libya, Syria, or Nagorno-Karabakh, do not detract from the advantageous military, energy, agricultural, or tourism synergies between the two countries, in favour of complex, mutually beneficial, relations of interdependence to ensure their prominence in a region of vital importance for the energy and strategic projection interests of both parties.

This Russian-Turkish rapprochement is perceived as a clear threat to the security interests of the United States in the region, whose reinforced presence in the EastMed, thanks to alliances with strategic countries such as Greece, Hungary, and Romania, perform the dual function of protecting the interests of the major US energy corporations in the region, at the same time as strengthening its strategy of containment of not only Russia and China, the latter, as ever, interested in the use of land and sea routes linked to its Silk Road project, but also of Iran, a country that uses its alliances with the Bashir al-Assad regime in Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon to project its influence in the zone (Sánchez Tapia, 2020: 165).

It is a dual use strategy coordinated via the Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act, approved with bipartisan consensus by the United States Congress in December 2019 (Rodríguez, 2021), with a view to strengthening, guaranteeing, and at the same time expanding US commitment in a strategic region on matters of security and energy cooperation through the implementation of bold measures such as the increase in military assistance to Greece; lifting the ban on arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus, or the creation of a US-EastMed joint centre for energy in order to facilitate energy cooperation among Israel, Greece, and Cyprus, classed as key allies in the region.

This scene of tension, aggravated by the pandemic, has, however, brought about a reconfiguration of Turkey's foreign policy. Against a backdrop of a worrying economic crisis, it has shown itself to be willing to drop its confrontational position to take a path of rapprochement towards France, Greece, Egypt, and, of course, the EU, which in the European Council of October 2020 already backed a negotiated solution, something Turkey accepted even then, with the suspension of unilateral energy exploration and the start of dialogue mechanisms with the United States and the rest of the NATO members (Mourenza, 2021). This de-escalation facilitated the subsequent European Council of March 2021, where an agenda of gradual and proportional rapprochement was established to revive EU-Turkey relations, on this occasion, in pursuit of a dual goal: incentivising cooperation on migration and boosting trade relations between the two partners, without losing sight of the possibility of retracing the path on this road map in the event of fresh unilateral action or provocations from Turkey against European interests in the region (Rodríguez, 2021)

2.4 The Southern Neighbourhood: North Africa And The Middle East And Africa-Sahel

2.4.1. North Africa And The Middle East

The region is highly important for the security interests of the EU. The geographical proximity between the two shores of the Mediterranean poses a broad range of challenges and threats, while simultaneously offering an equally wide range of opportunities, on which solid relations of interdependence have been established, fluctuating between cooperation and conflict. Issues such as the design of governance in the region, political instability, terrorism,

energy nationalism, the flow of investment, infrastructure projects, demographic growth, or the migration phenomenon, among other matters, are considered highly significant factors that shape the strategic landscape of a region closely linked to Europe.

Twenty-one years after 9/11 and 11 years after the Arab Spring, the region remains immersed in a deep security crisis, defined by a complex network of interrelations that intertwine in contradictory and unstable dynamics, spun from multiple and interdependent conflicting courses of multidimensional action: **sectarian**, between Sunnis and Shiites, but also among the Sunnis themselves, as exemplified by the rivalry between Qatar and Saudi Arabia; **ethnocultural**, among Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Jews, and Persians; **religious**, between Muslims and non-Muslims, given the multidenominational nature of the region; **ideological**, among political Islam, secular nationalism, Salafism, and jihadism; or **political-social**, as a result of the breakdown between state and society brought about by successive and thwarted attempts at political reform and social inclusion of a population in constant demographic growth (Segoviano, 2016).

The regional confrontation also extends to several theatres with active conflicts, as in the cases of Yemen, Syria, Iraq, of Libya. Of dubious standing as states, they are sources of constant tension and regional instability, transformed into battlegrounds where regional and extra-regional powers, as well as a wide variety of non-state players, compete with violence to secure a precarious dominant position in hypothetical post-conflict scenarios.

The United States' ambiguity towards the region, pivoting between commitment and withdrawal, has given rise to the configuration of a multipolar framework from which, in different ways, China and Russia reap rewards, as they have growing interests in the zone. On the one hand, the ongoing stabilisation effort by the United States in the region indirectly benefits China, in that, as well weakening the strength of the US policy of containment in the South China Sea, it helps to create a climate of relative security in defence of its interests, related primarily, though not exclusively, to the security of energy supply (Segoviano, 2016).

On the other hand, the United States' gradual withdrawal from the region has facilitated the penetration of Russia, which has found in Syria the optimal scenario for safeguarding its transregional geopolitical interests. The fact is that Russian intervention in the Syrian hornet's nest is not only inspired by the need to defend a strategic ally in the Mediterranean to protect the military bases of Latakia and Tartus; or to defend its energy interests in the Eastern Mediterranean; or to combat jihadist terrorism in the region. The Kremlin's interest in Syria can be found in the need to defend what Russia considers to be its motherland on its eastern European border with reach into the Black Sea towards the Turkish straits that connect Russia to the Mediterranean and Africa.

Against this backdrop, the EU's influence in the region is debilitated in the face of the assertiveness of powers such as China, Russia, and Turkey (Scazzieri, 2021b). More specifically, and as far as the EU's relations with the countries of North Africa are concerned, the truth is that they do not manage to shake off their status as a secondary goal compared to the area of

the eastern neighbourhood, in spite of the Union's recognised efforts to cast a framework of security, prosperity, and stability over this region. This reality is compounded by, or perhaps is the result of, the border tension in the zone arising from, among other factors, the simmering conflict in the Western Sahara, the breakdown of relations between Algeria and Morocco, demographic growth and social exclusion, or the complex processes stemming from the Arab Spring, particularly in the cases of Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia, with a significant transregional impact for the Sahel.

2.4.2. Africa-Sahel

Africa is a vast geographical space compartmentalised into several and large subregional areas, yet defined by its transregional, cross-border, and interdependent nature, where extra-regional powers have been combating various jihadist terrorist groups (and their offshoots) since the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom-Horn of Africa (OEF-HOA) in late 2002. However, it would be as of 2011, against the backdrop of the Arab Spring, when the enormous Sahel-Sahara-Maghreb transregional expanse became a priority focus of international attention, in the wake of a series of events such as the collapse of Libya, the crisis in Mali, the Benghazi terrorist attack, the abduction of 200 girls by Boko Haram, as well as the gradual establishment of the Islamic State jihadist brand in Western Africa and the Sahel with its respective branches: Islamic State West Africa (ISIS-WA) and Islamic State Greater Sahara (ISGS), whose violence wreaks havoc in countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, or Nigeria. The situation has been aggravated by the succession of coups that is blighting the continent. Since August 2020, military uprisings (Pye, 2021) have overthrown the governments of Mali, Chad, Guinea, Sudan, and Burkina Faso.

The alarming deterioration of the climate of security in an environment that is, paradoxically, increasingly militarised has triggered the intervention of several extra-regional powers with interests in the zone, primarily in pursuit of a policy of externalisation of borders. France, Spain, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Russia, China, Israel, the UN, the EU, NATO, among others intervene, ready to reinforce, and at the same time drive, disparate and sometimes opportunistic counterterrorist policies via diverse mechanisms of political-military and intelligence cooperation with allied African powers, generating a dynamic of securitisation that, however, does not succeed in halting the spiral of violence blighting the African continent (Pye, 2021).

Two Western powers in particular have consolidated their power in the area: France and the United States, which, in accordance with their respective counterterrorist strategies, serving their specific national interests, have helped to transform the configuration of geopolitical alliances in the region, showing signs of considerable dynamism in the face of the shifting nature of the jihadist terror threat.

That is the case of Operation Barkhane (Reeve & Pelter, 2014), launched in January 2014 with a view to ensuring a long-term French military presence in the Sahel-Sahara zone and in which the **G-5 Sahel**[3] countries –Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania– take part, with the contribution of Senegal and Cote Ivoire as bases for logistical support and reinforcement operations. Operation Barkhane secured the neutralisation of Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi, the leader of ISGS, in September 2021.

The United States, meanwhile, has gradually assembled a complex network of alliances and logistical support and operations bases deployed in every region of the globe, but interconnected through informal alliances with governments of several partner countries, in the service of the joint, military, and paramilitary operations of the special ops forces and the CIA. A genuine geography of bases, located strategically in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Seychelles, or Niger, designed as springboards for surveillance and attack missions (search and destroy) in so-called priority areas of concern: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Mali, Somalia, Yemen, or Libya, serving a low-profile counterterrorist strategy[4], in which Africa, the Sahel theatre of operations to be precise, is an area of special strategic importance.

The instability of the region, the cross-border nature of the threats, the series of coups, the rise in jihadist attacks, and the grave humanitarian situation in which the countries of the Sahel find themselves in general have led the EU to reconsider its strategy towards the continent (Marín, 2020), opting for a more integrated and proactive view of defence that goes beyond the training, advisory, and logistical missions carried out in the framework of the CSDP, in accordance with the goals of the last summit between the European Union and the African Union, in February 2022, and in contrast to the penetration efforts of powers such as Russia and China, which are committed to the consolidation and projection of their geopolitical interests in the region (Vianini & Berger, 2021).

2.5. The Indo-Pacific

In contrast to a foreign and security policy centred primarily on the neighbourhood areas, the new *EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* constitutes a necessary strategic shift in response to the rise of a region considered the new global geopolitical epicentre, given its economic, demographic, political, and technological significance. It is an innovative strategy, devised around the Joint Communication by the Commission and High Representative of 16

3 Given the grave deterioration of security and the tragic humanitarian situation in the Sahel, on 28 April 2020, during the Summit between the EU and the G5 Sahel countries, it was decided to launch the **Coalition for the Sahel**, with a view to including other international partners and IGOs in a joint effort to contribute to the security, stability, and development of the Sahel.

4 Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Seychelles, as well as Djibouti, considered the jewel in the crown, where Camp Lemmonier, the United States' permanent base in Africa, is located at the entrance to the Red Sea, with access to Somalia and Yemen and projection into the Indian Ocean and the Sahel, form part of this complex network of African military facilities from where the United States deploys its counterterrorist missions.

September 2021 (EC/HR, 2021b), which seeks to project the EU's global ambition in a world in constant flux.

And the fact is that starting from a serious integration effort, and despite the difficulties arising from recurring disagreements, disparities, and ambivalences among the member states relative to their specific interests in the region, particularly as far as relations with China are concerned, the institutions have been pushing the difficult yet urgent task of recalibrating the EU's strategic priorities based on a holistic, unified, inclusive, and at the same time multifaceted approach regarding the Union's role in a multipolar world, where the Indo-Pacific region has a direct bearing on the security and prosperity of the EU in a context of strong global interdependence.

Relations between the EU and the Asia-Pacific region have gradually been cemented, especially since the last decade, via several bilateral and multilateral mechanisms and in such significant and diverse spheres (Luthra, 2021: 4-5) as security cooperation, where the EU has taken part in initiatives such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM); in the sphere of trade relations, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, or the East Asia Summit, where the EU , as well as being China's main trading partner, has signed regional trade agreements with South Korea (2011), Singapore (2019), or Vietnam; as well as in major developments linked to connectivity, envisaged in the European strategy *Connecting Europe and Asia: Building Blocks for an EU Strategy*, from 2018, on the basis of which several connectivity partnerships have been pushed forward with such significant regional players as Japan, India, or ASEAN, the latter being the central pillar of the EU's regional cooperation architecture, through its support for the *Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025* (Lin, 2021).

Taking into consideration this progression, while it is true that the Strategy for the Indo-Pacific must be tied to the development of the EU's foreign and security policy itself, it is no less true that the Document arises from a clear political recognition of the need to take greater global responsibility (Grare & Reuter, 2021: 6), in accordance with the principle of strategic autonomy, regardless of the meaning of a concept, the Indo-Pacific, on which there is no consensus, either regarding its geographical demarcation or as far as its origin is concerned, including the self-interested appropriation on the part of the Trump administration to give it a deliberate anti-China connotation (Grare & Reuter, 2021:2)

In any case, the concept adopted in the Document is fully in tune with the strategic vision championed by allies such as the United States, Japan, India, Australia, or the ASEAN countries: as a space of interconnection, stability, and free navigation (Grare & Reuter, 2021), as opposed to the strategies of projection, demarcation, and militarisation driven by China.

The Strategy, then, emphasises the EU's firm commitment to increasing and strengthening its presence in the Indo-Pacific, a region that, according to the Joint Communication, spans from the east coast of Africa to the Pacific Island States (EC/HR, 2021b: 1). A vast geographical area that is home to three-fifths of the world's population, produces 60% of global GDP, and is at the forefront of the digital economy (EC/HR, 2021b: 1). A geopolitical epicentre of the

future with which Europe accounts for over 70% of world trade in goods and services and 60% of foreign direct investment flows (EC/HR, 2021b: 1) and which, therefore, requires the implementation of a long-term strategy, focusing on seven priority areas: inclusive and sustainable prosperity; green transition; ocean governance; digital governance and partnerships; connectivity; security and defence; and human security (EC/HR, 2021b: 5). Strategic priorities designed to respond in a coordinated manner based on the Community acquis to disturbing emerging dynamics such as the rise of China, the increase in hybrid threats, or the challenges related to climate change, digitalisation, and cybersecurity.

It is an ambitious road map, at present still more based on words than action, insofar as its proper implementation, by virtue of the Union's political credibility, will require major mobilisation of economic and financial resources, both public and private, generated via miscellaneous mechanisms such as *Global Europe's Neighbourhood* (Luthra, 2021: 13). A long-term plan of action that, however, must be built on impossible balances between the policy of containment of the Chinese giant, in line with the US strategy in the region, and the promotion of economic cooperation in the framework of the expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the European continent; a strategy, in short, constrained by the limited capacity of European naval forces, with the exception of France, when it comes to projecting and maintaining its sea power beyond the Indian Ocean (Luthra, 2021: 14).

2.6. The Arctic

Since the European Parliament presented its Resolution on Arctic Governance in 2008, the EU's policy on the region has evolved towards more firm and innovative positions, structured around two distinct strategic goals: first, focusing on the absolute priority of climate change, where the EU stands as a world leader in the struggle against global warming and the protection of biodiversity in the framework of the European Green Deal; and second, resting on a new security perspective in a strategic environment likewise defined by growing geopolitical competition, where the EU aspires to intensify its prominence and leadership through political discourse centred on the strengthening of the ties between the concepts of security and climate change.

A new approach to the region captured in the Joint Communication by the Commission and High Representative on *A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable, and prosperous Arctic* of 13 October 2021 (EC/HR, 2021a) and linked to the Report issued by the European Parliament just a few days earlier, on 7 October, on *The Arctic: opportunities, concerns, and security challenges* (EP, 2021), both of which are guidance documents to shape the European institutions' new discourse, in place of the Joint Communication of 27 April 2016 *An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic*, which was more focused on the promotion of sustainable development in the region.

Both the Joint Communication of 13 October, committed to a moratorium on hydrocarbons exploration in the Arctic, and the Parliament Report, focusing on the EU's security interests in the region, try to provide a response –from a perspective incorporating both the climate and security– to the multiple challenges that converge on the region arising from global warming, the gradual increase in competition for the exploration of the natural resources that the region holds, where 13% of the world's oil reserves and 30% of its gas reserves lie (Mayet, 2021), and geopolitical rivalries linked to gradual Russian militarisation around the North Sea Route and China's strategic placement along the Polar Silk Route.

2.7. Conclusions

The relatively optimistic view of the EU's neighbourhood policy and its contribution to the management of international conflicts, gathered in the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (EES), committed, moreover, to the building of a *better world*, or the call for an integrated management of international conflicts, in accordance with the Union's external action priorities, contained in the EU Global Strategy of 2016, are debatable, to say the least, seen from the perspective of the current strategic landscape. An international order defined by geopolitical rivalry and close relations of interdependence, whose effects, as well as integration dynamics, form the backbone of intense processes of fragmentation/atomisation –brought about by connectivity, digitalisation, and the universalisation of horizontal communication–, where multiple nodes of power exist, both state and non-state, with changing and diverging interests. To a large extent, these stand in the way of the EU's projection in its role as a security player in the various conflict scenarios. Regional areas, where the Union and its member states intervene in defence of their respective strategies, generating a cacophony of interests that end up undermining, if not cancelling out, the rhetoric of the discourse based on *European unity*.

It is a role that the EU projects from a normative and inclusive approach, based on negotiation, multilateralism, and the defence of values, in complex regional environments plunged into spirals of confrontation, violence, and atomisation, where geographical compartmentalisation is overwhelmed by the interconnected nature of transnational threats that spill over state borders. All this erodes the power of states and neutralises the effectiveness of recurring European multilateral initiatives for the management of conflicts, which are devised on the basis of a supposedly innovative and at the same time assertive *pragmatism based on principles*, as announced in the Mogherini Strategy.

The EU must face the future, which is now. A future horizon, determined by the decisions and action of the present, that, moreover, swiftly becomes the past, given the acceleration associated with the dynamics of globalisation. The world is increasingly complex, interdependent, interconnected, and unsafe, subjected to constant and profound mutations that require an integrative effort in favour of international security and global cooperation, aspirations that are increasingly connected to the environments of regional security, where the EU must

act with inclusive and long-term criteria, adapted to the specific complexity of the different regional scenarios. It must move beyond short-term and ineffective goals, often focused on the Union's own visibility.

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3. Europe geopolitics and defence: The Treaties

María Isabel Nieto

3.1. Introduction

"If Francis Fukuyama could have predicted today's world three decades after the publication of his well-known essay (Fukuyama, 1989), he might have given it a different title. And if anything positive can be drawn from the succession of socio-political and natural events of this period, it is that the European Union (EU) and the countries that make it up are being subjected to a stress test that will prove whether this Union goes beyond its name, or whether the voluntary efforts of so many brilliant and hard-working minds will be reduced to a nice exercise in good intentions. One of the key factors that will tip the balance in one direction or the other lies in the obvious but difficult decision to take a step forward in favour of a model that will develop Europe's security and defence, allowing it to find its place, a relevant place, among the medium and great powers and emerging power groups. If the EU does not want to lose ground, it must play its cards as a strong power, a "credible union" on the international stage and in the defence of its values, principles and vital interests, and assert them - when necessary - alongside other powers such as the United States, China or Russia". This personal reflection was included in a chapter of a book that emerged from the Complutense University's Summer Course at El Escorial, entitled 'The EU's International Role: Proposals for the Conference on the Future of Europe' (Nieto, 2021). A year later, this reflection adds an additional dose of arguments to reinforce its validity. The new Cold War reissued and fuelled in recent years by Vladimir Putin has led on 24 February 2022 to open war in Ukraine, which not only brings the war back to Europe but also threatens the world with a global conflict.

In just under two months since the Russian invasion began, the conflict has evolved rapidly. We have seen an initial attempt to take over the country in a pattern similar to that employed by the USSR and then Russia in previous conflicts with varying degrees of success: use of overwhelming military force from its Southern border with Ukraine and the Belarusian border, with the support of its illegitimate[1] and puppet President Lukashenko, aimed directly at overthrowing the established regime and replacing it with a like-minded one, an attempt thwarted by the courageous resistance shown by a Ukraine that has rallied around its president, Volodimir Zelenski, and the limited but for now effective support of NATO countries with the supply of military hardware. And as of this writing, Ukraine, and thus the hopes of the free world, face an even greater and more dangerous challenge: surviving the retaliation of a pride-wounded leader who has redirected the invasion towards what appears to be a

1 It should be recalled that the March 2022 presidential elections were branded as electoral «fraud» by the OSCE and the EU itself through the A:R and European Commission vice-president Josep Borrell.

systematic and destructive occupation of the country from its Eastern and Southern borders: the Russian-occupied Donbas and Crimea since 2014.

Decisions taken by the Kremlin and implemented by the armed forces of the Russian Federation seriously undermine not only European but also global security and stability. There is a Russian challenge to the world order. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov once referred to a "post-Western world order" and Russia is trying to form a counterweight to the US, alongside countries such as China and Iran. And in the face of European and American sanctions, which is another consequence of this war, Putin is striving to promote viable alternative economic partners such as China, India and Brazil, among others.

Putin's defiant and expansionist role on the international stage is evident, especially with his actions in the so-called "frozen conflicts" in Georgia, Moldova or even Azerbaijan, although Russia's role in the long-running struggle between Armenians and Azeris is less clear. As for Ukraine, recent developments leave various scenarios open, with no clear final outcome in sight. What is more clear is Putin's desire to restore, once again, the Soviet sphere of influence in both Asia and Europe. Russia wants to recover its lost hegemonic power and regain its influence in Europe and the Middle East. Also in Latin America. Putin demands an equal footing with the US in the management of global affairs and the invasion of Ukraine is a strategy of the tyrant as an element of strengthening the Russian Federation and influence abroad.

The new state of affairs has shifted, we do not know for how long, if not the centre of gravity, then the focus of geopolitical interest, which until a few weeks ago was located in Asia and specifically in the Indo-Pacific, a geographical area of growing strategic importance, and where the main disputes between the major powers are likely to be settled in the future. The struggle for power in the area transcends the current competition between China - aspiring to hegemony - and the United States, and actors such as Pakistan and India are clearly exerting their influence. The EU, and some of its individual member states, such as Germany, the Netherlands and France, and the UK now outside the Union, have important economic, commercial and even strategic interests that could be seriously affected if 'intense geopolitical competition is coupled with growing tensions in trade and supply chains, and in the technological, political and security fields. Human rights are also at stake. These developments constitute a growing threat to stability and security within and outside the region, which has a direct bearing on EU interests' (Council of the EU, 2021). It is worth remembering that the emergence of a new focus of concern in Europe does not erase, but rather may complicate the situation in the Indo-Pacific, given the momentary distraction on the part of the US and the European Union, and the free bar that China may find in an area now with its back to the new conflict (Reuters, 2022).

But what impact has the Russian invasion of Ukraine had on European public opinion? The opinion poll conducted by IFOP, the French Institute for Opinion and Marketing Studies, on 3 March 2022 (one week after the start of the invasion) in four countries accounting for 55% of

the Union's total population - France, Germany, Italy and Poland - shows some very interesting, and perhaps even surprising, conclusions (Finchelstein, Clavaud and Peltier, 2022).

- 84% of respondents have a good opinion of Ukraine; 16% of respondents have a good opinion of Russia.
- 75% have a good opinion of Volodymyr Zelensky; 9% of Vladimir Putin.
- 79% approve of the economic and financial sanctions against Russia (including 57% who "fully" approve them). 67% approve of the supply of arms to Russia.
- 67% approve of the supply of military equipment to Ukraine and 87% approve of the reception of refugees.
- 71% support Ukraine's entry into the European Union. 6. 68% are in favour of the creation of a European army.

Some of these results seem to indicate a state of opinion that coincides with, or at least favours, the thesis defended by High Representative J. Borrell, who recently stated: "the EU wants peace in Europe, but we have to be prepared to defend this peace. What is happening in Ukraine will be a moment of awakening for people who believe that only together can Europeans face the challenges of the future" (Borrell, 2022). This thesis seems to show what is currently the only course of action for Europe, while Putin's Russia only seems to understand the language of power.

Faced with the seemingly inevitable and inhospitable horizon that Europe is facing, some questions of interest arise: Is the EU a capable and credible global actor? Is it capable of providing security for its citizens, institutions and member states through the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)? How are these policies articulated in the Lisbon Treaty? Although the EU's Foreign Policy maintains numerous instruments of a diverse nature, political, legal, diplomatic[2], financial and security-related (Sánchez Amor, 2022). However, if the EU wants to be a truly global actor, it should have the leverage that a military capability would give it vis-à-vis other international actors. Firepower to deter, first and foremost, and to employ if necessary and as a last resort for its defence. Other shortcomings need to be addressed, such as that of a better European intelligence service. And here the potential of the European External Action Service is untapped.

Undoubtedly, the Global Security Strategy, a document presented by F. Mogherini in 2016, was a turning point for the European Union's security and defence. In the words of the former HR, "The European Security and Defence Union has taken its first steps" (Mogherini, 2019). Professor Aldecoa expressed himself in the same vein: "European defence policy is being born hand in hand with the Global Strategy" (Aldecoa, 2018). Since then and after six years, progress has been notable, but clearly insufficient, particularly in light of recent events, and Europe will have to rethink what it should do to adapt to them.

2 The good idea welcomed by the EP Pilot Project to create a European Diplomatic College could be a new step in the "big toolbox" towards a common strategic culture.

The invasion of Ukraine has therefore added another drop to the glass of improbable events that has been filling up over the last decade, which has forced the EU to consider and calculate the security and defence that can and should be provided at a time when NATO is reflecting and working on a new Strategic Concept to be presented at the Madrid Summit, to be held on 29 and 30 June 2022.

Within this framework, the objectives we set ourselves are to 1. Raise public awareness of the importance for the EU of having a genuine common foreign policy to address challenges and threats. 2. Examine the implications of Ukraine's invasion for the EU. 3. Carefully scrutinise CSDP developments with the Lisbon Treaty, with a view to enhancing the Union's strategic capabilities.

3.2. Implications of the invasion for the EU

In Russia, the economic consequences that Moscow will have to face in order to finance the war machine and cope with the economic sanctions resulting from the invasion will have short- and medium-term consequences. While in April 2022, World Bank sources predicted that Russia's GDP could fall by 11.2 per cent in 2022, while Ukraine's could fall by 45.1 per cent depending on the duration of the war (Expansión, 2022), at the time of writing, in May 2022, Russia's Ministry of Economic Development reduced the impact on the country's GDP to 7.8 per cent (Reuters, 2022). The rouble, which had initially fallen sharply, has recovered its pre-crisis value due to the strong control measures imposed by the Russian economic authorities to prevent short trading, raise interest rates sharply and prevent the sale of Russian shares by foreign investors, but inflation continues to soar, and large companies from all sectors such as McDonald's, Coca Cola, Apple, 3M, DHL, Visa, MasterCard, Societé Generale, etc. have been able to recover their value (some inevitably associated with the sanctions regime, others to avoid the negative image impact of continuing to operate in Russia). Some analysts argue that this isolation will make them more dependent on China in the future.

But the impact on the EU will not be negligible either. The heavy dependence of countries such as Germany and Italy on Russian raw materials has strained the EU, slowing down and nuancing its response, and work is still ongoing to address the situation in a coordinated manner. And while the EU's response initially appeared somewhat hesitant, the end result has been a strong and coordinated response from the EU-27.

Without ever overlooking the catastrophic aftermath of any armed conflict, this united response has been the best possible outcome of this unfortunate event, along with the undeniable revelation that, faced with the helplessness of standing alone in the face of major threats, Europeans must be responsible for their security. They are more aware than ever of the need for a common EU strategic culture. And the development of a "European demos" would go some way towards achieving this. In this sense, some experts question whether there is such a thing as a European demos (Aguilera de Prat, 2004). In the meantime, a com-

mon defence is far from being achieved, although the European Defence Agency (EDA) aims to remedy this in some way by strengthening itself "to enable member states to deliver on defence capabilities" (EDA, 2017). Its functions are set out in Art. 45 TEU.

The commitment of many states to increase defence spending has erupted with force. The war has direct consequences for European societies. And in the longer term, this crisis is also likely to lead to a rethinking of many of the EU's policies and budgetary priorities. We highlight the case of Germany, which has recently taken significant new steps in this area with additional defence spending of 100 billion euros by 2022 and an increase in the defence budget to over 2 per cent of GDP from 2024. This U-turn is significant because in Germany, until recently, dealing with military matters was a 'taboo' subject and regulations on arms sales were strict and sales to conflict zones were not possible. "The coalition agreement of the current German government (Social Democrats, Greens and Liberals) states that "exceptions can only be made in justified individual cases, which must be publicly documented" (DW, 2022). Even Denmark, which has remained outside and has not participated in EU military programmes, will hold a referendum in June and consult with its citizens, according to its current prime minister Mette Frederiksen.

The Strategic Compass takes a further step towards strengthening the EU's military capabilities. It is intended to be the EU-27's common vision in the field of security and defence for the next five to ten years and will make it possible to strengthen the CFSP. This action plan, approved by the Council, aims to make the EU a security provider capable of protecting its citizens, the values and interests of the Union and contributing to peace and international security (Council of the EU, 2022). It is structured around 4 pillars: Acting, Investing, Working in Partnership and Securing Security and there are 50 concrete actions to be implemented with different modalities, deadlines and responsibilities, including combat actions. One of the key actions is undoubtedly to develop an EU rapid deployment system that will allow for the rapid deployment of a modular force of up to 5,000 troops by 2025. And in 2023, European military manoeuvres are planned, exercises that will improve the readiness of soldiers and the interoperability of these forces. In the opinion of the Council of the Union itself, this document "marks a high level of ambition for our security and defence agenda by:

1. Providing a shared assessment of our strategic environment, the threats and challenges we face and their implications for the EU;
2. Bringing greater coherence and a common sense of purpose to actions in the area of security and defence that are already underway;
3. Setting out new ways and means to improve our collective ability to defend the security of our citizens and our Union;
4. Specifying clear targets and milestones to measure progress".

Transatlantic relations have also been affected and a more capable EU in security and defence will complement NATO which remains the foundation and basis for the collective defence of NATO allied member states - except Finland, Austria, Ireland, Sweden, Malta and Cyprus

which are not members, although Finland and Sweden have only a few days ago submitted their application to join the Alliance in Brussels. The transatlantic relationship and EU/NATO cooperation are fundamental to overall security. Indeed, the two international organisations have been cooperating for decades and have had their times of ups and downs in the context of transatlantic relations. NATO has been and is the main security provider on the European continent. The two organisations have strengthened their partnership since 2014 following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, a partnership that is undergoing a severe stress test with the ongoing invasion of the Ukrainian country. The intensification of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in member states geographically closest to the Russian aggressor and the conflict is encouraged. Expanding strategic partnership, political dialogue and cooperation with NATO from 2022 in all agreed areas of interaction including new lines of action related to emerging disruptive technologies, climate, defence and outer space is another consequence to be underlined. However, one of the biggest risks for both organisations is the lack of cohesion around threat perception. And the absence of a clear strategy on the southern flank.

The militarisation of the Black Sea is another impact. The NATO countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey also share a Black Sea border, so how does this crisis affect their ability to trade and travel safely? Similarly, the use of warships in the area contravenes the 1971 Montreal Convention.

Some of the most immediate and necessary measures have been the application of increasingly tough sanctions against Russia for breaching and violating international law (Council of the EU, 2022). Restrictive measures as they are also known are 'an essential instrument of the EU's CFSP' (Council of the EU, 2022), intended to bring about a change in the policy or conduct of those targeted and used with a view to furthering its foreign and security policy objectives[3]. Sanctions "which may target members of third-country governmental bodies, as well as companies, groups, organisations or individuals... are not punitive" (European Commission, 2022). They are decided by the Council, acting unanimously. And the main measures relate to arms embargoes; admission restrictions (travel bans); freezing of assets; other economic measures, such as import and export restrictions. The EU continues to prepare sanctions against Russia, in close coordination with transatlantic allies and other like-minded international partners.

The management of EU countries' energy needs is undoubtedly the EU's biggest headache, and the pressing need to reduce dependence on Russia in this market has internal implications, but also consequences for EU foreign policy. The consequences of the war in Ukraine were at the centre of the informal meeting of EU leaders in Versailles on 10-11 March 2022. Rising oil and gas prices have had an immediate impact on the EU-27 economy, with inflation rising at rates not seen since the last century, which has helped Putin fuel his war machine. For

3 The main objectives in adopting sanctions are: to protect the values represented by the Union, the fundamental interests and security of the EU, to preserve peace, to consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law, and to prevent conflicts and strengthen international security.

both reasons, EU heads of state and government have agreed to eliminate our dependence on Russian gas, oil and coal imports “as soon as possible”. A devastating fact. Every day more than 1 billion euros are paid for the import of these raw materials to Russia, in the words of J. Borrell. The Commission will have its work cut out in the coming months. It is working on 3 ways to reduce this dependence: 1. diversification of supplies, 2. energy efficiency and 3. accelerating renewables. On the diversification front, we need to increase our purchases of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from suppliers such as the United States, Qatar, Norway, African producers and others.

In parallel, heads of state and government addressed the impact of rising energy prices on EU citizens and businesses at the European Council meeting on 24-25 March. (European Council, 2022).

Another immediate consequence of the war was the Ukrainian president’s request to the EP plenary to speed up his country’s accession to the EU. On 1 March, the EP adopted a resolution in which point 37 of the text ‘calls on the EU institutions to work towards granting Ukraine the status of candidate country for EU membership’. Practically the entire parliamentary spectrum endorsed the text. The vote was 637 votes in favour, 13 against and 36 abstentions (SWI Swissinfo.ch, 2022). Obviously, a lot of work needs to be done to enable Ukraine to become a full member in the future and to meet the so-called Copenhagen Criteria. In this respect, there are different views and sensitivities of governments. Personally, I am a fervent advocate of this.

Another immediate repercussion of the invasion could be the weakening of the Visegrad group of Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. Hungary remains the most fractious and defiant within the Union. It is also worth noting the massive influx of refugees into EU countries bordering Ukraine, and the economic and social impact this has had on the countries concerned. Their response has been more than exemplary, and even more so, titanic, given the dimensions of the problem, especially for Poland, and the solidarity of the other countries is absolutely necessary in this case. Europe has a duty to take in these war refugees and provide them with emergency aid. And this brings to the table the question of EU asylum policy, which is one of the most controversial issues within the EU. The activation by the French Presidency of the Council of Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 (OJEC, 2001) on “the establishment of minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof” (OJEC, 2001) is underlined.

But in addition to the ‘conventional’ consequences that Europe is facing as a result of the invasion, the Union must deal with the hybrid threat that Russia has deployed in the form of disinformation. For example, in Moldova, hours after the Russian invasion, many young men received text messages telling them that boys were being called to join the army. The Moldovan government quickly announced that this message was false... It is clear that

Russia is making an enormous effort to disorientate its adversaries by offering a narrative and discursive framework that is incorporated into the narrative of the facts, disfiguring and altering reality and "hindering decision-making processes in favour of a particular ideological or political interest, including the reinforcement of preconceived opinions or confirmation bias" (Tuñón, Oleart and Bouza, 2019).

Of course, aggression against Ukraine is a violation of international law and the rules-based international order and of the key principles and elements of the European security order: sovereignty, political independence of any state and the integrity of states, inviolability of their borders, peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force. This is a violation of the United Nations Charter of 1945, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the Charter of Paris for a new Europe, which, it is worth remembering, with the signing of this Charter, the principle of "spheres of influence" disappears. In this context, we fully recognise the freedom of States to choose their own security arrangements'. And the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances. Let us recall that Ukraine agreed to get rid of its nuclear arsenal in exchange for Russia's commitment to respect its borders by signing this memorandum, whereby the US, the UK and Russia recognised the accession of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The latter was blown apart by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Now there are even meetings at the highest level to discuss the security of both countries, and especially Ukraine. There are talks that Ukraine would renounce NATO membership in exchange for international security guarantees on its territory. The question is how credible Russia is and whether it would respect this possible agreement. Credibility is practically zero, given what has happened in the past. It should also be remembered that from Russia's point of view NATO enlargement, the Alliance, is nothing more than an attempt to dominate the Mediterranean and the Balkans.

3.3. The CSDP: Background to the European Defence Policy and legal basis through the lens of the Lisbon Treaty

Today's international society is obliged to manage complex interdependencies. In this context, we Europeans must ask ourselves what we want and how to achieve what we want. It is useful to conceptualise the terms security and defence even in general terms. In the words of Portuguese Vice Admiral António Rebelo Duarte, "Quinto aos conceitos de Segurança e Defensa, poderemos aceitar, sem grande exigencia ao nível da pureza teórica, que a Defensa se confunde com o "acto" e a "Segurança com o seu "resultado", coma quela a visar criar a sensaçao de protecáo a que a Segurança aspira. A Defensa enuncia-se como actividade destinada a garantir a segurançapotenciadora do desenvolvimento e bemestar, abrangendo intereses vários, desde o acesso a água,até aos mercados, pasando pela energía, etc. Daí que se avalie a Segurança, não como una despesa a pagar pelo produto, outrossim como un investimento sem o qual não se pode favorecer o crescimento desse mesmo produto. Dito, ainda, de outro modo, uma boa Defesa vai gerar Segurança, quer em termos nacionais, quer

em termos “colectivos” caso da NATO) ou “inter-governamentais” e “cooperativos” (caso da PED)” (Rebelo, 2008).

The idea of addressing the security and defence of Europe dates back to 1948 with the signing of the so-called Pact of Brussels, a military organisation that contained a mutual defence clause binding the member countries of Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Another action of interest came with the Pleven Plan and its attempt to create a European Defence Community in 1952, which was intended to create a European army dependent on the political institutions of the United Europe, but which failed, not least because of the refusal of the French National Assembly to ratify it. Since then, the paths in this field have been opened up by NATO, by the WEU - which ended its activities in June 2011 and whose functions were incorporated into the EU - and by the EU itself, following the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 and its entry into force on 1 December 2009.

Although the issue of security had already been timidly incorporated into the 1986 Act of the European Union, art. 30. 6, it was not until the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 that the CFSP came into being, a policy of an eminently intergovernmental nature whose primary objectives are to protect the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union, to strengthen the security of the Union and its member countries, to preserve international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, to promote international cooperation, and to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It was definitely the Union’s inability to deal with the Balkan crisis in the 1990s that undoubtedly prompted the creation of a European Security and Defence Policy. Maastricht noted the lack of its own military instruments to give credibility to its CFSP. With the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, some important steps were taken, such as the appointment of the High Representative for the CFSP who, with the Treaty of Lisbon -articles 18 and 27 of the TEU- will broaden his powers and become one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission to try to ensure the coordination and coherence of external policies. It was also at the beginning of the 21st century that the first external crisis management operations, known as the Petersberg Missions, were launched. These were adopted at the WEU Council of Ministers in June 1992, and range from humanitarian and rescue missions, conflict prevention and peacekeeping missions, the use of combat forces for crisis management, including peacemaking missions, to joint disarmament actions, military advice and assistance missions and post-conflict stabilisation operations.

We must not forget to mention the Franco-British summit in Saint Malo on 3 and 4 December 1998, where the Joint Declaration refers to the need for an “autonomous” capability supported by credible military forces: “ ...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”. This Declaration was, we should not forget, the first official document that established the new British orientation towards European defence (Institute for Security Studies of WEU, 2001). It is also worth mentioning the NATO

Summit in Washington in April 1999, which "reaffirms the strengthening of the European pillar of the Alliance" on the basis of the Brussels Declaration of 1994 and the principles approved in Berlin in 1996 (NATO, Office of Information and Press, 1999).

At the Cologne Summit in June 1999, the governments of the Union committed themselves to adopting a common European defence policy, without prejudice to the action to be taken by NATO. But it was at the Helsinki European Council on 10-11 December 1999 that it was stated that by 2003 at the latest states should be in a position to deploy within 60 days and maintain for a minimum of one year military forces of up to 50,000 to 60,000 personnel capable of fulfilling the full range of Petersberg Tasks.

However, the real turning point came in the framework of the European Convention in 2002 and 2003, when "a broad debate arose on the need to develop the deepening of defence policy, proposing a change with respect to the previous situation, which was that of the CSDP" (Aldecoa, 2019). And with the Treaty of Lisbon - a treaty that assumes the model of "intergovernmental federalism" - the CSDP is made official and includes "elements that will make possible a greater and better presence of the EU in the world, instruments that, in accordance with the always necessary political will of the Member States, allow the Union to develop a more ambitious autonomous external action to face larger-scale crises" (De Castro and Borecojo, 2019).

As for the decision-making process, the institutions that adopt CSDP-related decisions are the European Council and the Council. These decisions are taken unanimously, with a few exceptions -such as those relating to the European Defence Agency (EDA), which are included in Article 45 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), and those relating to Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which are referred to in Article 46 of the TEU Treaty, for which majority voting is applied-. The role of the High Representative (HR) of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is responsible, among other functions, for coordinating and implementing the CFSP and the CSDP and ensuring that the EU's external action is coherent, is also responsible for presenting proposals to the EU Council and the European Council, directing the EDA and the EU Institute for Security Studies and chairing the meeting of Foreign Ministers in the EU Council, as well as in its Defence Ministers configuration (Nieto, 2021).

Undoubtedly, one of the major contributions of the TEU is the development of crisis management policy and EU self-defence issues. The CSDP is an integral part of the CFSP and the Lisbon Treaty itself shapes the Union's security and defence capabilities through the legal provisions it contains, which will give rise to numerous developments today, the most important[4] of which will be addressed by some of my colleagues in this collective work. The

4 Among them, and in order to strengthen the Union's command structures and in close liaison with the EU Military Staff (EUMS) in charge of early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning of EU-led missions and operations and overall military strategy, the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), which can become a kind of headquarters, designed to be more effective and more easily deployable and capable of conducting EU missions and operations; PESCO; the EDF, the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD); the Strategic Compass, the European Peace Support Fund, Military Mobility...

defence aspects will be developed mainly in Articles 41 - on financing - and 42 to 46 of the Treaty. Article 42(1) gives the Union an operational capability based on civilian and military means, and the Union may use these means on missions outside the Union in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter; Article 42 expresses the CSDP's vocation to build a common European defence "once the European Council has decided unanimously"; the mechanism of Cooperation for a mission is reflected in Article 42(5); 42.5; the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) mechanism is included in art. 42.6, and represents one of the most significant advances of the Treaty, making it easier for those states with more advanced military capabilities to establish a framework to regulate their cooperation, coordination and also their military industry. Article 42.7 is devoted to the collective alliance clause: "If a Member State is the object of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall give it aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations". The types of missions within the scope of the CSDP are provided for in Art. 43 (defence missions are added to the Petersberg tasks included in the Treaty of Nice). Art. 42.3 focuses on the legal reinforcement of the European Defence Agency - to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector - and "shall contribute to the definition of a European capabilities and armaments policy and assist the Council in evaluating the improvement of military capabilities". Also part of the legal basis are Protocols 1, 10 and 11 and Declarations 13 and 14, as well as Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). This Solidarity Clause will be activated "if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster". In such cases, "the Union shall mobilise all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the Member States". This clause is neither strict nor exclusively defensive, but a reinforced solidarity obligation covering many other dimensions in addition to the strictly military one.

As a result of the debate on the conference on the future of Europe, and after more than a year of work involving three co-presidents, representatives of the EP, national parliaments, governments, representatives of the CoR, the EESC and the social partners, representatives of citizens and organised civil society, working on various panels and in nine working groups[5], among them, the one on International Relations on the outcome of the work, which will now be followed up by the Czech, Swedish and Spanish presidencies in the second half of 2023, has just been published[6] (European Parliament, 2022). The report puts forward 49 proposals and more than 320 measures to be assessed by the institutions, some of which would require changes to the treaties, as provided for in Article 48 of the TEU. We will see in the coming months whether or not we are heading towards the Third European Convention. The ball is

5 They are as follows: 1. Climate change and environment. 2. Health. 3. A stronger economy, social justice and employment. 4. The EU in the world. 5. Values and rights, rule of law and security. 6. Digital transformation. 7. European Democracy. 8. Migration. 9. Education, culture, youth and sport.

6 Delivered by the Co-Chairs of the Executive Committee of the Conference to Commission President Ursula V. D. Leyen, EP President Roberta Metsola and President Macron on behalf of the Council Presidency on 9 May 2022.

currently in the European Council's court. As stated in point 3 of the aforementioned article, "If the European Council, after consulting the European Parliament and the Commission, decides by a simple majority[7] in favour of examining the proposed amendments, the President of the European Council shall convene a Convention composed of representatives of the national Parliaments, of the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, of the European Parliament and of the Commission. In the case of institutional changes in the monetary area, the European Central Bank shall also be consulted. The Convention will examine the draft revisions and adopt by consensus a recommendation addressed to a Conference of Representatives of the Governments of the Member States as provided for in paragraph 4. It is for the European Council to convene a Conference of Representatives of the Governments of the Member States "for the purpose of adopting by common accord the amendments to be made to the Treaties". In any case, the amendments would enter into force after ratification by all member states in accordance with their respective constitutional rules. For the time being, and although there is a broad majority of states that would be in favour of these reforms, some countries are reluctant to reform the Treaties, indicating that this is not the time, among them the Baltic countries, Croatia, Sweden, Malta, Poland, Denmark, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Finland.

The European Council may decide by a simple majority, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, not to convene a Convention where this is not justified by the scale of the changes. In the latter case, the European Council shall establish a mandate for a Conference of representatives of the governments of the Member States.

On the other hand, in the area of security and defence, it would be highly relevant to go beyond unanimity in decision-making by the Council and, as French President Macron recently pointed out, "continue to generalise qualified majority voting in our decisions for our main public policies". Another interesting initiative would be linked to the institutionalisation of an EU Defence Council.

3.4. Conclusions

There is no doubt that concepts such as power, sovereignty, interest, diplomacy and global governance are continuously on the political agenda. And of course, they are not "one-size-fits-all". We differentiate between vital interests that must be protected through deterrence and defence, for example, against terrorist threats, crisis situations, external interference..., essential interests to be promoted such as energy security, management of migratory flows..., or strategic interests in which we must participate in the common effort to achieve peace and international security, for example, the fight against climate change and environmental issues, which are considered - by almost half of European citizens (49%) - as the main global challenge affecting the future of the EU (Eurobarometer, 2022). And sometimes these con-

7 The support of at least 4 member states would be required.

tour lines are not clearly defined because internal security and external security are two sides of the same coin. If we ask ourselves whether a common threat or common threats in the Union will be enough to integrate Europe further and make a qualitative leap in the area of defence, the answer is not easy. Defence remains at the core of national sovereignty and is intimately linked to political power. Well, the EU will go as far in developing its common security and defence as the will of member states desires, and the stature of its leaders allows. Going further in the development of the CSDP through the realisation of the new political and military structures already in place - which give the Union international credibility - and other future ones that may come, as well as in the development of civilian and military operations outside European territory, will depend on the will of the member states and the imprint of their leaders, on the expectations they have as a political system at 27, and on the specific objectives they set for themselves. But it will also depend on the maturity of European civil society.

It is essential to overcome some of the decision-making procedures and move from unanimity with the right of veto to majority voting in foreign policy matters, preventing paralysis or unnecessary deadlocks. Along these lines, qualified majority voting should be appropriate for matters relating to human rights, the imposition of sanctions or the deployment of civilian and military missions. Other formulas are even being considered, such as 2/3 or 3/4 majorities.

It should be remembered that, to be effective, public policies require adequate budgets, and security is as important as education or health, especially today, when freedom is a value to be defended more strongly than ever in the world because it has more and more enemies and stronger enemies. Security does not come for free, and we must think about investing more in it in order to be prepared for permanent and new threats.

Finally, it is necessary to further promote “European culture”, which in a broad sense has a more universalist character, based on freedoms, political pluralism, solidarity and human rights. Advancing a common strategic culture means strengthening those elements that unite us as opposed to those that alienate us, reject “national loyalties” and opting for “more Europe”, promoting measures towards the achievement of European Intelligence (currently practically limited to a voluntary cooperation of the member states), strengthening the European External Action Service, which has not yet reached its full potential, and setting up a genuine European Diplomatic Corps in order to achieve a world in which the values that inspired the European model are not the exception, but a model achievable by all.

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4. Military Capabilities

Carlos Martí Sempere

Military capabilities define the military power that a nation can deploy in the event of a crisis or conflict situation with other nations or potential adversaries. In other words, these capabilities establish the degree of coercion and deterrence that a nation can exert on others to carry out its foreign and security policy. This is particularly necessary when its principles, values or interests do not coincide and collide with those of other nations and there are no mechanisms to peacefully arbitrate a solution.

This chapter analyses the military capabilities currently possessed by the European Union (EU), examining their suitability to meet the objectives set out in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). For this purpose, it first describes what is meant by military capabilities and how they are obtained. Second, it studies the slow historical development of European military capabilities, briefly analysing how they have been built up. Third, it examines the role of the technological and industrial base in realising these capabilities, briefly assessing its main problems, characteristics and limitations in providing these means. Fourthly, the most recent European actions aimed at improving these capabilities are reviewed, discussing their weaknesses in order to evaluate, in the following section, the significant problems and difficulties in overcoming them. Finally, some conclusions are drawn and recommendations are presented on this subject.

4.1. The concept of military capability

A military capability consists of organisation, assets, infrastructure, personnel, doctrine, training and leadership. In other words, properly trained military personnel who, following procedures and supported by appropriate material means and infrastructure, is capable of effectively carrying out the missions and operations entrusted to them without exposing themselves to serious danger. Examples of these capabilities are air defence; anti-submarine warfare; force projection; planning, directing and coordinating operations; or the ability to gather intelligence.

These capabilities require, in most cases, relatively sophisticated means consisting of ground, air or naval vehicles, as well as communications equipment and information systems that offer the performance needed in the field of operations, which can sometimes make the difference between the success or failure of the mission.

4.1.1. The Establishment Process

The building or updating of a military capability is a complex process that takes time and requires careful planning. It is often based on the analysis of past operations, or, in peacetime, of exercises, manoeuvres and rehearsals routinely conducted by the armed forces. The

identification of shortcomings and limitations arouses the interest of the armed forces, and of the industry itself, to find a solution to the deficiency found, seeking a solution or alternative to remedy it. Thus, for example, the battle tank emerged due to the high lethality of rifles and machine guns in World War I, which made any attempt to attack with troops unfeasible given their inadequate protection against these weapons.

These shortcomings call for the development of systems and devices that can address them. Their maturation process is slow, for even if improved performance is achieved in some respects, it may be small, reduced in others, or prohibitively expensive. Thus, for example, steam-powered warships created new logistical needs, such as a network of posts from which to supply them with coal. In short, it was a long and complex process of mistakes, failures, adaptations and new attempts to achieve a truly effective capability. Thus, the development of the US V-22 vertical take-off aircraft used for Marine missions took well over two decades.

4.1.2. The procurement process

In order to obtain them, the objectives are established in terms of the military capabilities they wish to achieve and the defence administration plans their procurement, in which the industrial sector necessarily participates. The need for these capabilities to be superior to those of a potential adversary generates fierce competition among States to obtain advanced means that guarantee this superiority. This usually involves research, development and innovation to achieve the required performance, as well as the development of methods to use them effectively in the field of operations. This implies significant investments to accumulate the knowledge to obtain the desired results. The uncertainty of this whole process makes it slow and costly.

The achievement of these capabilities is conditioned by three factors. Firstly, the perception of threats to national values and interests, i.e., the geostrategic context. The greater the threats, the greater the capabilities required. Secondly, the national capacity to generate wealth and the possibility of using such wealth to obtaining these capabilities. Finally, the existing technological and industrial capabilities to produce their measures. In other words, wealthier and more advanced nations with a good technological and industrial infrastructure generate these capabilities more easily by being able to produce, supply, deploy, operate, maintain and modify these advanced military equipment and systems. Conversely, when current institutional, technological and industrial capabilities are insufficient, nations cannot build these military capabilities and have to turn to potential allies, preventing their autonomy in this area.

4.2. EU Military Capabilities

4.2.1. Why EU military capabilities?

It makes perfect sense to speak of military capabilities in the EU framework, since a common defence, when principles, values[1] and a common destiny are shared, has important advantages.

1 Such as human rights, human security or democratic values.

Indeed, defence activity generates significant savings when several nations join together for this purpose, as the cost of defence per capita tends to decrease, making it ultimately less burdensome to enjoy this asset[2]. This is particularly true if we consider that most of today's threats are transnational in nature and largely affect all its Member States, such as the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Libya or the Islamic State. Moreover, the fact that no single state can sustain, on its own, a full range of military and industrial capabilities provides an incentive to do so in a European framework. Moreover, the disagreements that have sometimes arisen in foreign policy between Europe and the US due to their different strategic visions, or Europeans' doubts about their ally's degree of commitment when its main area of concern is shifting to the Indo-Pacific[3] area, or its own reliability (especially perceived during Donald Trump's administration) have stimulated Europeans' desire to be more autonomous on this issue.

However, we cannot really speak of EU military capabilities until relatively recent times. This is because it was not until the formation of the second pillar that a Common Security and Defence Policy was established within the Union that would oblige it to equip itself with the appropriate means to perform the required missions, and it was the Member States that, in each case, defined and established the military capabilities they considered necessary to guarantee their own defence and security.

4.2.2. The gestation of the framework for obtaining capabilities

After the Second World War, Europe based its defence largely on the Atlantic Alliance, a treaty signed on 4 April 1949 in Washington, although France and Germany sought, in parallel, European integration in the area of defence. American support was a key element of European security, something that was not always well accepted by many Europeans, who wanted greater autonomy in this area, particularly France. Between 1950 and 1954, several steps were taken to advance European integration. In 1952, the European Coal and Steel Community was created on the initiative of Jean Monnet, who also pushed for the creation of a European Defence Community to create a supranational European army. The treaty establishing the Community was signed in May 1952 by the six nations, but was not ratified by the French parliament at its session of 30 August 1954, which put paid to the project. In the same year, the Western European Union (WEU) was created, an institutional framework for the security and defence cooperation of its Member States, whose role and influence was

2 In this sense, NATO has allowed Europeans to spend less on defence and to devote resources to the provision of other necessary public goods. This has been the case not only because of the economies mentioned above, but also because of a larger US contribution to the Alliance. Although its contribution to spending currently stands at 22.1 per cent of the organisation's total budget, its budget is twice that of Europe's defence spending. Europe still has more than 68,000 US military personnel deployed, far below the 400,000 it had in the 1960s (Le Gleut and Conway-Mouret 2019). The US has always felt that Europeans spend too little on defence, while they are not supported by their protégés in their military interventions or in the position they hold in international relations.

3 Proof of this is the strategic military alliance between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, better known as Aukus for this region, which was publicly announced on 15 September 2021.

marginal due to NATO's predominance in this area during the Cold War. The Balkan crisis in 1991 reawakened Europeans' interest in their defence and the need for a common foreign and defence policy. A year later, the WEU defined the so-called Petersberg tasks for which forces under the European flag could be employed.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 with the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy addressed this issue for the first time within the EU. The NATO declaration of January 1994 incorporated this change when it spoke of the development of a European Security and Defence Identity. The Petersberg tasks became part of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 and have been expanded in subsequent treaties.

4.2.3. The stimulus of the Kosovo crisis

The Kosovo crisis generated a major declaration at the Saint-Malo summit in December 1998 between French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair calling for the EU to develop the capacity to take decisions and act autonomously, supported by credible military forces, in order to respond to international crises when NATO was not involved, initiating what has come to be known as the Common Security and Defence Policy. The broad consensus on the development of the EU as an autonomous international military actor alongside NATO was reaffirmed at the Cologne European Council in June 1999 and, in December 1999, at the Helsinki Council, European leaders agreed to develop, by 2003, the capability, on the basis of voluntary cooperation, to deploy within 60 days and sustain for one year, at a distance of 4,000 km, military forces (up to 15 brigades or between 50,000 and 60,000 personnel) and to cope with the full range of these missions. The aim was thus to achieve rapid reaction forces that would provide autonomy to make decisions and conduct military operations in response to international crises when NATO was not involved. Referred to as the Headline Goal, it was practically an inventory of the means that Europeans could make available to the EU for this purpose.

At the EU Capabilities Commitment Conference in November 2000 there was an excess of proposals in certain areas such as soldiers (100,000), combat aircraft (400) and ships (100), but a lack of relevant commitments in key areas such as strategic and tactical transport (Quille 2006). Capability goals were established at the Laeken Council of Europe in 2001, where a European Capability Action Plan, known as ECAP, was launched. These objectives were intended to meet the operational needs that were broadly defined in Helsinki.

In turn, the Commission began to develop the organisational structure to implement its policy in this area. In 1999, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy was appointed, a post enshrined in the Amsterdam Treaty. One of his first actions was the drafting of a European Security Strategy that synthesised the EU's interests and approach in the world in order to jointly advance and consolidate greater regional and global[4] security. In 2001,

4 This Strategy, of limited ambition, was presented and adopted in Brussels by the European Council in December 2003.

the Political and Security Committee (PSC) was established, advised by a Military Committee (EUMC) and charged with overseeing the work of the Military Staff (EUMS). In 2003, the first EU missions began.

In 2004, the European Defence Agency (EDA) was created with the support of key Member States, as well as defence companies eager to establish an armaments agency that would help strengthen the industry and associated technology sectors. However, this Agency was not supported by the UK, which has limited its size and the missions it has been given. This is clear when compared with the size of the French DGA, or the Member States' own preference to develop outside the Agency. And although its decisions can be taken by a qualified majority, unanimity has always been preferred, which has reduced its flexibility and agility.

A new Headline Goal 2010 was drafted in 2003, which took into account the new European Security Strategy and virtually eclipsed the previous Headline Goal. This was to be endorsed at the June 2004 Council meeting. Its objective was simpler and more concrete and focused on the generation of rapid reaction force packages whose core would be Battlegroups, battalion-type units made up of 1,500 men and including both combat support as well as combat support services[5]. These Battlegroups would be supplemented by air and naval capabilities, including landing assets, and an aircraft carrier with its fighter wing and escort. They should be available within 5-10 days and be sustainable for an initial period of 30 days, with possible extension to 120 days with appropriate resupply. In addition, they should be able to operate simultaneously in two different operations[6]. Unfortunately, these Groups, in theory operational since 2007, have not been jointly exercised or deployed in any military operation, possibly due to a lack of political consensus and the complexity of their implementation and financing.

4.2.4. Progress since the Treaty of Lisbon

The Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, established additional instruments to advance Europe's defence and military capabilities. These include the creation of an EU External Action Service (EEAS) which began in December 2010, as well as the possibility of common military forces when states decide to make such an effort in the future. In addition, the Treaty included, for the first time, a mutual defence clause (Article 42(7) TEU equivalent to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty) and a clause on solidarity in the face of terrorist attacks and man-made disasters (Article 222 TFEU). The Treaty defined a new instrument called Permanent Structural Cooperation (PESCO), which made it possible to establish more binding commitments between Member States in matters of security and defence.

5 The NATO Response Force (NRF), created in 2002, is the only rapid reaction force currently in existence. Other multinational forces such as the Eurocorps, the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) or the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) or the Franco-German brigade, although formed by some Member States, do not have a truly European character.

6 This target, however, is somewhat insufficient if one considers that the UN force generation, its most likely replacement, would take about six months to complete (Quille 2006).

The aforementioned actions have made it possible to create an institutional framework on the basis of which we can begin to speak of European military capabilities. Despite this, the results achieved in terms of capabilities have certainly been limited. Thus, the general conclusion of the 2007 Progress Catalogue, according to the EU's "Development of European Military Capabilities" document of February 2010 stated that:

> "... the EU, with a vision to 2010, has the capability to conduct the full spectrum of ESDP operations within the parameters of strategic planning assumptions with varying levels of operational risk arising from identified shortfalls. Troop transport to theatre, deployment, protection and acquisition of information superiority are considered critical."

Reading between the lines of this statement suggests significant shortfalls in military capabilities and the need for US external assistance to complement them. This is strongly attested to by the latest interventions in Libya (2011), despite 11 Member States intervening, and in Mali (2013-2014)[7]. The limits and shortcomings of the CSDP have clearly manifested themselves during the recent Sudanese refugee crises in Chad, Libya, Mali, Central African Republic and Ukraine (Perruche et al. 2015).

These crises have once again and notably highlighted the lack of recognised common interests, shared ambitions and unity of action among Europeans in foreign and defence policy. In this sense, these authors highlight the disproportion between Europe's weak capacity for joint action in defence compared to its wealth and economic power.

We will return to this issue once the technological and industrial base that these capabilities require has been examined.

4.3. The technological and industrial base to support capability development

As mentioned at the beginning, the complexity and sophistication of many military capabilities require a relatively advanced technological and industrial base to achieve them. In this sense, Europe has such a technological and industrial base, although these capabilities vary considerably among its Member States, conditioned ultimately by their technical and industrial development and the importance they have given to the defence. France is the nation with the strongest defence industry, followed by the United Kingdom, although its exit from the EU has considerably eroded this base, complicating the desired European autonomy in this area. It is followed by Germany and Italy. Slightly further behind are nations such as Sweden and Spain, and possibly the Netherlands. The defence industry in Central and Eastern Europe is considerably smaller. Indeed, its industry was clearly in a state of obsolescence after the fall of the Berlin Wall, which required a major overhaul, with Poland and the Czech Republic having the most developed industry. The most important companies are EADS, Leonardo and Thales, as BAE Systems should be considered outside the sector. These companies are

7 The EU has not been directly involved as an actor in the recent Syrian conflict either.

characterised as global rather than European players. Two-thirds of the industry's revenues are concentrated in these companies.

4.3.1. The problem of national industrial policies

The industrial policy of the Member States in this sector has always been characterised by favouring domestic suppliers over offers from foreign companies, even if they were European. This is mainly due to reasons of national autonomy or sovereignty (which are somewhat outdated in view of European progress in this area), as well as favouring a sector that is considered particularly technology-intensive and innovative and with potential positive spill over effects on other economic sectors, although this has not always been empirically demonstrated[8]. Only when national industrial capacities are perceived to be insufficient to obtain the means, within a reasonable time and at a reasonable cost, is it decided to purchase from foreign companies (not always European), sometimes resorting to offset-type agreements whereby part of the production and maintenance of the product is carried out by local companies.

These national policies have ultimately had a negative effect on the sector from a European perspective. Indeed, the defence market in Europe is fragmented, with insufficient national demand to obtain the economies of scale associated with these developments, while unnecessary duplication of productive means has been generated. Moreover, the shortage of national suppliers has led to monopoly situations that may have facilitated market abuse positions with a negative effect on quality and final price. This problem has only been overcome in the most serious cases, such as the aeronautical sector, where the high level of investment required has led to the creation of international programmes involving several Member States, which, on the one hand, makes it possible to increase the technological and industrial resources needed for the research and development phase, essential for obtaining an advanced, high-quality product, and, on the other hand, to increase the size of the market by combining the demand for equipment and systems in the participating States, which makes it possible to produce a more affordable product thanks to the economies of larger aggregate demand. This has been the case for the Eurofighter aircraft, the A-400M or the Future Combat Air System (FCAS)[9], and also explains the formation of European transnational companies such as EADS or MBDA.

4.3.2. Main characteristics of the sector

A review of the industry in this sector shows that its aerospace and electronics sector has a more globalised and diversified product portfolio compared to companies in the land and na-

8 Sometimes the need to preserve the secrecy of certain military developments has delayed the diffusion of certain technologies.

9 Also known as the Next Generation Weapons System, this is a sixth-generation aircraft capable of managing a group of drones, the development of which is to be undertaken jointly by France, Germany and Spain. This project competes with the similar Tempest project led by the UK and Italy. However, Europe does not appear to have sufficient capabilities to tackle both projects simultaneously.

val sector which have a more specialised portfolio. The land and naval sector show a greater dispersion, which offers scope for efficiency-enhancing restructuring. However, the industrial consolidation needed in the latter two sectors has often been blocked by Member States.

The aerospace sector is the most advanced, although European industry is weak in unmanned aircraft - a growing market segment - and engine technology. While in helicopters, missiles and engines they are good exporters, in combat aircraft they fail to compete with the US. The land sector is capable of supplying major systems such as artillery, battle tanks, armoured infantry vehicles and small arms, as well as ammunition. However, the number of producers seems excessive. The naval sector is capable of producing surface ships and submarines including nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. The most competitive products in this sector are of French and German origin. The sector also shows overcapacity. Key ancillary industries include the production of torpedoes, guns, sonar, radar and combat systems. The military electronics sector includes the production of air defence systems, radar, sonar, avionics and command and control systems. In cyber defence, Europe relies on hardware equipment and is less advanced than the US. Technical and industrial capabilities in this sector are key to the ability to operate in a network (EP 2013, 46).

In summary, it can be said that Europe's technological and industrial limitations adversely affect the procurement of military capabilities. Its main challenge is to maintain its capability to develop and produce military means with a rather limited R&D and procurement budget, as will be demonstrated below. This requires maintaining mastery of certain technologies that are critical to certain capabilities. According to the EDA Capability Development Plan (2008, 19, 42, 43 and 47) it is necessary to remain at the state of the art in microelectronics, communication systems, sensors, materials and life science and energy. Other important technology areas are nanotechnologies, sensor networks, explosives and rocket engines.

4.4. EU actions to support capacity building

The EU has attempted by various means to address some of the problems and constraints mentioned above and has produced several documents, directives and regulations aimed at strengthening the technological and industrial base, some dating back to 1994[10]. However, the lack of an adequate policy framework limited the success of these initial attempts. To promote the industrial sector, the Commission drafted two important directives. The first on public procurement in the field of security and defence (2009/81/EC) and the second on intra-Community trade in military equipment (2009/43/EC) aimed at facilitating exports between Member States. Another more important development came in June 2013 with the Commission's Communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient security and defence sector"[11]. This identified the main problems in the sector and set out a number of

10 COM (94) 319 final, COM (96) 10 final; COM (1997) 583 final; COM (2006) 779 final; COM (2003) 113 final; COM (2007) 764 Final.
11 COM (2013) 542 final.

actions to address them. The publication of this document was followed by four important developments, which are discussed below.

4.4.1 A global strategy

The first was the publication of the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) in June 2016, a far more ambitious strategy than the previous one. It clearly set out five priority areas in which to strengthen the EU's foreign and security policy, an important reference for identifying European capabilities, and a plan to implement this strategy was proposed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy[12] [13]. A plan to implement this strategy was proposed by the High Representative in November (HR/VP 2016), which details the Union's level of ambition in somewhat greater detail, identifying possible missions and thirteen concrete actions to achieve this level, which was favourably received by the Foreign Affairs Council, and which would be adopted a month later by European leaders. As part of this comprehensive approach, NATO and the EU signed a joint declaration at the 2016 Warsaw summit articulating the desire to 'give new impetus and substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership'. In November, the High Representative, in cooperation with the European Defence Agency, presented the European Defence Action Plan or ECAP (EC 2016). It aimed to deepen cooperation, pool and share resources, increase joint capabilities and achieve a stronger defence sector. This plan included the creation of a European Defence Fund as discussed below. In March 2017, another essential element, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EU Military Staff, was to be launched.

4.4.2. The materialisation of Permanent Structured Cooperation

The second, perhaps the most important step, has been the materialisation in December 2017 of the so-called Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) which has finally been signed by all 25 Member States with the exception of Denmark and Malta[14]. Originally included in the Lisbon Treaty (article 42.6), it is a key element in consolidating a Europe of defence. Its purpose is to

12 The UK's exit from the European Union in June of that year, however, has weakened the means at its disposal, although attempts have been made to mitigate this with the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), an agreement led by France and formed by 13 European nations in 2018, which seeks to facilitate the UK's contribution to the EU's overall capabilities and the generation of an expeditionary force when circumstances so require. However, its participation in other European initiatives such as the European Defence Fund or Permanent Structured Cooperation is particularly difficult after its exit. In this regard, no mechanism has yet been devised to enable its participation in these initiatives.

13 Other important agreements in this period on CSDP have been a Maritime Security Strategy, a cyber defence policy framework, and a policy framework for systematic and long-term defence cooperation (Solana 2015, 5). Another important agreement was the development of an energy security strategy in 2014. In April 2016, a joint framework for countering hybrid threats was agreed in clear reference to the tactics employed by the Russian Federation.

14 Initially intended for a few Member States wishing to be more active in this area, Germany's desire to be inclusive, leaving no one out, has led to a significant watering down of the commitments and a more ambiguous wording of the commitments.

achieve, on a voluntary basis, a more binding commitment by the Member States to tackle the most severe missions by providing military capabilities with a higher level of demand. The aim is therefore to achieve greater coherence, continuity, coordination and collaboration in order to achieve a common defence and security and a force package covering the full spectrum of defence and security needs. This Cooperation will be developed on the basis of a list of common objectives and commitments to cover the level of ambition set out in the Global Strategy, thus fostering the EU's strategic independence. Participating States have agreed on twenty legally binding commitments to invest, plan, develop and operate defence capabilities. Their degree of fulfilment is assessed annually by the High Representative on the basis of the National Implementation Plan submitted by the Member States and evaluated in the so-called Coordinated Annual Defence Review (CARD). One of the most important commitments is participation in collaborative projects related to capability development and operations.

PESCO has created a new instrument for coordinated capability development in the EU, as Member States are required to submit their capability development plans, allowing full transparency and openness to comments and suggestions from partners for more effective cooperation. This will facilitate the rationalisation of existing assets and the abandonment of those that are duplicated or not interoperable. Integrated defence planning is also necessary to establish the pooling and sharing framework to ensure deployment and interoperability in future EU operations (Solana 2015, 16).

This framework enables common planning, harmonisation of requirements and a collaborative approach to identified capability gaps. It results in projects in capabilities and operational domains. This allows for deeper cooperation that goes beyond political consensus among all Member States. These more binding commitments facilitate the development of common defence capabilities, which are intended to be achieved through a broad set of projects among participating Member States under the authority of the European Council. The EU Military Staff will have responsibilities for the evaluation of operational projects, while the European Defence Agency will have responsibilities for capability development. The number of approved projects currently stands at 60[15], a figure that seems too high for Europe's budgetary possibilities in this area. However, the capabilities developed would be the property of the Member States[16].

4.4.3. The Capacity Development Plan

The EU Capability Development Plan (CDP) tentatively established in 2008 was consolidated in 2018 with the launch of the EUGS. It is a planning and decision-making tool that provides

15 See https://pesco.europa.eu/

16 An alternative proposed in EP (2016, 61) would be to endow the EU itself with increasing capabilities so that it can directly acquire certain equipment necessary for the CSDP in the same way as has been done with the acquisition of satellites for the Galileo and Copernicus programmes. This option, although interesting, seems difficult to materialise as long as a European army is not established.

an overview of the capabilities of EDA Participating States and identifies short-, medium- and long-term needs. It aims to identify capability gaps, identify European capability development priorities and thus influence national plans and programmes. As part of this Plan, a decision support tool called the Coordinated Annual Defence Review (CARD) was developed as a guide to improve cooperation among participating Member States as mentioned above. Its purpose is to provide a picture of the capability set, monitor the implementation of European capability development and research, development and technology priorities, assess the state of defence cooperation in Europe and identify opportunities for cooperation. This tool is under the leadership of the EDA and the review is done on a voluntary basis. Its purpose is to increase coordination and coherence among participating Member States. The first full review was conducted in November 2020. This review noted that current capacities are insufficient for the level of ambition set and that technology research cooperation remains relatively low. It also identified 100 opportunities for collaboration between Member States[17]. These can be grouped into six main capability areas: battle tanks, systems for the soldier, maritime patrol vessel, anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, countermeasures against unmanned aerial systems, defence in space (collision avoidance protection of assets in space and observation, communications and navigation satellites) and enhanced military mobility.

4.4.4. The European Defence Fund

The third step was the creation in 2017 of the European Defence Fund (EDF) to finance the development of European military and defence capabilities[18]. Its purpose is to overcome the research and procurement limitations of Member States by boosting the pooling of their resources and thus increase the efficiency of investments in defence capabilities when they are approached from a purely national perspective[19]. Ultimately it aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the European defence industry and promote cooperation through investments in research, development and technologies. Its budget for the period 2021-2027 is €7,953 million and projects involving three companies from at least two Member States are eligible. While research will primarily be carried out by the Commission, development projects involve a minimum Commission funding of 20%, supplemented by contributions from Member States, although in some cases this figure may be higher. This would amount to around €5 billion per year for capacity building. For its management, the Commission has created the Directorate General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS)[20]. In order to exploit synergies in capability development, the Commission has drawn up an *Action Plan on synergies between civil defence*

17 https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/eu-lacks-defence-capabilities-to-meet-strategic-autonomy-goals/

18 COM (2018) 476 final.

19 More details on this Fund can be found in Martí (2020a).

20 Proposed projects are approved by a qualified majority of Member States. The Fund's regulations place significant restrictions on the participation of foreign companies in the Fund, something that prompted a vociferous protest in 2019 from the US, driven by its business lobby.

and space industries in 2021[21]. Actions include the creation of roadmaps for selected technologies and the launch of flagship projects, an innovation incubator and transnational defence innovation networks. And to support the development of the necessary technologies, it has developed a *Roadmap on Critical Security and Defence Technologies in 2022*[22].

Another important initiative was the *Military Mobility Action Plan*[23] developed in 2018, which aims to improve the mobility of EU armed forces, in particular their ability to sustain, at short notice, large-scale movements of military assets, which is essential to improve the EU's rapid response to a conflict situation. The plan is endowed with €1.69 billion for the period 2021-2027.

The '*pooling and sharing*' initiative, which aims to pool and share certain capabilities, has so far been limited in scope. Its most significant successes are the *European Air Transport Command* (EATC), which aims to plan, command and control the missions of approximately 170 transport and in-flight refuelling aircraft from seven nations (Pertusot 2015), and the EU Satellite Centre (EUSC), located in Torrejón de Ardoz. Similar initiatives seem particularly needed in other areas, such as helicopters or medical support.

4.4.5. The Strategic Compass

In March 2022, the last particularly important step was the publication of the Strategic Compass, which provides the EU's vision, ambition and strategic priority in the field of security and defence. It sets out important capability goals to be achieved following an analysis of the challenges and threats facing the EU. These include:

- The development by 2023 of a rapid deployment capability of a modular force of up to 5,000 troops, including land, maritime and naval components and their strategic enablers[24, 25].
- Strengthening the capability to plan and direct military operations.
- Boosting a unique intelligence analysis capability at the European level.
- Creating tools to protect against hybrid threats, avoiding manipulation and interference of foreign information.
- Strengthen the EU's cyber defence policy and cyber intelligence capabilities.
- Strengthen maritime security awareness mechanisms and extend a coordinated maritime presence in other seas and oceans of interest, especially in the Indo-Pacific.
- Develop a space strategy in the field of security and defence.

21 COM (2021) 70 final.
22 COM (2022) 61 final.
23 JOIN (2018) 5 final.
24 These enablers include strategic lift, force protection, health assets, cyber defence, communications, intelligence, surveillance and satellite reconnaissance.
25 This is seen as the germ of a future truly European army, in line with the wishes expressed by French president Emmanuel Macron. However, the main problem facing this army is what command it will be under and what rules it will employ if it has to intervene, an open question that requires a degree of European unity that is currently lacking.

The ultimate goal is to develop forces that cover the full spectrum of the missions and operations set out in the ambition level and that are agile, mobile, interoperable, technologically advanced[26], energy efficient and resilient. To this end, and despite the progress cited above, there is still a long way to go, as acknowledged on page 47, noting that the EU is under-equipped to deal with the full range of threats and challenges that may arise, in particular those listed below.

4.4.6. Europe's main weaknesses

First, Europeans have limited force projection capabilities abroad, including both strategic and tactical transport, as well as the logistical support that such deployments require, which is especially important when action is needed in areas far from European territory (e.g., the Sahel, Central Africa, the Gulf of Guinea, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East or the Persian Gulf). Second, they have limited command, control and communications infrastructure to direct their operations, as well as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance where the support of satellites and drones is essential. Third, Europeans have limited capabilities in air defence (against aircraft and drones) and missile defence[27]. This is particularly important with the development of hypersonic missiles[28] in conjunction with the abandonment of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty by the US and Russia. Fourth, Europeans have limited capabilities in long-range precision weapons capable of neutralising a potential adversary's military capabilities, which is essential if undesirable spillover effects are to be reduced. Fifth, Europeans are weak in cyberdefence that could be exploited by a potential adversary, something that is being compensated for by various initiatives such as the creation of the Cybersecurity Competence Center. Finally, Europeans have nuclear capabilities, provided by France[29], although this arsenal is relatively small compared to that of their most important adversary, the Russian Federation[30].

These European weaknesses can be important in scenarios where the intervention of combat forces is necessary, such as the invasion of its territory, blocking the supply of certain raw materials and energy products (maritime security and the fight against piracy), or the need to project forces into weak or failed states in its neighbourhood, as well as in large-scale humanitarian disasters.

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26 A Defence Innovation Hub, a Critical Technologies Observatory and a Global Strategic Research Agenda are planned.

27 This gap is currently filled by NATO with radar stations in Turkey, Poland and Romania and four frigates with AEGIS missiles located in Spain.

28 These are long-range cruise-type missiles (1,200 miles) with a speed exceeding Mach 5, which makes them particularly difficult to defend against, such as an aircraft carrier.

29 This arsenal, consisting of some 300 warheads, is not at the disposal of NATO or the EU. Its use depends exclusively on its President (Le Gleut and Conway-Mouret 2019).

30 Another weakness not analysed in depth is the availability levels of fighter, transport and attack helicopters which are below 50 per cent in some Member States (Giegerich and Hackett, 2022). This suggests that investments in the maintenance of defence assets may also be lower than what is really needed. In this regard, it should be noted that the costs of maintaining a system in service may equal or even exceed the cost of development and production, without even considering mid-life system upgrades (Kirkpatrick, 2019).

The main problem is that procuring any of these capabilities takes considerable time and resources and requires, in most cases, the collaboration of several Member States to obtain them. Barrie et al. (2019) have conducted an interesting exercise analysing two hypothetical scenarios in which the EU would take over its defence without US support. Their conclusions are that it would actually take Europe between one and two decades to achieve reasonable autonomy, which would require investments of no less than $357 billion.

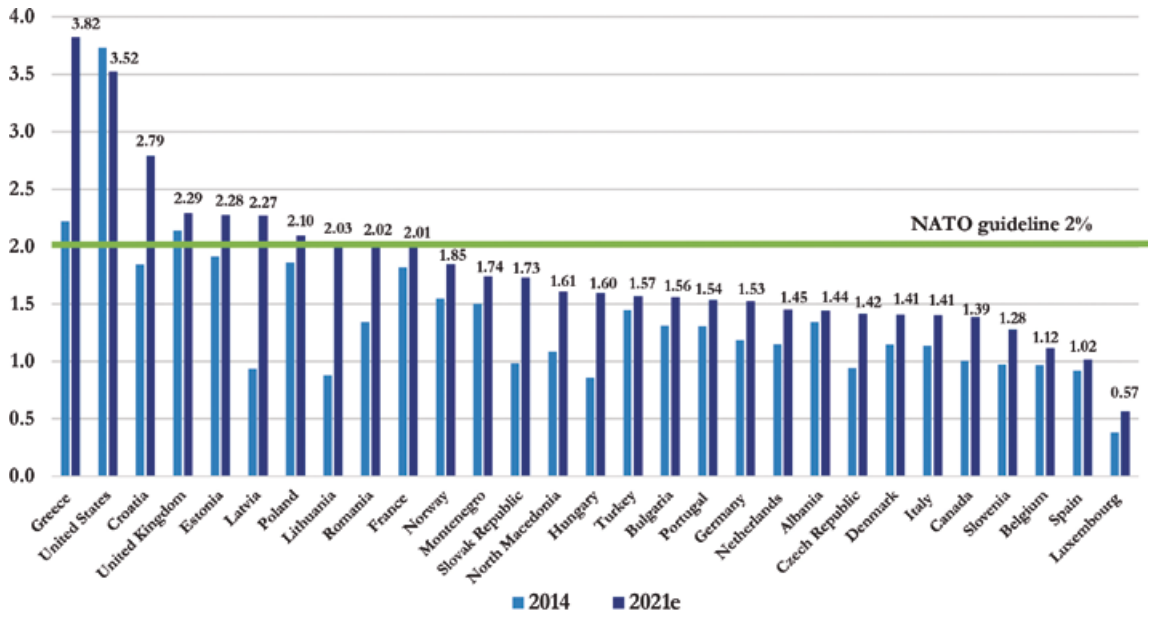
4.5. Main problems and difficulties

Despite the progress made in recent years, Europe's difficulties in improving its military capabilities to give it a relevant role as an international actor remain for several reasons.

4.5.1. Coordination problems in the procurement of resources

Firstly, the obvious economies of scale of joint developments require consensus to be reached on these developments. In this sense, different national visions may lead to very different timetables that prevent them, or very different requirements whose implementations require different versions that end up absorbing the savings initially envisaged. Moreover, national preferences may lead to the duplication of military capabilities that are unnecessary in a European framework, an issue over which states may wish to preserve their sovereignty. In other cases, the requirement for *juste retour,* the unanimity of decision-making processes or the bureaucratic arrangements of such programmes are a source of cost overruns that can lead to diseconomies from this pooling of resources. While PESCO has developed instruments to solve or at least alleviate this problem, it remains to be seen whether such joint procurement is really effective.

Figure 1- GDP share invested in defence by NATO members (source: NATO)



4.5.2. The defence investment problem

Secondly, defence spending in many Member States is below the 2% figure agreed at NATO summits, compared to 3.52% in the US as shown in the figure, while investment in equipment falls short of the recommended 20% of total defence spending. Moreover, European investment in research and development for military capabilities was around €8 billion in 2020 according to Eurostat, a figure that contrasts with $64.5 billion in the US, seven times higher. And although Europe invests a considerable amount in research and development (Horizon Europe), these amounts can only be devoted to civilian developments, even if some of them may have military applications. These budgetary constraints may scupper many of the projects envisaged in PESCO, which may lead to the development of European military capabilities having a generation cycle shorter than that required by a framework of arms competition, which may prevent it from achieving operational leadership[31]. Indeed, accelerated technological progress requires a constant process of modernisation, updating and creation of new capabilities to ensure the success of the mission. In this regard, major technological advances are expected in some fields that could have a significant impact on defence, such as increasing automation, secure networked information services[32], artificial intelligence, robots and autonomous systems (drones, satellites), big data, new materials, bio- and nanotechnologies, advanced propulsion and quantum computing, all of which require considerable economic investment.

4.5.3. Interference with national industrial policies

Member States' conservative industrial preferences and policies favour domestic supply, or alternatively foreign supply coupled with an industrial offset agreement[33], practices covered by Article 346 TFEU. This favours unilateralism and a lack of cooperation, which is particularly necessary to obtain certain capabilities given the different economies generated by arms cooperation. Moreover, procurement from suppliers outside the EU reduces the desired strategic autonomy[34]. This behaviour can lead to significant, and in some cases excessive[35], duplication of weapons systems and an excess of industrial capabilities, which, however, prevents European industry from maintaining its international leadership. Thus, EPSC (2015) notes that Europe maintains 154 different weapon systems compared to 27 in the US.

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31 Member States would need to invest €90 billion to reach the 2% of GDP figure mentioned above, which would mean increasing their current spending by 45%. Currently, staff expenditure is around 49%, leaving only 21% for the renewal of means (ECA 2019).

32 In other words, protected against cyber-attacks.

33 This may be the case for purchases of aircraft such as the F-16 or F-35 (JSF) from the US.

34 Alliances and bilateral agreements with other nations may explain these external purchases. Thus, Belgium has preferred the F-35 over the French Rafale for its ability to carry NATO weapons, a consistent decision within the Atlantic Alliance (Le Gleut and Conway-Meurat 2019).

35 A certain diversity in weaponry is beneficial in that it gives armed forces greater operational flexibility and makes it more difficult for an adversary to neutralise them.

Some figures corroborate this limited willingness to collaborate: Europeans invested only €140 million in 2020 in collaborative R&T programmes, which is only 6% of the total budget, and €4.1 billion in collaborative procurement programmes, which is only 11% of their equipment purchases (EDA, 2021). These figures are well below the convergence targets agreed in the EDA by its Member States (20% and 35% respectively).

4.5.4. The problem of securing the supply

Ensuring the security of supply of certain components required by weapon systems is a difficult problem to solve. Indeed, increasing globalisation is leading to the dominance of technologies for certain subsystems and components in the supply chain being located outside national or European territory, either because of their better performance or because they are more economical to produce, even if their acquisition from abroad undermines their autonomy. The growing complexity of weapons systems, the desire to unbundle the production chain and retain only the tasks with the highest added value, prolongs this chain and generates greater industrial interdependence. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many companies have outsourced their production to third countries in order to remain competitive (EP 2013, 51), a problem that also afflicts the United States[36]. This dependence is often on key components of US or Israeli origin (Martí 2020)[37]. The need to guarantee this supply throughout the life cycle of the system can entail considerable costs in terms of maintaining industrial capacities with low utilisation, an option whose cost is not always considered.

4.6. Summary

In the light of the above, it can be said that Europe will continue to lag behind the US in this area for a long time to come. This is not necessarily a bad thing, given that Europe has always benefited from and exploited US advances in military capabilities and means, which has undoubtedly reduced the amount it has had to spend on defence R&D, although this generates a dependence that many Europeans consider inappropriate. Some economic figures clearly show this dependence, with Europe exporting $7.3 billion in defence equipment and services to the US while importing $63 billion (Le Gleut and Conway-Mouret 2019). In the long term, China's potential to develop military capabilities is worrying[38]. China's emergence as the world's second-largest economic power gives it considerable scope for action on this issue. Indeed, China is taking the lead in particularly significant sectors such as quantum computing and outer space.

36 On this issue see Matthews (2019) or Braddon (2019). The latter notes that China currently supplies more than 50% of the microelectronics purchased by the Department of Defence, which is a particularly high risk. A study by the Joint Research Centre - JRC (2016) has also found supply problems in some raw materials. Russia has also experienced problems with Ukrainian suppliers since its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. The microelectronics for its GLONASS satellites are also produced outside Russia.

37 One of the problems that may arise is the need for authorisation from the nation supplying these components for export to third countries, an issue that affects the aforementioned strategic autonomy.

38 It is estimated that China's defence R&D budget could be double the total value of the EU (EP 2016, 53).

Some figures clearly illustrate this change. Thus, SIPRI (2018, 166) points out that, together, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy invested 2.6 times more in defence than China in 2008, while in 2018 this value had fallen to 0.78[39]. And, according to Wikipedia, China spent $514.798 billion on R&D in 2019, higher than Europe's $468,954 billion and very close to the US's $612,714 billion. This is particularly worrying when we consider that the defence sector is fuelled by a large set of technologies that come from civilian R&D[40].

4.7. Conclusions and possible recommendations

This chapter has revealed the problems and difficulties Europeans are encountering in developing military capabilities appropriate to the strategic environment in which they find themselves immersed. The development of a legal framework that allows the EU to take the lead in this area has been a particularly slow process that has only reached sufficient maturity in the second decade of this century, although further steps in this area are required to achieve the desired objectives. Fiott (2018) illustrates these lower capabilities by showing that, in 2017, Europe deployed 52,000 personnel for missions abroad for the EU, NATO, OSCE, UN and other organisations compared to 208,000 for the US, i.e. a quarter, despite their defence budget gap being slightly less than half[41].

However, initiatives taken in recent years show a more assertive EU attitude in this area, which is a turning point, not only necessary to ensure the defence of its citizens, but also to project security and development to the rest of the world. However, reading the Strategic Compass reveals Europe's significant shortcomings in this area. Moreover, it has also become clear that its technological and industrial base presents problems that make it difficult to obtain these capabilities.

It should be noted that the UK's exit has led to a significant reduction in Europeans' military and industrial capabilities (around a quarter), but at least it has allowed progress to be made in this area, as the UK was reluctant to limit NATO's key role in defence in one way or another.

However, the development of European capabilities is not necessarily incompatible with NATO. On the contrary, a Europe with enhanced military capabilities would strengthen the Alliance's joint capabilities, improve its influence in NATO and enhance its own credibility as a partner. It should be borne in mind that Member States' military capabilities could meet both their NATO and CSDP commitments, provided that the means employed are designed to be able to interoperate in the missions required by both institutions. This is quite feasible in peacetime when there is always a relatively large excess capability available to deal with emergencies. However, it would not be so feasible in the event of a major crisis that would

39 Defence spending in the Russian Federation was only 37%.

40 It is estimated that 70-80% of the elements of a weapon system come from commercial sectors (Matthews, 2019).

41 According to the SIPRI database, US defence spending in 2020 was $801 billion, China's was $293 billion, while that of the 26 European Member States was $210 billion (€198,000) according to the EDA, excluding the UK and Denmark which were $60,675 and $4,980 respectively.

require simultaneous missions in two very different and demanding scenarios. This could be the case of the US being involved in a conflict (e.g. in the Pacific), coupled with a crisis in Europe facing a powerful neighbour; or for example a crisis more linked to NATO's defence of Europe and another crisis more linked to the EU in an area of influence such as, for example, the African continent. However, this scenario seems likely to occur only in extremely rare circumstances, as there is not such great dissension between the US and Europe on defence issues either, and it seems unlikely that in such conflicts, although different, both US and European interests would not be at stake and that these interests would not have considerable commonality. The problem, then, is to determine which duplication seems desirable and economically feasible and which seems unlikely and prohibitively expensive, which is always difficult to determine objectively. In real terms, however, it is worth noting that NATO still maintains, to a large extent, particularly significant military capabilities with a robust command structure and multinational rapid reaction forces capable of acting across the full spectrum of capabilities, including conventional, nuclear and ballistic and cruise missile defence, something that our US partner brings to the table to a large extent.

In this context, the Strategic Compass represents a further step forward, in which greater concreteness can be seen in various actions to make an EU in defence a reality, although they seem insufficient to achieve the objectives and challenges set out, something that is probably due to the desire of the Member States not to cede more sovereignty that would allow a greater level of commitment to be achieved. Thus the creation of an intervention force (the future germ of the European army) falls far short of the Headline Goal 2003 and 2010. In terms of capabilities, they are merely sketched out, pending future clarification, which prevents a detailed assessment of their limitations in carrying out certain missions. In other cases, actions are limited to reports, studies and proposals to the Member States or, simply, a significant margin is granted for their materialisation (some of them not visible until 2025).

Certainly, if Europe does not make progress in this area, and does not equip itself with the mechanisms and means necessary to act with its own voice, it could progressively lose its influence in the international framework. In this sense, the recent conflict in Ukraine is probably a strong stimulus to the political will to equip Europeans with greater military capabilities and greater autonomy in defence than it has had in the past.

In this context, a particularly active Spanish contribution to the procurement of European capabilities could be a particularly useful tool to support this sector of the economy and significantly improve the current capabilities of our armed forces and play a leading role in this area in the EU.

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5. Permanent Structured Cooperation

Beatriz Cózar-Murillo and Guillem Colom-Piella

5.1. Introduction

If there is one thing that characterises the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), it is its intergovernmental nature and the reluctance of the member states to cede part of their sovereignty. This is why highly flexible and versatile initiatives have been promoted, to bring together the different positions of the European capitals and of the Union itself.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is the institutionalised cooperation mechanism that has made promoting differentiated integration in defence matters possible thanks to how it is configured. Activated in 2017 and with its regulation fully developed already, including the provision for third states to participate, four waves of projects were able to be approved.

Four years and sixty projects later, PESCO, thanks to its coalition-of-the-willing concept, has enabled those member states that meet higher military capability criteria and have made more binding commitments to advance more rapidly and more closely in the development of military capabilities. As presented in the previous chapter, Article 42.6 together with Protocol 10 of the Treaty on European Union constitute the mechanism's raison d'être.

Despite its flexibility, this tool has managed to secure a total of 20 common and binding commitments that should guide its development and implementation. One is the aim is to come closer to meeting the 2% gross domestic product defence expenditure by the member states and to improve the interoperability and deployability of the forces of the 25 states currently participating in PESCO.

These will be some of the issues that will be presented in this contribution taking into consideration the content of the recently adopted Strategic Compass as well as the current scenario marked by the war in Ukraine. In addition, the milestones coming up in the next few months should be taken into account as they will have a special impact on the future of Permanent Structured Cooperation as a mechanism and its ongoing projects, as will be discussed below.

The results of the Defence Summit will be relevant. This meeting was announced by the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, in her 2021 State of the Union address, and will also be hosted by the French Presidency of the Council. Next, given the complementarity between European Union initiatives such as PESCO and sNATO, knowing the new strategic concept that will be adopted at the Madrid Summit in June will be important.

Permanent Structured Cooperation is also intrinsically linked to other initiatives such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the coordinated annual review of defence (CARD).

Therefore, the results of the projects awarded by the EDF in this tender and the second CARD results that identify areas of collaboration should be taken into account once they are known to ensure all initiatives and the CSDP itself are consistent.

In view of the complexity of the subject and its multitude of facets, only some of the most relevant issues of the state of the art of Permanent Structured Cooperation will be presented in the following pages, and the analysis will focus mainly on the most current and relevant aspects.

5.2. Current assessment: Four years and sixty projects later

Since Permanent Structured Cooperation was activated in December 2017, interest from both the European Union and its member states, as well as the defence industry, has only grown. This interest has allowed the mechanism to consolidate even though the tangible results of many projects will not materialise until the end of its second phase in 2025.

Through adopting the fourth wave of projects (Council of the European Union, 2021, November 16), a total of 60 projects are currently being developed under the PESCO framework.[1] The first two waves of projects adopted on 6 March 2018 and 19 November 2018 had 17 projects each, while the third wave adopted on 12 November 2019 had 13. However, one of the projects was cancelled by the participating member states.[2] These projects would cover a broad spectrum which include the following areas: training facilities (9); land, formations, systems (8); maritime (8); air, systems (10); cyber/C4ISR (10); enabling, joint (11); space (4).

Of the last 14 projects adopted by the Council of the European Union (2021, November 16) the following should be highlighted: 'Next Generation Small RPAS'[3] and 'Essential Elements of European Escort' (4E), coordinated by Spain; 'Medium size Semi-Autonomous Surface Vehicle', coordinated by Estonia; 'Strategic Air Transport for Outsized Cargo' led by Germany; and 'Defence of Space Assets (DoSA)' coordinated by France.

It should be recalled, as highlighted in the previous chapter, that the United Kingdom did not participate since the results of its referendum were already known and it would be

1 Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2008 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under Permanent Structured Cooperation of 16 November 2021. An overview of the projects can be found at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53013/20211115-pesco-projects-with-description.pdf

2 On 5 February 2020, the PESCO secretariat informed the Council that the project members decided to cancel the project 'EU Training Mission Competence Center (EU TMCC)'. See Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1746 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under Permanent Structured Cooperation (PSC) of 20 November 2021. https://www.pesco.europa.eu/project/european-union-training-mission-competence-centre/

3 See Ministry of Defence (2015). Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Master Plan, p. 17. Available at: https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/dgamdocs/plan-director-RPAS.pdf

leaving the EU. Malta does not adhere either due to a provision in its national law and Denmark avails itself of its CSDP opt-out clause.

However, this may change since due to the war in Ukraine the Danish government decided to call a referendum to decide whether to join the Common Security and Defence Policy and reverse its opt-out clause that has been in force in this area since 1992. A favourable vote would result in a situation in which all 27 member states would now be part of the CSDP.

The participation of the member states should be highlighted not only because it provides a clear example of differentiated horizontal and vertical integration in defence in the European Union, but also because of the different dynamics that take place thanks to the mechanism.[4] Without prejudice to the detailed discussion in the following chapter of this report, the behaviour of the so-called 'big four' stands out. This group is formed by those who could be considered the pioneers in European defence up to now: France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

It is these countries that have led the way, although logically the rationale behind participation and the degree of involvement in PESCO differs depending on the member state under analysis. In cases like Spain, for example, initiatives such as PESCO or the European Defence Fund can truly be a lifesaver for its defence industry, which has to compete with European industrial giants and is fearful of being absorbed by them.

The issue is not a trivial one, because to survive they will have to compete in a future market that will be marked by a series of emerging military technologies, the mastery of which will determine the failure not only of those companies that do not master them but also of those armies that do not use them. This is the case of artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, hypersonic and directed-energy weapons, quantum computing, biotechnology, and new materials and others (Villanueva, 2021). All of these areas require a hefty investment to make real progress, something that is a distant possibility for most Spanish companies in the industry given their small size and limited financial muscle.

Participation in PESCO projects will allow us to overcome this problem by pooling efforts. One clear example is the European Patrol Corvette (EPC) programme, thanks to which Navantia will be able to go beyond what its resources and experience alone allow, developing a more capable vessel with Naval Group and Fincantieri (through its NAVIRIS joint venture). It will also be able to leverage on its partners' commercial networks when bidding for future contracts for this type of vessel, which will maximize its export opportunities either because they have access to more markets or because regardless of who makes the sale, everyone manufactures a part. Even if they were not exported, given that there is a clear intention

4 See Biscop, S. (2017). Differentiated Integration in Defence: A Plea for PESCO. *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, ISBN 978-88-9368-026-4

on the part of the participating countries to acquire a good number of future corvettes, it is difficult to imagine that the programme might end in failure.

As Martí (2020) explains, a more competitive procurement framework will place greater demands on the industry and will force companies therein to become more international. This is important because although the Spanish defence industry is a net exporter, it is largely thanks to a few companies (just five account for 80% of sales destined to defence activities) (Ministry of Defence, 2019: 14). The rest are dependent on Ministry of Defence contracts and accustomed to Spanish practices. PESCO will help Spanish companies to become more competitive beyond national borders, which will benefit the entire sector and ultimately the country's security. This is because a state-of-the-art defence industry is a prerequisite for a capable armed forces.

A group that may also be altered by war in Ukraine. If prior to Russia's aggression it was already being argued that the four states were not in the same position, now, if the announcements regarding increases in defence budgets in the various member states materialise, there will surely be a rebalancing of powers within the EU (Cózar-Murillo, 2022).

However, not all projects involve the participation of all four, although it is true that France continues to participate in 21 projects in which it coincides with Germany, Italy, and Spain. Numbers, like words, are rarely random in international relations, so the fact that France has 21 connections with the other three members of the group can be interpreted as a distortion of the system. Even though the four states are pioneers, their investments in defence, their gross domestic products (GDP), and their industrial and technological capacities are very different. If objective criteria were applied, it would be difficult to find a situation in which France would converge with each of the other three countries in the same number of projects, which suggests that these connections have been forced. Forcing the formation of binomials and trinomials is a clear example of how differentiated integration in defence is promoted in practice.

However, these statements should be taken with a grain of salt for two reasons. First, and as will be discussed below, the specific degree of participation of each state and its companies in the projects is unknown. This, of course, is inevitably connected to the industrial capacity of each participating state. Secondly, the inclusiveness of certain participating member states (e.g. Czech Republic or Cyprus) is being forced through binomials or trinomials – therefore, in an exclusive manner– by countries like France that are system integrators so that their companies could equally monopolise these spaces without the need to count on the production of another national industry that benefit from the participation in binomials or trinomials, since the final sales volume by including other states and the potential market is theoretically greater (Calcara and Simón, 2022).

Data compiled by Daniel Fiott, 2021

Data source: European Defence Agency 2021 https://pesco.europa.eu

PESCO PROJECTS (NOV, 2021)
Cooperation between participating Member States after 60 projects

	AT	BE	BG	HR	CY	CZ	EE	FI	FR	DE	EL	HU	IE	IT	LV	LT	LU	NL	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	ES	SE
Austria		1	1	3	1	1	2	1	6	4	3	2		4	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	1
Belgium	1		2	2	3	4	3	3	11	7	3	5		6	3	2	2	7	8	3	4	2	3	9	3
Bulgaria	1	2		3	3	1	2	2	6	2	4	2	1	4	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	1
Croatia	3	2	3		3	1	2	1	5	2	5	3	1	4	1	3	1	3	3	1	2	3	2	4	1
Cyprus	1	3	3	3		1	1	1	6	3	8	3	1	5	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	5	1
Czechia	1	4	1	1	1		3	2	6	7	1	3		4	2	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	2	5	2
Estonia	2	3	2	2	1	3		3	6	3	1	3		4	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	1	2	3	2
Finland	1	3	2	1	1	2	3		5	4	1	2		4	2	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	4	1
France	6	11	6	5	6	6	6	5		21	10	8	1	21	4	4	6	12	10	9	12	5	4	21	7
Germany	4	7	2	2	3	7	3	4	21		4	6		11	2	3	5	11	8	7	6	5	3	15	3
Greece	3	3	4	5	8	1	1	1	10	4		3	1	11	2	2	2	3	4	5	5	2	3	7	1
Hungary	2	5	2	3	3	3	3	2	8	6	3			5	2	2	2	5	7	2	3	4	4	6	3
Ireland			1	1	1				1		1			1										1	
Italy	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	4	21	11	11	5	1		1	3	4	6	7	7	6	2	5	15	2
Latvia	1	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	4	2	2	2		1		1	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	1
Lithuania	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	4	3	2	2		3	1		3	3	2	1	2	2	2	3	1
Luxembourg	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	6	5	2	2		4	1	3		3	2	3	3	1	2	4	2
Netherlands	2	7	2	3	2	5	4	4	12	11	3	5		6	3	4	3		7	3	4	3	3	8	2
Poland	2	8	2	3	2	3	4	3	10	8	4	7		7	3	3	2	7		5	6	3	3	7	3
Portugal	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	8	7	4	2		7	1	1	3	2	4		5	2	1	10	2
Romania	3	4	3	2	1	2	4	1	12	6	5	2		6	3	2	3	4	6	6		2	2	5	3
Slovenia	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	5	5	2	4		2	1	2	1	3	3	2	2		2	3	1
Slovakia	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	4	3	3	4		5	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	2		3	3
Spain	3	9	3	4	5	5	3	4	21	15	7	6	1	15	2	3	4	8	7	10	5	3	3		5
Sweden	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	7	3	1	3		2	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	3	5	

Source: Fiott (2021).

It should be emphasised that there is a large number of projects whose composition is based on binomials or trinomials. Specifically, this is the case for 10 and 15 projects, respectively. Consequently, 41.6% of the total number of projects are carried out by only two or three member states and, moreover, as confirmed by the analysis carried out by Nádudvari, Etl and Bereczky (2020), the overall PESCO network is centralised in the big four so that the other member states align their projects with the 'core'. Similarly, they argue that the 'peripheral' states –e.g. the Visegrád group (V4)– would play a supporting role, thus revealing once again an imbalance between the countries of the east and west of the EU.

PESCO projects, one should recall, are eligible to receive funding from the European Defence Fund, and therefore the requirements to do so should be taken into account, particularly with regards to forming consortia.[5]

In addition, it should be noted that as a result of the war in Ukraine and the adoption of the EU Strategic Compass, the implementation of Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union is expected to be promoted. Under it, a group of member states that so wish and have the necessary capabilities may be entrusted with carrying out a CSDP mission. There is no doubt that if this also finally occurs, it will mean the introduction of new dynamics.

5.3. The participation of third states

One of the milestones of Permanent Structured Cooperation has been to allow third states to participate in individual projects on a one-off basis.

5 Article 10 of Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092, OJ L 170 of 12 May 2021, pp. 149–177.

After tough negotiations that lasted several years, the Council adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639 on 5 November 2020 that established those conditions and requirements that third states interested in participating in individual PESCO projects must meet. However, it will not be enough for them to submit a request to participate in a given initiative: they must be invited to participate on an ad-hoc basis.

Furthermore, the decision on the participation of a third state will also be ad-hoc, since it will depend both on the project chosen and on the country itself that would like to become involved. Therefore, compliance with the conditions will be a sine qua non requirement for the invitation to be extended. The third countries that participate will *not* become part of the participating states in the EU-25 group that make up PESCO.

The conditions, in addition to being specified in substantive or procedural requirements, also have a marked political and legal character in line with the nature and objectives of Permanent Structured Cooperation, so the added value that third states may contribute to the projects can be determined. For example, one of the requirements is that the partner state must share the values on which the European Union is based and not contravene the security and defence interests of both the EU and its member states. Therefore, despite rumours that Turkey is interested in participating, it seems that obtaining a favourable decision on its participation may not be possible to obtain.

The efforts made by the institutions, especially since the United Kingdom's desire to leave the European Union became known, and by the big four to push this issue to the forefront must be acknowledged. However, this decision is not a cure-all. Given its density and extreme laxity or ambiguity, together with the complexity of the language, the document is a veritable mess (Cózar-Murillo, 2021: 314). All these factors make it impossible to clarify the terms under which third states may participate.

In fact, there are already third states participating in EU military missions and operations,[6] but when moving to the PESCO level it should be noted that a third factor comes into play here: industry. Therefore, issues that have not been fully outlined in the decision on the conditions for third states to participate such as technological sovereignty may hinder the process. These issues are also part of the mechanism's own governance system.

However, although shortcomings may be noted even at the legal level, the circle of PESCO regulation could be considered officially closed. It is already in the full implementation phase, having responded to the first requests to participate in the 'Military Mobility' project on the part of the United States, Canada, and Norway, which will be presented below.

6 In this regard see Sánchez, M. A. (2016). 'Operaciones militares de la UE, participación de terceros Estados y Marruecos' ('EU Military Operations, Participation of Third States and Morocco'). Opinion Paper 10/2016, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies). https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2016/DIEEEO10-2016_CFSP_terceros_Marruecos_MiguelAcosta.pdf

5.3.1. Military Mobility

The 'Military Mobility' (MM) project has been in the spotlight since its launch. And its importance has only increased since.

This is because in addition to being coordinated by the Netherlands and one of the largest projects –with the participation of all the member states who are part of the Permanent Structured Cooperation, with the exception of Ireland– the United States, Canada, and Norway will join the project after submitting their applications. On 6 May 2021, the Council of the European Union adopted three decisions authorising the project coordinator to invite the triad of aforementioned third countries that will be the first to be invited to participate in an individual PESCO project.

According to the project description provided by the European Defence Agency (EDA), its objective is to enable the swift and seamless movement of military personnel and assets throughout the EU. This would circumvent bureaucratic hurdles when moving through EU member states by land (rail or road), sea, or air. In addition, military mobility itself constitutes one of the 20 'ambitious and more binding common' commitments that PESCO participating member states have undertaken.[7]

However, the PESCO project is only one of the initiatives at the institutional level to achieve military mobility since a large number of actors must be involved. Therefore, the 2018 European Commission's Action Plan on Military Mobility as well as various actions in the EU-NATO cooperation framework following the implementation of the EU-NATO declaration of 8 July 2016 would also be implemented right now. However, it is also argued that the political and intergovernmental character offered by PESCO is an advantage for military mobility by allowing member states to more easily push for results (Lazarou and Lațici, 2020: 5).

Similarly, it should be noted that this is not a task that can be carried out by a single actor, so coordination is key.[8] European military mobility is configured as cross-industry and multilevel due to the involvement of European, national, and sub-regional public and private actors coming from different sectoral areas (e.g. department of transport or public health) (Finabel, 2018). However, as Drent, Kruijver, and Zandee (2019: 10) point out, current relationships are informal and subject to the temporality of the individuals holding the related positions, so there is no institutionalised forum in which all stakeholders are represented. Not to mention the high costs derived from adapting and standardising infrastructures.

Despite the above, there are the 'Friends of Military Mobility Group' and 'the Group of 8' comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Germany, France, Finland, the

7 Commitment number 12 of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 establishing permanent structured cooperation and establishing the list of participating member states, states: 'With regard to availability and deployability of the forces, the participating Member States are committed to simplifying and standardising cross border military transport in Europe for enabling rapid deployment of military materiel and personnel'.
8 See "Resumen gráfico sobre la participación de partes interesadas" in Drent, M., Kruijver, K. and Zandee, D. (2019), p. 6.

Netherlands, and Norway. The aforementioned authors argue that this is a way to take into consideration states that do not belong to PESCO or NATO, like in the case of Norway, the United States and the United Kingdom, and Finland, respectively.

However, Norway has already signed the Administrative Arrangement to participate in the Military Mobility project as it already had the necessary agreement with the European Defence Agency, a prerequisite for participation in the projects. The United States has not yet been able to sign the Administrative Agreement establishing the conditions for its participation in the Military Mobility project, although work to sign the Agreement with the EDA began in December 2021.

The United Kingdom's case could be defined as particular and not only because it was once an EU member state. Given the strong, and to a high degree indivisible, links between the two parties, it was to be expected that the United Kingdom would be the first third state to show interest in participating in individual PESCO projects to maintain its connection with the CSDP.[9] However, the British government's position has changed from the time the decision was made to activate the mechanism and the whole Brexit process was gone through until now. Initially, it was said that the UK would only decide to participate in PESCO projects where there was clear added value for the UK, including in the area of the defence industry, making case-by-case decisions on whether to participate or not. However, it should be taken into consideration the concerns expressed by Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace regarding intellectual property rights and export control from participating in PESCO (Mills and Smith, 2021). For that reason, it seems unlikely that they will become involved in any project for the time being, although it is to be hoped that in the future the national and industrial interests of both parties will prevail.[10]

Finland's position –along with that of its neighbour, Sweden– will, however, undergo 'fundamental changes' in its security and defence as a result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. On 18 May, both countries simultaneously handed NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg their formal requests to join the Alliance.

Even more important is the fact that achieving military mobility is not a mere *desideratum* or that the PESCO project that pursues it does not pay off. In fact, this 'commitment of member states to simplify and standardize cross border military transport ' (EDA, 2022) was reaffirmed in the European Union's Strategic Compass.

It was reaffirmed as an objective in itself (Council of the European Union, 2022: 18-22) but also very directly linked to one of the Union's new CSDP initiatives: its Rapid Deployment Capability. Member states have agreed that they will allow the deployment of a modular

9 See López, D. and Ruiz, X. (2017). La Defensa europea después del Brexit. *Fundación Alternativas, Opex Working Paper, 87/2017.* ISBN: 978-84-15860-77-8.

10 See Shea, J. (2020). "European Defence After Brexit: A Plus or a Minus?' *European View,* 19, 1, p. 88. Available at https://www.martenscentre.eu/blog/european-defence-after-brexit-a-plus-or-a-minus/

force of up to 5,000 troops in uncertain environments that will be fully operational by 2025. However, exercises contributing to force readiness and interoperability are planned for 2023.

This purpose goes hand in hand with those concretely agreed upon to improve and strengthen military mobility. In addition to revising the Action Plan mentioned above, it has been proposed, among others, to initiate before the end of the current year 2022 an analysis of the capacity of EU transport infrastructures 'to sustain short-notice large scale movements' (Council of the European Union, 2022a: 20).

The final version of the Strategic Compass incorporates a greater number of references than the one leaked on 15 November when High Representative Josep Borrell was to present it to the member states. The reason can be found –and as expressly stated in the document– in Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

The Ministers of Defence of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg insist on these issues in their Declaration on 6 April 2022 (Ministerie van Defensie, 2022a, 6 April), as does the Minister of Defence of the Netherlands, Kajsa Ollongren, in her speech on the implementation of the Compass (Ministerie van Defensie, 2022b, 6 April: 5-6):

> 'We have to seize this momentum. The response to this crisis provides an opportunity to work more closely together. We should fight fragmentation in the development and acquisition of new defence systems. This will improve the interoperability of our armed forces. We have to enable our servicemen and women to effectively and safely cooperate on the ground'.

The lessons learned from the war in Ukraine have shown that the adoption of the 'Military Mobility' project is more necessary than ever. To give a simple example, during the Cold War –excluding units and equipment pre-positioned in Europe– the British and Americans had to travel 500 to 600 kilometres to get from the ports of Amsterdam to the front lines in Germany. Things are very different now. With the enlargements of both the European Union and NATO, the distances between these ports and a hypothetical front (Suwalki Gap) have increased by an additional 600 kilometres. There is the additional disadvantage that some of the new member states do not have road and rail networks as developed as the French or the Germans do. To guarantee both deterrence and, if necessary, the capacity to deliver supplies to the front lines, the 'Military Mobility' project is essential, as it will be the element that will ensure that the Force can be deployed wherever it is needed.

5.4. Scope and limitations of the mechanism

Permanent Structured Cooperation has managed to position itself at the epicentre of the Common Security and Defence Policy since through the promotion of 60 projects it acts as a catalyst for consolidating the policy itself and promoting greater integration in defence as

well as providing the scenario for an increase in and strengthening of synergies among the 25 participating member states. In the recent words of High Representative Josep Borrell (European External Action Service [EEAS], 2022):

> 'PESCO is a decisive contribution for the development of Europe's capacity to act autonomously. It is key for the development of strong and integrated defence capabilities available to the EU, which will allow us to react effectively to the most demanding circumstances'.

The mechanism, given its highly flexible nature, but at the same time its binding commitments, has quickly achieved a sophistication in the way defence capabilities are pooled and shared and to translate them into programmes that offer concrete results. In fact, between the late 1950s and 2017 there have only been a few instances of successful projects (e.g., the Alpha Jet and ASCOD programmes, and the initiative that led to the A-400M) as many of the initiatives were cancelled (e.g., the NFR-90 frigate replacement programme). Considering that the incentives in this pre-PESCO period could be as great or greater than today, the real game-changer has been the Permanent Structured Cooperation, which has provided a concrete legal framework that by including governance rules allows for differentiated defence integration.

Notwithstanding the above, despite having 60 projects under development at the moment, according to the PESCO Strategic Review one third of the projects are expected to be fully operational by 2025 (Council of the European Union, 2020). Despite the deadlines far in the future to develop projects of this magnitude, this does not apply equally to all initiatives.

A recent example is found in the 'EU Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security (CRRT)' project which was launched in 2018 and was fully operational in 2021. It was also the first 'PESCO capability project' activated in an operational context such as the war in Ukraine.

On the same day that the Russian aggression began, 24 February, the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence –the project coordinator– announced that the Rapid Response Team had been activated at the request of the Ukrainian government. Croatia, the Netherlands, Poland, and Romania are also participating in this project, as Spain, Finland, and Italy stopped participating at an earlier stage (EDA, 2022, 24 February).

Moreover, the variability of the timeframe depends not only on the size of the project itself and the domain into which it is inserted (e.g., achieving full operability of the CRRT and the European Medical Command has been faster than the European Patrol Corvette (EPC), which requires a long R&D, design, and, if necessary, construction process), but also on the national and industrial interest in accelerating the processes, as well as on the amount of economic resources invested.

Although there are many factors to be taken into account when rolling out projects (participants' industrial and innovative capacity, political intentions, project complexity), the fun-

damental variable is economic. This is so because, *ceteris paribus*, with a greater investment it would be possible to shorten lead times by hiring more specialists, building more capable facilities or prototypes more quickly, and so on.

It is no secret that shortage of funds is one of the greatest scourges of the member states' defence policies and also the element that differentiates them. Moreover, this applies not only to Permanent Structured Cooperation projects but also to the European Defence Fund. At present, and by way of comparison, the EDF is endowed with approximately eight billion euros for 2021–2027, while the US Department of Defence has asked to increase its military research and development to $130.1 billion (US Department of Defence, 2022, 28 March). If approved, the US innovation envelope for 2023 will be roughly equivalent to the total estimated 2021 defence budgets of the three biggest European military powers, Germany, France, and Italy, which would amount to $135.731 billion (NATO, 2021, June 11).[11]

Moreover, it is not only a matter of providing the European Defence Fund with more resources or of member states increasing the expenditure devoted to their respective defence budgets but also of investing better. There must be total and coherent coordination along all initiatives to align means, modes, and ends. It would not make sense, for example, to disregard the Capability Development Plan and the priority areas for collaboration identified in the early results of the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), making them out of sync with projects receiving EDF funding or being developed under PESCO.

For this reason, the indivisibility of the three major initiatives in this area, PESCO, CARD, and EDF, should be emphasised. The Strategic Compass takes up this idea and gives them a special place, given that the trend among member states, as agreed, is to continue promoting capacity building.

Similarly, the content of the Strategic Compass with regard to PESCO –and also to the EDF– should be connected to the Versailles Declaration adopted on 10–11 March as a direct consequence of the war in Ukraine (Council of the European Union, 2022b). One of the most significant points in the Declaration is the reaffirmation of the commitment to 'increase substantially defence expenditures, with a significant share for investment, focusing on identified strategic shortfalls, and with defence capabilities developed in a collaborative way within the European Union'. This commitment was enshrined in the Strategic Compass (Council of the European Union, 2022a: 36) and is identified with five of the binding commitments undertaken within the framework of Permanent Structured Cooperation.[12]

However, one of the main limitations of the mechanism when it comes to ensuring compliance with the commitments made, including the 2% of GDP allocated to defence, is how to penalise non-compliers. It would not only be a matter of investing more and better in defence but also of creating incentives to stimulate investments and promote new financing

11 Conversion to US dollars at the exchange rate of 20 April 2022.

12 See Commitments 1 to 5 in Annex II of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017, *op. cit.*

solutions. For example, the Compass includes a commitment to adopt measures to promote and facilitate the defence industry's access to private financing, including the possibilities offered by the European Investment Bank, or to propose to the European Commission a VAT exemption to support joint procurement and co-ownership of collaboratively developed defence capabilities within the EU.

As mentioned in the previous section, another limitation of the mechanism is related to its governance. Issues such as technological sovereignty, intellectual property rights, or industrial returns can be a real hindrance to project development if the rules of the game are not clear to all players. What is more, it is no longer just a matter of filling possible gaps in the PESCO regulation –beyond those mentioned in relation to the participation of third states– but also of safeguarding the system and ensuring that initiatives do not end up responding to industrial or national interests over and above the European Union's own strategic objectives. In other words, how PESCO operates must be monitored to avoid the mechanism being corrupted if member states use it to their advantage and consolidate their position rather than contribute to building the defence market.

The latter would be the Permanent Structured Cooperation's greatest potential, able to exponentially boost the integration of the defence market even when the interests of all the actors involved are not always the same. In the same way, this is closely related to the projects that are adopted in the end, given that one might ask oneself whether they effectively respond to the capacities that the EU wants to develop or to the member states', the industry's, or all of the above.

According to Billon-Galland and Efstathiou (2019: 9–12), the fact is that most of the shortcomings to achieve the Level of Ambition proposed by the European Union are not covered by PESCO projects despite how numerous and popular they may be. Moreover, as the above authors rightly point out, 'projects are often at the low-end of the capability spectrum and consist mostly of what Member States were ready to develop at the national level'. In addition, Biscop (2020: 5–7) notes that the list of projects 'does not effectively address the priority capability shortfalls that the member states have commonly identified'.

Therefore, taking into account the current scenario of competition between powers, the war in Ukraine, and the forecasts of the Strategic Compass and the other initiatives, it might be necessary to rethink the PESCO projects to focus on the ones with more added value and which can have a greater impact on developing the necessary defence capabilities in the EU. This would undoubtedly lead to uncomfortable discussions about which projects to merge or cancel, if any, and then to convey that internally in the member states confronting the enormous lobbying capacity of some companies. This idea was already put forth by Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas when she said that EU states can compete with Russia with high quality cutting-edge technology and urged her counterparts to only submit PESCO projects that include technological innovation.

In fact, it should be noted that in the Versailles Declaration, the member states also decided to entrust the European Commission with the task of mapping defence investment gaps. Some of the results presented on 18 May showed that had the member states spent the same amount from 2008 to the present as before the eurozone crisis, they would have invested 160 billion euros more in defence (European Commission, 18 May). Consequently, this is the amount that the states must now cover while also increasing the percentage of collaborative investments, which currently stands at 11% and should be around 35%. However, the short-term objective will be to replenish stocks of ammunition, anti-tank weapons, MANPADs, etc., that were expended due to the support given to Ukraine. Therefore, with all the analysis on the table, states would have enough time to align these results with all the experience available for all the initiatives and submit their new proposals for the next call for PESCO projects which will be in July 2022.

And to conclude, it should be emphasised that one of the limitations of the mechanism, or rather of the governance system itself, is its lack of transparency. This problem of PESCO's is on the part of the European institutions and the member states. The fact that its absence is so conspicuous makes accountability impossible since we do not have publicly available data about what specific companies participate in the projects and at what percentage, how much financing each state provides, etc. In addition, only a small excerpt is known about the projects published by the Council and the European Defence Agency, respectively. We also do not know who the participating observer states are in the various initiatives.

Similarly, the public information available to us such as, for example, the first strategic review of PESCO (Council Conclusions, 20 November 2020) is an empty text that does not provide an assessment of each state's participation, among other things. This document confirms the obvious circular reasoning[13] so present in the European Union, since it is not enough to say that the EU must move forward and improve without establishing concrete guidelines. This, of course, would be to the detriment of accountability. Similarly, one cannot forget that the Strategic Compass, although not a Grand Strategy, does shed light on this area by being adopted not as a mere white paper but as a precise and detailed roadmap with clear timeline goals.

However, the European Union continues to suffer from living in a constant state of ambiguity or through unclear approximations to concepts on which it then tries to build the Union's own future. The clearest example is the concept of strategic autonomy, for which there is still no precise definition.

As mentioned above, these issues not only have a direct impact on PESCO, which is called upon to be one of the tools for achieving the Union's 'strategic autonomy', but also on CSDP in general and on other policies to a greater or lesser extent. In fact, the above limitations

13 As an example: 'To better use PESCO projects to enhance pMS operational capacities and to support work towards the coherent FSFP, in line with the EU LoA and the PESCO notification' (Council Conclusions, 20 November 2020: 6).

may create the perfect mix to ultimately keep the EU from establishing itself as a guarantor of security and learning the language of power in a new era of strategic competition (Borrell, 2022; Vales, 2021).

5.5. Final remarks

In conclusion, Permanent Structured Cooperation, it should be restated, is still the crown jewel insofar as European defence is concerned. Its flexibility, the binding nature of the commitments undertaken, the involvement of the European Union and its states in promoting the mechanism, as well as its potential to generate synergies, make it the true game-changer in the Common Security and Defence Policy.

Four years and sixty projects have been enough to lay the foundations for greater differentiated integration in defence, including the possibility for third countries' contribution. However, as has been pointed out in the different sections, all that glitters is not gold, for although strides have been made in comparison with previous decades, nothing indicates that they have been in the right direction. In this sense, the work of implementing the Strategic Compass is crucial to guarantee and ensure the CSDP's coherence, the investment of time and resources in those PESCO projects that truly add value, and, above all, that are in the European Union's strategic interests.

The Compass will only be one task in the arduous work to be done, as governance rules and concepts must be perfectly clear for PESCO projects to succeed. Similarly, the EU will sooner or later have to face debates such as the degree of military deterrence it intends to achieve, including both conventional and nuclear deterrence, assuming that French extended deterrent force may not be enough.

Another important and complex debate will be whether to maintain the sixty projects adopted or to merge or dispense with some of them to develop the capabilities that are truly necessary for the European Union. It will therefore be necessary to avoid growing Permanent Structured Cooperation in the fifth wave of projects if the essence of the mechanism is really to be preserved and to respect the content of the Strategic Compass by opting for a reinforcement of the European Union's defence.

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6. Reinforced Defence: Positioning and Dynamics among European Union Countries

Xira Ruiz Campillo

6.1. Introduction

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, said in September 2020 that strategic autonomy was the number one goal of our generation and the real beginning of the 21st century for Europe. In recent years, there have been a number of discussions on strengthening the military capabilities and defence of the European Union (EU) and its strategic autonomy and independence. The Covid-19 health crisis in 2020 highlighted the dependence on materials in a globalised world promoted by the West. The United States leaving Afghanistan in 2021 prompted European countries such as Germany to reopen the debate on the need to strengthen European defence to gain greater operational and decision-making capacity. And the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has demonstrated the danger of having Russia as a neighbour both to territorial integrity, ready to increase military pressure on the border to the east of the EU and to threaten Finland and Sweden, and to the European Union's energy dependence. Recent developments have also shown that European countries are willing to strengthen their defence budgets at the national level and within NATO, and this is already a major step forward for defence as a whole.

Perceptions of how to ensure European security vary among the member countries of the Union, and therefore it will be difficult to see anything other than a reinforcing of European defence within the NATO framework. The reality is that Europeans would be hard-pressed to create a new NATO, because neither the means nor the political will of many of its members is there. But they are increasingly willing to take the reins of their defence in projects within the EU that strengthen their capabilities and fill the gaps left by the transatlantic organisation due to lack of interest or agreements. NATO's interests, we should recall, do not necessarily reflect the interests of the European Union, so the European Union's first task should be to clearly identify what those interests are and exactly how it is going to defend them, since the recently published Strategic Compass does not make either of those two aspects apparent.

The Compass, published in March 2022, gives a glimpse of the differences between states and the next steps to be taken between member states (at least on paper). This document appears to be the sum total of the risks perceived by the states and not an analysis of the risks to the institution as a whole, which makes it difficult to identify priorities for the European Union. The positions of different blocs of states can be perceived in the wording of the document: there seems to be unanimity on the need to strengthen defence, as France and

Germany have been asking for for years, but this investment will be made by reinforcing the European pillar within NATO, as advocated for by Poland and a large majority of member states, including Germany.

This chapter takes a closer look at the positions of four member states that have expressed the need to make security and defence a priority policy within the European Union. In May 2020, with Covid-19 in the background, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain sent a letter to the other European countries and to Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, urging them to prepare for future threats through Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), addressed the operationalization of Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) –which includes a mutual assistance clause in case of armed aggression against a member state, but whose activation procedure is unclear– and Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, which includes the solidarity clause in case of terrorist attack or natural or man-made disaster by all means, including military. These states appealed in their letter to strengthen communication networks, cyber-interoperability, defence technology, the industrial base and, in short, to make Europe more sovereign in terms of security and defence to improve its ability to protect and defend its citizens.

The letter is also relevant because, although it speaks of reinforcing European capabilities, it also highlights NATO as a cornerstone of collective defence and the commitment of the four states to continue strengthening the European pillar of NATO and cooperation between the two organisations. This position also represents the sentiment of some Europeans. In a January 2022 survey[1] asking who should defend Ukraine in the event of a Russian invasion, most identified NATO as the organisation most prepared to take on that defence, followed by the European Union. The fact that NATO –and not the United States, not even the United Kingdom– is perceived as the institution best equipped to defend European interests shows a citizenry that sees defence as a matter for Europeans themselves to take care of (Krastev & Leonard, 2022).

6.2. Germany: More European defence, but within the framework of NATO

Germany is one of the countries with the greatest military power within the European Union, but also one which historically has been most reluctant to deploy combat forces. Merkel's Germany was never overly interested in investing in defence within the European framework, although the annexation of Crimea, the election of Donald Trump in the United States, and the recent invasion of Ukraine have caused it to rethink its position and its interests with respect to Russia and the United States. In the French-led strategic autonomy debate, Germany is betting on strategic sovereignty, a more inclusive term and one that emphasises supply

1 The survey was conducted by Datapraxis, AnalitiQs, and Dynata on behalf of the European Council on Foreign Relations. There were Finnish, German, French, Italian, Polish, Romanian, and Swedish respondents. The results are reported in Krastev & Leonard, 2022.

chains, economics, and health (Šešelgytė & Indrašiūtė, 2022). Within PESCO, Germany coordinates seven of the 21 PESCO projects in which it participates, most focused on improving the interoperability of European capabilities and improving information (geospatial, oceanographic, etc.) in support of missions.

In this debate Germany has taken major steps. The country chaired the Council of the European Union during the second half of 2020, having to face all the difficulties of a pandemic that had put to the test the management and coordination mechanisms of the countries and the institution, as well as the solidarity between members in the face of a global health threat for the first time in the history of the institution. In addition to pandemic response, the German presidency had other priorities, such as strengthening the civilian and military capabilities of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), promoting the coherence of EU defence initiatives, establishing the European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management, and developing the Strategic Compass of defence.

During its presidency, Germany stressed that the CSDP was essential for a strong Europe to eliminate overlap between European forces and to reduce defence costs. Among the advances made during that semester, the launch of the Strategic Compass, which was approved overcoming the reluctance of some countries that saw in this proposal a new document that would eat up a lot of time for the states and that would end up not materialising (Pontijas Calderón, 2021), is one of the most important.

Another advance of the German presidency is the strengthening of Permanent Structured Cooperation, allowing non-member states to participate in European security and defence projects, as requested by states such as Finland. This change in PESCO has enabled the United States (USA), Canada, and Norway to be invited to participate in a military mobility project led by the Netherlands. This can be understood as US support for reinforcing a defence that complements the transatlantic one, which in turn is a necessary step to reinforce European defence, given that some states such as Poland fear that reinforcing European defence will be understood by the United States as a disinterest in NATO.

For Germany, NATO remains indispensable for European defence and it opts to strengthen the European pillar within NATO, allowing the EU to act independently of the NATO framework while strengthening the transatlantic organisation. Indeed, in an October 2021 interview, former defence Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer asked her European partners to be realistic and forget about an autonomous EU in defence, something impossible to achieve, and to focus on becoming more capable within NATO.

During the German presidency, political agreement was also reached to approve the European Peace Facility, a financial instrument that replaces the Athena mechanism and the African Peace Facility and allows financing military and defence actions under the Common Security and Defence Policy, coordinated by the European Commission. The war in Ukraine has led to the activation of the European Peace Facility, allowing member states to allocate one billion

euros to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces –including lethal weapons– in their defence against Russia, a historic decision for an organisation that had never before financed the purchase of lethal weaponry for third states.

Germany has also been one of the proponents of the March 2022 agreement to create a 5,000-strong rapid deployment force that can mobilise to respond to immediate threats or during crises, with common funding and more flexible decision-making that aims to overcome the difficulties presented by the battlegroups, operational since 2007 but which have never been deployed due to a variety of political, technical, and financial obstacles. This new force, which will be fully operational in 2025, will be compatible with NATO, while reinforcing the availability, readiness, and deployability of European forces (Carter, 2021), whose lack of ability to act autonomously became apparent after the US' exit from Afghanistan.

Finally, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has meant a change for Germany in its defence policy, increasing its budget for the first time to 2% of its GDP, as the United States had been demanding of all NATO members, and speeding up its energy independence –approximately 55% of German gas comes from Russia– by investing in renewables. Germany's about-face, a country which had maintained a very restrictive policy on arms shipments to conflict zones, also represents a shift in the European Union's defence policy and means member states are seeing the most solid progress in this area in recent decades.

6.3. France: A fully European defence

France has been one of the countries that has tried the most to promote an EU strategic culture that would make identifying political and security priorities possible. Among others, in June 2018 it pushed for the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), of which 21 member states are part[2] and which would allow launching military operations and missions. It is noteworthy that the EI2 establishes an operation outside the European Union and NATO, which undoubtedly favours France imposing its vision of European interests without too much resistance (Moya Cánovas, 2019). On the other hand, and in line with its backing of the European Union's strategic autonomy in the area of defence, France is the member state most involved in PESCO projects (in 42 out of today's 60), of which it leads 14 (33%), most of them in the area of enabling projects, such as those to use joint bases or supply energy in operations.

It is clear that greater strategic autonomy and the creation of a European defence system are among France's ambitions. The United States' abrupt exit from Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, coupled with the creation of AUKUS, the security alliance between the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom for the Indo-Pacific region, increased France's frustration and its determination to strengthen European defence. Significantly, on the same day as the

2 The initiative was initially supported by Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

official announcement of AUKUS, von der Leyen also announced the need to create a European Union of defence and a Defence Summit to be held in the spring of 2022 during the French presidency.

The French presidency of the Council of the European Union has reinforced the resolute steps of the German presidency in defence matters, which, added to the invasion of Ukraine, have opened up a window of opportunity to re-legitimise the French position on the need to strengthen European defence in the face of the return of power politics. All this represents a unique alignment to accelerate and end the taboos surrounding European defence, one of France's top priorities. The EU Council, at its March 2022 meeting, approved the Strategic Compass, thus setting the pace for European security and defence until 2030.

Regarding the debate on whether or not defence reinforcement should be done within the NATO framework, it should be noted that while France does not question the importance of NATO, it does question whether all of the EU's security and defence needs can be covered by the transatlantic organisation (Macron, 2020a; Bouemar, 2021). And as a strategy to attract the more Atlanticist EU states, France advocates strengthening European defence as an opportunity to in turn strengthen the transatlantic organisation. This will have to fit in with positions such as those of the NATO Secretary General, who stresses that what is needed are more capabilities and not new structures (Emmont, 2021), or the United States', increasingly willing to support an ambitious defence proposal for EU countries.

France sees in the United States a growing disinterest in maintaining security in the Middle East and Africa, a disinterest that could be exploited by terrorist and organised crime networks and that would directly affect European, but especially French, interests (Pannier, 2022). For France, this would be more than enough reason for the European Union to assume more responsibility in its neighbourhood. But in order for the other EU member states to strongly support this reinforced defence, France knows that it has to support European defence within NATO. Macron did so in his speech on defence strategy and deterrence before his country's War College, in which he pointed out that the two cornerstones of European collective security were NATO and European defence and recalled that the United States had warned time and time again that Europeans had to spend more on defence (Macron, 2020b). France also knows that it will need explicit US support for states to take decisive steps, and the AUKUS crisis resulted in US recognition that a more capable and stronger EU would be beneficial to transatlantic security and its complementarity with NATO, a change of tack for a US that has always warned that European initiatives and capabilities should not duplicate the transatlantic organisation's (Pannier, 2022).

6.4. Italy: Interests with the United States and NATO

Italy is one of the major proponents of European integration and of increasing its strategic autonomy. Italy was one of the promoters of the coordinated annual review of defence, PESCO, and

the European defence fund and was participating, as of the end of December 2021, in 50 European Defence Agency projects and programmes. It leads 10 of the 28 PESCO projects it participates in, maintaining a very equal presence in all project areas: three space, five cyber, six enabling, three maritime, four air, three training, and four land systems (Council of the EU, 2021).

Over the years, the Italian position regarding defence in Europe has shown a balance between a pro-Europeanism and an interest in increasing European capabilities, and the conviction that the transatlantic relationship is still important to ensure European security (Muti & Varvelli, 2021). This pivoting between the two positions has led Italy to strongly defend strategic autonomy within the European Union, so long as it is complementary to NATO. This view on the necessary complementarity, which other countries such as France do not have, is explained, as the Italian Minister of Defence, Lorenzo Guerini, wrote, by the consolidated industrial cooperation that Italy and the United States have maintained for years and that has allowed part of Italian defence technology to enter and increase its share in the North American market (Guerini, 2021).

Moreover, Italy's strategic security is based on strong ties with the United States, making it a member state with the capacity and resolve to act as a mediator between the two organisations when security ambitions and demands between the EU and NATO have to be made to fit. In fact, Italy is one of the few European countries to host American nuclear weapons, another link to the United States. Italian forces are also strongly integrated into the alliance's military command, so ensuring compatibility, interdependence, and integration between allied and European development also serves the country's economy and efforts (Sabatino & Marrone, 2021: 12).

In recent years, Italy has supported a reinforcement of European defence capabilities, a stronger development of its industrial base, and an enhanced EU institutional architecture. The US exit from Afghanistan prompted Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Luigi Di Maio to point to the urgency of launching a real EU defence and that decisions in this area could be taken by majority vote, which would be a way of breaking the deadlock in defence decision-making.

6.5. Spain: An industry that needs more European defence

Spain is a very pro-European country that has repeatedly defended the strategic autonomy of the European Union, not only in the field of defence, but also in energy and technology. Spain is one of the founding members of the European Intervention Initiative and is one of the countries with the most personnel deployed in European missions, for which it provides logistical support and air transport. The country's position is reflected, for example, in the 2021 *National Security Strategy*, which states that a stronger Europe in defence strengthens NATO, and although both organisations must be complementary, Spain is committed to the EU's strategic autonomy, which is perceived as a means to have more geopolitical weight globally and to balance out asymmetries of influence between major players.

Of the countries analysed so far, Spain participates in the fewest PESCO projects (23), most of them in enabling projects, and leads four of them, one in cyber, one in maritime, and two in air systems (Council of the EU, 2021). PESCO projects are very important for the Spanish defence industry, which is made up of small and medium-sized companies that have a difficult time competing with French or German businesses. In other countries, defence strategy is a matter of state and all parties agree on medium- and long-term strategies from which domestic industry benefits. This is not the case in Spain, whose defence industry nearly operates on demand (Fernandez, 2021). Increasing defence cooperation is also an opportunity for Spain to improve a well-positioned industry, which has the necessary capabilities to do much more but perhaps lacks institutional support and planning. The European defence fund specifically aims to support European SMEs, which would benefit our industry, which would also see its visibility increased in other European countries. Spain's main limitation in this area is its budget, which officially does not reach 1% of the GDP, although President Sánchez has already indicated that the defence budget should progressively reach the NATO target of 2% of the GDP.

Together with the Netherlands, and aware of the French prominence in the strengthening of European defence and that initiatives such as the EI2 may be an attempt by France to mould the Europe of defence to the interests of France (Moya Cánovas, 2019), Spain announced a non-paper in March 2021 in which both countries stated their position on strategic autonomy as a way to 'break' the solid Franco-German axis that until then had led the proposals for more autonomy: the EU needs decision-making autonomy, preferably in coordination with its global partners but without any compromises due to dependencies of one of the parties. In matters of common defence and security, Spain and the Netherlands recall that the EU's strategic autonomy will strengthen its global position in the world and its capacity to act where and when necessary and that both the Strategic Compass and PESCO are the crucial instruments to achieve that end. The most important aspect of this document is the scope given to strategic autonomy, which goes far beyond defence and security, mentioning areas such as digitalisation, the single market, innovation, health, and energy and climate.

Speaking at the European Parliament in January 2019, President Pedro Sánchez encouraged the creation of 'a real European army' and becoming a credible power in the world to be able to demonstrate that the European Union is a soft power by choice and not due to weakness (European Parliament, 2019).

6.6. Other countries: The EU cannot ensure its own defence

Some of the countries whose positioning contributes to understanding the difficulties in the development of defence in the European Union are those that form the so-called Visegrád group (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia), which are firmly Atlanticist, and the Baltic and Nordic countries, which are firmly pro-European and have a broader understanding of security.

Poland is admittedly Atlanticist and lukewarm about defence initiatives in the EU. The country understands any attempt to strengthen defence in the EU as a threat to NATO; its stance on strategic autonomy has come to be defined as one of 'paralyzing anxiety' (Muti, 2021). It is undoubtedly one of the countries with the greatest apathy towards the idea of a Europe of defence outside of NATO, even though it is currently involved in 13 PESCO projects and is leading one, focused on the creation of a medical training and support centre for special operations. Although the country recognises that a bolstered European defence can improve Poland's security on the eastern flank and that it supports technological and industrial development in defence, it is against any strategic autonomy that might exclude US companies from the European market (Gotkowska, 2020). Moreover, in recent years, Poland has strengthened its cooperation with the United States, like with the 2020 defence agreement that led to increased US military presence in the Polish country, so it is unrealistic to assume that Poland will accept the development of a defence outside of NATO and the United States.

In general, the Eastern countries face the most direct threat from that flank of the EU and understand that the only institution capable of guaranteeing their security in the event of an immediate attack is NATO, perceiving attempts at European reinforcement as a threat to their own security. While Slovakia joined both NATO and the European Union, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have been members of NATO longer than they have been members of the EU. In all cases, they had to make major efforts to be accepted into NATO, so there is a very strong feeling towards the organisation that will be difficult to break in favour of a European defence that does not know where to develop and cannot quickly guarantee the security of these countries which, because of their geographical location, are highly exposed to threats from other states. Of this group, Hungary and the Czech Republic have supported the creation of an autonomous army within the EU (BBC, 2016). In the case of the Czech Republic, there is an understanding that the EU should do more to participate in crisis management operations and should increase its defence goals but also fears that the United States perceives European development as a disengagement from NATO (Gotkowska, 2020).

Some works, such as those by Šešelgytė & Indrašiūtė (2022), point out that Baltic countries such as Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia support Germany's model of defence cooperation, more focused on strengthening the EU as a political rather than a defence framework. Moreover, these countries fear that the strategic autonomy advocated by France will entail a deterioration of transatlantic relations and lead to France's strategic interests being defended at the European level, whose defence posture is perceived as too ambitious, too anti-American, and too far removed from the interests of and threats to the Baltic States (Šešelgytė & Indrašiūtė, 2022).

As a matter of practicality and efficiency, both Baltic and Nordic countries defend the strengthening of European defence as long as it does not duplicate what is happening within NATO. Among them, Finland has been the most in favour of increasing defence cooperation and recalling Article 42.7 of the TEU on mutual assistance, but they have always favoured the

transatlantic relationship. Despite not being NATO members, Sweden and Finland have close ties with the United States and NATO and opt for a European defence that is compatible with NATO (Lewander et al., 2021). Although until very recently there was a feeling that US interests had turned towards Asia and that the EU needed to be more independent, they do not see that the EU will be able to ensure the defence of their states and do not seem willing to support any measures that might create obstacles to the cooperation on defence they have with the US (Kuusik, 2020). This does not mean that they are not in favour of strengthening European defence where it does not collide with NATO. Lewander et al. (2021) recall that the three Nordic countries are committed to including third countries in common defence structures and industry, favouring a broader vision of strategic autonomy, which does not limit the market and trade, and which promotes innovation and competition in defence by allowing third countries to access projects through the European Defence Fund.

6.7. Conclusions

The Strategic Compass should be seen as a further step –perhaps the most decisive– on the long road to strengthening European defence. And it will be a long one because it is difficult to combine France's vision of autonomy, without any complexes about NATO's independent defence, with that of Poland, which will not support any step that might imply the slightest departure from the Atlanticist organisation. The European Union will have to take steps to define what Europe's interests and strategic objectives are and decide whether to identify the threats to the institution as a whole or the sum of the threats perceived by its members. The significance of the reinforcement of European defence must also be unravelled: Is it to develop new capabilities to deploy within the EU or to defend EU interests abroad? Is it to strengthen the capabilities of European countries participating in NATO to defend NATO's interests? Is strategic autonomy improving defence decision-making? Or mobilizing military capabilities and intelligence and information cooperation within the EU? These answers should be clear to be able to move forward, because it is hard to move forward without having an agreed-upon horizon.

There seem to be too many open fronts and too many uncertainties for any of the countries to question the essential role that NATO continues to play in the security of their territories. The Strategic Compass published in March 2022 is clear about what the reinforcement of European defence should look like: a stronger and more capable EU in security and defence will contribute to global and transatlantic security, complementary to NATO, which is the cornerstone of the collective defence of its members. The two, the text continues, go hand in hand. This determines the steps the EU will take in defence in the coming years: more investment, more collaboration, but within NATO. In a way, what the member states have decided is to make NATO more European and not the European Union more defensive.

The difficulties of having autonomy in the defence of the European Union are not only to be found in whether that defence should be developed inside or outside NATO. There are other, perhaps more important, underlying problems, and these have to do with the ability of the European defence industry to provide member states with the capabilities they need and with many countries' defence industry trade relations with the United States. Without an industry capable of providing alternatives to the US, Europe is unlikely to be autonomous. That is why PESCO and the European Defence Fund are trying to bring the industries closer together, to make them stronger and more compatible with each other. For example, member states have 20 different types of combat aircraft (compared to six in the United States), 29 types of frigates (compared to four in the United States) and 20 types of armoured combat vehicles (two in the United States). It seems clear that more compatibility between capabilities and equipment would be beneficial to improve the quality and efficiency of any European operation. However, the European defence industry is entirely fragmented, which poses a dilemma when it comes to purchasing armaments. Countries such as Italy, Poland, and the Netherlands bought 34 F35 fighter jets from the United States compared to European competitors, the Eurofighter Typhoon or the Rafale (De León Cobo et al., 2021). This shows that the problem of European defence is more complex than making the political decision to invest in a common defence. It is an issue that has to do with investment in research, strengthening synergies between industries, and increasing trust between partners in an area as sensitive as defence and security.

The international context, the decisive steps taken by the German and French presidencies, together with a greater receptiveness of public opinion, paves the way for a defence whose positioning of EU as an international actor is as of yet unknown. In addition, the 2023 presidencies of Sweden and Spain, the former because of its growing threat from Russia and the latter because of its strong support for a European defence, will surely ensure that the progress made in recent months consolidates. Necessarily, the new reorganisation of European security that Russia has forced into place will have to go hand in hand with the not always easy convergence of the positions of the member states. It has become clear that all European states want more defence and security. Since the European Union cannot provide credible security to the most threatened countries in the short term, strengthening the European foundation in NATO will be the way forward, at least for the time being. At the same time, however, trust must continue to be built up between European partners, through PESCO projects for example, identifying common points of action that do not generate suspicion, such as strategic transport, satellite communications, the use of joint bases, medical support, or energy supply during operations.

This increased defence cooperation and trust is the first step towards improving synergies between member states. The institutions are also contributing with proposals that can be easily assumed by the states and help drive common defence. A draft Commission report on military shortfalls carried out at the request of the European Council and leaked in May 2022 acknowledges the shortcomings and fragmentation of, and impediments to, member states'

defence and how the lack of joint action contributes to economic waste and deepening duplications. To make up for the list of gaps –ranging from surveillance drones and fighter jets to obstacles to mobility and logistics– it proposes that Brussels take on a greater role in the defence approach, like by organising joint arms purchases. More coordination on the part of the states and more action on the part of Brussels seem like a good fresh start in an area that has remained in a vegetative state for decades.

It is certain that the majority of member states will increase their defence budgets and that we will see the largest investment since World War II. This increase should proceed calmly, remaining realistic about the different European sensibilities and with how to make joint spending more efficient and at the same time contribute to strengthening national and European defence within and outside the NATO framework. More NATO is good, but more European Union is too.

Investing more does not necessarily mean being more prepared, and at a time of uncertainty like the present it is better to make good decisions that lead to more unity and better preparation for a geopolitical scenario in which new international rules, norms, and customs are being shaped that will continue to attack European values.

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7. The EU's Strategic Compass and Nato's new strategic concept from the Madrid Summit

José Enrique de Ayala

The first half of 2022 has been the scene of three events that are going to substantially affect the security of Europe, probably for many years to come. One of them unexpected, at least in the intensity it has acquired: Russia's brutal and arbitrary attack on neighbouring Ukraine. In some ways, however, it is the continuation of a conflict that began in 2014, with which Moscow breaks all the agreements signed since the Helsinki Final Act and places itself outside of international legality. The other two were scheduled and planned: the European Council's approval of the Strategic Compass on 24–25 March, an important step in building the European Union's own defence capability, and the NATO summit to be held in Madrid on 29–30 June, which will approve the Alliance's new Strategic Concept.

The three events are necessarily interrelated. The first because it undoubtedly influences the position, concerns, and security objectives of both the EU and NATO, at least in a circumstantial way, it remains to be seen if permanently. And the Union and Alliance initiatives because they are two approaches to the same issue, European security, and they have to manage to coordinate and reinforce each other to be effective and fully viable.

7.1. The European Council in March and the EU's Strategic Compass

On 24 and 25 March, the European Council held a meeting of particular importance attended on the first day by the President of the United States, Joe Biden, in addition to the EU heads of state and government, when the issue of support for Ukraine in its defence against Russian aggression and the strengthening of sanctions against Russia was discussed, as a continuation and confirmation of the decisions that had been made in the so-called Versailles Declaration (Council of the European Union, 2022), which emerged from the extraordinary European Council held in France on 10–11 March to discuss the war in Ukraine and the actions to be taken.

In addition to this issue, of extraordinary relevance today, the European Council addressed the strengthening of the Union's defence capabilities (European Council, 2022), pending an analysis of defence investment shortcomings and proposals for other initiatives needed to bolster the industrial and technological base of European defence which will be presented by the European Commission in coordination with the European Defence Agency and will contribute to increasing capabilities through more and better investments. The European Council also called for full use to be made of the possibilities offered by existing Community instruments, such as the European Defence Fund, Permanent Structured Cooperation, the Capability Development Plan and the coordinated annual review of defence. European leaders also decided that, by the end of 2022 at the latest, measures must be adopted to promote

and facilitate the defence industry's access to private financing, in particular through the possibilities offered by the European Investment Bank.

However, the most important milestone of the meeting in this field was the ratification of the Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022), –the future operational guide for European Union development and decision-making in security and defence– , which the European Council itself had commissioned High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission Josep Borrell to draw up in June 2020. In November of that year, the HR presented a comprehensive analysis based on intelligence reports of the full range of threats and challenges that the EU currently faces or could face in the near future, the first of its kind at the EU level. In doing so, it provided the starting point for the discussions with the representatives of the member states that followed in 2021, until on 15 November of that year the HR presented the draft document to the foreign affairs and defence ministers of the 27. On 21 March, the final text was approved by the Council of the EU for submission to the European Council.

The Strategic Compass sets out guidelines for the next decade and establishes a coherent set of actions that will help defend the EU's interests and protect European citizens through measures to enable the EU: to act more quickly and decisively in the face of crises; to increase its capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats; to promote investment and innovation to develop capabilities and technologies; and to strengthen cooperation with our partners to achieve common goals.

This is a very important step along the road to building the EU's own defence capability that will contribute to the strategic autonomy necessary to play the role of a global power that its economic and political strength entitles it to play, thus better defending the security, interests, and values of its citizens. The road to a common European defence is a long one. The Treaty of Lisbon[1] introduced a mutual defence clause in 2009 (Article 42.7) which states that if a member state is the object of armed aggression on its territory, the other states shall provide it with aid and assistance by all the means at their disposal. With all the exceptions that accompany it, referring to member states that are also NATO member or considered neutral, this formulation is almost identical to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and de jure converts the EU into a defensive alliance, although the organisational or structural development measures and implementing regulations have never been taken to make this obligation effective, as was the case with the Atlantic Alliance from the 1950s onwards.

In June 2016, former High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini presented to the European Council the Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy (EEAS, 2016) in which the objective of EU strategic autonomy was embodied for the first time. This strategy identified priorities for the Union's foreign policy: the security of the Union; state and social resilience of the Union's eastern and southern neighbours; the development of an integrated approach to conflict; regional cooperation

1 https://www.boe.es/doue/2010/083/Z00013-00046.pdf (Maastricht Treaty, Consolidated Version of the TEU 2010)

initiatives; and global governance for the 21st century. The most significant aspect, together with the concept of strategic autonomy, is that for the first time one of the missions of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was to guarantee the security of citizens and territories, which can be considered part of a collective defence, something that until then had always been considered NATO's exclusive competence.

In December of the same year, the European Council endorsed the implementation plan on security and defence (Council of the European Union, 2016), which defined the vectors in which the EU's security and defence policy should be developed to carry out the approved strategic idea. This led to developments that have undoubtedly meant an enormous leap in European defence capabilities: a timid increase in command and control capabilities with the creation of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC); the launch of a coordinated annual review of defence; the improvement of the Athena common funding system to cover part of the costs of the possible deployment of battlegroups; and the start-up of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), whose launch was approved by the European Council in December 2017, more than ten years behind the calendar in the Treat of Lisbon.

The Strategic Compass is the culmination of the process of improving European defence capabilities that began with the approval of the Global Strategy. It proposes the member states establish policy guidelines, goals, and specific objectives in four pillars.

- The first, which is perhaps the most important from an operational point of view, is to be able to act quickly and decisively whenever a crisis occurs, in collaboration with its partners if possible and alone when necessary. To this end, the EU will create an EU Rapid Deployment Capability of up to 5,000 troops for different types of crises; be ready to deploy a civilian CSDP mission with 200 fully equipped experts within 30 days, including in complex environments; conduct regular live exercises on land and at sea; improve military mobility; strengthen civilian and military CSDP missions and operations by promoting a rapid and more flexible decision-making process, acting more robustly and ensuring greater financial solidarity; and make full use of the European Peace Facility to support its partners (which is already being done with Ukraine).
- The second pillar, under the heading of 'secure', aims to improve the capacity to anticipate, deter, and respond to existing and fast-emerging threats and challenges, as well as to safeguard the EU's security interests, and to do so the Union will boost its intelligence analysis capabilities; develop a set of tools and response teams against hybrid threats; further develop cyber diplomatic tools and establish an EU cyber defence policy to better respond to cyberattacks: develop a toolkit against foreign information manipulation and interference; develop an EU space strategy for security and defence; and strengthen the EU's role in maritime security.
- The third, on investment, refers to the member states' commitment to substantially increase their defence expenditure to match their collective ambition to reduce critical

gaps in military and civilian capabilities and to strengthen the European defence technological and industrial base. The EU will: maintain an exchange of views on national objectives for increasing and optimising defence spending; provide further incentives to encourage member states to participate in collaborative capability development projects and to invest jointly in strategic enablers and next generation capabilities; and boost technological innovation in defence to fill strategic gaps and reduce outside technological and industrial dependencies.

- Finally, the Compass proposes to work in partnership to address common threats and challenges by strengthening cooperation with strategic partners such as NATO, the United Nations, and regional partners such as the OSCE, the African Union, and ASEAN, developing more tailored bilateral partnerships with like-minded countries and strategic partners such as the United States, Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Japan, and others, and develop tailored partnerships in the Western Balkans, the eastern and southern neighbourhood, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including by enhancing dialogue and cooperation, promoting participation in CSDP missions and operations, and supporting capacity-building.

It is clear that the Strategic Compass, if implemented as envisaged, represents a very important step in the development of an autonomous EU defence capability. But it has still not taken the definitive step since it has not addressed the political decision that would effectively give the Union its desired and essential strategic autonomy: the creation of a European Union of defence with sufficient capacity for the collective defence of its members against foreseeable threats, without neglecting its other commitments, such as the 21 member states' to NATO, which could certainly continue to be fulfilled and which these countries could appeal to when they deemed it necessary. The main barrier to having a common defence policy that could one day lead to a common defence, as stated in Article 42.2 of the Treaty on European Union, is that a common foreign policy is needed first. Not only because the treaty considers the CSDP an integral part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, but also because if the same objectives, the same interests, the same priorities in relations with third parties are not there, if the same risks are not considered, it is hard to define a defence policy that satisfies everyone, and this is still far from being achieved

EU member states are very diverse, have very different histories, some of which are heavily influenced by past confrontations between them, or with third parties, and this is reflected in different geopolitical perceptions and threat assessments. For the Baltic States and Poland, there is only one threat: Russia. For Germany, Russia is still indispensable as a source of energy for its industry, and it has not been able to give it up despite Russian aggression in Ukraine. The European countries bordering the Mediterranean look with concern to North Africa and the Sahel, regions in which other members such as Finland or Sweden have practically no interest.

When President George W. Bush launched the 2003 invasion of Iraq on the grounds that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, the EU was sharply divided among those who supported the invasion –Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom– and those who were radically against it: Germany, Belgium, France. In the Libyan crisis, which is still unresolved, the positions of France and Italy have been diametrically opposed. Nor, of course, is there agreement on the scope for the development of a European Union of defence. There are some European governments that are extremely wary of any initiative that could weaken NATO or distance the US from its responsibilities in Europe. The exit of the United Kingdom, which led that position and had a significant military weight, may make things easier, but the war in Ukraine has sent some European public opinions back to their starting point: taking refuge in the US' protection. Even among the countries most in favour of progress, there are substantial differences: Germany does not want the reinforcement of European defence to weaken NATO in any way, while France is less focused on maintaining NATO as-is.

This state of affairs means that reaching consensus in this area is very difficult. While for some the proposals of the Strategic Compass reach the limits of what is possible, for others, the most pro-European, it falls far short, since its ambitions are limited to being more effective and improving capabilities, but within a framework –inherited from the Cold War– in which collective European defence remains the responsibility of NATO and therefore depends to a large extent on decisions taken outside the Union, on the other side of the Atlantic. An approach that does not facilitate the Union's strategic autonomy.

7.2. The Madrid Summit and NATO's new Strategic Concept

On 29–30 June 2022, the summit of heads of state and government of the members of the Atlantic Alliance will take place in Madrid, which will be attended by all –or most– of the leaders of the 30 allied countries, including US President Joe Biden. For Spain, hosting this summit is an major event, which coincides –moreover– with the 40th anniversary of Spain joining NATO and comes 25 years after the first meeting of allied leaders in Spain in 1997.

The event will allow, as usual, the exchange of views –both collectively and in bilateral meetings– on all issues relating to collective security and geopolitical challenges and will produce a final communiqué setting out the allied position on them. In this case, the summit takes on particular relevance because of the strategic earthquake of Russia's unjustified and inhumane aggression against Ukraine, which has changed –more than ever since World War II– the security scenario in Europe, resurrecting the fear of a high-intensity conflict on the continent. This fact will undoubtedly mark the summit.

But what will make the Madrid summit particularly important will be the approval of a new Strategic Concept, which will replace the one approved in Lisbon in 2010 (NATO, 2010). The Strategic Concept is the Alliance's most important document after its founding Washington Treaty. It is of a political-military nature and analyses the security situation, including the risks

that may affect the Alliance, and establishes the strategic guidelines for its action in politics and operations to face these risks and achieve the allied objectives, i.e. the security of its members.

NATO has had a total of seven strategic concepts in its history. The first four until the end of the Cold War were classified. Since 1991 there has been practically one per decade, in an attempt to adapt to changing circumstances: in 1991, when the USSR was not yet dissolved, but was faltering, in which dialogue and cooperation already appeared; in 1999, in which new risks were identified –which we have already referred to– and crisis management was introduced; and in 2010, currently in force, which assumes out-of-area missions and includes the Alliance's three basic tasks: collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security. All NATO strategic concepts have been based on the one before it, completing or modifying what was deemed necessary.

The specific content of the 2022 Strategic Concept to be approved in Madrid will be based on the parts of the 2010 Strategic Concept that are still valid today but will also include the decisions made by the allies at the June 2021 summit in Brussels (NATO, 2021), in particular the recommendations contained in the final communiqué and those to be added by the Madrid summit regarding the changes that have occurred over the past year, especially on the European continent. However, the basic document for the new Concept will be the 2030 agenda, which was approved at the 2021 summit and which obviously cannot differ to any great extent from the final draft since the baseline of the new Concept is –at least– that date.

The 2030 Agenda (NATO, 2021), presented by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg –who will still hold that office at the Madrid Summit– defines the objectives to be achieved by the Alliance within this time horizon, which can be summarized in nine main lines of action: deepen and broaden political consultations in NATO by holding an additional foreign ministers' meeting each year and having more consultations with allied capitals; strengthen deterrence and defence by meeting the NATO-agreed guideline of spending 2% of the gross domestic product on defence and 20% of annual defence spending on major new equipment by 2024; develop resilience goals and nationally tailored implementation plans based on clearer and more measurable Alliance-wide resilience objectives; boost transatlantic cooperation on critical technologies; establish a NATO Innovation Fund to invest in start-ups working on emerging and disruptive technologies; maintain the rules-based international order by strengthening NATO's relationships with like-minded international partners and organisations, including the European Union, and forging new commitments, including in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; assist in the development of partner capabilities in areas such as counterterrorism, stabilisation, countering hybrid attacks, crisis management, peacekeeping and defence reform; combat and adapt to climate change with clear awareness, adaptation, and mitigation measures; develop the next strategic concept outlining NATO's core tasks and the strategic direction for its political and military adaptation; and ensure adequate resources, both through national defence spending and NATO common funded-budgets.

In addition to these pillars, which mainly concern procedures, the new Strategic Concept will reflect the Alliance's fundamentals, which have remained almost unchanged since its foundation: Russia will remain the adversary and main threat, replacing the Soviet Union of the foundation, and strong language will probably be used against it. NATO will continue to define itself as the single, essential, and indispensable transatlantic forum for consultation and joint action on all issues affecting the individual and collective security of the North Atlantic area, while the European Union may have complementary and interoperable capabilities, but the new Strategic Concept is unlikely to be open to considering the possibility of European strategic autonomy in the field of defence.

Perhaps the new Strategic Concept will include some of the innovations that were already included in the Brussels summit's final communiqué, such as recognition of the challenge of climate change and greater inclusion of women in all areas and activities related to security. But probably the most important novelty, and undoubtedly a highly significant one, will be to involve for the first time the Atlantic Alliance in the US struggle with China, within the trend –growing in recent years– of turning NATO into a global political and security actor, transcending the geographic area assigned to the organisation by the Washington Treaty. Although some European allies may not have much interest in the rivalry with China, this issue will probably in one way or another be part of the Allied Strategic Concept.

As a consequence of this brief analysis of the possible content and lines of action to be proposed in Madrid, we believe that at the NATO summit and above all in the formulation of the new Strategic Concept attention should be paid to the following five points that may become especially relevant:

7.3. Russia

It is clear that this will be the main topic of the Madrid summit. The final communiqué will logically include a very strongly worded rejection of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The wording may vary depending on the situation at the time, since it will not be the same if the war is still underway or if it has ended and how. If there has been a peace negotiation and Ukraine has accepted its neutrality, logically the communiqué will not include the future accession of the country, as was done at the Bucharest Summit in 2008 and at the last regular summit, the one in Brussels in 2021, and this will probably also drag Georgia's candidacy with it. In any case, and whatever the situation at the time, the condemnation of Russia is assured and has every reason to be very severe.

But as far as the new Strategic Concept is concerned, the approach should be different, since it is a document that should be valid in the medium or long term, and the Alliance should not exclude a possible future reconciliation with Russia, if the necessary conditions are met. The Strategic Concept cannot bind itself to a situation produced by a certain episode, it has to look further afield. While contemplating a situation of growing threat from Russia, it should leave

the door open to a rapprochement or reopening of a dialogue leading to greater stability and security on the European continent, provided that Russia meets certain minimum requirements. While Russian aggressiveness is absolutely intolerable, Europe is not interested in a permanent confrontation with a neighbour with which it has important economic ties and an energy dependence that will take several years to completely overcome. Prolonged isolation of Russia means a return to the Cold War, albeit with a weaker opponent than the Soviet Union. It would also bring Moscow closer to Beijing and –ultimately– a return to a bipolar world in which the European Union would play a merely secondary role.

7.4. China

Although temporarily overshadowed by the war in Europe, the struggle between the US and China will be the centre of gravity of global geopolitics in coming years. The US will try to attract, and is already doing so, its European allies to align themselves clearly on its side in this competition, which is military, but also –especially– technological and commercial in nature. Some European allies are reluctant to take up a clear and definitive position in this confrontation, which is basically bilateral, due to their strong commercial interests in China, as might be the case of Germany and Italy. Washington with the support of London already managed to introduce in the final communiqué of the Brussels Summit in 2021 several paragraphs involving NATO in the containment of China, and there was also a mention of the Asian giant in the final statement to come out of the extraordinary NATO summit in March, despite the fact that it was convened to deal monographically with the issue of the war in Ukraine. It can be expected, therefore, that they will try to do the same thing at the Madrid Summit, and will probably propose to include this issue not only in the communiqué but also in the Strategic Concept itself.

European allies should be very careful in this regard and try to discuss at very least the terms in which it is drafted. Under no circumstances does China represent a military threat to the geographical area covered by the North Atlantic Treaty and so only its consultation mechanism in Article 4 would be applicable, and even then, only in the event that one of the allies felt threatened. Restrictions on Chinese technology in the name of security must be analysed closely to strictly differentiate what may pose a real risk from what is only a partisan interest to gain commercial or economic advantage or overcome technological disadvantages. The European position can be to support the US as its main ally, but in no case one of confrontation with China, a country with which it has no major dispute, because this would harm it economically and commercially.

7.5. Turkey

The unilateralism of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's foreign policy, which has increased substantially in recent times, is undoubtedly a vulnerability of the Alliance because it undermines one of the principles that make it strong: unity of action. At the 2021 summit,

Erdoğan spoke with US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron to reconcile positions on contentious issues such as Western support for the Kurds in Syria, Turkey's purchase of S 400 air defence systems from Russia, Istanbul's intervention in Libya, and the intrusion into Cypriot waters, but as far as is publicly known, no agreement was reached. Logically, the disagreements with Turkey will not appear in this summit's communiqué, much less in the Strategic Concept, but they should be dealt with on the margins of the meeting, since Turkey's foreign policy seems to be moving further and further away from the one agreed by the Alliance.

There are other internal divisions that weaken NATO, from the different strategic perception members have of risks and threats –from the Baltics and Poland to the Mediterranean– to unique positions, such as Hungary's on sanctions against Russia or sending arms to Ukraine. Both the summit communiqué and the new Strategic Concept should make a serious appeal to unity among allies, although its formulation must be generic in nature as that is a prerequisite for it to be effective.

7.6. Africa

Africa is NATO's forgotten continent. In December 1994, the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) was launched, involving all North African countries except Libya and Mauritania. The current Strategic Concept, from 2010, made a generic call for more inclusive and strategically oriented efforts in dialogue and cooperation with third countries but without implementing concrete measures. Similarly, the final communiqué of the 2021 Brussels Summit makes two mentions of the need to strengthen political dialogue and practical cooperation with MD partners. But the reality is that this initiative has so far gained little traction and has not yielded significant results.

There is not a single mention of the Sahel in the Strategic Concept currently in force. Or of Africa. The communiqué of the 2021 Brussels Summit includes a paragraph on the Sahel stating that the deteriorating situation in the area affects NATO security but only talks about cooperation with Mauritania, included in the MD, and about addressing the issue in dialogue with other organisations such as the African Union and the G5 Sahel, with whom future commitments in the region will be considered. At the next summit, the European allies most concerned, i.e. those from the south of the continent, should try to push NATO to address in greater depth the problems of this geographical area and the risks that may arise from it.

North Africa and the Sahel should be priority action regions for the Alliance, as they may pose very serious risks for many European allies. Political instability in North African countries, especially in Libya but also in Algeria and potentially in other countries in the area, as well as the conflicts and lack of control in a large part of the Sahel where numerous jihadist groups are based, make this area a source of threats of all kinds, especially of a terrorist nature, more serious –and closer– than those that can come from other parts of the world. It is difficult, for example, to understand why NATO deployed in Afghanistan as a continuation of a military action decided by the United

States and not in Libya, which is less than 400 kilometres from allied territory, or in Mali, which is a more imminent as well as closer threat for most allies, also from the terrorist perspective, where France has had to act practically by itself with the limited support of other European countries and a small training operation on the part of the European Union.

The fact that the Madrid Summit is being held in a southern European country should ensure that the issue of North Africa and the Sahel, especially in the new Strategic Concept, acquire the relevance it deserves, given its negative evolution in recent years and the slim chances of any improvement in the near future.

7.7. European strategic autonomy

EU initiatives to enhance common European defence such as the coordinated annual review of defence, the Permanent Structured Cooperation, the European Defence Fund, the increase in Command and Control capabilities, which have culminated in the Strategic Compass recently endorsed by the European Council, cannot be ignored by the Atlantic Alliance, to which 21 of the 27 members of the Union belong. Both the 2010 Strategic Concept and the 2021 Summit communiqué consider the EU an international organisation to collaborate with –in some formulations it is put on the same list as the United Nations– to strengthen the actions of both. The first of these documents considers the EU a unique and essential partner and sets out a number of fields of enhanced cooperation, which were further specified in the joint declarations of Warsaw in 2016 and Brussels in 2018 and have been developed in numerous meetings of both organisations at different levels.

The Madrid Summit should seek to go beyond fostering cooperation between the two organisations, which has proved to be very positive, through NATO's recognition that the path towards strategic autonomy for the EU does not harm the transatlantic alliance but rather strengthens it by laying the burden somewhat more evenly on the two sides of the Atlantic, including that the Alliance supports the development. An express mention of the path taken with the Strategic Compass would be very helpful in overcoming the reluctance of some European allied countries to continue on the path of building a common European defence, which does not necessarily have to interfere with commitments to the Alliance.

It is very likely that the position on some or all of these issues may be shared by several European allies, perhaps not always the same on all of them. Establishing prior contacts between European allies would be highly recommended to discuss joint approaches to strengthen any common interests there may be. In fact, on the point concerning European strategic autonomy, it would be ideal if the position of the 21 allies who are also members of the EU be held in common, since they all recently approved the Strategic Compass.

There are two very important parameters to consider at this summit. The first is that the new Strategic Concept –if the previous ones are any indication– will last about a decade, unless an

extraordinary event occurs that forces it to be changed, and in that decade the EU will not stop its further integration, probably also in the field of defence, so that any formulation limiting that possibility would possibly have to be omitted. And second, that the current political situation may shift dramatically while it is in place, for example if Donald Trump or another politician of the same ideological line were to be elected again in the US presidential election of 2024. The new Madrid Strategic Concept then should be open-ended enough to allow it to adapt to the evolution of geopolitical scenarios in the coming years and precise enough in terms of the parties' obligations to avoid future misunderstandings between governments, whatever their political colour.

7.8. References

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Conclusions.
The Europe of Defence in the Face of a New International Order

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The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army that started in February 24 of 2022 has changed the perspective used to assess the security of Europe and, more specifically, of the countries that make up the European Union. This is the approach adopted by this document, prepared by Fundación Alternativas at the request of the Ministry of Defence.

From the outset, one should distinguish between **European defence** and the **Europe of defence**. European defence, both as a concept and as a reality, begins to take shape at the end of World War II, referring to the security of Western Europe against what was considered its main threat: the Soviet Union. This was an ideological as well as a military threat after Russian troops imposed pro-Soviet regimes in several Eastern European countries, liberated from the invasion of the German army.

The United States, Canada, and Western Europe formed a political-military alliance for that purpose: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thirteen countries lined up against the Warsaw Pact, the other major military agreement in post-war Europe, which came into being soon afterwards.

The Cold War, as is well known, lasted until 1991. The Soviet Union disappeared and with it the Warsaw Pact. Most of its members joined NATO in the coming years.

Europe's territorial defence and its collective defence has since then been based on NATO. Its core tasks are defined in the strategic concept approved in Lisbon in 2010. They are collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security (partnerships). The priority task is the first one, i.e. deterrence, which is rooted in nuclear force, essentially under the control of the United States. The most important and famous provision of the Atlantic Alliance Treaty is **Article 5:**

> "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be

> reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security."

If Ukraine had belonged to NATO, the invasion decreed by Putin would have triggered the invocation of that article. That is the lesson that Finland and Sweden learned immediately.

The Europe of defence is something different from the **defence of Europe**. It is the aspiration –for the time being almost just that– of the European Union.

The Europe of defence has so far been a weak policy within the European Union's policies taken as a whole. From the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which was created in 1999 as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) after the Treaty of Lisbon (2009). This weakness stems from two characteristics. The first is that it is a 'common' policy, not a 'single' one, because it coexists with the national defence of each EU state.

Second, it does not have a strong foreign policy to support and guide it.

These shortcomings are what the so-called 'strategic autonomy', which emerged from the 'Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy' (2016), promoted by the then High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission (HRVP), Federica Mogherini, is trying to solve. This document sets out the EU's direct goal of intervening in conflict resolution and international crisis management, and as such grants the Union the power to acquire military capabilities.

Mogherini's strategy paper is a step forward in the aspiration of giving the Union effective protection and citizen security missions in the face of external threats. It is compatible with classic defence: NATO and the armed forces of each EU member country.

This clear approach of the Union to the defence role is expressed in the implementation of specific instruments, which reference is made to in several chapters of this report: Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the coordinated annual review of defence (CARD), the European defence fund, and the Civilian CSDP Compact.

The recently approved 'Strategic Compass', which Germany proposed in 2019, is a further step towards operationalising Europe's strategic security autonomy. Aware of its limits, the Compass does not include collective defence, which differentiates it from NATO, where it ranks first among its objectives.

This raises the question of the role of the oft-cited Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union as the counterpart of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. Article 42.7 reads:

> "If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member

States. Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation."

Despite this mutual defence clause (supplemented by the solidarity clause contained in Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), Finland and Sweden have considered joining NATO as a direct consequence of the war in Ukraine, because the international order has shifted qualitatively towards a more polarised and fragmented outlook. In it, NATO, as we said, ensures deterrence faced with Putin's Russia. The CSDP is preferably intended for interventions within the so-called Petersberg missions.

There is thus a division of roles, which must be made compatible, between NATO and the EU. They are organisations with different natures, but they seek a 'peaceful coexistence' because a resounding 21 countries belong to both. Both provide security. However, this mutual understanding and coexistence should not place limitations on the development of a Europe of defence in the EU that contributes to European defence from its own perspective. This is what strategic autonomy means. The sudden emergence of a credible threat from Russia puts a growth of European defence and security policy, i.e. a real **Europe of defence**, on the agenda.

In this report, the essential elements of this desirable Europe of defence, still in the making, have been rigorously and thoroughly reviewed, starting from the risks and threats that we Europeans face and the possible conflict scenarios. Our major weaknesses in defence have also been examined.

If the European Union wants to be ever stronger in defence policy and in defence itself without compromising the resources devoted to public goods in a welfare state, it must strengthen the **Europe of defence**, which implies coordination between countries to develop military capabilities and industry.

This coordination and cooperation will be essential to support a common foreign policy, whose interests will not always coincide with the United States'. To name just one example: China is defined by the United States as a priority target in the struggle for world hegemony. Europe does not see the Asian giant the same way.

But foreign and security policy positions within the Union itself are not always absolutely precise. This is why the unanimity rule for adopting decisions in this field constitutes a paralysis that Europe will not be able to afford if it wants to make progress in autonomous defence.

The unanimity rule should be replaced by a qualified (or super-qualified) majority in foreign and security policy. This is even more true if the Union wants to expand eastward. Let us not forget that the decision of the institutions is behind a defence policy. And if these have their hands tied by the rule of unanimous consensus, no Europe of defence can be possible. This

is the major obstacle. But changing the voting system implies a reform of the Treaties, which smaller states of the European Union currently oppose.

The European Parliament, however, has just supported it. Its Resolution of 4 May 2022 calls for the convening of a Convention by activating the procedure to revise the Treaties in Article 48 of the Treaty on European Union. Mario Draghi and Emmanuel Macron also support it. This report considers this position to be the appropriate one.

Biographies

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