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Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP):

Latest developments and future prospects

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COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY (CSDP): LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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- ASAP: Act in Support of Ammunition Production

- BiH: Bosnia and Herzegovina

- CARD: Coordinated Annual Review on Defence

- CBRN: Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear

- CFSP: Common Foreign and Security Policy

- CPCC: Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability

- CSDP: Common Defence and Security Policy

- DIANA: Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic

- ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

- EDA: European Defence Agency

- EDC: European Defence Community

- EDF: European Defence Fund

- EDIP: European Defence Industry Programme

- EDIRPA: European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act

- EDTIB: European Defence Technological and Industrial Base

- EEAS: European External Action Service

- EEC: European Economic Committee

- EP: European Parliament

- EPC: European Political Cooperation

- EPF: European Peace Facility

- ESDI: European Security and Defence Identity

- ESDP: European Security and Defence Policy

- EUGS: EU Global Strategy

- EUMS: EU Military Staff

- EUMC: EU Military Committee

- EU RDC: EU Rapid Deployment Capacity

- MPCC: Military Planning and Conduct Capability

- NDPP: NATO Defence Planning Process

- PARP: Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process

- PESCO: Permanent Structured Cooperation

- PSC: Political and Security Committee

- SEA: Single European Act

- UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

- WEU: Western European Union

- WUDO: Western Union Defence Organization

INTRODUCTION

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) can be considered as one of the most ambitious projects of the EU as it aims to create a common defence infrastructure capable of handling threats menacing both internal and external security. It has been demonstrated that the evolution of this policy is a reflection of the EU's growing realisation of the necessity of strategic autonomy in a fast evolving global security landscape. The path leading to the creation of the CSDP comprises several earlier steps and in 2009 it formally substituted the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) through the Treaty of Lisbon.

In recent years, the global security environment has undergone profound transformations. Geopolitical tensions, driven by the resurgence of great power competition, in particular the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine that broke out in February 2022 and still ongoing, has created new imperatives for European defence and has shown the urgency for stronger European military capabilities, revealing vulnerabilities in the EU's collective security framework. In order to address in a common and coordinated manner the challenges to security, in March 2022, the EU and its Member States approved the so-called Strategic Compass. It consists of a document prepared by the European External Action Service, and it has become the new security and defence instruction manual for the EU. Its objective is precise, and it consists of making the EU a better security provider by 2030. The document assesses the key challenges the EU is facing in the field of defence and security, and lists its priorities according to four areas called 'act', 'secure', 'partner', and 'invest'. Indeed, the threats challenging EU' security have become more unpredictable as they are nowadays multi-layered, hybrid and surpass the traditional military or territorial type of threats. Much attention is paid to cyber-attacks, political monopolisation of sensitive technologies, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational threats coming from terrorism and extremism, as well as regional tensions and instability (for example in the Western Balkans, Sahel Region, and the Gulf Region).

Being this the current situation affecting the security scenario in Europe, this thesis explores the latest developments within the CSDP framework and analyses its future prospects in a shifting global security landscape, while knowing it is a constantly evolving field. The questions leading the research behind this Thesis in particular concern how the CSDP has responded to recent security challenges, and the identification of the principal elements and obstacles that are currently shaping the future of European defence. For this

reason, the first chapter provides an in-depth examination of the European defence strategies that underpin the CSDP. It traces its historical evolution, from the early days to the present-day structures that define the EU's security architecture. The failure of the European Defence Community in 1952, the foundation in 1954 of the Western European Union, the Western Union Defence Organisation, the European Political Cooperation, the Single European Act, and the Fouchet Plans are just some of them. Also, this section will analyse all bodies and tools involved in the CSDP, as the European Defence Agency, the European External Action Service, the Permanent Structured Cooperation, the European Defence Fund and others. Besides giving an explanation of the EU's defence strategies, the chapter proceeds to explore how the CSDP works and is employed in practice. Lastly, this section examines the recently adopted Strategic Compass, considering the new threats to the EU's security and the latest developments reported in the two Annual Progress Reports on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass.

The second chapter delves into the relationship between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the EU, particularly in the context of the CSDP. The NATO-EU strategic partnership has long been a cornerstone of European defence and finds its main foundation in the Berlin Plus Agreement (2002), having at the core the 2002 EU-NATO Declaration on the ESDP. Such focus on this partnership is indispensable as the CSDP cannot be analysed without taking into consideration the Atlantic Alliance, because it represents the transatlantic forum where Allies meet to consult and coordinate on all kinds of matter concerning collective defence and security. The cooperation between the EU and NATO is based primarily on three Joint Declarations, signed in 2016, 2018 and the latest in 2023, but this section examines how and where they cooperate, for example through CSDP and NATO joint operations in different parts of the world. Being 30 out of 32 the NATO Members geographically located in Europe, a focus on their cooperation was needed, also when considering the publication of the latest Strategic Concept. By analysing these dynamics, the chapter provides an understanding of the challenges facing the NATO-EU relationship when adapting to new security realities.

The final chapter looks towards the future by assessing the current challenges to defence cooperation between EU Member States and the consequent needed path the European defence may take in the coming years. While much progress has been made in the tackling of the different security threats, for example by proposing a new regulation for the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), by establishing new financial

mechanisms, and by a progressive increase in defence spending, there are nonetheless obstacles. They are explained in this section, and they mostly relate to an insufficient political commitment to invest in collective defence initiatives, but also to varied (and, once again, insufficient) defence spending among Member States, diverging national interests, duplication of defence capabilities and lack of coordination.

In summary, as the global security environment is continuously challenged and keeps evolving, then the role of the CSDP is becoming increasingly significant. Thus, this Thesis seeks to highlight the present situation of the EU's defence policy with its mechanisms, the bodies and tools involved, the cooperation with its principal ally for collective defence (NATO), with a long-term perspective on how to achieve a successful and much more collaborative European defence.

FIRST CHAPTER

EUROPEAN DEFENCE STRATEGIES FRAMEWORK

1.1 FIRST STEPS

Foreign policy has always been of crucial importance for the European Union, since its foundation in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty, signed on the 7th of February 1992. Strong was the desire for a single currency, for cooperation as far as justice and home affairs were concerned, as well as for common foreign and security policies. Nevertheless, the path leading to what it is now known as Common Foreign and Security Policy, and more specifically to the Common Security and Defence Policy, can be tracked down to the Fifties. A few years before though, the very first attempt to handle foreign policy in the Union was undertaken with the Treaty establishing the '**European Defence Community'**, signed in 1952 by Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg but which never came into force. The reason it was not ratified, in particular by the French Assembly, has its roots in the economic and political framework of that time. Europe had just terminated what had been the catastrophic period of World War II, during which approximately 36.5 million Europeans had died in the conflict and most of the countries had lost their force and grandeur, in particular France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Poland. From that moment on, the Cold War period began and froze all dynamics, both internal and external. Taking all this into consideration, it must be said that French President [1] Charles De Gaulle's position concerning Europe and international relations is of fundamental importance. Indeed, De Gaulle had clearly defined the role he wanted to give to France: it had to become one of the world's economic powers, and to achieve this goal, it needed Europe, but not the model of Europe that existed at the time. As a matter of fact, France was subordinated to the Cold War bloc order [2], a geopolitical tension which saw the United States counterposed to the Soviet Union. The affirmation of the primacy of the Nation then was central for De Gaulle, which therefore did not consider it acceptable for governments to be subordinated to supranational institutions and, consequently, a delegation of state powers. This notion was the main point of French policy during the whole period when the Gaullism held power in France. As a result, the latter's influence could only be

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[1] De Gaulle was the 18th President of France from 1959 until his resignation in 1969.

[2] The Cold War started in 1947 and ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

demonstrated through international relations and foreign policy with the powers of the time. As a consequence, it comes as no surprise that De Gaulle expressed its disagreement towards the European Defence Community, which consisted in the establishment of a European army which should have been under the supervision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, founded just three years before, in 1949 [3]. This could be seen in Art. 1 and 18 of the Treaty establishing the EDC:

> "Article 1. *By the present Treaty the High Contracting Parties institute among themselves a European Defence Community, supranational in character, consisting of common institutions, common armed Forces and a common budget."*

> Article 18. "*The competent Supreme Commander responsible to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization shall, except as provided in Section 3 of this Article, be empowered to satisfy himself that the European Defence Forces are organized, equipped, trained and prepared for use in a satisfactory manner.* [4]"

This underscored the French nationalists' firm conviction to reject any attempt at European integration which could have threatened the power of France, considering also the provision stating the impossibility for Member States to have national armies, unless in certain specific circumstances [5]. Thus, summing up, De Gaulle's rejection in 1954 of the European Defence Community was rooted in his commitment to national sovereignty, strategic autonomy reducing the reliance on the American leadership, and a vision of European cooperation that prioritised intergovernmentalism over supranational integration. His stance reflected broader concerns within France about losing control over national defence policies and the influence of external powers.

A moment of relevant importance for the topic of common defence was marked by the foundation in 1954 of the **Western European Union** (WEU) as a consequence of the

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[3] The Nort Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance now comprising 32 European countries, the United States and Canada, but the founding members were 12. It was founded in response to the rising threat posed by the Soviet Union at the end of World War II, but also to prevent the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe, while also promoting European political integration.

[4] Unofficial translation of the European Defence Community Treaty of 1952 https://aei.pitt.edu/5201/1/5201.pdf

[5] Chapter II - The European Defence Forces, art. 9 of the EDC Treaty of 1952: "*The Armed Forces of the Community, hereinafter called "European Defence Forces" shall be composed of contingents placed at the disposal of the Community by the member States with a view to their fusion under the conditions provided for in the present Treaty. No member State shall recruit or maintain national armed forces aside from those provided for in Article 10 below".*

failure of the EDC which left a gap in the collective defence structure, so the WEU was seen as a viable alternative. It was an intergovernmental defence alliance which played a significant role in shaping the dynamic of the crucial and difficult period of the Cold War. The WEU substituted the former Western Union thanks to the 1954 amendment [6] of the 1948 Treaty of Brussels [7]. More specifically, this event was primarily aimed at letting Western Germany and Italy enter the Union. That said, the WEU addressed several topics, as the nuclear armaments or the relationships with the United Kingdom, but as far as defence and security were taken into consideration, during the Cold War NATO was the main subject in charge of those matters. It is relevant to mark that before WEU, the five members of WU decided to create in 1948 the so-called **Western Union Defence Organisation** (WUDO)**.** Its scope in fact as a military body was a common foreign policy and a sort of defence management among the members. Nevertheless, the establishing of NATO, of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 and of the Council of Europe in 1949, left the WEU and WUDO little range of action for their purposes. For example, with NATO effectively taking over the primary defence responsibilities, the WUDO, being the military arm of the Western Union, became redundant: NATO's superior resources, strategic planning rendered WUDO's role secondary. In parallel, the Council of Europe for instance provided a forum for political cooperation and dialogue, which overlapped with some of the political and social aims that the WEU might have pursued.

Three years after the rejection of the EDC, a key moment was marked by the **European Economic Community** (EEC), established and signed in March 1957 by the Members of the European Coal and Steel Community [8] (ECSC), i.e. Belgium, Luxembourg, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, France, and the Netherlands. It was established by the Treaty of Rome , which up until now has been amended several times and it is now called 'Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union." Its goal was to have a unitary Europe with harmonic relationships among Member States and served as the foundation for further political and economic integration in Europe.

Another important attempt where security and foreign policy were of fundamental importance, is to be seen in the 'Fouchet Plan', so called because of the author of the plan, who was the French Ambassador of France and friend to De Gaulle and proposed by this

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[6] The Protocol of Paris of 1954 indeed amended the 1948 Treaty of Brussels
[7] The original Treaty of Brussels of 1948 marked the birth of the Western Union, whose text can be found on the official website of NATO at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17072.htm
[8] Ratified in 1952

latter. It came in 1961, a few years after France rejected the EDC Treaty, and it was obviously consistent with De Gaulle's vision of Europe. As a matter of fact, in the spring of 1960, the question of the Atlantic Alliance still remained a problem but gave way to the attempt at a union between the 'Six' which was increasingly the focal point of Gaullist interest. Indeed, the Fouchet Plan completely illustrates De Gaulle's European policy. But what was this Plan? It should be remembered that the proposal for a three-party executive board within NATO put forward by De Gaulle to President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister MacMillan with the 1958 memorandum [9] was a disaster. The Plan implicated for the six countries concerned (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) a sort of confederal union that is usually instituted when several States want to adopt the same regulation for issues that may be defence, foreign trade or the same currency. Thus, a confederation in which the member countries would have maintained their sovereignty and would collectively develop and agree on common policies in specific areas, thus transferring some degree of power to the union. This plan provided for three Committees of Ministers, a Parliamentary Assembly, a Commission and a Council of six Heads of State and Government. What is to be remarked though is the interest that common defence played in this draft Treaty and that could be read in Article 2:

> *"It shall be the aim of the Union:*
> *— to bring about the adoption of a common foreign policy in matters that are of common interest to Member States;*
> *— to ensure, through close co-operation between Member States in the scientific and cultural field, the continued development of their common heritage and the protection of the values on which their civilization rests;*
> *— to contribute thus in the Member States to the defence of human rights, the fundamental freedoms and democracy;*
> *— to strengthen, in co-operation with the other free nations, the security of Member States against any aggression by adopting a common defence policy.* [10]*"*

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[9] By a Memorandum in 1958, Charles De Gaulle proposes to U.S. President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister McMillan a change in NATO's structure, more specifically placing France at the same level of the other two countries.

[10] First draft Treaty of the Fouchet Plan, November 1961.

The respect for the Atlantic Alliance and the institutions already present was guaranteed, but not in the Fouchet II Plan [11]. They were finally all reunited together in Bonn in 1961, and the Six Heads of State considered the proposal of the French Ambassador Fouchet: the reactions were not enthusiastic, because it seemed like an attempt of France to reassert its power in an overly complex international situation. The Fouchet Plan was definitively postponed in 1962; this caused De Gaulle to adopt an attitude determined to impede any effort by Britain and the United States to build their ideal model of Europe. Over the following decades, European defence integration took place mostly in the context of NATO.

From 1970 until 1993, the **European Political Cooperation** (EPC) was in action, and it had that Atlanticist feature that was so disregarded by Charles De Gaulle. It was informally first introduced with the Davignon Report in October 1970, also referred to as the Luxembourg Report. It was an intergovernmental approach to foreign affairs of the members of the then European Communities, in order to have a united and common answer to specific matters of the time. All things considered, it can be thought of as the first attempt to establish a concrete apparatus concerning foreign affairs. Indeed, EPC covered issues as for example any aspect of the East/West relationship, human rights, terrorism, non-proliferation, other alarming areas of the world (Afghanistan, etc.), and the formation process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)[12], the latter considered one of the most important achievements in the EPC's framework. Though it was not a formal political union, it was nevertheless more than useful in creating a concrete web of meetings at all high political levels. Indeed, the EPC enabled member states to discuss and align their security policies. So, even if defence was not taken into account and was not a primary focus, the coordination of security policies contributed to a more consistent and effective approach to defence issues. This led to an increase of joint declarations and diplomatic initiatives on before-mentioned important matters of international security, and which ultimately contributed to the development of a unified European position on defence-related matters.

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[11] In the second draft of the Fouchet Plan, significant changes were made. These changes concerned: 1. common defence outside the Atlantic Alliance, 2. Economics as area of cooperation, 3. EP's role reduction, 4. Creation of a Network of Committees for different topics.

[12] It was established in 1975 after important meetings in Helsinki and Geneva. The signing of the Helsinki Final Act from the thirty-five participating countries was a crucial moment for those years, when the document marked an enormous step towards the détente between the East and West. In 1994 it became the so-called OSCE, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In February 1986 a major event took place, with the signing of the Single European Act, the first major amendment of the Treaty of Rome of 1957. The Act codified EPC in EU law, to whom it was dedicated an entire chapter: Title III – Treaty provisions on European Cooperation in the sphere of foreign policy. Article 30(6) is of relevant importance, and it states that:

> 6a) *"The High Contracting Parties consider that closer co-operation on questions of European security would contribute in an essential way to the development of a European identity in external policy matters. They are ready to co-ordinate their positions more closely on the political and economic aspects of security.*
>
> 6c) *"Nothing in this Title shall impede closer co-operation in the field of security between certain of the High Contracting Parties within the framework of the Western European Union or the Atlantic Alliance.* [13] *"*

What is to be remarked in this Article is that by stating that cooperation should continue to be pursued also in the organizations entrusted of the Western Europe's security aspects of foreign policy (i.e., WEU and NATO), member states were actually detaching collective security form national security [14] .

In 1976 the **Independent European Programme Group** (IEPG) was founded by the 13 European members of NATO who, realising a more balanced transatlantic defence partnership was needed, used IEPG to foster cooperation on armaments procurement. The goals were indeed to achieve greater interoperability of military equipment within Europe, to foster a robust European defence industrial base, and coordinate national defence procurement projects to improve efficiency. It played a role in fostering a culture of defence cooperation in Europe and influenced subsequent efforts to create a more integrated European defence market. Nevertheless, in 1993 the **Western European Armament Group** (WEAG) was established and from that moment on it replaced the IEPG. It remained in activity until 2005, and its scope was to ameliorate and reinforce European defence, increase standardization and interoperability of equipment, encourage

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[13] OJ L 169, 29.6.1987

[14] Koutrakos, P., "The EU Common Security and Defence Policy", Oxford European Union Law Library (Oxford, 2013; online ed., Oxford Academic), 2013.

a balanced cooperation in armaments between Europe and North America and use at best funds for procurement and research [15].

That same year, 1993, the Maastricht Treaty came into force and the European Union substituted the WEU. It is in that precise moment that it could be seen the birth of the so-called **Common Foreign and Security Policy** (CFSP), thanks to which members started to adopt a common strategy in the issue of foreign policy and security. The CFSP represented one of the three pillars composing the European Union:

1. European Communities
2. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)
3. Cooperation in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs

The pillar structure, typical of the Maastricht treaty era, was then removed by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

1.2 CFSP: COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

In 1990 an intergovernmental conference was convened to discuss the creation of a political union, including a common foreign policy. It took place in a changing political context marked by the fall of the communist regimes in central and eastern Europe, Germany reunification and the outbreak of a major crisis in Yugoslavia. This context throws into question the very basis of the two-block international order. In doing so, it raised the need for the European Community to become a more credible international actor capable of guaranteeing the European continent's security which was then being threatened. Negotiations during the Conference eventually led to the signature in 1992 of the Maastricht Treaty establishing the European Union. This treaty built a three-pillar structure for the EU, with the second pillar consisting of the Common Foreign and

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[15] NATO, "NATO logistics handbook", October 1997 (source on-line can be found at https://www.nato.int/docu/logi-en/1997/lo-923.htm)

Security Policy (CFSP). The main reason behind the pillar structure was precisely to avoid the application of supranational logic, typical of the Community, to foreign policy.

CFSP finds its legal basis in articles 21 - 46 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) in Title V: General provisions on the Union's external action and specific provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy; and articles 205 - 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). It worked with an intergovernmental method: the European Council and the Council of Ministers (i.e. Council of the European Union) have dominant roles, adopting decisions at unanimity [16].

Indeed, general guidelines are defined by the European Council, while the Council of Ministers then takes the necessary steps or decisions for their implementation. Indeed, the European Council identifies the Union's strategic interests, determine the objectives of and define general guidelines, including for matters with defence implications and then it adopts the necessary decisions [17]. CSFP is backed by the EU's diplomatic corps, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and is excluded [18] from the Court of Justice of the European Union, which makes it hard to enforce member states' compliance with its provisions [19].

CFSP is a more comprehensive framework in comparison to the Common Defence and Security Policy, which will be later explained in Chapter 1.1.2 of this thesis. It includes security cooperation and EU foreign policy. It covers a wide range of topics, including preventing conflicts, managing crises, promoting democracy and human rights, and diplomatic relations. The financing arrangements of the CFSP are outlined in article 41 (TEU). In this sense, all expenditure consisting in administrative issues are charged to the budget of the EU; on the other hand, CFSP expenditure having defence and military implications (rising from example from EU military operations) or when the Council

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[16] As can be read at: *"(...) The European Council shall act unanimously on a recommendation from the Council, adopted by the latter under the arrangements laid down for each area. Decisions of the European Council shall be implemented in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Treaties (…)"*, Article 22(1) TEU, OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 29–30.

[17] Article 26, TEU — Title V — General Provisions on the Union's External Action and Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Chapter 2 'Specific provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy', Section 1 'Common Provisions', OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 31–31.

[18] The Court of Justice does not have jurisdiction in the CFSP, with just to exceptions outlined in article 275 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

[19] " (…) *The Court of Justice of the European Union shall not have jurisdiction with respect to these provisions (…)",* Article 24(1), TEU — Title V — General Provisions on the Union's External action and specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Chapter 2 'Specific provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy', Section 1 'Common Provisions' (OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 30–31).

decides otherwise, the expenditure is charged to the Member States in accordance with the gross national product scale. More specifically, on 1 March 2004, the Council of the European Union launched 'Athena', a mechanism which handled the financing of common costs relating to EU military operations (headquarters implementation and running costs, administration, locally hired staff, infrastructure, acquisition on information via satellite images, etc.) and that remained active until 2021. It was set up with the Council Decision 2004/197/CFSP [20], later amended in 2011 with Council Decision 2011/871/CFSP [21]. Yet, in 2021 another financing mechanism, namely the European Peace Facility (EPF), was launched with the Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 [22]. of 22 March 2021 and from that moment replaced Athena (article 74: 'Repeal of Athena Mechanism). The EPF has been amended several times and is currently in force with the consolidated version of Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/890 of 18 March 2024 [23]. It started in 2021 with as an off budget instrument [24] having a financial ceiling of €5 billion for the period 2021-2027. This ceiling has been increased in March and June 2023, respectively with an amount of €2.29 billion and €3.5 billion. At the moment, there are 9 active EU military operations and one civilian-military mission that benefit from EPF financing:

- Military operation in Bosnia Herzegovina – EUFOR ALTHEA
- Training mission in Somalia (EUTM SOMALIA)
- Training mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA)
- Training mission in Mozambique (EUTM MOZAMBIQUE)
- Naval operation in the North West Indian Ocean (EUNAVFOR ATALANTA)
- Naval operation in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Gulf (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES)
- Naval operation in the Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI)
- Military assistance mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM UKRAINE)
- Military partnership mission in Niger (EUMPM NIGER)
- Security and defence initiative in the Gulf of Guinea (EU SDI GoG)

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[20] OJ L 63, 28.2.2004, p. 68-82.
[21] OJ L 343, 23.12.2011, p. 35-53.
[22] OJ L 102, 24.3.2021, p. 14–62.
[23] OJ L, 2024/890, 19.3.2024.
[24] It means that the expected yearly budget for the EPF is used to determine how much each EU Member State must pay in contributions each year.

The CFSP in its first years of office suffered from a lack of necessary instruments and institutional framework which Member states have failed to put in place. The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty [25] had tried to tackle some of the shortcomings through several innovations. Firstly, that Treaty created the figure of the High Representative (HR) [26] for the CFSP, a senior official who would assist the Council in foreign policy matters and give EU foreign policy a de facto representative. Secondly, while the decision-making rule remained unanimity, the treaty envisaged the use of qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers in extremely limited cases. It also introduced the 'constructive abstention' [27] which allows a Member to abstain from a vote on a CFSP decision without preventing the adoption of the decision by the Council, and if abstaining, it should provide a formal explanation of the reasons for it.

In brief, CFSP still now aims at building a common front for European states when talking of foreign and security policies, after long consultations and voting sessions. These lead altogether to the development of common strategies and give a direction to EU's external actions. Hence, Members' national policies change suitably accordingly to the policies adopted by the Council. In doing so, the CFSP uses different tools: economic sanctions, diplomatic meeting sessions, partnerships with regional / international subjects, civilian / military missions, and projects. The principal instrument acting precisely in the theme of defence is the Common Security and Defence Policy, providing a framework for military and crisis management.

1.2.1 <u>ESDP - EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY: THE BEGINNINGS</u>

The question of defence had remained until 1992 a sort of taboo leaving the issue of defence being one of the latest to be envisaged by EU member States, as foreign relations were the principal argument of discussion. In the intergovernmental conference leading

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[25] Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and certain related Acts (OJ C 340, 10.11.1997, pp. 1-144).

[26] Article 18, TEU — Title III — Provisions on the institutions (OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 26–27).

[27] Article 31, TEU — Title V — General Provisions on the Union's External action and specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Chapter 2 - Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Section 1 - Common Provisions (OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 33–34).

to the Maastricht treaty, member states were divided over this matter. France and Germany were in favour of creating a common defence, believing the US would reduce its military commitment in Europe following the end of the Cold War, leading to the necessity for the EU to have its own defence capabilities that should be centred on the WEU. On the other hand, neutral states were reluctant, with Atlanticist states even opposing any move that might weaken NATO. This divergence of viewpoints prevented any conclusive provisions on this matter. The Maastricht Treaty thus contained a vague formulation of the objective concerning the theme of defence which did not clarify precisely the ways in which a common defence policy for the CFSP could be pursued and that led to anything conclusive.

> *"The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence.[28]"*

Defence though was not discussed only within EU member States, but also within NATO. In fact, already during the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Berlin in 1996, considerations regarding the need for a European defence were advanced:

> *"Today, we have taken decisions to carry further the ongoing adaptation of Alliance structures so that the Alliance can more effectively carry out the full range of its missions, based on a strong transatlantic partnership: build a European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance [29]".*

As said before, the WEU was an intergovernmental defence alliance, which is why it was entrusted with developing a defence identity. Indeed, it did so by providing the EU member States with a platform within the framework of NATO. The concept consisted in the EU taking more responsibility for its security and defence, while maintaining transatlantic cooperations. Surely, the objective of ESDI was not to compete with the Atlantic Alliance, but rather to complement it, to be a plus in the response to crisis management and military operations. This meant that EU countries kept being committed to the principles of the Alliance, as for example the collective defence principle enshrined in the Article 5 of the Treaty:

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[28] TEU, OJ C 191, 29/07/1992

[29] Press Communiqué M-NAC-1(96)63, Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 3 June 1996, Berlin (available online at: https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-063e.htm)

> "*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 (…)* [30]"

Unfortunately, the WEU, lacking policymaking capabilities, soon faced practical challenges. Questions concerning the duplication of tasks with NATO rose, as well as concerns coming from non-EU NATO members. Rapidly, the concept of ESDI evolved into the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

Concreteness came with the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, entered into force two years after, and that laid the foundations for the expansion of the European Security and Defence Policy within the context of the CFSP. It created the position of High Representative having a key role representing the CFSP, and it was earlier anticipated that it added specific changes concerning decision-making procedures, therefore facilitating the adoption of EU common positions in defence and security. Crucial were the so-called Petersberg tasks incorporated by this Treaty and named after the Petersberg Declaration adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union in June 1992. In the issues envisaged, the theme of defence was put on the table as can be read in the following statement of the Declaration:

> WEU Ministers *"discussed the progress made in developing the role of WEU as the defence component of the European Union and as the means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance (…)* [31]"

The Declaration did not limit itself to general statements but showed WEU national armies' commitment to pursue specific tasks which could encompass a range of military and civilian activities that the EU could undertake in response to security challenges, including humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and crisis management. As a matter of fact, all these intentions are reaffirmed in the Amsterdam Treaty. The Atlantic Alliance kept being considered the main framework for collective defence under the North Atlantic Treaty, where discussions and consultations among Member States take place when dealing with defence and security matters. As a consequence, the commitment to start a series of actions to strengthen practical cooperation with NATO began: WEU's involvement in the NATO defence planning process was one among them, but military

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[30] North Atlantic Treaty, 1949

[31] Petersberg Declaration made by the WEU Council of Ministers 19 June 1992 (available online at: https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/petersberg_declaration_made_by_the_weu_council_of_ministers_bonn_19_june_1992-en-16938094-bb79-41ff-951c-f6c7aae8a97a.html)

exercises and deeper consultation between the two Organizations were present too. Furthermore, in the Amsterdam Treaty member States agreed that a special Unit would be established in the General Secretariat of the Council under the responsibility of its Secretary-General (who at that time coincided with the High Representative for the CFSP as the two roles were indeed combined in a single person [32]. Things changed with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009). This Unit would have had numerous tasks concerning the CFSP, namely the monitoring of areas of interest, evaluation of possible future relevant matters where the CFSP could focus, and even the production of policy solutions, thus contributing to the policymaking in that field.

Overall, the Treaty of Amsterdam played a significant role in institutionalising and expanding the EU's role in security and defence matters, laying the foundation for the development of the ESDP as a key component of the EU's external action. Nevertheless, despite the appearance of the new changes introduced, only minor modifications were made to further improve the CFSP's range of action [33].

Yet, other important steps were made towards the development of such a matter. The St. Malo Declaration of 1998 can be considered a direct consequence of the provisions included in the Amsterdam Treaty. Indeed, it marked the willingness of the Heads of State and Government of the United Kingdom and France to translate into concrete actions that Treaty. It has to be stressed that the Nineties were the witnesses of the Jugoslav Wars which began in 1991 and lasted a decade. In fact, when the St. Malo was made, the Bosnian War just ended, and the Kosovo War was starting. It comes as no surprise that the European Union, not having a strong and well-structured defence policy, heavily relied on the U.S. and NATO military strength, though contributing diplomatically. This led France and the United Kingdom to underline that:

> *"It will be important to achieve full and rapid implementation of the Amsterdam provisions on CFSP. This includes the responsibility of the European Council*

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[32] Javier Solana was the first person to hold this position: Secretary-General of the Council of the EU and the High Representative for CFSP.

[33] Liargovas, P., Papageorgiou, C., "Foreign and Defence Policy: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges". In: The European Integration, 2024.

to decide on the progressive framing of a common defence policy in the framework of CFSP [34] *''*.

Certainly, two specific defence organizations were already present, that were NATO and WEU. The challenge was indeed to avoid unnecessary duplication of tasks or structures, as explained in point 3 of the Declaration:

"In order for the European Union to take decisions and approve military action where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged, the Union must be given appropriate structures and a capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence, and a capability for relevant strategic planning, without unnecessary duplication, taking account of the existing assets of the WEU and the evolution of its relations with the EU. In this regard, the European Union will also need to have recourse to suitable military means (European capabilities pre-designated within NATO's European pillar or national or multinational European means outside the NATO framework) [35] *''*

This declaration can be considered as the first real initiative in the defence realm after the failure of EDC. It was made in a moment where the Jugoslav wars had emphasized the weakness, almost non-existence, of the EU's defence strategies and policies. Numerous steps were taken to pursue a development in that sense. The following year, in 1999, the Amsterdam Treaty came into force, but the European Council made also a series of decisions to advance the development of the ESDP. Those decisions taken in Cologne, Germany, shaped furtherly the EU's defence capabilities as some changes were put forward. Of particular relevance concerning the field of defence and security is the document annexed to the Council Decision (known as Annex III), called 'European Council Declaration on strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence'. The need to develop more effective European military capabilities was reaffirmed, and it demonstrated a high-level of commitment coming from the Member states. Also, the Annex introduced changes in the context of decision-making in the field of security and defence policy. Such changes were needed in order to handle at best the

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[34]   Franco-   British   St.   Malo   Declaration,   1998   (available   online   at: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf

[35]   Franco-   British   St.   Malo   Declaration,   1998   (available   online   at: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf

strategic direction of EU-led Petersberg operations so that the EU could decide and conduct such operations effectively. To do so, the EU needed sources of intelligence, and a capability for relevant strategic planning. Thus, the Annex stated that regular (or ad hoc) meetings of the General Affairs Council, including Defence Ministers were to be hold; a Political and Security Committee consisting of representatives with political and military expertise had to be created, as well as an EU Military Committee [36] consisting of Military Representatives making recommendations to the Political and Security Committee, and an EU Military Staff [37]; lastly, other resources as a Satellite Centre and an Institute for Security Studies were needed to enhance the capacity for analysis of situations [38].

These were the first bodies to be created specifically for defence and security purposes and from that moment on had to provide political and military advice to the EU and coordinate rapid response to crises. Nevertheless, it was not the only change made in the Decision. Indeed, while stating the pledge to the Atlantic Alliance and the collective defence principle, the EU's defence strengthened. The Annex stated that the EU had to decide whether to conduct EU-led operations using NATO assets and capabilities or not. So, while acknowledging NATO as the main framework for collective defence, the EU sought more and more to widen its own capacity to undertake military operations, complementing NATO's capabilities.

In 2001 the Treaty of Nice amending the TEU was issued, and it brought changes in many fields, as the one of the CFSP. News concerned in particular:

- the High Representative
- the enhanced cooperation [39]
- a Political and Security Committee (PSC)

The role of the HR for the CFSP was thus reinforced as it gained responsibility. Not only would be the HR assisted by a Deputy Secretary-General, but it also had to keep informed the Member states about enhanced cooperation in the field of CFSP. Indeed, changes

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[36] Set up through Council Decision 2001/79/CFSP of 22 January 2001 setting up the Military Committee of the European Union, (OJ L 27, 30.1.2001, p. 4–6)

[37] Set up through Council Decision 2001/80/CFSP on the establishment of the Military Staff of the European Union, 22 January 2001 (OJ L 27, 30.1.2001, p. 7–11)

[38] European Council, Conclusions of the Presidency, Annex III, 3 - 4 June 1999, Cologne (available online at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/kol2_en.htm#an3)

[39] Procedure that exists under Art. 20 TEU and it allows a minimum of nine EU Members to start specific actions of cooperation and integration in different fields. In this way, those who participate can move at different speeds and towards different goals than those who decide not to do so.

came in the context of enhanced cooperation where the use of the qualified majority voting procedure was broadened furtherly with an exception, that is defence:

> *"Enhanced cooperation pursuant to this Title shall relate to implementation of a joint action or a common position. It shall not relate to matters having military or defence implications* [40]*".*

Thirdly, the Treaty of Nice provided the necessary context and political impetus for the creation of the Political and Security Committee. Its formal establishment was accomplished through Council Decision 2001/78/CFSP [41], and it substantially substituted the former Political Committee, created along with the EPC in the Seventies. Article 25 of the Treaty specifies how this newly established entity would "*monitor the international situation in the areas covered by the common foreign and security policy and contribute to the definition of policies by delivering opinions to the Council at the request of the Council or on its own initiative. It shall also monitor the implementation of agreed policies (...)* [42] " and more importantly "*exercise, under the responsibility of the Council, political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations* [43]".

It could be said that new entities were formed in those years (EUMS, EUMC, PSC) and they represented a substantial step towards a new way to interpret defence and security. A sort of a more structured attempt to address matters on defence and security was taking place.

Figure 1. Coat of arms of (a) EUMC and (b) EUMS

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[40] Treaty of Nice, OJ C 080 , 10/03/2001
[41] OJ L 27, 30.1.2001, p. 1–3
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

Some months after meeting in Nice, EU Member States met in Göteborg. Along with other issues, they reaffirmed their willingness to further develop the ESDP, its capabilities and its structures. Not only did they discuss about civilian aspects of crisis management as well as their tasks to be achieved before 2003, but the EU-NATO relationship was long considered. As could be read at point 49 of the Presidency Conclusions:

> *"Progress has been made in the development of a permanent and effective relationship with NATO. Permanent arrangements for consultation and cooperation have been agreed and implemented (…). Rapid agreement is called for on arrangements permitting EU access to NATO assets and capabilities [44]"*.

Nevertheless, in September of the same year, the 9/11 attack soon showed the weaknesses of the ESDP [45]. The fight against terrorism was then included in the main tasks of the Policy at the European Council meeting of 2002 [46] thanks to Annex V: Draft Declaration of the European Council on the contribution of CFSP, including ESDP, in the fight against Terrorism. Yet, a stronger position in the realm of security and defence was demonstrated with the launch of the **European Security Strategy** (ESS) in 2003. It identified the global challenges and key threats of that specific historical moment. It came as no surprise that issues as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Iran's nuclear programme, cybersecurity, terrorism, and energy were taken into consideration. The War in Iraq was crucial too in raising awareness among EU Member States for the necessity to develop its own defence system, without depending on stronger States (i.e. the U.S.). Through the ESS, EU Members affirmed their ambition to play a much more influential role in security and protection of democracy. Putting it into simpler words, the ESS aimed at outlining a common approach to security and defence for the EU and its Member states. In order to do so, the EU had to gain much more political weight, but this was strongly impeded because the socio-political context had become enormously complex, considering terrorism and regional conflicts. The ESS Act itself stated that "*(…) Europe faces new threats which are more diverse, less visible and less predictable [47]*". Yet, willingness did

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[44] Presidency Conclusion, Göteborg European Council - V. Cooperating for peace and security, 15 and 16 June 2001.

[45] Liargovas, P., Papageorgiou, C., "Foreign and Defence Policy: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges", 2024.

[46] This was followed by the Prague summit during when seven other States joined the Atlantic Alliance, namely Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, thus increasing the participation of Central Eastern countries.

[47] European Council, " A secure Europe in a better world ", European Security Strategy, 2003 (not published in the OJ).

not suffice as the ESS failed to put forward concrete actions and policy objectives [48]. Among the reasons, probably, is the fact that it covered many and enormous security threats, without really stating specific policy objectives, useful when addressing each individual threat. A lack of operational details could be also the cause, as the Strategy did not delve into implementation mechanisms. It came as no surprise that few steps were made towards the EU's defence and security strategy if those were the reasons. Among them also, a diversification of national interests and priorities, and an interinstitutional problem as many new bodies and entities were being created at that time, so problems could arise if there was disagreement over any kind of issue.

All this paved the way for the launch of another agency, namely the European Defence Agency. In fact, in July 2004 the Council of the EU had everything ready to make the EDA operational: its aim was indeed to improve Member States' military capabilities while keeping them consistent with ESDP objectives and policies [49].

It can be easily said that the creation of the ESDP represented a significant step forward in the EU's efforts to enhance its role as a security provider, alongside its conventional focus on economic and political integration. Eventually though, the transition from the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was driven by the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, which will be now analysed.

1.1.2 COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

The final text of what later became the Treaty of Lisbon was adopted in October 2007, signed in December of the same year and finally entered into force two years later, in December 2009. This Treaty amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community brought with it many important changes. It is currently in force with the consolidated version of 2016.

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[48] Mälksoo, M., "From the ESS to the EU Global Strategy: external policy, internal purpose", Contemporary Security Policy, 2016.
[49] More details are given in the section concerning the agencies of EU addressing the theme of defence, page 21.

Interesting are the changes concerning the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Treaty created another body, the European External Action Service, as stated in Article 27:

"In fulfilling his mandate, the High Representative shall be assisted by a European External Action Service. (…) The organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service shall be established by a decision of the Council. [50]".

Furthermore, a new position is created, i.e. the new post of Commission vice-president and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which substituted the former High Representative for CFSP introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997. Additionally, it expanded its role as the High Representative from that moment would chair the Foreign Affairs Council, would be considered one of the Vice-Presidents of the European Commission, and would finally be separated from the role of Secretary-General of the Council of the EU as they had been since 1997. The main tasks of the High Representative are to conduct the Union's CFSP and CSDP and contribute by his proposals to the development of that policies, which he carries out as mandated by the Council [51].

The Treaty of Lisbon was also of relevant importance for the theme of defence as it introduced the mutual defence clause [52] which states that:

"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.[53]"

Moreover, it has to be stressed that the Lisbon Treaty does not explicitly state that the ESDP became the CSDP. The name change from ESDP to CSDP is more of a practical implication of the broader reforms and enhancements to the EU's security and defence policy introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. This change reflected the EU's evolving approach

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[50] Article 27, OJ C 202, 7.6.2016
[51] Article 18, OJ C 202, 7.6.2016
[52] Firstly introduced in the Treaty of Brussels, with Article IV, signed in 1948 signed by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It provided that an armed attack against any of the signatory states in Europe or North Africa would have been considered an attack against them all.
[53] Article 42, OJ C 202, 7.6.2016

to security and defence matters, emphasizing the shared responsibility of EU member states in addressing common security challenges.

Lastly, the Lisbon Treaty dedicates a paragraph of Article 42 to the role of the EDA. This will be later examined when talking about the different agencies involved in the EU defence.

The Annual Report for the implementation of the CFSP in 2022 highlighted the very limited ways the Lisbon Treaty has been used when talking about security and foreign policy. This was the consequence of a lack of political will by member States; hence, the need to shape differently CFSP in order to answer the challenges the EU is currently facing (as for example, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine). Clearly, crucial partnerships as with the Atlantic Alliance or G7 are reaffirmed, stressing the importance of having such allies for the maintenance of peace [54]. Following these considerations, the Annual Report draws some conclusions and possible solutions to reach its goals. It has an entire section concerning the consolidation of the EU's decision-making arrangements in foreign and security policy, where issues such as voting procedures (qualified majority, 'passerelle', and unanimity) and the need for a defence union that could be complementary to NATO are scrutinized.

1.3 EU DEFENCE AGENCIES AND TOOLS

Nowadays many are agencies and initiatives actively involved in the realm of defence in the European Union. They were born in different times but today they play a major role in shaping the CSDP, and more generally the CFSP.

One of the main bodies is the European External Action Service, henceforth called EEAS.

Figure 2. Emblem of the EEAS

Its creation was observed at the time as 'one of the most significant changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon'. [55] As explained before, the Lisbon Treaty enhanced the role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs

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[54] European Parliament, *Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022*, (2022/2048(INI))
[55] Council of the European Union, Press Release 8967/10 (Presse 89), 26 April 2010

and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission (i.e. HR/VP). This is relevant because, affirming even more this new institutional status quo, the Treaty states that the HR/VP is backed and assisted by the EU's diplomatic Corp, the European External Action Service as equivalent to a foreign ministry (Koppa, 2022) [56]. The EEAS helps the HR/VP in pursuing its tasks and objectives concerning the EU's foreign policy and it finds its legal basis in the *Council Decision 2010/427/EU* of 26 July 2010 [57]. It has this central role due to the fact that, as stated in Article 1, it:

> " *(…) shall be a functionally autonomous body of the European Union, separate from the General Secretariat of the Council and from the Commission with the legal capacity necessary to perform its tasks and attain its objectives* [58] ".

Moreover, it is indicated that it works in close cooperation with the Commission, with the General Secretariat of the Council and with the diplomatic service of the Member States. This of course to ensure common decisions and strategy approaches concerning external actions and foreign policy. It is to be noted though in Article 3 that there is an exception in the matters of consultation regarding the CSDP:

> *"The EEAS and the services of the Commission shall consult each other on all matters relating to the external action of the Union in the exercise of their respective functions, except on matters covered by the CSDP* [59] ".

The Decision then follows explaining the structure of EEAS, its organization, and the respective responsibilities for each role. The HR/VP of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is now Josep Borrell Fontelles. It is managed by Stefano Sannino, Executive Secretary-General, assisted by three [60] Deputy Secretaries-General, whose work falls under the authority of the HR/VP; also, he is in charge of the coordination between all departments and Union Delegations present in non-EU countries [61].

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[56] Koppa, M., "The Evolution of the Common Security and Defence Policy: Critical Junctures and the Quest for EU Strategic Autonomy", p. 92, Springer International Publishing, 2022.
[57] OJ L 201, 3.8.2010, pp. 30-40
[58] Decision 2010/427/EU — establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service.
[59] Ibid.
[60] In 2015, HR/VP Federica Mogherini announced that there would be a third Deputy Secretary-General, to be added to the traditional two, appointed to handle Economic and Global Issues.
[61] The legal basis for the delegations is Article 221 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, stating that "*1. Union delegations in third countries and at international organisations shall represent the Union. 2. Union delegations shall be placed under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign*

Simultaneously, the EEAS is organised in Directorates-General, as it can be read in the Decision 2010/427/EU — establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service. Several comprise geographic desks covering all countries and regions of the world, as well as multilateral and thematic desks.; a directorate-general for administrative, staffing, budgetary, security and communication and information system matters. Lastly, the crisis management and planning directorate, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, the EUMS, and the European Union Situation Centre, placed under the direct authority and responsibility of the High Representative.

Each year, the EEAS delivers its Annual Activity Report consisting in a management report of the Secretary-General to the HR/VP. This explains in detail all the activities carried out by the Service every year, including the key political achievements, and how it managed human and financial resources. By playing its role carrying out the CFSP, including the CSDP thanks to strategic planning, crisis management, diplomatic engagement and coordination of EU missions, the EEAS helps to enhance EUs capacities in addressing security challenges, ensuring global stability. It is in charge of supervising the deployment and management of EU civilian and military missions and operations which are going to be explained in paragraph 1.3 concerning the Strategic Compass, key document approved in 2022 and consisting of an ambitious plan of action aiming at bolstering the EU's security and defence policy by 2030.

Figure 3. Emblem of the EDA

Surely, the EEAS is not the only body engaged in security and defence issues. It works closely with the European Defence Agency (henceforth called EDA), which plays a crucial role. It was established under a Joint Action of the Council of Ministers on 12 July 2004 (2004/551/CFSP) [62]. Since its birth, several amendments have been made regarding its statute. These changes were made official in 2015 with the adoption of the Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1835 defining the statute, seat and operational rules of the European Defence Agency. The EDA is led by Jiří Šedivý, EDA Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executive André Erich Denk under the authority of the High Representative

Affairs and Security Policy. They shall act in close cooperation with Member States' diplomatic and consular missions".
[62] OJ L 245, 17.7.2004, p. 17–28

of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It consists also in three operational directorates and one directorate in charge of providing business support to the Agency (about finance, HR, contract managements and so on).

Article 2 of the Decision specifies the mission of the Agency:

> *"1.   The mission of the Agency is to support the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve the Union's defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the CSDP as it currently stands and as it develops in the future.*
>
> *2.   The Agency shall identify operational requirements, promote measures to satisfy those requirements, contribute to identifying and, where appropriate, implementing any measure needed to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector, participate in defining a European capabilities and armaments policy, and assist the Council in evaluating the improvement of military capabilities.*
>
> *3.   The Agency's mission shall be without prejudice to the competences of Member States in defence matters* [63] *".*

Article 45 of the TEU establishes the legal basis for the European Defence Agency, while the before-mentioned Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1835 provides detailed rules and procedures governing the Agency's operations, structure, and administrative framework within the broader context of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. It states that it is tasked with defining a European capabilities and armaments policy, promoting measures to meet operational requirements, assisting the Council in evaluating the enhancement of military capabilities, and contributing to the identification and implementation of any necessary measures to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector. This showed a much broader view of defence, common defence indeed, starting now to dedicate much more attention to what could be said to be the practical part: the defence industry and technology.

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[63] Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1835 of 12 October 2015 defining the statute, seat and operational rules of the European Defence Agency (recast) (OJ L 266, 13.10.2015, p. 55–74)
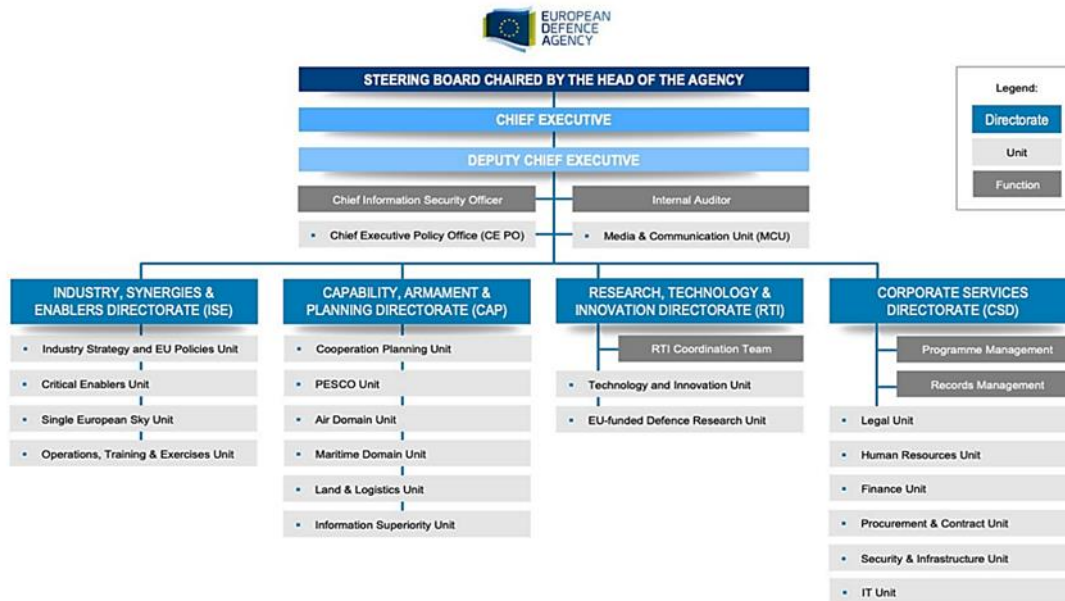
Figure 4. EDA's organigram (source: EDA)

Additionally, the EDA is due to submit to the Council in November each year a report on the Agency's activities for that year, as stated in Article 4 concerning 'Political supervision and reporting arrangements to the Council'. Indeed, the Agency is appointed to regularly update the Capability Development Plan (CDP), which is the reference for several fundamental defence initiatives, launched following the 2016 EU Global Strategy. These initiatives are:

- the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)
- the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)
- the European Defence Fund (EDF)

Initially set up in 2008, the CDP was revised in 2011, 2014, 2018 and 2023 under the auspices of the European Defence Agency which is the CDP 'architect', in close cooperation with its Member States and with the active contributions of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). Simply put, the CDP answers the question: which capabilities should EU Member States focus on together to be ready for the future? Thus, it has to be continuously updated on EU defence and military capability [64] gaps in order to let EU Members have a rapid response to threats. It is the

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[64] The term 'military capability' refers to the ability to take action producing effective achievements, and it is defined by a minimum of requirements.

major tool concerning EU defence as all other instruments and initiatives revolve around the outcomes of CDP's research.

The Capability Development Priorities relative to the year 2023 are twenty-two and they precisely reflect the continuous changes of the society, taking into consideration wars, conflicts and political alliances, using as principal guiding line the so-called Strategic Compass, which will be later deeply explained (chapter 1.1.3, p. 29) In doing so, CDP considers previous EU's defence shortfalls, emerging threats, and of course, takes lessons from past CSDP operations and activities. To give an idea of the domains being in constant development in the realm of defence, here are the 2023 Capability Development Priorities.

Figure 5. Capability Development Priorities. Source: EDA website

As stated before, CDP serves as reference for other defence tools. Among them, there is the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence. It was initiated by the European Council in 2016 and launched in 2017, as a result of the EU Global Strategy on foreign policy and security issues [65] (EUGS). Indeed, some months later an implementation plan for the CSDP was proposed by the then HR/VP, Federica Mogherini, to the Council of Foreign Affairs to lay some concreteness to the EUGS. Thus, among the proposals, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence made its first appearance:

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[65] It replaces the 2003 ESS

> *"Member States invite the HRVP / Head of the Agency to present proposals on detailed scope, modalities and content to Ministers in spring 2017 with a view of setting up the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence in concrete terms [66]"*

CARD provides a comprehensive picture of the European defence landscape to member states on capability, research innovation and industrial aspects. Its goals are different: analyse national defence planning and development; help member states identify opportunities for cooperation in critical areas; serve as 'pathfinder' for collaborative capability development and research projects. To reach its results, it has to pursue several phases, which, to sum up, are the following:

1. EDA collects information already made available by Member States and coordinates with EEAS and EU Military Staff.
2. Bilateral dialogues are then held with each member State to validate and consolidate the info in consistency with NATO's Defence Planning Process.
3. The results are analysed to identify trends:
    a. On defence spending and planning
    b. In implementation of priorities set by the CDP
    c. Of opportunities for defence cooperation
4. Based on matches found in Member States, planning and interests' recommendations and opportunities for cooperation are presented to Ministers of Defence in the CARD report

CARD aims to trigger collaborative efforts based on existing national interests. Projects can be launched by Members in various formats, and they can be sometime co-funded by the European Defence Fund, which will be later analysed:

- Under PESCO
- Within the EDA
- In other bilateral or multinational frameworks

CARD, as part of the EU defence toolbox, is a cornerstone of a structured approach to European defence cooperation and a guiding reference to boost collaborative defence capability planning/development/joint procurement. Despite being quite a recent tool, it

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[66] Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, 14392/16, 14 November 2016

has until now resulted in two cycles (2019-2020 and 2021-2022, with a trial exercise in 2018), considering that in order to produce the final document, it has to carry out research for two years [67]: a third cycle has begun in 2023. CARD has an intrinsic relationship with the other two defence initiatives, PESCO, with CARD guiding the priorities and commitments PESCO works on; and the European Defence Fund. Additionally, it serves as a sort of parallel initiative to NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP), thus considered essential for the harmonisation of both the EU and NATO, not only in the realm of the two Organizations but also at the national level [68].

Lastly, the EDA is involved in the European Defence Fund. It was founded in January 2021 with Regulation 2021/697 adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union [69] to promote industrial collaboration in the field of defence and proposed by the Commission in 2018. Indeed, it has specific objectives, such as introducing new defence products and technologies, and boosting innovation, efficiency and competitiveness. This has the ultimate goal of a better and ideal use of EU defence spending. The Fund is operative from 2021 to 2027 having a budget of €7 billion to be spent for two categories of actions: research or development actions [70].

The third and last fundamental body appointed to the CSDP is PESCO. When talking

Figure 6. PESCO's emblem

about PESCO, what is important to note is that it is one of the deepest forms of defence cooperation. Its legal basis can be found in Article 42 TEU, and more specifically in Protocol No. 10 annexed to the Treaty. It was formally established with the Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 [71]. The Member States that agreed on their participation were initially twenty-five, becoming twenty-six only last

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[67] CARD uses two specific mechanisms, i.e. the CARD Aggregate Analysis (providing a guideline for recommendations/proposals to Member States) and the CARD Report (consisting itself in three sub-categories: defence spending, defence planning and defence cooperation).

[68] Dragos, I., "Convergence and Pragmatism in structuring the EU Defence Planning Process. The Importance of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)". Strategic Impact, 2023.

[69] OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 149–177

[70] 'Research action' meaning research activities with the objective of acquiring new knowledge on defence applications; 'Development action' meaning developing new defence products/technologies

[71] OJ L 331, 14.12.2017, p. 57–77

May 2023 with Denmark joining the group with the Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1015 [72]. PESCO differs from other defence cooperation forms in the legally binding nature of its twenty commitments. Since its launch in 2017, it has carried out several projects covering all military domains, counting now sixty-eight projects. Participation is voluntary and Member states can decide in which projects they want to participate. Such projects carried out by PESCO cover a wide range of areas and they all mean to fill the defence capability gaps identified in the CDP. Their goals are to enhance interoperability and deployability [73], achievable for instance by providing a database of capabilities that are ready to be rapidly deployed or with the simplification of cross border military transport in Europe.

Also, Members commit to regularly increase their defence budgets with the perspective of rising defence investment expenditure reaching the 20 % of total defence spending.

Moreover, the HR/VP has to present an annual report on PESCO activities to the Council, report based on the findings coming from the EDA and the EEAS which also form together its Secretariat.

PESCO's competencies in defence and security are designed to enhance the EU's collective defence capabilities, improve interoperability among member states, and support the EU's strategic autonomy. In simple words, PESCO is capable of doing this because, on the one hand, the Council is in charge of the overall political direction and decision-making, but on the other hand, particular projects are left to the Member States that have joined voluntarily the partnership.

In 2023, Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 [74] establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO was amended for the fifth time with Decision (CFSP) 2023/995 [75], updating the list of PESCO projects bringing them to a total of 72 projects.

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[72] OJ L 136, 24.5.2023, p. 73–74
[73] The term 'deployability' refers to the ability of armed forces to be rapidly and effectively deployed to a specific location or operational theatre where their presence is required
[74] Council of the European Union, Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO, 6 March 2018 (OJ L 65, 8.3.2018, p. 24–27).
[75] Council of the European Union, Decision (CFSP) 2023/995 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO, 22 May 2023 (OJ L 135, 23/05/2023 p. 123–130)

1.3 STRATEGIC COMPASS – MARCH 2022

In March 2022, the EU and its Member States approved a document prepared by the EEAS, the so-called Strategic Compass, which has become the new security and defence instruction manual for the EU. Its objective is precise, and it consists of making the EU a better security provider. The document assesses the key challenges the EU is facing in the field of defence and security, and it tracks solutions both concerning political/diplomatic approaches and gaps in defence spending. In parallel, it states that these ambitious results are to be achieved before 2030. More importantly, the need for a common and consistent view of threats and defence approach among the Member States is crucial in order to be as efficient as possible when facing challenges. And this is everything but easy in a Union with so many countries, each with different perspectives on what are their priorities and national interests. This has resulted to be the main reason behind the fragmented partnership among States and will be later analysed in the third Chapter.

After the 2016 EUGS, new tools were developed, namely CARD, EDF and PESCO. Nevertheless, EU Member States when adhering to the Strategic Compass are adhering to a political commitment to achieve its priorities. While the Strategic Compass sets strategic priorities, the implementation of specific actions and initiatives remains voluntary. Member states retain the sovereignty to decide the extent and manner of their participation in various projects (for example, PESCO projects, and missions). The priorities are listed in clear and precise points in the Document:

- ➢ Act
- ➢ Secure
- ➢ Partner
- ➢ Invest

Indeed, *acting* rapidly when a crisis or emergency comes up is crucial, be it in cooperation with other partners outside the EU or alone. To achieve this, among the most important initiatives is the deployment of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC), considered one of the key military outcomes of the Strategic Compass. In case of exceptional circumstances, it allows the EU to deploy up to 5.000 troops against imminent threats or even in conflicts outside the Union. They can be deployed in cases of conflict prevention, crisis management, stabilization, and humanitarian assistance. Yet, it has to

be stressed that the EU RDC is not intended for collective defence, because its primary mission is not to provide defence against armed attacks on member states, which is typically the role of collective defence arrangements, still responsibility of the Atlantic Alliance under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty . Instead, the RDC focuses on other types of military operations that fall under the CSDP.

Also, while not denying the fundamental partnership with NATO, the EU nevertheless has recognized the importance of becoming more efficient in joint operations (as within the PESCO's framework). Indeed, attention is drawn to Civilian and Military CSDP missions [76], with the objective of making the decision-making process more flexible, as they offer a variety of instruments to address various security issues. In fact, the EU can respond to any crisis with the best resources possible thanks to this dual capability, which guarantees a thorough and efficient strategy for preserving international peace and security. Civilian missions focus on non-military aspects such as rule of law, police training, civilian administration, and border management, and are present when military intervention is not appropriate or necessary. On the other hand, Military missions handle peacekeeping, conflict prevention, post-conflict stabilization, and crisis management. Below, are the current ongoing Civilian and Military CSDP missions and operations, as of 2024:

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[76] Their legal basis is provided by the TEU in Art. 42(1), 42(3), 43(1), and 44, explaining the types of operations that can be conducted and the framework within which these missions are organised and implemented
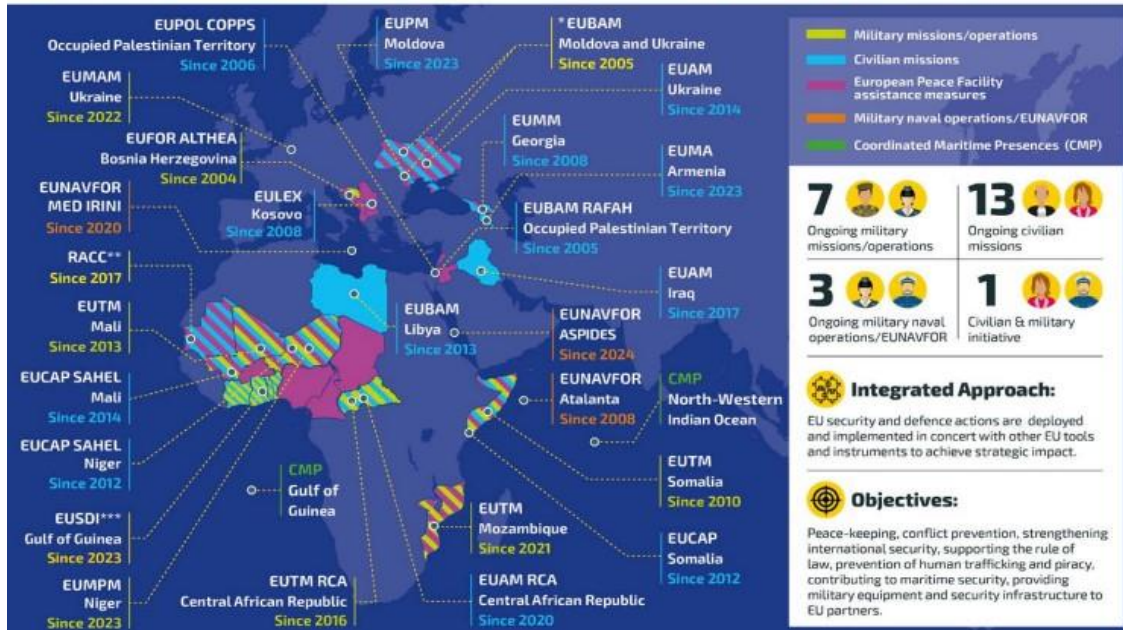
Figure 7. On-going CSDP missions and operations. Source: "A Strategic Compass for security and defence" (source: EEAS)

The 'act' section also handles the strengthening of the command and control structures, in particular the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) [77]. This latter is appointed for the operational planning and conduct of the EU's non-executive [78] military missions and works under the authority of EUMS being thus part of the EEAS. It works jointly with the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC)[79], it reports directly to the PSC and informs the EUMC.

Secondly, as far as the *secure* section is concerned, the scope is to anticipate threats before they emerge and secure access to strategic defence domains. To do so, the EU commits to develop an EU Cyber Defence Policy and expand its range of action in the maritime, space and air domains, for example through an EU Space Strategy or the Coordinated Maritime Presence [80]. Also, there is a need to bolster the EU's intelligence-based

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[77] Established in June 2017, in line with Council conclusions of 14 November 2016 on implementation of the EUGS in the area of Security and Defence.

[78] A non-executive EU military mission is a type of mission under CSDP where the EU provides advisory, training, and support services to the armed forces of a host country, rather than directly engaging in combat operations or taking over military responsibilities (i.e. EU Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine - – EUMAM Ukraine, or EU Training Mission in Somalia – EUTM Somalia).

[79] Responsible for the conduct of civilian CSDP operations (i.e. EU Advisory Mission in Iraq - EUAM Iraq)

[80] It can be implemented in any maritime area of the world determined by the Council of the EU as a Maritime Area of Interest and relies on assets which yet remain under national command.

situational awareness and relevant EU capacities. Relevant are surely the framework of the EU Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, as well as the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen), being them the only entry point for intelligence information coming from Member States, thus facilitating the exchange of data and the response of the EU.

Thirdly, cooperation with *partners* is inevitably necessary in order to face new threats and challenges, and essential if the EU wants to be a global strategic partner. For example, the EU-NATO partnership is fundamental for maintaining security in the Euro-Atlantic area and this commitment is shown in the Joint Declarations of Cooperation signed in 2016, 2018 and the last in January 2023. Additionally, the EU commits to boost partnership with the United Nations for example by implementing the new joint set of priorities on peace operations and crisis management 2022-2024 and the recommendations present in the Report "Our Common Agenda" [81]. Already in 2020, the EU and UN agreed on a Framework Agreement for the Provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field [82]. There are also regional partners to work with, such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) or OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). With the first ones, the EU commits to be more engaged in the building of Pan-Asian security. With the latter, the EU will further cooperation in specific areas of the world as Western Balkans and Central Asia, while also exchanging more and more information concerning conflict prevention, post-conflict stabilisation, security governance, and so on. The African continent though is not left behind: the partnership with the African Union is to be reinforced thanks to political dialogues, joint field visits and stronger communication with its sub-regional organisations, as ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States. Lastly, to achieve the 'partner' goal, the EU has to keep pushing for tailored and bilateral partnerships with strategic partners, with whom it shares common interests. A way to do this is with a high-level EU Security and Defence Partnership Forum which will take place twice a year, becoming the occasion for EU partners to discuss crucial issues of security and defence.

Fourthly, there is the impellent urge to make better use of the EU defence spending, and this is the main subject of the section *invest*. The EU indeed has to exploit the tools already

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[81] Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General, published by the United Nations, 2021
[82] Framework Agreement between the European Union and the United Nations for the Provision of Mutual Support in the context of their respective missions and operations in the field (OJ L 389, 19.11.2020, p. 2–20).

available, namely PESCO and the EDF. This issue is faced in the Strategic Compass because of the period of under-investment and under-spending that have been characterising the period 2008-2018 [83], but today's situation does not leave space for dependencies in the field of technology or industry, especially if linked to EU security. The EU then commits to enormously increase its defence expenditure, mainly its investments for example in disruptive technologies [84] (such as Artificial Intelligence) and in technologically advanced forces, capable of responding to the new threats the world is currently facing. Consistently to the idea of investing, the more suitable tool to use in this case of course is the EDF. The more cooperation is encouraged, the more investments in defence are going to increase. This is because if defence cooperation among EU Members increased, this inevitably would lead to an increase in investments as cooperation enhances efficiency and reduces costs through economies of scale. Buying large quantities reduces costs per unit, making it financially attractive to invest more in high-quality defence equipment. In other terms, by cooperating and working together, Member States could achieve greater security and defence capabilities.

In conclusion, the Strategic Compass represents the strategic roadmap for the EU's defence and security attitude towards challenges and it is an extraordinary coincidence that the time for its adoption in 2022 coincided with the outbreak of the most serious military threat since World War II. The Strategic Compass has committed to achieve around forty goals, but none of these are going to be attained without a serious enhancement of defence spending. EU Member States have announced the increase in their defence spending and investments (within PESCO binding commitments, and within NATO's framework), and they actually managed to do it. As the 2023 Annual Report of the EDA reported and as can be read in the EDA annual defence data report for 2021-2022 published in 2023 [85], total defence spending across the EU reached €240 billion, a 6% increase compared to 2021. But this is not sufficient, also if considering events as the financial crisis of 2008 and the Covid-19 pandemic which have strongly affected EU countries. Money has to be used to fill the capability gaps reported in the CARD's report,

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[83] European Defence Matters, "EU's Strategic Compass: follow the ambition", Magazine issue no. 23, 2022.

[84] Term that refers to a new technology that replaces an older process, product, or indeed technology; it is an innovation that significantly alters the way that industries, or businesses operate.

[85] 2023 EDA Annual Report available online at: https://eda.europa.eu/publications-and-data/all-publications/annual-report-2023; EDA Defence Data 2022 available online at: https://eda.europa.eu/publications-and-data/brochures/eda-defence-data-2022.

while also PESCO and the EDF can help but these three cannot be considered an alternative to national defence investments [86].

1.3.1 NEW THREATS

In the last years, the world has become more complex, as threats challenging EU' security have become more unpredictable. Threats nowadays are multi-layered, hybrid and surpass the traditional military or territorial type of threats: as pointed out by Josep Borrell, society is witnessing the return of power politics [87] and a range of many new power tools. Indeed, in addition to the traditional troops and aircraft, a major role is being played by misinformation, cyber-attacks, commercialization of armed forces and even political monopolisation of sensitive technologies [88]. Also, the need for multilateral partnerships, and more importantly bilateral partnerships is essential when noting that many countries behave as friends on certain issues, but then appear to have an antagonist attitude when handling other issues. This is why before delivering the Strategic Compass, a work that needed two years of discussion, an *EU Threat Analysis* was conducted in 2020, the first ever at the EU level to let Member States have a common consideration and a clear idea of the menaces they were facing. It has been prepared by the EU's SIAC (Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, which consists of the EU Intelligence Centre and EUMS Intelligence), and it studied the global trends and risks of security challenges, mainly focusing on those particularly interesting for the EU, because they affect its specific interests. The next threat analysis is foreseen for 2025.

As mentioned before, society is witnessing the so-called power politics, despite the firm adhesion to multilateralism and respect for international law with its principles. Indeed, the Compass explains that the presence of a wide range of new actors in the international security scheme trying to change the global order by being willing to expand their

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[86] Fiott, D., Lindstrom, G., Nunes, I. F., Giegerich, B., Gotkowska, J., Jacoby, V., Lazarou, E., Marrone, A., Maulny, J.-P., Raik, K., & Tiilikainen, T., "Strategic Compass: New bearings for EU security and defence?", European Union Institute for Security Studies - EUISS, 2021.

[87] According to the theory of power in international relations known as "power politics," shifts in the allocation of power and national interests are one of primary causes of war.

[88] Josep Borrell in European Defence Matters, "EU's Strategic Compass: follow the ambition", Magazine issue no. 23, 2022.

positions is shattering international security itself. The biggest threat to be mentioned in the document of course cannot be anything but Russia with its military aggression against Ukraine. This unexpected attack has shown Russia's possibility to use a greater degree of military force compared to a smaller State like Ukraine, totally regardless of ethics or violation of international law rules. Since the beginning, Russia has been using hybrid tactics, cyberattacks, foreign information interference, and coercion over energy which has been a central issue for the EU for the last two years [89]. Additionally, when talking about power politics, China is taken into consideration, because while being partners for cooperation and being an economic force, undeniable differences lie between the two societies and economies. China is also supporting Russia's war economy being its most important trading partner as it provides Russia with high-end technologies such as microprocessors, microelectronics for missiles, battle tanks, planes, big amounts of dual-use equipment [90].

Furthermore, China's decision to reform its army, aiming to modernise it before 2035 has led the EU to be worried about how this will affect international order. In fact, President Xi Jinping's China has implemented the biggest military reorganization in over a decade, reorganization that seeks to integrate technology-driven forces in order to better respond to modern and future wars. For example, in 2021 the United States' Department of Defence reported that People's Liberation Army [91] wanted to expand China's capacity in terms of nuclear arsenal by reaching the total of 700 warheads by 2027 [92]. This inevitably might have impacts on regional and global security.

Moreover, the EU not only has to envision regional tensions and instability (as in the case of the Western Balkans, Sahel Region, Central Africa, Gulf Region, Central America, etc.), but it also has to pay much attention to transnational threats [93]. These can come for example from terrorism and violent extremism, coming particularly from Da'esh, al-

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[89] European Union, "A strategic compass for security and defence" (available online at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf) 2022.

[90] Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the Informal meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Prague, 31 May 2024 (available online at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_226063.htm?selectedLocale=en)

[91] It is the military force of the People's Republic of China.

[92] Nouwens, M., China's Military Modernisation: Will the People's Liberation Army complete its reforms?, Strategic Survey 2022: The Annual Assessment of Geopolitics, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022.

[93] The Strategic Compass affirms that such transnational threats have a "direct impact on the Union's own security".

Qaeda and their affiliates who keep undermining the stability in various regions of the world, if not EU itself with the propagation of extremist ideologies. Nevertheless, one of the major concerns is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, accompanied by both China and Russia's desire to enhance their nuclear power, using it as a threat against other powers (as Russia with Ukraine). The use of chemical weapons too has to be discouraged via Organizations like the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Furthermore, the rapid increase of the transnational menace rising from cyberspace has led to the development of strategic competition, for example, thanks to cyberattacks. All this clearly has defence implications because an unsafe outer space does not permit safe monitoring and observation capabilities, essential to ensure freedom. Apart from the cyber field, security has to be maintained also at the maritime and air levels, both of which are becoming more and more contested. For example, the Gulf of Aden (part of the Suez Canal shipping route) and the Strait of Hormuz (which divides the Arabic peninsula from Iran, connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman) are maritime area facing security challenges for their crucial importance. Instability in the region is exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in Yemen with Houthi rebels attacking ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

Figure 8. Emblem of EU Advisor Mission Ukraine

After all these issues being tackled in the Compass, in March 2024 the *Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence* has been published. It states the achievements the EU has reached concerning the four sections that were the core of the Compass. As far as the war in Ukraine is involved, over 40,000 Ukrainian soldiers have received training from the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM Ukraine), while the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform (EUAM Ukraine) and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism provide respectively for support to the authorities to law enforcement and border control and the second one for assistance to civilian structures. However, other missions are ongoing, for example in Armenia and the Republic of

Figure 9. Emblem of EU Military Assistance Mission Ukraine

Moldova, the latter being one of the most affected countries by the outbreak of Russia's war. Africa though is an area extremely delicate, ranging from a zone like the Sahel (especially Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali), where coups and violent extremism occur, to a zone like West and Central Africa where missions are leading to concrete results, for example with the launch of the Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea [94] through Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1599 of 3 August 2023 [95]. Such missions in the African regions are relevantly important as its instability might lead to negative consequences in Europe, in terms of terrorism, migration flows and of economic interests [96]. Addressing the Red Sea crisis, a new mission called EUNAVFOR Aspides has been launched in February 2024 with Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 [97]: it acts consistently with the UN Security Council Resolution 2722, which demands the cessation of Houthis' attacks on merchant and commercial vessels [98].

Figure 10. Emblem of EU Naval Force Aspides

A major role, visible in the Report, is played by the European Peace Facility (EPF) as in 2024 the Council has raised the EPF financial ceiling up to EUR 17 billion for the period 2021-2027 with Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/890 [99]. Indeed, the Council in March 2024 allocated €5 billion under EPF to be dedicated to additional military support to Ukraine. This has led the EU and its Member States to be able to provide around EUR 28 billion worth of military support to Ukraine in the last two years, thanks both to the EPF and other means like bilateral support.

Also, another central tool of the Compass has had major developments: the EU RDC is becoming operational within 2025, but before that, many live military exercises are being carried out. Military mobility is indeed fundamentally important in order to response

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[94] Launched in December 2023 for a duration of two years.

[95] OJ L 196, 4.8.2023, pp. 25–34.

[96] African countries possess many resources wanted and necessary for European industries, as for example: minerals and metals (cobalt, copper, etc.), energy resources (oil and uranium), agricultural products (coffee, cocoa, palm oil).

[97] Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/583 of 8 February 2024 on a European Union maritime security operation to safeguard freedom of navigation in relation to the Red Sea crisis (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES) (OJ L, 2024/583, 12.2.2024).

[98] EUNAVFOR Aspides factsheet is available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/EUNAVFOR%20OPERATION%20ASPIDES_2024_0.pdf.

[99] OJ L, 2024/890, 19.3.2024.

quickly and with the best instruments. Hence, at the end of 2022, a Joint Communication from the European Commission proposed the so-called *Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0* which provides for the framework of a well-connected military mobility network and to which PESCO greatly contributes with its Military Mobility Project.

Concerning the advancement of hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation and interference (called henceforth FIMI), EU tools have experienced great developments. Just to mention some of them, the EU Hybrid Toolbox, the EU Hybrid Rapid Response Teams, and the EU FIMI Toolbox. Concerning space defence, the first ever EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence was proposed in March 2023. This latter is crucial progress for the simple reason that the capacity to use space for defence purposes is essential when wanting to ensure security, which is achieved with surveillance, observation, and monitoring of defence activities. Concluding, among the main accomplishments there is an "an unprecedented boost in peace, security and defence tailored partnerships [100]", achieved for example through NATO and in contexts like the first Schuman Security and Defence Partnership Forum in March 2023, with the second one occurred in May 2024.

Coming to a conclusion, the Strategic Compass has stated what are the threats that the EU is facing, but some doubts have been raised about the implementation of the goals under the four sections of the document (*act, partner, invest and secure*). Among them, the fact that these goals are not clearly prioritized, they are not listed in a sort of rank; additionally, the level of ambition of the military projects, as for example the EU RDC, is not specified, leaving space for ambiguity. All this gives uncertainty to the ambitious projects present in the Strategic Compass and one has to wonder whether they are likely to disappoint the EU's international partners' expectations [101]. Nevertheless, the next Chapter will delve into the strongest partner of the EU in the realm of Defence and Security, that is the Atlantic Alliance. As a matter of fact, NATO itself has published in 2022 its new version of the Strategic Concept, which clearly involves all its members. In the following Chapter, the role of NATO in the European defence, and NATO-EU relationship will be in-depth analysed.

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[100] European External Action Service, Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Council, March 2024

[101] Kaim, M., Kempin, R., "Compass or Wind Chime? An Analysis of the Draft "Strategic Compass" of the EU", SWP Comment, No. 3, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik - SWP, 2022

SECOND CHAPTER

FOCUS: NATO-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

2.1 NATO AS CORNERSTONE OF EU'S COLLECTIVE DEFENCE: JOINT DECLARATIONS

The first chapter of this research has explained how the idea of a common defence was born and subsequently developed among EU Member States. Key events, useful to describe the framework behind the EU-NATO relationship from the very beginnings, have been already mentioned: the failure of the European Defence Community, the Western European Union with its Western Union Defence Organisation, the submission of the Fouchet Plans, the creation of the Independent European Programme Group and of the Western European Armament Group. Yet, the very tangible acts concerning this relationship began with the 2002 EU-NATO declaration on the ESDP [102] where both actors agreed on the principles that would establish such cooperation development. For instance, these principles concerned effective mutual consultation; due regard for the decision-making autonomy and interests of the European Union and NATO; cooperation and transparency; and making sure that the two organizations' crisis management initiatives complement one another, while also acknowledging that NATO and the EU are distinct organizations.

On 16 December 2002, the "Berlin Plus" arrangements were signed, and they strengthened cooperation between the two organisations, allowing EU-led operations to make use of NATO assets and capabilities. Adopted the following year, such arrangements had their roots in the Berlin 1996 Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council on building an ESDI, and in the 1999 Washington Summit. They came after Bill Clinton's administration, in particular Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, proposed the so-called "3 Ds": "no duplication, no discrimination and no diminution of NATO [103] ".

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[102] EU-NATO Declaration on the ESDP is available online n the NATO website at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19544.htm#:~:text=The%20European%20Union%20is%20ensuring,the%20relevant%20Washington%20Summit%20decisions%2C.
[103] The original Press Conference speech of US Secretary Madeleine Albright of 1998 is available in the NATO website at: https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981208x.htm.

The "Berlin Plus" agreement is a cornerstone of EU-NATO cooperation and it comprises a package of seven major points, covering issues as:

- The exchange of classified information under the rules of mutual protection;
- NATO-EU consultation arrangements in the context of an EU-led crisis management operation calling on NATO assets and capabilities;
- The access to NATO's collective assets and capabilities or EU-led crisis management operations;
- The access to NATO's planning capabilities to be used in the context of military planning.

Since then, the EU has been allowed to use NATO structures, mechanisms and assets to carry out military operations in those circumstances where NATO might decline to participate. What happens in that case is that the EU makes a request to the Alliance to get access to its assets. To give a concrete example, the first mission to be deployed under the agreement was the EUFOR Concordia peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Also, the first test on a large scale of cooperation took place in

Figure 11. Emblem of EUFOR Althea operation

Bosnia-Herzegovina (henceforth, BiH) with the EUFOR Althea military operation, launched in December 2004 with Council Decision 2004/803/CFSP [104]. It is still now an EU-led military operation, which yet substituted in 2004 the Stabilisation Force (SFOR), a NATO-led operation, thanks to United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1551 [105] and UNSCR 1575 [106]. It is now active with a renewed mandate under UNSCR 2706 delivered last November 2023. Its objectives are: 1. To ensure a safe and secure environment in the country; 2. To conduct collective training with BiH's armed forces; 3. The support to demilitarisation, demining and non-proliferation.

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[104] OJ L 353, 27/11/2004, p. 21–22.

[105] Official document available online on the United Nations website at: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n04/419/37/pdf/n0441937.pdf.

[106] With this Resolution, Member States were authorised to cooperate with the EU in order to form a multinational stabilisation force, namely EUFOR. The expected initial period was of 12 months and though being from that moment an EU-led operation, NATO still maintained and maintains a headquarter. Official text available online at: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n04/619/22/pdf/n0461922.pdf?token=ADN3Ue5iA5zEPMBp Sj&fe=true.

Yet, while in the period between 2004 and 2013 the EU-NATO cooperation "was almost frozen [107]", it significantly increased only in 2016 when the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of NATO signed a Joint Declaration [108] in Warsaw, Poland. It was the first of three Joint Declarations and, while a declaration *per se* does not represent a binding commitment for the signatories, in this case, they are fundamental to explain the EU-NATO partnership [109]. In the one from 2016, the two parties committed to strengthening seven identified areas, precisely:

− Defence industry and research

− Fight against hybrid threats

− Operational cooperation at sea and on migration

− Cybersecurity and defence, e.g. in the framework of missions and operations

− Increase of interoperability in defence capabilities

− Coordination on exercises

− Help to Eastern and Southern partners in their defence capacity building development

A few months later, in December 2016, the EU and NATO adopted a common set of proposals that would have helped consolidate their partnership. They served as "concrete actions for the implementation of the Joint Declaration [110]. Some of such proposals, for instance, concern the pursuit of greater consistency in terms of requirements assessment and guidelines development in the context of the EU's CDP and NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP). This latter is NATO's primary instrument used in the identification and development of defence capabilities and it is organised in five steps [111] for a period of four years. The legal and procedural basis of the NDPP derives from the North Atlantic Treaty, strategic guidance documents, Summit declarations, Ministerial communiqués, as well as the operational input from NATO's military commands (called

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[107] Ramirez, J. M., Biziewski, J., "Security and Defence in Europe", Advanced Sciences and Technologies for Security Applications, Springer, 2020.

[108] Available online at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm.

[109] Mariani, P., Genini, D., "EU and NATO: The Legal Foundation of an Extraordinary Partnership", Eurojus, Fascicolo n. 4, 2023.

[110] Conclusions 15283/16 of the Council of the EU of 6 December 2016 on the Implementation of the Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15283-2016-INIT/en/pdf.

[111] 1. Establish political guidance; 2. Determine requirements; 3. Apportion requirements and set targets; 4. Facilitate implementation; 5. Review results.

Allied Command Transformation and Allied Command Operations). These elements together form a comprehensive framework that guides NATO's defence planning and ensures that member states collectively develop the necessary capabilities to address current and future security challenges. The NDPP can be considered as the equivalent of the EU CDP, as these two instruments work in similar ways [112]. NDPP analyses allies' defence capability targets and when those allies happen to be members of the EU, then the EDA is invited to the discussions and gives its great contribution with its tools.

The following year, in December 2017, other 34 actions were approved as can be read in the Annex to the Council Conclusions 14802/17 on the Implementation of the Joint Declaration [113]. There, the need to ensure coherence between EU's CARD and NATO's NDPP, thus avoiding an overlap of requirements, was expressed: this had to be achieved through staff-to-staff contacts and, when necessary, through bilateral meetings between NATO and the Member States involved. In general, reciprocal dialogue and consultations between the two parties were significantly encouraged. To give some ideas, a proposal concerned dialogue about counter-terrorism issues giving NATO and EU participation to the Global Coalition against Daesh [114]. Also, they were encouraged to exchange information about security issues covering different parts of the world, such as Western Balkans, Libya, Eastern/Southern partner countries and particularly Iraq. In parallel, briefings relating to security and defence issues and developments in Europe, as well as to challenges coming from the East and South and Western Balkans, had to increase. Such briefings indeed had to involve different Committees and working groups focused on those themes which were of common interest both for NATO and the EU. Additionally, great importance was given to cyber-originated threats which were the reason behind many of the proposals. For instance, the two parties were invited to foster cooperation trough the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, which was actually established with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017 [115]: it is still operative, and it aims at conducting research into current hybrid threats and

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[112] Angus Lapsley in European Defence Matters, "For the long haul: Sustaining EU ambitions in defence", Magazine issue no. 26, 2023

[113] Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31947/st14802en17.pdf.

[114] Coalition formed in 2014 aiming at the disruption on all front of the jihadist group Daesh. It counts now 87 members.

[115] Available at: https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Hybrid-CoE-final-Mou-110417-1.pdf

the useful methods in the fight against them, as well as carrying out training and exercise for the EU and NATO.

In May 2018, the *third progress Report on the implementation of the common set of proposals* endorsed by NATO and EU was published. It summarised the main achievements of their cooperation in the different areas of interest. Accomplishments concerned for instance 'defence and security capacity building', which is a term that refers to the processes and efforts aimed at developing, enhancing, and sustaining the defence capacities of a country (or organisation). It involves training, education, resource allocation, and organisational development to improve overall defence effectiveness and readiness. Among the achievements under this section were:

- In Ukraine, the chairing of a coordination group for the defence and security sector, as well as cooperation in the context of the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) [116], launched in 2014 following Council Decision 2014/486/CFSP [117] and currently in force with Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1353 which has extended its mandate until 2027 [118]

Figure 12. Emblem of EUAM Ukraine

- An intensification of information exchange in the context of BiH, Moldova, Tunisia, Ukraine, Jordan, and Georgia
- Organisation of workshops at the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
- Ongoing support to Tunisia concerning the democratic control of armed forces, education, and training
- Identification of other areas of cooperation, e.g. ammunition storage

Concerning the 'strengthening of political dialogue', meetings between the EU High Representative and NATO Ministers of Defence and Ministers of Foreign Affairs

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[116] EUAM Ukraine was launched in 2014 after the Ukrainian government reached out to the EU for help as a consequence for the Revolution of Dignity. It consisted of a large-scale manifestation which lasted few days and that was sparked by the then President Yanukovych's sudden decision in November 2013 to suspend the preparations for signing an Association Agreement with the EU and which led to first manifestations. The President indeed chose to tighten its relations with Russia.
[117] OJ L 217, 23.7.2014, p. 42–47.
[118] OJ L, 2024/1353, 15.5.2024.

continued. The Report also listed the precise themes over which political consultation was fostered, and it reads as follows:

"In the first semester of 2018, reciprocal cross-briefings on issues of mutual interest have become more frequent and covered the following topics: EU cyber policy issues, the outcome of the strategic review of Operation Atalanta [119], the EU Training Mission (EUTM)[120] and the EU Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP) in Somalia[121], ongoing EU military missions and operations, the Western Balkans, Iraq, energy security, the Alliance's role in the maritime domain and NATO operational activities [122]".

Figure 13. Emblem of EUTM Somalia, EUNAVFOR Atalanta, EUCAP Somalia

Important achievements were reached also in the context of 'defence capabilities', a term which refer to distinct but related concept to that of defence capacity building. As a matter

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[119] Launched with Council Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP of 10 November 2008 on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast (OJ L 301, 12.11.2008, p. 33). According to Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2441, it will terminate on 31 December 2024.

[120] Launched with Council Decision 2010/96/CFSP of 15 February 2010 on a European Union military mission to contribute to the training of Somali security forces (OJ L 44, 19.2.2010, p. 16–19). According to Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2443, it will terminate on 31 December 2024.

[121] Launched with Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2240 of 12 December 2016 (OJ L 337, 13/12/2016, p. 18–19) and currently in force with Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/2445, with its mandate terminating on 31 December 2024.

[122] The third progress report is available on the Council website at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35578/third-report-ue-nato-layout-en.pdf.

of fact, the work between EU's CARD and CDP, and NATO's instruments related to the analysis of such capabilities as the NDPP, as well as Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process (PARP), continued. This latter is a NATO mechanism established in 1995 and aims at the military and defence capabilities' enhancement of NATO's partner countries. Initially, PARP was thought only for the Partnership for Peace (PfP) partners, launched in 1994 and consisting of a programme of bilateral cooperation between NATO and its Euro-Atlantic partners. Since 2011, PfP and consequently PARP have been open to all NATO partner countries. PARP is more tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the individual partner countries that decide to adhere choosing their own priorities of cooperation with NATO [123].

ASPECT	**Defence capabilities**	**Defence capacity building**
Focus	Existing military capabilities and resources	Processes to develop and enhance defence capabilities
Nature	Static (what is currently available)	Dynamic (ongoing efforts and improvements)
Components	Personnel, equipment, infrastructure, technologies, logistics	Training, mentoring, organisational development, resource allocation
Objective	To assess current readiness and operational capabilities	To improve and sustain military effectiveness and readiness
Examples	Fleet of operational tanks, combat-ready soldiers	NATO training missions, modernization programs

Yet, another success concerned EU-NATO cooperation through the EU's Action Plan on Military Mobility, which was launched in March 2018 as a response to the Joint Communication on improving military mobility in the EU from November 2017 [124]. Indeed, in May 2018, NATO shared its parameters for transport infrastructure with the President of EUCO and the President of the European Commission, as well as its standards for military mobility.

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[123] It is important to note that Countries wishing to join the Atlantic Alliance must participate in the PARP as a pre-requisite.

[124] Joint Communication available on the European Commission website at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_17_4385.

To summarise, with the 2016 Declaration the EU and NATO leveraged their strength in order to avoid duplication, unnecessary effort, and to make efficient use of their resources, assets and instruments available. It set the foundation for a long-term partnership and represented a significant milestone in enhancing the collaboration between EU and NATO fostered also by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 (which shed light to the European security as it was the first time since World War II that a European country's borders were forcibly changed by another state) [125].

Only two years after the first Joint Declaration, **a second Declaration** was signed in Brussels in July 2018 [126]. It asserted the focus on achieving specific goals, namely:

- Military mobility
- Counter-terrorism
- Strengthening resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks
- Promoting the women's peace and security agenda

The next day, the Heads of State and Government of the 29 NATO Member countries met at the NATO Brussels Summit, and they welcomed the second Joint Declaration and the results attained until that moment (covering a wide range of arguments, e.g. related to nuclear deterrent capabilities, defence expenditure, NATO relations with Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan, Tunisia, Kosovo, Finland, Sweden, etc.) [127]. Nevertheless, the paragraphs of relevant importance in handling EU-NATO cooperation are those ranging from 69 to 73, and they reaffirm the will to contribute to what was asserted during the European Council conclusions a month before, in June 2018 [128]. Such conclusions regarded in particular five themes, specifically: 1. migration, 2. security and defence, 3. jobs, 4. growth and competitiveness, 5. innovation and digital, and on some other issues.

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[125] Nissen, C., Banke, et al., "Relationship between the EU And NATO", in European Defence Cooperation and the Danish Defence Opt-Out: Report on the developments in the EU and Europe in the field of security and defence policy and their implications for Denmark, chapter 4, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2020
[126] The official text of the 2018 Brussels Joint Declaration is available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36096/nato_eu_final_eng.pdf.
[127] The Brussels Summit Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018 is available online on the NATO website at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm#24.
[128] European Council conclusions, 28 June 2018, available online at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/29/20180628-euco-conclusions-final/.

Concerning the second theme, the European Council welcomed the progress with respect to military mobility within PESCO under EU-NATO cooperation and called for the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) and for further progress on the EDF. EDIDP was indeed a precursor of the EDF and was established with Regulation 2018/1092 of 18 July 2018 with a financial budget of €500 M for the period 2019-2020. Among its objectives, were the fostering of competitiveness and innovation capacity regarding the defence industry, and the support to collaboration in the development of defence products and technologies [129].

Moreover, in the Conclusions, the Council welcomed the Joint Communication of June 2018 handling the countering of hybrid threats, in particular with regard to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats. This Communication further increased EU Member States' efforts in that direction by listing other steps to be taken in order to improve EU preparedness in this field. It relied on the EU Action Plan against CBRN of October 2017 [130] which itself built on the work of the 2015 Action Plan. The 2018 Joint Communication underlined how CBRN threats are hard to detect and, by surpassing the category of hybrid threat, they represent unconventional menaces which may proliferate in different parts of the world and be in the possession of non-State actors [131]. Also, the fundamental cooperation with NATO concerning the fight against these threats was reaffirmed [132]: this could be seen in the 2017 Parallel and Coordinated Exercise (PACE17), an unprecedented test aiming at measuring EU response capacities with regard to a large-scale hybrid crisis, and in particular how such response interacted with NATO.

Finally, Conclusions demanded:

- Further development of PESCO projects consistently with CARD and CDP

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[129] Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 establishing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme aiming at supporting the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union's defence industry (OJ L 200, 7.8.2018, p. 30–43).
[130] Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017DC0610.
[131] Joint Communication to the European Parliament, The European Council and the Council, Increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_increasing_resilience_and_bolstering_capabilities_to_address_hybrid_threats.pdf.
[132] The 2016 Warsaw Joint Declaration listed the fight against hybrid threats as one of the seven areas of cooperation between EU and NATO

- A civilian CSDP Compact by the end of 2018 (on which EU Member States agreed in November 2018) in order to give a new EU framework for civilian crisis management

- An action plan addressing an EU response to the challenge of disinformation, providing mandates and resources to relevant EEAS teams

- Further coordination between Member States, and between EU and NATO, in order to hinder hostile intelligence activities

A year later, in June 2019, the *fourth Progress Report on the implementation of the common set of proposals* covering the period June 2018 – June 2019 was delivered [133]. As in the other Progress Reports, achievements were detailed under the specific sections of cooperation identified in the first Joint Declaration. With respect to hybrid threats, much success came from the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, to which the EU and NATO have cooperated with training and workshops/conferences, while also being briefed by experts from the Centre. Staff-to-staff consultations continued and covered many topics, e.g. information exchange, cooperation in the East, South and Western Balkans, situational awareness, resilience and deterrence, and others. Consultation between EU and NATO increased notably also in the first steps of implementation of the EU 2018 Action Plan against Disinformation. A major exercise called 'Trident Juncture 18' involved the EU which contributed to the development of NATO's Information Environment Assessment, which assists in recognizing false information, antagonistic narratives coming from allies and not, and early warning indicators of possible hybrid activities [134] (e.g. by doing research on pro-Kremlin propaganda and narratives). Consultations and exchanges happened in the context also of the NATO Defence Policy and Planning Symposium, as well as concerning terrorism (by enhancing the collaboration between EU, NATO and Europol's [135] European Counter Terrorism Centre, launched in 2016. Lastly, other areas were tackled, for instance civil-protection exercises, crisis response, CBRN issues, and so on.

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[133] Fourth Progress Report available at:
https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_06/190617-4th-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-eng.pdf

[134] NATO Allied Command Transformation, Fact Sheet – Information Environment Assessment (IEA), available at: https://www.act.nato.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2019_05_IEA.pdf.

[135] Europol was set up by Council Decision 2009/371/JHA of 6 April 2009 establishing the European Police Office (OJ L 121, 15.5.2009, p. 37–66), and currently in force with Regulation (EU) 2016/794 repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA (OJ L 135, 24/05/2016, p. 53–114). It is an agency of the EU, aiming at

Figure 14. Emblem of EUNAVFOR MED Sophia

With respect to cooperation at the maritime level, this was furthered through two operations, namely *EUNAVFOR MED Sophia* and *NATO's Operation Sea Guardian*. The first one was the first EU CSDP naval military operation, and it was launched with Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/778 of 18 May 2015 [136]. Its main objective, until the end of its mandate, was the identification and capture of vessels suspected of being used by migrant traffickers. The supporting tasks were:

Figure 15. Emblem of NATO Operation Sea Guardian

1) the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy, 2) the surveillance activities and gathering of information on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya (under UNSCR 2362 of 2017 [137]), 3) contribution to the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya (under UNSCR 2357 of 2017 [138]). On the other hand, NATO Sea Guardian Operation was launched in 2016 and its three main tasks are: 1) maritime security capacity building, 2) support to maritime situational awareness and 3) maritime counterterrorism.

In parallel, achievements were attained with respect to cyber security and defence. For instance, exchanges were made aiming at the development of generic standards procedures for Cyber Defence and concerning the EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox (set out in 2017 when the EU adopted the Framework for a Joint EU Diplomatic Response to Malicious Cyber Activities). Also, exercises increased, as well as efforts in education and training, with invitations coming both from NATO (to its Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence) and the EU (to its European Security and Defence College Executive Academic Board meetings). Workshops and talks related to cyber crisis

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preventing and combating organised crime, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, money-laundering activities, immigrant smuggling, sexual exploitation, and other forms of serious crime.
[136] OJ L 122, 19.5.2015, p. 31–35.
[137] UNSCR Resolution 2362 of 29 June 2017 is available on the UN website at:
https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2362-%282017%29.
[138] UNSCR Resolution 2357 of 12 June 2017 is available at:
https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2357-%282017%29.

management and cyber training modularity [139] continued, and more in general related to cyber issues of common interest.

Coming to defence capabilities, consistency of outputs did not stop between the EU's CARD, CDP, and NATO's NDPP and PARP. Such coherence was pursued through invitations coming from NATO to the EU staff to contribute to NDPP and PARP, along with invitations coming from the EU to NATO staff in its CARD bilateral dialogues [140]. Other issues too were taken into consideration: the implementation of the Military Aviation Strategy, airworthiness (meaning the fitness of an aircraft for flight in all conditions for which it has been designed), EDA's Air-to-Air refuelling [141], standardisation [142], military mobility, and counterterrorism. Defence industry and research-related cooperation focused on the EU briefing NATO on the EDF, EDIDP, and PADR, the latter being another precursor of the EDF and focusing on the early research and innovation phase of defence technologies, and which eventually shut down in 2019. Then, in November 2018, the biggest crisis management EU-led exercise took place, called EU HEX-ML 18 (Hybrid Exercise – Multi Layer 18), to which NATO participated too. In May 2019, a NATO exercise took place, the NATO's Crisis Management Exercise, to which the EU contributed with crisis responses in that hypothetical crisis scenario. Lastly, the EU was invited to many NATO military exercises, either as participants or as attendees.

Coming to defence and security capacity building, staff-to-staff consultations continued on the three pilot countries [143], namely:

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[139] Cyber training modularity refers to the implementation of cybersecurity training programs in a way that is divided into distinct, independent modules, where each module focuses on a specific topic, skill, or aspect of cybersecurity (e.g. cost-effectiveness, flexibility, focused learning, etc.).

[140] In bilateral dialogues, each EU Member State meets individually with the EDA and the EUMS to discuss its defence profile, in order to look for opportunities of collaboration in capability development.

[141] Critical military aviation technique that involves transferring fuel from one aircraft (the tanker) to another (the receiver) during flight. According to the EDA, its shortfalls were most shown during the Kosovo campaign in 1999 and in Libya in 2011 (https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-factsheets/2017-09-28-factsheet_aar).

[142] It refers to the process of harmonising military requirements, procedures, equipment specifications, to enhance interoperability, efficiency, and effectiveness in defence operations.

[143] In the first Progress Report of December 2016 (page 4), three countries of strategic importance were chosen as key areas of interaction between the EU and NATO (https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_06/20170619_170614-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-EN.pdf)

- ➢ Bosnia and Herzegovina: progress was attained in particular in relation to strategic communications, as well as through briefings between EU and NATO staff coming from BiH to NATO and the EU.
- ➢ Republic of Moldova: exchanges between Chisinau and Brussels did not stop.
- ➢ Tunisia: it was agreed to organise a NATO-EU staff seminar on Building Integrity with the Members of the Tunisian parliament in 2020, and a seminar in Tunisia with the participation of EU experts to raise awareness on weak governance and the links with illicit trafficking and small arms and light weapons.

Nevertheless, the EU and NATO decided to conclude this 'pilot countries' phase and to opt for a 'focus countries' approach, while still maintaining those three as focus. For example, North Macedonia started accession talks with NATO (of which it eventually became a member in March 2020) and the EU (of which it currently is a candidate State for joining). Cooperation increased also in countries such as Jordan, Ukraine, Iraq, and in addressing the relevant topic of CBRN-related threats.

In June 2020 and June 2021, other *two Progress Reports* were published listing the main achievements in EU-NATO cooperation on the seven topics of interest. For instance, advancements were made with regard to the fight against disinformation, as in the case of EU and NATO participation in the meetings of the Global Coalition against Da'esh Communications Working Group. EEAS's Strategic Communication divisions (under EEAS Directorate for Strategic Communication and Foresight) and its task forces were useful in addressing different issues: StratCom Task Force South worked closely with NATO Public Diplomacy Division to counter information manipulation; StratCom Task Force East continued to work with NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence in Riga (Latvia), as did StratCom Western Balkans Task Force [144].

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[144] The original mandate for the East StratCom Task Force stems from the European Council in March 2015, when the European Council tasked the HR to submit an action plan on strategic communication (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21888/european-council-conclusions-19-20-march-2015-en.pdf). The Western Balkans Task Force and the Task Force South were subsequently set up to address similar threats in these two priority regions.

Figure 16. Emblem of EUNAVFOR MED IRINI

Relevant was the launch in March 2020 of a new EU operation called *EUNAVFOR MED IRINI* based on Council Decision 2020/472 [145] and has the approved mandate until 2025 following Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/653 of 20 March 2023 [146]. It formally substituted EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and has the primary task of the implementation of the United Nations arms embargo on Libya, in accordance with UNSCR 2292 of 2016 [147], as well as the tasks of its predecessor (fighting human trafficking, preventing illicit export of oil from Libya, and providing capacity building and training to Libyan law enforcement forces). Cooperation continued also through high-level webinars, workshops, and meetings in other parts of

the world, in those partner countries which the EU and NATO had been cooperating with since 2016 (BiH, Georgia, Jordan, Moldova, Tunisia, and Ukraine). Yet, practical cooperation was seen in the achievements attained in Iraq, where in early 2021 a new Iraqi national security strategy was facilitated thanks to the help coming from two missions: *EU Advisory Mission Iraq (EUAM Iraq)* and the *NATO Mission Iraq (NMI).* The first was launched in 2017 with Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/1869 [148] as

Figure 17. Emblem of EUAM Iraq

a response to a request coming from the Iraqi government to have advice on how to adopt a civilian security sector reform [149]. The mission's current mandate is extended until April 2026 based on Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1247 and its headquarter is located in Baghdad, with a regional presence in Erbil (capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq). Among its priorities, there are: the National Security Strategy, Security Sector Reform coordination, and countering terrorism, organised crime, violent extremism, and

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[145] Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 of 31 March 2020 on a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI) (OJ L 101, 1.4.2020, p. 4–10).

[146] OJ L 81, 21.3.2023, p. 27–28.

[147] UNSCR 2292 is available on the UN website at: https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2292-%282016%29.

[148] Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/1869 of 16 October 2017 on the European Union Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq) (OJ L 266, 17.10.2017, p. 12–18).

[149] It refers to the process of transforming the institutions and actors responsible for ensuring the security of the state and its citizens (i.e. through the transformation of law enforcement agencies, of the legal framework, the judicial system, and others.

integrated border management [150]. On the other hand, NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) was launched at the NATO Summit in Brussels in 2018, and, as in the other case, following a request from the Iraqi government, and finally established in Baghdad in October 2018. It consists of a non-combat advisory and capacity-building mission and contributes to the fight against terrorism by strengthening Iraqi security institutions and armed forces, while also instructing on the rule of law, the law of armed conflict and how to prevent corruption. NMI operates under the

Figure 18. Emblem of NATO Mission Iraq

authority of Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Naples, which is one of NATO's two operational-level commands (the other being in Brunssum, Netherlands). In other words, while EUAM Iraq focuses on the civilian security sector, NMI helps build the capacities of the Iraqi defence and security structures.

Figure 19. Emblem of NATO

Nevertheless, another success concerned the opening of new South-West air routes in the lower airspace over Kosovo with the contribution of the NATO-led peacekeeping *Kosovo Force (KFOR)*, whose mandate derives from UNSCR 1244 of 1999. KFOR's primary tasks are the deterrence of renewed hostility and threats against Kosovo by Yugoslav and Serb forces and the establishment of a secure environment. It works in close cooperation with the EU presence in the area, namely through its *Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) Kosovo*, the largest civilian mission ever launched under the CSDP. EULEX, headquartered in Pristina, draws its legal basis on Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of February 2008 [151] and its current mandate has been extended until June 2025 through Council Decision 2023/1095 of June 2023 [152]. EULEX Kosovo uses a pillar approach, consisting of: 1) a Monitoring pillar, and 2) an Operations Support pillar. The first

Figure 20. Emblem of EULEX Kosovo

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[150] The official brochure of EUAM Iraq is available on the website of the Mission: https://www.euam-iraq.eu/uploads/2024/06/25/euam667aad8d998d3.pdf.

[151] Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX KOSOVO (OJ L 42, 16/02/2008, p. 92–98).

[152] Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1095 of 5 June 2023 amending Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (OJ L 146, 6.6.2023, p. 22–23).

one, by monitoring cases [153] at every stage of the criminal justice system, evaluates how well the Kosovo judiciary complies with legal, procedural, and human rights standards. On the other hand, through the second pillar, EULEX serves as a second security responder, preceded by Kosovo Police and followed by KFOR, though being able to intervene only at the specific request of Kosovo Police. It serves also as an intermediary in the exchange of information between the Kosovo Police and Interpol [154], Europol or the Serbian Ministry of Interior.

Moreover, the sixth Progress Report explained that EU and NATO staffs had identified additional areas of cooperation that could be explored and bolstered in the future:

➢ Opportunities for coordination or cooperation with relation to border security (Jordan) and demining (BiH, Ukraine)

➢ Opportunities of cooperation concerning the countering of hybrid threats and cybersecurity/defence (Georgia, Jordan, and Moldova)

➢ Engage on CBRN issues (Moldova, Tunisia, and Jordan), Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (Tunisia) and counter terrorism-related issues (Jordan)

➢ Enhancement of cooperation on strategic communications and countering disinformation (Georgia, Ukraine, and Jordan)

It can be said that the achievements and successes explained in such detail in the annual progress reports on the Implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by EU and NATO Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017 reflected the development of new threats, be them related to specific areas of the world (Iraq and Ukraine, just to mention two of them) or to emerging technologies (as CBRN threats or cyberterrorism). In order to address in the best way possible these non-traditional security threats and, evidently, the war in Ukraine which broke out in February 2022, NATO

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[153] Such cases include for example war crimes cases, gender-based violence cases, corruption cases, and others.

[154] Established in 1923 in Lyon (France), INTERPOL operates on a global scale, involving 196 member countries. It provides its members with expertise, investigative support, and it connects each country through a secure network system called I-24/7. Each Member possesses an INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) which serves as liaison between INTERPOL General Secretariat and the national police forces. It helps police forces around the world collaborate and share information to combat international crime, including terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and more. Its last Annual Report is available on the INTERPOL website at:
file:///C:/Users/Lenovo/Downloads/INTERPOL%20%20Annual%20Report%202022_EN.pdf.

leaders adopted in June 2022 a new [155] Strategic Concept, the Alliance's top political guidance. The following section analyses this key document which aims at providing NATO Members political guidance to navigate the complexity of the current security environment.

2.2 NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT – JUNE 2022

Adopted by NATO Heads of State and Government at the Madrid Summit in June 2022, the Strategic Concept is the highest-level political document that the Atlantic Alliance delivers [156] and it is indeed the eighth document of this type since the foundation in 1949. It formally replaces the 2010 Strategic Concept, provides guidance to navigate the complexity of the current security environment and prepares the Alliance for a more contested and competitive world. Indeed, it outlines NATO's understanding of security and defence for the next decade and, in doing so, the document divides the text (relatively short, just 13 pages, while the 2010 Concept had 40 pages) into four sections: "Purpose and Principles", "Strategic Environment", "NATO's Core Tasks", and "Ensuring the Alliance's Continued Success". It comes in a historical period characterised by, for example, the rise of China with its military modernisation and the advancement of technologies. Of relevant importance is China being the first ally of Russia in its war against Ukraine, followed by Iran and North Korea, which altogether are altering the world order [157], as will be explained in the third Chapter.

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[155] The last NATO Strategic Concept was delivered in 2010.

[156] NATO Defence College, "NATO's New Strategic Concept", Research Paper no. 25, 2022.

[157] Closing press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the end of the 2024 NATO Summit in Washington (11 July 2024); Pre-summit press conference by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg ahead of the NATO Summit in Washington (5 July 2024); Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the Informal meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Prague (31 May 2024). All available on the NATO website at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions.htm.

To understand how NATO and its Allies plan to envisage the current geopolitical and security situation, the three Strategic Concepts' core tasks have to be analysed, and they are:

1. Deterrence and Defence
2. Crisis Prevention and Management
3. Cooperative Security

Unlike the EU's Strategic Compass, the Strategic Concept does not offer policy options but describes what NATO stands for and lists its key priorities. In the first part of this chapter, the areas of cooperation between the EU and NATO have been explained, for example with regard to military operations, cybersecurity threats, military mobility, defence capabilities and so on. All these have to be inserted into a context of multiple actors and challenges coming from two different parts of the Euro-Atlantic area, the South and East. As stated before, NATO finds itself addressing nuclear proliferation, military threats, hybrid forces, and non-state actors [158], and while the major threat coming from the East is Russia, the ones challenging the South are caused by Iran, Hezbollah [159], ISIS and other terrorist groups [160]. This totally differs from the 2010 Strategic Concept which described the Euro-Atlantic area as being "at peace" and thought of a conventional attack against NATO territory as low, not probable [161] . The 2022 Strategic Concept contrasts that affirmation, and actually begins the Strategic Environment paragraph claiming that "the Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace [162]". As a matter of fact, already in the Preface the new relevant priorities concerning collective security and defence stand out. The Russian Federation's war of aggression is condemned as unlawful, thus giving light to the need to ensure the sovereignty of Ukraine.

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[158] Non-state actors do not possess any legal responsibility, while though having significant *de facto* economic and financial power. Some categories of such actors are: terrorist organisations, transnational organised crime (i.e. human trafficking), militant groups (i.e. Taliban, Hezbollah), Private Military Companies (i.e. Wagner Group), paramilitary groups, cyber threat actors (i.e. Anonymous). Explanations are given by NATO Allied Command Transformation in the "Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) Regional Perspectives Report on North Africa and the Sahel", p. 13-15, 2023

[159] Political-military organisation based in Lebanon and considered by Israel and the United States as terroristic organisation.

[160] NATO Defence College, "Strategic Shifts and NATO's New Strategic Concept", Research Paper no. 24, 2022.

[161] NATO, Strategic Concept, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence", paragraph 7, 2010 https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf

[162] NATO, Strategic Concept, paragraph 6, 2022

The section concerning the *Strategic Environment* explains that authoritarian actors are investing in sophisticated nuclear and missile capabilities and reaffirms the Russian Federation as the first and most relevant threat to the Euro-Atlantic stability and security. Indeed, its modernisation of nuclear power and disruptive technologies, its attempt to impose itself in the area through coercion, aggression and subversion, makes it a destabilising actor in NATO's eastern and southern flank, namely in the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Sea regions. Nevertheless, the Concept confirms its intention to "keep open channels of communication with Moscow to manage and mitigate risks, prevent escalation and increase transparency [163]". In other words, while not posing itself as a threat to the Russian Federation, NATO will pursue its response to any menace and hostile action in order to ensure stability in the Euro-Atlantic.

That being said, the Concept identifies other challenges not related to the Russian Federation: for instance, terrorism is listed among them. It is referred to as "the most direct asymmetric threat [164]" to security and international peace, particularly due to terrorist organisations (defined as non-state actors) which, in the last years, have been capable of expanding investments in sophisticated technologies, as well as expanding networks which allow them to exploit other areas' instability and weak governance. For instance, particular relevance is given to African regions, such as the Sahel (mentioned here for the first time in a NATO Strategic Concept), North Africa and the Middle East. They are characterised by political and security challenges with external actors increasing their engagement for different reasons and with different approaches and implications. As reported by the 2023 NATO's Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) [165] Regional Perspectives Report on North Africa and the Sahel, the most relevant actors exercising their influence in the area are China, Russia, other nation-states, and non-state actors [166].

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[163] NATO, Strategic Concept, page 4, 2022
[164] NATO, Strategic Concept, page 4, 2022
[165] Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) identify changes shaping the security environment, and since 2018, the Strategic Foresight Branch carries out analysis of specific regions of relevant importance, named Regional Perspectives Reports. The SFA informs the NDPP.
[166] NATO Allied Command Transformation, The Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) Regional Perspectives Report on North Africa and the Sahel, 2023

Figure 21. Map of Sahel (Source: International Crisis Group) [167]

China, for example, has significantly increased its military sales to different African countries in the last years, and among them, Algeria is the first recipient of China's (and Russia's) arms in Africa [168]. Russia too has enhanced its engagement in the political and military context, by developing economic relations in both the military and the energy sector, and by deepening its ties and partnerships with countries like Egypt, Algeria and Libya, thus trying to compete and contest the EU and NATO's influence [169]. Not only have Russian weapons sales to Africa increased from nearly $500 million to more than $2 billion annually in recent years [170], but Algeria and Egypt represent 90% of Russian arms exports to Africa (major weapons systems, tanks, submarines, and helicopters) [171]. A 2022 report by RAND Corporation Nevertheless, Russia is engaged in cooperating with the G5 Sahel in its fight against terrorism through counterterrorism, as in the case of a military cooperation agreement with Burkina Faso, where in January 2024 a contingent of Russian military personnel (called now Africa Corps, but former Wagner Group)

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[167] Available at https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/mali/sahel-malis-crumbling-peace-process-and-spreading-jihadist-threat#map-33641-

[168] NATO Allied Command Transformation, The Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) Regional Perspectives Report on North Africa and the Sahel, p. 8, 2023.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Tasamba, J., "Selling weapons and sealing deals: Is Russia a reliable defence partner for Africa?", Anadolu Agency, 27 November 2023 (available online at: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/selling-weapons-and-sealing-deals-is-russia-a-reliable-defence-partner-for-africa/3066118#).

[171] NATO Allied Command Transformation, The Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) Regional Perspectives Report on North Africa and the Sahel, 2023.

arrived [172] to patrol dangerous areas and train Burkinabe [173] people. In addition, transnational extremist organisations such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and al Qaeda are present in the African and Middle Eastern scene. The first (since 2015 called also ISWA, ISWAP, Islamic State in West Africa) was founded in 2002 in Nigeria and it is active in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. The second is based principally in northern and eastern Syria and northern Iraq; the third, founded in 1988, is primarily located in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but with affiliates in Yemen, Syria, Somalia and in the Maghreb (northwestern Africa). In this context, criminal organisations (dealing with humans, illegal weapons and drugs) are linked to terrorist organisations, thus employing illegal activity to get financial backing, often with governmental complicity [174].

Despite these being the considerations inside the Concept towards the instability of that geographic area, China is mentioned here for the very first time in a Strategic Concept, precisely to lay attention to the number of problems it poses to NATO. Nevertheless, it does not target China as a direct threat (unlike the Russian Federation): indeed, the choice of terms when referring to it conveys to, for example, "malicious operations", "harm Alliance", "subvert rules-based international order" (para. 13). China is described as trying to control technological and industrial sectors using its economic power as a means to create dependencies, while it spreads disinformation, and subvert the international order in different domains. Moreover, although China and the Russian Federation are close partners, the Concept specifies in the Concept that NATO is willing to positively engage in cooperation with China as far as security interests are concerned, making the safeguard of the Euro-Atlantic the first priority of the Atlantic Alliance.

In addition to Russia, terrorism, and China, the 'Strategic Environment' section identifies other evolutions of the Euro-Atlantic security scenario and crucial part of the Concept and they are the following:

a) Pervasive instability (para. 12): linked to NATO's southern neighbourhood, where state security is undermined to the detriment of minority groups, women and children,

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[172] Africa Defence Forum, "Burkina Faso Opens Door for Russia's Africa Corps", 20 February 2024 (available online at: https://adf-magazine.com/2024/02/burkina-faso-opens-door-for-russias-africa-corps/).

[173] Term referring to Burkina Faso citizens.

[174] NATO Allied Command Transformation, The Strategic Foresight Analysis (SFA) Regional Perspectives Report on North Africa and the Sahel, 2023.

due to forced displacement, human trafficking, irregular migration, and environmental damage.

b) Cyberspace (para. 15): crucial field to take into consideration when handling security, and that was not present in the last 2010 Strategic Concept (which only talked of nuclear and conventional capabilities – para. 17).

c) Disruptive technologies (para. 16 and 17): strictly connected to success on the battlefield.

d) Erosion of arms control and non-proliferation (para. 18): linked to Russia's violation of its arms control, to China strengthening its nuclear arsenal, and to other actors such as Syria, North Korea and Iran who are consolidating missile programmes and making more use of chemical weapons.

e) Climate change (para. 19): highlighting the nexus between climate change and security instability.

Moving on to the following section, "*NATO's Core Tasks*" (from para. 20 to 46) are referred here in a subtle different way to the 2010 Concept (para. 4). The latter defined the first task as 'collective defence', which in 2022 is substituted with the term 'deterrence and defence'; the second task was limited to 'crisis management', while in 2022 it increases its range of action by being called 'crisis prevention and management'; the third task remains the same, 'cooperative security'. The Concept describes NATO as "deterrence and defence-centric [175]" and, indeed, it adopts a 360-degree approach. It relies on space and cyber capabilities, along with missile, nuclear and conventional defence capabilities which can be used in what may, in time, become battlefields, that are on land, at sea, and in the air.

To achieve this objective, NATO will develop several sectors which contribute to the Alliance's deterrence attitude: it consists of the improvement of command and control arrangements, of integrated air and missile assets, and of the enhancement of deployability, interoperability and responsiveness of its forces. While stressing the importance of maritime security as a fundamental contributor to Alliance defence, digital transformation and cyber defences will be improved. This achievement will be taking place, for example, through investments in disruptive technologies, and cooperation with the private sector, as well as with regard to space and cyberspace.

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[175] NATO Defence College, "NATO's New Strategic Concept", Research Paper no. 25, 2022

As far as resilience is concerned, NATO commits to invest in reliable energy, and reduce any kind of dependencies, for example in those sectors dealing with health, infrastructure and supply chains. Moreover, while not being willing to use nuclear capabilities, the Concept nevertheless explains how NATO is committed to making use of any means that might end a conflict against the Alliance, as well as those nuclear weapons which are part of its arsenal. Indeed, paragraph 29 of the document describes how NATO relies particularly on the United States in that regard, considering the U.S. the first and 'supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance [176]'. The United Kingdom and France too are of relevant importance as they form the European outpost for nuclear power. Also, in paragraph 28 the Concept clarifies that NATO, in case of a conflict involving nuclear weapons, would with no doubt resort to its nuclear assets in order to 'impose costs (…) that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that any adversary could hope to achieve [177]'. Nevertheless, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty[178], signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970, remains active and the commitment towards, in particular, its fourth Article concerning the peaceful purposes of the use of nuclear energy is reaffirmed. Finally, the last paragraph of the 'deterrence and defence' section deals with terrorism-related threats and, in order to deliver an effective response, NATO is dedicated to pursuing its long-standing cooperation with the UN and the EU.

The second core task of the 2022 Strategic Concept deals with 'Crisis Prevention and Management' and consists of only five paragraphs. Here, importance is given to investments in key areas as crisis response, preparedness and management, which will be addressed during exercises, training, and operations. Also, threats related to climate change, food shortage and health emergencies are listed among NATO's priorities in this section, and the Alliance plans to address such issues through the support to civilian crisis management and relief operations by strengthening civil-military planning and coordination. Also, prevention-related efforts are a fundamental part of Euro-Atlantic security, and NATO is willing to achieve it by deepening capacity-building assistance to whatever partner needs it. In doing this, the destabilisation of weak governances, as well as of areas lacking sufficient defensive means, will be prevented. In order to accomplish such an objective, NATO once again will rely on cooperation within the international

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[176] NATO, Strategic Concept, page 8, 2022
[177] NATO, Strategic Concept, page 7, 2022
[178] The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is considered the cornerstone of global nuclear non-proliferation policy.

scene, i.e. with the UN, the EU, as well as with regional organisations such as OSCE and the AU.

The last task discusses NATO's priorities when talking of 'cooperative security' and consists of seven paragraphs. Here, NATO reasserts its open-door policy based upon Article 10 of the Washington Treaty which cites:

> *"The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty (...) [179]".*

Figure 22. Black Sea region (source: John Hopkins University)

The Concept here refers to Ukraine, Georgia and BiH, with which NATO is engaged in pursuing cooperation for the safeguard of the Euro-Atlantic. Importance is given also to the geographical area of the Western Balkans, the Indo-Pacific, and the Black Sea regions. The latter, for example, play a crucial role in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, with Russia being present in the area with military deployment precisely in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova [180]. In order to be able to maintain security, political dialogue and practical cooperation emerge as a priority for the Alliance, which remains open to engagement and partnership with whatever country or organisation might share the same interests and values of NATO. Simultaneously, the Concept proceeds to reaffirm the partnership with the EU, which is described in paragraph 43 as "a unique and essential partner for NATO". Not only is the EU considered in the Concept a partner, but it is

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[179] Washington Treaty, Article 10, 1949

[180] Atlantic Council - Task Force on Black Sea Security, "A security strategy for the Black Sea", December 15, 2023 (available online at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/a-security-strategy-for-the-black-sea/).

clearly stated that NATO and the EU act in a complementary manner while stressing the need for a stronger and more capable European defence to be achieved through defence spending investments and the avoidance of capabilities duplication.

The Strategic Concept was issued along with the Declaration by NATO Heads of State and Government in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid on the 29th of June 2022 [181]. As pointed out by the Tertrais in a NATO Defence College magazine, the Declaration serves as a "de facto first implementation roadmap [182]" for the Concept. Apart from renewing their condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, NATO Heads of State here took concrete decisions. With regard to Ukraine (para. 8), they decided on a robust support package consisting of the delivery of also non-lethal defence equipment, the modernisation of its defence sector and cyber defences. Moreover, regarding deterrence (para. 9), NATO here commits to deploy on the eastern flank additional forces which would be capable of expanding, when necessary, until reaching the size of brigade units and commits to bolster cooperation between Framework Nations and Host Nations [183].

In addition, the Madrid Declaration includes details on a multinational Innovation Fund that was launched with the objective of strengthening cooperation in the defence sector involving the private sector (such as the small and medium enterprises - SMEs), governments, and academia. It consists of a venture capital fund supported by 24 NATO Members, becoming fully operational in 2025 and that has allocated €1B in emerging and disruptive technologies critical to defence and security. Furthermore, the Declaration proceeds in explaining that climate change is defined as a 'threat multiplier' in para. 12, thus leading NATO leaders to agree on substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by the Alliance facilities and structures. Lastly, as far as partnerships with non-member countries are concerned, the Madrid Declaration announced that NATO Heads of State had invited Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance, which they eventually did,

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[181] It is called Madrid Summit Declaration (available online on the NATO website at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm).

[182] Tertrais, B., "An evolutionary, not revolutionary, Strategic Concept", in "NATO's New Strategic Concept", NATO Defence College, NDC Research Paper No. 25, September 2022.

[183] In 2014, NATO leaders endorsed the NATO'S Framework Nations Concept (FNC), an initiative that encourages groups of NATO's countries to cooperate by addressing political and military gaps in the Alliance. Here, there is the distinction between Host Nations and Framework Nations: the first are countries that provide the geographical base, i.e. logistical, administrative and infrastructural facilities; the second are countries that take on a leadership role, (help) develop military capabilities and contribute with troops, and financial support.

respectively, in April 2023 and March 2024, consistently with NATO's Open Door Policy (para. 18). To summarise, as it emerges from this analysis, the differences between the Strategic Concept of 2010 and that of 2022 are several, and they relate to:

1. The length of the document
2. The Euro-Atlantic area not being at peace anymore
3. The change of the core tasks' title (collective defence vs. defence and deterrence; crisis management vs. crisis management and prevention)
4. Cyberspace, China, and the Sahel being mentioned here for the first time

Thus, the Concept captured NATO's changing security context and the Alliance's core tasks, while, on the other hand, not explaining how its members should address such threats in practice. As pointed out by Hardy, the 2022 Concept does not propose countermeasures [184], nor it proposes specific policy options for its Allies. Nevertheless, the EU and NATO are important examples of a long-lasting partnership despite a series of shocks and geopolitical changes. In this context, one year after the delivery of the Strategic Concept, the EU and NATO signed a third Joint Declaration in January 2023 [185], to be added to the 2016 Warsaw and 2018 Brussels Joint Declarations. Such Declaration is to be analysed together with the annual progress reports on the implementation of the common set of proposals, in particular with the last two issued: the eighth progress report covering the period between June 2022 and May 2023, and the ninth covering the period between June 2023 and May 2024.

These are useful documents when analysing how the EU and NATO intertwine with each other on behalf of the security and defence of the European, and more in general, the Euro-Atlantic area, by acting in "complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles [186]". The Strategic Concept cannot be examined without taking into consideration that NATO is a regional defence organisation, and that most of the members are part also of the EU. This is why NATO's Strategic Concept and EU's Strategic Compass are to be thought together when addressing defence issues, as well as the CSDP. Joint

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[184] Hardy, T., "Six takeaways from NATO's new Strategic Concept", in "NATO's New Strategic Concept", NATO Defence College, NDC Research Paper No. 25, September 2022.

[185] The 3rd Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is available on the NATO website at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_210549.htm.

[186] Council of the EU, "EU-NATO: 9th progress report stresses the importance of ever closer cooperation at a key juncture for Euro-Atlantic security", Press Release, 13 June 2024

communications, Council conclusions, UNSCR Resolutions, joint declarations and all the successes listed in the progress reports form the framework for the cooperation between the EU and NATO.

THIRD CHAPTER

EU'S DEFENCE FUTURE

3.1 DEFENCE COOPERATION CHALLENGES

As it has been mentioned in the first chapter concerning the EU's Strategic Compass, the second Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence was published in March 2024. It lists the progress made with regard to the four sections of the Compass (act, secure, partner, invest) in the year 2023. Such progress relates to faster and responsive engagement on the ground, the use of more efficient instruments, the countering of terrorism and hybrid threats, defence expenditures, and others. In order to understand the latest achievements of the CSDP, the Annual Progress Report represents an up-to-date document on how the objectives and implementation goals of the 2022 Compass are being addressed. In particular, this sort of document tracks how the EU is handling security and defence issues, year by year, and in some cases month by month. Then, the second chapter proceeded in exploring the partnership between the EU and the Atlantic Alliance, essential when handling transatlantic security and defence issues. The publication of the last NATO Strategic Concept currently represents the roadmap for its Member States in that field, to be read in conjunction with the EU's Strategic Compass, issued only three months apart from the Concept.

This chapter will be dealing with the current effectiveness of the CSDP and explore its future directions and opportunities for the strengthening of the EU's defence policy. As pointed out by Hartley, the problem of European defence deals with insufficient industrial cooperation, difficulty in exploiting scale economies in the defence industry, as well as duplication and fragmentation, leading to a lack of competitiveness [187]. This year, in particular, the problem of defence spending and investments has been given much attention, an issue that NATO's Secretary General Stoltenberg too has called for in his speeches [188].

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[187] Hartley, K., "European Defence Policy: Prospects and Challenges" (2023), in Defence and Peace Economics, Volume 35, Issue 4: Special issue: Spend More and Better, 2024

[188] In this sense, some examples are the Keynote Speech at the NATO Industry Forum in Washington (July 2024), and the Pre-ministerial press conference ahead of the meetings of NATO Ministers of Defence in Brussels (June 2024), available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions.htm.

Money is central when dealing with defence, but Europe in 2021 was the only region in the world spending on defence less than it used to at the end of the Cold War (end of the Eighties) [189]. In the last EDA's publication on defence data, issued in 2022, it is stated that the total defence expenditure of the 27 EU Member States amounted to €240 billion and that €58 billion were allocated to defence investments [190]. It has to be noted that back in 2014, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed on the goal of reaching the 2% of GDP to be assigned exclusively to defence spending, thus being able to maintain security in the Euro Atlantic. In addition, this is part of the 20 binding commitments for the Members that decided to adhere to PESCO in 2017. Indeed, the fourth commitment of the list is cited as follows: "Increasing the share of expenditure allocated to defence research and technology with a view to nearing the 2% of total defence spending (collective benchmark) [191] ".
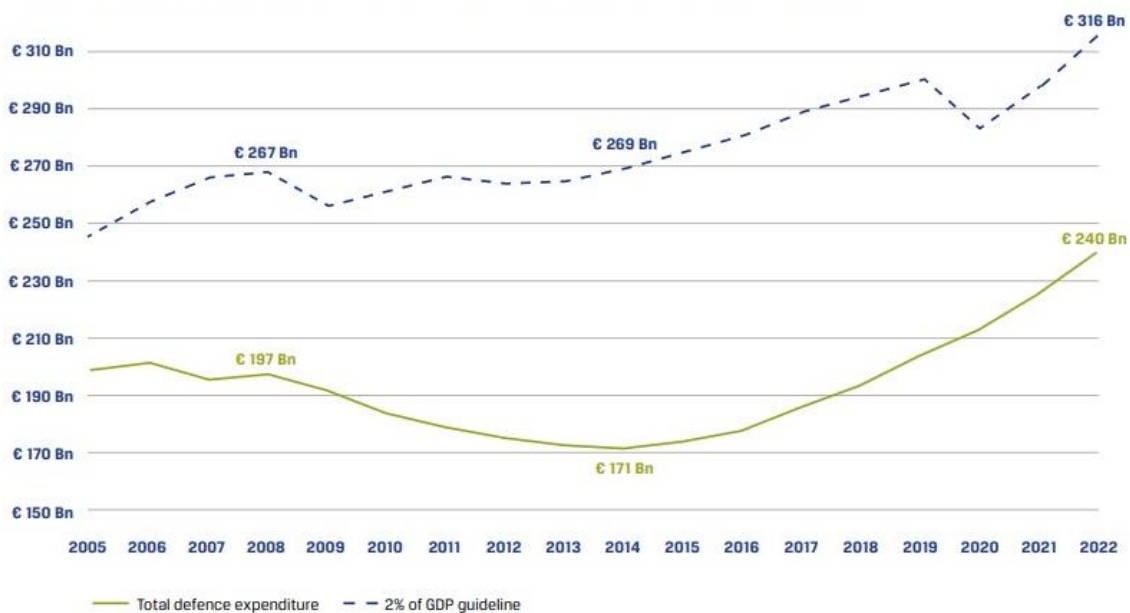

Figure 23. Total EU defence expenditure and 2% of GDP guideline as of 2022 (source: EDA)

This graphic shows the trends between 2005 and 2022 on how EU Member States spent their money on defence, while considering that each State decides on the management of the money to be allocated to defence. Thus, this means that, while the amount of the

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[189] Matelly, S., "Hausse record des dépenses militaires mondiales, symbole d'une nouvelle course aux armements?", Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques – IRIS, June 2022

[190] European Defence Agency, 2022 Defence Data, 2023.

[191] Permanent Structured Cooperation, Binding Commitments (available online on the PESCO website at: https://www.pesco.europa.eu/binding-commitments/).

national budget depends on the country, and that some Members have spent more on defence in comparison to others, the graphic nonetheless illustrates the average among the EU. Aso, a positive trend since 2014 is evident. On the other hand, the next graphic shows the differences between EU Member States in the period 2020-2022.
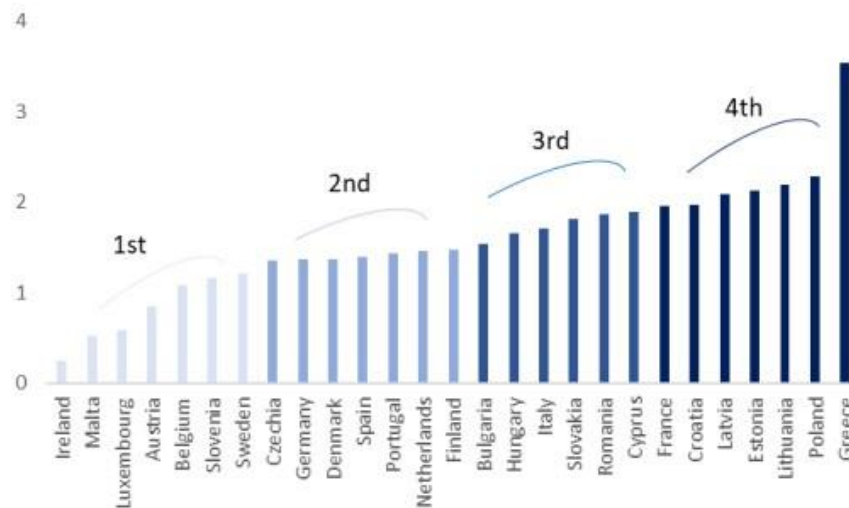

Figure 24. Defence spending by country in the EU – % GDP (2020-2022) (source: European Commission)

As pointed out by the EDA, in 2022 there were twenty of the EU Member States capable of augmenting their defence expenditure on defence when comparing it with the previous year, while on the other hand, seven decreased it [192]. Of these twenty, six were capable of achieving the 2% GDP benchmark in the period ranging from 2020 and 2022, and in this graphic it can be observed that such countries were Greece, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Croatia. In particular, Greece [193] was almost reaching the 4% peak of its GDP in defence, thus placing itself as the EU Member spending more money in this field than the EU-average [194], it being 1.5 % of GDP. Specifically, to give a concrete idea of the differences between the variation in defence expenditure, the next chart illustrates how the different EU Members States augmented their expenditure from one year to the other,

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[192] European Defence Agency, 2022 Defence Data, 2023.

[193] The reasons behind Greece high expenditure on defence are different and complex, deriving from its geopolitical position, let alone the tensions in the region. Among them, its proximity to Turkey, the unresolved issue of Cyprus (island divided between the Greek-Cypriot community and Turkish-Cypriot community, the first being recognised at the EU level as Republic of Cyprus), and migration concerns.

[194] Cepparulo, A., Pasimeni, P., "Defence Spending in the European Union", European Commission, Discussion Paper 199, 2024.

where Sweden, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Spain, Belgium, and Greece did it of over the 10%.
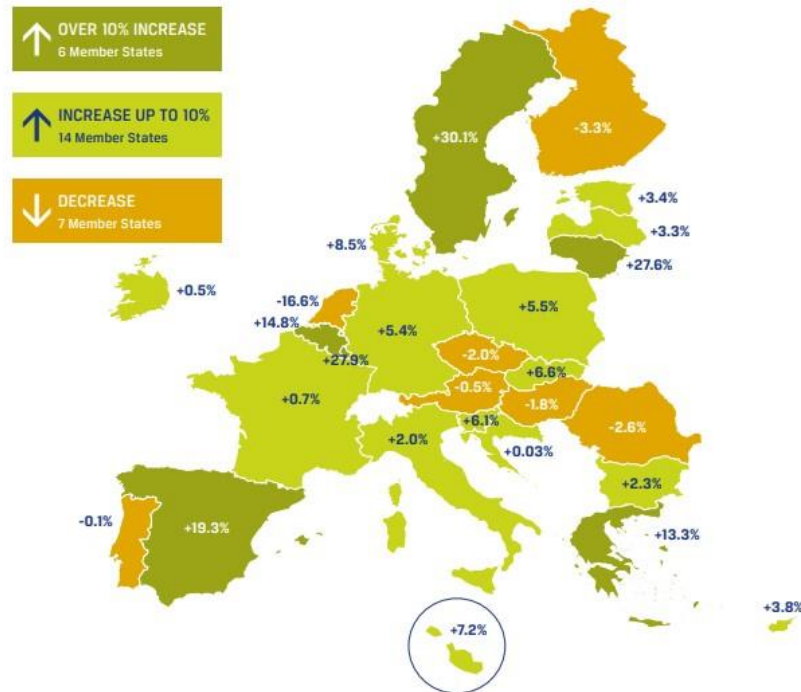

Figure 25. Variation in defence expenditure (2021-2022) (source: EDA)

The increase in defence expenditure is necessary when talking of defence investment too. One of PESCO's binding commitments is that of reaching 20% of defence spending for investment purposes [195] dealing with research and technologies, as well as the procurement of new equipment. They aim at the fulfilment of defence investment gaps understood as "*the difference between a stated national priority and the level of investment effectively committed to that priority* [196]", and more in general as what an EU Member State is required at EU-level in high-intensity situations and conflicts. Yet, they need to be considered in light of the shortcomings resulting from previous defence investment cuts and in light of the current return of conflict to Europe.

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[195] Permanent Structured Cooperation, Binding Commitments (available online on the PESCO website at: https://www.pesco.europa.eu/binding-commitments/).

[196] European Commission, "Scoping EU Defence Investment Gaps" – Annex to the Joint Communication on Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward, May 2022

As stated before, EU Member States in 2022 where capable of allocating €58 B to defence investments out of the total defence spending. This figure means that, when comparing it to 2021, defence investments in the EU have seen an increase of 5.9%. In general, EU Member States' average in defence investments in 2022 was of 24.2%, higher than the 20% collective benchmark adopted in 2017. The EDA also underlines in its last Defence Data that 2022 marked the fourth year of consecutive growth with regard to investment among the Member States [197]. Investments need to increase, or at least they necessarily have to be above the benchmark, as they serve for the maintenance of the security of the armed forces in the EU. Being well-equipped on the battlefield, as well as in missions/operations, and being provided with new and advanced technologies and capabilities is what Member States are aiming at.
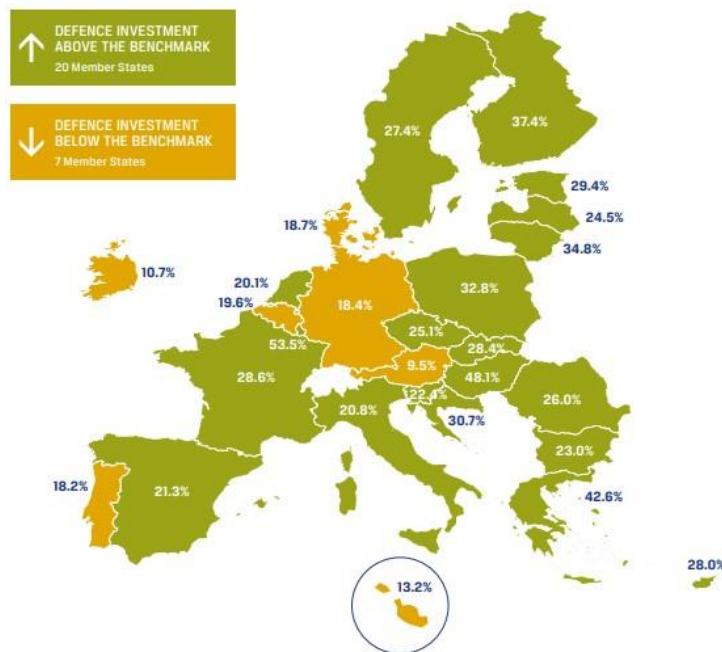
Figure 26. Defence investments with 20% benchmark (2021-2022) (source: EDA)

What the EDA has observed is that Member States prefer to assign the money for investments concerning the first point, equipment, with 83.7% of defence investment expenditure; on the other hand, money allocated for Research and Development (R&D) investments sees only 16.3% [198]. In addition, when analysing these figures, it has to be noted that, when considering the individual States, there were only two reaching the 20%

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[197] European Defence Agency, 2022 Defence Data, 2023.
[198] European Defence Agency, 2022 Defence Data, 2023.

of their defence investments on defence R&D, and twenty-five countries spending more than 90% of theirs on equipment procurement.

In 2022, twenty Member States were allocating the 20% of their defence spending on investments. Eighteen were capable of increasing their performance in comparison to the previous year, but other nine did not. The graphic shows that in the period between 2021 and 2022, seven Member States were performing below the 20% collective benchmark, namely Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Ireland and Malta. Nevertheless, the overall trend suggests that the ongoing level of investments in the EU has improved significantly, in particular when considering that back in 2017 only 8 Member States were reaching the goal of the collective benchmark [199].

Nevertheless, the Stability & Convergence Programmes, prepared by the EU Member States year by year, contained provisions for defence expenditure too. Until 2023 [200], such Programmes were required for every Member State part of the Eurozone, and the Commission and finance Ministers evaluated these documents to determine whether or not Member States were meeting their so-called Medium-Term Budgetary Objectives (MTOs). The Commission published in July 2023 an Overview of the last Programmes [201], and what emerged is that there are three groups containing different Member States depending on the targets they have declared to achieve before 2026 with respect to defence spending:

1. *Member States having specified their future defence expenditure*: it consists of 11 countries, of which Czechia and Finland have declared to be willing to increase their defence expenditure by 1 and 0.7 points of GDP respectively. The Netherlands, Estonia and Spain to follow with a wished increase between 0.3 and 0.5 points of GDP. Lastly, Slovakia, Latvia, Luxembourg and Bulgaria.

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[199] Cepparulo, A., Pasimeni, P., "Defence Spending in the European Union", European Commission, Discussion Paper 199, 2024.

[200] On 30 April 2024, a new economic governance framework has entered into force, so Member States are no longer required to submit such Stability & Convergence Programmes. More information can be found on the European Commission website at: https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/new-economic-governance-framework_en.

[201] European Commission, The 2023 Stability & Convergence Programmes - An Overview, with an Assessment of the Euro Area Fiscal Stance, Institutional Paper 253, July 2023.

2. *Member States having announced an unspecified increase in defence expenditure:* they are 8 countries, namely Austria, Croatia, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, and Poland.

3. *Member States not having announced any increase in defence expenditure:* here too 8 countries are part of the group, and they are Belgium, Greece, France, Ireland, Hungary, Romania, Portugal, and Slovenia.

In 2023 and 2024, NATO's Secretary General Stoltenberg has underlined how more investments are needed when facing the ongoing security challenges, and that Allies must spend more than their 2% of GDP. This has indeed been the principal issue addressed during the NATO Summit that occurred on 9-11 July 2024.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by Ludivine Dedonder, Belgium's Minister of Defence since 2020, while it is true that the EU has witnessed a significant increase in defence spending, the need for better spending derives from the fact that "many EU countries have lived too long on the peace dividend [202]". This has meant that many Member States have not continued paying attention to the modernisation of their armed forces and what is in relation to them. Josep Borrell, Head of EDA and High Representative [203]/Commission Vice President, declared that right now it is not sufficient to spend more, because a more coordinated management of defence budgets is required [204]. Consequently, the two questions rising from this are: why is European defence cooperation so difficult? What are the possible solutions in this direction?

Multinational defence cooperation is what EU Member States need to focus on. Yet, the challenges of such cooperation stem from political and structural factors that affect how EU Member States approach defence and security issues. Member States clearly have different historical experiences, threat perceptions, as well as strategic approaches to security menaces, thus influencing their defence priorities. Nevertheless, European defence cooperation is said to be challenged by what is called, in political science, the

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[202] Ludivine Dedonder in European Defence Matters, "For the long haul: Sustaining EU ambitions in defence", Magazine issue no. 26, 2023.
[203] Until September 2024.
[204] Josep Borrell in in European Defence Matters, "EU's Strategic Compass: follow the ambition", Magazine issue no. 25, 2023.

Collective Action Problem [205]. It consists of the fact that a group of people (or, in this case, EU's Member States) would benefit much more by working together and cooperating (on defence matters, for example), but they do not achieve the desired results because they are driven by their personal interests on those issues [206].

The 'collective action problem' with respect to European defence cooperation deals with the difficulty of aligning the interests and contributions of the different EU Member States toward a common defence objective, which is precisely what has emerged in last and before mentioned official reports. This challenge is said to derive from the tension between individual national priorities and the broader collective goals of European defence, leading to consequent underinvestment and inefficiencies. The reasons are complex, and they deal, for example, with a strong reliance on NATO and the United States, which alone represent with their defence expenditure approx. two-thirds of the defence spending of the Atlantic Alliance as a whole [207]. As indicated by the Report "The future of European competitiveness" published in September 2024, there are several reasons behind the choice of Member States to prefer procurement from the US. For example, under the US Foreign Military Sales Programme, EU Member States better comprehend what is available and then sign a government-to-government agreement with the US, which makes the administrative part behind the purchase easier. Also, Member States are not fully aware of what the European defence market offers which is balanced by a perceived better quality and cost of what the US have to offer; finally, for certain Member States US procurement is preferred as there is a perception that military intervention cannot be thought without taking into consideration the US [208]. Consequently, some EU Member States might be not that incentivized in investing in their own military capabilities. This can create the so-called '*free-rider*' issue, i.e. some states benefit from collective security without contributing equitably or, put in other words, those with smaller defence budgets may feel less pressure to invest in EU defence,

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[205] S. Monaghan, "Solving Europe's Defence Dilemma: Overcoming the Challenges to European Defence Cooperation", Centre for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), March 2023
[206] A deeper explanation of the Collective Action problem can be found at:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/collective-action-problem-1917157
[207] NATO, Funding NATO (available online at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm).
[208] Draghi, M., "The future of European competitiveness", Part B | In-depth analysis and recommendations, September 2024.

relying on other larger states (e.g., France, Germany [209]) or NATO which eventually would cover capability gaps.
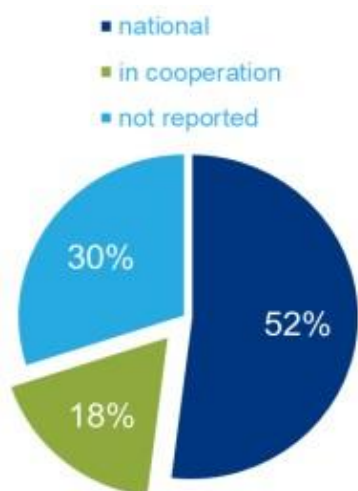

Figure 27. EU defence programmes 2021-2022 (source: EDA)

Also, as previously stated, European Member States evidently have different security concerns based on their geographic position and historical past experiences. For instance, EU's Eastern border states, such as Greece, Poland and the Baltic states, tend to focus more on threats posed by Russia, while Southern European states may prioritise migration and terrorism. Such inevitable differences make it hard for Member States to agree on a common view on defence or on common defence priorities and pool resources. In other words, this misalignment of priorities might lead to a prioritisation of national security investments over collective EU projects, hindering European defence cooperation. The following chart shows what has emerged in the 2022 CARD Report by the EDA (referring to the period 2021-2022).

The 52% of defence programmes in which EU Member States have invested have been carried out at a national level, while only the 18% by cooperating with one another [210]. Also, in 2020 it was just 11% of defence equipment being procured in collaborative programmes [211]. This has to do with the fact that Member States tend to take into consideration cooperation preferably in those circumstances when the objective is in line with their national priorities or when national defence industries could benefit from it [212]. On the other hand, what has surfaced is that collaborative defence programmes tend to be preferred over nationally-conducted ones in those cases where cooperation is beneficial in terms of costs when comparing them to national initiatives or when it leads to a faster delivery of the result [213]. Consequently, if EU Member States do not augment significantly

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[209] According to NATO data, "France, Germany and the United Kingdom together represent approximately 50% of defence spending by the non-US Allies". https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm

[210] European Defence Agency, 2022 Coordinated Annual Review on Defence Report, November 2022.

[211] Josep Borrell in European Defence Matters, "EU's Strategic Compass: follow the ambition", Magazine issue no. 23, 2022.

[212] European Defence Agency, 2022 Coordinated Annual Review on Defence Report, November 2022.

[213] European Defence Agency, 2020 Coordinated Annual Review on Defence Report, November 2020.

their defence expenditure and cooperation, as well as technological capacity, then their defence industries will not be updated with respect to future defence capabilities [214]. This is what is meant by the term 'fragmentation'. Despite working toward joint defence, many states still invest in national defence systems without coordination, leading to inefficiencies, and duplication of capabilities, and according to Josep Borrell, it is related to the political fragmentation of the EU [215]. To this, juridical limits must be added. In a Report of the European Parliament of 2023, another challenge has been underlined, i.e. the one coming from the unanimity decision-making rule. What emerged is that if one hand there are other alternatives to the use of unanimity for CFSP matters, as for example the constructive abstention (art. 31(1) TEU) [216], enhanced cooperation (art. 20 TEU), the 'passerelle' clause (art. 31(3) TEU), and qualified majority voting (art. 31(2) TEU), on the other hand they have not been fully exploited. More specifically, the measure of veto was conceived also for all Member States to feel at the same level, but in recent times such measure has been used in a significant manner, thus harming "*the unity and the identification of Member States as a collective* [217]".

In other words, EU defence cooperation faces many challenges, and their reasons are different and complex, making it often a difficult endeavour. These challenges stem from historical, political, juridical, and structural factors that affect how EU Member States approach defence and security issues. When summing them up, it can be said that today they deal with diverging national interests, tied to the different historical contexts of Member States and national sovereignty, as defence is closely linked to more or less reluctance over cooperation in defence. Another challenge is caused by budgetary constraints and inefficiencies that exist because of varied defence spending among EU Member States and of the duplication of defence capabilities (due to the preference of national defence programmes as emerged with EDA Data previously cited). Indeed, EU Member States have widely varying levels of defence spending, with some countries investing heavily in their military and others spending minimally, leading inevitably to

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[214] Hartley, K., "European Defence Policy: Prospects and Challenges" (2023), in Defence and Peace Economics, Volume 35, Issue 4: Special issue: Spend More and Better, 2024.

[215] Josep Borrell, Time to strengthen European defence industry, European External Action Service, 2024 (available online on the EEAS website at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/time-strengthen-european-defence-industry_en).

[216] Used in EULEX Kosovo

[217] Navarra, C., Jančová, L., Qualified majority voting in common foreign and security policy: a cost of non-Europe report, EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, July 2023.

disparities. Also, despite the significant overall increase in defence spending, a lack of coordination leads, once again, to duplication of efforts and inefficiencies: just to give an example, in the EU there are 17 different types of battle tanks, while the United States only manufactures one [218].

Hence, if the EU Member States fail to increase the cooperation on defence and security, then they will not be able to achieve the shared goals explained in the different documents such as the Strategic Compass, the Progress Reports, and CARD reports, let alone the objectives shared within NATO. In order to be stronger and effective, EU Member States need to better invest and cooperate more by taking into consideration on one hand national interests and priorities, but always in a common and collaborative sense in the field of defence and security [219]. The EU needs to make significant improvements toward a more effective and cohesive defence cooperation, despite the latest progresses, which nevertheless are insufficient.

3.2 EUROPEAN DEFENCE NEEDED DIRECTION

The return of war in Europe has led to major consequences and has made the EU realise the need for stronger cooperation with respect to defence and security. Much progress has been made in that direction: increases in defence spending have been noticed, cooperation in crucial themes (counterterrorism, hybrid threats, CBRN, etc.) has been furthered through meetings and collaborative projects, and civilian and military missions' mandates have been extended in many cases. EU Member States nonetheless need to increase defence cooperation, as it is the only way to achieve the shared goals expressed in the Strategic Compass and NATO's Strategic Concept. Today it is not possible to know the ways and then they will do this, nor whether it will happen effectively in comparison to

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[218] Clapp, S., "Reinforcing the European defence industry", European Parliamentary Research Service – EPRS, 2023.
[219] Ludivine Dedonder in European Defence Matters, "For the long haul: Sustaining EU ambitions in defence", Magazine issue no. 26, 2023.

what is the current state of cooperation between them. There are different steps that EU Member States can take towards that direction and thus, they will be able to address together and better the security and defence challenges of the nowadays situation explained in the previous chapters, and listed as well in each document related to such field.

A step, crucial for the effectiveness of defence cooperation, is better resource allocation and integration. As previously shown, this can be achieved through collective defence projects. In order to fight and reduce duplication and improve efficiency, the EU could strengthen joint procurement and defence research initiatives, such as those funded by the EDF. By pooling resources, Member States could develop more advanced capabilities at a lower cost. Joint procurement is essential as it results in enhanced interoperability, meaning that when developing and procuring equipment together, Member States are ensuring that their military forces can work in a similar and much more successful manner. This would lead to more cohesive and efficient military capabilities, reducing operational complications that might occur when equipment and defence capabilities are different. Evidently, joint procurement avoids duplication which emerges when countries work independently, not cooperating, and it enhances the European defence industrial base by reducing the dependence on non-EU suppliers [220] and strengthens the EU's ability to produce advanced defence technologies internally, which is a key element of the CSDP.

In this sense, with the aim of tackling such defence industrial gaps, the EU established in 2022 a *Defence Joint Procurement Task Force* [221] which brings together the European External Action Service, including the EUMS, the EDA, and the European Commission, namely its Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) and the Secretariat-General. The Task Force has identified specific areas of common interest in the field of joint procurement, for example, medical equipment and supplies, ammunition, anti-tank systems, and others. With respect to ammunition, for example, the EU has adopted the *Act in Support of Ammunition Production* (ASAP) [222]. The Commission has

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[220] European External Action Service, Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Council, March 2024.
[221] European Commission, Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward, May 2022
[222] Its legals basis is laid on Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023 on supporting ammunition production (ASAP) (OJ L 185, 24.7.2023, p. 7–25).

currently allocated 500€ M under ASAP for the period 2023-2025, which deals with five main areas, namely explosives, powder, shells, missiles, and the testing and reconditioning certification. In parallel to ASAP though, another step related to the strengthening of the European defence industry came in March 2024 when the European Commission adopted the *European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act* (EDIRPA) [223] Work programme. It has a financial budget of 300€ M for the period 2023-2025 and in particular it encourages EU joint procurement in three areas: ammunition, Air and missile defence, and platforms (i.e. tanks, combat platforms, etc.) [224]. All these instruments, by considering the work of the Defence Joint Procurement Task Force, are thus consistent with the objectives of the Strategic Compass.

What emerges is that the EU, after the adoption of the Joint Communication on Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward in May 2022, approved ASAP and EDIRPA in 2023 and established a Defence Joint Procurements Task Force, but they serve as short-term measures: ASAP will expire on 30 June 2025, while EDIRPA on 31 December 2025. Nevertheless, the EU needs to aim for stronger solutions in the long-term. It is for these purposes that in March 2024, the European Commission proposed a new regulation for *European Defence Industry Programme* (EDIP) [225]. As explained in the document, EDIP's objective is to "reconcile the urgent with the long term [226]", and it is currently under discussion for its adoption and entry into force by the European Parliament and the Council. EDIP comes as an attempt to implement the goals listed in the *European Defence Industrial Strategy* (EDIS), announced with Joint Communication JOIN/2024/10 [227].

EDIS is a strategic policy framework that provides a high-level roadmap for the EU's defence industry, focusing on the long-term sustainability and alignment of national

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[223] Adopted with Regulation 2023/2418 of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA), 18 October 2023 (OJ L, 2023/2418, 26.10.2023).

[224] The EDIRPA Work Programme factsheet can be found online at: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1b6aec44-ea03-452c-bb2a-e7f01b15700f_en?filename=EDIRPA%20factsheet%20v8.pdf.

[225] EDIP was firstly announced with the Joint Communication on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward of May 2022.

[226] European Commission, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Industry Programme and a framework of measures to ensure the timely availability and supply of defence products ('EDIP'), COM(2024) 150, March 2024.

[227] European Commission, Joint Communication on a new European Defence Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry, JOIN(2024) 10, 5 March 2024.

defence policies. It provides the strategic direction and structure for the defence industry in the EU. Its ambitious but needed objectives are the following:

a. Achieving defence industrial readiness: through EDIP
b. Teaming-up with strategic like-minded and international partners: with Ukraine and NATO, in this particular historical context
c. Spreading a defence readiness culture, even across EU policies
d. Investments: through new mechanisms and tools
e. Bolstering innovation within the defence industry: for example, much attention is paid to Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

The three goals EDIS aims to achieve by 2030 are concise and concrete:

1. Member States need to procure at least 40% of defence equipment in a collaborative manner
2. At least 50% of Member States' defence procurement needs to derive from EDTIB
3. The value of intra-EU defence trade needs to represent at least 35% of the value of the EU defence market

On the other hand, EDIP, besides being an integral part of EDIS, is a concrete program with financial mechanisms aimed at promoting joint projects and innovation in defence technologies. Becoming EDIS the new direction of the defence industry, EDIP consequently acts with a long-term perspective unlike measures ASAP and EDIRPA, which tackled specific urgent defence procurement and production challenges. In other words, EDIP complements, rather than substitutes, these programs. In summary, while EDIS is a broad policy framework for industrial strategy, EDIP is a specific mechanism and an integral part of the EDIS proposals.

All these initiatives aim at the bolstering of the *Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB)*. It consists of a broader concept that refers to the overall network of industries, capabilities, technologies, and skills within the EU that contribute to defence. Thus, it is not a program like the EDIP, but a strategic framework to ensure that the EU maintains a strong and autonomous defence industry. Consequently, when talking of the EU defence industrial readiness in the changed ongoing security scenario, the EDTIB is

what is being and needs to be addressed, i.e. "the capacity of the EDTIB to respond effectively (in time and scale) to changes in European demand for defence products [228]"

To achieve such goals, as explained by Zandee et al., the solution is political will [229]. It is a very complex framework that has to change in order for the European defence to be effective and to deliver those concrete wished results, needed if wanting to envisage security and defence threats. Uncertainty over Member States' defence budgets does not make it attractive for companies/SMEs to invest money in expanding their production capacity. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned tools are not the only way leading to an increase of defence cooperation. Indeed, it has to be said that Member States have the opportunity to cooperate within other defence frameworks, as the *Organisation for Joint Armament Co-operation (OCCAR)*: an intergovernmental organisation active since 1998 [230] whose members are six, namely Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These, except for the UK, are also part of the EDA, so the two organisations are closely linked as far as defence capability development and delivery are concerned. In one of PESCO's binding commitments, precisely the 18th, it can be read that EU Member States part of PESCO will commit to the EDA for joint capability development, while considering OCCAR "as the preferred collaborative programme managing organisation [231]". Projects often move from EDA's Preparatory phase to OCCAR for implementation. As explained by Matteo Bisceglia, OCCAR Director, the EDA helps identify common needs, initiates and prepares cooperative armament projects, and once a project is mature enough, OCCAR intervenes and takes care of the actual procurement and development phase [232].

Figure 28. OCCAR emblem

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[228] European Commission, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Industry Programme and a framework of measures to ensure the timely availability and supply of defence products ('EDIP'), COM(2024) 150, March 2024.

[229] Zandee, D., Stoetman, A., & Deen, B., "The EU's Strategic Compass for security and defence: Squaring ambition with reality", Clingendael Institute, 2021.

[230] OCCAR was firstly established through an Administrative Arrangement (AA) signed by the Defence Ministers of Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and France, but it was in September 1998 that the OCCAR Convention was signed, entering into force in 2001. Belgium adhered in 2003, Spain in 2005.

[231] Permanent Structured Cooperation, Binding Commitments (available online on the PESCO website at: https://www.pesco.europa.eu/binding-commitments/).

[232] Matteo Bisceglia in European Defence Matters, "EU's Strategic Compass: follow the ambition", Magazine issue no. 23, 2022.

Mario Draghi, in its Report presented to the European Parliament, has proceeded with proposals for an enhancement of the European competitiveness, also in the field of European defence. What has emerged is the need for a rapid implementation of EDIS and subsequent adoption of EDIP, as well as an increase of the aggregation of demand among Member States deriving from more joint defence expenditure and joint procurement, thus consolidating the supplies in the EU's defence market and furthering industrial specialisation. According to the Report, more effort has to be directed to Research & Development (R&D) and Research & Technology (R&T) defence initiatives. The first refer to the entire process comprising both the scientific research and the technical aspect of a product, from the early stage to the effective creation of a defence capability; on the other hand, R&T is focused more on the early stages of scientific research, along with technology exploration. Indeed, allowing a deeper involvement of SMEs and start-ups, specialised in cutting-edge technology, would lead to the application of new defence capabilities. Also, a medium-term Defence Industrial Policy is seen as a solution, as it would address all issues in this field, from the objectives and mechanisms to a regulatory framework aiming, for example, at the reduction of barriers for SMEs to accede to the defence market. Other restrictions needing to be removed are those for EU-funded financial instruments in order to be easily accessible for private defence companies: this would be allowed through some measures in-depth explained in the Report. Moreover, attention is paid to a hypothetical revolutionary institutional set-up. Indeed, among the solutions proposed, there is the suggestion to give more power to the European Commission for defence industrial policy-related issues, to create the position of a Defence Industry Commissioner, as well as to establish an EU Defence Industry Authority, chaired by the Commission and the High Representative, whose main activity would be that of "procure centrally on behalf of the Member States [233]".

In other words, the EU needs to emphasize its defence initiatives which are meant to complement, not replace, NATO, even though the Russian war of aggressions against Ukraine has proved the centrality of the Atlantic Alliance with respect to collective defence [234]. That said, cooperation between the EU and NATO can help both organizations work more effectively together through all the tools at their disposal (as the

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[233] Draghi, M., "The future of European competitiveness", Part B | In-depth analysis and recommendations, September 2024.
[234] Giusti, S., Grevi, G., "Facing War: Rethinking Europe's Security and Defence", Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale - ISPI, 2022.

collaboration between NDPP and CDP), but there is no replacement expected [235]. In order to come closer to what is the so-called strategic autonomy, the EU has to reduce reliance on external actors like NATO (particularly the U.S.) for defence while still maintaining cooperation. In this sense, it has though emerged that not every Member State feels the same on strategic autonomy in defence: France and Germany are supporters, but others do not totally agree with a European strategic autonomy implicitly juxtaposed with NATO [236].

Nevertheless, the goals European defence needs to achieve are clear and listed in different documents, both from the EU and NATO. Initiatives have been set up, defence spending is increasing, and new financial mechanisms have been established (both for the short and long term). Yet, being them all recently created, it is too soon to understand what the outcomes will be. What is though evident are the shortfalls and capability gaps concerning European defence. The EU is expected to make full use of its tools in order to attain some concrete results, because the needed direction of European defence will have to deal with the enhancement of political will, a better resource allocation, a balancing of EU-NATO relations emphasizing EU initiatives, more strategic autonomy, and increase investments in the defence industry.

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[235] Bermann, M., Amond, J., Cicarelli, S., "The Case for EU Defence," Centre for American Progress - CAP, 2021.
[236] Tocci, N., "European Strategic Autonomy: What It Is, Why We Need It, How to Achieve It", Istituto Affari Internazionali - IAI, 2021.

CONCLUSION

This Thesis has tried to give an overview of the situation the European Union is currently facing in terms of security and defence. As previously mentioned, while on one hand the EU continues to struggle with both internal and external security challenges, on the other hand the CSDP has emerged as a central pillar of the EU's efforts to build a coherent defence and security architecture. Over the past years, the CSDP has evolved from a relatively marginal tool into an increasingly integrated mechanism for collective defence, crisis management, and strategic autonomy. In order to do that, it was important to first explain the background of the CSDP, the events that led to the creation of such policy in 2009 with the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the agencies, bodies and tools related to the European defence. Considering the focus on the latest developments and future prospects of the European defence policy, two documents approved in 2022 have been key to the analysis: on one hand, the EU's Strategic Compass, being the EU's leading policy document for the development of a stronger security and defence union, and on the other, NATO's Strategic Concept, the highest-level political document that the Atlantic Alliance delivers. They aim at having a common perception of security threats, and what emerges is a strong cooperation between the EU and NATO, considering that 21 of the EU Member States are part of the 32 NATO Members States. However, the CSDP still face significant political and practical challenges as it seeks to position itself for the future. The most urgent menaces needing to be envisaged are clear, namely Russia, supported by China, Iran and North Korea, with its military aggression against Ukraine. Nevertheless, the EU not only has to envision regional tensions and instability coming from the Western Balkans, the Sahel Region and others, but it also has to pay much attention to transnational threats caused by terrorism, hybrid threats, CBRN-related threats, and many others.

It has been shown that the EU and NATO cooperate in many geographic areas of the world through CSDP civilian and military missions/operations in collaboration with NATO missions [237] (often under United Nations mandates), as well as through other initiatives to counter the different emerging threats. The Annual Progress Reports on the implementation of the common set of proposals, which serve as concrete actions for the implementation of the Joint Declarations signed by the EU and NATO, were useful in

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[237] As in the case, for example, of EULEX Kosovo and KFOR, EUAM Iraq and NMI, EUNAVFOR Med Irini and NATO's Sea Guardian

describing the latest developments concerning the defence policy of the EU, as well as the main achievements of EU-NATO cooperation in the seven relevant areas of interest concerning security.

Yet, while progress has been made, challenges persist. In order to be much more effective in the response to the current unstable security situation, the EU has to increase its efforts in terms of approaches to defence. While the Strategic Compass sets strategic priorities, it has to be underlined that the implementation of specific actions and initiatives remains voluntary, and consequently, it is up to Member States to decide the extent and manner of their participation in various projects and initiatives, as within PESCO, the EDF, and others. For future prospects to be analysed, the challenges to defence cooperation between EU Member States need to be taken into account. Thus, what has emerged in the last two years is that cooperation is not as high as desired. Actually, EU defence cooperation is currently facing several challenges, and they are mostly linked to diverging national interests of the Member States, budgetary inefficiencies and dependence on NATO as far as collective defence is concerned. The historical and geographical context of a Member State is useful when analysing its security and defence priorities, but financial limitations are the most urgent issue hindering a functional and successful defence policy. The broad implication of the present research is that the ongoing problem drivers relate to a structural change in the security environment, an underinvestment in the defence sector and consequent cost escalation, a limited understanding of defence supply chains linked to a fragmented and uncoordinated demand of defence capabilities due to limited cooperation.

Specifically, the EU needs to tackle three aspects: defence expenditure, defence industrial gaps, and capability gaps. In 2022, EU Member States spent €240 B in defence and €58 B were allocated to defence investments out of the total defence spending. Six [238] were capable of achieving the 2% GDP benchmark in the period ranging from 2020 and 2022, while the EU average is 1.5%. Also, seven Member States did not attain the wanted result of the PESCO's Binding Commitment of the 20% collective benchmark in defence investments. As far as joint procurement is concerned, EDA data suggest that Member States tend to take into consideration cooperation preferably when the objective of a defence programme/initiative is in line with their national priorities or when their national

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[238] Greece, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Croatia.

defence industries could benefit from it. On the contrary, collaborative defence programmes tend to be preferred over nationally-conducted ones in those cases where cooperation is beneficial in terms of costs when comparing them to national initiatives or when it leads to a faster delivery of the result.

Nevertheless, there is clear momentum for CSDP evolution. As the global security environment becomes increasingly complex, the EU has no choice but to bolster its defence capabilities to protect its interests and values. The future of the CSDP is shaped by both external challenges and internal dynamics, with several key trends and developments expected in the near term. And while there is much that can be done to make European defence cooperation easier, it has to be noted that is a constantly evolving topic. The CSDP certainly will continue to evolve, and significant steps have already been made (for example, through EDIS and EDIP), but its ultimate success will depend on whether Member States are willing to harmonise their security policies and make the necessary political and financial commitments. The present findings confirm the need for the enhancement of the political commitment of the Member States to invest in collective defence initiatives, better resource allocation, a substantial increase in investments in the defence industry, and evidently much more internal cooperation through EU defence initiatives. Also, the concept of "strategic autonomy" is likely to become even more central to the EU defence policy in the debates concerning the will to reduce its dependency on external actors, particularly the United States, and this is precisely the focus of the Report by Mario Draghi that has listed some proposals that would lead to a better European competitiveness.

The latest Data on Defence relating to the year 2023 are expected to be published by the EDA in November 2024, and the results of the third cycle of CARD at the end of 2024, but through strategic foresight and coordinated effort, the CSDP will fully realize its potential, while navigating the intricate security scenario. In the meantime, starting from September 2024, Kaja Callas is the new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and one of the Executive Vice-Presidents of the European Commission, while the North Atlantic Council has appointed in June 2024 the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the next Secretary General, who will succeed Jens Stoltenberg in October 2024.

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31. Council of the European Union, *Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO*, 6 March 2018 (OJ L 65, 8.3.2018, p. 24–27).

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