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Quo Vadis Europe?

A Qualitative Content Analysis of the EU's Common Foreign and Defense Policy
and the Concept of Strategic Autonomy

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Abstract

Seit der Veröffentlichung der Globalen Strategie für die Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik der Europäischen Union im Jahr 2016 ist *Strategische Autonomie* als Ziel für die EU formuliert. Mit dem Beginn des russischen Angriffskriegs auf die Ukraine ist *Strategische Autonomie* nun endgültig in das Zentrum der Debatten um Europäische Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik gerückt. Diese Arbeit nimmt die Vorstellung der Globalen Strategie als Startpunkt für eine Analyse der Außenpolitik der EU in Bezug auf die Ausprägung des Konzepts der Strategischen Autonomie. Eine *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse* konnte zeigen, dass die EU zwar einige Ziele der Global Strategie in ihrer Außenpolitik umsetzt, die Umsetzung von *Strategischer Autonomie* allerdings nur mit geringer Ambition erfolgt. Eine weiterführende Analyse des Diskurses über *Strategische Autonomie* unter Bezugnahme der Perspektive des *Diskursiven Institutionalismus* konnte herausstellen, dass die Europäische Kommission ein höheres Ambitionsniveau von *Strategischer Autonomie* forciert indem sie das Konzept als weiteren Schritt in einer folge mehrere Integrationsschritte charakterisiert. Gleichzeitig zeigt die Kommission auf, dass *Strategische Autonomie* ein notwendiges Ziel für die EU sei, um in der aktuellen geopolitischen Lage handlungsfähig und unabhängig zu bleiben. Weiters zeigte die Analyse jedoch, dass mit Deutschland und Frankreich zwei zentrale Akteure in der EU widersprüchliche Zielvorstellungen von *Strategischer Autonomie* haben. Dieser Dissens verhindert eine gemeinsame europäische Vision von *Strategischer Autonomie*. Der russische Krieg in der Ukraine könnte eine Chance sein, diesen Dissens zu überwinden und einen europäischen Reformprozess ermöglichen der zu *Strategischer Autonomie* führen könnte.

Abstract

In the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, the European Union defined *Strategic Autonomy* as its goal. Ever since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the question of *Strategic Autonomy* is central in the debates around the EU and its foreign and security policy. Taking the Global Strategy as a starting point, this thesis analyzes the EU's foreign policy from 2016 to 2022 by conducting a *Qualitative Content Analysis* of the Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council to outline how *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in EU decision-making. The analysis showed that the EU has implemented several ambitions of the Global Strategy in its foreign policy but concluded that the level of ambition concerning *Strategic Autonomy* remains limited. A further analysis of the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* utilizing the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism* identified the attempts by the European Commission to embed the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* in the ongoing integration process while showcasing the need to pursue a higher level of ambition by highlighting the decreasing role and ability to act of the EU in international politics. Further, the analysis showed that with France and Germany two crucial actors in the discourse of EU foreign policy making have different visions on *Strategic Autonomy* leading to an inability to agree on a common vision of *Strategic Autonomy*. Still, the Russian war in Ukraine could open a window of opportunity to make the reforms necessary to move towards an ambitious level of *Strategic Autonomy* for the EU.

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1. Introduction

The EU as an international actor is challenged by external crises and geo-political developments that shake-up the global order established after the Cold War and revokes the prioritization of threads and challenges that dictated foreign policy in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001. When Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine on 24.02.2022 and Russian troops were on their way to conquer Kiev, it was the latest and most consequential event in a series of developments that forced the EU to response. But what is the way forward for the EU? For many, it is time for the EU to fully integrate the CSFP and CSDP to reach the ability to act coherently and forcefully on the international stage, utilizing the full potential of its 27 Member States¹. A union containing a “full measure of difference” (Hill 1998: 36 in Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 278) is now forced to decide whether it will strive for *Strategic Autonomy* or maintain the status quo. In its essence, *Strategic Autonomy* suggests that the EU should acquire the resources, capabilities, and decision-making authority necessary to act and decide autonomously and free of dependencies. However, as scholars point out, the current use of *Strategic Autonomy* is ill-defined and light on substance. While the EU declared *Strategic Autonomy* its goal in the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy (EEAS 2016)², it is still unclear which path the EU want to take as a foreign policy and defense actor and for which level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* it will strive for.

Therefore, this thesis seeks to analyze the foreign policy decisions made by the EU following the Global Strategy to see how *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in the actions of the EU: Where does the EU want to act? How does the EU want act? Why does the EU want to act and with whom? These are important questions to understand the state of play of *Strategic Autonomy* as well as the level of ambition the EU might be striving for. However, as the EU is no monolithic, uniform actor but made up of 27 Member States and different institutions that are all involved in the decision-making process. Therefore, the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* and the actors involved in the discourse shall be considered as well. Utilizing the

¹ This thesis uses the capitalized version of the term Member State, following the style-guide of the EU institutions, to differentiate Member States of the EU from membership in other international fora.

² For brevity this thesis will refer to the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy as “Global Strategy” and reference the document using the official abbreviation of the European External Action Service, EEAS

perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, this thesis will take a closer look at the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* focusing on France, Germany, and the European Commission to answer the question:

Quo vadis Europe? How does *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in the EU's foreign policy and what does this entail for the future of the EU as a foreign policy actor?

This study will focus on the foreign policymaking in the EU and conduct an analysis of the Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council, which are the main decision-making bodies of the CFSP and CSDP. The research period will start at the time of the publication of the Global Strategy, which declared *Strategic Autonomy* to be the goal of the EU, in June 2016 and end in June 2022 to account for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which is seen by many as an inflection point for EU policymaking. Utilizing a *Qualitative Content Analysis*, this study seeks to extract and categorize the external actions decided on by the EU in the research period and analyze them from the perspective of *Strategic Autonomy* by applying definitions and criteria of conceptualization from the literature to the Conclusions of the Council. The *Qualitative Content Analysis* aims to show how the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in which level of ambition in the EU's foreign policy. In a second step, this thesis will look at the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* and the CFSP and highlight three actors: the European Commission, France, and Germany. This part of the analysis will utilize the theoretical perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, which allows for a more holistic and complex view on *Strategic Autonomy* and European foreign policymaking by accounting for ideas as well as material interests, acknowledging actors' ability to act, and introducing the role of discourse to the contingent and, hence, both restraining and enabling structure of institutions. The perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism* can provide insight into why a certain level of *Strategic Autonomy* has been reached and point out where and why there are shortcomings. Potential conflicts and different understandings of *Strategic Autonomy* and the level of ambition that should be pursued can be identified by utilizing the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*.

After reviewing the literature on *Strategic Autonomy*, the European Foreign and Security Policy, and *Discursive Institutionalism*, the first part of the thesis will retrace the development of the CFSP from the first notions of a European Defense Union to the institutionalization of the CFSP and the CSDP in the Treaty of Lisbon and beyond to the start of the research period in 2016 (chapter 3). The second part of the thesis concerns the theoretical background of, and

the methodology applied in this thesis. To begin with, chapter 4 will first discuss the debates on Europe as an international actor and its foreign policy, second, examine the concept of *Strategic Autonomy*, and third, explain the analytical perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*. Chapter 5 introduces the *Qualitative Content Analysis* as the research method of this thesis, explain its specific application to the research material and sheds light on how *Discursive Institutionalism* can help to discuss the results of the analysis of the CFSP and the challenges such an analysis face. In the third part of the thesis the results of the research will be presented and discussed. At first, chapter 6 will present the results of the *Qualitative Content Analysis* of the Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council before evaluating the external actions of the EU in the context of *Strategic Autonomy*. Turning back to the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* as presented in chapter 4, the second part of chapter 6 applies key conceptualizations of *Strategic Autonomy* to the results of the *Qualitative Content Analysis* to outline how the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in the Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. Chapter 7 begins by discussing the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* itself from the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism* before examining the point of view of the Commission, France, and Germany in the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*. Finally, the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* and the results of the *Qualitative Content Analysis* shall be critically discussed using the approach of *Discursive Institutionalism*.

2. Literature Review

This thesis is concerned with the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU's CFSP and CSDP. It thus draws on literature concerned with the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* as well as literature on debates on the EU as a global actor in general and the EU as an actor in the sphere of security and defense in particular. To contextualize the debates on *Strategic Autonomy* in the European institutions and point out dynamics in the discourse over *Strategic Autonomy*, this thesis will draw on *Discursive Institutionalism*. A point of emphasis of this thesis is going to be the conceptual discussions surrounding the term *Strategic Autonomy*. One element of this discussion is whether the term *Strategic Autonomy* should be framed in a broad way encompassing all policy areas deemed strategically important, or in a narrower way as being a concept pertaining to European security and defense. Accordingly, the term *Strategic Autonomy* is used widely in the literature and in policy areas ranging from public health to trade policy. This paper uses literature on *Strategic Autonomy* in the context of foreign, security, and defense policy. Because of the unique relationship between *Strategic Autonomy* and the EU, the literature research used the terms “Strategic Autonomy” and “European Strategic Autonomy” and the keywords “European Foreign and Security Policy” and “European Security and Defense Policy”.

While there is plenty of literature on *Strategic Autonomy*, it is of a peculiar nature. The common denominator in the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* is the lack of a clear definition of the term and what is more the debate on what term to use. Perhaps this lack of common understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* is a reason why the academic work on *Strategic Autonomy* is less present in academic journals and more often published by research institutes, scientific foundations, and think tanks. This peculiarity is pointed out by Mauro (2018: 17) who points to the absence of *Strategic Autonomy* in the classics of strategic literature and goes on to give a brief account of what he calls doctrinal definitions. Another peculiarity of the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* is its close connection to the EU as a reference. While it is true that *Strategic Autonomy* is most hotly debated in the EU and in the context of the EU, the literature itself points out that there is no reason why the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* should be confined to the EU and not applied to other states and multilateral organizations (see Järvenpää et al. 2021). A good summary of the debates around *Strategic Autonomy* was written by Damen (2022) for the Parliamentary Research Service. Mauro (2018) explains the development of the concept *Strategic Autonomy* and traces its roots back to Gaullists in 1960s

France. A good overview of *Strategic Autonomy* in EU policymaking is given by Miró (2022), who summarizes policies and decisions on the EU level that can be seen as contributing to *Strategic Autonomy*. As pointed out earlier, the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* lacks some academic qualities. Thus, it is common to find policy recommendations (Charillon et al. 2017, Järvenpää et al. 2019 and calls for the implementation of *Strategic Autonomy* (Brustlein 2018; Tocci 2019) following a conceptual analysis.

While the literature largely stays in the context of European politics, Arteaga (2017) and Varga (2017) try to give a definition of *Strategic Autonomy* that can be transferred to other contexts. Further definitions of the concept are given by Mauro (2018) and Tocci (2021) who take an etymological approach towards defining *Strategic Autonomy* by looking at the Greek origins of the word autonomy. The Research and Analysis Team of the Council of the European Union General Secretariat (2021) examines the word strategic and offers three different readings of strategy or strategic that respectively correspond with a narrower or wider framing of *Strategic Autonomy*. The paper also highlights the need to define a common understanding of the concept and reach an agreement on the application of *Strategic Autonomy*. The lack of a fixed definition leading to “conceptual confusion” (Csernatonni 2022: 369), a “cacophony of current interpretations” (Miró 2022: 3), and disputes over the meaning and its consequences (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 1; Lippert et al. 2019: 5) are observations common in the existing literature. The debate, however, is not only concerned with meaning of *Strategic Autonomy* but also with the term used to describe the aspiration. Fiott (2021) explores the meaning behind European Sovereignty and *Strategic Autonomy*, which for some is a mere semantic question while others like Fiott (2021) see a qualitative difference between the two terms. In the literature, *Strategic Autonomy* is the term most commonly used. Still, Szewczyk (2021) builds on the term European Sovereignty to discuss the general problem of sovereignty in the context of the EU and offers the concept of European Sovereignty as a potential way out of the existing dilemma. The question of sovereignty is also the starting point for Csernatonni (2022) and Bellanova et al. (2022) to explain integration in the question of defense and the expanding of EU competencies to new policy areas.

Multiple papers focus on the necessary elements of *Strategic Autonomy* albeit having a different understanding of how wide *Strategic Autonomy* should be framed. While Biscop (2019) and Mauro (2021) discuss the concept solely from a military and defense perspective, Järvenpää et al. (2019) and Grevi (2019) take a wider view on *Strategic Autonomy*. This divide between a narrow perspective with a focus on security and defense and a wide perspective

that encompasses all elements of foreign affairs and trade is a major point of contention in the literature. On the one side, authors like Mauro (2018) warn against diluting the concept to a point where it means everything and nothing at all by stretching it to all policy areas while on the other side authors like von Ondarza & Overhaus (2022) explicitly state that *Strategic Autonomy* or Strategic Sovereignty must encompass the whole spectrum of foreign policy.

However, even within the narrow perspective of *Strategic Autonomy*, there are different visions of what *Strategic Autonomy* means and what it entails. Retter et al. (2021), Mauro (2021), and Varga (2017) outline different visions or faces of *Strategic Autonomy* in security and defense. An excerpt from the debate around *Strategic Autonomy* and EU defense integration can be found in Camporini et al. (2017), who give the floor to four scholars to explicate their respective position on the issue. Different understandings and opinions regarding *Strategic Autonomy* are not only present in the scholarly debate but also among the Member States. Charillon et al. (2017) define three necessary elements of *Strategic Autonomy* and examine how they are discussed from a French and a German perspective. Expanding the view, Arteaga et al. (2016) present the perspectives from seven Member States with the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania grouped together. While both Charillon et al. (2017) and Arteaga et al. (2016) focus on *Strategic Autonomy* in the area of defense procurement, military operations, and defense research and development, Franke & Varma (2019) conducted a comprehensive study of all Member States and their view on what *Strategic Autonomy* is, what it entails, and what kind of *Strategic Autonomy* should be pursued. Both Arteaga et al. (2016) and Franke & Varma (2019) still include the UK as a member of the EU. Aside from disputes among scholars and differences among Member States, Hoffmann (2021) applies the parameters of hard and soft power to the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* focusing on the soft power instruments of diplomatic missions and developmental aid.

Building on the different foci of *Strategic Autonomy* in security and defense, Fiott (2018) categorized three levels of ambition for *Strategic Autonomy* and outlines the respective consequences of each level of ambition. These consequences can be differentiated in two broad categories. First, the consequences for the institutional system of the EU. Different levels of ambition in *Strategic Autonomy* would necessitate reforms or transformations of varying degree to the functioning of the EU. A good overview of potential institutional reforms is given by Järvenpää et al. (2019), Lippert et al. (2019) and von Ondarza & Overhaus (2022). Second, different visions of *Strategic Autonomy* can, and already have, consequences for the EU's relationship with NATO in general and the US specifically.

Howorth (2017) highlights the conflict between the EU's aspiration towards *Strategic Autonomy* and its insistence on multilateralism and cooperation with partners and outlines four scenarios for a future EU-NATO relationship. A further discussion of EU-NATO and EU-US relationship in the advent of *Strategic Autonomy* is also given by Jana Puglierin's chapter in Fiott (2021).

There is a plethora of literature on the European Foreign and Security Policy and the debates around it. A good overview of the genesis of the CFSP can be found in Giegerich's (2020) contribution to the 8th edition of *Policy-Making in the European Union*, as well as in Juncos & Friis' (2022) chapter for the 7th edition *European Union Politics*. A closer focus on the CSDP is available in Kempin (2020). Serrando (2020) contributes to this with a personal account of this development with an inside-view from the institutions. Moving away from the history of the policy Wessels (2021) explains the institutional framework of the EU's foreign policy. An in-depth look at the legal framework can be found in Bieber et al. (2021), while Epiney (2012) focuses specifically on the EU's legal commitment to International Law. Debating the role of the EU as an international actor, Manners (2002) wrote a seminal article on the EU as a normative power, which is further discussed in Forsberg (2011), Pacheco Pardo (2012) and Wood (2009). Besides the character of the EU as an international actor, its ability and potential to act is also subject to debate. Hill (1993) developed the concept of the Capability-Expectations Gap, which is further explored in Larsen (2020) and Thomas (2012). Thomas (2021) and Müller et al. (2021) debate the impact of intergovernmentalism in the CFSP and debate the question of de-Europeanization in the context of EU foreign policy. For some scholars, the Commission is gradually increasing its role in the foreign policy domain. This phenomenon is investigated by Riddervold (2016) who looked at the Commission's role in setting the foreign policy agenda and providing resources and expertise, and Martins & Mawdsley (2021) who take a closer look at the implications of the European Defense Fund. Finally, the influence of crisis on the integration process is explored in Falkner (2016) with a special focus on foreign policy in Müller (2016).

A general overview on *Discursive Institutionalism* can be found in the multiple publications of Vivien Schmidt for which Schmidt (2008) shall be named here exemplary. A breakdown of *Discursive Institutionalism* and the different types of ideas and actors that play a role in it can also be found in Campbell (1998) and Campbell (2004), as well as in Schleicher (2021). Campbell (1998) uses the change of economic policy in the US during the administration of Ronald Reagan to explain his theory of institutional change. Similarly, both Blyth (2002) and

Hall (1993) use the economic policy changes of the 20th century to discuss a theory of change with Hall (1993) elaborating on the application and limitations of the concept of social learning. While economic policy is the most frequently used example to discuss the shortcomings of historical and rational-choice institutionalism and the advantages of approaches focusing on discourse and ideas, Howorth (2004) detailed the role of discourse, ideas and epistemic communities in the development of the CFSP especially in the time leading up to the Saint Malo Declaration and its aftermath. Related to the theoretical work on *Discursive Institutionalism* but more focused on ideas is Goldstein's and Keohane's (1993) book "Ideas and Foreign Policy. Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change" with a chapter by Garrett and Weingast on the establishment of the EU's Single Market.

3. Genesis of the European Foreign and Security Policy and the European Security and Defense Policy

To understand the debates on the CFSP and the CSDP as well as the ensuing discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*, it is important to reflect on the genesis of the European Foreign and Security Policy. As multiple scholars, as well as representatives of the EU institutions point out, *Strategic Autonomy* is by no means a new concept but one that has been part of the discourse on the EU in different shapes for a long time. Similarly, some ideas, like the European Defense Union, have been around the EU from the moment of its creation. However, understanding the origins and development of the CFSP is not only important to analyze *Strategic Autonomy* and its potential implications on the EU, but also key to understanding the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* and the roles and positions of the actors therein. Therefore, to explain the context of *Strategic Autonomy* and lay the groundwork for an analysis of the actors in the discourse from the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, this chapter seeks to outline the genesis of the CFSP. The chapter is structured in three parts. The first part outlines the development of a European foreign policy from the end of World War II to the Treaty of Lisbon. In the second part of the chapter, the institutional framework of the CFSP and CSDP in the Treaties of the EU shall be explained. Finally, the third part traces the more recent developments of the EU's foreign policy from 2009 to the start of the research period in 2016.

3.1 The European Foreign and Security Policy: From World War II to the Treaty of Lisbon

The origins of the CFSP and the subsumed CSDP as codified in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), are commonly placed in the aftermath of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. However, the concept of a shared approach to foreign and security policy dates back further. After World War II, the state system in Western Europe needed to be rebuilt. Under the threat of the looming Cold War, the US planned to re-establish Germany by integrating it into regional institutional cooperation and, thereby, containing it. The idea behind this approach was labeled “supranational compromise” by American theorists because it conditioned security guarantees and the financial and material aid of the Marshall Plan on the creation of a supranational level of governance, which required states to seize some of their sovereign domains (Wallace 1999: 507; see also Testoni 2021: 5). In response, France set the Schuman Plan in motion to create the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which established a shared administration over the reconstruction of Germany’s industry (Giegerich 2020: 390). Robert Schuman, then Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, also believed in the promise of European integration to end the long history of bloody wars on the European continent (Kempin 2020: 977).

External crises pushed this integration further. The US was pulled into an escalating war on the Korean peninsula in which the US now had to fight communist North Korea, which was supported by the newly established Maoist regime in China. Fearing that a similar conflict could break out in Europe, the US government pushed for the rearmament of Germany and its integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was established in 1949. The French government was understandably weary of German rearmament. At the same time, it also questioned the idea of the US as a hegemon in European security. French Prime Minister René Pleven, thus, envisioned a plan for a European Defense Union (EDU), which eventually gained the support of the US government. The German defense contribution was to be integrated and controlled in a European structure. Together with the EDU, a European Political Community (EPC) was to be established to harmonize the ECSC and the EDU (Kempin 2020: 977). The EPC would have created a kind of federation of six European states with an executive branch and a European Parliament (Giegerich 2020: 390). According to Wallace (1999: 507) the US also supported plans for closer European cooperation besides the existing transatlantic alliance. However, the Pleven Plan, as it has come to be known, also

established the idea of a European Army under a shared command (Kempin 2020: 978). The European Defense Treaty to set up the institutional framework was signed in 1952, but its ratification failed in the French parliament in light of the armistice in Korea and the death of Soviet president Josef Stalin (Giegerich 2020: 390). This muted enthusiasm for an integration of security and defense politics was also visible at the passing of the Treaty of Rome, which made a clear distinction between the low politics regarding trade and commerce, which were made the subject of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the high politics of foreign and defense policy, which remained in the authority of the Member States (ibid.; Kempin 2020: 978).

The position of France regarding European security and defense cooperation and integration was conflicted. While the National Assembly failed to ratify the European Defense Treaty, newly elected President Charles de Gaulle pursued closer foreign-policy cooperation in Europe to counter the US hegemony (Fröhlich 2020: 74; Giegerich 2020: 390). While the term *Strategic Autonomy* was not used in official documents, the idea of a joint approach to foreign policy independent from, or even in contrast to, the US can be seen as embodying the spirit of the concept. Indeed, the term *Strategic Autonomy* was used by de Gaulle in a speech in which he outlined his understanding of the concept (Mauro 2018: 4 f.). Thus, it could be said that the idea of a European *Strategic Autonomy* can be traced back to the end of the 1950s (Howorth 2004: 214 f.). In 1961, de Gaulle presented the Fouchet Plan at a meeting of the EEC, which would have laid the groundwork for a Union of the European Peoples with a common foreign and defense policy (Fouchet Committee 1961). The plan was controversial among several members of the EEC, but the initiative eventually fell apart because of de Gaulle's rejection of the accession of the UK. At this point, the idea of a common security and defense policy seemed dormant with the NATO security framework being the status quo for European defense. In 1970, the European Political Cooperation (EPC) was instituted to give more life to European security cooperation (Juncos & Friis 2022: 281). It was, however not integrated into the supranational framework of the EEC but, as Giegerich (2020: 391) writes, an "entirely intergovernmental process, outside the treaties, steered by foreign ministers and managed by diplomats." Once more, external events opened a window of opportunity for Europe. The détente policy of German chancellor Willy Brand as well as the Yom Kippur War in 1973 enabled the European states to distinguish themselves in foreign policy. As Fröhlich (2020: 74) argues, Brand's Ostpolitik that culminated in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Helsinki and the Euro-Arab Dialogue pushed by French President Georges

Pompidou gave the EC its own profile as a global actor and enabled the EC to counterbalance the hegemonic power of the US. From this point on, the foreign secretaries of the EPC met four times a year to coordinate their approach to foreign policy and develop a common European point of view on international developments (Fröhlich 2020: 74 f.). In 1976, a report by Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans warned of a technological and capabilities gap emerging between Europe and the US and once more called for a common defense policy and a cooperative perspective on the manufacturing and procurement of armaments (Martins & Mawdsley 2021: 6). However, defense and security issues were still largely excluded from this cooperative process since Western Europe presented themselves as a civilian power and normative authority, which, in contrast to the US, used the means of diplomacy and economic instruments (Giegerich 2020: 391). Still, Martins & Mawdsley (2021: 6) argue that the Tindemans report represents a moment in which the vision of a shared defense policy was publicly performed for the first time. In the meantime, there was an increase in cooperation in other policy areas. The discontinuation of the gold standard and the end of the Bretton Woods System led to a franco-German initiative to create a European Monetary System as a counterweight to the dominance of the US Dollar (Fröhlich 2020: 75). Simultaneously, the members of the EC signed agreements with former colonies, deepening the Europeanization of foreign policy in the process. This led to the first major revision of the Treaty of Rome in the Single European Act of 1986, which codified the EPC and laid the groundwork for the major treaty revisions of the 1990s. Moreover, Title III of the Single European Act explicitly called for an outline and a subsequent realization of a coordinated European foreign policy (Art. 30, Abs. 1 Single European Act).

In 1989 the Berlin Wall broke down and with it the Iron Curtain that had been the focal point of European security policy. The end of the Cold War raised many questions regarding the security infrastructure of Europe (Serrando 2020: 18). NATO no longer seemed to be vital for the security interests in Europe and structural and political changes in the eastern neighborhood of the EC changed the security needs of Western Europe. With the US decreasing its involvement in Europe, the role of NATO in the European security architecture was questioned (Juncos & Friis 2022: 280). The End of History and the apparent triumph of liberal democracies seemed to pave the way for Europe to emerge out of the shadow of the US as a normative world power (Fröhlich 2020: 76). During an intergovernmental conference in the run-up to the European Council in Dublin in April 1990, France and Germany proposed measures to accelerate and deepen the European Integration. The idea was to follow through

on the internal dynamic triggered by the formation of the single market and complete the political union (Fröhlich 2020: 77). Among the proposed elements of France President François Mitterand and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was a common foreign and security policy as a key feature of the new EU (ibid.; Giegerich 2020: 391). This proposal divided the European states into proponents of NATO and advocates of European autonomy as well as defenders of national sovereignty and proponents of further integration. The fact that some states like France and Germany were positioning themselves on different sides of the lines of conflict, complicated the negotiations even further (ibid.: 392). Still, the Treaty of Maastricht proclaimed the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and called for the development of a common defense policy (Juncos & Friis 2022: 280). The treaty also put into place the institutional architecture of the EU, namely the three-pillar structure in which the CFSP was included in the second intergovernmental pillar under the control of the European Council (ibid.: 281). The architects of Maastricht designed the CFSP around the common values of the European states and tasked it with the security of the Member States and the protection of democracy, rule of law, and fundamental human rights (Kempin 2020: 977). However, as Giegerich (2020: 392) points out, the formulation of the Maastricht treaty regarding foreign policy, security, and defense areas was more wish-casting than solid policy because the language covered up the remaining differences and unresolved questions among the signatories. While the exact details of how the future European institutional cooperation on security and defense should work were still in question, progress was made in developing the relationship between the EU and NATO. In 1992, the Petersberg Declaration defined shared tasks and responsibilities in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations between NATO and the EU, which included humanitarian and rescue missions as well as crisis management (Giegerich 2020: 392; Juncos & Friis 2022: 281). Independent from the EU-NATO negotiations, France set itself a clear objective for security and defense. The French White Paper on Defence is the first official document to use the term *Strategic Autonomy*. As Mauro (2018: 6) points out, France was not the only state to reshape its strategic orientation, but the only one to use *Strategic Autonomy* to describe its ambition. In the French White Paper, *Strategic Autonomy* describes the ability to have the necessary information to make decisions quickly and independently, the capacity to control complex situations, and the freedom to move troops freely and in a timely fashion (ibid.: 8). Although, the concept was a specific French objective, the 1994 White Paper can be seen as the moment at which *Strategic Autonomy* entered the ideational horizon of the European discourse on security and defense.

The next step for European integration was to be taken with the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. The Treaty established the office of the High Representative for the CFSP to represent the EU's foreign policy to partners and move closer to answering Kissinger's famous question of who to call when speaking to the EU. The Treaty also codified the Petersberg Tasks although it quickly became clear that the EU would still need to rely on NATO capacities and capabilities to complete these tasks (Juncos & Friis 2022: 281; Kempin 2020: 979).

Despite all the efforts and pressures from prior external events, the integration of security and defense policies into a common institutionalized European framework was a slow process. In the 1990s, however, two developments were key to finalizing the process that was started in 1952 with the Pleven Plan. In Europe's East, Yugoslavia disintegrated in violent civil wars. Ethnic tensions flamed up with the redrawing of maps amplified by the power vacuum left by Josip Broz Tito, and a severe economic crisis. In Bosnia Herzegovina, Muslim Bosniaks clashed with Christians of Croatian descent, and Orthodox Serbs in a brutal war that led to a genocide (Greenberg & McGuinness 2000). Being compelled into action, Europe found itself unable to intervene militarily to stop the fighting and once more had to rely on US power through NATO (Juncos & Friis 2022: 281). Consequently, the US, not the EU, took the leading role in negotiating the Dayton Agreement to end the conflict (Giegerich 2020). The inability to take care of security risks in its own backyard amplified the need to increase shared military and security capabilities in the EU. The second development was the change of government in the UK. The EU-skeptical prime minister Margret Thatcher stepped down and was replaced by a government led by the Labour Party and Tony Blair. Both Blair and France's President Jacques Chirac were frustrated with the dominance of the US and worked towards greater autonomy of the EU in questions of security and defense (Giegerich 2020: 394; Kempin 2020: 979). The Franco-British consensus was sustained by the shared experience of cooperation on the battlefield in Bosnia, which helped to build mutual respect between the military leadership (Giegerich 2020: 394; Howorth 2004: 217; see also Juncos & Friis 2022: 281). Howorth (2004: 220) describes how the Ministry of Defense and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK began to forge a consensus with the Quai d'Orsay in France and the Auswärtiges Amt in Germany and worked to convince the office of Prime Minister Blair to cross what Howorth calls the "European Rubicon". In 1998, France and Britain held a bilateral summit in Saint-Malo to discuss the military crisis management capabilities of the EU (Kempin 2020: 979) and issued a forceful statement: "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces (Giegerich

2020: 394).” As Howorth (2004: 222) points out, the word “autonomy” let the genie out of the bottle despite being understood differently by the British and the French because it introduced a paradigm shift in the European strategic and security discourse. This newfound commitment to cooperation was immediately put to the test during the Kosovo War, which saw the major European states acting in concert and, most notably, represented the first German combat mission post World War II (Böller 2021: 109). With France and Britain pulling together towards more integration in security and defense policies and the German council presidency at the beginning of 1999, the conditions were ideal to realize the proclamation of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) within the CFSP in the Maastricht Treaty (Kempin 2020: 979).

The hour of birth of the ESDP was the European Council in Cologne in June 1999, in which the member states agreed „to strengthen the CFSP by the development of a common European policy on security and defence. This requires a capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military capabilities and appropriate decision-making bodies. Decisions to act would be taken within the framework of the CFSP according to appropriate procedures in order to reflect the specific nature of decisions in this field (European Council 1999: Annex 3, 2).“ To appease opponents of European security integration and differentiate the ESDP from both the US and NATO, the civilian dimension of the ESDP was emphasized to keep it in line with the idea of the EU as a normative or civilian power. Still, the focus of France, Germany, and the UK was on reshaping their armed forces and improving the military capabilities of the member states to gain the ability to deploy troops in the framework of the Petersberg Tasks. To this matter, the European Council in Helsinki adopted the Helsinki Headline Goals in December of 1999. In the Helsinki Headline Goals, the Member States pledged to make troops available to assemble a European Rapid Reaction Force by 2003, consisting of up to 60,000 troops (Giegerich 2020: 395). In addition, the Member States agreed to establish a Political and Security Committee (PSC), a European Union Military Committee (EUMC), and the European Union Military Staff (EUMS). These new committees as well as the ESDP were to be codified and weaved into the institutional framework in a future treaty revision in Nice (Juncos & Friis 2022: 281). The new millennium started hopefully despite the grim events of September 11th, 2001. For the first time in history, the mutual defense clause in the NATO Treaty was put into action and Member States offered assistance to the US invasion of Afghanistan. To better accommodate the intra-European cooperation in defense in the transatlantic partnership, the Berlin Plus arrangement was minted in 2002 to provide the EU

access to NATO infrastructure. The Berlin Plus arrangement formalized the relationship between the institutions and allowed a better exchange of intelligence as well as the usage of NATO Headquarters for the planning and monitoring of EU missions (Juncos & Friis 2022: 281; Serrando 2020: 22). Still, the EU's relationship towards NATO remained a point of contention. As Giegerich (2020: 400) writes, the underlying issue of the CFSP was and still is, whether and to what degree the EU should be an autonomous international actor or act within the transatlantic framework and NATO. The precarious nature of this issue was highlighted by the “three Ds” put forward by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Press Conference during a NATO summit in December 1998 in which she cautioned the EU that the integration of security and defense matters should not lead to a diminution of NATO, discrimination against NATO or duplication of NATO (Albright 1998; Howorth 2004: 222).

With the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the consensus between the drivers of European defense integration was upended (Fröhlich 2020: 79; Giegerich 2020: 400). Before the war in Iraq, France and the UK tried to move along the European security and defense integration without explicating the details of a future relationship with NATO, rather choosing to uphold a constructive ambiguity between Europeanism and Atlanticism. The controversial US invasion of Iraq made this delicate dance impossible, forcing France, Germany, and the UK to choose sides (Howorth 2004: 228). While the UK joined the coalition of the willing, both France and Germany voted any assistance or participation down. At the same time, despite the pledge and the timetable of the Helsinki Headline Goals, there were still major deficiencies in 2003, and the Treaty of Nice, which was meant to be the final step in the integration of the ESDP as part of the CFSP failed to be ratified. Once more the divergent positions on security and defense within Europe became obvious. As Fröhlich (2020: 78 f.) writes, both France and the UK were reluctant to transfer sovereignty in the security and defense area to the EU. Both saw foreign and security policies as a “*domaine réservé*” of the state and sought to preserve their ability to act without interference from the EU especially in the areas of their former colonies. However, while the UK was skeptical of Europeanization in security and defense in general and preferred to act within the transatlantic alliance, France was wary of US influence in European security questions and wanted to design a European counterweight to the dominant US position. One point of contention, even after the agreement in principle of Saint Malo was the question of European military headquarters. While France saw European headquarters as a vital capability, the UK rejected every notion of the word headquarters in fear of duplications with NATO infrastructure (Serrando 2020: 22). As a result, there were only few windows of

opportunity in which the most influential Member States shared a vision on European security and defense and were willing to pursue integration.

In the years after the Amsterdam Treaty and the European Council in Cologne, the European States continually worked to improve their military readiness. In 2003, the European Council answered calls for a European Security Strategy that were voiced after the attacks of September 11, 2001, had exposed a different kind of threat to the security of Europe and the transatlantic alliance. The threat environment no longer seemed to be dominated by the potential of a large-scale conventional war or a civil war with a set group of militarily organized actors but by the more elusive threat of small terrorist cells and radical insurgents. In response, the targeted number of deployable troops was adjusted in 2004 and the tasks included in the ESDP were expanded to include the training and assistance of third-state military forces in fighting terrorism (Kempin 2020: 980). To account for the capability gap identified in 2003, the EU set the European Capability Plan and the Capability Development Mechanism in motion to analyze the status quo and systematically increase capabilities (ibid.). To support Member States in expanding their military capabilities, the European Defense Agency (EDA) was set up in 2004.

In the run-up to Lisbon, the EU fielded 23 missions and operations with different characteristics and objectives, and in different parts of the world. However, as Kempin (2020) points out, these missions still heavily relied on NATO infrastructure, were often direct successors of former NATO mandates, or were largely carried by both the interest and the capabilities of a single Member State. The failure of the Constitutional Treaty of Nice put pressure on the Member States to circumvent a more severe crisis for the EU. When multiple national parliaments declined to ratify the treaty, it showed a degree of alienation from the supranational European project and put both the resolve of the EU as well as its ability to act in unison and reform itself into doubt (Church and Phinnemore 2019: 37). Multiple Council presidencies worked towards a second round of treaty negotiations, which finally gained traction with French President Nicolas Sarkozy's suggestion of a "mini-traité (ibid.: 38)." The Portuguese Council presidency made negotiations towards an amending treaty a key objective and managed to finalize a document that preserved the essential content of the Treaty of Nice, while stripping it of its constitutional language (ibid.: 39). In doing that, the Treaty of Lisbon created the institutional framework for the CFSP and the renamed Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) that still governs the external actions of the EU (Juncos & Friis 2022: 282).

3.2 The Treaty of Lisbon and the Institutional Framework of the CFSP and the CSDP

Stopping just shy of being a constitutional treaty, the Treaty of Lisbon reformed the institutional framework of the EU. Renaming the CSDP was not simply a semantic exercise but came with significant changes to the way the policy worked. Most importantly, the three-pillar structure introduced in the Maastricht Treaty was abolished signaling a further “Brusselization” of the CFSP and the CSDP (Juncos & Friis 2022: 282f.). Part of this “Brusselization” was the introduction of a permanent president of the European Council to “ensure the external representation of the union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy” and work towards reaching consensus or building majorities among the member states (Giegerich 2020: 399; Juncos & Friis 2022: 282). Furthermore, the High Representative for the CFSP³, who in personal union holds the office of Vice-President of the Commission, is awarded new competencies with the right to initiate policies and suggest the application of the EU’s foreign policy instruments (Kempin 2020: 984). To further support the HR for the CFSP, the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Art. 27 TEU) was introduced to act as the EU’s diplomatic corps to improve the intelligence necessary to conduct foreign policy, increase the visibility of the EU abroad, and give the EU more diplomatic sway as a geopolitical actor (Juncos & Friis 2022: 282).

Besides institutional changes and additions, the Treaty of Lisbon also updated the Petersberg Tasks that were codified in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. In addition to humanitarian missions and crisis management operations, the support of military forces outside of the EU, missions to fight terrorism, and disarmament measures were added to the tasks of the CFSP and CSDP (Giegerich 2020:399; Kempin 2020: 984). To increase and simplify cooperation among Member States on defense and security issues, the Treaty of Lisbon opened the door for intergovernmental defense cooperation between two or more member states. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) makes it easier for member states to cooperate in the heavily regulated area of defense industry. Most notably, the Treaty of Lisbon included a clause that calls on all Member States to provide aid in case of an armed attack on another Member State (Giegerich 2020: 399 f.).

³ In official EU documents the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy is often referred to as HR/VP because of his role as Vice President of the Commission. For clarity and brevity, this thesis will refer to the office as HR for the CFSP

The EU's foreign policy stretches beyond the confines of the CFSP and CSDP and is subject to the segmentation of different policy areas which included trade, development, and migration policy (Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 276). With Art. 3 (5) of the revised TEU, the Lords of the Contracts, declare all relevant areas for foreign policy and external action as the domain of the EU. However, the Treaty differentiates between foreign policies that are mainly economic in nature and the instruments of the CFSP and CSDP, which gives the European foreign policy a two-column structure. This becomes visible when looking at the two main contracts that codify how the EU is governed: The Treaty of the European Union (TEU) and the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Being constituted supranationally, the foreign trade and economic relations policy is settled in the TFEU (Bieber et al. 2021: 657). The differences between the two columns of the EU's foreign policy are explicated in Art. 24 (TEU), which gives the Commission and the Parliament a diminished role in the CFSP and CSDP, requires decisions by a unanimous vote, and puts the CFSP and CSDP outside of the jurisdiction of the ECJ. Accordingly, the instruments of the CFSP and CSDP - in contrast to the EU's trade policy and external economic relations - are subject to largely intergovernmental processes. Title V of the TEU is concerned with the external actions and security and defense policies of the EU. The subsummation of the CSDP under the CFSP is codified in Art. 42 TEU. The Treaty emphasizes the adherence to the UN Charta as well as the pledges made by Member States with NATO membership and calls on Member States to gradually increase their military defense capabilities (Art 42 (1-3) TEU).

As formulated in the Maastricht Treaty, the guiding principles of all external actions by the EU build on the Charta of the UN and include a pledge to the pursuit of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights (Art. 21 (1) & (2) TEU). The Treaty of Lisbon builds on this pledge and formally proclaims the EU as having a legal personality that is subject to international law (Bieber et al. 2021: 659). However, as Bieber et al. (2021: 659) and Epiney (2012) write, the EU has a difficult and diffuse relationship with international law. In general, only states are subject to the rights and obligations under international law, which does not include international organizations. According to Epiney (2012: 1), mixed treaties in which both member states and the overarching international institution have legal authority are especially problematic. This predicament, however, is necessary for the understanding of the EU as an international actor. While the TFEU does codify the adherence of the EU institutions and its Member States to international law in Art 216 (2), the TEU does not explicate the legal ties between EU law and international law (Bieber et al. 2021: 661; Epiney 2012: 26 f.). In the

view of Epiney (2012: 27), the legal bond between the EU and international law is based on the act of the EU identifying itself as a subject of international law. Consequently, it is mandatory for the EU as a subject of international law to adhere to its rules to be granted the corresponding rights and duties. Whether this binding effect can actually be derived from the TEU can be questioned. Nonetheless, both judicial rulings and the legal literature see international law as part of EU law and the EU as legally bound to the rules of international law (ibid.: 27, 28).

Art. 24 TEU explicates the institutional processes behind the CFSP and the CSDP and spells out the unusual nature of this branch of EU politics. Point 2 and 3 of Art. 24 base the CFSP on the mutual political solidarity of the Member States which is subsequently supposed to lead to a growing convergence of Member States' external actions. The CFSP is thus built on loyalty and reciprocal solidarity among the Member States, which adumbrates a balancing act between solidarity to the Union and the independent power to shape external actions that lie in the sovereign authority of each state (Bieber et al. 2021: 690). Because of the long-held tradition of sovereignty in foreign policy and international relations among the Member States, the TEU gives a special status to the CFSP. It delegates the main authority to the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council and requires a unanimous vote on all issues regarding foreign policy and security:

“Where the international situation requires operational action by the Union, the Council shall adopt the necessary decisions. They shall lay down their objectives, scope, the means to be made available to the Union, if necessary, their duration, and the conditions for their implementation (Art. 28 (1) TEU).”

Keukeleire and Raube (2020: 278 f.), thus, talk about vertical and horizontal differences in the EU's CFSP and CSDP because of the possibility of diverging interests between Member States (vertical differences) and between EU institutions (horizontal differences). The role of the two Council bodies and the function of the HR for the CFSP are described further in Art. 26 and Art. 27 TEU. As mentioned earlier, the Treaty of Lisbon also moved away from a rotating Council presidency to a permanent Council president with a fixed term and term limits. The authority of the Council presidency is described in Art. 15 (6) TEU, which highlights the shared task of the president and the HR for the CFSP in representing the EU in matters of the CFSP. One of the tasks of the HR for the CFSP and the president of the European Council is supporting the coherence and cooperation of the CFSP and CSDP by

bridging the vertical and horizontal differences and presenting a unified image of the EU to the outside (Art. 21 (3) TEU). While unanimity in the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council is required in principle, Art. 31 TEU carves out some additional rules and exceptions to give the CFSP and the CSDP more flexibility and allow it to act more effectively. It allows for majority voting in the Foreign Affairs Council when it adopts a decision by the European Council, wants to adopt a decision defining an EU action or position put forward by the European Council or the HR for the CFSP, or wants to adopt a decision implementing a decision defining an EU action or position (Art. 31 (2) TEU). More importantly, the Treaty carves out the possibility for Member States to abstain from a vote:

According to Wessels (2021: 17), these process rules in the TEU document the dilemma of the CFSP because, on the one hand, Member States want to improve the Council's ability to work and reach decisions, while they are, on the other hand, unwilling to cease authority in areas deemed vital for national sovereignty and thus, cling to their right to veto decisions. While the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council with their respective President or Head of Council are the most important bodies in the decision-making process of the CFSP and CSDP, other institutions assist in this process. In the years before and after Lisbon, both the civil and the military aspects of the CFSP were strengthened by the establishment of advisory and planning committees that work to give the Council institutions the necessary expertise to decide on the type, duration, and condition of a given external action. Figure 1 shows how the different committees and institutions work together on the EU's foreign policy:

Figure 1: Organogram of the EU's CFSP (Sweeney & Winn 2018)

The most important additions of the Treaty of Lisbon are first, the newly created opportunity for intergovernmental cooperation on defense and security issues and two, the duty to provide assistance to another Member State that is subject to an armed attack on its soil. The rules guiding the enabled increased cooperation are laid out in Art. 20 TEU and Art. 326 to 334 TFEU. Member States who want to engage in increased cooperation on issues regarding the CFSP or CSDP need to file an application with the Commission and need subsequent approval from the European Council (Art 229 (2) TFEU). This new opportunity to cooperate can also be seen as a push for more integration in the realm of defense procurement since there are explicit exceptions in the EU law governing production and trade for military goods (Bieber et al. 2021: 658). Indeed, the Article laid the groundwork for PESCO established in Council Decision 2017/2315 of December 11, 2017, to create joint defense projects among Member States (ibid.: 692). Bieber et al. (2021: 691) argue that this legislation towards collaboration on defense and military projects is one of the first steps towards an EDU. Inspired by the mutual defense clause, which is the bedrock of the NATO Treaty, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced a solidarity clause explicated in Art. 42 (7) TEU and Art. 222 TFEU:

“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 (Art.42 (7) TEU).”

As the treaty text shows, the obligation to assist a fellow Member State does not necessitate military aid but rather builds on the leitmotifs of loyalty and solidarity of the Member States to lend the appropriate type and level of assistance. The solidarity clause can be evoked after a joint proposal by the Commission and the HR for the CFSP and needs approval of the European Council (Art. 222 (3) TFEU). In the aftermath of the terror attacks in Paris on November 13th, 2015, perpetrated by the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the solidarity clause was invoked for the first time. Bieber et al. (2021: 692) point out, however, that there is no legal conclusion on whether the terror attacks constitute an attack by a third state according to the standards of international law.

The Treaty of Lisbon set the institutional framework of the CFSP and the CSDP into place. While it is falling short of ambitions aimed at creating a true Defense Union as first discussed in the Pleven and Fouchet Plans, the treaty does lay the groundwork for the first steps towards deeper integration in security and defense politics. By proclaiming itself a legal personality

and a subject to international law, the EU asserted its role as a foreign policy actor on the international stage. In a corresponding move, the Treaty of Lisbon strengthened the role of the HR for the CFSP and reformed the office of Council President to increase the representation of the EU as a fully capable international actor. Still, the Treaty of Lisbon could not overcome the conflicts concerning Member States' sovereignty in matters of foreign policy and defense, thereby putting the capability and efficiency of the EU as a foreign policy actor into question. One major shortcoming of the Treaty of Lisbon is the continuing absence of an EU committee or council that brings together Member States' defense ministers on a regular basis. The EU defense ministers come together only when defense matters are on the agenda for the Foreign Affairs Council and as board members of the EDA. Calls for a European Defense Council or a Security Council shaped after the US model remain unanswered (Solana et al. 2016: 22). This can be seen as an example of the reluctance of member states to seize decision-making power or allow EU influence in matters of security and defense. The tiptoeing around a shared definition of *Strategic Autonomy* and the debates around this concept can be seen as a direct consequence of the compromise the Treaty of Lisbon tried to strike by integrating the foreign and defense policies while leaving decision-making power with the states.

3.3 The CFSP since the Treaty of Lisbon and the emerging debate on Strategic Autonomy

Since the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, two developments can be identified. First, while the Treaty of Lisbon formally integrated the policy-making process of the CFSP and CSDP with strong intergovernmental characteristics, scholars still see an increasing Brusselization since the Treaty of Lisbon marked by the creation of new institutions and policy mechanisms (Juncos & Friis 2022: 285). Second, defense budgets around Europe decreased steadily at the same time. The end of the Cold War and a decade of peace in Europe made defense spending in times of a financial crisis seem like an unnecessary expenditure (ibid.: 283). Since 2005, the defense budgets of Member States have decreased on average by 9% while spending on research and development has decreased by 30% (Kempin 2020: 976; see also Solana et al. 2016: 16f.). Experts lament the lack of spending on troops or equipment which results in capability gaps regarding surveillance and reconnaissance as well as the refueling of aircraft midflight and a decreasing number of operational troops. In 2016 only 20% of a total of 1.5 million troops in the EU were equipped and ready to be deployable abroad (Juncos & Friis 2022: 283). Correlating with this trend is a decline in troops deployed overall. The proactive

mood concerning international missions gradually declined with fewer operations being commenced and fewer troops being deployed (Kempin 2020: 976). While in 2003 70,000 European troops were deployed in crisis management operations, the number declined to 50,000 in 2010 and to 35,000 by 2018. As Giegerich (2020: 405) points out further, most of the deployed troops were and are part of European contingents within NATO or UN missions and not part of a mission in the framework of the CFSP. Although the Treaty of Lisbon represented a step towards a more integrated foreign and security policy and included pledges by the Member States to commit more resources towards common security and defense and coordinate with other member states (Art.42 (3) TEU), more EU missions were agreed upon before the adoption of the treaty than afterward (Kempin 2020: 983). While the EU adjusted the Helsinki Headline-Goal, established joint EU Battlegroups, and created an institutional infrastructure with the EDA and the EEAS, it either failed to meet set goals or neglected to use established capabilities (Kempin 2020: 983; Serrando 2020: 34; Solana et al. 2016:7). The same can be said about the tools enabling deeper cooperation among the Member States that were built into the Treaty of Lisbon (Wessels 2021: 19). Fröhlich (2020: 78) thus writes about a discrepancy between the pledge towards shared actions and supranational practices and the autonomy of member states regarding control over the decision-making process in questions of foreign policy and defense. He observes that no other policy field is still as connected to the idea of the sovereignty of nation-states as security and defense policy (ibid.).

2014 can be seen as a turning point in the EU's CFSP. Already in the years leading up to the Crimea crisis, the Arab Spring and the civil war in Syria and Libya had underlined the volatile security status quo in the direct neighborhood of the EU and was framed as an emerging "arc of instability" by the EEAS (Juncos & Friis 2022: 290f.). Russia's annexation of Crimea and the inability of the EU to act and respond in unison showcased that borders can be threatened and changed with military power even on the European continent and that a higher level of cooperation would be needed to meet further aggressions (Giegerich 2020: 402 f.). The CFSP was put back into the spotlight already during the European Council in 2013. The EU once again formulated pledges towards more efficiency, higher capabilities, and generally more funding for the defense sector but also started the process of formulating a security and defense strategy for the EU (Solana et al. 2016: 9f.). The first step on the path towards a true White Book was the Global Strategy presented by the HR for the CFSP, Federica Mogherini, in 2016 together with an Implementation Plan (Kempin 2020: 976; EEAS 2016). Besides the volatile situation in the MENA region and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, the EU

faced several other crises around the time of the publication of the Global Strategy that impacted the thinking in Brussels and the capitals of the Member States. First, in June 2016 a slim majority in the UK voted for Brexit, altering the balance of power in the EU while at the same time not only removing significant military capabilities from potential CFSP operations but also part of the nuclear deterrence of the EU (Juncos & Friis 2022: 291). While Brexit did mean the loss of important defense resources, it also entailed a chance for progress and reform regarding the CFSP. The UK was seen by many in the EU as an obstacle on the way towards closer integration because it had blocked several reform proposals of the CFSP as well as increased funding for the EDA and generally questioned the need for the CFSP and CSDP for defense next to the existing structures of NATO (Kempin 2020: 988). Accordingly, the exit of the UK was seen as a window of opportunity to revisit CFSP reform aspirations (ibid.; Juncos & Friis 2022: 291). Second, around Europe, right-wing populist parties increasingly saw electoral success and openly questioned the value of European solidarity and their countries' membership in the EU. The Eurozone crisis caused doubt in the common currency and increasing migration movements cast questions on the freedom of movement within the EU. To counter the success of EU-sceptic, right-wing populists, the EU needed to show the benefits of joint political solutions and highlight joint measures for the security and defense of the European territory (Kempin 2020: 987). Third, the election of Donald Trump as President of the US sent a wave of uncertainty over the EU capitals. Trump openly criticized the transatlantic alliance in general as well as specific NATO member states and questioned the mutual defense clause of the NATO Treaty. Generally, Trump's rhetoric and behavior led to an estrangement between the US and the EU and strained the relationship between the EU and its most important defense partner. Even before Trump, there were questions regarding the US' commitment towards Europe due to the "pivot to Asia" initiated by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama who planned to engage more closely with Asian and Indo-Pacific countries (Witney 2019: 2).

The Global Strategy represents a paradigm shift for the EU according to some observers (see Bendiek 2017; Juncos 2017; Wagner & Anholt 2016). Most notably the introduction of the Global Strategy reads differently compared to the European Security Strategy of 2003. While the Security Strategy proclaimed that "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history (Council of the European Union 2003: 3)," the Global Strategy sets a decidedly different tone:

“We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned (EEAS 2016: 7).”

While the civilian dimension of the EU and its belief in soft power instruments is still part of the Global Strategy, the document acknowledges that “in this fragile world, soft power is not enough (ibid.: 44).” Thus, resilience, a word that is mentioned 40 times in the document, is seen as the new leitmotiv of the Global Strategy (Wagner & Anholt 2016: 414). The term is also used in the subsequent Implementation Plan and is used to refer to the EU working towards securing its citizens and territory, reacting to crises and conflict at its borders, and building up capacities in the neighborhood of the EU (Bendiek 2017: 15). Cross (2016: 403, 408) identifies a paradigm shift towards a principled pragmatism in this new focus on resilience to account for the EU’s acknowledgement of the shortfalls of soft power while still holding on to the idea that the EU can act as a global force for good and as an example for democracy, peace, and prosperity. At the same time, the emphasize on resilience can also be seen as a building block for the development of a Security and Defense Union, which recalls the idea of the EDU and was advocated for in Germany’s 2016 White Book on security policy and the future of the German army (Bendiek 2017: 15). While a true Security and Defense Union still remains a vision for the future, steps have been taken into the direction of actualizing this vision.

The emerging questions regarding the reliability of the US as a partner accelerated the internal review of the CFSP and CSDP. Led by French President Emmanuel Macron the terms *Strategic Autonomy* and European Sovereignty began to populate the discourse around European defense once again (Giegerich 2020: 411; Juncos & Friis 2022: 291). As mentioned earlier, *Strategic Autonomy* has a history in French strategic discourse and – at least in part – found its way into the Saint-Malo Declaration (Mauro 2018). Twenty years later, *Strategic Autonomy* was proclaimed as an objective for the EU in the Global Strategy. However, the concept and its consequences were defined neither in the Global Strategy nor in the subsequent Implementation Plan (Varga 2017: 5). A year later, French President Macron used the term European Sovereignty in a speech in Sorbonne on the future of the EU and even the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker used the term in his State of the Union (Szewczyk 2021: 1). Besides politicians the term became a buzzword in European and Foreign Policy Think Tanks to the point that some advocates of the concept feared that the inflationary use of the concept has diluted its meaning (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 1; Mauro 2018:

3, 16; Retter et al. 2021: iii). *Strategic Autonomy* or Strategic Sovereignty, thus, not only became part of the debate on European security and defense but also a key narrative for deeper integration of the EU (von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 3). While Germany did not endorse the term, it joined France in the pursuit of a reform agenda of the CFSP (Giegerich 2020: 411). In 2016, France and Germany put forward a joint initiative for a renewal of the CFSP and recommitted themselves to the goal of increased cooperation and the establishment of a joint EU headquarters.

Still, the question of which forum – the EU or NATO - is best to address the security and defense of Europe, or how a more effective, operational, and strategically used CFSP can coexist besides or within NATO remains unresolved (Howorth 2017: 3). As Giegerich (2020: 411) writes:

“European cooperation in foreign policy has gone beyond the framework of sovereign state diplomacy, but still remains far short of an integrated single policy, with integrated diplomatic, financial, and military instruments.”

While small steps towards more cooperation and effectiveness are made continuously, even the drivers of integration in foreign policy and defense remain reluctant to give up sovereignty in this *domaine réservé* (Fröhlich 2020: 78 f.). Accordingly, Member States uphold national interests over potential or supposed EU interests or responsibilities, which can result in “disparate loyalties and contradictory interests” and impede joint decision-making on foreign policy and security (Lippert et al. 2019: 9; see also Anghel et al. 2020: 3). Critics question the viability of this form of nationalism in security and defense, pointing to the lack of state-of-the-art equipment and crucial missing technologies. They argue that a Europeanized approach to defense procurement and capability development would not only be more cost-effective but also the only way to make up lost ground especially since Brexit has removed valuable military and intelligence capabilities from the EU arsenal (Solana et al. 2016: 17 f.; Varga 2017: 13; von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 6). At the same time, it is still unclear how the EU will work together with the UK now that a hard Brexit has come into fruition. The UK consciously decided to leave cooperation in PESCO and the CFSP in general out of the final agreement, leaving any future relationship on security and defense still to be decided. There’s debate about whether the UK could participate in the European Defense Fund (EDF) or be awarded a seat in a future European security council. However, any form of cooperation in the future needs to recognize the fact that participation in any decision-making process would be

connected to adherence to the rules and decisions of the Brussels' institutions (Lippert et al. 2019: 13 f.; von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 5 f.).

The analysis of this Master's thesis is embedded in this context. Starting at the inflection point that was the Global Strategy, this thesis seeks to analyze the external actions decided on by the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council to evaluate whether the debates and conflicts explained in this chapter impacted foreign policy making on an EU level. In the center of the analysis is the concept of *Strategic Autonomy*, which is now an official goal of the CFSP and CSDP. This thesis will not only discuss how *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in the Conclusions of the CFSP and the CSDP but also look at the actors involved in the debate on *Strategic Autonomy* and the future of the CFSP from the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*. The CFSP and the CSDP have come a long way and have become more Europeanized since the first attempts to integrate foreign, defense, and security policy (Fiott & Lindstrom 2021: 4). Today, the EU faces foreign policy and security challenges last seen in the 90s during the civil wars in former Yugoslavia. Having transformed the CFSP and CSDP from a tool to intervene autonomously on the battlefield to an instrument for crisis management and anti-terror operations, the EU needs to shift gears towards creating a credible military force that is able to guarantee the security of the EU and its neighborhood against conventional wars of aggression (Kaim & Kempin 2022: 2f.; Giegerich 2020: 399; von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 2 ff.). How a credible and effective European deterrence can be created in the presence of sovereign nation-states and with respect to existing NATO structures is the key question for the CFSP and CSDP (Varga 2017: 7). In the past, external crisis events enabled actions towards a more Europeanized approach to foreign policy and defense. As outlined in this chapter, the EU was and still is faced with multiple crises and external pressures. In debates, these crises and pressures are increasingly characterized as an existential threat to the EU that can only be faced by an EU that takes on a more independent role, speaks with one voice in foreign policy matters, and acts unified (Giegerich 2020: 403). As Laffan (2022: 445) writes:

“The debate on strategic autonomy is a response to these pressures. The future of the EU will be greatly influenced by its ability to act in concert, to be strategic, to influence its neighbourhood, and to shape the pattern and substance of global governance—in brief, by Europe's ability to find its role and place in the world of twenty-first-century global politics.”

4. Theoretical Background

The next part of the thesis shall discuss the theoretical background of the EU as a foreign policy actor and the concept of *Strategic Autonomy*. Because of the history of the EU as a foreign policy actor and the complex institutional framework created behind its foreign policy actions, the EU's foreign policy and its role as an actor in international relations have been subject to debate. The debate on the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* is, thus, part of a larger discourse on the nature and conceptualization of the EU as a foreign policy actor and its external actions. To understand the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU's foreign policy, it is important to set it into the framework of the larger debates around the EU as an actor in international relations. These debates will play an important role in analyzing the EU's conflictual position on *Strategic Autonomy*. After introducing some of the most important ideas and debates on the EU's foreign policy, the chapter will follow by discussing *Strategic Autonomy* in differentiation from the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty will be both discussed as a general concept and as it pertains to the EU before turning back to the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* and how it is defined. The attempts to conceptualize Strategic Autonomy will provide the basis of the category system that will be applied to the research material in the process of the Qualitative Content Analysis. Key elements will later be applied to the research results to showcase how Strategic Autonomy manifests itself in the EU's foreign policy. Finally, this chapter is examining the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism* as an analytical lens for the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* and the CFSP.

4.1 The EU as a global actor in international relations

The previous chapter outlined how the CFSP and CSDP came into existence and how they were subsequently codified in the Treaty of Lisbon. It is this complicated legal framework that makes the EU's status as an actor in international relations and its foreign policy subject to academic debate. One question being raised about the EU's foreign policy is whether it is even possible to speak of an independent European foreign policy and therefore of the EU as an independent actor on the international stage. Since any discussion of the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU's CFSP is meaningless without accepting the premise of the EU as an independent actor with its own foreign policy, this paper will neglect this debate and focus rather on the question of how its foreign policy and actorness in international relations is constituted. Following Hill (2003: 3) foreign policy can be defined as “the sum of official

external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations.” As Pacheco Pardo (2012: 2) clarifies, the term “official external relations” indicates that there is legal recognition of an actors right to conduct external actions and maintain relations with other recognized actors on the global stage. Following this definition, the EU can be seen as an independent actor, in part because, as discussed in the previous chapter, the EU declared itself an international actor by proclaiming its adherence to the UN Charta (Bieber et al. 2021: 659). In addition, with the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, Member States pledge to support a coherent foreign policy and act in solidarity (Art. 24 TEU). However, this does not mean that the EU’s actorness is not imperfect. Hill himself points out that the EU as a foreign policy actor contains a “full measure of difference” due to the horizontal and vertical differences between Member States and the EU and between EU institutions (Hill 1998: 36 in Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 278). Still, these differences are no arguments against actorness because as Kelemen & McNamara (2022: 964) write, “all political systems are dynamic, incomplete works-in-progress and subject to ongoing political development.” This is echoed by Tereszkievicz (2019: 97) who states that “the EU is still a political system under construction with evolving internal institutions and practices.” The debate on the character of the EU’s foreign policy and the decision-making in this area can be separated into two strains of thought: The normative institutionalist perspective emphasizing the role of supranational institutions and the impact certain standards and norms established by these institutions have on the behavior of the community’s members (Thomas 2009: 343), and the realist perspective which highlights the prevalence and dominance of national interests and frames negotiations as zero-sum games with cost-benefit calculations.

From the realist perspective international regimes like the EU are only effective as long as they are seen as an extension of or a benefit to the national interests of its members. Accordingly, the character and the debate within international regimes is shaped by the distribution of power among its members (Rieker & Riddervold 2022: 462; Cini 2022:68 f.). While not disregarding the existence of interests, scholars of the normative institutionalist school rather follow constructivist ideas and view them as changeable and open to the influence of norms and values. The idea is that actors keep acting rational, but that their ideas and interests are shaped by the membership in an institutional arrangement and the discourse with other actors. As one of the preeminent constructivists in international relations Alexander Wendt writes: “Actors acquire identities – relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self – by participating in [...] collective meanings (Wendt 1992 in

Williams et al. 2006: 356).” The identity of national actors as well as their interests and ideas are therefore constructed by or a reflection of their membership in the institutional setting that is the EU. Hence, Europeanization in foreign policy was seen as transforming the construction of national foreign policies by institutionalizing a set of norms that became the guideposts of European foreign policy making (Tonra 2018 in Müller et al. 2021: 522).

On the one hand, the EU established normative and policy commitments like the adherence to the UN Charter, which set standards for appropriate actions and on the other, the EU developed what Thomas (2009: 344) calls meta norms like “joint action as an intrinsic value, [...] support for the functionality and credibility of the EU as a global actor; and consistency and coherence in EU policy-making across time and issue-areas.” This normative institutionalization gave coherence to the foreign policy and a shared sense of purpose that rallied support around the CFSP, which Schimmelfennig (2001) explains with the phenomenon of normative or rhetorical entrapment. From this perspective, the “frequent and intensive consultation between Member States has weakened egoistic identities and accustomed national policymakers to seeking out the views of their EU counterparts before determining a national position on a particular issue (Thomas 2009: 342).” In addition, through the process of deliberation, member states can learn from each other and adjust their policy preferences (Goldstein & Keohane 1993). The result is a convergence of policy preferences among the Member States. Even when there are divergent policy preferences, the commitment of Member States to coherence and deliberation will help to bridge those differences and reach consensus (Thomas 2009: 344 f.). Some argue that the “full measure of difference” in the constitution of the EU’s actorness in international relations is no shortcoming to be overcome but rather an important feature characterizing the EU as a global actor. The argument is that to account for the inherent differences, the EU developed a specific post-Westphalian system of diplomacy (Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 277). Advocates for the EU as an international actor, thus, talk of the *sui generis* character of the EU’s foreign policy (Bendiek 2017: 9; Mittag 2020: 37).

The characterization of the EU as a *sui generis* actor in international relations stretches beyond the institutional constitution of the EU’s foreign policy to its means and ends. This is based on the assumption that an actor has or constructs a certain role conception in foreign policy. A role conception can be defined as set of norms that guide the orientation of and behavior in foreign policy. It therefore acts as a “road map” that supports the understanding of political situations of decision-makers and guides them towards actions (Goldstein &

Keohane 1993: 3). In a seminal article of normative institutionalist thinking, Ian Manners (2002) argues that the EU represents a normative power that contrasts with the established regular actors in international relations:

“The notion of a normative power Europe is located in a discussion of the ‘power over opinion’, *idée force*, or ‘ideological power’, and the desire to move beyond the debate over state-like features through an understanding of the EU’s international identity (Manners 2002: 239).”

Central to Manner’s argument is that the constitution of the EU itself is differentiating it from other actors and gives it normative power. The peaceful treaty-based surmounting of Westphalian conventions towards a legal entity that is imprinted by the principles of democracy, rule of law, and human rights gives the EU a normative character it can broadcast to the outside. This is important because the EU diffuses these norms by redefining what is considered normal (Forsberg 2011: 1190). By pooling sovereignty and creating a treaty that codifies adherence to the principles of democracy, rule of law, and human rights the EU exemplifies that an escape from the logic of zero-sum power politics is possible (Manners 2002: 253; Manners 2006: 183). In his 2002 article, Manners uses the EU’s advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty as an example for the EU’s diffusion of normative power using the six factors contagion, informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, transference, overt diffusion and cultural filters (Manners 2002: 244 ff.). While Manners warned in an article from 2006 that increasing militarization of the EU risks undermining the normative power potential, he acknowledged in a joint article with Thomas Diez that normative power doesn’t necessarily has to be mutually exclusive to military or economic power. Reflecting on the discourse about normative power Europe, Manners & Diez (2007: 183) observe that Europe’s identity as a normative power is on the one hand constructed to contrast an Other (e.g. the USA) as a better self and on the other hand on the recognition of the Other within. Here, Manners & Diez (2007: 185) take the idea of the EU as an unfinished project with a full measure of difference and turn it into an argument for a normative power Europe that is more humble and has to recognize its differences and diversity as well as its violent past. Negotiating a shared role conception is thus more difficult for the EU than for a nation state:

“It is the fluid, complex, multiple and relational aspects of the self-other contestations which define the EU as a normative power, rather than the other way round (Manners & Diez 2007: 186).”

In other words, having inherent differences within together with the goal of deeper integration and the EU's self-binding to international law leads to the EU having a character of reflexivity that is a feature of its normative power. The notion of the EU as a normative power is criticized by some who argue that the EU cannot be qualified a normative power because it uses both economic and military means to promote European norms and acts to influence others to promote its own security (Pacheco Pardo 2012: 8; Wood 2009: 116). Pacheco Pardo (2012: 6 f.) differentiates between normal powers, which are characterized by prioritizing their own security by influencing others, and normative powers, which "seek objectives that go beyond self-interested security maximization, and which do not use military power." From this perspective the EU is a normal power because it is very concerned with stability in its direct neighborhood to protect its own security. This sentiment is echoed by Wood (2009: 118 ff.) who points out that the EU acts like a normal power to secure its energy supply which the EU sources from states that show deteriorating levels of democracy, political rights, and civil liberties. While they acknowledge the EU's pragmatism in certain issues like critical energy supply, some academics believe the idea of the EU as a normative power to be valid, too. Mai'a K. Davis Cross (2011: 691), therefore, calls the EU a smart power which is a concept often utilized by US politicians and describes the effective combination of hard and soft power instruments. For some in the academic discourse, terminology like normative power, normal power, or smart power are state centric concepts that do not apply to a construct like the EU:

"The EU is nothing like a state, nor is it likely to become one. The Union has no effective monopoly over the legitimate means of coercion. It has no clearly defined centre of authority. Its territory is not fixed. Its geographical, administrative, economic and cultural borders diverge (Zielonka 2008: 473)."

The EU should therefore rather be seen as an empire, which Münkler (2014: 16 ff.) describes a non-state entity with semi-permeable borders, that requires certain conditions for membership, works through constructs of power and influence with clear dependencies, and is committed to the imperial logic of expansion from the center to the periphery. However, there is debate on the consequences of the EU as an empire. While Beck (2005: 6) sees the promise of a cosmopolitan empire that overcomes the inherent nationalistic ontology of politics and society in Europe, Münkler (2014: 253 f.) and Zielonka (2008: 484) argue that the EU needs to apply the logic of empire to stabilize its neighborhood and ensure the security of its borders and safeguard its economic success.

Closely associated with the debate on the EU as a foreign policy actor is the question of whether the EU meets the theoretical threshold of being an independent foreign policy actor, but practically lacks the capacities to fulfill this role. As Thomas (2012: 457) writes:

“Given its population, economic size, military resources and voting power in international organizations, the European Union is potentially capable of exerting great influence on world affairs.”

However, for many scholars and even EU politicians, the EU falls short of its existing potential in both the actions it undertakes and the effect these actions have (Wessels 2021: 986). This is not a new development, but one that is part of the debate on the CFSP from the moment of its inception, starting with the failure to accomplish the Helsinki Headline Goals. In 2009, the HR for the CFSP, Catherine Ashton, acknowledged and proclaimed that the EU should increase its efforts to “punch its weight politically (Ashton 2009).” This discrepancy between the potential of and expectations for the EU’s foreign and security policy and the political reality was termed Capability-Expectation-Gap by Hill (1993: 315) who wrote that the tasks the EU is and will be expected to perform by both insiders and outsiders pose a challenge to the EU’s resources, instruments, and ability to agree. As Hills definition shows, the Capability-Expectation-Gap is twofold, concerning both resources and institutional challenges, which is often synonymous with a lack of political will of member states to transfer sovereignty to the EU (Kempin 2020: 986).

As discussed earlier, the shortcomings of the EU regarding military capabilities and resources are a problem that is both acknowledged and criticized by scholars. Keleman & McNamara (2022: 971) see NATO as a reason for the EU’s underdeveloped coercive capabilities because it addressed Europe’s collective security needs throughout the Cold War mainly by US deterrence. This is echoed by Fröhlich (2020: 72) who calls Europe a security consumer under the American protective umbrella. The resulting shortcomings in military capabilities during the civil wars of Yugoslavia motivated the EU to create a European Security and Defense Policy that was renamed CSDP in the Treaty of Lisbon. Still, despite good intentions and ambitious proposals the EU failed to meet set milestones and goals. What is more, the aggregate defense spending declined in the years after the Treaty of Lisbon from 204 billion euros in 2007 to 190 billion euros in 2012 (Müller 2016: 363). Major & Mölling (2020: 44) speak of a reduction of 30-80 % of relevant capabilities lost since the creation of the CSDP. These deficiencies stand in contrast with the EU’s ambition to achieve *Strategic Autonomy* or

even resilience as proclaimed in the Global Strategy (EEAS 2016). As Lippert et al. (2019: 16) write, “the gap between the wish for strategic autonomy and the reality of available resources is most glaring in the context of military capabilities.”

Beside a lack of resources and military capabilities, the Capability-Expectation-Gap stretches to the institutional dimension. Keukeleire & Raube (2020: 280) write that the EU’s struggles to react to the crises in Northern Africa and Ukraine exemplify its problem with coherent, efficient, and continuous actions. The European Council, the principal institution for foreign and security policy, is seen as not being efficient and effective enough to manage crises because of dissent among the member states (Wessels 2021: 23f.):

“The member states – despite the wording of the contract – refer to the CFSP architecture as an adjunct or subsidiary tool for political action in contrast to national action capabilities in matters they classify as ‘high politics’ (ibid.: 24).”

As a result, the different foreign policy traditions of Member States and their corresponding established patterns of national policy preferences, national interests, and strategic cultures shape the policy debate on the EU level (Müller 2016: 361; see also Aggestam 1999). Further deficiencies are identified in the coordination of already integrated areas of foreign affairs like trade and the CFSP due to an insufficient compatibility of supranational and intergovernmental rules and practices (ibid.: 26). The inability to reach consensus in the European Council and the prioritization of national policies over supranational approaches lead to the theory that the structures of the CFSP and CSDP are dysfunctional (Bendiek 2017: 7). For many scholars, the underlying problem of the Capability-Expectation Gap is the unwillingness of Member States to transfer sovereignty in these crucial area of foreign and defense policy to the EU because as long as the CFSP and CSDP have a strong intergovernmental dimension, the EU relies on unanimity in the Council and “voluntary pooling of national manpower and capabilities for collective action (Müller 2016: 363; see also Kempin 2020: 986).” The dilemma for both the EU and its Member States is the incompatibility of the reality of interdependence in defense and security politics and the need for cooperation to enable collective defense and crisis management, and the preservation of national sovereignty in this area:

“When the ESDP confronted the member states with the choice of being more capable but having less individual say in defence decision-making, member states often preferred a limited national option. In other words, governments preferred to manage their ever-shrinking

national capability inventory rather than engage in strategic cooperation (Major & Mölling 2020: 39).”

This is partly caused by the still unanswered questions regarding the goals of the CFSP and CSDP and its relation to NATO. Due to the deliberate vagueness that helped the Franco-British agreement in Saint Malo, questions like strategic alignment and further integration were never addressed by the Member States. As a result, some Member States rely solely on transatlantic cooperation and NATO, whilst others prefer European options or a pragmatic mixture of both. Similarly, some member states want the CFSP and CSDP to be intergovernmental policies with some transgovernmental cooperation whilst others support a more supranational approach to EU foreign policy (Müller 2016: 361).

The Treaty of Lisbon designed the CFSP and the CSDP as a political area with pronounced intergovernmental structures (Wessels 2021: 25). These intergovernmental structures limit the potential for integration in the area of foreign and defense politics (Kempin 2020: 991). However, some scholars identify an increase in the application of intergovernmental logic by the Member States. Intergovernmentalism as a theory of Europeanization provides “a state-centric explanation [...] in other words intergovernmentalism privileges the role of states and state actors within the European integration.” Closely related to the realist perspective on international relations, intergovernmentalism views states as acting towards securing their own interests and international regimes and organizations as being shaped by the distribution of power among their member states (Cini 2022: 68; Moravcsik 1993). In this it differs from neo-functionalism which explains the European integration by assuming that cooperation in one area will spill over into other areas (Strøby Jensen 2022: 54). While the CFSP and CSDP were conceived as policies in which the member states take the primary role, the Europeanization of this political area was seen with greater optimism in the early 2000s than in the following 20 years (Thomas 2021: 619). A key part of this process was the building of institutions like the EEAS and the EDA which give the European foreign policy structures a transnational dimension. However, as Wessels (2021:25) writes, the overall architecture of the CFSP still can only be understood as a type of “rationalized intergovernmentalism.” Still, proponents of Europeanization in foreign policy point to the fact that the EU has reached 1000 legally binding strategies and agreements regarding under the framework of the CFSP and that the total number of adopted policies per year has increased between 1993 and 2008 (Thomas 2009: 341).

The increase in intergovernmental tendencies or “re-nationalization” of policy preferences is explained with the success of populist parties in some member states, unpopular austerity problems, and political crises like the migration crisis of 2015 or the COVID-19 pandemic. As Müller et al. (2021: 529) explain it, the lack of mutual solidarity by some member states in dealing with certain challenges has “spilled-over into the foreign policy realm.” As a result, scholars like Thomas (2021) and Smith (2021) observe that Member States have become less likely to set and voice policy preferences in foreign policy in a way that is conducive of joint European policy making. Thus, normative entrapment becomes less likely while theories of logrolling and competitive bargaining become more pronounced in EU foreign policy making. In both logrolling and competitive bargaining theory, common goals and share norms are secondary to the opportunity to utilize unanimity requirements to either extract concessions and reciprocal bargains or to wield the veto power to push through policy preferences. The result of logrolling and competitive bargaining is either deadlock or a policy outcome of the lowest common denominator (Thomas 2021: 627 f.; see also: Bendiek 2017: 11; Thomas 2009: 349 f.). The Treaty of Lisbon attempted to circumvent these practices which Scharpf (2006: 849) summarized under the term joint-decision-trap by introducing the constructive abstention vote. However, Member States neglect this option thereby retaining the need for unanimity and the potential for competitive bargaining and logrolling (Wessels 2021: 23). Thus, “the EU will be hampered [...] by the constant threat of having one of its numerous member states break from its ranks (Meunier 2000: 132 in Thomas 2021: 628). Naturally, the tough negotiations and careful compromises that are the result of this approach to policymaking are noncompliant with the goal of a responsive and cohesive European foreign policy. For scholars, the question now is whether this intergovernmental turn is still part of the normal policy-making process on the European level or constitutes a degree of de-Europeanization and warn against fragmentation and disintegration (Major & Mölling 2020: 39). Lippert et al. (2019: 9) describe the CFSP and CSDP as “slow, indecisive and susceptible to blockades and vetoes” but, while a certain degree of quarrels about bargaining and procedure is expected, de-Europeanization “relates to more stable trends or patterns of objection to well-established CFSP norms in a member state’s foreign policy discourse and practice (Müller et al. 2021: 525). Elements of de-Europeanization are norm regression and reconstruction by Member States, the challenging of foundational norms of the EU, and structural disintegration in which a Member State objects to an and opposes the structures of European foreign policymaking (ibid. 525 f.). The latter can also be the case if a Member

State simply disengages from the CFSP or circumvents the CFSP by utilizing other institutional formats for foreign policymaking (ibid.).

While no scholar has made a definitive conclusion on whether there is de-Europeanization in foreign policymaking is at hand, several worrying trends are identified. Most common is the observation that norms have become objects of politics (Smith 2021: 643). On the one hand, the success of populist far-right parties across Europe has introduced nativist and semi-authoritarian dynamics that are antithetical to the values of the EU back into the European discourse, and on the other hand economic calculations seem to dominate over concerns about norms in foreign policymaking (Müller et al. 2021: 521; Smith 2021: 641). Lippert et al. (2019: 9) write about “growing centrifugal forces” that are reflected in “national unilateralism and idiosyncrasies.” Examples are the difficult relationships towards authoritarian regimes like the Russian Federation or the People’s Republic of China in which the prospect of trade and economic growth has often outweighed concerns over human rights and democratic standards. A continuous trend in European foreign policymaking is the question of circumvention of EU structures, which can be seen as the product of the still unclear relationship between the CFSP structures and NATO and is, therefore, dependent on the temperature of transatlantic relations. To escape the joint-decision-trap and increase the efficiency the EU, some call for a process of differentiated integration in the area of the CFSP and CSDP, which has precedent in other political areas like the Banking Union or Schengen:

“In response to growing heterogeneity, the EU evolved as a system of differentiated integration whereby not all member states participate in all EU policy regimes (Laffan 2022: 445 f.).”

This idea - sometimes also referred to as multi-speed-Europe (Bendiek 2017) – builds on the idea to enable Member States that are willing to push forward with integration in a given political area while giving other Member States the opportunity to opt-in later. Exemplary of this is the Franco-German tandem that is sometimes referred to as “the motor of integration (Laffan 2022: 446).” A first step into the direction of differentiated integration in security and defense is PESCO which enables Member States to cooperate on research and development in defense more closely. However, the model is not without its critics. Whilst it helps to reduce the threat of joint-decision-traps and circumvents conflict over divergent interests, “it has also raised concerns about undermining collective European efforts that offer far greater synergies and cost savings (Müller 2016: 370).” Critics also point to the risk of an instrumentalization

of the CFSP and CSDP by a Member State or Member States to implement their national agendas. Already, Bendiek (2017: 12 f.) writes, the CFSP is believed to be an instrument of a select group of Member States. Still, as long as bold steps in the direction of supranational reform are distant, concepts of cooperation among two or more member states like pooling and sharing of defense capability development are a viable strategy evade the collective decision-making problems of the EU (Müller 2016:361, 366).

Apart from practical internal solutions, some scholars look at external factors to explain or predict integration and Europeanization in EU politics. External events and crises that are outside the control of policymakers can put pressure on politicians and drive political change because they can “redistribute critical political resources and unsettle policy beliefs (Falkner 2016: 221).” From a historical institutionalist perspective, external events like crises can act as a critical juncture or window of opportunity to change institutional structures that have been perpetuated over time and have created lock-in effects.⁴ This concept has been integrated into the classic theories of Europeanization, neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism. In neofunctionalist thinking external events and political crises can enable the spillover processes that are crucial to Europeanization (Falkner 2016: 221 f.). From an intergovernmentalist perspective, political crises have the potential to break through the competitive bargaining and logrolling and compel Member States to act (ibid.: 222). Thus, it is generally assumed that political crises defined as “a situation in which politicians are confronted with significant need for action, on the one hand, and limited time to accomplish reforms, on the other (ibid.: 219),” can bring along Europeanization. The idea is that a crisis forces an urgent reaction to avoid reaching a tipping point and thus opens the opportunity for a legitimization of new policy paradigms. Similarly, Kelemen & McNamara (2022: 964) looked at Europeanization from a traditional state-building perspective in which the emergence of new states and their consolidation is explained by the “bellicist” logic of war and market forces for economic gain. They argue that EU has not sufficiently integrated coercive power and fiscal authority partly because of a lack of existential threats. Of course, one could argue that the desire to the war-making powers necessary to ensure European security and independently act in the wars in Yugoslavia and Kosovo was key in the development of the CSDP (Müller 2016: 359 f.), but the American security guarantees and the dominance of NATO structures hampered the conclusion of Tilly’s theorem: “War made the

⁴ A closer examination of crises as enablers of change can be found later in this chapter in section 4.3 Discursive Institutionalism

state and the state made war.” Similarly, on the economic side, the political crises were not severe enough to push the EU further along on the trajectory towards a state-like constitution. However, as Kelemen & McNamara (2022) point out, the EU and its Member States overwhelmingly reacted to the recent intersecting crises by strengthening the union and, in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, made first steps towards creating a mutualized European debt. Echoing this sentiment, Falkner (2016: 231) writes that while the EU acts on crises and finds solutions for joint-decision traps, these solutions are often not far-reaching enough to overcome institutional restrictions and bring long-term stability. In an analysis of the influence of crises specifically on the CFSP, Müller (2016: 370) concludes that the EU did not use the pre-2016 crises as opportunities to advance the CFSP and CSDP, and that Member States remain stuck in joint-decision-traps in which national interests and fears over a loss of sovereignty have outweighed collective EU interests. Responding to crises, Member States were more likely to attempt a strategy of differentiated integration and act via bilateral or multilateral cooperation (ibid.). Still, the crises caused the EU and its Member States to start a reflection process on strategic alignment and the future of the CFSP and CSDP (ibid.: 360).

Some scholars identify a paradigm shift in the aforementioned reflection process. Based on textual analyses of EU documents they identify resilience as a new policy paradigm (Juncos 2017) or a new leitmotiv (Wagner & Anholt 2016) for the EU’s CFSP and CSDP. Crucially, resilience is neither seen as an extension or rejection of the normative framing of the EU. Rather, it is measured as a middle ground, or a pragmatist turn in the dichotomy of normative power and normal power described earlier. In other words, it is seen as a compromise between a foreign policy interested in norm diffusion and a foreign policy centered on securing stability and interests. Resilience, as a concept, stems from biology and ecology and was transferred to the social sciences. Its original meaning was adapted to a new form of governance which is concerned with the ability of states and societies to withstand crisis and develop internal capabilities to deal with threats and problems: “Resilience acknowledges uncertainty and complexity as a contemporary condition but emphasizes internal capacities and capabilities as the way to deal with the problems, rather than external intervention (Juncos 2017: 4).” For the EU this approach remains anchored in the normative principles because, as Wagner & Anholt (2016: 415) point out, norms and values like democracy, human rights, and justice are seen as preconditions for a society to be resilient. In part, this pragmatist turn seems to be a reaction to the limited success of peacebuilding missions like the one in Afghanistan. The principled pragmatism of resilience is a move away from framing the EU as

an agent for positive change in the world and instead puts the focus on working with local resources to stabilize regions that have a threat potential for the union (ibid.: 417). Still, resilience, despite being prominently featured in multiple EU documents, is not a fully-fledged concept but rather has ambiguity or vagueness as a key feature to render it acceptable (ibid.). This approach, however, is not without critique. In Juncos opinion, the EU tries to square a circle by proposing principled pragmatism and needs to decide whether it wants to be principled or pragmatic in its foreign policy actions (Juncos 2017: 2). Trying to be both principled and pragmatic would always lead to tradeoffs that can be seen as inconsistencies in the EU's foreign policy and thus, threaten its credibility (ibid.: 13). Wagner & Anholt (2016: 419 f.) summarize a range of criticisms of the concept: It naturalizes and depoliticizes crises and provides a readymade response to every crisis by shifting the responsibility to react or withstand crises from governments to society. Rieker & Riddervold (2022) introduce the dimension of urgency to the debate on resilience in the EU's foreign policy. They argue that the EU reacts to urgent crises in a more pragmatic interests-focused manner, while still pursuing the principled norm-based policies in its long-term strategic actions (Rieker & Riddervold 2022: 460). In its ambiguous nature, resilience is similar to the other "buzzword" concept used in EU documents, *Strategic Autonomy*, which is discussed in greater detail in the next part of this thesis.

Besides the pragmatist turn, scholars also observe an increase in the role of the Commission in EU foreign policy making. The first observation made by scholars is the establishment of the Directorate General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS), and the EDF, which is seen as an important step in coordinating and aligning defense procurement and defense research and development of member states. For Sabatino (2022: 137) the EDF represents a new form of intergovernmentalism because it enables member states willing to engage in cooperation to improve their Defense Technological and Industrial Base (DTIB). Still, in establishing and providing the fund, the EC does step up as a motor for integration in the security and defense sector (ibid.: 135). Martins & Mawdsley (2021: 3) present the position of framing the establishment of the EDF as an example of neo-functionalist spillover. From this perspective, the Commission used the dysfunctionality of the intergovernmental decision-making process in defense procurement and research and development spending to promote the efficiency and functionality of supranational instruments. In other words, the integration of instruments for economic and industrial policies spilled over to the previously nationally dominated area of security and defense. Using the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries,

which refers to “collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desired futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order attainable through, and supportive of, advances in science and technology (Jasanoff 2015: 4 in Martins & Mawdsley 2021: 4),” Martins & Mawdsley argue that the Commission provided a vision for an integrated defense industrial policy that seemed beneficial for national DTIB (Martins & Mawdsley 2021: 11). Moreover, the establishment of the EDF from this perspective constitutes the public performance of a sociotechnical imaginary that can lead to further integration by creating a *modus operandi* that can be transferred to future integrated policies (ibid.: 7, 9). Looking at the role of the Commission from a different perspective, Riddervold (2016) writes that the Commission has an increasing role in foreign policymaking because of its bargaining power and its expertise, which exemplified by analyzing the role of the Commission in the launch of the mission EUNAVFOR Atalanta and the passing of the European Maritime Strategy. First, building on intergovernmental rational-choice based bargaining perspectives, the Commission influences the agenda and the decision-making of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council by using its bargaining power as a purposeful opportunist (Riddervold 2016: 356). This bargaining power stems mostly from its power over budgetary and legal instruments that are needed to conduct operations (ibid.: 362). Second, the EU influences decision-making “through the mechanism of argument-based learning: by justifying its suggestions and proposals through presenting expert arguments accepted as relevant by the Member States (ibid.: 357).” Based on interviews with national delegates, Riddervold writes that the Commission has a decisive argumentative power due to the expertise of its DGs, which often contribute directly to the legal text of an operation or strategy (ibid.: 364). Taken together, Riddervold (2016: 367) argues, the Commission takes on an increasing role and “substantial *de facto* influence” that goes beyond the competences delegated to it in the treaties.

Whether it is an increase in the role of the Commission or the alignment of the CFSP towards either resilience or more normative policies, the issue of legitimacy underpins every discussion of European policy making. As Smismans (2022: 125) describes: “Whereas ‘democracy’ refers to a set of procedures guaranteeing the participation of the governed, ‘legitimacy’ refers to the generalized degree of trust that the governed have towards the political system.” Naturally, the EU as a political system contrived of 27 sovereign states, poses a challenge to traditional notions of legitimacy. The more competences the EU gathers from its Member States, the more pertinent the question of legitimacy becomes. At the

conception of the EEC, the democratic constitution of its members was enough to give legitimacy to the limited functions and competences transferred to the EEC (ibid.). A growing number of functions and competences as well as the realization that a political system like the EU cannot function effectively under the prerequisite of unanimity, brought the question of legitimacy to the forefront (Szewczyk 2021: 9). While the treaty negotiations of the 1990s and early 2000s try to remedy the legitimacy problem, some scholars argue that the Treaty of Lisbon merely highlighted the glaring problem (ibid.: 4).

Generally, legitimacy can be divided first, into input and output legitimacy and second, into internal and external legitimacy. First, a political system can be viewed as legitimate because it sufficiently involves its citizens in its decision-making process through elections, transparency, and other options for participation. Apart from that, a political system might also be regarded as legitimate, if its decisions benefit its citizens and its citizens are satisfied with output of the decision-making process (Smismans 2022: 125). The idea of input and output legitimacy can be related to the sovereignty and legitimacy theories of David Beetham and Thomas Franck. Both Beetham and Franck highlight the importance that a political system must operate by a set of generally accepted rules which must be derived from and acted out in defense of shared normative beliefs. For Franck (1990: 24 in: Szewczyk 2021:38), “legitimacy is a property of a rule or rule-making institution which itself exerts a pull towards compliance on those addressed normatively because those addressed believe that the rule or institution has come into being and operates in accordance with generally accepted principles of right process.” For EU governance, participation, civil society, and transparency are the most important aspects of legitimacy (Smismans 2022: 131). Despite having an elected parliament, scholars attest the EU a democracy deficit because of the limited role the parliament still plays in decision-making compared to the Commission and the Council which lack democratic accountability. This aspect is related to the question of whether there is a European civil society. Some scholars argue that the EU is a polity without a demos (ibid.: 126), which could explain the low voter turnout in European elections, the weak connection to the decision-making process felt by the electorate, and the lack of public debate about issues debated in Brussels and Strasbourg (Szewczyk 2021: 5). The lack of debate can be attributed to a lack of transparency especially with regards to the decision-making process of the Council and the preparatory negotiations of the COREPER and the difficulty and technicality of both the issues and the decision-making process of the EU which is labeled as a byzantine system (ibid.: 5, 40). In addition, many politicians at the national level routinely frame European

issues from a national perspective, which makes it hard for the electorate to distinguish EU policymaking from national policymaking (Smismans 2022: 157).

Both input and output legitimacy as well as the concepts participation, civil society, and transparency are vital for the internal legitimacy of a political system. Besides internal legitimacy, a state or a supranational organization also requires external legitimacy to operate on the global stage. External legitimacy harkens back to questions raised at the beginning of this chapter concerning the status of the EU as an international actor and thus is closely linked to the EU's foreign policy. Generally, in order to engage in external affairs, the EU needs to be recognized by other international actors as a legitimate negotiating partner. Therefore, the external legitimacy of the EU is not only dependent on its own actions but is subject to forces in a global context (Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 282). Some scholars argue that the EU has lost some of its legitimacy as an international actor due to the aforementioned expectation-capability gap and needs to restore trust in its external action capabilities (ibid.: 281). Keukeleire and Raube (2020: 281 ff.) spell out several challenges for the EU's external legitimacy. The first challenge is related to the internal legitimacy problems of the CFSP, which as an intergovernmentally structured policy area lacks input legitimacy due to a lack of democratic oversight. It also struggles with output legitimacy because of Member States' difficulty to formulate coherent policies and visions for the CFSP (Kempin 2020: 985). The second challenge is the deteriorating trust in and legitimacy of the international order. This manifests itself in the emergence of new multilateral formations and state actors who are actively challenging established norms and no longer abide by or act through the rules of the international order. The third challenge is a general debate about the viability of an international system dominated and structured by sovereign nation states (Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 282). Many scholars argue that the EU needs to act more coherently and assertive to revive its external legitimacy. The problem is that any path towards reforming the EU decision-making process, like qualitative majority voting in CFSP matters or the formation of a European Security Council, is a further challenge to its internal legitimacy unless additional democratic accountability and sufficient transparency is provided. It also means that "appropriate EU action is only possible when the member states provide the EU with the legal and financial means for that, which requires that there is not only a sense of expectation of European action but also one of European solidarity (Smismans 2022: 134)." This is made difficult first, by the emergence of populist and intergovernmental tendencies mentioned in this chapter, and second, by the exegesis of the Treaty of Lisbon. Exemplary, is

the landmark decision by the German constitutional court, which attested the primacy of EU law except in cases of national interest, which in effect limits the potential for European integration and ensures the status of the nation states in the EU (Szewczyk 2021: 7 ff.).

The question of legitimacy is especially pertinent to the issue of *Strategic Autonomy*. As Lippert et al. (2019: 15) write, any ambition towards *Strategic Autonomy* is dependent on the external and internal legitimacy of the EU as an international actor. From the perspective of Manners (2002), the EU draws its legitimacy as an international actor from its status as a normative power. Following Beetham and Franck the normative dimension of EU actions are also an important part of its internal legitimacy (Szewczyk 2021: 35 ff.). Any move towards a strategic alignment that embraces more pragmatic positions and resilience could thus threaten both the internal and external legitimacy of the EU. Similarly, and as already mentioned, any strategic alignment and any effective action that is an expression of a more sovereign EU foreign, security, and defense policy needs either unanimity in the council or is dependent on a reform of the CFSP and CSDP decision-making process. As Szewczyk (2021: 3) writes: “There can be no sovereignty without legitimacy and power.”

4.2 Strategic Autonomy

This paper centers on the concept of *Strategic Autonomy*. As mentioned earlier, the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* accompanies the EU’s foreign and security politics throughout its entire evolution, starting with the ill-fated project to create the EDU in 1954 (Lippert et al. 2019: 6). *Strategic Autonomy*, thus, is not a new concept that was invented for the presentation of the 2016 Global Strategy (EEAS 2016). Still, a glance into a lexicon of keywords in international relations or political science leaves the question of what *Strategic Autonomy* means or entails unanswered (see Nohlen & Grotz 2015; or Lieber 1991). Strategic Autonomy as a concept is neither part of the classic literature on strategy and international relations (IR) nor present in the modern literature on IR theory of the 20th century (Mauro 2018: 17). Nonetheless, the concept is used and referenced as a “key catch-phrase in the recent CSDP debates and EU documents (Varga 2017: 5). Unfortunately, these documents, including the Global Strategy, remain vague on the specifics of the concept and lack a clear definition (Howorth 2017: 1; Mauro 2018: 3; Varga 2017: 5).

Turning to the existing literature on *Strategic Autonomy*, this problem is acknowledged. While Csernaton (2022: 396) talks about “conceptual confusion,” Grevi (2019: 10) about a “blurry

concept,” and Mauro (2021: 2) about a “somewhat elusive” concept. Järvenpää et al. (2019: 1) call *Strategic Autonomy* a “buzzword” whose usage lacks clarity on both the scope and the meaning of the concept, which “allowed substantial space for interpretation and disagreement.” What is more, Retter et al. (2021: 4) point out that this lack of a uniform understanding is present on both sides of the Atlantic, leading to controversies between officials from the US and the EU. A paper by the research and analysis team of the Council of the European Union even identifies an “intrinsic ambiguity” in the term *Strategic Autonomy* and count it as an “essentially contested concept” (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 2). The term essentially contested concept relates to a concept by W. B. Gallie (1956), who used it to describe concepts that are inherently disputed and so value-laden that no neutral definition can be formulated. Among the necessary conditions Gallie formulates are that it must be “appraisive” by signifying or accrediting a value or achievement, it must be internally complex, allowing for intrinsic contradictions, and it must be open for debate in that it can be questioned and contested by others (ibid.: 171 f.). However, declaring a concept as essentially contested is often questioned itself as Baldwin’s (1997) examination of the concept of security as an essentially contested concept has shown. For Baldwin, some concepts labeled essentially contested – like security - are rather underdeveloped than essentially contested, which he sees as an excuse to refrain from formulating a concrete concept, even if it is loaded with specific values (ibid.: 12).

Some in the literature, thus, warn about the consequences of this inadequate conceptualization: “A lack of clarity on the scope and meaning of ESA [European Strategic Autonomy] has allowed substantial space for interpretation and disagreement over questions such as Europe’s overall strategic aims, the resources it will need, and the implications and unintended consequences of pursuing greater autonomy (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 1).” There is also the notion that *Strategic Autonomy*, in its earliest iterations, was more concrete and lost meaning and specificity by its extension to ever more policy areas. Mauro (2018: 16) thus calls *Strategic Autonomy* the “Victim of a linguistic fad.” Crucially, the in-house research team of the Council of the European Union is also concerned about a “trivialization” of *Strategic Autonomy* and warns that the discourse around an unspecific conceptualization of *Strategic Autonomy* could be harmful to the European project (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 11). As Jana Puglierin writes in her chapter in Fiott (2021: 28), confusion around the concept and conflicting understandings across the Atlantic made “the very notion” of *Strategic Autonomy* “toxic.” In a similar vein Howorth (2017: 1 f.) attempts to

square the circle between the EU and NATO by trying to consolidate the aspiration of *Strategic Autonomy* and the EU pledge to complementarity with its partners. Thus, there is a need to conceptualize *Strategic Autonomy* to create a shared understanding that can serve as the basis for further discourse. As Mauro (2018: 22) put it aptly: “In the absence of contextual clarifications, the term is like a suitcase into which you can put anything you want.”

The conceptual confusion around *Strategic Autonomy* is exacerbated by the lack of agreement on which term should be used in the public discourse (Fiott 2021: 10; von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 3). Besides *Strategic Autonomy* and added signifiers like “European” or “open,” the terms *Strategic Sovereignty* and *European Sovereignty* are also used (Csernatoni 2022: 396; von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 3). The latter term gained prominence in the speeches of French President Emmanuel Macron and former President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker (Szewczyk 2021: 1). While some argue that *Strategic Autonomy* and *European Sovereignty* can be used interchangeably and are only a matter of preference (Hoffmann 2021: 292; Schwarzer 2021: 19) others see a qualitative difference between the two terms and reject the notion of a mere linguistic difference (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 2).

In a paper on *European Sovereignty*, Fiott (2021) tries to distinguish between the term *Strategic Autonomy*, which for him should refer exclusively to the capacity to act and decide in the area of foreign policy and defense, and *European Sovereignty*, which Fiott sees as a broader concept including “a wider suite of policies linked to the economy, technology, health and/or foreign policy (Fiott 2021: 10). Others identify a specific model of *Strategic Autonomy* behind the term *European Sovereignty* or a certain quality or level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* (von Ondarza & Overhaus 2022: 3). Often the term *European Sovereignty* is linked to the vision of Macron and thus seen as an extension of France’s strategic interests (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 9; Brustlein 2018: 2). However, the inclusion of the word sovereignty is also a point of contention in the theoretical debate on *Strategic Autonomy* (Fiott 2021: 7). Tocci (2019: 3) points out that *Strategic Autonomy* “is often confused with sovereignty, independence, unilateralism and at times autarky,” which, at the same time, can serve as a negative definition to conceptualize *Strategic Autonomy*. If the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* can or must be differentiated from the concept of sovereignty, it seems paramount to take the established concept of sovereignty and the EU’s relationship toward it as a starting point to create an understanding of *Strategic Autonomy*.

4.2.1 The Concept of Sovereignty

While sovereignty is indeed an established concept (IR), its usage is also contested. However, one can define a broad philosophical category of sovereignty that serves as the foundation of any critical concept analysis (Philpott 1995: 355). Thomas Hobbes and Jean Bodin most prominently used the concept of sovereignty. For both Hobbes and Bodin, the state was at the center of their thinking, and the goal was to manifest the institution and the authority of the state internally and externally. Their theories were, as Krasner puts it, “concerned with establishing the legitimacy of a single hierarchy of domestic authority (Krasner 2001: 21).” This single hierarchy originated in divine or natural law but was transferred to the sovereign, who, according to Bodin, takes the role of the family elder, *pater familias*, in the household (Schwan 1991: 170). Thus, the sovereign combines the force majeure, *summa potestas*, and the supremacy, *majestas* (ibid.: 169). This authority, described as the “right to command and [...] the right to be obeyed,” lies with the state (Philpott 1995: 355). In his influential book *Leviathan*, Hobbes describes how individuals enter a contract of each with the other to give up their sovereign right to rule over themselves and transfer it to a third party appointed to guard and enforce the security interests of the population (Hobbes 2020: 175). Crucially, for neither Bodin nor Hobbes can there be any check on the sovereign’s authority or law regulating the sovereign’s actions since that would entail that the sovereign is not really sovereign in his dealings (see Hobbes 2020: 178 and Schwan 1991: 170).

These are, of course, mainly theoretical concepts that - in their purity - had practical implications only for absolute monarchies. As Krasner points out, the idea of supreme power was already irrelevant by the end of the 17th century (Krasner 2001: 21). With Britain establishing a type of constitutional monarchy and the newly formed United States of America creating a “constitutional system of checks and balances with multiple sovereignties distributed among local and national interests,” (ibid.; see also Keohane 2002: 747) the concept of sovereignty was not abolished but substantially altered. Philpott identifies four necessary elements of sovereignty in the aforementioned authority, legitimacy, supremacy or control, and territoriality. The latter is significant since it describes the realm where a sovereign has the necessary legitimacy to act with supreme authority (Philpott 1995: 356). Next to these four necessary elements of sovereignty, Philpott describes three types of adjectives that signify sovereignty: The first type of adjective signifies the holder or holders of sovereignty, who can be an individual, a triumvirate, or a body of law. The second type is the pair “internal” and “external,” describing the recognition of authority within and outside

the state. The third type of adjective to qualify sovereignty is “absolute” and “non-absolute,” which signifies the scope of affairs that a sovereign state has control over (Philpott 1995: 357 f.). This concept of sovereignty was the bedrock of the Westphalian System, which made the state the central subject of the international political system. The core idea was that states are autonomous entities with the power to act within their boundaries without interference or intervention from outside actors (see Krasner 2001: 21; Keohane 2002: 744). Today, this view of sovereignty as an indivisible supreme authority can be categorized as the traditional perspective of sovereignty (Bellanova et al. 2022: 344). In the aftermath of World War II, a gradual shift away from sovereignty in the Westphalian sense can be observed (Philpott 1995), which required new conceptions of sovereignty. At the same time, it was and is within the sovereign power of a state to enter into contracts and agreements with other states. This can be seen as an expression of the “denotations and connotations” the concept of sovereignty has gone through (Keohane 2002: 743). Some argue that states’ ability to act in the framework of international agreements and treaties is representative of a type of “new sovereignty” (Chayes & Handler Chayes 1995: 27). To take the changing nature of state sovereignty into account, Krasner has categorized sovereignty into four dimensions: international legal sovereignty, Westphalian sovereignty, domestic sovereignty, and interdependence sovereignty (Krasner 1999: 3). According to Krasner (1999: 4) there is not necessarily a correlation between the four dimensions of sovereignty, but he points out that the exercise of international legal sovereignty in the form of international agreements can infringe on other dimensions of sovereignty like the Westphalian or domestic sovereignty.

The proliferation of international treaties and regimes is one of the reasons Philpott identified a “revolution” against existing notions of sovereignty, with the other reason being the creation of the EC and its increasing integration into the EU (Philpott 1995: 353). In part, the creation of the EC is caused by the ability of sovereign states to voluntarily enter into binding international agreements, which means that the agreed to loss of sovereignty in principle is itself a product of state sovereignty (Krasner 2001: 28). Still, the EC, respectively the EU, is seen as a fundamental break with traditional notions of sovereignty. Its creation represents “the first time since the demise of the Holy Roman Empire, a significant political authority other than the state, one with formal sovereign prerogatives, has become legitimate (Philpott 1995: 367).” The EU provides an interesting case for modern conceptions of sovereignty since, according to Keohane, it “both legitimized the state and imposed limits (Keohane 2002: 747).” The interesting conundrum is that while some areas remain under the sole control of

the Member States, other policy areas are governed by the institutions of the EU, with EU law being supreme over national law (Philpott 1995: 367). Thus, the literature describes this new European conception of sovereignty using terms like “shared sovereignty” (Wallace 1999: 512), “pooled sovereignty” (Keohane: 2002: 748), or “plural sovereignty” (Bellamy & Castiglione 1997: 422). Both the terms “shared” and “pooled” indicate an action by a state, which is essential for understanding sovereignty in terms of practices rather than meaning.

Practices in this sense are “competent performances [of] meaningful patterns of action, which [...] simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world (Adler & Pouliot 2011: 6).” Following this line of thinking, sovereignty can be actively shaped and used to build and order political structures (Jackson 1999: 431). Sovereignty, in terms of practice, thus, connotes first that sovereignty is a claim to legitimize a particular political structure. In reference to Max Weber, it is not about actualizing sovereignty but about a political entity consistently claiming sovereignty, which produces a sense of sovereignty that can never be absolute or undisputed (Bellanova et al. 2022: 340). Second, sovereignty, in terms of practice, entails the development of administrations and policies to exercise governance over a population and territory. In this reading, the EU would represent practiced sovereignty rather than sovereignty in its traditional meaning. These new conceptions of sovereignty represent post-sovereigntist perspectives and post-traditional approaches. While the post-sovereigntist perspective critiques traditional notions of sovereignty by arguing that the Westphalian system with states as the most relevant actors has been overcome, the post-traditional approaches see sovereignty as a dynamic concept with a shifting meaning that can be adjusted to be fit for purpose as described by Jackson (1999) and Bellanova et al. (2022: 344).

4.2.2 Sovereignty and the EU

Because of the unprecedented break with traditional Westphalian sovereignty that was the creation of the EC, the conceptualization of sovereignty in the framework of the EU is a matter of debate in the literature (Brack et al. 2019: 820). The beginning of this contested relationship with sovereignty lies in the rebuilding of the state system in Europe after World War II. Both the Marshall Plan and the aim of the U.S. government to rebuild democratic states in Europe while at the same time integrating them into an alliance framework led to a state of “compromised sovereignty” (Wallace 1999: 507). Especially post-war Germany was to be integrated to limit its sovereignty and keep it in check (ibid.: 508). Together with the

increasing globalization, this led to the development of a system of shared sovereignty in Europe, eventually progressing from the EC to the EU (Wallace 1999: 505 f. see also Keohane 2002: 749). According to Keohane (2002: 744), the resulting disassociation between a state's success and its ability to act sovereign in all areas is a historic accomplishment of the EU. While the transfer of sovereign competencies from the Member States to the institutions of the EU is historic in nature, "the signature of the Maastricht treaty marked a turning point as since then, member states repeatedly rejected new major transfers of ultimate decision-making powers to the EU level (Puetter 2014: 1 in Brack et al. 2019: 820)." Accordingly, questions of sovereignty remain in debates about EU integration (Brack et al. 2019: 818 ff.).

While the transition away from Westphalian sovereignty is uncontroversial, there are new debates surrounding the expression of sovereignty within the EU. As a result of the genesis of the EU and its *sui generis* structure, sovereignty regarding the EU institutions and its member states is a complex issue. Brack et al. (2019) identify four dimensions of sovereignty that play a role in the current debates around sovereignty in the EU. Similar to Krasner's (1999) categorization, national sovereignty represents the first dimension. The second dimension pertains to supranational sovereignty, which, according to Brack et al., can be understood as the EU's ability to enact policies and make decisions on behalf of the member states. Finally, the third dimension, parliamentary sovereignty, and the fourth dimension, popular sovereignty, concern the ability of the constituency and parliament to take part in the EU decision-making process and thus raise crucial questions about the legitimacy of the EU's model of sovereignty (Brack et al. 2019: 824). This leads precisely to the question of what kind of model of sovereignty the EU as a whole embodies. Building on the dimensions of sovereignty outlined by Brack et al. (2019) and the act of "sharing" or "pooling" sovereignty, there is debate about whether the EU constitutes a federal or a communitarian model. Bellamy & Castiglione (1997) discuss three models or views on European sovereignty that diverge on where sovereignty lies within the EU. First, the cosmopolitan federalist perspective emphasizes the constitutional nature of the EU treaties and thus locates the sovereignty with the EU institutions. Second, the communitarian model defends the state-based architecture emphasizing states' sovereign decision to compose and sign the treaty. The final model combines elements of the cosmopolitan and communitarian perspectives. The argument behind this approach is the unprecedented nature of the EU, which cannot be expressed in the established federal or communitarian models. It thus develops the model of a mixed-commonwealth to accommodate the unique features of the EU (Bellamy & Castiglione 1997:

423). The mixed-commonwealth model identifies multiple holders of sovereignty within the EU, a sort of “polycentric polity” in which the “personalized character of traditional sovereignty, associated with the idea of a government, is substituted by a more diffuse, and hence impersonal, idea of multi-layered governance (ibid.: 443).”

The sovereignty of the member states and the areas in which sovereignty is transferred from the member states to the EU are codified in Article 4 and Article 5 of the TEU. Article 5 defines the areas in which sovereignty is transferred to the EU as follows:

“Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level (Art. 5 (3) TEU).”

Still, the competencies that remain with the Member States are not set in stone but are subject to attempts to integrate new policy areas and streamline the politics of the Member States. However, questions of and debates around sovereignty not only come up when the EU wants to expand into additional policy areas but are a compendium to the legislative process itself, which can lead to “unresolved” dilemmas for decision-makers (Brack et al. 2019: 818; see also Winzen 2016). The debate around sovereignty is thus intersecting both EU integration theories and EU decision-making (Bellanova et al. 2022: 340). Following the existing literature about crises as a motor for integration and EU-policymaking (see Falkner 2016), crises are seen as a crucial aspect to bridge the reluctance of member states to give up further sovereignty, especially in the realm of monetary policy and immigration (Brack et al. 2019: 817). There remain, however, policy areas in which, despite multiple crises, only incremental progress is made regarding further integration and supranationalization. Foreign affairs, defense, and security or military-political issues remain controversial despite proclaimed goals of further integration (ibid.: 820 f.; see also Müller 2016). Accordingly, the EU is not seen as a decisive actor in strategic external actions, as was discussed earlier. Keohane even theorizes that the act of pooling sovereignty in itself hinders the EU from acting decisively on military-political issues invoking the question of the legitimacy of sovereignty in the EU:

“Classical modernist conceptions of external sovereignty focus on the legitimacy of a government over its own citizens or subjects. To act decisively in foreign affairs requires voluntary support from the citizenry. Machiavelli famously advocated citizen rather than

mercenary armies, not merely as a means of self-defence, but also of aggrandizement (Keohane 2002: 760).”

According to Keohane, it is precisely the “complex, cross-cutting network of governance” (Wallace 1999: 519) that enables the “muddling through” in affairs of the internal market but hinders decisive actions and a coherent external strategy (Keohane 2002: 759). This observation touches on the core of the EU’s dilemma in foreign and security policy issues. Despite the challenges provided by its unique model of pooled sovereignty, it wants to map out a coherent strategy and act more decisively and independently on the international stage. *Strategic Autonomy*, as Grevi (2019: 9) puts it, is the alternative to “muddling through,” which could lead to muddling downwards” and a decline of the EU. Accordingly, the debate around *Strategic Autonomy* is, at its heart, a debate on sovereignty. Some even frame the push for *Strategic Autonomy* as a relaunch of the European project (Major 2017). Due to the controversial nature of debates on sovereignty, it might have been political shrewdness to coin the term *Strategic Autonomy* to describe a more integrated approach to security and defense policy and more autonomous actions by the EU.

However, Bellanova et al. (2022) and Csernatonì (2022) identify another development at work that is related to the post-traditional approach to sovereignty explained above. Both Bellanova et al. and Csernatonì see the emergence of the term *Strategic Autonomy* and other modified concepts of sovereignty as a “conceptual explosion” that is part of a “discursive and doctrinal activism at the EU level (Csernatonì 2022: 396).” Csernatonì argues that concepts like sovereignty or *Strategic Autonomy* have “traveled” or have been “stretched” to encompass new meanings. Here, Csernatonì references the idea of conceptual traveling and stretching put forward by Giovanni Sartori, who describes traveling as the application of existing concepts to new cases, and conceptual stretching as the modification of said concept if changes are needed for the concept to fit the new case (Collier & Mahon 1993: 845). Csernatonì argues that *Strategic Autonomy* and sovereignty, which have been traditionally connected to high-politics that remain within the domain of the state, “have ‘travelled’ vertically to a supranational EU-level context (Csernatonì 2022: 397).” At the same time, at the EU level, Csernatonì and Bellanova et al. identify a horizontal “stretching” of the concepts of sovereignty and *Strategic Autonomy* to policy areas that traditionally have been counted among the “lower-politics” (ibid.: 397; Bellanova et al. 2022: 339). In doing that, the EU would create a “hegemonic effect of imaginary building and [shape] collective security thinking [...] by organising and bridging civil–military political and policy agendas, and by

opening windows of opportunity for decision-making and EU-level joint action (Csernaton 2022: 397).”

Of course, neither Csernaton nor Bellanova et al. differentiate between sovereignty and *Strategic Autonomy*, thereby conflating the two terms. However, suppose one sees *Strategic Autonomy* itself as the conceptual stretching of sovereignty to fit, on the one hand, the complex structure of the EU and, on the other, the complicated environment of EU policymaking and integration in the area of security and defense. In that case, *Strategic Autonomy* might emerge as a more palatable and achievable compromise between the status quo and the controversial goal of *European Sovereignty*. Still, the usage of a term that needs to be more established and well-defined in IR carries the problem of vagueness (Csernaton 2022: 396). Besides, *Strategic Autonomy* carries a problem identified by Järvenpää et al. (2019: 1), who criticize that definitions of the term are too closely linked to EU politics rather than trying to define a concept that is applicable outside of the framework of the EU.

4.2.3 The Concept of Strategic Autonomy

Setting out to define *Strategic Autonomy* is not an easy task. The critique of Järvenpää et al. (2019) is valid in that the literature is always closely related to EU politics. This might be explained by the uniqueness of the EU model (Krasner 2001: 28; Bellamy & Castiglione 1997: 441). While other states can simply refer to their Westphalian sovereignty which gives them the authority to act autonomously in all questions of foreign and security affairs, the peculiarity of the E.U.’s pooled sovereignty might attract a concept like *Strategic Autonomy*. This, however, does not mean that a conceptualization of *Strategic Autonomy*, even if done in the context of the EU, must “be attached to this, or any other institutional setting (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 1).” Crucially, since the idea of absolute sovereignty as “unlimited, undivided, and unaccountable” (Don Herzog in Szewczyk 2021: 2) is increasingly disputed, *Strategic Autonomy* might be more applicable to other states and more accurate in describing their position in the world than the Eurocentric literature on *Strategic Autonomy* would suggest.

Still, few papers seek to disconnect their attempt of a definition of *Strategic Autonomy* from the context of the EU. One of the few attempts at a general definition is made by Arteaga (2017:1) who defines *Strategic Autonomy* as referring to “the indispensable military capabilities necessary to allow a strategic actor to engage in autonomous action.” Varga (2017: 5) is another author who disconnects *Strategic Autonomy* from the European context, but he offers three competing definitions of *Strategic Autonomy*, writing that the concept can

refer to the ability to defend one's territory, the reliance on one's domestic defense industry, or the capability to "undertake demanding expeditionary military operations." The most quoted definition of *Strategic Autonomy* stems from the Implementation Plan put forward by the HR for the CFSP Federica Mogherini: "the ability to act and cooperate with international and regional partners wherever possible, while being able to operate autonomously when and where necessary (Council of the European Union 2016)." Still, critics point out that this definition is vague (Howorth 2017: 1) and unable to address important internal contradictions (Fiott 2021: 9). As Franke & Varma (2019: 4) have shown, there was substantial disagreement among Member States on the question of what *Strategic Autonomy* entails explicitly. Surveying policymakers and experts in all 28 Member States⁵, their results showed a picture of "uncertainty and confusion" concerning the aspects and level of *Strategic Autonomy* to be achieved and the region in which the EU should be able to act with *Strategic Autonomy*. Thus, we are still faced with a lack of a fixed definition leading to "conceptual confusion" (Csernaton 2022: 369), a "cacophony of current interpretations" (Miró 2022: 3), and disputes over the meaning and its consequences (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 1; Lippert et al. 2019: 5). The goal is thus to summarize and combine the definitions given in the literature and separate the elements of *Strategic Autonomy* from their contextualization.

To start with, *Strategic Autonomy* can be defined by breaking it down into the two parts *Strategy* or *Strategic* and *Autonomy*, that make up the term (Tocci 2021: 8, Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 4). According to the Analysis and Research Team of the Council of the European Union General Secretariat (2021: 3 f.) the first part, *strategy*, can be seen from three perspectives: First, *strategic* can be seen as a synonym for military or usage of hard power instruments in foreign policy (see also Brustlein 2018). As Mauro (2018: 21) writes: "Literally and figuratively, 'strategic' autonomy refers principally to the *Strategos*, in other words the person who defines and, where necessary conducts military affairs." The second perspective understands *strategic* as relating to issues of great importance to a political community. In the context of *Strategic Autonomy*, this would include areas in which a certain degree of dependence would lead to a loss of sovereignty (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 4). Third, *strategy* can be seen, in reference to Clausewitz, as the relationship between ends and means of an external action (ibid.). Thus, *strategy* relates to the areas included and the actions to be undertaken in a quest for *Strategic Autonomy* and is an indicator of whether *Strategic Autonomy* is defined narrowly, broadly, or analytically (ibid.:

⁵ The study conducted by Franke & Varma (2019) still includes the UK as a Member State.

5). The different perspectives on *Strategic Autonomy* are noticeable in the literature with some authors focused exclusively on the military consequences of this ambition (Biscop 2019; Brustlein 2018), while others take the broader perspective including not only diplomacy and other soft power instruments but also economic aspects like trade (Grevi 2019; Lippert et al. 2019; Tocci 2019). Mauro (2018; 2021) is especially vocal about the need to restrict the application of *Strategic Autonomy*, warning of semantic meandering (Mauro 2021: 6) and the risk of it becoming a meaningless “catch-all” concept (Mauro 2018: 16). In the same vein, Fiott (2021: 10) takes a narrow perspective on *Strategic Autonomy* to differentiate it from *Strategic Sovereignty*, which he sees as a “broader concept [...] used in the context of a wider suite of policies linked to the economy, technology, health and/or foreign policy.”

Concerning autonomy, Tocci (2021) starts by explaining what it does not entail, thereby following the observed “negative or defensive definitional approach” toward *Strategic Autonomy* (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 2). *Autonomy*, thus, is neither equivalent to independence nor to unilateralism or autarky (Tocci 2021: 9). Considering the problem whether true autarky is even possible in today’s interconnected world (Keohane 1995: 74), there is agreement that *autonomy* is never an absolute but a gradual condition on a spectrum between total dependence and complete autarky (Grevi 2019; Tocci 2021: 8). Tocci explicates *autonomy* by looking at the origins of the word itself:

“As the Greek etymology of the word suggests, autonomy means the ability of the self – autos – to live by its laws – nomos. Thus, autonomy, compared to sovereignty, is a condition rather than a set of attributes (Tocci 2021: 8).”

The conditional or relational nature of *autonomy* is also highlighted by Lippert et al. (2019: 5), who liken autonomy to the term power, as both are only qualifiable in relation to a referential other. With that, it also becomes clear that there can never be a binary choice between having autonomy or not, but rather that one can only strive to achieve a certain level of autonomy (Fiott 2018: 1). As Mauro (2018: 22) writes: “Absolute strategic autonomy does not exist, unless the term is confused with military independence.” Returning to the question of *Strategic Autonomy* as an essentially contested concept, the lack of a binary outcome, puts the “appraisive” nature into doubt (Gallie 1956: 171 f.). Using Gallie’s example of a championship in a game, states that strive for *Strategic Autonomy* do not compete by the same rules in the same competition (Baldwin 1997: 10 f.). This would indicate that *Strategic Autonomy* is rather underdeveloped than essentially contested. Besides the question of the

level of autonomy, there are other important questions connected to this part of the concept. First, the question of where autonomy should be pursued must be posed. “Where” in this context does not refer to geography but rather to the political field in which a certain level of *Strategic Autonomy* is desired (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 8). This question is, of course, closely connected to the understanding of the term *strategic* discussed above. Second, the question of who would be strategically autonomous can have important implications. In the context of the EU, this would concern whether the EU and its institutions itself or the Member States will be more autonomous (ibid.: 10). Third, the question of why *Strategic Autonomy* should be pursued not only gives context to the previous two questions and the aimed for level of ambition but also legitimizes the actions towards this goal. In the literature, *Strategic Autonomy* is always set in the context of external factors like perceived shifts in the balance of power or other global developments.

Still, the question of the level of ambition remains important, not least because it is hard to operationalize since there is neither a straight answer to the question nor a generally accepted scale to measure it. To categorize different levels of autonomy, Fiott proposes to use “freedom to act” and “freedom from dependencies” (Fiott 2018: 2). With that, Fiott differentiates three levels of *Strategic Autonomy* with the keywords *Responsibility*, *Hedging*, and *Emancipation*. The lowest level, *Responsibility*, is characterized by a freedom to conduct operations autonomously while not striving for freedom from dependencies. In the framework of an alliance or partnership, this would mean acting more responsibly by taking on problems without the support of partners and allies. For the EU, this would entail NATO’s European member states taking on more responsibility and carrying out missions under the flag of the EU without relying on the support of other NATO states like the US (ibid.). The second level of *Strategic Autonomy*, *Hedging*, is characterized by the freedom to conduct operations autonomously while striving for greater freedom from outside influences (ibid.: 4 ff.):

“In this regard, ‘strategic hedging behavior [sic] is meant to serve as a sort of insurance policy that guards against’ a deterioration in relations between two actors and/or should the hegemon cease to provide security to the hedging actor (Tessman & Wolfe 2011: 216 in Fiott 2018: 4).”

For the EU, autonomy as strategic hedging would not only mean taking on more responsibilities but safeguarding future *Strategic Autonomy* by developing defense structures and a defense industry in case of US disengagement from Europe. The EU would still rely on NATO in its actions but prepare for the eventuality of a breakdown of NATO support. Finally,

Strategic Autonomy as Emancipation is characterized by the freedom to conduct operations autonomously and the freedom from all current and future dependencies and outside influences (ibid.: 6). For the EU, this would, of course, entail the emancipation from the US and the support of NATO and thus the development of the defense capacity, command structure, and defense industry necessary to act completely without the support of NATO. Related to Fiott's conceptualization of level of ambition, Mauro (2021: 3 ff.) set out to identify three faces of *Strategic Autonomy*, that are in concert with different levels of ambition. First, international crisis management which Mauro relates back to the joint declaration of France and Britain of Saint-Malo from 1998 and the subsequent European summit in Cologne a year later. According to the Saint-Malo declaration, the EU should seek to "have the capacity for autonomous action, backed by credible military forces (Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom 1998)," while the conclusions from the Cologne summit calls for the "ability to take decisions on the full range of conflict prevention and crisis management tasks defined in the Treaty on [the] European Union (European Council 1999, Annex 3, 2)." Second, *Strategic Autonomy* as military independence can be drawn from the reading of different EU-documents from 2013 to 2016. These documents call for the EU's ability to protect its citizens from different threats, increase its security in the area of cyber, energy, and strategic communications and build up the defense technological and industrial base (Mauro 2021: 4f.). Third, *Strategic Autonomy* as autonomy writ large was implied in speeches from Mogherini's successor Josep Borrell and EU Commissioner for Competition Margrethe Vestager. According to Mauro (2021: 5f.) *Strategic Autonomy* as autonomy writ large comes close to what Fiott (2021) would understand as European Sovereignty, namely commercial, defense and industrial self-sufficiency, which is related to terms like *Open Strategic Autonomy*, re-shoring, and de-risking (Plummer 2023:46 ff.).

From the description of the three levels of *Strategic Autonomy*, it can be seen that there are different dimensions connected to *Strategic Autonomy*. While different numbers of dimensions with different names can be found in the literature, there is still substantial overlap in the reasoning behind it. While Charillon et al. (2017) and Grevi (2019: 10) differentiate between a *political dimension* concerning the ability to make decisions and act on them, an *operational dimension* concerning the institutional requirements and necessary capabilities to plan and carry out actions, and an *industrial dimension* concerning the development of the capabilities necessary for these kinds of operations, Järvenpää et al. (2019: 12) add an *institutional* and a *capabilities dimension*. Like Grevi (2019), Järvenpää et al. (2019) see the

political dimension as concerning the decision-making process behind *Strategic Autonomy*, however, with a greater focus on the capacity to decide on and push for a certain level of ambition. The *institutional dimension* includes elements of both Grevi's *political* and *operational dimensions*. It is concerned with "the governance structures required to prepare and administer" the priorities set out in the *political dimension* (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 12). In doing so, Järvenpää et al. (2019) separate the decision-making process from the actual capacities necessary to carry out operations. These are included in the *capabilities dimension*, which concerns the necessary military and civilian forces, command structures, and finances to implement a certain level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* (ibid.). Arteaga (2017: 1) follows the categorization of Grevi (2019) but adds another layer to the categorization by drawing conclusions from the interaction of the different element:

"In specific terms, the concept comprises political, operational, and industrial components. These can be combined in different proportions, generating in turn different interpretations of strategic autonomy."

Accordingly, identifying which element of *Strategic Autonomy* is emphasized in a given policy can give us a hint towards identifying a specific vision of *Strategic Autonomy*. Mauro (2021: 11) puts this sentiment into a formula: "Strategic Autonomy = Political Will x Ability to Decide x Capacity to Act." Mauro's perspective, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, is strictly military. He thus spells out the ability to decide as involving intelligence and decision-making processes and the capacity to act as pertaining to military forces and armament in combination with industrial and research capacities in the defense sector (ibid.). Similarly, Biscop (2019: 3) identifies five dimensions that most notably add *intelligence* and *strategizing dimensions*. At closer inspection, however, both dimensions concern elements of *Strategic Autonomy* already accounted for in the *capabilities dimension* of Järvenpää et al. (2019) and the *operational dimension* of Grevi (2019).

However, Biscop's paper adds another valuable contribution to the discussion of *Strategic Autonomy*. Focusing on the EU, he starts by investigating the Global Strategy. He lists the vital interests, priorities, tasks, and capacities defined by the strategy. Still, according to Biscop (2019: 4 f.), these kinds of lists do not tell us what the EU means by *Strategic Autonomy*. This sentiment can be sustained by looking at the survey by Franke & Varma (2019), who found divergent views on *Strategic Autonomy* despite the Global Strategy being published by that point. For Biscop, the reason for this uncertainty is "that the link between

operations and tasks on the hand and priorities and vital interests on the other remains underdefined (Biscop 2019: 5).” Therefore, the questions of when, why, and where the EU wants to act must be answered. Biscop’s paper focuses specifically on military actions in the context of *European Strategic Autonomy*. To create a more holistic picture of *Strategic Autonomy* in external actions, Hoffmann’s separation into soft power and hard power instruments can be included (Hoffmann 2021). This adds the fourth question of how the EU wants to act to the ones posted by Biscop.

Talking about *Strategic Autonomy* in the context of the EU’s CFSP, Retter et al. (2021: iv) start their paper on transatlantic visions and implications of *Strategic Autonomy* by listing factors that directly influence the EU’s *Strategic Autonomy*. Some of the factors listed by Retter et al. have already been discussed in this chapter. Therefore, it seems to be appropriate to end this chapter with this overview. Starting the list are external factors like the level of conflict in the world, threat perception of Member States, the credibility of NATO, and the level of trust in the US as an ally. Following these factors are issues and debates already discussed in this chapter. First, the level of ambition, as conceptualized by Fiott (2018). Second, the development of a common strategic culture in Europe. This factor is echoed by Arteaga (2017: 5), who sees a coherent strategic culture as a pre-requisite for *Strategic Autonomy* to be viable. Related to this factor are the aggregate military strength of Member State forces, the level of interoperability, and EU leadership (Retter et al. 2021: iv). A factor that is a real point of contention is the degree of complementarity with NATO. As Howorth (2017) points out, the current vague definition of *Strategic Autonomy* and the lack of clarity of the level of ambition leaves contradictions with regards to the EU’s future relationship with NATO. It is evident from the literature that there are major disputes about the interplay between NATO, the EU, and the EU’s proclaimed aspiration for *Strategic Autonomy* not only among member states but also among experts (see Arteaga et al. 2016; Camporini et al. 2017; Franke & Varma 2019). The questions pertaining EU leadership, military strength, and interoperability are important to determine the role of the EU inside and next to NATO. Coupled with these issues are the factors, defense spending of member states and EU common funding (Retter et al. 2021: iv). The issue of national defense spending gained prominence during the Trump presidency but became acute with the beginning of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. Shrinking defense budgets across Europe are identified as a main obstacle on the path to *Strategic Autonomy*. As Arteaga (2017: 6) writes, a move towards *Strategic Autonomy* would require additional budgetary efforts by the Member States and the

EU. Finally, the future involvement of and cooperation with the UK in matters of security and defense and more generally, the access of third parties to the EU defense market are identified as factors influencing the *Strategic Autonomy* of the EU (Retter et al. 2021: iv).

Strategic Autonomy is like other concepts in IR (e.g., power or security), relational and therefore hard to conceptualize. Seen out of the context of EU politics, certain features of *Strategic Autonomy* can be defined, as well as certain variables that need to be filled in to create a contextualized concept. *Strategic Autonomy* can be defined narrowly, only concerning hard power instruments, broadly, concerning all areas of potential strategic interest, or in an analytical way as the relation between the ends and means of external policy. As autonomy is a condition rather than an attribute, *Strategic Autonomy* must be seen gradually between total dependence and complete autarky. To identify certain levels of *Strategic Autonomy*, “freedom to act” and “freedom from dependencies” can be used as classifiers. While Fiott (2018: 2 ff.) uses them to identify three levels of autonomy for the *European Strategic Autonomy* with *Responsibility*, *Hedging*, and *Emancipation*, one could envision other and further levels of autonomy for other contexts. Furthermore, *Strategic Autonomy* has multiple dimensions that are important for the operationalization of the concept. While the literature categorizes and names these dimensions differently, there is agreement on the latent content of the dimensions. In general, the decision-making process necessary to decide on a level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* as well as the actual policies to implement this goal, are framed in a political and or institutional dimension (Arteaga 2017; Grevi 2019: 10; Järvenpää et al. 2019: 12). The actual operationalization as well as the resources needed, be it financial or other, are framed in an operational, and or capabilities dimension. Finally, the industrial base necessary for the pursued level of *Strategic Autonomy* is represented in an industrial dimension (ibid.). The combination and balancing of these dimensions can indicate a certain understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* (Arteaga 2017: 1; Mauro 2021: 11). In addition to these dimensions, a couple of questions are essential to formulate a concrete conception of *Strategic Autonomy*. These questions concern who exactly should be strategically autonomous, in which political areas, as well as what kind of level of *Strategic Autonomy* will be pursued, and why (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021). For external actions, this last question of why takes on a special meaning and is necessary for understanding *Strategic Autonomy*. Therefore, to conceptualize *Strategic Autonomy* in Foreign Affairs, the questions of why, where, when, and how – with hard or soft power instruments – external policies are deployed need to be answered (Biscop 2019: 5).

4.3 Discursive Institutionalism

How does political change work? This question may seem basic, but it is important to understand the prospects and limitations of a discourse around a concept like *Strategic Autonomy* which is influenced by both endogenous and exogenous factors. Institutionalism tries to explain why change happens and also why it does not happen. Institutions in this case are understood in a sociological way as “the foundation of social life. They consist of formal and informal rules, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and systems of meaning that define the context within which individuals, corporations, labor unions, nation-states, and other organizations operate and interact with each other (Campbell 2004: 1).” Institutions in this sense not only include the political institutions like the European Council, the Member States, or the treaties at the heart of the EU but also the values and norms assigned to the EU and claimed by each member state as well as concepts like the EU as a normative power. The question is thus, how these structures work and how actors within them can produce change within them or change the institution itself. In doing that, Institutionalism in general, and *Discursive Institutionalism* more specifically, tries to alleviate the problem that change, or the lack thereof, is analyzed after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. Blyth (2002: 7) observes that institutional change is often explained by juxtaposing political structures and policies before and after the fact and then inserting a variable to explain the change which often has the character of an external factor. For Blyth, this logic of post hoc, ergo propter hoc is not suitable for explaining change because “that which comes after does not explain that which comes before, unless one can specify the causal links between the former and latter objects (ibid.: 8).” Therefore, closer attention needs to be paid to how and why actors behave and act in a certain way inside their structures.

To start with, any change requires a practice by an actor or a set of actors. Practice can be seen as a pattern of meaningful action (Adler & Pouliot 2011: 6). Already, the word action connotes intention behind a specific behavior (Wagenaar 2011: 16). In the literature, meaning is distinguished between subjective and objective meaning to try to explain intention. While objective meaning describes rules and conventions that inform everyone’s actions to a degree, subjective meaning relates to the reasons, motives, and individual purposes of the action (ibid.: 18). This aspect of meaning is the most consequential but is hidden behind the explanations and justifications of an actor. Thus, interpretation is required to render subjective meaning “visible” (ibid.: 16). Institutionalists of different analytical strains disagree on the

characteristics and influence of both subjective and objective meaning on institutional change. First, rational choice institutionalism subsumes everything under the calculus of individual utility (Blyth 2002: 19). Therefore, all actors make calculated, rational decisions using a cost-benefit analysis to maximize their individual interests (Schleicher 2021: 36). In this view, nothing exists a priori that is not a product of an individual decision. Institutions, be they conventions, treaties, or other structures, are therefore the product of individuals and are mere instruments to further their personal benefit. Accordingly, any institution is just a vehicle of exogenous interests that joined forces to produce it (Blyth 2002: 19). Second, historical institutionalism highlights the influence of institutions on actors. As Blyth puts it, „historical institutionalists hold institutions themselves as theoretical primitives [...] institutions are ontologically prior to the individuals who constitute them (ibid.).” As a consequence, institutions are routines and established practices that constitute regulating structures that guide the behavior of actors (Schleicher 2021: 36). The normative structures that are the foundations of institutions can create a path dependency that restricts “the set of policy ideas that political elites find acceptable and formal institutions mediate the degree to which elites transport different ideas into policy-making arenas for consideration. (Campbell 1998: 378).” For historical institutionalists equilibria are the norm and the individual beliefs and interests are of lesser importance. If change does occur, it is explained by exogenous influences which “puncture” (Blyth 2002: 20) the equilibrium thereby creating a “window of opportunity” to change the constricting institutions (Schleicher 2021: 36).

While both rational choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism make important contributions to understanding institutional change, they have blind spots in their analytical perspective. Critics point out that the focus on individual interests and calculus neglects the influence of institutions on actors. While individual interests certainly factor into decision-making, other non-utilitarian concerns play a role as well (Schmidt 2008: 16). In their introduction to their book on the role of ideas in foreign policy, Goldstein & Keohane (1993: 4) put it aptly when writing: “ideas as well as interests have causal weight in explanations of human action.” Campbell (1998: 379) criticizes that interests are framed by rational choice institutionalists as the main determinants in decision-making processes when it should be seen as an interaction between interests and other ideas and factors because “some types of ideas are endogenous to the policy process in the sense that they are influenced by policy struggles in which interests, resources, and power loom large.” As Schmidt (2008: 16) writes, the critique of interests is not a rejection of the notion of a material reality but rather a critique of

the conflation of material reality and interests. Moreover, some scholars argue that interests themselves are not simply given but the result of social construction and are therefore contingent (Campbell 2004: 91, Schmidt 2008: 18). For Blyth (2002: 9) this means that interests are a part of the discourse that needs to be explained, rather than being explanans for change. On the other hand, historical institutionalism is criticized for disregarding the agency of actors and counterintuitively overemphasizing the “lock-in-effects” of punctuated equilibria (Schmidt 2008). As Campbell (2004: 88) writes, the historical institutionalist’s perspective on change leads to “excessively deterministic stories in which actors appear to be [...] responding blindly and in knee-jerk fashion to the institutionally given scripts, schema, rules, and regulations that surround them.” Both rational choice and historical institutionalism are thus criticized for neglecting the influence and genesis of ideas and the process of discourse and deliberation. *Discursive Institutionalism* emerged to reconceptualize the relationship between institutions, interests, and ideas and thereby answer to the critique leveled against both institutionalist approaches (Blyth 2002: 17). Rather than seeking to replace or contradict the existing institutionalist perspectives, the *Discursive Institutionalism* perspective builds on the insights of rational-choice and historical institutionalism to extend the toolbox for analysts. The main points of *Discursive Institutionalism* are one, to treat ideas as crucial parts of institutional change rather than as “fillers” in a predetermined hypothesis of change (Blyth 2002: 17), two, to acknowledge the role discourse plays in the development and reception of ideas (Schmidt 2008: 1), and three, to define institutions as contingent and thus both restraining and enabling structures, which on the one hand can narrow the ideas available to decision-makers and on the other provide them with a frame of reference for actions and ideas (Campbell 1998: 382; Schmidt 2008: 12). In this reading, actors are socialized by their surroundings but retain the ability to act strategically while also being influenced by exogenous shocks and other changes (Schleicher 2021: 37).

To understand *Discursive Institutionalism*, we must contend with four terms, namely ideas, actors, discourse, and change. Ideas are the most important aspect of *Discursive Institutionalism*. In contrast to rational-choice institutionalism which only focuses on material interests and individual calculus, *Discursive Institutionalism* acknowledges the influence of a variety of ideas of which interests are but a part. As explained above, interests are subjective rather than objective and thus open to change and outside influences (Schmidt 2008: 2). Schmidt (2008: 4) differentiates between two types of ideas: cognitive ideas, which assess a situation and suggest what to do in a given situation, and normative ideas, which connect

values to ideas and thus imply “‘what is good or bad about what is’ in light of ‘what one ought to do’.” Cognitive ideas, thus, function as guidelines for political action by pointing out material needs and interests, while normative ideas legitimize decisions by amplifying their appropriateness (Schleicher 2021: 38). Ideas can be further differentiated into distinct levels. Schmidt (2008: 3f.) defines three levels of generality: First, policy ideas, which are the specific policies proposed by policymakers, second, programmatic ideas, which refer to the paradigms and underlying principles that inform specific policies, third, philosophical ideas, which are the worldviews and internal values and organizing ideas. Campbell (1989; 2004) differentiates ideas into four separate types, which follow a similar thought process as Schmidt. First, programs or programmatic ideas in Campbell’s categorization refer to technical or professional ideas that determine the cause of a specific policy problem and the effect of an action and thus recommend a precise policy solution (Campbell 1998: 386). Second, paradigms are cognitive background assumptions, which Campbell describes as “underlying theoretical and ontological assumptions about how the world works (ibid.: 389).” Third, public sentiments refer to the norms and values purported by society, which influence whether policymakers will perceive an idea as acceptable or appropriate (Campbell 2004: 96f.). Finally, Campbell (2004: 98) adds frames as types of ideas that are employed by policymakers to legitimate ideas and political actions with symbols and concepts. Schmidt (2008: 4) uses frames or “référentiels” as a type of programmatic idea used by policymakers to reconstruct a certain perception of how the world works and situate their idea in this framework. The inclusion of frames in this categorization is important because it points to the fact that ideas on their own are insufficient to explain change and only become effective when situated in a certain context and discourse. Framing is relevant because information is generally incomplete and influenced by the pre-existing attitudes and intentions of the communicator (Scheufele 1999: 105). Because citizens live in a world of incomplete information in which they cannot draw on personal experience alone, they rely on certain interpretation frames to organize the world surrounding them and make judgments (Entman et al. 2009: 178 f.; Scheufele & Engelmann 2016: 443). A frame, according to a widely used definition by Gramson and Modigliani (1987), is a central “organizing idea or storyline” behind a communicated message, giving meaning to it and helping consumers understand it (Entman et al. 2009: 175; Scheufele 1999: 106). It repeatedly uses synonymous words or symbols to invoke certain traits or highlights specific bits of information to increase their

salience, thereby promoting a particular interpretation of the content and supporting a response desired or favored by the communicator (ibid.: 177; Entman 1993: 53):

“Frames, then, define problems – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values (Entman 1993: 52).”

Following the categorization of different levels of ideas, we can classify them as either cognitive or normative and situate them in the background or the foreground of the decision-making process of actors. Both policy solutions and programs, what Campbell (2004: 94, 98) would call programs and paradigms, are cognitive ideas. While the specific policy ideas or programs are in the foreground, Campbell (2004: 94) situates paradigms in the background. Philosophical ideas, public sentiments, and frames can be classified as normative ideas because they refer to either specific or universal norms and values as well as ideas of how the world or society is constituted and thus legitimate policy actions. While frames are in the foreground because they are methodically employed by policymakers, philosophical ideas and public sentiments are situated in the background because they are either intrinsic or subconsciously influencing the decision-making process. Generally speaking, background ideas like paradigms, public sentiments, and philosophical ideas constrain policymakers because they limit the range of ideas available to or deemed acceptable by actors in a discourse. Foreground ideas, on the other hand, enable actors to push ideas because they either refer to a material need or advertise them by situating them in a certain legitimate and desirable context (ibid.). Looking at *Strategic Autonomy*, it is difficult to position the concept definitively in one of the categories or levels. Indeed, the different levels of ambition for *Strategic Autonomy* also change the categorization of *Strategic Autonomy* as an idea in the European discourse. The lowest level of ambition aiming at increasing spending for European defense, advancing inter-EU cooperation, and pushing the member states towards a more assertive posture in the area of foreign policy and defense could be framed, in Schmidt's (2008) terms, as a policy idea that does not entail a change in the *modus operandi* of the EU and the CFSP and keeps the Status Quo regarding the primacy of NATO for European defense. Higher levels of ambition that see the EU assert itself as a defense and security actor would characterize *Strategic Autonomy* as a paradigm or even a philosophical idea if defined as complete independence from the US and NATO in all questions of security and defense, requiring a wide-ranging transfer of sovereignty to the EU institutions.

Discursive Institutionalism emphasizes the agency of actors in the discourse. Therefore, actors have an important role in institutional change because they develop, disseminate, and frame ideas (Schleicher 2021: 40). While actors also play a role in rational-choice institutionalism, they are very one-dimensional because they act only according to their material interest and personal benefit. By looking at the deliberation between different actors, discursive institutionalism widens the scope of actors that influence decision-making, which allows us to make sense of more complex issues. With regard to *Strategic Autonomy*, *Discursive Institutionalism* also forces us to take a critical look at the existing literature on the concept, which becomes apparent when looking at the actors present in the political sphere. In the political discourse, these actors are political figures like members of the government and the opposition or party representatives as well as other political actors like experts, think tanks, lobby groups, and the media (Schmidt 2008: 8). Campbell (2004: 100f.) differentiates these actors into five separate categories with distinct roles. First of all, and most obviously, decision-makers have the most immediate relationship with the development and execution of ideas. However, decision-makers neither develop nor deliberate ideas in a vacuum but are influenced by other actors (ibid.: 101 f.). The second category of actors refers to theorists like academics or intellectuals who develop policy ideas or even challenge existing paradigms either by publishing books, editorials, and essays or directly in an advisory capacity. Campbell (1998) analyzed the shift in US economic policy in the 1980s and found that one factor among others for the change towards neoliberal supply-side economics was an influential and vocal academic advocacy, which dominated the intellectual discourse. With this in mind, we return to the observation by Mauro (2018: 17) who pointed out that while the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* is prominently absent in the classic literature on IR, it is omnipresent in publications by research institutes and think tanks. Reading their output, it usually couples an attempt to craft a universally applicable definition of *Strategic Autonomy*, with an analysis of potential outcomes and concrete political recommendations. Thus, the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* is less of an academic observation of a phenomenon in the foreign policy discourse but rather an active participant in the deliberation of the concept.

The third type of actors described by Campbell (2004) are framers. Framers, in reference to Campbell's four types of ideas, are an important part of the discourse because, "for decision makers to embrace them, programs need to be considered acceptable or appropriate as well as intellectually appealing and convincing (ibid.: 102)." Thus framers, in the manner described by Entman (1993), act strategically to set ideas in a context that not only advertises them but

also lets them seem acceptable and legitimate. In his analysis of US economic policy, Campbell (1998: 395) quotes a political observer commenting on US President Ronald Reagan's masterful way of framing his planned paradigm shift in economic policy by offering "an amalgam of images, aspirations, and expectations which resonated very powerfully with American ideas of personal and national identity." An effective framing like this can therefore contribute to a paradigm shift despite available policy solutions in line with established paradigms and sentiments. Framers not only work to convince decision-makers of an idea but also have the wider public as their audience and reference. These constituents represent the fourth actor for Campbell (2004: 104) because for an idea to be effective their "approval and support must be obtained in order to carry out a program and change institutions." Constituents are the actors who represent the public sentiment that decides whether an idea is legitimate or not. Thus, an idea either has to conform to existing sentiments within the constituency or must be shaped or framed so as to resonate with constituents (ibid.). Finally, brokers are actors who connect the existing ideational realms which can be differentiated into the ideational realm of discourse within political institutions and the public discourse. For Campbell (2004: 105), examples for brokers are pollsters who draw a picture of public sentiments and the media which not only communicates ideas from decision-makers to the public in a certain framing but also recites the deliberations of these ideas in the political discourse. Finally, Campbell introduces the institutional entrepreneur who can be seen as a special type of decision-maker. Institutional entrepreneurs introduce new ideas and have an interest in institutional change. To succeed, an institutional entrepreneur must have financial, political, and organizational resources to convince other decision-makers. For Campbell (2004:177 f.), the existence of institutional entrepreneurs is a prerequisite for change to occur.

Change, however, like ideas, can occur on different levels. After all, there are normally multiple avenues to solve a political problem. Hall (1993) thus introduced a three-tier classification of change. His categorization is based on the argument that politics consists of political goals, political instruments, and the design or configuration of these instruments (ibid.: 278). When confronted with a political problem, there are just three approaches that entail a different degree of change. First, the established instruments can be adjusted by changing policy slightly for instance by increasing retirement benefits. This can be classified as a first-order change. Second, a new set of instruments can be applied to a problem. This would mean that instead of simply increasing or decreasing retirement benefits the system itself would be changed which exemplifies second-order change (ibid.: 278, see also

Schleicher 2021:48). Both first and second-order changes can be considered gradual or incremental change, or normal policymaking (Blyth 2002; Campbell 2004, Hall 1993: 279) because they are the result of social learning (Hall 1993: 281). Decision-makers faced with a problem, learn from the shortcomings of a previous policy solution and adjust accordingly while holding on to established concepts and ideas. As Hall (ibid: 280) describes it, first and second-order change are perceived as or associated with a regular policy process marked by familiar routines and ideas even with second-order change venturing into the direction of more strategic and novel actions. Third-order change is the highest level of change possible. With third-order change, the goals behind a policy shift, which means that the concepts or paradigms behind the policy change in a drastic way. Therefore, third-order change is referred to as transformative or revolutionary change (Schleicher 2021: 47). Third-order change always overcomes a paradigm that is considered institutionalized and has the prospect of becoming institutionalized itself. Institutionalization can be seen as a sort of depoliticalization since it restricts the horizon of legitimate political ideas (Campbell 2004: 110). However, as political theorists point out, the political always leaves traces that can be picked up by emerging discursive communities outside of the established paradigm to re-politicize the discourse and challenge the institutionalized paradigm (Marchart 2007: 64).

The example brought forward by Hall (1993) is the shift away from established Keynesian policies towards neoliberal economic policies. This type of third-order change is usually caused by a variety of factors and has deeper structural consequences: “The movement from one paradigm to another that characterizes third order change is likely to involve the accumulation of anomalies, experimentation with new forms of policy, and policy failures that precipitate a shift in the locus of authority over policy and initiate a wider contest between competing paradigms (Hall 1993: 280).” One reason for this type of ideational change is that the long-term problem-solving potential of an established paradigm is exhausted and no longer fit for purpose. For third-order change to occur, external influences often play a role. However, as Blyth (2002: 8) points out, exogenous factors cannot be separated from endogenous processes, because a destabilizing exogenous factor in and of itself cannot explain the shape of institutional change it helped spring to life. Scholars of all strains of institutionalism see crises as a window of opportunity to cause institutional change. However, crises are subjective rather than objective events. For a crisis to have an impact on decision-making it first must be acknowledged as a crisis by actors in general and decision-makers specifically, which often coincides with the recognition that a certain situation or event has the

potential to threaten the present division of power and resources (Blyth 2002, S. 9; Campbell 2004, S. 175 f.). Crises can be defined as moments in time in which external events or internal contradictions foster insecurities that push actors to look for new answers and ideas (Blyth 2002: 9; Campbell 2004: 174 f.). In Blyth's (2002: 9) words, crises are "situations regarded by contemporary agents as unique events where the agents are unsure as to what their interests actually are, let alone how to realize them." These foster discourse because the source of the uncertainty and nature of the crisis have to be discussed and diagnosed and the deliberation of the available ideas becomes crucial as the stakes for collective action increase (ibid.: 9; Schleicher 2021: 51). Crises, or the diagnosis of a situation as a crisis, are thus constructions that always implicate a certain policy solution that is meant to be framed as "explicable, manageable, and [...] actionable," by a certain actor (Blyth 2002: 10). A crisis can thus favor ideas that in times of stability might not have seemed valid or legitimate, by questioning the interests of actors (ibid.: 270). This can be especially effective if the established paradigm is no longer able to explain a situation or provide policy solutions that are seen as actionable and effective. If a paradigm can no longer explain developments, it loses legitimacy, which opens the opportunity for it to be questioned and ultimately replaced (Hall 1993: 280).

All these aspects interplay in the final and most important aspect of *Discursive Institutionalism*, which is discourse. While elevating the importance of ideas already adds to explaining institutional change by making it "dynamic, contingent, and political" (Blyth 2002: 11) adding a focus on discourse makes it even more versatile by looking at the interactive processes between different actors in different spheres (Schmidt 2008: 7). Discourse is put into focus because on their own neither actors nor ideas are sufficient to explain change or the question of why some ideas come into fruition while others remain ideas. For Schmidt (2008: 2) discourse is the "interactive process of exchanging ideas" which thus encompasses what is said to whom by whom at which time in which place, in what manner, and with what intention. Discourse in Schmidt's reading is about text, context, structure, and agency. It is the overarching structure as a "system of meaning that orders the production of conceptions and interpretations of the social world in a particular context. In this view, ideas are always embedded in discourses and become meaningful only by being interpreted as part of a particular discursive system of meaning (Kjaer and Petersen 2001: 220 in Schleicher 2021: 44):" This means discourse and institutions alike are socially constructed structures that guide and influence the exchange of ideas. As pointed out earlier, there are a variety of actors that take part or influence the political discourse. When looking at the actors engaged in discourse

Hall (1993: 289) separates the state and society between which there is a free flow of ideas. Still, decision-makers, experts, brokers, and constituents have to “operate within the terms of political discourse that are current in the nation at a given time, and the terms of political discourse generally have a specific configuration that lends representative legitimacy to some social interests more than others, delineates the accepted boundaries of state action, associates contemporary political developments with particular interpretations of national history, and defines the context in which many issues will be understood.”

Turning back to Campbell’s classification of ideas, a policy idea needs to fit the public sentiments in society to be seen as legitimate which Schmidt calls the normative level of an idea. For incremental change an idea needs to fit on a cognitive level, meaning that it draws on a policy solution that is part of an established toolbox as well as on a normative level, which means that it is in line with existing norms and values (Schleicher 2021: 44f.). To change the existing paradigm or stretch it with a policy idea, decision-makers need to adjust the idea or the framing of it in order to make it palatable for the public and other decision-makers influenced by it. Schmidt (2008: 2), thus differentiates between the coordinative discourse among decision-makers and other policy actors and the communicative discourse which pertains to the dialogue between the decision-makers and the wider public. In both discourses, institutional entrepreneurs pushing an idea on the one hand use framing as described earlier and on the other hand, a technique sometimes referred to as bricolage. In the process of bricolage actors (re-) combine established ideas and concepts that are already seen as legitimate to induce institutional change (Campbell 1998: 383). The process of bricolage highlights one of the defining traits of discursive institutionalism which is the constricting and enabling character of institutions and discourse itself. Schmidt relates this characteristic to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus which is rooted in social norms and values and gives an actor a “logic of practice” that restricts behavior while at the same time enabling action (Bourdieu 1990: 11 in Schmidt 2008: 13). Furthermore, while actors are always rooted in an institutional background that influences their ideational horizon, their foreground discursive abilities enable them to talk outside of their institution and its ideational restrictions. In doing that actors can form epistemic communities willing to change the institution. Together, such an epistemic community can work towards building a coherent policy paradigm that builds on established and new emerging norms and values and is thus able to replace an existing paradigm in times of uncertainty or crisis. As Campbell (1998: 387, 390) points out in his analysis of the shift towards supply-side economics in the US under Reagan, there was

already an epistemic community of experts, policymakers, and brokers who had worked towards popularizing a new approach towards economic policy and had strategically crafted a simple and effective communicative framing that was ready to be applied once the existing economic paradigm was sufficiently questioned.

It is important to acknowledge that while most examples in the literature focus on a top-down dynamic with policy elites and experts crafting an effective frame or strategic bricolage to convince the public that a certain policy idea is favorable, applicable, and legitimate from both a cognitive and a normative perspective, the discourse can also be shaped bottom-up. Social activism, civic engagement, and public protest can put pressure on decision-makers, expand the horizon of legitimate ideas, and forebode a shift in public sentiments or the emergence of new norms and values. Examples of this kind of bottom-up discursive interaction are the civil rights and feminist movements as well as environmental activism (Schmidt 2008: 8 ff.). Of course, we probably do well to view institutional change as a product of discursive interaction in both directions. As Stuart Hall points out in his analysis of Thatcherism in Britain, it is a wrong simplification to attribute this transformative political shift to the volatility of the political competition (Hall & Morley 2018: 374). Hall thus creates the image of conjuncture to represent how Thatcherism combined different ideas, claims, and societal groups to – not unlike the process of bricolage – create a seemingly coherent movement with the ability to create transformative change (ibid.: 376). It is only in the interaction and shared discourse between all the actors as defined by Campbell (2004) that a new alternative coherent policy paradigm can be put forward to replace an institutionalized concept or idea. While times of uncertainty and crisis can put actors' interests into doubt and open a window of opportunity or critical juncture for institutional change, the alternatives need to have roots in an existing discourse of a discursive community or appeal to a public sentiment or emerging norms that might not have been dominant but in existence in society. To illustrate this point using the example of the economic paradigm shift in the 1980s, the problems and crises the US economy was facing could seemingly no longer be solved or contained with the established economic policy instruments. The Keynesian paradigm of industrial policy expired because it appeared to have lost its explanatory and problem-solving potential (Campbell 1998: 386; see also: Schmidt 2008: 5). However, as Campbell (1998: 387 f., 390) elucidates, the idea to apply supply-side policy instruments was not taken out of thin air but was already advocated for in academic circles and increasingly gained traction among experts, journalists, and think tanks. An increasing number of publications and

newspaper editorials called for a transformation of economic policy and was able to communicate and frame their policy solution in terms that made supply-side economic policy-instruments seem both effective and legitimate. When the coordinative discourse on economic policy debated the idea of supply-side economics it already had influential advocates, was framed in an effective way, and was introduced into the communicative discourse as legitimate alternative. The transformative change from Keynesianism to neoliberal supply-side economics, therefore, involved different actors within different dimensions of the discourse interacting with each other enabled by a moment of economic crisis that opened a window of opportunity for institutional change. Finally, supply-side economics were tied to the idea of individual liberty as an artifice to convince the American public by an effective and persuasive communicator like President Reagan (ibid.: 395).

Discursive Institutionalism is a tool to help to explain change. Its strength lies in its approach that illustrates the different actors and different discursive dimensions and their interactions within a discourse. While historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism have the proclivity to oversimplify change by attributing it either to narrow material interests or the irresistible force of external crises or historical path dependency, *Discursive Institutionalism* accounts for a variety of factors influencing decision-making. It acknowledges different actors with different roles and positions in the discourse and their ability to act strategically, embeds these actors in a context of current events and historical developments, and focuses on the interaction of all these variables within a discourse. Thus, *Discursive Institutionalism* tries to avoid the narrow perspective of other explanatory approaches by taking a more holistic view that allows for the inclusion of the complexity of a political discourse like the EU discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*.

5. Methodology

This thesis aims to create a picture of the understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* in the European institutions by doing a two-part analysis of the existing decisions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. While the EU set *Strategic Autonomy* as a goal in 2016, the persistent and ongoing controversies over the meaning and the consequences of this goal show that after the initial publication of the Global Strategy, there was little elaboration on the details of *Strategic Autonomy* in security and defense. Due to this controversial nature, it is unlikely that the term will be used in the documents of the European Council or the

Foreign Affairs Council since the decisions of both council institutions represent a compromise between the Member States. Still, decisions on external actions and strategic orientation are made in these institutions that might work towards *Strategic Autonomy* in this policy area, even without being embedded in this contextual framework. In the previous section, the features and dimensions of *Strategic Autonomy* were explicated in reference to the existing theoretical work on the concept. Using this conceptualization, the actions and ambitions decided on by the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council can be analyzed to deduce the current images of *Strategic Autonomy* present in the EU. To do this, the external actions and strategic alignment put forward by the Council institutions need to be extracted and systematically categorized. Therefore, the first part of the analysis utilizes a *Qualitative Content Analysis* to map the landscape of European external actions and strategies. The *Qualitative Content Analysis* fits the research interest because, as Hsieh & Shannon have put it, the qualitative content analysis is “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1277).” The *Qualitative Content Analysis* by Mayring allows the qualitative analysis of large amounts of material, guided by rules to ensure traceability and the preservation of the “full complexity” of the material and its latent contents (Mayring 2015: 19). In the process of conducting the *Qualitative Content Analysis*, the theoretical work on *Strategic Autonomy* presented in the previous chapter will be applied to the research material to categorize it and extract the information necessary to analyze it further. At the same time, the *Qualitative Content Analysis* is the bedrock of the second part of the analysis, which shall look at the decisions made by the Council and how these decisions might portray a certain vision of *Strategic Autonomy* for the EU from the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*. Analyzing the decisions by the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council over time together with the normative context they are embedded with and putting them into the context of world events and the discourse within the literature on European security and defense, might increase the understanding of how these decisions were made and allow for a projection of what direction the CFSP and CSDP might take in the following year.

5.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

On the most basic level, the content analysis is the analysis of content that stems from “some sort of communication (Mayring 2015: 11).” It analyses the content and formal features of

fixed communication like printed texts, images, or photos (Früh 2015: 29). While the qualitative analysis seeks to identify the latent content within the material, it can also deduce quantitative data points. Like every qualitative analysis, the research design of the *Qualitative Content Analysis* is devised specifically to fit the examined object, the chosen research material, and the research interest (Mayring 2015: 12). The strength of this approach is, first the orientation by a specific process model and second, the vicinity to the research material. Mayring defines three types of *Qualitative Content Analyses*. First, the summary, which seeks to reduce the material to the core contents to create a picture of the material that still represents the full scope of the material (Mayring 2015: 67). In the English-speaking world, this approach is sometimes referred to as the conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1279). Second, the explication or context analysis seeks to extend the understanding of particular phrases in the material by analyzing the usage and context of certain words or phrases. The explication is also known as summative content analysis (Mayring 2015: 67; Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1283 f.). Third, the structuring, which tries to deduce certain aspects of the research material by applying predetermined criteria to it (Mayring 2015: 67). This approach is sometimes referred to as directed content analysis, because in contrast to the conventional approach, the researcher uses theory as a guide to develop a coding scheme and to highlight certain aspects of the material (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1281; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 262).

The selection of the approach to content analysis is dictated by the research interest and the research question (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1286; Mayring 2015: 12). Part of this is the question of what kind of content the analysis wants to extract from the material. Three types of content can be distinguished: Manifest content, describing the appearance, status, classification, or behavior in written form; pattern content, which can convey latent meaning in patterns of symbols; and projective content, describing elements within the content that requires recipients to access a “pre-existing mental schema” to evaluate the content (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 259). Since this research applies the dimensions and features of *Strategic Autonomy*, as found in the literature, to the decisions and Conclusions of the Council institutions, to extract the manifest contents related to these dimensions and features and summarizes them afterward, the research design will follow the process of a content structuring qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2015: 98). Following the research design of the structuring content analysis, the existing theoretical work in the literature is used to deduce a category system that structures the analysis. According to Mayring, the first steps of

the process for content structuring are the definition of the units of analysis and the structuring dimensions that eventually build the category system (ibid.; see also Poter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 262). The units of analysis represent the minimal (Kodiereinheit) and maximal (Kontexteinheit) unit of text that can be coded and the order in which the material is coded (Auswertungseinheit) (Mayring 2015: 61). This technique ensures that all the applicable materials are included in the analysis (Ramsenthaler 2013: 25). Thus, the units of analysis are as much defined by the researcher as they are by the research material itself.

When seeking to analyze the publications, decisions, and conclusions of the European institutions on external policies in general and matters of security and defense specifically, the amount of available material is overwhelming and cannot possibly be analyzed in the framework of this study. Thus, the available material must be broken down to fit the purpose of the research and the scope of a Master's thesis. This research focuses on the decisions and Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. It seeks to analyze previous and existing decisions on external actions and strategic alignment. In the area of security and defense, the Council institutions take a key position. Article 24 TEU delegates the definition and implementation of the CFSP to the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council who are supposed to act unanimously on all areas covering foreign policy and security (Treaty of the European Union, Title V, Chapter 2, Art. 24). As further laid out in Art. 22 of the TEU and Art. 68 of the TFEU, the European Council decides on the strategic interests, objectives, and guidelines of the EU in the area of freedom, security and defense (Title V, Chapter 1, Art. 22 TEU; Title V, Chapter 1, Art. 68 TFEU). Decisions by the European Council include the "duration, and the means to be made available by the Union and the Member States (Title V, Chapter 1, Art. 22 TEU). Since conclusions and decisions by both the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council require unanimity by the member states (Title V, Chapter 2, Art 31 TEU), the output of the Council institutions comes closest to representing the existing consensus positions in the EU. To create a picture of the existing images of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU without conducting a comprehensive study of all EU Member States' positions like Franke & Varma (2019), an analysis of the conclusions and decisions by the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council, thus represent the most practical approach.

The perimeters of the research period are set to include three major developments in the EU's Foreign and Security Policy. First, the already mentioned publication of the Global Strategy in June 2016, which officially named *Strategic Autonomy* as a goal for the EU (EEAS 2016).

The Strategy resulted from a renewed focus on security and defense questions after establishing the CFSP and the CSDP in the Treaties of Lisbon (Solana et al. 2016). Second, the Strategic Compass for Security and Defense, which the Council adopted in March 2022 (EEAS 2022). The Strategic Compass was written as a review of the EU's policies and strategic alignment in the area of security and defense and as a basis for the future positioning of the EU as a global security actor. While a first draft of the document was handed to the Council in November 2021, the Russian invasion of Ukraine delayed the adoption by the Council and resulted in amendments to the document (Fiott & Lindstrom 2021). The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is the third major development to be included in the research period because of the profound impact it had and still has on the EU's understanding of its role as a global actor in international politics, as described in a previous chapter (EEAS 2022). Accordingly, this research encompasses the decisions and conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council from June 2016 to June 2022.

The second and third step of Mayring's process model requires the definition of the structuring dimensions based on the existing literature and theory, and the development of the category system, which structures the analysis (Mayring 2015: 98). In contrast to the inductive formulation of categories, the deductive approach necessitates the use of theory to define and explicate the structuring dimensions that develop into the coding scheme (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 265). Using the literature on *Strategic Autonomy*, the key dimensions, features, and questions of *Strategic Autonomy* were highlighted above. The idea of this research is that by analyzing the external actions and strategic alignment as described in the Conclusions and decisions by the Council institutions with the parameters of *Strategic Autonomy*, an image of the understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU can be constructed. Of course, the dimensions as defined by Biscop (2019), Grevi (2019), and Järvenpää et al. (2019) cannot directly be applied to the material. To render elusive categories like "Level of Ambition" operational, the building blocks behind them need to be identified. The resulting structuring dimensions must be tested on the material to ensure their applicability (Mayring 2015: 97). Following Biscop (2019) and Fiott (2019), it is important to know where the EU wants to act or to be actively involved, to get an understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU. Knowing where the EU wants to conduct operations tells something about the regions the EU sees as in their strategic interest and hints at a certain level of ambition. The aim to have the capacity to act in regions outside of the immediate neighborhood of the EU could indicate a higher level of ambition regarding *Strategic*

Autonomy. Thus, the location targeted by a policy or action is one of the categories applied to the material.

Turning again to Fiott's (2018: 2) classification of his three levels of *Strategic Autonomy*, one of the key elements is the freedom to conduct operations. What Fiott does not include is the question of what kind of operations the EU wants to conduct. In reference to Hoffmann (2021), one could identify various hard and soft power instruments to be applied in various degrees. Identifying exactly what kind of actions the EU wants to pursue also puts the list of strategic interests, ambitions, and priorities of the EU given by Biscop (2019: 4 f.) into context, thereby increasing the understanding of *Strategic Autonomy*. Related to the kind of operations the EU wants to conduct are the capacities and capabilities needed to conduct them, such as strengthened naval capacities to conduct maritime operations. Categorizing the capacities needed for a particular operation further explicates the capability dimension as defined by Järvenpää et al. (2019: 12), which includes parts of Grevi's (2019: 10) operational dimension as well as Biscop's (2019: 3) military and intelligence dimension. Since the focus of this research is *Strategic Autonomy* in security and defense and not on the extensive topic of EU industrial policy, the necessary industrial capacities will – for the purpose of this research - be included into this category despite being separated into a special dimension by Biscop (2019), Grevi (2019), and Järvenpää et al. (2019). Now that the category system accounts for the type of action, the location of the action, and the capacities and capabilities needed for an action, it needs to turn to what might be the most critical element of *Strategic Autonomy*: the question of autonomy. After the question of autonomy, as formulated by Fiott (2018: 4, 6), was tested on the research material, it became clear that freedom from outside influences is not applicable to the conclusions and decisions of the Council institutions. Thus, the question will be turned around, asking for the relationship the EU wants to have with other states and institutions while conducting an operation. In the context of the other categories, this creates the picture of when and where the EU seeks to work with partners to conduct certain types of operations. On the other hand, the operations for which the EU does not specifically want to have a partner will be coded as well and can, thus, be highlighted. There is a caveat to this kind of operationalization because the documents might not explicitly tell whether the EU wants to work together with another institution and the degree this relationship will have. One could imagine the EU mentioning a close partnership with NATO for a certain kind of operation to highlight a close relationship to the transatlantic alliance, while in reality the operation will be planned and conducted by the EU autonomously. In this

sense, the careful consensual language of Council decisions and conclusions might make analyzing the EU's ambition to act autonomously difficult.

Finally, the normative context of a specific external action shall be coded in a separate category to account for the question of why the EU wants to act somewhere, which Biscop (2019: 5) counts as vital to an understanding of *Strategic Autonomy*. Here, the research is less interested in the true motifs behind actions than in the reason given in the conclusions and decisions. While the actual motifs might remain opaque behind the veneer of the careful and consensual language, the given reasons for actions can tell a lot about the EU's image of *Strategic Autonomy*. The framing of EU external actions by the Council institutions represents the legitimization of said actions and creates a certain image of the EU as a global security actor. As the literature on *Discursive Institutionalism* explains, framing an idea in a way that is consistent with established norms and values or constructing a bricolage of references and legitimizations is crucial for this idea to be acknowledged in the discourse and for it to ultimately lead to change (Campbell 1998: 383; Schmidt 2008: 3 f.). Coding the normative context within the content structuring qualitative content analysis, thus contributes to our understanding of how a decision was reached and allows us to analyze it from the perspective of Discursive Institutionalism. To ensure comparability and the analysis of developments over time, the document's title, the institution responsible, and the year of publication will also be coded. The structuring dimensions create the following category system (see Figure 2):

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Title of the Document</i>	<i>Location of the action</i>	<i>Action/Ambition/Target</i>	<i>Capacities</i>	<i>Relationship to States and other Institutions</i>	<i>Normative Context, Argument for action</i>
EuCo	European Council meeting (15 December 2016)	Libya, Central Mediterranean	enhance support for the Libyan coastguard, including through EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia	naval capacities, finances	Libya	„...to prevent the loss of life at sea and break the business model of smugglers.“
FoAfCo	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING Foreign Affairs, 18	South Sudan	support to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	Finances	UN	respond to the violence in South Sudan and

	July 2016					protect civilians
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Figure 2: Category System with exemplary content

Using these parameters, the category system is applied to the research material. The units of analysis define how the process will unfold to ensure the traceability of the analysis and allow replication of the coding (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 267). The documents of the Council of Europe and the Foreign Affairs Council will be coded in random order. A typical conclusion by the Council of Europe is about eight pages long and ordered in different chapters. Inside the chapters, different actions and decisions are listed as numbered bullet points. While sometimes every bullet point pertains to a separate issue, at times, a single action is described in multiple numbered bullet points or has sub-bullets in the form of letters. Only contents within the External Relations or Security and Defense chapters are considered for this research. Within these sections, only bullet points pertaining to an action to be conducted will be coded (Definition of action). The smallest part applicable for coding is, thus, a single bullet point, while the maximum for coded content is a whole External Relations or Security and Defense section within a Council Conclusion document (see Mayring 2015: 61). For the documents of the Foreign Affairs Council, the operationalization is more complicated. In contrast to the conclusions of the European Council, there are no chapters to guide the coding process in the documents of the Foreign Affairs Council. The Main Outcome documents that summarize the contents of every Council Meeting vary with regards to the contents included. The Foreign Affairs Council adopts Conclusions on certain foreign policy issues, which are sometimes replicated in full in the Main Outcome document, sometimes summarized and sometimes only referenced. In the latter case, the separate Conclusion document was coded in addition to the Main Outcome document. Still, the contents of the documents will be coded according to the same definition of action that guide the coding of the European Council's documents⁶.

Together, the units of analysis make up the coding scheme that translates the material into a category system that is the bedrock of the analysis of the material (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1285). Every coded paraphrase is dissolved into the relevant dimensions for *Strategic Autonomy* and sorted into the categories of the category system (see Früh 2015: 79). If a

⁶ It is also important to mention, that the format of the Outcome documents of the Foreign Affairs Council changed during the research period. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Foreign Affairs ministers met virtually in Video Conferences. Following these meetings, the Council Secretariat produces press releases and no official Outcome documents. This practice continued after physical meetings of the Council resumed.

category does not apply well or at all to the material during the initial coding process, the category, and its parameters can be changed to increase the fit of the category system to the research material. This potential revision of the category system is represented in step seven of the process model of a structuring content analysis (Mayring 2015: 98). The strength of this approach is the close vicinity of the content analysis to the original research material, to ensure that all relevant content is coded while preserving that each piece of coded material can be related to its initial context (ibid.: 50). The result is a table that categorized all external actions and strategic decisions the Council institutions have decided on in the span from June 2016 to June 2022. To make the coding of the content easier to handle and to allow for a comparison between the two Council formations, the content of Conclusions from the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council were coded in separate tables. For actions by the Council aimed at reforming the CFSP or creating a new instrument the location of the action was coded as internal. Whenever no specific code could be found for a specific category, these were coded as “not applicable” or in short “NA”. After the coding process is completed, the results will be discussed, guided by the theory to make a statement on the research material and extend the existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1283). To differentiate the research material from other references in the text, they are quoted by adding their document number to the institution and the year of publication. For documents that don’t have an official document number, a number was created from the respective publication date of the document.⁷

As with every qualitative method, there are challenges with this approach. The first is a potential bias by the researcher (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1283). While the deductive, theory-guided approach can help to reduce the influence of the researcher’s personal biases in the design of the coding scheme (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 266), there can be a strong bias to be more likely to find material in support of the chosen theory (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1283). The second challenge is an overemphasis on the theory, resulting in a narrow perspective on the research material and missed contextual information (ibid.). These challenges are related to a central issue of qualitative research: the validity and reliability of the results. Therefore, reliability and validity must be discussed to fulfill the criteria of a social scientific methodology (Mayring 2015: 123; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 258). In every research – but especially in qualitative research – pre-existing knowledge and attitudes can influence the research at different stages. This challenge increases when more

⁷ The full list of documents can be found in Appendix A

interpretation is required to analyze the data (Früh 2015: 115). The deductive theory-guided approach attempts to minimize the input of researchers' opinions and biases and "make the coding process uniform across all coders so that the coding can be regarded as systematic (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 268)." The key is to follow predetermined steps and explain the choices made in defining the units of analysis and the structuring dimensions to make the coding process traceable and, thus, reproducible for other coders (Früh 2015: 116). The stability and reproducibility of such a systematic approach are important for the reliability of the content analysis. In this research, the manifest nature of the content being extracted by the content analysis already contributes to the greater reliability of the results (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999: 272). When analyzing manifest content, reliability is a precondition for validity, which is harder to establish. Validity describes the degree to which the results of the analysis represent the research question (Früh 2015: 116). When using the directed approach to content analysis, this means that all steps of the research process accurately build on each other to ensure that the coding system, category system, and results are valid and represent the aim of the research:

"The categorization matrix can be regarded as valid if the categories adequately represent the concepts, and from the viewpoint of validity, the categorization matrix accurately captures what was intended (Elo et al. 2014: 2)."

Having followed the systematic approach of the process model for a structuring content analysis, the summary of the existing literature on *Strategic Autonomy* and the explanation of how the literature informed the definition of the structuring dimensions and the formulation of the categories should give validity to the results of this research. Still, both validity and reliability remain to a degree, subjective exercises when no additional coders can be utilized to establish intercoder-reliability (Früh 2015: 116). Therefore, a better term to describe the essence of what is meant to be achieved with reliability and validity is trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of the results is expressed by its dependability, which is another term for the stability of the data, and its conformability, which describes the "potential for congruence between two or more independent people" regarding the accuracy of the data and the results (Elo et al. 2014: 2). As a consequence, working systematically and transparently can be sufficient to establish the trustworthiness of the results (see Mayring 2015: 126 f.).

5.2 The CFSP under the lens of *Discursive Institutionalism*

While the first part of the analysis draws a picture of the strategic orientation of the CFSP and CSDP it does little to explain the decisions made on the way. To add to the theoretical complexity of this analysis and allow for an explanation of past decisions and a potential projection of the strategic decisions to come, the second part of the analysis looks at the CFSP and CSDP decisions through the lens of *Discursive Institutionalism*. *Discursive Institutionalism* is a tool to help us explain change by focusing on the full complexity of the political discourse and situating it in current political events and the academic discourse. Looking at the CFSP and CSDP from the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, thus, allows an attempt to explain how changes in the EU's policy came about and will come about. With regard to the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*, *Discursive Institutionalism* can help to explain why the concept has not only made a comeback but has become a “buzzword” (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 1) in the debate on the EU's foreign, security and defense policy debate and how the discourse is moving the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* in certain directions. Moreover, *Discursive Institutionalism* also enables a critical perspective on the existing literature on *Strategic Autonomy*. As mentioned earlier, the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* is dominated by articles published by foundations, research institutes, and think tanks. The analysis of these papers and their work towards crafting a general definition for the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* is muddled with critique on past and present political shortcomings of the EU's CFSP and CSDP and recommendations for changes and reforms of the EU's strategy and security landscape. The literature on *Strategic Autonomy*, therefore, is not just a passive observer of the political discourse on the EU's security and defense, but an active participant. Describing brokers in the political discourse, Campbell (2004: 106) highlights the role of epistemic communities and especially think tanks in developing new paradigms and connecting ideational realms:

“They have learned to transmit these ideas to decision makers through pithy policy briefs designed to affect programmatic thinking. And, to influence public sentiments, they transmit these ideas to the public through op-ed pieces and articles in the major newspapers and financial press, and through appearances on television and radio talk shows.”

Therefore, a careful reading of the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* is necessary to on the one hand extract the different dimensions and levels of *Strategic Autonomy* and on the other acknowledge when the author or authors are pushing a certain narrative or path of conduct. The ambivalent role of the literature is not the only difficulty in analyzing the CFSP and the discourse around it. The ability to observe the discourse on the CSFP, CSDP, and the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* is limited by the contractual framework behind the CFSP. As explicated in the first part of this thesis, the CFSP and CSDP is subject to the Council with little participation of the parliament. Thus, the actual debate on the strategic alignment of the EU and the future of the CFSP is largely confined to closed-door meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council and the preparatory COREPER. The conclusions of the Council available to the public do not show the discourse that preclude them and are themselves a contribution to the discourse and as such subject to framing. As a result, structural factors like cultural norms and path dependency can be hard to evaluate because norms like the pledge to the UN Charter or the adherence to the path of the EU as a peaceful normative power can also be employed as a veil or legitimization to cover cut and dry strategic interests. As Mauro (2021: 9) wrote aptly but pessimistically: “The reality is that states are ‘cold monsters’ as Nietzsche said, and that they ‘coldly lie’ when it suits them [...] States act according to their interests, which can lead them to flout the values they proclaim, the treaties they have ratified and even the contracts they have signed.” Therefore, as Campbell (1998: 401) admitted, we can’t necessarily trust what actors say in public because they might simply try to cover up true motives. While these motives are probably voiced behind closed doors and influence the discourse as well as the decision output, they are not communicated publicly. Therefore, it can only be guessed what lies behind purported statements and pledges.

Another limitation regarding the inter-institutional discourse in the EU is the relationship between the Commission and the European Council. Schmidt (2008: 11) elucidates that the EU has both a weak communicative discourse because of “the lack of an elected central government— and its dependence on national leaders to speak for it” and a strong coordinative discourse “given its highly complex, semi-pluralist processes and quasi-federal structures.” While the Commission tries to assert itself as an institution in EU foreign policy making and increasingly tries to influence the agenda and the decision-making of the Council (Riddervold 2016), the control over the CFSP remains in the Council. It was the Council that requested the Commission to draft the Strategic Council and the Council both reviewed and ultimately passed an adapted version of the Strategic Compass. It is hard if not impossible to

reconstruct the discourse between the Council and the Commission, especially since the first drafts of documents and strategy papers that are introduced to the Council by the Commission are not public domain. Therefore, the position of the Commission can only be examined after the fact once it is approved by the Council. Thus, speeches by the President of the Council, the HR for the CFSP or the President of the Commission like the State of the Union, are the only window into the foreign policy agenda and strategic thinking of the Commission. In general, as Szewczyk (2021: 75) points out, there is only a limited EU-wide debate on issues, due to reasons like language barriers, lack of interest, and the complexity of some of the issues. The public discourse that does exist is mostly limited to a select group of insiders. Finally, since the focus of this Master's thesis is on the analysis of the decisions of the Council regarding the CFSP and CSDP, a thorough and comprehensive discourse analysis cannot be realized within the limits of this thesis. Even a general overview of the publications on the CFSP and *Strategic Autonomy* from the major think tanks, foreign policy magazines and newspapers in addition to speeches and interviews would require a separate thesis paper. Thus, this thesis will use the lens of *Discursive Institutionalism* to further discuss the results of the first part of the analysis and set them into the context of both the academic literature and the political events that could have influenced them.

6. Analysis

This thesis aims to analyze the European Foreign and Security Policy based on a *Qualitative Content Analysis* of the Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. The following chapter presents the results of the *Qualitative Content Analysis*. After presenting the results of the *Qualitative Content Analysis*, key elements of the theoretical conceptualization of *Strategic Autonomy* will be applied to the research results to identify the state of play of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU's foreign and security policy. In total 63 documents of the European Council and 193 documents of the Foreign Affairs Council were coded as part of the *Qualitative Content Analysis*. The resulting spreadsheets contain a list of the states and regions the European Union wants to be active in, the type of action the EU wants to conduct, the partners the EU wants to conduct the action with, and the objective of or reason for the action. Generally, the Foreign Affairs Council covers foreign affairs and external actions more in depth, while the European Council is focused on the issues that are most pressing or have strategic priority. Hence, issues that are covered more frequently by the

European Council can be seen as more salient to the EU. Looking at the types of action the EU wants to conduct, 12 general types of action can be identified.⁸

6.1 External Actions under the CFSP from 2016-2022

The first category of actions contains treaties, partnerships, and agreements the EU signs with third states or regional organizations. These range from Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with third states, to the establishment of an EU-Latin America and the Caribbean International Foundation (Council of the European Union 8126/19 2019: 9), to the signing of a Joint Green Agenda (Council of the European Union 9993/21 2021: 9). Included in this category of action are the opening of EU Representations in third states and the increased cooperation within existing partnership frameworks. Notably, between 2016 and 2022, the EU was especially active in Central Asia and Latin America. As set out in the 2016 Global Strategy, the EU signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with multiple states in Central Asia like Kazakhstan (Council of the European Union 14418/16 2016: 11) and the Kyrgyz Republic (Council of the European Union 13032/17 2017: 10) and signed agreements to secure the supply with gas from Central Asia (Council of the European Union 10387/17 2017: 4). In Latin America, the EU established the aforementioned International Foundation, adopted an EU trust fund (Council of the European Union 15471/16 2016: 8), and signed multiple agreements with third states in Latin America to strengthen democracy, fight climate change, or establish closer cooperation. The EU was also active in eastern Europe. The Council approved agreements between the EU and Moldova to strengthen the cooperation on the basis of an existing Association Agreement (Council of the European Union 6541/18 2018: 4) and opened the door for Kosovo to access EU programs (Council of the European Union 11353/17 2017: 12). This can be seen as part of the EU Agenda to accelerate the integration of eastern Europe and the Western Balkan to uphold the perspective of membership for these states and disseminate its norms and values. Finally, the EU also reiterated its commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for Iran, which it was party to together with China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and the US. Even after the US unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, the EU at first remained committed to the deal (Council of the European Union 9400/18 2018: 3) and even put actions in place to shield

⁸ The List of Categories for both the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council can be found in Appendix B

companies from repercussions by the U.S. for continuing to engage with Iran according to the statutes of the JCPOA (Council of the European Union 11153/18 2018: 6).

The second category of actions by the EU contains sanctions. Sanctions represent a significant part of the EU's foreign policy. Sanctions were used for a variety of causes which broadly align with the EU treaties and its commitment to the Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter like the violent repression of civilians, assassinations, and extrajudicial killings as well as for military coups and attacks on democracy and the rule of law. Among the states most sanctioned by the EU from 2016 and 2022 is Syria. The Syrian government was not only chemical weapons in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Council of the European Union 11353/17 2017: 8). While some sanctions are put forward by the EU, the EU also joined in sanctions regimes established by the UN Security Council. An example for this is the almost annual renewal and expansion of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for developing and testing nuclear weapons and missiles capable of carrying a nuclear payload (Council of the European Union 6541/18 2018: 13). In 2020, the EU expanded its application of sanctions by adopting a global human rights sanctions regime able to target individuals, entities, and bodies – including state and non-state actors (Council of the European Union 13737/20 2020: 5). Also in 2020, the number and scope of sanctions against Belarus started to increase. The potentially fraudulent presidential elections of this year and the subsequent violent repression of protesters marked a turning point in the EU's relation with Belarus. In the months and years after the EU continually expanded its sanctions regime against Belarus for actions like the arrest of a journalist following the forced landing of a commercial airliner (Council of the European Union 9993/21 2021: 4) and the pushing of migrants towards the EU border in Poland in 2021 (Council of the European Union 13934/21 2021:4). The state most often mentioned in the context of sanctions was Russia, mainly due to its war of aggression against Ukraine (European Council 24/22 2022: 2). It is notable that sanctions are most commonly used against states in which the EU is not active otherwise.

Humanitarian aid is another distinct category of EU external actions. The reason for delivering humanitarian aid are mostly food insecurity, water scarcity, environmental disaster, as well as forced displacement due to violent conflicts. A special situation for the latter is the humanitarian aid given to Bangladesh following the expulsion and persecution of the Rohingya population in Myanmar (Council of the European Union 13032/17 2017: 6). Similarly, both Jordan and Lebanon received humanitarian aid from the EU for giving shelter to refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria (European Council 31/16 2016: 3). Syria is one of

the states most commonly mentioned in relation with humanitarian aid next to the states in the Sahel region, and Yemen. The humanitarian aid of the EU is often connected to UN initiatives or international funding drives supported or spearheaded by the EU and based on the EU treaties' commitment to the Charter of the UN and pledge to the pursuit of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights (Art. 21 (1) & (2) TEU).

A category of actions that is related to but sufficiently distinct from the category of humanitarian aid is the category of EU external actions containing developmental aid and support for economic reforms. Support in these areas is often part of a wider ranging cooperation including areas like migration and governance. The range of areas included in EU actions towards supporting development as well as economic and structural reform processes can be exemplified by a set of actions targeted at the Indo-Pacific region to “support states to eradicate poverty, stimulate growth and jobs, promote respect for human rights and labour rights, develop ambitious climate and biodiversity policies and long-term decarbonization strategies (Council of the European Union 7914/21 2021: 5).” The Covid-19 pandemic introduced funding to offset the economic fallout of the pandemic and measures aimed at reforming the health sector of states (European Council 15/20 2020: 3). As mentioned before, this type of developmental aid and support for economic reform is often part of a set of external actions by the EU targeted at a state or region. Hence, a region that was especially targeted by the EU was the Sahel (Council of the European Union 7723/21 2021) in which the EU continues to be engaged in a variety of ways, which are explored later. Besides the Sahel, efforts towards development and economic reform, were located in Afghanistan (Council of the European Union 11245/16 2016: 2) and Pakistan (Council of the European Union 11246/16: 2) as well as the EU's eastern neighborhood, most notably Ukraine and Moldova (Council of the European Union 14418/16 2016: 4).

A step up from delivering economic support are EU actions towards capacity building in the military and security area and security sector reform. Both capacity building and security sector reform are not only internal goals for the EU but are part of a strategy to improve the resilience of third states to prevent and withstand crises. A good example for external actions in this category is Afghanistan where the EU supported the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces by building up their capacity to act, cooperated with them in the fight against terrorism, and worked towards strengthening civilian policing (Council of the European Union 13098/17: 3; Council of the European Union 11245/16 2016: 6). As mentioned earlier, this type of action is often part of diversified approach to a state or region by the EU and is

thus most commonly targeted at states and regions which are the focus of a variety of EU actions. The Sahel region and the states located therein were of particular interest for EU capacity building and security sector reform measures next to the Horn of Africa, Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq. While in the Sahel region efforts were aimed at strengthening the security capabilities and stabilities of states in an ongoing conflict, the focus in Afghanistan and Iraq was on building up capacities post conflict. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine represented a decisive point in EU capacity building efforts. Starting at the days following the invasion, the EU increased its efforts to support the military capabilities of Ukraine by facilitating the supply of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine while simultaneously expanding capacity building measures in the eastern neighborhood and the Western Balkans (Council of the European Union 1605/22 2022).

A key part in the EU's foreign and security policy as it is codified in the Treaties is its aim to act in accordance with and towards the propagation of its values and principles. Accordingly, there are external actions aimed at supporting elections, governance, and democratic transition processes. Actions towards democratic governance included support for reform efforts, technical and financial assistance for election processes, and financial support for governance reforms and transition processes. In addition, the EU employed two Election Observation Missions in Bolivia (Council of the European Union 1408/20 2020) and Mali (Council of the European Union 10026/18 2018: 7) and extended the mandate of its mission in Kosovo aimed at supporting judicial reforms and the rule of law (Council of the European Union 14418/16 2016: 12). Interestingly, the EU made substantial efforts to engage in Venezuela. After the disputed reelection of Nicolas Maduro and his efforts to weaken democratic institutions in Venezuela, the EU stepped up its engagement in the region by trying to foster dialogue and spearheading an International Contact Group together with Uruguay to work towards a technical mission to create the conditions for free, fair, transparent presidential elections (Council of the European Union 6539/19 2019: 5). In some states and regions the EU is only indirectly engaged in transition efforts by supporting missions and initiatives by the UN and the African Union for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, and Sudan. Besides support for governments and international missions working towards democratic reform efforts, the EU also provided financial assistance to civil society organizations and opposition groups in states in which the government is opposed to democratic reforms (e.g. Council of the European Union 6295/21: 5). Hence, the EU

supported civil society groups in Belarus, Hong Kong, Russia, and Syria to facilitate grassroots efforts towards a democratic transition.

The EU was not only involved in democratic transition efforts but also in conflict mediation and peace negotiations. In this category of action, it is notable that the EU is almost always engaged in joined efforts with other partners. The UN, AU, and the Intergovernmental Association for Development are among the most important partners for the EU in mediation and conflict settlement efforts. This is in line with the objectives of the EU to encourage peace and mediation processes that are owned by the local populations. There are certain conflicts that come up repeatedly in the period between 2016 and 2022, most notably the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno Karabakh, and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine prior to the Russian invasion in 2022. Usually, the EU would reiterate its support and commitment to a peaceful conflict resolution while advocating for negotiations with the promise of providing developmental aid. In 2016, the EU tried to ameliorate relations between Israel and Palestine by offering an “unprecedented package of political, economic and security support to be developed with both parties in the context of a final status agreement (Council of the European Union 368/16 2016).” A conflict that necessitated concerted efforts by the EU during the period of analysis was the deterioration of the ongoing dispute between Cyprus and Türkiye, which led to Turkish military aircraft violating the sovereign air space of an EU member state (Council of the European Union 1505/20 2020).⁹ The conflict deteriorated over drilling operations conducted by Türkiye in the maritime zone of Cyprus and the unilateral decision by Türkiye to reopen the area Verosha for potential resettlement.¹⁰ The EU responded with sanctions against Türkiye by halting arms exports (European Council 23/19 2019: 2), suspending negotiations over a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, and reducing pre-accession financial assistance to Türkiye (Council of the European Union 11260/19 2019: 10). At the same time, it reiterated its support to the UN led peace process between ethnic Greek and ethnic Turkish Cypriots.

While the EU is cooperating with the UN and other international organizations for a variety of actions, support for and participation in international regimes, multilateral efforts and

⁹ In 2021, Türkiye changed its official English name from Turkey to Türkiye. While the Council documents still use the old name, this thesis is only using the new name Türkiye to maintain coherence

¹⁰ Varosha is part of the city of Famagusta which is in the disputed area between Cyprus and Northern Cyprus. While it de jure belongs to Cyprus, it is de facto under the control of Northern Cyprus. The city was evacuated during the conflict and remains inhabited. A UN Security Council Resolution considered any settlement by people other than the original inhabitants inadmissible (International Crisis Group 2023).

initiatives, and international convention can be identified as a distinct type of foreign policy action. The EU's participation in international regimes can be further specified in three broad categories: weapons and non-proliferation, human-rights, and climate and development. In the period between 2016 and 2022, the EU was especially focused on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). This can be retraced to the use and development of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime and the assassination attempt in Salisbury with the use of a chemical agent. Support for the CWC was expressed with financial contributions to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the provision of satellite imagery to the OPCW to enable the effective implementation of the CWC (Council of the European Union 15381/18 2018:10). The EU was also active in supporting the Small Arms and Light Weapons Convention (Council of the European Union 2111 2019), the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (Council of the European Union 13934/21 2021: 6), and efforts towards the clearance and destruction of landmines and explosive remnants of war (Council of the European Union 14177/16: 4). With regards to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the EU supported the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and routinely renewed sanctions against treaty violations (Council of the European Union 13934/21 2021: 6). The human rights category or international regimes is probably the most prominent. The EU's commitment to human rights is not only expressed in almost every Conclusion adopted by the Council institutions but also represented in an annually adopted Conclusion lining out the EU's priorities in UN human rights fora. While human rights can be utilized as the overall term, the EU expressed support for conventions and initiatives on gender violence, the protection of children and indigenous peoples as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights (Council of the European Union 6326/21 2021). Support for these causes is expressed monetarily and by a commitment to act as a leader for the promotion of these rights. The final category of international initiatives supported by the EU is representing actions against climate change and for sustainable development. Front and center in this category are the 23 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) put forward by the UN. The EU has committed itself to support the realization of the UN's SDGs by delivering financial and technical assistance to third states and help raise further financial support (Council of the European Union 13991/18: 7). The EU also wants to accelerate the transition towards sustainable energy generation by encouraging more ambitious goals and strengthening its support for the revision and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (Council of the European Union 5033/20 2020: 2 f.). In addition to these three

categories, two crises caused the EU to declare or reiterate its support for international initiatives. First, the Covid-19 pandemic triggered the EU to support the global drive to secure vaccines and treatments for states unable to compete in the initial market for vaccines (European Council 02/21 2021). Second, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine led to a shortage in wheat and fertilizer endangering the food security of millions relying on imports from Ukraine and Russia. In the face of this crisis, the EU committed itself to facilitate the delivery of wheat and the balancing of the price gap but also initiated EU initiatives for more sustainable agricultural practices (European Council 24/22 2022; Council of the European Union 2006/22 2022). Finally, the Russia's war in Ukraine and the alleged war crimes committed by Russian troops on Ukrainian territory caused the EU to underline its support for the International Court of Justice and reinforce its commitment to the international legal framework (Council of the European Union 10470/22 2022).

A crucial part of the EU's foreign and security policy concern migration. Apart from security and control at the EU external border, the EU was active in third states to tackle the issue of migration to the EU. While external actions concerning the issue of migration are adopted throughout the six-year period of analysis, it is notable that there is a notable accumulation of migration related external actions from 2016 into 2017, which can be visualized by looking at external actions in Libya, the Sahel Region, and Syria. Moreover, focusing on the European Council, the issue of migration is covered more intensive than other foreign affairs issues, which could indicate a higher salience of this issue for the EU.

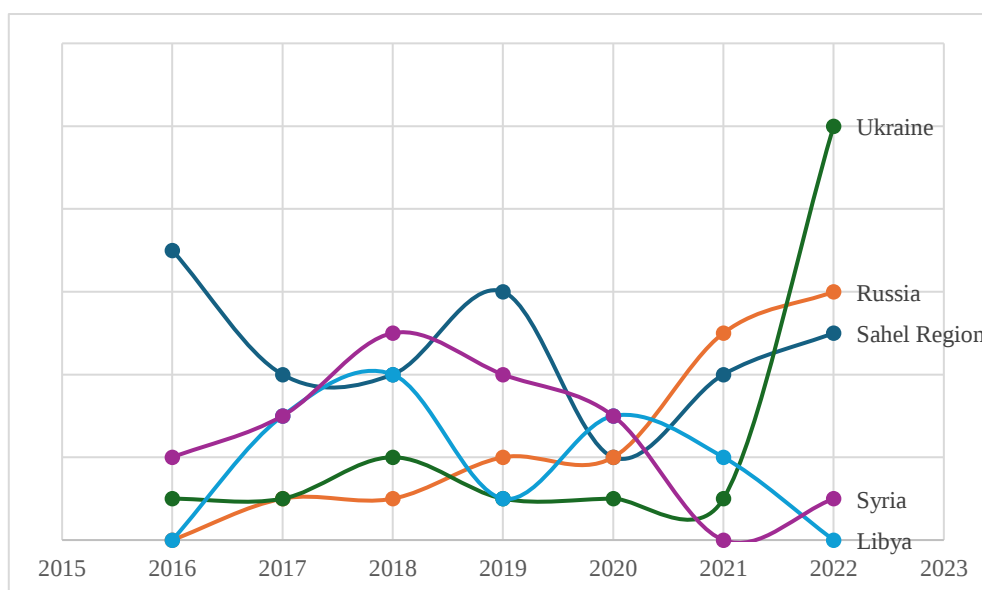


Figure 3: Development of EU External Action from 2016 to 2022

A central part of the EU's migration policy outside the EU are two CSDP missions. The EU NAVFOR MED Sophia is a naval mission located in the Mediterranean that on the one hand has the mission to stop the smuggling of migrants by boat and is on the other hand tasked with training the coastguard and navy of Libya to fight smuggling networks and prevent smuggling boats from reaching international or EU waters (European Council 34/16 2016: 2). The second mission is EUBAM Libya, a border assistance mission to support Libya in controlling its external borders to prevent migrants from entering Libya from neighboring states (Council of the European Union 5983/17 2017: 6). The EU was also involved in a tripartite taskforce with the UN and the AU to tackle the issue of migration in Libya and the bordering Sahel region (Council of the European Union 10026/18 2018: 6). Libya is the state the EU's external actions on migration are focused most on. External actions targeted at Libya had the objective to stabilize the state, enable it to control its borders and patrol its maritime zone, and create the conditions for migrants to stay in Libyan communities. Furthermore, the EU restricted the export of inflatable boats and outboard motors to make it harder for smuggling networks to obtain the equipment necessary for a crossing of the Mediterranean (Council of the European Union 11155/17 2017: 6). The fight against human smuggling and the enabling to administrate and host migrants and refugees are integral parts of the EU's external actions on migration everywhere. This was partly done by increasing the capacity and capability of local forces, support for structural reform in governance, and financial aid through different financial instruments like the EU Trust Fund for Africa, the EU Regional Trust Fund, or the Bêkou Trust Fund (e.g. Council of the European Union 11260/19 2019: 8; Council of the European Union 13730/20 2020: 4). External actions were targeted both at countries of origin as well as transit and host countries like Jordan and Lebanon. In Central Asia, the EU targeted migration issues by strengthening cooperation and reaching Readmission Agreements. Examples for that include Iran and Pakistan (Council of the European Union 6539/19 2019: 11; Council of the European Union 11160/17 2017: 3). Apart from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the neighbors of Syria most of the EU's external actions on migration are targeted on the African continent especially on the Sahel and Horn of Africa region. In these regions migration policy is conducted in combination with CSDP missions which are discussed further in the next part of this chapter.

The highest level of external engagement in third states and regions outside of the EU are CSDP missions. In 2016, at the start of the research period, the EU conducted 16 CSDP missions in different regions. In the six-year period of analysis, the EU adopted five new

CSDP missions which sometimes replaced existing missions. For example, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia was replaced by EUNAVFOR MED Irini, which continued some of the tasks of its predecessor but was also given the new mandate of enforcing the arms embargo against Libya. From 2016 to 2022 the EU extended the mandate of multiple ongoing missions, seven of which have been active for eight or more years in June 2016. The longest running active mission of the EU, EUFOR Althea continues to operate under a UN mandate in Bosnia Herzegovina since 2004 (Council of the European Union 12693/21 2021). The EU differentiates between civilian and military CSDP missions. Of the 16 CSDP missions active in 2016, six are labeled as military missions, while 10 are labeled as civilian. Of the five missions established from 2016 to 2022, two are labeled as military and three as civilian in nature. However, the label military mission does not equate a combat mission. Military missions like the training missions EUTM Mali, EUTM Mozambique, and EUTM RCA explicitly exclude EU military personnel from engaging in combat. The EU put a special focus on the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa.

In the Sahel Region, the EU conducted two capacity building missions in Mali and Niger as well as a training mission in Mali. In 2019, the EU reinforced these missions with a Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell to facilitate better cross-border coordination between the existing missions in the Sahel (Council of the European Union 107/19 2019). The objective of the missions in the Sahel was the training and reinforcement of the national military forces as well as the G5 Sahel Joint Forces as a crucial partner to enable them to fight terrorist insurgencies and stabilize the region (ibid.). In Niger, EU CSDP missions also supported the French military forces involved in active combat (Council of the European Union 11355/16 2016: 4). Despite the strategic importance allocated to the Sahel region, the EU suspended its capability and training missions EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali in 2022 because the Malian military cooperated with mercenaries of the Wagner Group (Council of the European Union 1104/22 2022). The cooperation with a group supported by the Russian regime and accused of human rights violation was deemed unacceptable by the EU because it put the credibility of the EU at risk. The second regional focus was on the Horn of Africa. In the Horn of Africa, the EU conducted a capability building and a training mission in Somalia which were coordinated with the naval mission EUNAVFOR Atalanta. The objective of the mission was the fight against piracy and the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. Hence, the capability building and training mission were aimed at enabling the Somali military forces to stabilize and secure the state against the terrorist insurgency and training the Somali navy to counter

piracy and enforce international maritime law (Council of the European Union 15381/18 2018: 14). While the training mission EUTM Somalia is labeled as a military mission, EU forces are not to participate in combat. In contrast, the EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission has the mandate to secure the maritime routes in the Gulf of Aden and actively fight piracy if necessary. The strategic importance the EU assigned to this mission and this geopolitical area is not only represented in the extension of the mandate but also in the plans to expand the mandate to cover the maritime area of the Indo-Pacific and enable the participation of third states in the Indo-Pacific region. In general, the EU put an emphasis on maritime security in the period of analysis from 2016 to 2022. Besides the planned expansion of EUNAVFOR Atalanta, the EU also made plans to enhance cooperation with the multinational naval task force to fight piracy, the Combined Maritime Forces, in the North-Western Indian Ocean (Council of the European Union 6255/22 2022: 4), worked towards replicating the maritime cooperation and surveillance mission CRIMARIO in the Southern Pacific (Council of the European Union 7914/21 2021: 8), and established a Coordinated Maritime Presence and a Maritime Area of Interest on the North-Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Guinea (Council of the European Union 6255/22 2022: 3; Council of the European Union 5387/21 2021: 3). Generally, EU CSDP missions are cooperating with partners in the states and regions they operate in. In the Sahel Region and Libya, the EU cooperated with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the Multinational Joint Task Force, the G5 Sahel Joint Forces and the African Union (Council of the European Union 10393/16 2016: 3). In Somalia and the Horn of Africa, the EU cooperated with African Union Mission to Somalia and the Combined Maritime Forces (Council of the European Union 11238/16 2016: 4). During the research period, the EU adopted a civil advisory mission to Iraq and Ukraine, a training mission on invitation from Mozambique (Council of the European Union 594/21 2021), as well as the Advisory and Coordination Cell for the existing missions in the Sahel and the replacement for the EUNAVFOR Med Sophia, EUNAVFOR Med Irini (Council of the European Union 8396/21 2021: 8).

Cooperation with partners is an important category of EU external action. The EU cooperates with partners either to act together with them or through them, meaning that it supports the efforts of partners either monetarily or with equipment without having a physical presence in the targeted state or region. The most important partner of the EU is the UN. The EU cooperates with the UN in multiple states and regions as well as in different capacities from supporting democratic transition efforts, providing humanitarian aid, or assisting UN military

missions with CSDP missions. Outside of the areas in which the EU has a physical presence itself, it supported UN efforts *inter alia* in South Sudan and Yemen. As mentioned before, the EU is especially active in the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa. To work towards its objectives the EU partnered with France, the G5 Sahel, the UN, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD). During the research period, the EU was especially interested in improving relations and increasing cooperation with the African Union not only in the area of security and defense but also with respect to migration, economic development, and trade (European Council 22/21 2021: 7).

Besides relations with Africa as a continent, the EU cooperated with the AU *inter alia* in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and in the framework of the tripartite taskforce together with the UN in Libya. A second regional focus for cooperation with partners was on Asia. The EU reiterated its interest in expanding cooperation with Asian partners on multiple occasions. Partners targeted for cooperation were regional groupings of states like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, as well as third states like China, India, and South Korea (Council of the European Union 9400/18 2018: 8 f.). The objective for this diplomatic outreach was a deeper security cooperation in the areas of maritime security, cyber security, counter terrorism, as well as the preclusion of conflicts and hybrid threats. The EU planned to recruit Asian partners to participate in CSDP missions like EUNAVFOR Atalanta or projects like the replication of CRIMARIO in the South Pacific (*ibid.*; Council of the European Union 7914/21 2021: 8). Still, the most important relationships and partnerships the EU fostered were with the US and NATO. While NATO is seldom mentioned in the context of specific EU operations and external actions, the EU regularly reiterates the importance of the transatlantic alliance and the objective and necessity to cooperate with NATO, synchronize activities, and avoid structural duplications (e.g. European Council 26/16 2016: 7). To this end, the EU planned to conduct joint exercises with NATO (Council of the European Union 9396/17 2017:3). Similar to the EU's plans for deeper cooperation with partners in Asia, the areas of cooperation the EU wants to work on with NATO are counterterrorism, maritime security, resilience and the stabilization of the EU neighborhood. Notably, the US was increasingly mentioned in the Outcome documents and Conclusions of the Council institutions after the election of Joseph Biden as president. The EU reinforced its interest in a close cooperation with the US and discussed plans to form a joint global leadership with the US (Council of the European Union 6295/21 2021: 6; European Council 02/21 2021).

The final category of EU foreign and security policy actions is concerned with reforms to the CFSP and the development of new policies and instruments for the CFSP. It also lays out the ambition for what the EU wants to achieve with respect to its security and defense sector. Broadly speaking, the EU aimed at making the CFSP/CSDP more responsive and effective with increased funding, cooperation, and resources (e.g. European Council 9/19 2019: 11). The starting point for the EU's actions and ambitions to improve the design and implementation of the CFSP and CSDP is the Global Strategy which pointed out areas in need of reform and shortcomings of the existing capacities and capabilities. On the policy side, the Council approved multiple new policies and instruments enhancing the CSDP. The ambitions set out in the Global Strategy calling for a European Defense Action Plan and a European Defense Fund were realized (Council of the European Union 7019/17 2017: 3) as well as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (European Council 14/17 2017: 9). While the Treaty of Lisbon already allowed for defense cooperation among member states, the PESCO amended this instrument to make a more effective use of it. PESCO was designed to fulfill the EU's goal of more defense cooperation and a move towards shared platforms and procurement. Together with the EDF, PESCO aimed to support the research and development in the area of security and defense to overcome capability gaps. After the initial adoption of PESCO, the EU adapted the governance rules of the instrument and launched new projects in 2021 (Council of the European Union 13934/21 2021: 7). On the path towards strengthening the European defense technological and industrial base, the Council also proposed a European Defence Industrial Development Programme to supplement PESCO, CARD, and the Capability Development Plan (European Council 14/17 2017: 9).

In addition the Council institutions reached an agreement on a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) to take on the strategic planning and coordination of CSDP as a step towards an EU military headquarters (Council of the European Union 7019/17 2017 and adopted a Civilian CSDP Compact to strengthen the capability of civilian CSDP missions, support the civilian aspect of military CSDP missions and improve the coordination between civilian and military CSDP missions (European Council 19/1/17 2017: 1; Council of the European Union 14305/18 2018). To improve the responsiveness of civilian CSDP missions, the EU established a warehouse capability for civilian crisis-management operations (Council of the European Union 7192/21 2021: 7). An increased responsiveness or the ability to react faster to crises and be ready to immediately deploy forces was a central aspect of the EU's reform agenda. The Council committed the EU to "be able to launch a new mission of up to

200 personnel in any area of operation within 30 days after a Council decision (Council of the European Union 14305/18 2018:8)” and establish an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5000 troops (Council of the European Union 301/22 2022). More generally, the Council planned to strengthen “the relevance, usability, and deployability of the EU’s Rapid Response toolbox (European Council 34/16 2016: 4)” and secure the funding for the EU battlegroups (Council of the European Union 14149/16 2016: 13). The period of analysis overlapped with the EU’s reform of the Athena mechanism (European Council 19/1/17: 1). The Athena mechanism was the main funding tool behind CSDP missions to cover transport costs for land, sea and air deployment of battle groups. The Athena mechanism was designed to ensure cost sharing among member states for CSDP missions so as to avoid overburdening member states with both the costs of a CSDP operation and the contribution of personnel and equipment. While the Athena mechanism was renewed during the reform process it was succeeded by the European Peace Facility which was adopted in 2021 (Council of the European Union 220/21 2021). The EPF not only replaced the Athena mechanism but also other funding instruments used to fund partners like the G5 Sahel Joint Force. A difficulty within this category of action is the intangible nature of some of the proposed or envisioned actions. In the period between 2016 and 2022, the EU repeatedly stated its goal to do more on security and defense by making “better use of the options in the Treaties (European Council 09/16: 5)” or use “the full potential of the European Union’s funding instruments and initiatives, in particular the European Defence Fund and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (European Council 2022, 1/22: 4).” Phrases like “enhance military mobility and reinforce the EU’s civilian and military CSDP missions and operations (Council of the European Union 301/22 2022),” or “invest more and better in defence capabilities and technologies (European Council 03/22 2022: 4)” reappear throughout the research period in different wordings. It is therefore difficult to assess which commitments bore fruit and which remained unfulfilled. The Strategic Compass adopted in March 2022 shines some light on the reforms since the adoption of the Global Strategy and will be discussed later.

6.2 States and regions of EU external actions

Besides the categories of different EU external actions, a look at the states and regions the EU wants to engage in or cooperate with is equally instructive. In total the Council documents made reference to 89 states and regions targeted for external actions.¹¹ A problem with coding

¹¹ The list of states and regions targeted by Council decisions can be found in Appendix B

the target of EU action is that it sometimes refers to states specifically while at other times it mentions the region. This of course leaves room for interpretation which states belong to any particular region like Central Asia, the Indo-Pacific, or the Southern Neighborhood. In this regard, the Council documents are sometimes painfully vague. For example, the EU repeatedly stated its goal of deepening its cooperation and partnership with Africa. In other cases, the general use of a region instead of specific states seems to be the product of practicality. Since the EU is involved either directly or indirectly in almost every state of the Sahel Region including a cooperation with the regional partnership G5 Sahel Joint Force, it is more practical to refer to the target of external actions as Sahel Region. Looking at the states and regions targeted by EU external actions, four loci of action can be identified.

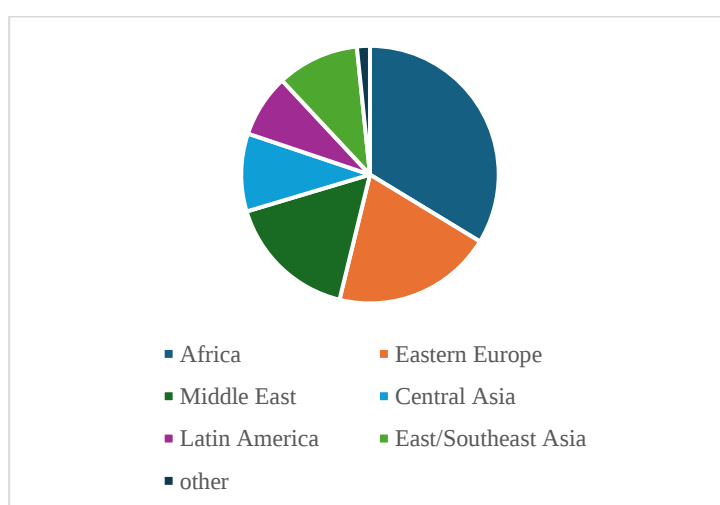


Figure 4: Targets of External Actions - Foreign Affairs Council

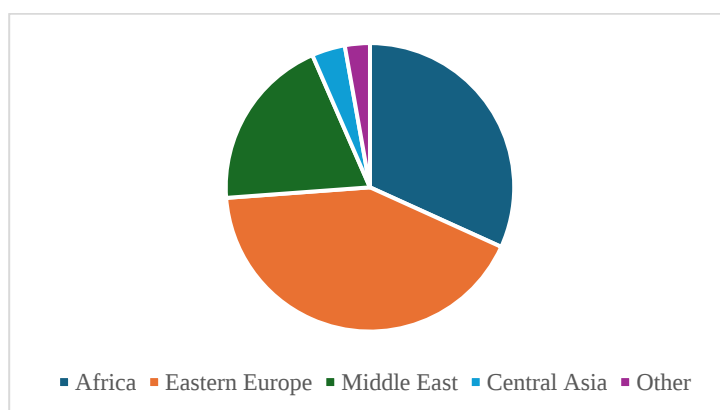


Figure 5: Targets of External Actions - European Council

The first locus of action is the Sahel region, which for this purpose will be defined as including Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, but also Libya since the EU's border assistance mission in Libya has a focus on preventing the crossing of migrants from the sub-Saharan into Libya. The Sahel region and the states located in the Sahel region are not only frequently

targeted by EU external actions but are an example for the multifaceted approach the EU takes in regions of strategic importance. The strategic importance of the region is expressed in the definition of the objectives of EU engagement as targeting “common challenges” (Council of the European Union 10026/18 2018: 5) and is stated directly in Conclusions by the Foreign Affairs Council (Council of the European Union 9103/19 2019: 3). Considering the stated objectives of EU external actions in Libya and the Sahel region, it is notable that while the EU is concerned about conflict and interested in stability in the region, the overarching theme behind external actions is migration. Hence, conflict and humanitarian needs in the region, while being in itself reasons to act according to the Global Strategy, are frequently seen through the prism of the EU’s migration policy as drivers of refugee movements towards the EU:

“The EU considers it both urgent and essential to tackle the rise in numbers of irregular migrants leaving West Africa through the Sahel with the aim of reaching the EU, in particular their transit through Niger to Libya (Council of the European Union 10393/16 2016: 5).”

Accordingly, the EU’s cooperation with the G5 Sahel Joint Force was designed in part for the “disruption of the business models of human smugglers and traffickers (European Council 8/17 2017: 10),” while the instruments to engender developmental progress like the European Fund for Sustainable Development are applied in the Sahel region to “help tackle the root causes of migration by creating job opportunities, encouraging investment and facilitating sustainable development in partner countries (Council of the European Union 15471/16 2016: 7).” The Sahel is an example for a multi-prong approach by the EU to a region. The EU combined humanitarian and developmental aid (Council of the European Union 10137/17

2017: 2), including through projects like GARI-SI Sahel (Council of the European Union 10026/18 2018:, with action towards building up security and defense capabilities to strengthen the resilience of the region (Council of the European Union 10384/17 2017: 6), efforts to improve governance and support

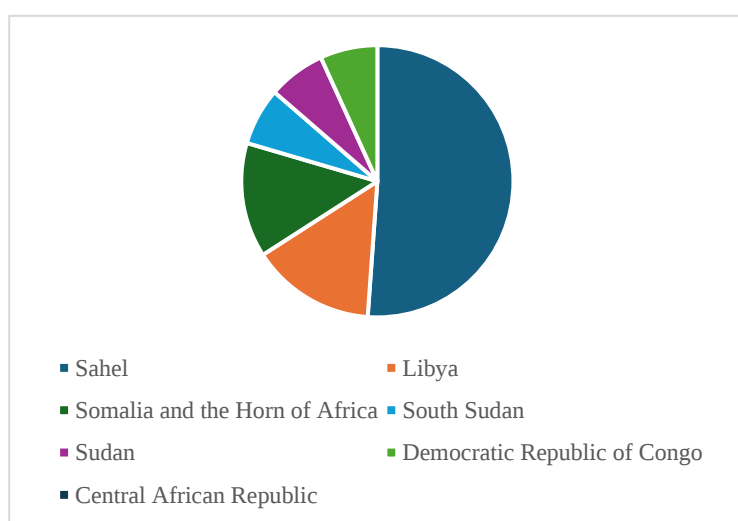


Figure 6: External Actions on the African continent

democratic institutions (Council of the European Union 10026/18 2018: 7), and CSDP missions to actively help the security and military forces of Mali and Niger. Similarly, the EU was active on multiple levels in Libya, where it conducted the aforementioned border assistance mission, EUBAM Libya (Council of the European Union 15028/18 2018: 3), as well as a tripartite mission together with the AU and the UN to specifically address the issue of migration (Council of the European Union 10026/18 2018). As a coastal state with an unstable post-civil war government, Libya was marked out as an area of strategic priority for the EU. Significant efforts were made to train and build up the capacities of the Libyan coast guard and navy to fight smuggling networks and prevent the crossing of boats and ships carrying migrants across the Mediterranean (Council of the European Union 5983/17 2017: 6). At the same time, Libya was a target for EU to explore the concept of disembarkation platforms (European Council 9/18 2018: 2) and developmental aid programs to enable Libyan coastal communities to host migrants reaching the coast of Libya or being rescued or intercepted by the Libyan coastguard (European Council 02/17 2017). The EU's approach to the Sahel region aligns with the strategic ambition set out in the Global Strategy, which aimed to "work through development, diplomacy, and CSDP, ensuring that our security sector reform efforts enable and enhance our partners' capacities to deliver security within the rule of law (EEAS 2016: 26)," and declared that "a special focus in our work on resilience will be on origin and transit countries of migrants and refugees (ibid.: 27)."

The second locus of action was the Horn of Africa, more specifically Somalia and the Gulf of Aden, which is located between the coasts of Somalia and Yemen and functions as the passage from the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The EU described the Horn of Africa as a geo-strategic priority with a growing geopolitical and economical importance (Council of the European Union 8135/21 2021: 2; Council of the European Union 10027/18 2018: 4). Besides piracy and terrorism, the EU expressed concern over the humanitarian situation in Somalia at various points during the research period (Council of the European Union 7922/17 2017: 22) as well as the issue of internally displaced persons in the Horn of Africa, especially in Ethiopia (Council of the European Union 13960/18 2018: 4) and Sudan (Council of the European Union 13957/18 2018:4). The stated objective of the EU was to "support peace and security, democracy, human rights, rule of law, gender equality, sustainable development, economic growth, climate action and regional cooperation (Council of the European Union 8135/21 2021: 2)." Still, contrary to the Sahel region and Libya, the Horn of Africa and or Somalia were not really an issue of concern for the European Council.

Instead, external actions in the Horn of Africa and Somalia were almost exclusively handled and discussed in the Foreign Affairs Council, which could indicate a lower priority of the region in comparison to the Sahel region.

In Somalia the EU has a presence on the ground with the training mission, EUTM Somalia, and the capability building mission, EUCAP Somalia. While part of the mission was directed at supporting Somali security forces to secure the state and fight the terrorist insurgency of Al-Shabaab (Council of the European Union 7922/17 2017: 22 f.), it also aimed at building up the naval capacities of Somalia to enable it to fight piracy and patrol its coastal areas (Council of the European Union 15381/18 2018: 14). One of the central aspects of EU engagement in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden is the anti-piracy, maritime security mission EUNAVFOR Atalanta (Council of the European Union 691/16). The centrality of the mission to the EU was underlined through the expansion of its mandate both in terms of time and operational radius as well as the explicit wish to expand the mission further and invite participation of more international partners (Council of the European Union 7914/21 2021: 8). While the EU continually argues that its focus is on upholding UNCLOS and the freedom of navigation, the “critical maritime routes” EUNAVFOR Atalanta is commissioned to protect are naturally connected to specific economic interests (*ibid.*). From this point of view, the importance the EU assigned to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea (Council of the European Union 5387/21 2021: 3), the Indo-Pacific, and the Gulf of Aden is perhaps unsurprising (Council of the European Union 6255/22 2022: 3).

The Horn of Africa is another example for the EU’s inclusive multi-prong approach to certain regions of geopolitical interest. Next to the military and security aspects of its engagement, the EU also supported the electoral process in Somalia (Council of the European Union 11238/16 2016: 3), gave financial assistance to Somalia both through an existing Partnership Agreement and the EDF (Council of the European Union 7922/17 2017: 25), and cooperated with the IGAD to spur structural reforms and economic development in the Horn of Africa (Council of the European Union 10027/18 2018: 4). Since the Horn of Africa is not only notorious for its proclivity for conflict, but also a region of destitution heavily affected by droughts and food insecurity. Hence, the EU directed significant humanitarian efforts towards the region and specifically included Somalia and South Sudan in its conclusions on the risk of famine (Council of the European Union 11334/17 2017) and its efforts ameliorating the food insecurity caused by the Russian war against Ukraine (Council of the European Union 2006/22 2022). At the same time, the region is an example of the EU acting through partners.

The EU expressed concern over and strategic interest in the situation of Sudan (e.g. Council of the European Union 2006/22 2022), South Sudan (e.g. Council of the European Union 455/16 2016), and Ethiopia (Council of the European Union 13960/18 2018: 5). Still, the EU did not commission additional CSDP missions to the Horn of Africa instead relying on cooperation with the UN, AU, and IGAD to exert influence in the region at large. Applying this approach to regions of strategic importance follows through on Global Strategy:

“We will work through development, diplomacy, and CSDP, ensuring that our security sector reform efforts enable and enhance our partners’ capacities to deliver security within the rule of law. We will cooperate with other international players, coordinating our work on capacity-building with the UN and NATO in particular (EEAS 2016: 26).”

Both the EU’s interest in the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa were underpinned by recurring statements of intent to deepen cooperation with partners in Africa including the AU and the IGAD:

“Engagement in and with Africa remains key to preventing conflict, promoting human security, addressing the root causes of instability and managing migration flows (Council of the European Union 15471/16 2016: 4).”

The migration policy perspective on Africa is especially prevalent in the documents of the European Council. In the European Council Partnership Frameworks are discussed to prevent illegal migration and allow for deportations (European Council 31/16 2016: 2), while development and humanitarian aid through instruments like the Official Development Assistance for Africa or the EU Trust Fund for Africa are seen as a means to the end of impeding migration movements towards the EU (European Council 02/17 2017). In October 2017, the EU launched an additional line of financing, the European Fund for Sustainable Development, aimed at “addressing the root causes of migration and providing economic and social opportunities in the countries of transit and origin (European Council 14/17 2017: 4).” While not specifically targeted at the Sahel region or the Horn of Africa, these measures enhance and underpin the EU’s focus on and its external actions in these regions and are an expression of the EU’s stated aim to “systematically [address] cross-border dynamics in North and West Africa, the Sahel and Lake Chad regions through closer links with the African Union, the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the G5 Sahel (EEAS 2016: 35).”

The third locus of EU external action is the eastern neighborhood of the EU more generally, and the Western Balkan more specifically. The EU expressed its interest in engaging in and with the states of Eastern Europe like Ukraine and Moldova and the states in the Western Balkans on multiple occasion. Actions in this region were focused on strengthening the security and stability of the region (Council of the European Union 10384/17 2017: 6) and cooperating with the regions on questions concerning migration (European Council 34/16 2016: 1). Moreover, the EU’ longest running and still ongoing CSDP operation is located in Bosnia Herzegovina. During the research period, the EU extended the mandate and the funding for Operation Althea multiple times and adapted the mission to include new tasks and phase out redundant ones (Council of the European Union 13124/18 2018: 10). For example, the mission’s tasks were adjusted to include EU support for demining efforts in Bosnia Herzegovina (Council of the European Union 11433/20 2020: 3). The mission which operates under a mandate by the UN, is tasked with maintaining a safe and secure environment as well as building up the capacities and capabilities of the authorities in Bosnia Herzegovina (Council of the European Union 13271/16 2016: 3).

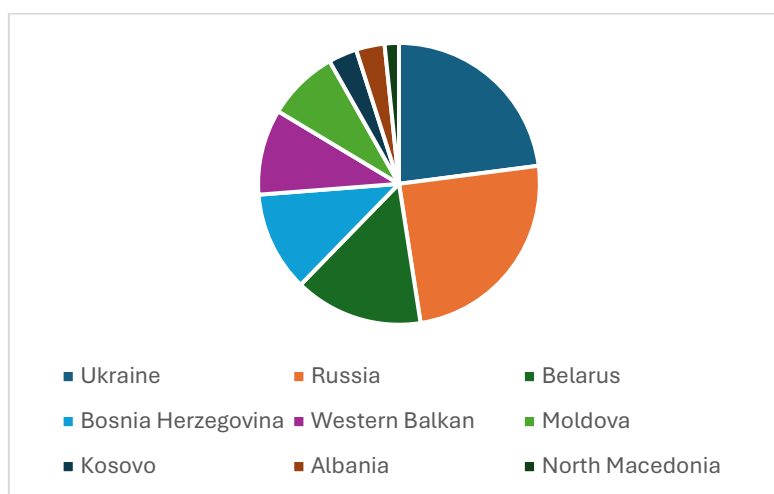


Figure 7: Targets of External Actions in the Eastern Neighborhood

However, most notably, Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans were targeted by EU external actions aimed at moving the region towards closer integration with the Union. The EU did this through Association Agreements (European Council 9/19 2019: 3), concrete accession negotiations (European Council 2603/20 2020) and financial support for reform efforts oriented at a European perspective for these states. Actions included “launching concrete and visible initiatives to improve the physical and human connectivity within the region and with the EU (European Council 1/18 2018: 3),” or allowing participation in EU programs (Council of the European Union 11353/17 2017: 12). A specific example for the

EU's support in policy areas apart from migration is energy and climate policy, in which the EU planned to support "the uptake of the EU's energy acquis, rules and standards, as well as further energy market integration and interconnectivity in line with the European Green Deal (Council of the European Union 5263/21 2021: 11)" with the Neighborhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument, or judicial reform in Kosovo through the extended EULEX Kosovo mission (Council of the European Union 14418/16 2016: 12). The EU was also actively involved in the peace process between Serbia and Kosovo, stating its support of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue (Council of the European Union 11598/20 2020: 5).

Upholding the European perspective of states in the Eastern neighborhood and the Western Balkans and the gradual integration of different policy sectors in these states can be seen as a crucial part of the EU's foreign policy (Börzel & Panke 2022: 115). It was not only aimed at increasing the stability of the EU's neighborhood and reducing the number of migrants arriving at the EU's external borders via the Western Balkans but also to directly influence policy making in these states while at the same time trying to reduce outside influence from other states like Russia. This became especially vital after Russia started its war of aggression against Ukraine. In the aftermath of the beginning of Russia's military campaign, the EU strengthened its support for and moved to deter provocations in Moldova, Georgia, and the Western Balkans (Council of the European Union 2502/22 2022) and pledged to strengthen its "engagement to increase Western Balkan's resilience vis-à-vis third-party actors and hybrid threats (Council of the European Union 1605/22 2022)." Furthermore, the Council motioned to accelerate the accession process of Bosnia Herzegovina and North Macedonia (European Council 24/22 2022: 4, 5). The EU adopted these measures in reference to its "unequivocal support for the European perspective" of the Western Balkans and pledged to remain "committed and engaged at all levels to support them in conducting EU-oriented reforms and projects (European Council 03/17 2017: 6)." The importance of the Eastern neighborhood and the Western Balkans for the EU was highlighted during a video conference of the Foreign Affairs Council during which the ministers took an opportunistic look at the Covid-19 pandemic, stating that the health crisis could be an opportunity "to show that EU is the most reliable partner (Council of the European Union 2204/20 2020)." The EU's actions in the Eastern neighborhood and the Western Balkans correspond with the Global Strategy's aim "to invest in the resilience of states and societies to the east (EEAS 2016: 23)." The action towards supporting the green energy transition of the Western Balkans and stepping up assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic can be seen as an expression of the EU's strategy to

“redouble our efforts on prevention, monitoring root causes such as human rights violations, inequality, resource stress and climate change – which is a threat multiplier that catalyses water and food scarcity, pandemics and displacement (ibid.: 29).”

Ukraine represents a special case regarding the EU’s foreign policy. For most of the research period, Ukraine represented just another state in the Eastern Neighborhood and was target of the external actions mentioned above. This of course changed with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. Following the invasion, Ukraine stepped into the focus of EU foreign policymaking and was targeted with unprecedented measures of support. The EU was already engaged in and with Ukraine for example through the advisory mission EUAM Ukraine, which was established in 2014. The mission was tasked with assisting Ukraine in the reform process of its civil security sector. When the invasion began, the EU immediately decided to give additional political, financial, humanitarian, and logistical support to Ukraine (European Council 18/22 2022: 2) and vowed to support the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine in the future (European Council 03/22 2022: 2). However, the EU also provided support for the professional military education of the Ukrainian army (Council of the European Union 2102/22 2022) and provided geospatial intelligence to help Ukraine in the defense of its country (Council of the European Union 2802/22 2022). In an unprecedented step, the EU sent direct military aid to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility only four days after the war had started (Council of the European Union 2702/22: 2022) and further assisted member states in their bilateral support for Ukraine (Council of the European Union 2802/22 2022). The existing advisory mission EUAM was redeployed to Kiev and equipped with the additional task of assisting with the investigation and prosecution of war crimes committed by Russian forces on Ukrainian territory (Council of the European Union 1705/22 2022). In the span of four month after the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the EU, further increased the financial and military assistance and laid the foundation for the establishment of a Ukraine Reconstruction Platform (European Council 21/22 2022: 3, 4). In addition, the EU actively supported the Ukrainian agricultural sector to assist a vital part of the Ukrainian economy and ameliorate the negative effects of the Russian war concerning food security in Africa and other parts of the world (ibid.: 5; Council of the European Union 1605/22).

6.3 *Strategic Autonomy* in the CFSP and CSDP

Following the presentation of the research results, this part of the chapter shall analyze the research results further by applying key elements of the literature on *Strategic Autonomy* by Fiott (2018) and Grevi (2019) to identify how *Strategic Autonomy* manifests itself in the state of play of the EU's foreign and security policy. It is difficult to assess the EU's understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* in the area of foreign policy and security or assign a certain level of ambition to the EU's external actions. This is partly due to the deliberate vagueness of the Global Strategy and the subsequent Council conclusions. As Howorth (2004) has pointed out, this deliberate vagueness has long been a feature of the EU's foreign and security policy to appease all parties involved and reach a compromise. In the Global Strategy this vagueness is expressed in the aim to act together with partners wherever possible while being able to act alone when necessary (Council of the European Union 2016: 4). At the same time, the EU states in reference to ongoing conflicts in Syria and Libya that "none of these conflicts can be solved by us alone," thereby creating a permission structure for a subdued reaction or even inaction (EEAS 2016: 10). Still, the EU made its goal clear to be more responsive when it comes to the deployment of troops in regions of crisis and to be able to engage in regions that are vital for the EU's interest even when there is no support from partners. Recalling the three perspectives on the term strategic, it can thus be said that *Strategic Autonomy* in the understanding of the European Council does include the usage of military or hard power instruments. It also shows the analytical understanding with reference to Clausewitz in which the ends of the EU's interest not only allow but necessitate the EU's sovereignty to deploy military means (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 3 f.). In its Conclusions of June 2019, the Council declared:

"In a world of increasing uncertainty, complexity and change, the EU needs to pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously to safeguard its interests, uphold its values and way of life, and help shape the global future (European Council 9/19 2019: 10)."

The EU's insistence on working with partners and its belief that conflicts ultimately require a multilateral response by a multitude of different state and supranational actors reflects Grevi's (2019) and Tocci's (2019:8) notion that autonomy to act should be seen as a gradual condition between the two absolutes of dependence and autarky. To recall Tocci:

“As the Greek etymology of the word suggests, autonomy means the ability of the self – autos – to live by its laws – nomos (Tocci 2019: 8).”

Applied to external actions, autonomy would mean the ability of the EU to act according to its laws and values. From this, one could conclude that autonomy will mean the ability to act without partners if these partners fail to comply with the EU’s values. This seems to be the ambition of the EU as set out in the Global Strategy and the corresponding Implementation Plan (EEAS 2016; Council of the European Union 2016). Staying for the moment with the question of the EU’s level of ambition, Fiott’s (2018: 2) proposed categorization based on the classical philosophical distinction of positive “freedom to” and negative “freedom from” leaves the EU’s level of ambition for *Strategic Autonomy* somewhere in between *Responsibility* and *Hedging*. While *Responsibility* is characterized by Fiott as the freedom to conduct operations autonomously while not striving for freedom from dependencies, *Hedging* is described by Fiott as the freedom to conduct operations while at the same time striving for greater freedom from outside influence (ibid.: 4). On the one hand, the EU is adamant in reiterating that NATO is and should remain the main security sponsor of Europe, on the other hand, the EU’s plans to increase the effectiveness and responsiveness of the EU’s Rapid Response tool box and its objective of strengthening the EU battlegroups (Council of the European Union 14149/16 2016: 13), building up a military headquarter, and establishing “a strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5000 troops (Council of the European Union 301/22 2022),” indicates that the EU strives for the ability to act independently from NATO and outside its structures. Yet, these proposals are made with the aim to avoid duplications with NATO (European Council 34/16 2016: 4), thereby upholding a certain degree of dependence on NATO. This is reflected in the ambition the EU defined in its Global Strategy in 2016:

“We must be ready and able to deter, respond to, and protect ourselves against external threats. While NATO exists to defend its members – most of which are European – from external attack, Europeans must be better equipped trained and organised to contribute decisively to such collective efforts, as well as to act autonomously if and when necessary (EEAS 2016: 19).”

Hence, the EU’s level of ambition falls short of Tessman & Wolfe’s (2011) definition of strategic *Hedging* as an “insurance policy that guards against’ a deterioration in relations between two actors and/or should the hegemon cease to provide security to the hedging actor

(in Fiott 2018: 4).” With its level of ambition for *Strategic Autonomy*, the EU treads a fine line between reassuring member states with strong inclination towards the primacy of the transatlantic alliance, and the envisioned capacity to have *Strategic Autonomy* in international crisis management operations and sufficient military independence to protect its citizens from different threats (Mauro 2021: 4f.). Indeed, scholars like Howorth (2017) see major contradictions in the EU’s level of ambition concerning the EU’s perspective on the future relationship with NATO. Moreover, while the EU wants to have the autonomy to act and decide independently without taking on tasks and competencies of NATO, it also wants to uphold the sovereignty of its member states:

“The new impetus in EU-NATO cooperation will take place in the spirit of full openness and in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations, be based on the principle of inclusiveness and be without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any Member State (European Council 26/16 2016: 7).”

This raises the important question of how to harmonize the interests of the member states to establish and implement a cohesive level of ambition for *Strategic Autonomy*. In the literature, scholars often describe *Strategic Autonomy* by breaking it down into separate dimensions. Most commonly is the differentiation into a political, operational, and an industrial dimension (Arteaga 2017:1; Charillon et al. 2017; Grevi 2019).

The political dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* describes the ability to make decisions and act on them (Grevi 2019: 10). Both the CFSP and the CSDP have often been criticized for not being able to react adequately and in a timely fashion to crises and other external events (Wessels 2021: 23 f.). By their design in the Treaty of Lisbon, the CFSP and CSDP have pronounced intergovernmental structures (ibid.). As a result, the European Council and Foreign Affairs Council become a meeting place of different foreign policy traditions and policy preferences, relying on unanimity and the “voluntary pooling of national manpower and capabilities for collective action (Müller 2016: 361, 363). In its Global Strategy the EU, thus, declared the ambition to create a more responsive CSFP and CSDP:

“CSDP must become more rapid and effective [...] We must develop the capacity for rapid response also by tackling the procedural, financial and political obstacles which prevent the deployment of the Battlegroups, hamper force generation and reduce the effectiveness of CSDP military operations (EEAS 2016: 47).”

During the research period, both the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council declared a reform of the functioning of the CFSP towards faster and more decisive decision-making processes to be a goal of the EU and proposed action towards achieving it. Council Conclusions set out to “improve the EU's ability to act decisively” and create a “rapid and more flexible decision-making process (Council of the European Union 301/22 2022) and underlined that cooperation with NATO must be conducted “in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU (European Council 9/18 2018: 6).” Other conclusions referred to making full use of the opportunities in the treaties (European Council 09/16: 5) and the instruments already passed (European Council 2022, 1/22: 4) to improve or streamline decision-making processes. Looking at the actual output of the Council, it adopted multiple extensions for existing CSDP missions, launched new missions, and managed to react quickly to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, it made use of the treaties to establish PESCO and reformed the funding mechanism for CSDP missions. Still, the Council was not able to adopt measures to reform the decision-making process itself, which means that the decided on external actions analyzed in this thesis represent either compromise or unanimity among the member states. With this in mind, it is perhaps even more impressive that the EU and its Council institutions were comparatively quickly in adopting far reaching measures following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Turning back to the literature and Järvenpää et al’s (2019) classification of dimensions of *Strategic Autonomy*, the EU was able to articulate an ambition towards improving decision-making procedures in the political dimension, but on the institutional level was unable to overcome existing intergovernmental hurdles to reform “the governance structures required to prepare and administer” the desired level of ambition (Järvenpää et al. 2019:12).

The operational dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* concerns the institutional requirements and necessary capabilities to plan and carry out actions (Grevi 2019: 10). Thus, some, like Järvenpää et al. (2019: 12) differentiate the operational dimension further into an institutional and a capabilities dimension. In the Global Strategy, the EU proposed that it will “step up its contribution to Europe’s collective security, (EEAS 2016: 9) to create a more credible European defense and “enable the EU to act autonomously while also contributing to and undertaking actions in cooperation with NATO (ibid.: 20). In its corresponding Implementation Plan the EU specified the actions it would aim to undertake:

“Concrete actions are necessary to implement the Level of Ambition in a credible way, notably by: (1) identifying the related capability development priorities; (2) deepening

defence cooperation and delivering the required capabilities together; (3) adjusting the EU's structures for situational awareness, planning and conduct, as well as the rapid response toolbox; (4) increasing financial solidarity and flexibility, as well as ensuing a more seamless range of funding options as part of an integrated approach (Council of the European Union 2016: 17)."

These concrete actions do appear as ambitions in the documents of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. To move towards achieving these ambitions, the Council, as mentioned earlier, adopted PESCO to instill increased cooperation among member states in the field of security and defense, established the EDF to finance defense projects in line with the EU's strategic interest, and created the EPF as a successor to the Athena mechanism to ensure the funding of CSDP operations based on solidarity. On the operational side, the Council established the MPCC to improve the strategic planning and coordination of CSDP missions. Reintroducing Biscop (2019: 5), the questions of when, why, and where the EU wants to act come into focus to specify the operational dimension by linking operations and tasks with "priorities and vital interests." The EU's external actions from 2016 to 2022 reflect the ambition set out in the Global Strategy.

As seen in the analysis of the different categories of EU external actions, the EU not only reiterated its support to the UN and the rules-based global order, but underbuilt this support financially for example for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in New York (Council of the European Union 15381/18 2018: 10), or with regard to the arms export control regime (Council of the European Union 5471/18 2018: 10). Furthermore, it provided intelligence and support for the CWC (Council of the European Union 15381/18 2018: 10) and passed action plans to manifest human rights and democracy in its foreign policy actions (Council of the European Union 1911/20). Concerning external actions in specific regions, the Global Strategy announced that "it is in the interests of our citizens to invest in the resilience of states and societies to the east stretching into Central Asia, and south down to Central Africa (EEAS 2016: 23)." To this effect, the Council adopted a strategy for engagement in Central Asia (Council of the European Union 10387/17 2017), signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with states in Central Asia like the Kyrgyz Republic (Council of the European Union 13032/17 2017: 10) and applied a multi-faceted approach to support security and governance in Afghanistan (Council of the European Union 13098/17 2017). While being active in other regions of Africa, the EU was also actively engaged in the Central African

Republic with the advisory mission EUAM RCA (Council of the European Union 802/19 2019) and the training mission EUTM RCA (Council of the European Union 12759/18 2018: 4). The EU also followed through on the Global Strategy (EEAS 2016: 35) on issues like cross-border dynamics in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions (Council of the European Union 10393/16 2016), cooperation with the AU, ECOWAS, and the G5 Sahel (Council of the European Union 10384/17 2017) and investment in the economic development of the African continent (European Council 22/21 2021). Likewise, the EEAS already lined out the EU's ambition on global maritime security with a special focus on the Gulf of Guinea and the Indo-Pacific (EEAS 2016: 41).

The final dimension, the industrial dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* is concerned with the development of the capabilities necessary for the level of ambition and kind of operations the EU wants to pursue. Again, the Implementation Plan identifies specific areas in which progress should be made to enable the EU to act. Specifically, the Global Strategy identified needs in the area of Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR), Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), Cyber, and Satellite Communication (GovSatCom) (Council of the European Union 2016: 20). To achieve the envisioned capabilities and fill the identified gaps, the Implementation Plan states:

“Deepening defence cooperation is increasingly important for Member States to develop economies of scale and use resources more efficiently. This is in view of the rising cost of advanced defence technology and the need to retain full spectrum armed forces (ibid.: 21).”

The industrial dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* is probably the dimension with the highest level of ambition by the EU. The ambition to increase investment into the EU defense industry, guide the development of certain capacities, and stimulate cooperation among member states was frequently discussed in both the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council. A Council conclusion on implementing the Global Strategy included a list of capabilities the EU aimed to achieve like Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities, high end military capabilities, and capabilities to ensure maritime security and force protection (Council of the European Union 14149/16 (2016: 8). As mentioned earlier, the Council did adopt measures to achieve the strategic vision as written in the Global Strategy by adopting the PESCO, the EDF, and CARD, which was launched “to deepen cooperation in defence, including by fostering capability development addressing shortfalls, and ensure more optimal use, including coherence, of defence spending plans (Council of the European Union 7019/17

2017: 6).” Still, the level of ambition of the EU is limited by the existence of NATO. Operating under the principle of a single set of forces, the EU and the Council stressed the need for coherence between the EU and the NATO defense planning process, defining the EU-NATO relationship as one “where requirements overlap while recognising the different nature of the two organisations and their respective responsibilities (ibid.).”

However, the progress of the EU’s level of ambition can be questioned despite CARD, EDF, and PESCO because six years after the Global Strategy described the EU’s level of ambition, the Council still had to declare its goal of boosting “defence technological innovation to fill strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependencies (Council of the European Union 301/22 2022).” This notion is supported by a Joint Communication of the Commission to the other EU institutions on a defense investment analysis, which diagnosed years of under financing of defense and defense production capabilities (European Commission 2022 b: 1). While the net budget for defense did increase steadily across member states after 2016, the budget cuts implemented during the financial crisis in 2007 were so steep that Member States only managed to reach a pre-crisis level of defense expenditure between 2018 and 2019 (ibid.: 3 f.). Concerning defense cooperation among member states, another Communication by the Commission concluded that despite CARD, EDF, and PESCO “the percentage in European collaborative defence equipment procurement has been constantly decreasing since 2016, and the 2020 figure is the lowest since such data is being collected (European Commission 2022a: 8).” The collective benchmark of 14-35% of defense spending for collaborative defense equipment procurement the member states set within the framework of PESCO was never reached and was at 11% in 2020 (ibid.: 7). Thus, it is fair to say that while having a significant level of ambition for the industrial dimension of *Strategic Autonomy*, the actual implementation lacks behind the level of ambition.

Similarly, as mentioned earlier, the Council failed to reform the decision-making process of the CFSP and CSDP to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of EU external actions. The lack of progress over the six-year period of analysis was included in the Strategic Compass proposed by the Commission and adopted by the Council in March 2022, which reiterated the ambition to become faster and more capable with regard to external actions by looking at the “practical modalities for implementing Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union, in accordance with CSDP decision making, to allow a group of willing and able Member States to plan and conduct a mission or operation within the EU framework and under the political oversight of the Council. (Council of the European Union 2016: 26).” In

general, the Strategic Compass gives insight into the implementation of the EU's level of ambition following the Global Strategy in June of 2016. It is notable that ambitions set out in the Global Strategy, like the ability to deploy EU battlegroups and improving the EU's rapid response toolbox are represented in the conclusions of the Council Conclusions as well as the Strategic Compass, which indicates either a lack of implementation or an insufficient level of implementation of these ambitions. In the same vein, the capability gaps and capability needs to be fulfilled in order to reach the level of ambition identified in the Global Strategy are still identified as areas in need of action in the Strategic Compass, namely surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (Council of the European Union 2016: 20; EEAS 2022: 44 f.). This could indicate that the council institutions were unable to reach a compromise to take action on these capability gaps and, therefore, could underline the lack of progress on the reform of the decision-making process. To this end, the analysis of the Council actions between 2016 and 2022 seems to confirm the Capability-Expectation Gap (Hill 1993: 315) which is often seen synonymous with a lack of political will of member states to transfer sovereignty to the EU (Kempin 2020: 986).

Consequently, this has negative implications for both the political and the operational dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* since a lack of operational capabilities subsequently limits the realm of options for decision-making. From this perspective, it is hard to analyze whether the external actions decided on by the Council institutions between 2016 and 2022 are a reflection of the EU's level of ambition in other words are the preferred or desired option to reach a certain outcome or contribute to certain EU interests, or rather the product of diminished capabilities and capacities that have led to a limited room to maneuver. As Lippert et al. (2019: 16) identified, "the gap between the wish for strategic autonomy and the reality of available resources is most glaring in the context of military capabilities." Using Mauro's (2021: 11) formula "Strategic Autonomy = Political Will x Ability to Decide x Capacity to Act" and applying it to the state of CFSP and CSDP actions during the research period between 2016 and 2022, the analysis shows that while the EU was able to agree on a certain level of ambition in principle, it was unable to decide on the concrete enactment of this level of ambition. While it undertook a variety of actions based on goals and priorities mapped out in the Global Strategy, it fell short on delivering on institutional reform and capability development with the exception of the EDF and the EPF.

7. Discussion

This preliminary conclusion brings back the question of how political change works that was posed at the beginning of the chapter on *Discursive Institutionalism*. Institutionalism tries to explain why change happens and also why it does not happen. Using *Discursive Institutionalism*, an attempt can be made to explain why the level of ambition proclaimed in the Global Strategy remained in large parts unfulfilled, while at the same offering a perspective on how future change is possible. While the *Qualitative Content Analysis* and subsequent application of key elements of the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* as outlined by, among others, Fiott (2018) and Grevi (2019), identifies the current implementation and level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* in the EU's foreign and security policy, *Discursive Institutionalism* gives an additional interesting perspective on *Strategic Autonomy* by revealing conflicts and differences in the understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* as well as potential explanations to why the EU still falls short of its own goal of *Strategic Autonomy*. This chapter will first look at the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* as an idea from the perspective of *Strategic Autonomy*. In a second part, chapter 7 will examine three actors in the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*: the Commission, France, and Germany. Finally, this chapter will consider the impact of the Russian war in Ukraine on the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* and offer a look forward utilizing both ideas from the literature on *Discursive Institutionalism* and theoretical concepts from the field of EU studies concerning the impact of crises on policymaking.

7.1 Strategic Autonomy from the perspective of Discursive Institutionalism

Using Schmidt's (2008: 4) differentiation of cognitive and normative ideas, *Strategic Autonomy* in EU foreign and security policy can be seen as a cognitive idea that functions as a guideline for political action by pointing out material needs and interests (Schleicher 2021: 38). The EU proclaimed its aim of achieving *Strategic Autonomy* in the Global Strategy and the accompanying Implementation Plan and delivered an assessment of capabilities and capacities it needs acquire to fulfill this ambition as well as a list of states and regions it wants to be active in (EEAS 2016). The more complicated task is categorizing the idea *Strategic Autonomy* according to Schmidt's (2008: 3f.) three levels of generality. An argument can be made for *Strategic Autonomy* as a programmatic idea, an underlying principle that informs specific policies, at the same time, it can be argued that a certain level of *Strategic Autonomy*

is closer to being a philosophical idea, which describes worldviews, internal values and organizing ideas. Arguing about a certain level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* means arguing about the position of the EU in the geopolitical security structure, mainly, does the EU want to rely on NATO and more specifically the US for security and the implementation of its interests?

Apart from that, *Strategic Autonomy* could also be seen as a frame or “référentiel” which Schmidt (2008: 4) defines as a type of programmatic idea used by policymakers to reconstruct a certain perception of how the world works and situate their idea in this framework and Campbell (2004: 98) as an idea employed by policymakers to legitimate ideas and political actions with symbols and concepts. *Strategic Autonomy* as a frame is an interesting idea since it can avoid specifying the exact level of ambition of the EU and in which situations and what capability areas it wants to be able to act independently from NATO. *Strategic Autonomy* as a frame can act as a central “organizing idea or storyline” (Gramson and Modigliani 1987 in Entman et al. 2009: 175) to bundle different policy ideas related to defense spending and procurement together under the idea of *Strategic Autonomy* which legitimizes these actions by weaving them into the broader narrative of having the need to take political actions in order to have the decision-making autonomy necessary to defend EU interests. As such, Campbell (2004: 94) would situate the idea of *Strategic Autonomy* in the foreground, meaning that it is an idea that should enable actors to push ideas because they either refer to a material need or advertise them by situating them in a certain legitimate and desirable context. Looking at the communication from the Commission examples for this approach can be found. In a blog article for the EEAS, the High Representative of the CFSP, Josep Borrell, first describes *Strategic Autonomy*, as concept that has long been “part of the agreed language” of the EU only to then answer his own rhetorical question, why *Strategic Autonomy* is now more salient than ever, as follows:

“Because the world has changed. It is difficult to claim to being a ‘political union’ able to act as a ‘global player’ and as a ‘geopolitical Commission’ without being ‘autonomous’ (Borrell 2020).”

Borrell’s statement for *Strategic Autonomy*, from Campbell’s (1998: 383) perspective, utilizes bricolage to combine established ideas and concepts that are already seen as legitimate, like the idea of the EU as a political union or the EU as a global player. Simultaneously, Borrell institutionalizes the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* by situating it in the canon of established

and accepted EU language. Taking a step back from the specific concept of *Strategic Autonomy*, it is noticeable that the Commission is and was engaged in a concerted effort to push the EU towards a more assertive strategic alignment. The president of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, started a discourse on the position of the EU on the international stage in her speech introducing the new college of commissioners. In her speech, she not only highlighted the EU's ability to shape the global order but went on to say:

“My Commission will not be afraid to speak the language of confidence. But it will be our way, the European way. This is the geopolitical Commission [...] that Europe urgently needs (von der Leyen p. 7).”

Building on von der Leyen's announcement speech of the new Commission, Borrell went further in saying that “the EU has to learn to use the language of power,” indicating that he envisions an EU that is not only relying on soft power in terms of diplomacy and aid but also utilizes hard power, which would entail the deployment of military forces (European Parliament 2019). Applying Hall's (1993) three-tier classification of change, the Commission clearly introduced ideas to aim for second- or third-order change. Second-order change, while still being considered gradual or incremental change or normal policymaking (Blyth 2002; Campbell 2004, Hall 1993: 279), involves the introduction of a new set of instruments applied to a problem. These new instruments like the EDF, the EPF, or the idea to reform “the practical modalities for implementing Article 44 of the Treaty on European Union (Implementation Plan, p. 26)” on the one hand increase the role of the Commission in the area of defense (Oliveira-Martins & Mawdsley 2021: 2) and on the other hand exemplify steps towards the integration of security and defense policy (Sabatino 2022). Indeed, the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, introduces *Strategic Autonomy* and further integration in the area of security and defense as a further step in the continuous development of the EU. Elaborating on the creation of the single market and the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, Michel explains that “each of these stages has strengthened the European Union and its autonomy.” By putting the idea of *Strategic Autonomy* in the context of past integration measures, that are widely perceived as positive and beneficial developments, Michel follows Borrell in situating *Strategic Autonomy* in the “agreed language” that is part of an established toolbox in line with existing norms and values (Schleicher 2021: 44f.). Moreover, the Commission is applying the line of arguments used to advocate for the Single Market to the integration of the EU security and defense market by pointing out cost-burdens for Member States and companies in the area of defense production procurement that are related to

duplications, different national regulation systems, licensing procedures, and a lack of information sharing. In contrast, greater competition already has led to an increase of competition, transparency, and non-discrimination (European Commission 2016: 10), and could lead to cost savings and improved competitiveness of EU-based companies (European Commission 2021: 75 f.; European Commission 2022b: 6). In other words, inside the discourse with the Member States in the Council, the Commission tried to sell further integration of the defense market and a larger role of the Commission in funding and coordinating procurement by touting the economic and financial benefits for Member States and the market sector. This attempt to extend the logic and positive perception of the Single Market to the defense sector can be seen as a usage of bricolage or framing and an example for the neo-functionalist idea of policy spill-over as an explanation for European integration (Strøby Jensen 2022: 54). It can also serve as an example for Sartori's idea of conceptual traveling which is the application of existing concepts to new cases, and conceptual stretching which entails the modification of said concept if changes are needed for the concept to fit the new case (Collier & Mahon 1993: 845).

However, one could argue that the actual ambition of the Commission actually exemplifies third-order change which indicates a drastic shift in the concepts or paradigms behind policy changes (ibid.: 47). While the EDF and EPF can be seen as steps towards a single market in defense and the communalization of financial obligations in European security and defense, reforming the decision-making process behind the CFSP and CSDP to allow for more Qualified Majority Voting would have a profound impact on the sovereignty of member states with regards to their foreign and security policy and infringe on the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP (Wessels 2021: 25). By introducing Qualitative Majority Voting to the CSDP, a majority of Member States could decide against the will of other Member States to deploy a CSDP mission for which the Member States opposed to the mission would have to pay because of the reformed funding mechanism in the EPF. According to Schmidt (2008: 5 f.) this sort of ideational change is possible once the established programmatic ideas have exhausted their long-term problem-solving potential. Evidence for this can be found in a speech by Charles Michel to the Bled Strategic Forum in September of 2021. In his speech he calls the chaotic exit of NATO and EU forces from Afghanistan “a stark demonstration” of the challenges the EU faces and goes on to saying, “we do not need another such geopolitical event to grasp that the EU must strive for greater decision-making autonomy and greater

capacity for action in the world (European Council 2021).” Similarly, the Borrell speaks of the shrinking weight of Europe in the world which already shows consequences:

“In conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh, Libya and Syria, we are witnessing an exclusion of Europe from the settlement of conflicts in favour of Russia and Turkey (Borrell 2020).”

These quote touches on another factor that can enable change in *Discursive Institutionalism*, which are crises. Crises are often seen as critical junctures or windows of opportunity for ideational change (Blyth 2002: 20). As mentioned earlier, this concept has been integrated in neo-functionalist and intergovernmental theories. While neo-functionalist theorize that political crises can enable the spillover processes that are crucial to Europeanization, proponents of intergovernmentalism theorize that political crises have the potential to break through the competitive bargaining and logrolling and compel Member States to act (Falkner 2016: 221, 222). Still, as both Blyth (2002: 9) and Campbell (2004: 175 f.) argue, for a crisis to have an impact on decision-making it first has to be acknowledged as a crisis by decision-makers. Besides the example of Afghanistan in his speech at the Bled Strategic Forum, Michel pointed to “an arc of instability” that has emerged around the EU in a speech at the Bruegel think-tank (European Council 2020). Crises and conflicts around the EU were already part of the context out of which the Global Strategy emerged in 2016, which not only identified the threads and the problems in solving them but also offered a solution:

“None of our countries has the strength nor the resources to address these threats and seize the opportunities of our time alone. But as a Union of almost half a billion citizens, our potential is unparalleled (EEAS 2016: 3).”

Thus, the Commission identified crises around Europe, their impact on the EU and the current inability of the EU to effectively respond to these threads and crises with the existing toolbox. In doing that, the Commission evokes the expectation-capability gap identified by scholars (Hill 1993: 315) and the risk of losing external legitimacy as a consequence of that gap (Keukeleire & Raube 2020: 282). Turning back to the literature on *Discursive Institutionalism*, the Commission has embedded the idea of *Strategic Autonomy* in the discourse on European institutional development while pointing to crises and threads to legitimize profound changes to the CFSP and CSDP. In this process the Commission, as well as Michel as President of the European Council, is aided by the literature on *Strategic Autonomy*, which, as pointed out earlier is both an academic observation and an active participant in the deliberation of the concept. The articles on *Strategic Autonomy* published by

think tanks like the European Policy Center (Grevi 2019) or the European Council of Foreign Relations (Franke &Varma 2019) form what Campbell (1998: 387) calls an epistemic community making a push to change the institution of CFSP and CSDP by criticizing intergovernmentalism (Varga 2017) and ambiguity (Mauro 2018).

Interestingly, as mentioned earlier, this ambiguity might be a feature of the EU's approach to *Strategic Autonomy*. Keeping *Strategic Autonomy* and the attached level of ambition deliberately vague might be a discursive strategy to keep Member States engaged and make at least incremental progress towards reaching *Strategic Autonomy*. As pointed out in the Chapter on *Strategic Autonomy* as a concept, the lack of a clear definition is commonly mentioned in the academic literature (Csernaton 2022: 396; Mauro 2021: 2). The phrase "Europe's strategic autonomy entails the ability to act and cooperate with international and regional partners wherever possible, while being able to operate autonomously when and where necessary (Council of the European Union 2016: 4)," leaves as much room for interpretation as the Global Strategy's explanation of the EU's future relationship with NATO:

"When it comes to collective defence, NATO remains the primary framework for most Member States. At the same time, EU-NATO relations shall not prejudice the security and defence policy of those Members which are not in NATO. The EU will therefore deepen cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance in complementarity, synergy, and full respect for the institutional framework, inclusiveness and decision-making autonomy of the two (EEAS 2016: 20)."

As Howorth (2017: 3) points out, the exact ambition of the EU and its consequences on the EU-NATO relationship remains unclear. Despite the repeated pledges of the EU to recognize NATO's primary role in security and defense, Howorth argues that the literal adoption of the Global Strategy's objectives would represent the "highest possible level of ambition" and would pose "huge question about the ultimate state of EU-NATO relations." Still, this ambiguity can also be seen as a feature in the discursive strategy of the EU. During a reflection on the development of the EU's security and defense policy, Howorth (2004: 229) noted that constructive ambiguity was a key feature in the negotiations of compromises like the declaration of St. Malo because both sides "stuck to their respective interpretations" while agreeing on the basic idea. Howorth argues that European defense and security integration was progressing while there was room for ambiguity and seized progressing after the US invasion of Iraq forced member states to discard ambiguity and take a position (ibid.: 228).

Following Schmidt (2008: 13) in introducing Bourdieu's logic of practice into the analysis framework of *Discursive Institutionalism*, discourse and discursive practices can be both enabling and restrictive. With regard to *Strategic Autonomy* and the constructive ambiguity used to frame it, this certainly holds true. The constructive ambiguity enabled the Council institutions to reach common positions on security and defense issues. During the period of analysis, the Council institutions repeatedly stated the intention to adopt the ambitions of the Global Strategy, do more on security and defense, and increase security and defense cooperation in the EU (European Council 8/17 2017; European Council 17/18 2018). However, the analysis of the intended action showed that these ambitions were either not translated into policies or failed to reach the intended outcome, for instance with regard to joint defense expenditure. At the same time, the constructive ambiguity hindered the development of a coherent epistemic community with the ability to create transformative change (see Hall & Morley 2018: 374). As Campbell (2004) writes, it is only in the interaction and shared discourse between all the actors that a new alternative coherent policy paradigm can be put forward to replace an institutionalized concept or idea. The constructive ambiguity means that the different actors of EU decision-making can engage in their own discourse using their own interpretation of *Strategic Autonomy* rather than in a shared discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*. This seems to confirm Thomas' (2021) and Smith's (2021) observation that Member States have become less likely to set and voice policy preferences in foreign policy in a way that is conducive of joint European policymaking. Thus, the normative entrapment that could lead to policy breakthroughs and institutional change becomes less likely while theories of logrolling and competitive bargaining become more pronounced in EU foreign policy making. This is problematic since a coherent strategic culture in the EU is a prerequisite for *Strategic Autonomy* (Arteaga 2017: 5). Looking at the positions of France and Germany on key issues of *Strategic Autonomy*, the differences in expectations and interests become clear. Using the questions Biscop (2019: 5) raised to define *Strategic Autonomy* and applying the dimensions of the concept identified by Grevi (2019) and Charillon et al. (2017), France's and Germany's understanding of *Strategic Autonomy* can be analyzed.

7.2 France as an actor in the discourse on Strategic Autonomy

France wants EU *Strategic Autonomy* for external actions in the EU's neighborhood and the broader region of Africa to engage in post-conflict stabilization and crisis management

(Franke & Varma 2019: 13; 14). However, rather than seeing the EU as a supporting actor in crises, France also wants the EU to conduct first-entry missions and higher-end operations independent of NATO (ibid.: 14). For France, *Strategic Autonomy* is, therefore, an extension of its own sovereignty for which its ability to enter a conflict first “is the ultimate guarantee (Arteaga et al. 2016: 8).” As Järvenpää et al. (2019: 10) write, France has an interest in strengthening the EU’s ability to decide and act especially in areas where France does not want involvement of NATO. While France stresses that *Strategic Autonomy* for the EU does not stand in conflict with NATO membership or diminish the role of the US in European security, it seeks *Strategic Autonomy* as autonomy of action (Franke & Varma 2019: 25). Using Fiott’s (2018: 2) measurement stick of “freedom from dependencies” and “freedom to act” France sees *Strategic Autonomy* as a tool to ensure its security and actively protect its interests “even if the United States and NATO do not or cannot act (Franke & Varma 2019: 46).” According to Fiott’s (2018: 4 f.) classification this view of *Strategic Autonomy* is consistent with *Hedging* behavior, if not more ambitious. The level of ambition France seeks for EU *Strategic Autonomy*, namely the ability to conduct crisis management tasks as well as first-entry missions to defend EU interests without the support or backing of the US and NATO, is consistent with the first two faces of *Strategic Autonomy* as defined by Mauro (2021: 3 ff.): *Strategic Autonomy* as international crisis-management capabilities and *Strategic Autonomy* as military independence. Regarding the operational dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* (Grevi 2019: 10), France wants to build-up a European command structure and increase the EU’s capabilities to conduct operations independently (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 11). Answering Biscop’s (2019: 5) question of when the EU should act, Lippert et al. (2019: 12) lay out the four scenarios France wants the EU to respond to independently from the US and NATO:

“A terror attack against an EU member state, a hybrid attack, an attack against an EU member state that is not a member of NATO (principally Sweden or Finland), or an armed attack on a NATO ally where the United States is not willing to respond militarily under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty.”

Concerning the industrial dimension (Grevi 2019: 10), France wants to reinforce the competitiveness of the defense technology and industrial base of the EU (Arteaga et al. 2016: 11) to ensure the EU’s ability to provide the capabilities that are necessary to conduct operations (Franke & Varma 2019: 46). In the industrial dimension, France seeks reduced dependency if not independence from the US in defense procurement and thus advocates for

reinforced EU tools to strengthen the EU's defense production sector (Lippert et al. 2019: 13). On an institutional level, France advocates for greater solidarity on defense and security and a reform or operationalization of the relevant treaty provisions (Franke & Varma 2019: 23). In general, France's vision for *Strategic Autonomy* seems to align with the ambition described in the documents of the Commission. However, there are key differences on the institutional framework behind a future European *Strategic Autonomy*. Contrary, to the Commission, France advocates a more exclusive approach that relies on a few close partners (Lippert et al. 2019: 12) and sometimes works outside of the EU institutions. For example, France proposed the creation of a European Security Council outside of the EU format which would include the UK (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 15). France's concept for a European Security Council outside the EU format could be seen as an example for the concept of differentiated integration in which some Member States continue to integrate in certain policy areas while others can opt out (Laffan 2022: 445 f.). Still, France advocates for a reinforcement of resources at an EU level because "Member States of the European Union can have greater sovereignty together than each country taken separately (Kempin & Kunz 2017: 33)."

7.3 Germany as an actor in the discourse on Strategic Autonomy

Germany is more cautious regarding *Strategic Autonomy* than France (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 11), which manifests itself literally in the German government's longstanding avoidance of the term *Strategic Autonomy* in its strategic documents (Kempin & Kunz 2017: 12). Besides, this more cautious approach can be seen in the answer to Biscop's (2019: 5) question of where the EU should be able to act and the type of actions the EU should be able to execute. Germany limits the area of EU action to the EU's neighborhood and the operational level of *Strategic Autonomy* to post-conflict stabilization and crisis-management (Franke & Varma 2019: 13; 14). Concerning the operational dimension of *Strategic Autonomy*, Germany wants the EU to focus on decision-making autonomy, seeing *Strategic Autonomy* as an approach to implement a "shared strategic culture in Europe and more efficient spending and interoperability (Franke & Varma 2019:25; 47)." However, despite Germany's acquiescence of the term *Strategic Autonomy* and the joint support of France and Germany for the Global Strategy, there remain significant differences between the two Member States on the strategic alignment of the EU. As Kempin & Kunz (2017: 12) write:

"Paris' and Berlin's views on their own positions on the international stage are seldom on par. Ideas on the role of the military and the use of force differ, as well as societies' perceptions of

their armed forces. Security and defence policy priorities do not necessarily go together either, be it in terms of threat perception, regional priorities or readiness to resort to military action.”

Germany long stressed the importance of non-military approaches for the EU and was long reluctant to contribute to the funding of defense procurement (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 11). Interestingly, Germany’s position on the industrial dimension of *Strategic Autonomy* is not coherent. In a strategy paper from 2015, Germany declared the goal of enhancing the European framework for defense industries, deepen cooperation and promoting consolidation inside the EU to promote research and development in the defense sector (Arteaga et al. 2016: 14). While Germany used to operate under the belief that *Strategic Autonomy* is an unrealistic goal, it still embraced and supported policies towards defense integration like PESCO and the EDF (Franke & Varma 2019: 47 f.). However, Germany remained obstinate on giving the requirements of the Bundeswehr primacy over EU concerns. As a result, Germany remains reluctant to engage in joined procurement programs preferring their own in-house developments of more complex military equipment and weapon systems. Germany, thus, wants to protect German sovereignty over “key national technologies in order to ensure military capabilities and the security of supply chains (German Federal Government 2016: 129).” Applying Fiott’s (2018: 2) three classifications of level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy*, *Responsibility*, *Hedging*, and *Emancipation*, Germany’s cautious and incremental approach to *Strategic Autonomy* is more in line with the lowest level of ambition, *Responsibility*. Similarly, Germany’s approach to *Strategic Autonomy* fulfills only the criteria of the first face of *Strategic Autonomy* as defined by Mauro (2021: 3).

7.4 The discourse on Strategic Autonomy

Generally speaking, Germany’s level of ambition is lower than that of France or the Commission. Further differences can be identified regarding the institutional dimension of *Strategic Autonomy*. Contrary to France, Germany sees no need to reform the treaty provisions and judges them to be sufficient to achieve the desired level of ambition (Franke & Varma 2019: 23). Germany also has a divergent opinion on the assembly of a potential European Security Council. As mentioned earlier, France favors a more exclusive option outside the EU format with the UK participating, Germany on the other hand favors a more inclusive approach in the EU format (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 15). France and Germany thus disagree on the important question of who is supposed to be strategically autonomous (Council of the European Union General Secretariat 2021: 10). While France seems to favor

more autonomous Member States that would be capable to decide and act independently of the institutions, Germany envisions a limited *Strategic Autonomy* of the EU as a whole with a focus on inclusivity and transparency (Järvenpää et al. 2019:14). The disparities between France and Germany regarding the EU's strategic alignment in general and *Strategic Autonomy* specifically, can be showcased by the public disagreement between French President Emanuel Macron and Germany's then minister of defense Annegret Kramp Karrenbauer. Kramp Karrenbauer had publicly disregarded the notion of *Strategic Autonomy* and more European independence in the field of defense calling it an "illusion". Macron responded by further advocating for the potential of *Strategic Autonomy* to enable the EU to set up its own rules and criticized the comments of the German defense minister as a "historical misinterpretation" (Mauro 2021: 7). Still, there has been a shift in Germany's position over the years. As Franke & Varma (2019: 48) already noticed during their study in 2019, Germany increasingly believed that the EU should show more strength as a geopolitical actor. This shift was certainly moved along further with the beginning of Russia's war in Ukraine. However, while Germany did proclaim the "Zeitenwende" and vowed to increase its defense spending (Die Bundesregierung 2022), the perception of Germany as a reluctant partner in military questions persisted (Agence-France Presse 2023).

Returning to the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, the divergent viewpoints of France, Germany, and the Commission shows that there are still different ideas about *Strategic Autonomy*. The debate on *Strategic Autonomy*, thus, represents the "full measure of difference" (Hill 1998: 36) that up until now has defined the EU as a foreign policy actor. France's idea of *Strategic Autonomy* as an extension of its own sovereignty might be guided by its own strategic interests as some critics suggest who called Macron's speeches on *Strategic Autonomy* a "European intervention initiative (Lippert et al. 2019: 12)." The fact that France explicitly calls for the broader region of the African continent to be included in the area the EU should be engaged in might support the suggestion that France is looking to realize their national interest through EU or NATO channels, especially in the regions of their former colonial empires (Fröhlich 2020: 78f.; Giegerich 2020: 411; Varga 2017: 18; Wessels 2021: 19). However, as the analysis has shown, the EU already has a strategic interest in regions in which France is engaged in nationally with the Sahel being the region in which the EU was and planned to be especially active. Therefore, it might just be that France's historical interest in the region overlaps with geopolitical as well as internal political pressures that guided the EU's focus to this region. After all it is not only in France's but in the EU's general

interest to fight terrorism and reduce the number of migrants arriving at the coast of the Mediterranean to cross over to Europe. Following the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, France's interest should therefore not be seen as the main determinants for its decision-making (Campbell 1998: 379). As the introduction into the genesis of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in chapter 3 has shown, France had a conflictual relationship with European defense integration from the moment the outline for a European Defense Union was drafted by René Pleven (Kempin 2020: 977). Notably, France introduced the term *Strategic Autonomy* in its national White Book, thereby highlighting the value France attaches to national sovereignty (Mauro 2018: 4). In addition, France's weariness of the US as a hegemon and US influence in Europe (Fröhlich 2020: 74; Giegerich 2020: 390) is still present in the French political discourse (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 10). Using Schmidt (2008: 3f.), the primacy of French sovereignty, the conflictual relationship with European defense integration, and the perceived need to balance US power and influence can be seen as philosophical ideas that represent worldviews and internal ideas. The institutionalization of philosophical ideas can restrict the horizon of political ideas that are perceived as legitimate and thus inhibit change (Campbell 2004: 110).

Similarly, Germany is restricted in its maneuverability by its longstanding perception of itself as non-military actor. Once again, a look back into the history of European foreign policy and defense integration can be useful. It was Brand's *détente* policy that enabled Europe to create a common foreign policy identity in contrast to the more aggressive US posture, which led to the European Political Cooperation (EPC) (Juncos & Friis 2022: 281; Fröhlich 2020: 74). The EPC brought the foreign secretaries of its members together to develop a common view on international development (ibid.: 74 f.). It is, thus, perhaps unsurprising that Germany stressed the importance of non-military approaches in the EU's foreign policy (Järvenpää et al. 2019: 11). Therefore, both France and Germany have powerful philosophical ideas that limit their ability to take on new ideas and work towards institutional change. This is expressed in the prevalence of Intergovernmentalism in the decision-making process of the CFSP and CSDP. They remain intergovernmental policies with cooperation among few Member States and critics point out, that the steps towards more integration are less a result of increasing solidarity and responsibility among the member states and more caused by the external and internal crises, exemplifying the reactive character of the CFSP (Fröhlich 2020: 80). From the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, Intergovernmentalism in itself can be seen as an institutionalized idea that limits the range of possible policy outcomes.

Still, the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* was able to produce a degree of change, even if it might only be categorized as incremental change or normal policymaking (Blyth 2002; Campbell 2004, Hall 1993: 279). As the analysis has shown, the Council was able to reach agreements on the EDF, PESCO, and the EPF, which are policies that moved the EU towards closer cooperation and defense and security integration. While PESCO, in theory only concerns those Member States who opt to participate and can, thus, be seen as an example of differentiated integration (Laffan 2022: 445f.) or a multi-speed Europe (Bendiek 2017), the EDF and the EPF are examples of defense integration towards a level of *Strategic Autonomy*. In addition, the Council expanded the scope of its maritime operations by adding maritime expanse to the area of operation of NAVFOR Atalanta (Council of the European Union 6255/22 2022) and committing itself to maritime missions in the Gulf of Guinea (Council of the European Union 5387/21 2021). Moreover, it is notable in itself that the Council reached agreement on the Global Strategy and upheld a consensus to be more assertive as a geopolitical power and move towards some vision and level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* (European Council 8/17 2017; European Council 17/18 2018). In 2020, Mogherini's successor Josep Borrell even answered a German initiative to conduct a review of the CFSP, update the threat assessment, and put forward an operational direction based on the threat scenarios faced by the EU, which started the process of creating the Strategic Compass (Kaim & Kempin 2022: 1; EEAS 2022).

On the one hand, this could be attributed to the discursive process of interaction between interests and ideas (Campbell 1998: 379), on the other, the Commission in the role of an institutional entrepreneur might have contributed. A social entrepreneur is a special kind of decision-maker who introduces new ideas and has an interest in institutional change. The Commission as the independent executive arm of the European Union naturally has an interest in further Europeanization and neo-functionalist spillover effects and has already increased its influence on EU foreign policymaking as outlined by Riddervold (2016). As discussed earlier, the Commission pushes the narrative of *Strategic Autonomy* and a more assertive EU posture on the geopolitical stage. By setting the scene of an instable and insecure global environment, the Commission constructs a situation in which established intergovernmental policy solutions have lost their efficacy and *Strategic Autonomy* becomes necessary. For Campbell (2004: 177f.) an institutional entrepreneur needs financial, political, and organizational resources to succeed. Applied to the context of the CFSP and CSDP, the financial, political, and organizational resources the EU, represented by the Commission, can provide are selling

points to convince the Member States. The Commission not only promises the security and defense integration could increase the international competitiveness of the defense sector but also that it would lead to a more cost-effective procurement. Moreover, the Commission promises a fairer burden-sharing approach, which would reduce the costs for Member States who are engaged in CSDP missions. For Martins & Mawdsley (2021: 4), the Commission is using sociotechnical imaginaries, which refer to “collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desired futures,” to advocate for closer integration. From the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, these ideas introduced by the Commission are no longer “fillers” in a predetermined hypothesis of change (Blyth 2002: 17) but shape the contingent nature of the institution on which the discourse is centered. *Strategic Autonomy* becomes a frame of reference for different actions that are introduced in the Council institutions (Campbell 1998: 382; Schmidt 2008: 12), which makes it not only a restraining background idea but also an enabling foreground idea that situates actions like the EDF or the EPF in a desirable context (Campbell 2004: 94).

Still, the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*, and the existence of the Commission as an institutional entrepreneur, was unable to move the Council institution beyond incremental change and normal policymaking even while it partly succeeded in moving the integration of the CFSP and CSDP forward. This seems to confirm the diagnosis of some scholars that intergovernmental tendencies are on the rise which consequentially leads to logrolling or competitive bargaining (Thomas 2021: 627 f.). For both historical institutionalist and discursive institutionalist the occurrence of change can be explained by exogenous influences which “puncture” (Blyth 2002: 20) the equilibrium thereby creating a “window of opportunity” to change the constricting institutions (Schleicher 2021: 36). In other words, crises can change the interests and ideas of actors in a way that enables them to change the institution they are part of. Often a crisis can contribute to the perception that existing and established programmatic ideas have exhausted their long-term problem-solving potential (Schmidt 2008: 5 f.). During the period of analysis, there were multiple external crises that could have and to a degree did affect the EU. First, Donald Trump was elected as president of the US and openly questioned the transatlantic alliance and the principle of mutual defense. Second, Belarus moved away from the EU towards Russia indicating a growing sphere of influence of Russia. Third, multiple coups in the Sahel region not only put the existing CSDP missions at risk and put the future commitment of the EU to the region into doubt. Fourth,

Russia's increasingly aggressive posture culminated in the ramp up of troops at the Ukrainian border almost a year before the invasion started. As Laffan (2022: 445) writes:

“Multi-polarity now seems an increasingly pronounced feature of the international system, underlined by the transcendence of the G8 of Western powers by the G20. The growing weight of China and others, notably India, Brazil, and Russia, points to a relative decline in the power of the USA and Europe, especially within the international political economy.”

While relations with the US have improved under US President Joe Biden, the focus of the US has shifted towards its strategic rivalry with China and the looming threat of war between China and Taiwan (Laffan 2022: 445). Of course, as both Blyth (2002: 9) and Campbell (2004: 175 f.) point out, for a crisis to have an impact on decision-making it first has to be acknowledged as a crisis by decision-makers. There is evidence that decision-makers were aware of the need to act even before the vicissitude of the Russian invasion of Ukraine as shown by a non-paper put forward by Spain and the Netherlands in March of 2021:

“These global events, including the current crisis, mark a turning point in the debate on the need for the EU and its Member States to have the capacity to take and implement autonomous decisions (Rijksoverheid: 2021).”

Still, while all these crises were discussed in the Council institutions and recognized as potential threats, they did not create a window of opportunity to create meaningful change. According to Hall (1993:278), when confronted with a political problem, decision-makers can apply three approaches that entail a different degree of change. During the research period, the Council mostly engaged in first and second order change, threatening sanctions and criticizing actions by regimes, while having an agreement in principle to do more and move towards greater integration. Disagreements on strategic alignment like the public dispute between Macron and Kramp Karrenbauer, differences in engrained foreign policy approaches and the reluctance to overcome intergovernmentalism and transfer additional sovereignty to the EU narrowed the ideational space of policy solutions deemed acceptable to respond to these crises. The discourse on the future of the CFSP and *Strategic Autonomy*, therefore, continued on the basis of deliberate vagueness. Grevi (2019: 9) calls this process of buying time with lowest-common denominator compromises without answering the hard questions and offering long-lasting political solutions “muddling through,” which he sees as the consequence of failing to agree on *Strategic Autonomy*. Another factor certainly was the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the European Council came together twelve times, twice as often as in

the years prior. Still, both the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council were preoccupied with the health emergency of the novel virus, which reduced the available time to discuss other foreign policy issues.

This seemed to change with the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. As showcased earlier, the EU immediately reacted to Russia's war with unprecedented support measures for Ukraine and unprecedented sanctions against Russia. In reaction to the war, the Council delayed the publication of the Strategic Compass to draft an introduction that takes account of the invasion of Ukraine. A central aspect of the Strategic Compass is the assessment of a return of power politics to international relations. The EU expects geopolitical players to take on an increasingly assertive or even aggressive posture and therefore assesses the need to develop itself into an effective security provider (Fiott 2020: 114; Kaim & Kempin 2022: 2f.). Notably, the Strategic Compass acknowledges the lack of action following the Global Strategy in 2016, by explicating the need to get "serious about threats to our strategic interests that we have been aware of but not always acted upon (EEAS 2022: 5)." It further states: "The history of European integration is full of plans and initiatives to strengthen the EU's security and defence policy. Most have come and gone (EEAS 2022: 7)." Actions like the delivery of military equipment to a third country engaged in war and the wide-ranging sanctions against Russia and Belarus can be seen as indicators that the war in Ukraine is a type of crisis that pushes actors to look for new answers and ideas (Blyth 2002:9; Campbell 2004: 174 f.). In the case of the war in Ukraine, this idea is not new but a rekindling of the discourse on *Strategic Autonomy*. The introduction to the Strategic Compass written by the HR for the CFSP Borrell even has the subtitle "Europe's geopolitical awakening (EEAS 2022: 4)," even though Russia's war was preceded by other crises and happened in the context of multiple other crises. This indicates that the war in Ukraine is indeed seen as an inflection point in EU policymaking. Russia's war of aggression is perceived by many as the return of war to the European continent and a declaration of war not only against Ukraine but against the world order guided by the principles of the UN Charter. The war and the necessity to act, made the continuation of the use of deliberate vagueness with regard to the strategic alignment of the EU impossible. From the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, crises like this, thus, induce discourse because the source of the uncertainty and nature of the crisis have to be discussed and diagnosed and the deliberation of the available ideas becomes crucial as the stakes for collective action increase (Blyth 2002: 9; Schleicher 2021: 51). In the first months after the invasion, the EU found itself being capable of remarkable collective

actions and was at the same time reminded of the limits of intergovernmental policy-making and nationalized defense procurement. Therefore, the war in Ukraine could lead to a paradigm shift in EU foreign and security policy making and might bring the EU closer to a common understanding and level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy* and eventually to *Strategic Autonomy* itself.

7.5 The war in Ukraine and a look ahead

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was an incision in the discourse on EU foreign and security policy making. The “*Zeitenwende*” proclaimed by German chancellor Olaf Scholz referred to German foreign and security policy but could very well have been addressed at the EU at large (Die Bundesregierung 2022). Looking at the unprecedented response to the Russian invasion as well as the rhetoric surrounding it, there seemed to be a path to meaningful institutional change. As mentioned earlier, the EU responded with multiple financial aid packages, an unprecedented sanctions regime against Russia, and direct military aid to Ukraine. To account for the Russian war in Ukraine, the Strategic Compass was updated and passed later than originally planned in March 2022. The EU further established the European Peace Facility outside of the MFF to reimburse Member States for weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine as military aid (Maletta & Héau 2022: 1). Member States delivered a wide range of military equipment from tanks to air-defense missiles and cleared the pathway to grant candidate status for EU membership to Ukraine in an accelerated procedure. In addition, the EU and its Member States vowed to take steps to boost the production of munitions and put in place a three-track approach to speed up delivery and joint procurement with the aim to provide one million rounds of artillery ammunition for Ukraine by March of 2024 (Council of the European Union 2023). From the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism*, the EU can be seen as looking for new answers and ideas (Blyth 2002: 9) to respond to a crisis that can no longer be addressed by the established policy solutions (Hall 1993: 280). Russia’s naked disregard for the international order and the principle of non-aggression led the EU decision-makers to recognize that the war in Ukraine has the potential to threaten the present division of power and resources (Blyth 2002, S. 9; Campbell 2004, S. 175 f.). For *Discursive institutionalists*, this is a situation that can create change because it allows for the discussion of ideas that in times of stability might not have seem valid or legitimate (Blyth 2002: 270). In the case of the war in Ukraine, this crisis emerged in situation that was already marked by another impactful crisis.

Already, the Covid-19 pandemic had showcased the danger on relying on potentially volatile markets when the EU was unable to procure vital products from drugs to gloves, masks, and other personal protective equipment (Fiott & Theodospoulos 2020; Stockton et al. 2020). With the Russian war of aggression this re-emerged discourse on *Strategic Autonomy* was extended into the area of security and defense (Damen 2022). Trying to gather military equipment, arms and munitions to adequately support Ukraine, the EU quickly realized that it not only lacks sufficient stock to aid Ukraine but also to defend itself in case of a military aggression against its territory. Thus, the contributors and enablers of change as described by Blyth (2002), Hall (1993), and Campbell (2004), all seemed to be present to change EU policy towards an ambitious and well-defined level of *Strategic Autonomy*. The urgency and gravity of the situation could have cleared the way for the integration and uniformization of defense development and procurement and a simplification of decision-making processes regarding foreign and security policy making to answer Russia's threats with a unified and forceful response. However, the months since have shown the opposite. The EU continues to struggle to find its voice on the international stage while being perceived as indecisive and unable to act. Reviewing the EU's responses to past and ongoing crises, Lithuanian Foreign minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said in an interview in May of 2024:

“With every attempt in Europe to find a common position, be it on Ukraine, Gaza or Georgia, we find less and less coherence (Gavin & Hanke Vela 2024).”

Instead, Member States still have a penchant for intergovernmentalism and engage in bargaining and logrolling (Wessels 2021: 23). One reason for the continuation of intergovernmental practices can be attributed to the rise of populism in the EU (Müller et al. 2021: 529). Most prominently, Hungary, under its populist leader Victor Orban, has blocked and delayed military aid to Ukraine multiple times to press out concessions regarding EU funds for Hungary that were frozen in response to Hungarian shortcomings in the area of rule-of-law (Vinocur 2023). Likewise, Orban also blocked a unified statement of the EU on the situation in Georgia following the passing of a law that requires NGOs and media outlets to publish the names of foreign donors and investors. The failure of the EU to react forcefully to the passing of the contentious law came as a blow to protestors in Georgia who want to see their country move away from Russia and closer to the EU (Gavin & Hanke Vela 2024). However, it is too easy to contribute the persistence of intergovernmentalism to populist tendencies in the EU. The discrepancies between Germany and France on the envisioned role of the EU on the international stage are still a major factor for the conflictual nature of the

CFSP and CSDP as showcased by conflicts over the EU's China policy and military aid for Ukraine (Camut 2023; Angelos & Posaner 2024). Exemplary for Franco-German disunity, is the public disagreement on the prospect of supporting Ukraine with German made Leopard II tanks (von der Burchard et al. 2023). Some Member States even accuse their European partners of underestimating the threat the war in Ukraine constitutes for all of Europe. Two years after the invasion, Latvia's prime minister Evica Silina felt the need to reiterate that Russia's war of aggression is not just a problem for the Baltic member states, asking: "How can Europe be a strong player internationally if we cannot react strongly inside Europe (Leifert 2024)?"

What is more, even when the EU was able to agree on actions, it often failed to deliver. While the EU pledged to send 1 million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine by March of 2024 (Council of the European Union 2023), it was only able to deliver half of the amount promised (Pugnet 2024). Conflicts also emerged over a proposal to create a designate commissioner for defense in the EU's college of commissioners. Creating a commissioner of defense is a key element of Commission president von der Leyen's re-election bid and the latest attempt by the Commission to advocate for integration in the defense and security sector by highlighting the economic benefits of interoperability and alignment of defense procurement. However, the proposal was immediately questioned by the German chancellery over concerns of national sovereignty (Schäfers 2024). Crucially, these disagreements on EU actions, the role of the EU on the international stage, and the future of the CFSP and CSDP come at a time at which there are already conflicting views on how to deal with the European security situation between the US, the UK, and Member States (Hanke Vela 2023). Moreover, disagreements and delays within NATO (Duclos 2020; Bayer 2023) and the project of a second, even more radical and isolationist Trump presidency in the US make it ever more dangerous to rely on partners outside of the EU (von Daniels et al. 2024). Thus, a joint EU position on questions on security and defense would be more important than ever. Agreeing on a level of *Strategic Autonomy* and acting on it by integrating the EU defense market, centralizing the defense procurement for all Member States, and enabling the EU to act independently from the US and NATO would help to legitimize the EU as an international actor and give it the necessary credibility to act in a volatile global environment. What is more, the multiple crises the EU is faced with make an ambitious level of *Strategic Autonomy* a prudent political choice. Financial resources are needed to tackle the post-Covid-19 economic recovery, invest in the green transition, and build up the military capabilities

necessary to support Ukraine and create a sufficient defense of the EU. Therefore, increasing scale and interoperability and avoiding duplication is a way to make EU spending more efficient, which could enable the EU and the Member States to have sufficient resources for other areas of need (Varga 2017: 13 ff.).

Agreeing on and following through on an ambitious level of *Strategic Autonomy* closer to Emancipation than Responsibility (Fiott 2018), could also be an opportunity to bring the unfinished project of a true union closer to fruition. The integration process that would be necessary to obtain an ambitious level of *Strategic Autonomy* could bridge differences between Member States and thus defy some of the centrifugal forces currently at work. A look at political philosophy can be insightful here. In her attempt to describe the constitution of a society and the elements necessary to keep it together, Nicole Loraux investigated the antique polis, which came together over its fear of stasis or unrestrained conflict (Loraux 1994: 31 f.). Looking at certain structures of the antique polis as well as the different meanings of Greek words, she concluded that partition is a prerequisite for the tying of a new bond which could dissolve conflict and prevent the separation of the polis (ibid.: 33). Faced by the populist thread questioning its foundational values, the EU could use *Strategic Autonomy* as a way to unify and mobilize those actors that believe in and support the European project. Staying with Loraux's image, a tighter bond of Member States in the area of foreign and defence policy would not stand in contradiction to Manners & Diez (2007: 186) who observed that "the fluid, complex, multiple and relational aspects of the self-other contestations [...] define the EU as a normative power." While Manners (2002) argues that it is the lack of state-like features that makes the EU a normative power and warns against a further militarization, a normative power can only act in a normative way if it is indeed able to act. The examples of the conflicts in Syria and Libya showcase that internal conflicts and disagreements lead to either uncoherent action or inaction, which leaves the EU as an ineffective, toothless normative power. While at the moment, *Strategic Autonomy* is needed to project hard power and enable military action, in the long run, it can be the foundation of the EU's status as a normative power. However, to achieve this, the EU and its Member States need to discard unilateralism, reactionary policymaking, and short-term political thinking and acknowledge that the challenge of this time is to be an Other to the illiberal and increasingly aggressive powers China and Russia. The EU should therefore strive for *Strategic Autonomy* to build a decisive and coherently acting union founded on and guided by the principles of democracy, equality, human rights, and the rule of law and be a true normative power.

8. Conclusio

This Master's thesis aimed to analyze the EU's foreign and security policy in the framework of the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* using a *Qualitative Content Analysis* to extract and analyze EU external actions from the conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council and subsequently utilizing the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism* to discuss the results and the role of discourse in the debate on *Strategic Autonomy*. The analysis was able to identify twelve distinct categories of EU external actions as well as a clear prioritization in the regions and states the EU was active in. One major finding of this analysis is that EU external actions between June 2016 and June 2022 were often made in the framework of migration policy and often aimed towards regions in which there was already an international or regional presence. The analysis further showed that the EU followed through on several parts of the Global Strategy published in 2016 but failed to deliver on others. While member states continuously reiterated their commitment to increase defense spending, engage more in defense cooperation and simplify the decision-making process, they failed to act on these commitments that were an expression of the ambition set out in the Global Strategy. The analysis, thus, confirms the discrepancy between the pledge towards shared actions and supranational practices and the autonomy of Member States regarding control over the decision-making process observed by Fröhlich (2020: 78). Still, the EU was able to agree on establishing the European Defense Fund and the European Peace Facilities, which can both be seen as steps towards a closer integration of European security and defense. Introducing the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* to the analysis of the Council actions, the level of ambition of the EU, according to Fiott's (2018) categorization, is between *Responsibility* and *Hedging*. While the EU is striving to reduce dependencies and, hence, has a higher ambition than indicated by *Responsibility*, it falls short of *Hedging* because of its indecisiveness regarding its relationship with NATO. Applying the dimensions of *Strategic Autonomy* (Grevi 2019; Järvenpää et al. 2019), the analysis showed that the EU had the necessary capabilities in the political, operational, and industrial dimension to follow through on some of the goals of the Global Strategy. However, it fell short in all dimensions regarding the targeted level of ambition in the Global Strategy. Concluding with Mauro's (2021: 11) formula "Strategic Autonomy = Political Will x Ability to Decide x Capacity to Act" and applying it to the state of CFSP and CSDP actions during the research period between 2016

and 2022, the analysis showed that the EU lacked the political will and the ability to decide to agree on an ambitious level of *Strategic Autonomy* and increase its capacity to act.

Analyzing EU foreign and security policy making from the perspective of *Discursive Institutionalism* showed that the Commission tried to reform the CFSP and CSDP and overcome intergovernmentalism by advocating for *Strategic Autonomy*. Thus, it acted as an institutional entrepreneur that introduces new ideas and has an interest in institutional change. The analysis was able to show that the Commission tried to legitimize the concept of *Strategic Autonomy* by framing it as part of the established discourse on EU policy making. Simultaneously, it tried to establish *Strategic Autonomy* as the solution to an ever more volatile global environment in which the EU would risk losing its ability to act without *Strategic Autonomy*. Further, the Commission tried to persuade Member States by comparing the cost benefits and positive effects of further integration in security and defense to the success of the Single Market. Still, the analysis showed that this was only partially successful. With France and Germany, two important players within the EU continue to have differing positions on the role of the EU and the desired level of ambition for *Strategic Autonomy*. The analysis was able to show that these positions are rooted in long-held traditions that are engrained in their decision-making process. The Commission's advocacy for *Strategic Autonomy* was not enough to overcome the paradigms of France and Germany. Furthermore, while there were several geopolitical crises between 2016 and 2022, no crisis was severe enough to exhaust the explanatory potential and applicability of the established policies and decision-making processes. The Russian war in Ukraine is the first crisis with the potential to bring about meaningful institutional change that would be comparable to a high level of ambition of *Strategic Autonomy*.

However, so far, the war in Ukraine has neither led to changes in the CFSP and CSDP nor to a coherent and detailed outline of *Strategic Autonomy*. There is still a persistent general malaise to give up sovereignty in the security and defense policy that the Member States possess and the Commission and the epistemic community lament. While with Russia's invasion of Ukraine the days of the primacy of the liberal Western order, which seemed to represent the end of history in the 1990s, have gone down behind the shadow of the mass graves in Bucha, inaction or insufficient actions prevail. Indeed, the EU's external policy targeted at Ukraine is stuck in the cycle of intergovernmentalist bargaining and logrolling that has become the norm in the Council. While the EU is able to reach decisions on some issues, on consequential issues the European Council is still characterized by the prioritization of national policies over

supranational approaches as outlined by the comparison of France and Germany (Bendiek 2017). Thus, Major and Mölling's (2020: 39) statement is still applicable to the CFSP and CSDP:

“When the ESDP confronted the member states with the choice of being more capable but having less individual say in defence decision-making, member states often preferred a limited national option.”

While Member States like Austria make use of the option of voting abstention to allow military aid for Ukraine to proceed through the Council, it is generally underused, thereby retaining the need for unanimity and the potential for competitive bargaining and logrolling (Wessels 2021: 23). While Victor Orban might make a serviceable villain and represent the polarization within the EU, the failure of the EU to meaningfully reform the CFSP and CSDP can also be contributed to the inability of Member States like France and Germany to find compromise. Member States remain stuck in the logic of practice of muddling through with intergovernmental bargaining. Seemingly protected by NATO and the financial and military capabilities and capacities of the US, the inability to act coherently and decisive in the intergovernmental decision-making process of the CFSP and CSDP has become institutionalized, restricting the horizon of legitimate ideas (Campbell 2004: 110). The debate on a further integration of CFSP and CSDP and *Strategic Autonomy* for the EU had become so de-politicized that moments like Macron's first Sorbonne speech and his public disagreement with then defense minister Kramp-Karrenbauer are seen as unpleasant and unwelcome disturbances in the EU's daily business rather than starting points of a true political discourse.

Still, as Campbell (2004) and Hall (1993) point out, even an institutionalized paradigm can be changed and the evil death that has set forth in Europe again with the Russian invasion might be the crisis the political event that eventually can induce this change. Event in this context can be used deliberately instead of crisis in the understanding of Alain Badiou, who understands a political event as a disturbance in time which uncovers something that was hidden by the dominant order (Badiou 2015: 58). Through this disturbance, the discourse becomes re-politicized and the ideological horizon is open for ideas that might change the institutionalized order. The Russian war in Ukraine disallows the deliberate vagueness that has characterized the debate on European foreign and defense policy. Following Kelemen & McNamera's (2022: 964) look at Europeanization from a traditional state-building perspective, the war in Ukraine may be the entrance point for Tilly's bellicist logic to state-

building or integration in the case of the EU: “War made the state and the state made war (Tilly 1975: 42 in Keleman & McNamara 2022: 968).” Notably, even the rise of populism that seems to unfetter the intergovernmentalist tendencies might eventually lead to the resolve among the rest of the Member States and especially France and Germany to bridge their divides and take steps towards institutional change and *Strategic Autonomy*. Although much is taken and much abides, strong will in the Member States could still lead to agreement to strive and seek for *Strategic Autonomy* and not to yield to intergovernmentalist reflexes. As Martins and Mawdsley (2021: 6), see the Tindemans report in 1976 as a guiding moment for the eventual creation of the CFSP, the vision of a truly integrated defense policy and elements of *Strategic Autonomy* might be performed during the war in Ukraine and enable security and defense integration and *Strategic Autonomy* in the CFSP.

Abbreviations

AU – African Union

CARD – Coordinated Annual Review of Defense

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

CSDP – Common Security and Defense Policy

COREPER – Committee of the Permanent Representatives

CWC – Chemical Weapons Convention

DG – Directorate General

DTIB – Defense Technological and Industrial Base

ECSE – European Coal and Steel Community

EC – European Community

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

ECJ – European Court of Justice

EDA – European Defense Agency

EDF - European Defense Fund

EDU – European Defense Union

EEAS – European External Action Service

ESDP – European Security and Defense Policy

EU - European Union

EUMC – European Military Committee

EUMS – European Military Staff

EPC – European Political Community

EUAM- European Union Advisory Mission

EUBAM – European Union Border Assistance Mission

EUCAP – European Union Capability Building Mission

EUFOR – European Union Force

EUNAVFOR – European Union Naval Force

EUTM – European Union Training Mission

HR for the CFSP – High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy

IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IR – International Relations

JCPOA- Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

MPCC – Military Planning and Conduct Capability

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OPCW – Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

PESCO – Permanent Structured Cooperation

PSC – Political and Security Committee

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

TEU – Treaty of the European Union

TFEU – Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNCLOS – United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNOCT - United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism

UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

US – United States of America

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Appendices

Appendix A

Research Material

European Council

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Council of the European Union 6120/22 (2022): Conclusions on EU Climate Diplomacy-accelerating the implementation of Glasgow outcomes. 6120/22. Brussels: 21 February 2022

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Council of the European Union 2802/22 (2022): Informal Video Conference of Foreign Affairs (Defense) Ministers, 28 February 2022. Brussels: 28 February 2022

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Council of the European Union 7416/22 (2022): Conclusions on Cameroon. 7416/22. Brussels: 21 March 2022

Council of the European Union 301/22 (2022): A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade. 301/22. Brussels: 21 March 2022

Council of the European Union 1605/22 (2022): Main Results Foreign Affairs Council, 16 May 2022. Brussels: 16 May 2022.

Council of the European Union 8829/22 (2022): Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach in support of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Former Combatants. 8829/22. Brussels: 16 May 2022

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Council of the European Union 10066/22: Conclusions on a Team Europe response to global food insecurity. 10066/22. Luxembourg: 20 June 2022

Council of the European Union 590/22 (2022): EU-NATO cooperation – seventh progress report. 590/22. Brussels: 20 June 2022

Council of the European Union 10470/22 (2022): Declaration of the European Union and its Member States on upholding and promoting respect for international law, including the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. 10470/22. Brussels: 20 June 2022

Appendix B

Categories of EU External Actions

European Council

C-1: Treaties, Partnerships, and Agreements

- implementation of a Partnership Framework of cooperation with individual countries of origin or transit
- developing compacts with Lebanon and Jordan to enhance support for refugees and host communities in both countries,
- support for the European perspective of the Western Balkans
- implement the EU-Turkey Statement
- increase/enhance cooperation with Africa
- further develop strategic partnership with Africa
- open accession negotiations with the Republic of North Macedonia
- open accession negotiations with the Republic of Albania
- development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Turkey.
- need to rebalance the economic relationship and achieve reciprocity, encourages China to assume greater responsibility in dealing with global challenges
- strengthening its strategic relations with Africa and its partnership with the African Union
- keeping channels of communication between the EU and Turkey open.
- selective engagement with Russia in areas of EU interest.
- high level dialogues with Turkey on issues of mutual interest, such as migration, public health, climate, counterterrorism and regional issues
- reinforce the EU's partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood
- establish an ambitious future-oriented Alliance with Africa
- strengthen bond and deepen partnership with Ukraine
- proposal to launch a European political community
- acceleration of the accession process of Bosnia Herzegovina, North Macedonia

C-2: Sanctions

- reinforce sanctions' regime towards Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- coordinate the adoption of consequences for Russian authorities
- consider further options, including non-recognition of Russian passports
- condemn and monitor Türkiye's illegal actions, work out options for appropriate measures without delay, including targeted measures
- halt arms export licensing to Türkiye
- roll-over of economic sanctions - Russia
- sanctions against individuals in Belarus
- options against illegal drilling activities - Türkiye
- EU will use all the instruments and options at its disposal to defend its interests - Türkiye

- impose restrictive measures - Belarus
- additional restrictive measures - Türkiye
- sanctions against individuals in Belarus
- further economic sanctions – Belarus
- consider targeted measures against political and military leaders who obstruct the Malian transition
- further restrictive measures against persons and legal entities, - Belarus
- restrictive measures against Belarus
- negotiations, warning of massive consequences, severe costs and restrictive measures - Russia
- any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs, wide array of sectoral and individual restrictive measures
- further restrictive measures that will impose massive and severe consequences on Russia for its action
- further individual and economic sanctions – Belarus
- further sanctions against Russia and Belarus
- close loopholes and target actual and possible circumvention of sanctions as well as to move quickly with further coordinated robust sanctions on Russia and Belarus
- adoption of the sixth package of EU sanctions – Russia
- committed to intensify pressure on Russia and Belarus to thwart Russia's war against Ukraine

C-3: Humanitarian Aid

- provide humanitarian support to the Syrian population
- pursuing the EU humanitarian initiative and medical evacuations
- provide humanitarian assistance and organize donor conference
- supporting the concerned countries in providing urgent humanitarian relief assistance to the affected populations
- strengthen humanitarian assistance
- provide political, financial, material, and humanitarian support to Ukraine
- continue to provide coordinated political, financial, material and humanitarian support
- provide strong support for Ukraine's overall economic, military, social and financial resilience, including humanitarian aid.

C-4: Development Aid and support for economic reforms

- reach out to key actors in the region on a political transition and on preparations for post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction – Syria
- support development of local communities in Libya, especially in coastal areas
- strengthen financial assistance through Official Development Assistance for Africa and EU Trust Fund for Africa
- supporting the development of the local communities in Libya
- further strengthen support for affected areas in Ukraine
- step up its support for the Sahel region, the Libyan Coastguard, coastal and Southern communities

- partnership with Africa, transformation of the African continent building upon the principles and objectives as defined by the African countries in their Agenda 2063
- launching concrete and visible initiatives to improve the physical and human connectivity within the region and with the EU and cooperation on security and migration – Western Balkans
- supporting African efforts on peace and security, good governance and the promotion of human rights
- strengthening EU support to health systems and the reinforcement of partners' preparedness and response capacity – Africa
- close cooperation in areas such as environment, connectivity, education and culture, and natural resources – Southern Neighborhood
- jointly fight the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen the resilience of our economies and societies – Southern Neighborhood
- reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions in the Indo-Pacific with the aim of contributing to the stability, security, prosperity – Indo-Pacific
- support to the G5 Sahel countries' efforts to strengthen governance, the rule of law and the provision of public services in their territories
- support the Republic of Moldova, based on its sustained implementation of reforms under the Association Agreement / DCFTA
- continue to support Ukraine and its people together with its international partners, including through additional political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support
- provide political, financial, material, and humanitarian support to Ukraine
- support for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine
- continue to provide coordinated political, financial, material and humanitarian support
- provide support to the Ukrainian Government for its immediate needs and, once the Russian onslaught has ceased, for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine
- provide technical assistance in order to help Ukraine implement necessary reforms
- support Ukraine's reform agenda as a vehicle for enhancing Ukraine's external and internal resilience
- provide support to the Ukrainian Government for its immediate needs and, once the Russian onslaught has ceased, for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine.
- consider Ukraine reconstruction platform
- continue to support Ukraine and its people together with its international partners, including through additional political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support
- launch of the European Fund for Sustainable Development in support of investment in African and Neighbourhood countries
- active measures to facilitate Ukraine's agricultural exports and to support Ukraine's agricultural sector
- provide strong support for Ukraine's overall economic, military, social and financial resilience, including humanitarian aid.
- build sustainable food production, strengthen agricultural productivity, including on protein crops, and agri-business capacity on the African continent

C-5: Capacity Building in the military and security area and Security Sector Reform

- cooperation with Ukraine in the fields of security, notably with regard to conflict prevention, crisis management and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- stabilize Libya and build up capacities

- training, equipping and supporting Libyan coastguard
- supporting the G5 Sahel Joint force, disruption of the business models of human smugglers and traffickers
- step up its support for the Sahel region, the Libyan Coastguard, coastal and Southern communities
- launching concrete and visible initiatives to improve the physical and human connectivity within the region and with the EU and cooperation on security and migration – Western Balkans
- supporting African efforts on peace and security, good governance and the promotion of human rights
- reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions in the Indo-Pacific with the aim of contributing to the stability, security, prosperity
- provide support to the Ukrainian Government for its immediate needs and, once the Russian onslaught has ceased, for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine.
- support the stabilisation of G5 Sahel countries, in particular the G5 Sahel Joint Force, through the continuation of EU CSDP missions and engagement in the Takuba Task Force
- support to Ukraine also in the area of professional military education
- increase military support to Ukraine under the European Peace Facility
- provide all relevant support to the Republic of Moldova
- provide strong support for Ukraine's overall economic, military, social and financial resilience, including humanitarian aid.
- further increase of military support – Ukraine

C-6: Supporting Elections, Governance and Democratic Transition Processes

- reach out to key actors in the region on a political transition and on preparations for post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction - Syria
- support OSCE proposal for dialogue – Belarus
- work towards a solution in line with the aspirations of the Malian people
- pursue an ambitious neighbourhood policy, develop a comprehensive partnership with Africa
- support to Russian civil society, human rights organizations and independent media
- support for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine
- provide support to the Ukrainian Government for its immediate needs and, once the Russian onslaught has ceased, for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine.
- support Bosnia Herzegovina and its constitutional and electoral reform

C-7: Conflict mediation and peace negotiations

- work constructively with all partners, under UN auspices, towards a transition as agreed in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 - Syria
- support for the UN-led process for the cessation of hostilities and an inclusive political solution - Libya
- support of political solution in line with UN Security Council Regulation – Syria
- support OSCE proposal for dialogue – Belarus
- work towards a solution in line with the aspirations of the Malian people

- support of the speedy resumption of negotiations, under the auspices of the UN – Cyprus/Türkiye
- support for settlement Armenia/Azerbaijan
- appoint a representative to the UN Good Offices Mission – Cyprus, Türkiye
- support bilateral talks between Greece and Türkiye as well as talks on the Cyprus question under the auspices of the UN
- work with international partners to restart a political process – Israel/Palestine
- negotiations, warning of massive consequences, severe costs and restrictive measures – Russia/Ukraine
- support to French and German efforts within the Normandy format – Russia/Ukraine

C-8: Participation in International regimes, conventions, and international initiatives

- new EU regime of restrictive measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons
- step up its activities in support of climate action, committed to scaling up the mobilisation of international climate finance
- support the UN and key multilateral organisations.
- support fight against climate change, promoting sustainable development and implementing the 2030 Agenda
- assist countries and communities to fight the COVID-19 crisis, strengthen the sustainability of global integrated value and supply chains
- strengthening EU support to health systems and the reinforcement of partners' preparedness and response capacity
- contribute to the international response to the pandemic, including via the COVAX facility
- improve access to vaccines for priority groups in the neighborhood, support global approach through COVAX facility
- strengthen World Health Organization and work towards an international treaty on pandemics
- set up vaccine-sharing mechanism, support COVAX
- continue to export and share vaccine doses and ancillary materials, and step up our support for the countries most in need
- intensify support for the global rules-based order
- supports the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to create Solidarity Lanes to facilitate food exports from Ukraine
- engage in strengthening the existing mechanisms to ensure military transparency and predictability, and to support efforts regarding arms control

C-9: External actions concerning migration

- support the Government of National Accord, expanded role for Operation Sophia in enforcing the arms embargo on Libya and training the Libyan Coast Guard
- provide continued support to Western Balkan countries, including in their fight against smugglers
- address the root causes of illegal migration

- continue support for the countries along the Western Balkans route
- enhance support for the Libyan coastguard, including through EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia
- implementation of a Partnership Framework of cooperation with individual countries of origin or transit
- need to tackle the root causes of migration in the region, including by supporting displaced persons in the region
- developing compacts with Lebanon and Jordan to enhance support for refugees and host communities in both countries,
- signing of the "EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward on Migration Issues"
- migration compacts for cooperation and dialogue with third countries
- step up work with Libya as well as its North African and sub-Saharan neighbors
- take additional steps along the Central Mediterranean route
- support development of local communities in Libya, especially in coastal areas
- enhance information campaigns and outreach addressed at migrants in Libya
- strengthen financial assistance through Official Development Assistance for Africa and EU Trust Fund for Africa
- supporting the G5 Sahel Joint force, disruption of the business models of human smugglers and traffickers
- cooperation with Turkey on migration and to support for the Western Balkans
- supporting the action of our partners of the G5 Sahel
- supporting the development of the local communities in Libya
- working with the Libyan authorities and all neighbours of Libya to enhance border management capacity
- support, also financially, UNHCR and IOM efforts in Libya, the Sahel, cooperate with Libyan authorities
- spend more on stemming illegal immigration and security and defense
- step up its support for the Sahel region, the Libyan Coastguard, coastal and Southern communities
- implement the EU-Turkey Statement
- explore concept of regional disembarkation platforms, shared or complementary actions among the Member States to the disembarkation of those who are saved in Search And Rescue operations
- launching the second tranche of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and at the same time on transferring 500 million euro from the 11th EDF reserve to the EU Trust Fund for Africa
- partnership with Africa, transformation of the African continent building upon the principles and objectives as defined by the African countries in their Agenda 2063
- strengthening cooperation with countries of origin and transit, particularly in North Africa,
- work with third countries on investigating, apprehending and prosecuting smugglers and traffickers
- strengthen cooperation with third countries
- continue and deepen our cooperation with countries of origin and transit to fight illegal migration and human trafficking and to ensure effective returns
- high level dialogues with Turkey on issues of mutual interest, such as migration, public health, climate, counterterrorism, and regional issues

- continue financing for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and other parts of the region
- mobilize financing for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and other parts of the region, including Egypt
- effectively protecting the EU's external borders, combatting smuggling and trafficking
- launching concrete and visible initiatives to improve the physical and human connectivity within the region and with the EU and cooperation on security and migration – Western Balkans
- ensuring that CSDP missions and operations are fully staffed and that their mandates are adapted as required to assist in the fight against traffickers and smugglers networks

C-10: CSDP missions

- support the Government of National Accord, expanded role for Operation Sophia in enforcing the arms embargo on Libya and training the Libyan Coast Guard
- enhance support for the Libyan coastguard, including through EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia
- training, equipping and supporting Libyan coastguard
- supporting the G5 Sahel Joint force, disruption of the business models of human smugglers and traffickers
- speed up Training and equipping the Libyan Coast Guard
- working with the Libyan authorities and all neighbours of Libya to enhance border management capacity
- step up its support for the Sahel region, the Libyan Coastguard, coastal and Southern communities
- reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions in the Indo-Pacific with the aim of contributing to the stability, security, prosperity
- encouraging greater participation Asian countries in CSDP missions and operations
- secure free and open maritime supply routes in full compliance with international law, extend area of operations of EUNAVFOR Atalanta, extend the geographic scope of its CRIMARIO II activities
- explore the possibility of replicating the CRIMARIO experience in the Southern Pacific.
- expansion of CSDP missions, encouraging greater participation by Asian states in CSDP missions
- establish Maritime Areas of interest in the Indo-Pacific, assessment of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept, cooperate with partners' navies, build capacities
- ensuring that CSDP missions and operations are fully staffed and that their mandates are adapted as required to assist in the fight against traffickers and smugglers networks

Acting with or through partners

- Cooperation with NATO in the spirit of full openness and in full respect of the decision-making autonomy and procedures of both organisations
- implementing the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw by EU and NATO leaders, avoiding duplication and ensuring complementarity between EU and NATO
- implementing the joint declaration with NATO

- cooperation, in particular in the fight against terrorism and international crime, as well as security, defence and foreign policy
- partnership with Africa, transformation of the African continent building upon the principles and objectives as defined by the African countries in their Agenda 2063
- further deepening of EU-NATO cooperation, in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU
- cooperation with UK in particular the fight against terrorism and international crime, as well as security, defence and foreign policy
- working together with the United States, to reinforce the global response to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, tackle climate change, enhance the economic recovery
- cooperating with new US administration on strong and ambitious transatlantic agenda
- reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions in the Indo-Pacific with the aim of contributing to the stability, security, prosperity
- advance military mobility, both in PESCO and in the context of EU-NATO cooperation
- expansion of CSDP missions, encouraging greater participation by Asian states in CSDP missions
- establish Maritime Areas of interest in the Indo-Pacific, assessment of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept, cooperate with partners' navies, build capacities
- establish partnerships in areas unrelated to trade, in particular the fight against terrorism and international crime, as well as security, defence and foreign policy - UK

C-12: Reform of the CFSP and development of new policies and instruments for the CFSP

- Ausbau der EU Sicherheits- u. Verteidigungskapazitäten, mehr Ressourcen, mehr Kooperation, wenn nötig muss EU allein handeln können
- reinforcing cooperation in the development of required capabilities as well as committing to making such capabilities available
- development of civil and military capabilities, establishment of a permanent operational planning and conduct capability at the strategic level, the strengthening of the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU's rapid response toolbox
- developing European security and defence policy, stressing the importance of fully involving Member States
- EU cooperation on external security and defence, make better use of the options in the Treaties, especially as regards capabilities
- new dedicated instrument covering all requirements for Capacity Building in support of Security and Development after 2020
- complete the comprehensive revision of the Athena mechanism
- advance military mobility, both in PESCO and in the context of EU-NATO cooperation
- Civilian CSDP Compact
- need to launch an inclusive and ambitious Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).
- cooperation on external security and defence, need to step up European efforts to strengthen our defence related research, capabilities and operations
- cost sharing for deployment of EU battlegroups according to Athena mechanism

- not specified; do more; commit sufficient additional resources; implement the "Common set of proposals" for enhanced cooperation with NATO
- ensuring that CSDP missions and operations are fully staffed and that their mandates are adapted as required to assist in the fight against traffickers and smugglers networks
- launch PESCO
- proposal for a European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)
- develop flexible and sound financing mechanisms within the European Defence Fund
- spend more on stemming illegal immigration and security and defense
- improve PESCO, improving military mobility, in implementing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme, strengthen EU-NATO cooperation
- taking steps to bolster European defence, by enhancing defence investment, capability development and operational readiness, PESCO, CARD, Capability Development Plan, European Defence Industrial Development
- pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously to safeguard its interests
- increase responsiveness of CSFP and CSDP, enhancing defence investment, capability development and operational readiness, cooperate with NATO
- align positions inside EU and make more resources available for shared actions
- increase capacity to act autonomously, increase defense investment, deepen cooperation
- enhance EU civil and military engagement, deepen defense cooperation through CARD and PESCO, strengthen EU defense technological and industrial base through EDF
- work towards a Strategic Compass
- take more responsibility for its own security and in the field of defence, pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously.
- Strategic Compass, contribute positively to global and transatlantic security
- invest more and better in defence capabilities and technologies, increase defense expenditure, incentives for collaborative investment and procurement, enhance military mobility
- continue to support Ukraine and its people together with its international partners, including through additional political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support
- enabling the European Union to act more quickly and decisively, stimulating investment and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies, cooperation with partners, use potential of PESCO, EDF, Capability Development Plan
- stimulating investment and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies
- plan towards development of an EU defence strategic programming, procurement and coordination capability
- implement the Strategic Compass, reinforce its partnerships, enhance its resilience and increase its security and defence capacity through more and better investments,

Foreign Affairs Council

C-1: Treaties, Partnerships, and Agreements

- support to the reform agenda by partners, in line with the EU incentive-based approach; strengthening the economic and trade dimension of the Eastern Partnership;

cooperation in Common Security and Defence Policy related - Armenia/Azerbaijan/Belarus/Georgia/Moldova/Ukraine

- supporting the region and each of the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) in a tailored way - Armenia/Azerbaijan/Belarus/Georgia/Moldova/Ukraine
- promote the EU's policies and interests in certain regions and countries as well as issues of particular concern or interest for the EU.
- comprehensive agreement with the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan
- conclusion of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
- signed the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Cuba
- signed the constitutive agreement of the EU Trust Fund for Colombia.
- implementation of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement
- opening of a European Union delegation to Panama
- establish a mechanism for bilateral consultations and high-level political dialogue – Panama
- authorize negotiation of Joint Declaration for a Dialogue on Environment, Climate Action and Sustainable Development – Colombia
- establishing a partnership between the EU and the Kyrgyz Republic
- accession of Solomon Islands to the Interim Partnership Agreement
- conclusion of a partnership agreement on relations and cooperation with New Zealand
- deepen cooperation with Pacific Alliance - Chile/Colombia/Mexico/Peru
- open negotiations for an Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Peru for participation in crisis management operations
- broadening its engagement with Thailand in framework of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement – Thailand
- launch bilateral dialogue – China
- upgrading of EU-ASEAN relations to a strategic partnership – Southeast Asia
- extension of EU partnership priorities - Jordan/Egypt/Lebanon/Tunisia/Algeria
- conclusion of the protocol to the Euro Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the EU and Algeria
- open negotiations on a Missions Framework Participation Agreement with Jordan
- socio-economic cooperation under the EU-Jordan partnership
- negotiate an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Uzbekistan
- open an EU Delegation – Kuwait
- open an EU Delegation – Turkmenistan
- partnership and cooperation agreement between the EU and Singapore
- enhance cooperation with Asia
- establishment of an Ocean Partnership – Canada
- forge a strong and durable partnership with Central Asia
- forge a non-exclusive partnership with the countries of Central Asia
- enhanced engagement to the regional cooperation – Black Sea region
- approved the EU-Indonesia Joint Green Agenda

- partnership framework approach and country-specific compacts, 64 actions worth €1 billion had so far been approved - Mali/Niger/Senegal/Nigeria/Ethiopia
- establishing the EU - Latin America and the Caribbean International Foundation
- strengthen cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)
- technical and legislative assistance to strengthen regulations on biosafety and biosecurity, to ensure harmonization
- relaunch the inter-regional dialogue - Latin America and the Caribbean
- support for the region to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, boost the region's financial resilience by enhancing trade relations - Latin America and the Caribbean
- strengthening political association and economic integration between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova by working in close partnership on the basis of the Association Agreement
- strengthen dialogue and cooperation on human rights, education, sustainability as well as to tackle emerging security challenges faced by the Central Asian countries
- extend the Southern Gas Corridor to Central Asia, and to further promote the EU's multilateral and bilateral energy cooperation
- intensify political engagement – Central Asia
- step up relations with Africa in the medium and long term
- accelerating political association and economic integration with the EU – Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
- develop further its relations with Iran, in a manner fully consistent with the JCPOA, committed to implementation of JCPOA
- concluding the Framework Agreement on Kosovo's access to EU programmes
- implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Iran nuclear deal.
- the EU will stay in the agreement as long as Iran remains fully committed to it despite US withdrawal
- continued full support for the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA)
- engagement and cooperation with the region and commitment to European perspective of the region – Western Balkans
- support Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in its EU integration process
- continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)
- support to the reform agenda by partners, in line with the EU incentive-based approach; strengthening the economic and trade dimension of the Eastern Partnership; cooperation in Common Security and Defence Policy related
- strengthening political association and economic integration between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova by working in close partnership on the basis of the Association Agreement
- intensify engagement with all the countries in the Red Sea region and other relevant regional and international actors, work towards organised and inclusive regional forum for dialogue and cooperation around the Red Sea

C-2: Sanctions

- adding 17 ministers and the governor of the Central Bank of Syria to the list of sanctions against the Syrian regime – Syria, violent repression of the civilian population
- adopt restrictive measures against those responsible, restrictive measures against the seven individuals who hold positions of authority – DRC, acts of violence which caused the death of at least 50 people on 19 and 20 September
- EU will continue to enforce its own arms embargo and urges the United Nations Security Council to impose a UN arms embargo – There can be no military solution to the divisions of South Sudan
- imposing further sanctions on the DPRK – North Korea, serious threat to international peace and security and undermine the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime
- further restrictive measures against Syria as long as the repression continues – Syria, dire situation in Syria and the persistent humanitarian, security and political issues arising from the conflict; there can be no lasting peace in Syria under the current regime
- restrictive measures against four persons in view of the situation in Yemen - Yemen, against persons providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of Yemen.
- restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia – Russia, the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol
- extended the restrictive measures for a further 12 months – Guinea Bissau, against those who seek to prevent or block a peaceful political process or who take action that undermines stability in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau
- consider further restrictive actions – North Korea, DPRK's actions undermine the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime
- restrictions on the export and supply to Libya of inflatable boats (dinghies) and outboard motors – Libya, further disrupt the business model of people smugglers and human traffickers
- added 16 persons to the list of those targeted by EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime – Syria, development and use of chemical weapons against the civilian population
- adopted new EU autonomous measures to further increase the pressure on the DPRK – North Korea, continuing development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in violation and flagrant disregard of UN Security Council resolutions
- restrictive measures which consist of an embargo on arms and on equipment that can be used for internal repression – Myanmar, disproportionate use of force carried out by the security forces
- restrictive measures – Venezuela, targeting those involved in the non-respect of democratic principles or the rule of law and the violation of human rights.
- prolonged the sanctions against the Democratic Republic of the Congo -DRC, in response to obstacles made to a consensual solution to the crisis.
- put 7 individuals holding official positions under restrictive measures – Venezuela, continuing deterioration of the situation in Venezuela, individuals are involved in the

non-respect of democratic principles or the rule of law as well as in the violation of human rights

- added 17 individuals to its list of those subject to an asset freeze and travel restrictions – North Korea, continued and accelerated development of nuclear and ballistic programmes
- extension and strengthening of arms embargo and targeted restrictive measures against senior military officers of the Myanmar armed forces – Myanmar, disproportionate use of force and widespread and systematic grave human rights violations [...] including sexual and gender-based violence and killings [...] in Rakhine State,
- specific targeted measures, put on hold the EU's financial assistance to the National Election Committee (NEC) – Cambodia, worrying political developments and the continuing deterioration of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, including the escalating repression of the opposition, media and civil society
- consider targeted restrictive measures – Maldives, calls upon Maldivian authorities to respect the rule of law, and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and the right to fair trial
- increased the restrictive measures against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) – North Korea, proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery
- Council added the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Information of the government of Syria to the list of those targeted by EU restrictive measures – Syria, violent repression against the civilian population in Syria
- prolonged validity of the Council decision of 21 March 2011 concerning restrictive measures – Bosnia Herzegovina, persons whose activities undermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- added four persons to the list of those targeted by EU restrictive measures – Syria, role in the development and use of chemical weapons against the civilian population
- The EU will continue applying its autonomous arms embargo and reiterates the call for a UN arms embargo – South Sudan, attacks against civilians, including but not limited to those reported by the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS)
- setting out restrictive measures, that can be used to prevent and respond to malicious cyber activities against third states – NA, importance of a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace
- imposing additional targeted and reversible restrictive measures – Venezuela, EU calls for the holding of fresh presidential elections in accordance with internationally recognised democratic standards and the Venezuelan constitutional order
- extended EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime – Syria, ongoing repression of the civilian population
- restrictive measures against seven individuals – Myanmar, involvement in or association with atrocities and serious human rights violations committed against the Rohingya population
- restrictive measures against eleven individuals – Venezuela, responsible for human rights violations and for undermining democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela

- adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities – Maldives, responsible for undermining the rule of law or obstructing an inclusive political solution
- new regime of restrictive measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons – N/A, EU's efforts to counter the proliferation and use of chemical weapons
- added nine persons to the list of those subject to restrictive measures – Ukraine, actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine
- adopt additional designations for restrictive measures against senior military and border guard police officers – Myanmar, gross human rights violations were committed in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan States, in particular by the Myanmar/Burma military (Tatmadaw)
- extended the restrictive measures currently in place against the Democratic Republic of the Congo until 12 December 2019 - DRC, obstruction of the electoral process, and the related human rights violations, in the DRC
- amend sanctions on Somalia to designate persons who commit acts involving sexual and gender-based violence – Somalia, persons who commit acts involving sexual and gender-based violence
- restrictive measures against four officials from the GRU – Russia, involvement in the attempted murder of Sergei Skripal in Salisbury on the weekend of 4 March 2018
- restrictive measures against the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) – Syria, development and production of chemical weapons
- sanctions against 11 prominent businessmen and five entities linked to those businessmen – Syria, support and/or benefit from the Syrian regime
- renewed for one year the restrictive measures against Zimbabwe – Zimbabwe, activities that undermine democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe
- confirmation of sanctions – North Korea, contributing to the DPRK's nuclear-related, ballistic-missile-related or other weapons of mass destruction-related programmes or for sanctions evasion
- review arms exports to Türkiye - Türkiye's military action which seriously undermines the stability and the security of the whole region
- agreement on framework for restrictive measures – Türkiye, continued illegal drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean
- imposing targeted and individual sanctions against persons and entities responsible for human rights violations – Nicaragua, deteriorating political and social situation in Nicaragua [...] repression by security forces and pro-government armed groups of political opponents, demonstrators, independent media and civil society organisations
- extended restrictive measures by the EU addressing the use and proliferation of chemical weapons until 16 October 2020 – Syria, responsible for the development and use of chemical weapons
- extended restrictive measures by the EU addressing the use and proliferation of chemical weapons until 16 October 2020 – Russia, involvement in the Salisbury attack
- commitment to halt arms exports - Türkiye,

- extended the restrictive measures against Venezuela for one year, until 14 November 2020 – Venezuela, ongoing political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and the continued undermining of democracy
- adopted a framework for restrictive measures – Türkiye, in response to Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- maintain the existing restrictive measures – South Sudan, NA
- renew arms embargo and maintain restrictive measures -Zimbabwe, lack of substantial reforms, the further shrinking of democratic space and corruption
- extending restrictive measures against Belarus until 28 February 2021- Belarus, unresolved disappearances of two opposition politicians, one businessman and one journalist in 1999 and in 2000
- added persons to list of sanctioned individuals of the Syrian regime - Syria, prominent businesspersons are making large profits through their ties with the Assad regime and are helping to finance that regime
- need for restrictive measures – Belarus, elections in Belarus neither free or fair, disproportionate and unacceptable violence against peaceful protesters
- adopted new sanctions targeting two people and three entities that are undermining peace and security in Libya – Libya, undermining peace and security in Libya, violating the arms embargo or committing human rights abuses
- restrictive measures – Central African Republic, in view of the situation in the Central African Republic
- imposed sanctions, consisting of travel ban and asset freeze, against persons – Belarus, against persons responsible for the fraudulent nature of the presidential elections and the violent crackdown
- propose restrictive measures – Russia, assassination attempt of Alexei Navalny
- extending by 1 year, until 15 October 2021, the existing framework for imposing targeted restrictive measures - Nicaragua, deteriorating political and social situation in Nicaragua, and firmly condemned the repression of political opponents, demonstrators, independent media and civil society
- sanctions regime for chemical weapons renewed for one year -Syria, development and use of chemical weapons
- sanctions regime for chemical weapons renewed for one year – Russia, involvement in the Salisbury attack using the toxic nerve agent Novichok
- proceed with third package of sanctions – Belarus, continued repression against protesters
- adopt additional restrictive measures – Venezuela, deteriorating situation of human rights, rule of law and democracy in Venezuela
- withhold all financial support, apply restrictive measures – Myanmar, military coup in Myanmar
- developing further restrictive measures -Russia, in response to serious human rights violations
- consider the adoption of further sanctions – Belarus, ongoing crackdown by the authorities on human rights defenders, civil society and journalists
- impose restrictive measures- China, serious human rights violations, large-scale arbitrary detentions of, in particular, Uyghurs in Xinjiang

- impose restrictive measures -North Korea, serious human rights violations
- impose restrictive measures - Libya, serious human rights violations, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances
- impose restrictive measures – Russia, serious human rights violations, torture and repression against LGBTI persons and political opponents in Chechnya
- impose restrictive measures- Eritrea, serious human rights violations, torture, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and killings
- impose restrictive measures – South Sudan, serious human rights violations, torture, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and killings
- imposed restrictive measures on eleven individuals – Myanmar, involvement in military coup and subsequent military and police repression
- sanction 10 individuals and two military-controlled companies – Myanmar, military coup and the ensuing military and police repression against peaceful demonstrators
- comprehensive package of sanctions listing 86 individuals and entities – Belarus, escalation of serious human rights violations in Belarus and the violent repression of civil society, and forced landing of RyanAir flight
- imposed sanctions on 8 individuals, 3 economic entities and the War Veterans Organisation – Myanmar, military coup and the ensuing military and police repression against peaceful demonstrators
- renew sanctions – Russia, in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation
- establish sanctions regime - Lebanon, against individuals responsible for the situation in Lebanon (harbour explosion)
- prolong the sanctions targeting specific economic sectors of the Russian Federation for a further six months, until 31 January 2022 – Russia, Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine
- broaden scope of restrictive measures – Central African Republic, transposition of UN Resolution 2588 (2021)
- renew sanctions regime for one year until 31 October 2022 – Burundi, NA
- expand the scope of the sanctions regime on Belarus and to adopt the fifth package of sanctions - Belarus, situation in Belarus and the issue of migrants being pushed towards the EU's borders
- establish a dedicated framework for restrictive measures – Mali, deteriorating situation in Mali, unlawful elections
- creation of specific sanctions regime – Türkiye, unilateral actions taken by Turkish Cypriots in breach of UN Security Council Resolutions
- restrictive measures against the Wagner Group – Russia, Wagner Groups role in fueling violence, loot natural resources and intimidate civilians
- threatens massive consequences and severe costs. This includes a wide array of sectoral and individual restrictive measures – Russia, Russia's continued aggressive actions and threats against Ukraine
- adoption of a further package of restrictive measures -Russia, Russia's attack on Ukraine
- further individual and economic sanctions – Russia, Russia's military invasion of a sovereign state is a violation of international law

- suspend negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and reduce pre-accession assistance – Türkiye, Türkiye continued its drilling operations west of Cyprus and launched a second drilling operation northeast of Cyprus within Cypriot territorial waters
- adopts a global human rights sanctions regime to target individuals, entities and bodies – including state and non-state actors – NA, promotion and protection of human rights remain a cornerstone and priority of EU external action

C-3: Humanitarian Aid

- EU emergency humanitarian initiative launched on 2 October in close coordination and cooperation with UN agencies, to deliver humanitarian relief to eastern Aleppo
- provide substantial humanitarian aid to South Sudan and to neighbouring countries which are generously receiving those fleeing violence
- continue intensive humanitarian diplomacy and seek ways to improve access and protection as well as to promote humanitarian principles – Syria
- ready to step up humanitarian assistance to the population across the country according to the rising needs and to mobilize their development assistance to fund projects in crucial sectors – Yemen
- the EU has mobilised more than €140 million notably to drought specific humanitarian assistance in the Horn, including nearly €80 million for Somalia
- providing humanitarian aid to those most in need – Iraq
- increase partnership with Africa, economic support, political dialogue, humanitarian aid, environmental assistance, funding for women's rights
- provides assistance to meet the humanitarian needs of those in vulnerable situations in Mali and in the Sahel region
- continue humanitarian assistance to Yemen, north-east Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan at risk of famine, support neighbouring countries' efforts to host refugees
- humanitarian assistance for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh
- EU supports an increased international response to this humanitarian situation – DRC
- providing humanitarian aid to those most in need and according to humanitarian principles – Iraq
- continue to provide humanitarian and other assistance – Bangladesh
- EU stands ready to step up its humanitarian assistance, further operationalise the humanitarian and development nexus, with focus on equal access to basic social services and reconstruction – Myanmar
- deliver humanitarian assistance to all population in need across Syria through the most direct routes
- providing humanitarian and development assistance to Yemen
- provide support to the millions of vulnerable people affected in view of strengthening their resilience – Horn of Africa
- provide support to the millions of vulnerable people affected by conflicts, widespread insecurity - Sahel Region
- provide needs-based humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people

- deploying assistance to enable access to water and sanitation including in humanitarian crises
- provide humanitarian assistance to those in need, and to assist the Libyan people through their cooperation programmes in a wide range of areas, including governance, economic development, health, youth and education, civil society, security and mediation, and to build up Libya's institutional capacity
- humanitarian assistance and support for the capacities of the Central Bank of Yemen
- provide humanitarian assistance – Yemen
- committed to addressing the humanitarian needs – Cameroon
- further €60m in humanitarian assistance for north-west Syria
- support and give assistance to the most vulnerable countries
- set up EU humanitarian air bridge for delivery of coronavirus related equipment and movement of humanitarian staff
- provide need-based humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people
- substantial efforts to assist Lebanon
- continue to deliver in support of a people-centred recovery – Lebanon
- address energy poverty, building, where possible, on the Team Europe approach, launching an African Union-EU Green Energy Initiative
- provide emergency support and humanitarian assistance – Sahel Region
- providing principled humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable people affected by man-made or natural disasters, support actions against climate change and environmental degradation -Horn of Africa
- continue providing humanitarian assistance – Ethiopia
- provide direct financial aid to the population of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso
- million euro in support against food insecurity -North Africa/Levant
- 1 billion euro in support against food insecurity – Sahel
- 600 million in support against food insecurity – Horn of Africa

C-4: Development Aid and support for economic reforms

- supporting Pakistan in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals through its development programmes
- support to the reform agenda by partners, in line with the EU incentive-based approach; strengthening the economic and trade dimension of the Eastern Partnership; cooperation in Common Security and Defence Policy related – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
- EU support for economic growth and job creation, dialogue democracy, the rule of law and human rights, cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism and migration – Egypt
- provide resilience support through the provision of education, job creation, support for local civilian governance structures in opposition held areas – Syria
- new European Consensus on Development
- renewed impetus of the Africa-EU Partnership
- ready to continue contributing to Iraq's economic regeneration efforts, supports IMB and UNAMI, enhance public services, reinforce inclusive governance

- deploying the full range of relevant instruments in the fields of diplomacy, long-term development cooperation, support to human rights, stabilisation efforts, resilience building, migration, and security, including CSDP missions – Mali/Sahel Region
- support governance and economic and human development in Afghanistan
- strengthening political association and economic integration between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova by working in close partnership on the basis of the Association Agreement
- provide resilience support through the provision of education, job creation, support for local civilian governance structures in opposition held areas, including by working with the Syrian Interim Government, and work to avoid the collapse of the state administration
- stabilize region, improve development and governance through projects like GARI-SI Sahel
- support its efforts in advancing social and economic reforms -Pakistan
- providing development assistance for national and regional programmes, in particular through the Emergency Trust Fund - Burkina Faso/Chad/Mali/Mauritania/Niger
- support in times of Covid-19 Pandemic - Ukraine and Eastern Partnership
- sustained international support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan
- continue its support to the Venezuelan population by assisting in strengthening its social fabric and supporting international and local humanitarian and development stakeholders
- promote energy efficiency, the deployment of safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies, the increasing uptake and system integration, discourage investment in fossil energy infrastructure
- address energy poverty, building, where possible, on the Team Europe approach, launching an African Union-EU Green Energy Initiative
- support the ambitions and efforts of countries in the Southern Neighbourhood, Western Balkans
- immediate economic relief measures addressing the employment and social consequences of the economic downturn
- support efforts to combat climate change, support strengthening the resilience of populations, participate in the international effort to limit the impact of COVID-19 - Sahel Region
- support states to eradicate poverty, stimulate growth and jobs, promote respect for human rights and labour rights, develop ambitious climate and biodiversity policies and long-term decarbonisation strategies - Indo-Pacific
- supporting structural reforms of the health sector, support economic and social recovery, promote regional economic integration and cooperation – Horn of Africa
- support Congolese reform program, provide humanitarian assistance, support health system
- supporting the people of Zimbabwe in various sectors, such as economic development, primary health care, resilience building
- supporting Ethiopia through EU development cooperation, as well as through the European Investment Plan and the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

- engage with European and International Financial Institutions and the private sector to promote the development of an economic and financial system that supports sustainable growth and climate action – Southern Neighborhood, Mediterranean

C-5: Capacity Building in the military and security area and Security Sector Reform

- support of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, promote security; reinforce democracy; encourage economic and human development; strengthen the rule of law; promote human rights
- support Afghan efforts in strengthening civilian policing
- expanding and making more operational its Counter Terrorism cooperation with Pakistan
- cooperation with Tunisia in the security sector, in the fight against terrorism and in preventing violent radicalisation and extremism
- uphold engagement in and with Africa
- support for UN process and EU regional initiative on the future of Syria
- support the Lebanese Armed Forces in their fight against terrorism and the prevention of radicalisation, continued support through the EU-Lebanon partnership priorities
- stabilize Libya; support peace, stability and security in Libya
- EU support for economic growth and job creation, dialogue democracy, the rule of law and human rights, cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism and migration - Egypt
- helping the Western Balkans address common challenges, such as human trafficking, drugs smuggling, extreme radicalisation and terrorism
- strengthen its response to the persistent terrorist threat, the Council calls for the further strengthening of EU capacities to ensure their long-term sustainability and business continuity – Horn of Africa
- strengthen its response to the persistent terrorist threat, the Council calls for the further strengthening of EU capacities to ensure their long-term sustainability and business continuity – Central Asia
- improve its ability to build security and defense capacities in Africa and where appropriate include CT in CSDP missions and operations - Sahel Region
- providing support to Iraq in the security sector, including through police training and support to counterterrorism structures and intelligence agencies
- increase African funding for peace and security, notably through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), closer cooperation with UN and African Union missions
- support international initiatives contributing to peace, security and stability in Afghanistan, working with Afghanistan to combat terrorism
- engage in stabilisation efforts in the areas liberated from Da'esh by the Global Coalition in north-eastern Syria
- strengthen the resilience of the EU and its neighbours against Russian threats, including hybrid threats
- reinforcement of the European External Action Service's three strategic communication task forces – Eastern and Southern Neighborhood

- stabilize region, improve development and governance through projects like GARI-SI Sahel
- reinforcement of the CAR forces by the EU as part of the European initiative for capacity building in support of security and development (CBSD)
- support the Government of Iraq in the implementation of its programme of political, social, economic and security sector reforms e.g. through EUAM Iraq
- renewing and scaling up the existing Sahel Strategy with a view to increasing the impact of EU's action in support of security, stability and development
- Strengthening capacities for effective migration and asylum governance, including on border management, providing capacity building in the field of search and rescue – Southern Neighborhood and Mediterranean
- support regional and national capacities for effective migration governance and for addressing irregular migration, smuggling and human trafficking – Horn of Africa
- strengthening resilience, peace, security and governance, migration and mobility - Africa
- further support Ukraine's resilience, including in countering cyber and hybrid threats and tackling disinformation through a financial assistance package
- support in the area of professional military education - Ukraine
- provide 1.2 billion euro in macro-financial assistance, provide support for Ukraine's professional military education
- support the development of a regional maritime security architecture in the fight against piracy and drug trafficking – North-Western Indian Ocean
- support Ukrainian armed forces through the European Peace Facility, support Ukraine economically, financially and militarily with an additional 500 million euros
- strengthen engagement to increase Western Balkan's resilience vis-à-vis third-party actors and hybrid threats
- support Ukraine politically and financially, as well as to support the Ukrainian armed forces
- deploying the full range of relevant instruments in the fields of diplomacy, long-term development cooperation, support to human rights, stabilisation efforts, resilience building, migration, and security, including CSDP missions – Mali/Sahel Region
- plan for a possible civilian CSDP mission in the field of security sector reform, co-operating closely with and contributing to UNSMIL efforts – Libya
- allocated an additional amount of €200 million under the EDF for the period up to 2020, beyond the €286 million already committed since 2014 for New Partnership Agreement – Somalia

C-6: Supporting Elections, Governance and Democratic Transition Processes

- intensified cooperation and support of reform efforts – Myanmar
- support Somalia throughout the electoral process, political and financial support to AMISOM (African Union Mission to Somalia), supporting the development of the Somali security forces

- increasing the EU's financial aid up to EUR 300 million in 2017 and maintaining a high level of funding until 2020, second programme for an amount of EUR 500 million, support transition – Tunisia
- adopted a reference amount for the EU rule of law mission (EULEX Kosovo) of EUR 23.25 million until 14 June 2017 to cover the expenditure of EULEX KOSOVO for the implementation of its mandate in Kosovo
- stands ready to provide support, including financial support, for an election process which meets all the necessary conditions and the socio-economic situation – DRC
- technical and financial support for credible and inclusive elections in cooperation with all Congolese actors and their partners
- provide practical support and closely follow the electoral process – Iraq
- work with Syrian civil society and Syrian political opposition
- deploy an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) for the presidential election in July 2018.
- step up work on the two tracks of the ICG: facilitating humanitarian access, and creating the conditions for free, fair, transparent presidential elections – with International Contact Group in Venezuela
- additional financial support – Sudan
- provide financial aid for the transition and support for economic reform – Sudan
- support democratic transition and macro-economic reforms, provide humanitarian assistance – Sudan
- commitment to deploy an Election Observation Mission in Bolivia
- additional financial support for governance and judicial reforms – Southern Neighborhood
- engage in a structured political dialogue, with political actors across the spectrum, and with civil society, on the basis of a mutual commitment to shared values focused on human rights, democratic principles and the Rule of Law - Congo
- support to foster dialogue and overcome the economic and social challenges that the country is facing, including through assistance – in Venezuela
- commitment to support the Ukrainian reform agenda, through continued and significant financial support, as well as through the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM Ukraine)
- provide substantive support to Syrian civil society organisations, including to the work of the Civil Society Support Room and the Women's Advisory Board.
- provide resilience support through the provision of education, job creation, support for local civilian governance structures in opposition held areas - Syria
- ready to continue contributing to Iraq's economic regeneration efforts, supports IMB and UNAMI, enhance public services, reinforce inclusive governance
- political and financial support, development assistance – with UN in Afghanistan
- technical mission by the International Contact Group to Caracas led by the EU and Uruguay – with International Contact Group and Uruguay in Venezuela
- provide political and financial support for the people of Afghanistan, notably by: (1) supporting the Geneva Ministerial Pledging Conference; (2) strengthening EU assistance for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic; - with UN and NATO in Afghanistan

- made available additional financial resources for victims of violence, civil society organisations and independent media
- step up support for Russian civil society and human rights defenders
- political support for Hong Kong's autonomy under the 'one country, two systems' principle
- increased support to civil society, enhancing coordination with like-minded partners – in Hong Kong
- promote, protect and respect all human rights and all fundamental freedoms and to support their defenders, support journalists, civil society activities and decentralization – in Sahel Region

C-7: Conflict mediation and peace negotiations

- support the tripartite mechanism UN, African Union and IGAD to facilitate the finding of a political solution – Sudan
- support more actively any meaningful mediation initiative, which can lead to a peaceful and long-term settlement – Cameroon
- renew engagement with US and a revived Quartet to start peace process – Israel/Palestine
- strengthen role as mediator, heightened ambition in the practice of peace mediation, promote human rights of women and girls
- support negotiations for lasting peace – Nagorno Karabakh
- support peace process and give message of solidarity with financial pledge – Afghanistan
- support of Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue - Kosovo-Serbia
- support for a negotiated two state solution – Israel/Palestine
- supporting the UN-led efforts to work with the parties – Türkiye/Cyprus
- contribute, both politically and financially, to the implementation of a peace settlement that embodies these values and principles – Afghanistan
- provide the United Nations with political, financial and other support in its efforts to implement the Stockholm Agreement - Yemen
- support for UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen's efforts and the Geneva UN-led peace process for Syria
- support to the efforts of the UN Secretary General and the UN Special Envoy for Yemen
- supports the work of the UN Special Envoy and the resumption of the talks in Geneva – Syria
- support negotiations as member of Support Group – DRC
- support the efforts of the Syrian opposition and in particular the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) as the opposition delegation in the UN-brokered talks in Geneva
- offer unprecedented package of political, economic and security support to be developed with both parties in the context of a final status agreement – Israel/Palestine
- actively support the constructive development of cross-Strait relations – Taiwan Strait
- support to foster dialogue and overcome the economic and social challenges that the country is facing, including through assistance - Venezuela

- technical mission by the International Contact Group to Caracas led by the EU and Uruguay
- appoint EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia - Georgia/Nagorno Karabakh

C-8: Participation in International regimes, conventions, and international initiatives

- support the fight against the illicit arms trade in military grade weapons, support to third countries for secure arms stockpile management and destruction of surplus weapons, capacity building for marking, record-keeping, tracing and law enforcement capacities
- activities regarding non-proliferation, disarmament and arms export control
- adopted the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2017) – Leave No Child Behind
- reaffirming support of the international advancement and recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in the UNDRIP (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- support the global reporting mechanism on illicit small arms and light weapons and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition to reduce the risk of their illicit trade ('iTrace III').
- promotion of effective arms export controls with a budget of 1.3 million
- make full use of the range of instruments and policies available to promote and protect human rights worldwide, including bilateral human rights dialogues, mainstreaming human rights in EU policy and the other bilateral or multilateral dialogues and for a
- cooperation with countries to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime
- support OPCW and strengthen the CWC by ensuring effective implementation of the CWC
- continue working on the further development and implementation of the voluntary non-binding norms, rules and principles – regarding cyberspace
- new regime of restrictive measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons
- commitment to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda and water related SDGs
- provide EU assistance to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna and the United Nations Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT) in New York
- implementing the Women Peace and Security Agenda in all areas of EU external action
- support of the biological and toxin weapons convention (BTWC) with 3 million Euro
- use all available tools and fora to fulfil its commitments to human rights and promote human rights globally, including in the framework of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the United Nations General
- strong engagement in the promotion and protection of human rights
- continue support to the Southeastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) for SALW control activities
- support for UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, call on states and non-state actors to prevent human rights violations and abuses

- be at the forefront of a human rights-based approach to its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation in all countries and will engage with all stakeholders to realize SDGs
- be a global leader in advancing the promotion and protection of all human rights worldwide, support a strong and efficient Human Rights Council
- Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDG
- accede to Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
- put forward EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024
- support mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and ensure adequate financing
- promote and scale-up international efforts towards gender equality and combat gender based violence
- promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
- promoting minority rights, rights of indigenous people, religious freedom, combatting discrimination and child labour
- strengthen rules-based international order to protect and safeguard cultural heritage
- support of the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery
- support for Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, provide cooperation and assistance for mine action
- support for the safeguarding and strengthening of the nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control architecture, NPT Treaty
- support mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and ensure adequate financing
- continue monitoring the human rights situation globally and denouncing human rights violations and abuses
- promote and scale-up international efforts towards gender equality and combat gender based violence
- promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), minority rights, rights of indigenous people, freedom of religion, fight against child labour
- support the UNGA Resolution promoting a moratorium on the use of the death penalty
- provide financial resources and personnel to support DDR, in particular by allocating sufficient funding within NDICI Global Europe
- enhance coordination, cooperation and partnerships on DDR with the UN, international and regional organisations
- support initiatives for sustainable agricultural value chains and resilient food systems
- adopts declaration on upholding and promoting respect for international law, including the principles of the charter of the United Nations
- reiterates support for the International Court of Justice (ICJ)
- reinforce the international legal framework
- strive for and support a strong United Nations as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order.

- provide money and satellite imagery in support of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) missions
- measures and actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability
- scale up its political dialogues and climate and energy diplomacy to focus on action and to encourage its strategic partners to accelerate transition
- use all available tools and fora to fulfil its commitments to human rights and promote human rights globally, including in the framework of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council
- push for the sustainable financing of the UN
- help raise global ambition against climate change
- strengthen its support for relevant Parties in revising and implementing Nationally Determined Contributions
- be at the forefront of those advocating a more effective, efficient and sustainably financed UN
- support for the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism
- enhance cooperation on global challenges and support reform – of UN and multilateral fora
- strive for sustainable and adequate financing of the UN and its mandates
- contribute to financial resources to tackle climate change (including through Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe)
- play a catalytic role in mobilizing the private sector and shifting the global financial flows towards sustainable and green investments
- support for the Global Gateway initiative
- provide assistance, in particular related to the clearance and destruction of ERW and landmines, assistance to victims and mine risk education.
- mainstreaming human rights across all policy sectors in the context of EU external action reaffirmed in the Global Strategy
- intensify its efforts to ensure human rights based and gender responsive recovery, particularly mindful of the need to ensure women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights, advocate for the elimination of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence
- adopts a global human rights sanctions regime to target individuals, entities and bodies – including state and non-state actors

C-9: External actions concerning migration

- maintaining active engagement in the Sahel region, including in relation to neighbouring countries of the Maghreb region and Libya
- increase human development and security; strengthening of integrated management of cross-border issues; support migration management and integrated border management in the Sahel region and around Lake Chad

- extend the mandate of the EUNAFOR MED Operation Sophia; adding two supporting tasks: training of the Libyan coastguards and navy, contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya.
- strengthening the economic resilience of the host countries, while enhancing economic opportunities for Syrian refugees
- uphold engagement in and with Africa
- partnership framework approach and country-specific compacts, 64 actions worth €1 billion had so far been approved - Mali/Niger/Senegal/Nigeria/Ethiopia
- use, amongst others, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and will step up cooperation with IOM and UNHCR. It will work with Libyan municipalities to promote alternative livelihoods and support the resilience of local communities
- provision of training, equipment and other support, with priority given to the Libyan Coastguard and Navy
- continue EUNAVFOR MED Sophia and EUBAM Libya
- commitment to provide support to Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as Iraq and Egypt
- The EU Trust Fund shall contribute to creating sustainable solutions for refugees and displaced populations – Somalia
- reinforce cooperation with partner countries, improve migration management in Libya
- renewal of the mandate of EUBAM Libya
- plan for a possible civilian CSDP mission in the field of security sector reform, co-operating closely with and contributing to UNSMIL efforts – Libya
- restrictions on the export and supply to Libya of inflatable boats (dinghies) and outboard motors
- EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement, support to the large refugee population and reintegration measures in Pakistan and Afghanistan – Pakistan, Afghanistan
- continue humanitarian assistance to Yemen, north-east Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan at risk of famine, support neighbouring countries' efforts to host refugees - Yemen and neighboring states
- humanitarian assistance for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh – Bangladesh, Myanmar
- supporting the UN in its efforts to bring about political stability – Libya
- establish formal exchange on migration with Iraq
- strengthen its engagement with the G5 Sahel countries, Tripartite AU-EU-UN Taskforce on the migration situation in Libya – Sahel Region, Libya
- allocate funding for Operation Sophia and EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – Africa, Mediterranean
- continuous engagement in neutral and impartial humanitarian efforts, assistance for refugees and support for host communities through Bêkou Trust Fund – Central African Republic
- provide humanitarian aid for internally displaced persons - Ethiopia
- providing support to the refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities in Sudan
- enhance EU diplomatic engagement on water, as a tool for peace, security and stability

- supporting the population of Venezuela and, in neighbouring countries, to supporting the socio-economic inclusion of Venezuelans and the resilience of host communities, with 20Million – Venezuela
- deepen cooperation on migration and refugee issues – Iran
- need to increase financial resources for the EU Trust Fund for Africa
- support for Lebanon hosting Syrian refugees through the EU Regional Trust Fund
- Strengthening capacities for effective migration and asylum governance, including on border management, providing capacity building in the field of search and rescue – Southern Neighborhood
- generate funding for the Syrian people and for refugee-hosting communities – Syria
- further support EU frontline member states hosting the majority of those fleeing the war – Ukraine and eastern neighbors
- support regional and national capacities for effective migration governance and for addressing irregular migration, smuggling and human trafficking – Horn of Africa

C-10: CSDP missions

- support SSR (Security Sector Reform) and DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration), in close coordination with MINUSMA and CSDP missions (EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger)
- extend the mandate of the EUNAFOR MED Operation Sophia; adding two supporting tasks: training of the Libyan coastguards and navy, contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya.
- extended the mandate of EUCAP Sahel Niger, adapted the mission's mandate to assist the Nigerien central and local authorities as well as the security forces
- readiness to continue at this stage the executive military role of Operation Althea to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities
- prolonged the mandate of its two CSDP missions in Somalia, EUCAP and EUTM
- extended the mandate of the operation EUNAVFOR Somalia Operation Atalanta
- provision of training, equipment and other support, with priority given to the Libyan Coastguard and Navy
- continue EUNAVFOR MED Sophia and EUBAM Libya
- continued support needs to drive more effective action by AMISOM troops and capacity development of Somali security forces
- continue supporting Somali efforts in the field of SSR also through EUTM Somalia and EUCAP
- continued contribution to peace and security through the existing CSDP missions – Horn of Africa
- enhancing operational cooperation and coordination on maritime issues including between EU NAVFOR MED Sophia and Operation Sea Guardian
- examining the deployment of an EU Security Sector Reform Advice and Assist Team - Iraq
- need for imminent operationalisation of the regionalisation work of CSDP missions in their civilian and military dimensions with the aim of supporting regional security cooperation- Mali, Niger, Sahel Region

- renewal of the mandate of EUBAM Libya
- support Libya in fight against terrorism, with CSDP missions, support of G5 Sahel Joint Force
- plan for a possible civilian CSDP mission in the field of security sector reform, co-operating closely with and contributing to UNSMIL efforts
- continue the executive military role of Operation Althea to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities to maintain the safe and secure environment
- new CSDP mission to support security sector reform in Iraq
- provide support through EU Advisory Mission (EUAM Iraq), support SSR, ensure cooperation and coherence among different actors
- engage with and support the G5 Sahel countries on the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force – Mali, Sahel Region
- engage with the governments of the G5 Sahel countries to ensure the effective integration of the personnel trained under the CSDP missions into their respective national security forces
- strengthen its engagement with the G5 Sahel countries, Tripartite AU-EU-UN Taskforce on the migration situation in Libya
- return of a permanent physical EU presence
- allocate funding for Operation Sophia and EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
- extension of the EUTM RCA mandate until September 2020 to train and reform Central African Armed Forces (FACA)
- additional assistance for the CAR Internal Security Forces, deploying a dedicated interoperability pillar within EUTM RCA tasked with providing strategic advice in this area
- continue the executive military mandate of Operation Althea, phasing out the other elements no longer relevant
- extend the EU stabilisation action in Mopti and Ségou (EUSTAMS)
- extended the mandate of and finance the EU Advisory Mission, EUAM Iraq, until 17 April 2020
- extended the mandate of EU military training mission EUTM Somalia until 31 December 2020 and agreed on a budget of €22.9 million
- assist the Libyans in reinforcing the capacity of the security institutions with EUBAM Libya and EUNAVFOR MED Sophia
- extended the mandate of the EU capacity building mission in Somalia, EUCAP Somalia until 31 December 2020
- amended the mandate of the EU military training mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) to include an interoperability pillar
- reinforce CSDP missions in Sahel with the aim of supporting cross-border cooperation and regional cooperation structures, enlarge command and control structure of Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell
- extended the mandate of the EU mission EUCAP Sahel Mali until 14 January 2021 and allocated it a budget of almost €67 million
- strengthening the capacity of the internal security forces in Niger and Mali with EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUCAP Sahel Niger

- extended the mandate of the European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) in Ukraine until 31 May 2021. It also approved a budget of €54 million
- modified the mandate of EUCAP Sahel Mali to extend the area of operations to other G5 Sahel countries, allocate extra budget
- plan for a possible civilian CSDP mission to support the civilian security forces of CAR, complementing EUTM CAR
- continue at this stage the executive mandate of Operation Althea
- establish CSDP civilian advisory mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA)
- support the implementation of the agreed ceasefire and the enforcement the UN arms embargo
- reached a political agreement on the launch of a new operation in the Mediterranean - Libya, Mediterranean
- maintain operational presence on the ground of CSDP missions, ensuring protection of deployed personnel
- continue the executive mandate of the EUFOR Operation Althea to support Bosnia and Herzegovina
- resumption of EU's civil and military CSDP missions EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali
- launches the pilot case of the Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) concept in the Gulf of Guinea
- strengthen the capabilities of national defence and security forces and of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, support SSR through EUCAP and EUTM Missions
- strengthened mandate and extended area of operations of EUNAVFOR Atalanta to fight piracy -Indo-Pacific
- explore the possibility of replicating the CRIMARIO experience in the Southern Pacific
- support, including through its CSDP missions and operations, the build-up of regional security capacity, support the fight against terrorist groups – Horn of Africa
- supporting maritime security, using naval diplomacy as a tool to encourage cooperation and synergies, including through EUNAVFOR Atalanta – Horn of Africa
- implementation of the more robust EUTM Mali mandate and its closer cooperation with EUCAP SAHEL Mali and EUCAP SAHEL Niger
- extension of EUAM Ukraine's mandate, renewal of EUMM Georgia's mandate
- renewal of Operation EUNAVFOR MED Irini's mandate for two years until 31 March 2023
- setting up an EU military training mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique) to train and support the Mozambican armed forces in protecting the civilian population
- continue the executive mandate of the Operation ALTHEA under a renewed UN authorization
- enhance and consolidate a continuous maritime presence in the region, reflecting the Union's growing role as a maritime security provider, in line with international law and UNCLOS

- launches the implementation of the CMP (Coordinated Maritime Presence) concept in the North-Western Indian Ocean (NWIO), by establishing a Maritime Area of Interest (MAI)
- redeployment of EUAM Ukraine to Kiev with additional tasks border management and investigation and prosecution of war crimes

C-11: Cooperation with partners

- continue supporting France in the Sahel and in all external operations – with France
- extend EU security and defence co-operation with China in Africa, EU-China offshore co-operation on counter-piracy to peacekeeping and capacity-building onshore – with China
- support to the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) – with UN
- agreement to allow the EU and the USA to provide each other with logistical support, supplies and services in return for either cash payment or the reciprocal provision of the facilitated help, in the field of military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations – with USA
- working with its partners, in particular the UN, NATO, OSCE, African Union, League of Arab States and ASEAN – with UN, NATO, UN, OSCE, AU, ASEAN, League of Arab States
- expand and reinforce CT cooperation through dedicated political dialogues on counterterrorism with priority partner countries in the Middle East and North Africa – with partner states in Middle East and North Africa
- EUR 50 million contribution to UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) – with UN
- advance on cooperation with the EU in the security and defence field as well as its participation in the EU-led CSDP missions – Moldova
- deepen EU security cooperation with its Asian Strategic Partners: China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea, ASEAN, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) – with China, India, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, IORA
- deeper security engagement are: maritime security, cyber security, counter terrorism, hybrid threats, conflict prevention, the proliferation of Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons and the development of regional cooperative orders – with China, India, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, IORA
- Encourage more Asian participation in EU CSDP missions and operations and offer European Security and Defence College (ESDC) training to countries – with China, India, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, IORA
- cooperate with the leaders of IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development) as they reinvigorate its structures and membership and shape its priorities and mandate to make it an effective tool capable of ensuring a collective response – with IGAD
- enhance cooperation with UN and AU in conflict prevention and peacekeeping – with UN and African Union
- enhance cooperation with India – NA with India
- endorsed the framework on counterterrorism developed jointly by the UN and the EU – with UN

- contribute 4.9 million Euro to UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) – with UN
- support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) – with UN
- EUR 147 million in funding for G5 Sahel Joint Force – with G5 Sahel Joint Force
- reinforcing the UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management – with UN
- mutually reinforcing cooperation with NATO in areas of shared interest – with NATO
- continue close cooperation with USA - with USA
- strengthen the UN's efforts to address the global threat of terrorism – NA with UN
- increasing work with the coastal States of the Gulf of Guinea – with Gulf of Guinea coastal states
- strengthen the EU-US partnership, form a joint global leadership - with USA
- work with third countries for mutual benefit, reinforce cooperation with multilateral and regional organisations, explore the possibility of replicating the CRIMARIO experience in the Southern Pacific – with partner states in the region
- support UN actions in response to conflicts that cause harm to civilians and threaten global security and stability through peacekeeping and crisis management - with UN
- approved the financial reference amount associated with the reinforcement of UNVIM (UN Inspection Mechanism in Yemen) – with UN
- renewing and deepening the UN-EU strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management – with UN
- further strengthen the political dimension of the UN-EU partnership and to enhance cooperation on conflict prevention in peace operations - with UN
- enhance and consolidate a continuous maritime presence in the region, reflecting the Union's growing role as a maritime security provider, in line with international law and UNCLOS, enhancing the complementarity with EU-funded programmes in the region, such as the GoG Inter-regional Network (GoGIN) – with Gulf of Guinea coastal states and GoG Inter-regional Network
- enhance maritime cooperation with international and regional partners, notably the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) – with Combined Maritime Forces
- assist efforts of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in fight against Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province – with MNJTF
- EU continues to support the efforts of the Global Coalition to counter Da'esh in Syria and Iraq - with Global Coalition
- strengthen engagement in the region and cooperation with Japan – with Japan
- supporting the UN in its efforts to bring about political stability – Libya with UN
- cooperation in several areas, in particular in countering hybrid threats, as well as in information sharing, strategic communications, and maritime cooperation, enhance their cooperation, including with regard to the stabilisation of the neighbourhood, cyber threats and common exercises – with NATO
- strengthen outreach, cooperation and coordination on counter-terrorism with key strategic partners in counter terrorism- with NATO, OSCE, ECOWAS, ASEAN, Interpol, US, Australia, Canada

- strengthen co-operation on resilience with UN system and NATO, as well as the OSCE and other relevant regional organisations - with UN, NATO, OSCE
- co-chairing the Explosive Hazard Mitigation (EHM, "demining") efforts of the Global Coalition – with Global Coalition
- cooperation in the field of security and defence – with Pakistan
- enhance cooperation on global challenges and support reform – with UN
- renewed transatlantic agenda to find joint answers to global challenges - with NATO
- renewed partnership based on more engagement, more coordination and cooperation - with USA
- strengthen cooperation with strategic partners such as NATO, the UN and regional partners
- deeper cooperation with China on areas such as multilateralism, climate change, non-proliferation, peace-keeping and addressing regional security challenges – with China
- engage with partners around the world to address the still existing and emerging challenges and will actively work on the implementation of various sectoral initiatives – with UN and Santiago Network
- a framework for its participation in EU crisis management operations – with Vietnam

C-12: Reform of the CFSP and development of new policies and instruments for the CFSP

- EUGS; strengthening security and defence; investing in the resilience of states and societies to our East and South; developing an integrated approach to conflicts and crises; promoting and supporting cooperative regional orders; and reinforcing a global governance based on international law
- Responding to external conflicts and crises covers the full range of CSDP tasks in civilian and military crisis management outside the Union; respond with rapid and decisive action through the whole spectrum of crisis management tasks covered by Article 43 of the TEU
- strengthen CSDP's ability to contribute more systematically to the resilience and stabilisation of partner countries recovering from or threatened by conflict or instability
- borders as well as building partners' capacity to manage their borders; civil protection and disaster response; ensuring stable access to and use of the global commons, including the high seas and space; countering hybrid threats; cyber security; preventing and countering terrorism and radicalisation; combatting people smuggling and trafficking
- invest adequately and develop collaborative approaches, such as: Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, satellite communications, and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation; high end military capabilities including strategic enablers; response to hybrid threats; as well as other capabilities, in particular those needed to ensure cyber and maritime security, and force protection

- strengthening the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU's Rapid Response toolbox, including the EU Battlegroups – particularly to reinforce their modularity, their preparation and their effective financing
- approved the EDA's 2017 general budget, which for the first time since 2010 is increased, reaching €31 million
- implementation of the EU Security Sector Reform
- common funding of the deployment of EU battlegroups, until December 2018
- implement European Defense Action Plan and EDF
- establish a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EU Military Staff responsible for strategic planning
- bring together civilian and military expertise in key mission support areas within a Joint Support Coordination Cell
- work on an inclusive Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)
- develop the principles and scope of a Member States-driven CARD to deepen cooperation in defence, including by fostering capability development addressing shortfalls, and ensure more optimal use, including coherence, of defence spending plans
- developing civilian capabilities. It agrees on the need to enhance responsiveness in order to ensure more effective, rapid and flexible deployment of civilian CSDP missions, standing capacity, pre-configured specialised teams of experts and contingents of police and/or other professional categories
- strengthening the relevance, usability and deployability of the EU's Rapid Response toolbox including the EU Battlegroups
- new EU policy on training for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and EU crisis management military exercise
- foster a dynamic and multidimensional approach to resilience
- improving the shared analysis of risk at country and regional level
- The EU's Conflict Early Warning System should be further developed in order to integrate appropriate indicators of resilience
- establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO),
- cooperation in areas such as resilience, cyber security and countering hybrid threats, military mobility
- increase effectiveness and responsiveness of civilian CSDP Missions, improve coordination between CSDP missions, speed up civilian CSDP planning, intensifying cooperation with countries hosting and partner organizations
- deploying CSDP missions with executive or semi-executive mandates, under agreed modalities
- complement civilian CSDP missions with rapidly deployable assets and planning elements from Member States, and specialised teams and multinational formations such as the European Gendarmerie Force
- improve military mobility in coherence with member states and EU initiatives
- adopted governance rules for PESCO
- adopted its position (partial general approach) on the European Defence Fund proposed by the European Commission
- agreed on civilian CSDP compact, Provide an increased contribution to civilian CSDP

- enhance responsiveness, be able to launch a new mission of up to 200 personnel in any area of operation within 30 days after a Council decision
- renew Athena mechanism concerning transport costs for land, sea and air deployment of battle groups
- action of the Union on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, democracy, human rights, rule of law, non-discrimination.
- strengthen the role of culture in policies and programmes within the framework of external relations, including under the CSFP
- coherent and output-oriented implementation of the security and defence initiatives PESCO, CDP, CARD, EDF
- implementation of the EU action plan on military mobility, following the gap analysis performed by EU services
- launching thirteen new PESCO projects
- adoption of the Civilian CSDP Compact for a more capable, effective, and flexible CSDP
- set up task force led by EU Military Staff
- strengthen preparedness and resilience
- launch development of Strategic Compass for Security and Defense
- enhance strength of EU military missions, set up European Peace Facility
- ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable financing and strengthening partnerships, support peacekeeping operations in view of making them fit-for purpose by improving force generation, equipment
- fulfil the more binding PESCO commitments by working towards a coherent full spectrum force package (FSFP), improving the defence capabilities of the pMS and to making them also available to CSDP missions and operations
- enhance the availability, readiness and interoperability; strengthen the Union's operational effectiveness; further develop capabilities
- increase EU's capacity to autonomously to strengthen transatlantic partnership
- increase responsiveness, effectiveness and resilience while continuing to ensure a rapid, flexible and efficient use of the CFSP budget
- enhance cooperation and synergies in training at EU level
- strengthen synergies and complementarity between the civilian and the military dimension of CSDP
- establishment of a warehouse capability for civilian crisis-management missions
- adopted a decision establishing the European Peace Facility (EPF), an off-budget fund worth approximately €5 billion
- pursuing closer cooperation opportunities with relevant international partners
- agreement on the Connecting Europe Facility 2021-2027 for dual-use projects to improve civilian and military mobility
- enhance its efforts to promote peace and security
- continue work on Strategic Compass
- updated list of projects under the EU permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)
- ensuring full and coherent implementation of all commitments in the Civilian CSDP Compact

- support Member States in their work to develop and provide the capabilities, capacities and competences required for the Union to undertake the full range of civilian CSDP missions
- continue to strengthen synergies and complementarity between the civilian and the military dimension of CSDP, foster closer mutually reinforcing cooperation and synergies between civilian CSDP, JHA actors
- implement Feira priorities of police, rule of law and civil administration as well as Security Sector Reform in CSDP
- enhancing systematic operational cooperation at HQ-level and in the field with a view to ensuring complementarity, synergies and increasing the effectiveness and efficiencies of missions
- strengthening systematic cooperation on training and capacity building, including exercises, as well as sharing relevant lessons and good practices,
- establishing a framework to address the climate, peace and security nexus in EU external action
- approved the Strategic Compass, an ambitious plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy by 2030
- establish a strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5000 troops
- be ready to deploy 200 fully equipped CSDP mission experts within 30 days, including in complex environments
- enhance military mobility and reinforce the EU's civilian and military CSDP missions and operations by promoting a rapid and more flexible decision-making process
- strengthen the EU's role as a maritime security actor
- improved defence spending to match our security needs, boost defence technological innovation and reduce technological and industrial dependencies
- contribute to DDR through military and civilian CSDP missions and operations
- increase flexibility when responding to partners' needs with more targeted training, accompaniment, equipment, and adaptability to the security environment

Lists of Countries targeted by EU External Actions – European Council

African Continent:

State/Region	Total
Africa	9
Sahel	5
Mali	3
Libya	7
North Africa	1
Egypt	2
Mozambique	1
Malawi	1
Zimbabwe	1
Coast of Somalia	1
Southern Neighborhood	3

Total	34
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Eastern Europe:

State/Region	Total
Belarus	9
Russia	12
Ukraine	10
Western Balkan	5
Albania	2
Moldova	4
Bosnia Herzegowina	1
North Macedonia	1
Eastern Neighborhood	1
Total	45

Middle East:

State/Region	Total
Jordan	3
Lebanon	3
Syria	3
Iran	1
Israel/Palestine	1
Türkiye	10
Total	21

Central Asia:

State/Region	Total
Afghanistan	1
Georgia	2
Nagorno Karabakh	1
Total	4

Other:

State/Region	Total
North Korea	1
China	1
Indo-Pacific	1
Total	3

Lists of Countries targeted by EU External Actions – Foreign Affairs Council

African Continent:

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
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Africa	3	2	3		1	2	2	13
Sahel	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	13
Mali	2	1	1	3	1	1	3	12
Niger	3	1	2	1				7
Somalia	2	1	2					5
South Sudan	2	1	1		1	1		6
Tunesia	1					1		2
DRC	2	2	1	1				6
Guinea	1							1
Cameroon				1			1	2
CAR			2	2	1	1		6
Sudan			1	4			1	6
Senegal	1							1
Nigeria	1	1						2
Algeria	1							1
Libya		3	4	1	3	2		13
Egypt		2				1		3
Horn of Africa		2	1		1	2	1	7
Zimbabwe			1	1	1			3
Eritrea			1			1		2
Ethiopia			1			1		2
Gulf of Guinea						1	1	2
Southern Neighborhood				1		2		3
Mozambique								1
Burundi								1
Burkina Faso				1				1
Guin Bissau		1						1
Mauritania				1				1
Marocco					1			1
Total								124

Eastern Europe:

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Belarus	1	1			4	3		9
Moldova	1		1				1	3
Ukraine	1	1	2	1	1	1	10	17
Kosovo	1	1						2
Bosnia Herzegowina	1	1	2	1	1	2		8
Western Balkan		2	1		1	2	1	7

Russia		1	1	2	2	5	6	17
Eastern Neighborhood				2		2		4
Total								67

Middle East:

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Israel/Palest	1				1	1		3
Syria	2	3	5	4	3		1	18
Lebanon	1	2	1		2	2		7
Jordan	1	2	1			1		5
Iran	1	1	3	3	1	1		10
Kuwait			1			1		2
Iraq		4	2	1	1			8
Türkiye		1		3	2	1		7
Red Sea		1						1
Total								61

Central Asia:

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Afghanistan	1	1	1	1	3	1		8
Pakistan	1	1	1	1				4
Armenia	1	1						2
Azerbaijan	2	1						3
Georgia	2	1			2	1	1	7
Uzbekistan			1					1
Turkmenistan			1					1
Kazakhstan	1				1			2
Central Asia		2		1		2		5
Kyrgyz. Rep.		1						1
Nagorno Karabakh		1			1			2
Total								36

South and Central America:

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Venezuela	1	1	4	3		1		10
Nicaragua				2	1			3
Cuba	1			1				2
Colombia	1	1			1			3
Panama			1					1
Latin America/			1	4	1	1		7

Caribbean								
Peru			1		1			2
Bolivia					1			1
Total								29

East and Southeast Asia

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Myanmar	1	1	3			4		9
Taiwan Strait	1							1
North Korea	1	2	2	1		1		7
Bangladesh		1	1					2
Thailand		1		1				2
Cambodia			1					1
Maldives			2					2
Vietnam				1				1
Indo-Pacific						1		1
Southeast Asia				1				1
China				1	1	1		3
Hong Kong					1	1		2
Singapore				1				1
India								1
Indonesia						1		1
Northwestern Indian Ocean							1	1
Asia				2				2
Total								38

Other:

State/Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Arctic	1			1				2
Canada				1				1
USA						1		1
Solomon Islands					1			1
New Zealand							1	1
Total								6

Extract of the Coding Spread Sheet European Council

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Extract of the Coding Spread Sheet Foreign Affairs Council

FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	the EU will stay in the agreement as long as it remains fully committed to it despite US withdrawal	sanctions, diplomacy
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	imposing additional targeted and restrictive measures	sanctions
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	supporting neighbouring states and enhancing diplomatic outreach with all relevant national, regional and international actors.	diplomacy, finances
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	extended EU restrictive measures against the Syrian regime	sanctions
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	deepen EU security cooperation with the Asian Strategic Partnership, China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ASAP), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)	diplomacy, policies
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	deepen security engagement with ASEAN security, counter terrorism, hybrid threats, conflict prevention, the proliferation of Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBR) diplomacy, policies	diplomacy, policies
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	Encourage more Asian participation in EU CSDF missions and operations and offer European Security and Defence College (ESDC) training to countries	diplomacy
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	opening of a European Union delegation to Panama	diplomacy
	with 9065/18 Conclusions on enhancing the EU's role in the Sahel	increase effectiveness and responsiveness of civilian CSDF Missions, improve coordination between CSDF missions, speed up civilian CSDF planning, enhancing cooperation with countries hosting and partner organisations	policies
FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	providing humanitarian and development assistance to Yemen	finances, humanitarian aid
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	provide support to the millions of vulnerable people affected in the Red Sea region and other relevant regional and international actors, work towards regional and inclusive regional forum for dialogue and cooperation	diplomacy
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	provide support to the millions of vulnerable people affected in the Red Sea region and other relevant regional and international actors, work towards regional and inclusive regional forum for dialogue and cooperation	humanitarian aid
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	cooperate with the leaders of IS/DAI (intergovernmental authority for development) as they encourage its structural and membership and shape its priorities and mandate to make it an effective	diplomacy
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	engage with and support the OS Sanket countries on the operationalisation of the OS Sanket Joint Force	finances, diplomacy, human
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	engage with the governments of the OS Sanket countries to ensure the effective integration of the personnel aimed under the CSDF missions into their respective national security forces	finances, military contribution
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	provide support to the millions of vulnerable people affected by conflicts, widespread insecurity	humanitarian aid
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	deploy an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) for the presidential election in July 2018	personnel for election observation
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	finances
FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	sanctions
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	sanctions
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
	with 10027/18 Conclusions on the Red Sea	strengthen its engagement with the OS Sanket countries, together with the AU-EU Joint Liaison Office on the migration situation in Libya	policies
FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	return of a permanent physical EU presence	sanctions
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	policies
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 12759/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	return of a permanent physical EU presence	sanctions
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	policies
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13097/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	return of a permanent physical EU presence	sanctions
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	policies
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
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FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	return of a permanent physical EU presence	sanctions
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	policies
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FAC/CO	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING FROM		
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	return of a permanent physical EU presence	sanctions
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	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy
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	with 13823/18 Conclusions on the Central African Republic	adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities	diplomacy

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