

MASTER ARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

“The EU's Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – The Road to Strategic
Autonomy / Der strategische Kompass der EU für Sicherheit und Verteidigung -
Der Weg zur strategischen Autonomie“

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2024 / Vienna, 2024

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 066 824

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Politikwissenschaft

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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1. Das Abstract

Diese Masterarbeit zielt darauf ab, die Entwicklung und Implementierung des strategischen Kompasses der EU zu erklären, wobei ein Rahmenwerk verwendet wird, das auf den Prinzipien des strukturellen Realismus beruht und auf einer Untersuchung der strategischen Autonomie der EU aufbaut. Da das Hauptziel des strategischen Kompasses darin besteht, die Rolle der EU als fähigerer Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsanbieter zu stärken, befasst sich diese Arbeit mit der folgenden Forschungsfrage: Wie wird sich die Implementierung des strategischen Kompasses auf die aktuellen und zukünftigen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsfähigkeiten der EU auswirken?

Auf der Grundlage der durchgeführten Forschung stellt diese Masterarbeit zwei Hypothesen auf: (1) Die Implementierung des strategischen Kompasses wird die Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsfähigkeiten der EU erheblich stärken und die europäische strategische Autonomie verbessern. (2) Die Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsfähigkeiten der EU werden nur die Macht der USA und der NATO ergänzen. Diese Hypothese stützt sich auf den strukturellen Realismus und berücksichtigt Aspekte wie ein staatlich orientiertes internationales System, internationale Anarchie, staatliche Souveränität und Überleben. Insbesondere wird der Ansatz des defensiven Realismus, der hauptsächlich auf Waltz' neorealistischer Gleichgewichtstheorie basiert, verwendet, um die Entwicklung und Implementierung des strategischen Kompasses zu erläutern und die Dynamik und Aussichten der europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik zu untersuchen (Waltz, 1979, S. 103-128).

1. Abstract

This master's thesis aims to explain the development and implementation of the EU's Strategic Compass, employing a framework grounded in the principles of structural realism and built upon a study of the EU's strategic autonomy. Given that the primary objective of the Strategic Compass is to strengthen the EU's role as a more capable security and defence provider, this thesis addresses the following research question: How will the implementation of the Strategic Compass impact the EU's current and future security and defence capabilities?

Building on the conducted research, this master's thesis posits two hypotheses: (1) The implementation of the Strategic Compass will significantly strengthen the EU's security and defence capabilities and improve European strategic autonomy. (2) The EU's security and defence capabilities will only complement the power of the U.S. and NATO. This hypothesis relies on structural realism, considering aspects such as a state-oriented international system, international anarchy, state sovereignty, and survival. In particular, the approach of defensive realism, predominantly grounded in Waltz's neorealist balance of power theory, is employed to elucidate the development and implementation of the Strategic Compass, along with examining the dynamics and prospects of European security and defence (Waltz, 1979, pp. 103-128).

2. Introduction

The Strategic Compass is a comprehensive strategy for European defence and security. It was adopted by the Council of the European Union on March 21, 2022, and subsequently approved by the European Council during its meetings on March 24-25, 2022 (European Parliament, 2022, pp. 1-4). In essence, the document builds upon the Common Security and Defence Policy and outlines a plan to enhance the EU's security and defence capabilities by 2030. In this context, the Strategic Compass incorporates a broad range of military and civilian crisis management instruments and the European Commission's tools, utilizing an integrated approach that includes strategic thinking, threat analysis, and strategic dialogue among the Member States (Zande, Stoetman, & Deen, 2021, p. 21). According to the conclusions of the CESI European Defence Roundtable (ERDT) and Expert Commission meeting on defence challenges, the EU Strategic Compass is expected to serve as a valuable framework that guides "the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) towards a fully-fledged European Defence Union (EDU)". This vision emphasizes the need for effective military, industrial, and civilian cooperation (CESI, 2022). In that sense, Zandee, Stoetman and Deen argue that the Strategic Compass could close the gap between "too much rhetoric" and "too little action" if the EU precisely defines its military level of ambition and what it implies for capability development and partnerships (Zande et al., 2021, p. 4). Considering the fact that the Strategic Compass is built around four pillars (1. 'Act' - Crisis Management, 2. 'Secure' - Resilience, 3. 'Invest' – Capability Development, and 4. 'Partner' – International Cooperation) that cover all aspects of security and defence policy, it can be provisionally concluded that this document will reduce the existing shortcomings of the 2016 EU Global Strategy and be more concrete guiding instruments for the EU and its member states (The Council, 2022, pp. 3-4).

One of the key strengths of the Strategic Compass is its goal to enhance the EU's capacity to respond decisively during crises and to safeguard its security and citizens. It achieves this by offering specific, actionable proposals along with a precise implementation schedule. These proposals stem from a collective evaluation of the strategic environment in which the EU operates, as well as the threats and challenges the Union encounters. However, the initial assessment of threats and challenges, presented to the Council in November 2021, revealed shortcomings and was subsequently revised significantly to emphasize security concerns, primarily due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Presented as the Threat Analysis, this document is a classified intelligence report prepared by the European Intelligence and Situation Center

(INTCEN). It identifies the main threats and challenges for the Union, its Member States, and its citizens, encompassing global and regional threats and conflicts in the European neighborhood by both state and non-state actors (Fiott & Lindstrom, 2022, p. 5). Aligned with the new Threat Analysis, the Strategic Compass reveals the EU's global aspirations by evaluating security issues such as China's growing military capacity, geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific, persistent hostilities and enduring instability in the Middle East and Gulf Region, ongoing conflicts and poor governance in Africa, and threats from terrorism and various forms of violent extremism (EEAS, 2022, p. 5). In addition, this document also promotes synergy and encourages strategic partnerships with NATO, the UN, and other partners to work together against current and future threats.

3. Research Question

“The adoption of the Strategic Compass is a turning point for the EU as a security provider. And for tackling the numerous threats and challenges we face” (Borrell, April 2022).

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine has caused tectonic disturbances on European soil and severely shaken the European security order, leading to a new assessment of the security situation within the European Union in terms of its role as a security provider. The Strategic Compass (formally endorsed by twenty-seven Heads of State and Government on 25 March 2022) reflects European unity and the urgent need for a document that provides guidelines for strengthening European security and defence over the next decade. According to HR/VP, Josep Borrell, the war in Ukraine has caused a geopolitical awakening in the EU, prompting a swift response involving the imposition of a series of sanctions on Russia and the provision of military aid to Ukraine (EEAS, 2022, pp. 4-5). Consequently, the "new reality" indicates that investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency and that the European Union must have a strategic document that will ensure European security and enable a rapid response to impending external crises (Andersson et al., 2022, p. 5).

Considering that the objective of the Strategic Compass is to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider (EEAS, 2022, p. 10), this master's thesis seeks to answer the following **research question**: How will the implementation of the Strategic Compass impact the EU's current and future security and defence capabilities?

To address this question, an analysis has been conducted on previously produced documents and policies, including the development and implementation of the CFSP and CSDP, the 2003 EU Security Strategy, the 2016 EU Global Strategy, and other relevant sources. Furthermore, the EU's relations with strategic partners (NATO and the USA) were considered, as well as the complex relations within the framework of the EU. In addition, relevant academic books, articles, surveys, and other publications were analysed to gain an in-depth understanding of the Strategic Compass.

Based on the initial research, the following two hypotheses emerged:

- (1) The implementation of the Strategic Compass will significantly strengthen the EU's security and defence capabilities and improve European strategic autonomy.
- (2) The EU's security and defence capabilities will only complement the power of the U.S. and NATO.

These hypotheses rely on structural realism that provides considerations related to (a) a state-oriented international system, (b) international anarchy, (c) state sovereignty, and (d) survival (Mazis et al., 2011, p. 22). In particular, the defensive realist approach which is largely built on Waltz's neorealist balance of power theory will be used to explain the implementation of the Strategic Compass, as well as the dynamics and future prospects of European security and defence (Waltz, 1979, pp. 103-128).

Also, these hypotheses are supported by the fact that the Strategic Compass, with its four pillars, contains guidelines for the current and future development of the EU's security and defence capabilities. For instance, the first pillar provides guidance on how to boost crisis management in the EU by improving the readiness of EU armed forces and civilian experts to strengthen CSDP missions and operations, as well as by developing a European Union Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5000 troops. The EU resilience should be fostered by strengthening defence and security capabilities to prevent, deter and respond to hybrid threats, including external cyber-attacks and foreign manipulation and interference, as well as by safeguarding EU security interests in the maritime and space domains. The third pillar is related to capability development and should encourage joint investment in key military capabilities for operations on land, at sea, in the air, and in space. Furthermore, investments in research and innovation should address strategic deficiencies and decrease technological and industrial dependencies. Finally, strategic partnerships should be enhanced by strengthening cooperation with NATO, the U.S., the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, the OSCE, and other partners (EEAS, 2022, pp. 11-13).

4. Theoretical Approach

“2022 will be the year of European defence”, declared the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, at the Charlemagne Prize award ceremony on 2 October 2021 (Herszenhorn, 2021). At the time, the eyes of the European political community were focused on the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Washington's announcement of a new strategic alliance in the Indo-Pacific region with the United Kingdom and Australia, affecting the French and EU interests (Zucchini, 2021; The White House, 2022). The possible Russian invasion of Ukraine was not foreseen or considered, which indicates serious shortcomings in the work of the European Intelligence and Situation Center, as well as the security and information agencies of the Member States. In his speech at the Charlemagne ceremony, President Michel addressed the importance of the EU strategic autonomy, which has been the subject of deep and historic divisions among EU Member States (Herszenhorn, 2021). Advocating this concept, he stressed that the EU needs less dependence, more influence and that strengthening Defensive Europe means strengthening the Atlantic Alliance. In this sense, the adoption of the Strategic Compass reflects the EU's aspirations to achieve strategic autonomy. Moreover, the Strategic Compass is an important step not only in improving European security and defence, but also in advancing European unity, as well as strategic partnership with NATO and other partners. Explaining the unity achieved between the Member States, Fitzgerald argues that “the Strategic Compass is an attempt to set the strategic vision of the Union from the top-down, while simultaneously building consensus among Member States from the bottom-up, by drawing upon their diverse perspectives to provide an instrument for coordinating their foreign policies” (Fitzgerald, 2022).

Analysing the content of the Strategic Compass, the development of EU military capabilities, political and strategic debate, and the theoretical incorporation of concepts, this master thesis argues that the Strategic Compass could increase the EU's security and defence capability and consequently ensure strategic autonomy of the EU, which in this case is an example of balanced behaviour. Namely, this balanced behaviour can be explained through the defensive realistic approach where some authors like Brooks & Wohlforth claim that the development of autonomous EU capabilities merely complements American power and NATO (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2008, p. 40). Posen complements these claims, arguing that the concentration of U.S. global power has encouraged European states (via the European Security and Defence Policy) to move towards greater autonomy and to “cautiously” balance the U.S. power (Posen, 2006, p. 153). On the other hand, Chiriac argues that EU security and defence issues, and thus

strategy, cannot be isolated from concepts such as sovereignty or national strategic culture. In this sense, realism provides a theoretical framework for studying the development and implementation of the Strategic Compass based on the study of strategic autonomy while taking into account concepts such as the concept of sovereignty or national strategic culture.¹ According to Helwig & Sinkkonen, strategic autonomy is a prominent framework through which policymakers discuss the EU's response to global challenges. They argue that strategic autonomy is an ambiguous term that allows exploring the EU's external interdependencies, as well as the implications in diverse policy fields, including security and defence, foreign policy, and trade (Helwig & Sinkkonen, 2022, p. 2). Moreover, defence realists emphasize that anarchy encourages states to adopt defensive, moderate and restrained strategies, but with the premise that the balance of powers in the international system is constantly changing and that the periods of lasting hegemony are not permanent or stable. Therefore, they argue that conflict is sometimes necessary such as in the case of aggressor states, when their security is threatened, when they are insecure, or when differences are irreconcilable (Mearsheimer, 2001, pp. 17-21). However, as Stephen Walt notes, "If balancing is more common than bandwagoning, then states are more secure because aggressors will face combined opposition" (Walt, 1985, p. 4).

Bearing in mind that the rise of China and the Russian invasion of Ukraine seriously shook the post-Cold War era of American unipolarity, realism and its interpretation of the balance of power became more than relevant. Regarding the EU's Strategic Compass, realism offers two sets of arguments to explain the development of the EU's military capabilities. As mentioned, Posen argues that the EU is balancing against the unipolar power of the U.S. both externally by creating new alliance formations under the EU, and internally by building autonomous capabilities (Posen, 2006, p. 164). At the same time, other authors claim that the development of the EU's autonomous capabilities only complements American power and NATO, thus strengthening the unipolarity of the United States (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2008, p. 40).

Finally, with the adoption of the Strategic Compass and joint actions with the EU, the U.S., and allies supporting Ukraine, this master thesis argues that enhancing the EU's security and defence capabilities will bolster its role as a more effective security and defence provider, thereby complementing the roles of the U.S. and NATO in ensuring Euro-Atlantic security. However, it is essential to note that the interests of EU members must converge to the point

¹ States are the principal actors in the international system, as they "set the terms of the intercourse" (Waltz 1979, p. 96), monopolize the "legitimate use of force" (Waltz, 1979, p. 104) within their territories, and generally conduct foreign policy in a "single voice" (Waltz, 1959, 178-179)

where unity prevails and where the implementation of the Strategic Compass is possible, as well as the further development of the CSDP and the CFSP. Otherwise, EU cooperation in the field of security, defence, and foreign policy may remain limited, fragmented, and intergovernmental due to Union enlargement, permanent differences in the strategic culture, ambitions, values, interests, and historical attitudes of the EU members (Gordon, 1997/98, p. 76).

5. Methodological Approach

This master's thesis adopts a methodological approach grounded in realistic perspectives, aiming to understand state behavior, particularly in military and strategic contexts. It employs qualitative document policy analysis to delve into the development and implementation of the Strategic Compass and its potential implications for the evolution of European security and defence (Harrison et al., 2013, p. 125). Qualitative analysis of political documents offers nuanced insights into political operations, capturing the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders involved in shaping policies. Thus, this thesis examines the historical trajectory of European security and defence policy and, drawing from these historical dynamics, conducts a comprehensive analysis of the Strategic Compass and its potential impact on EU security and defence policy moving forward. As Cardno notes, qualitative documentary analysis allows researchers to delve beyond the surface of policies, uncovering the driving forces behind their inception, tracing their development, and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving stated objectives. This methodological approach typically entails an exploration of the relevant theoretical framework, providing a solid foundation for understanding the analysed documents (Cardno, 2018, p. 624).

Advantages of analyzing previously adopted documents include:

1. **Historical Context:** By examining historical documents, the researcher gains insights into the context in which policies and strategies were developed. This historical context is crucial for understanding the evolution of security and defence policies.
2. **Policy Evolution:** Analyzing past documents allows the researcher to trace the evolution of policies over time. This longitudinal perspective helps in identifying patterns, shifts, or continuities in the strategic direction of the entity under study.
3. **Informed Decision-Making:** Understanding past decisions and their outcomes can inform current and future decision-making processes. This knowledge provides a basis for assessing the effectiveness of past strategies and contributes to making more informed choices for the future.
4. **Policy Impact:** Examining the impact of past policies helps in evaluating their success or failure. This assessment is valuable for policymakers and researchers seeking to learn from past experiences and improve the efficacy of future strategies (Cardno, 2018, p. 625).

5. **Identifying Trends and Patterns:** Document analysis enables the identification of trends, patterns, or recurring themes in security and defence policies. Recognizing these patterns contributes to a deeper understanding of the strategic landscape.
6. **Contextual Understanding:** Documents often provide the rationale, considerations, and contextual factors that influenced the development of policies. This understanding is crucial for interpreting the motivations behind certain decisions.
7. **Documentation of Strategic Thinking:** Past documents serve as a record of the strategic thinking and priorities of the entity, offering insights into the mindset and objectives of policymakers during specific periods.
8. **Contextualizing Current Challenges:** The analysis of past documents aids in contextualizing and understanding current challenges and opportunities, providing a backdrop for assessing the relevance of the Strategic Compass in the present context.

While analyzing previously adopted documents in the master's thesis offers numerous advantages, there are also some potential disadvantages to consider:

1. **Limited Perspective:** Historical documents may not provide a complete or unbiased perspective on events, as they are often written from the viewpoint of the entity producing them. This limitation could result in a one-sided or incomplete understanding of the historical context (Bowen, 2009, p. 32).
2. **Selective Documentation:** The availability and preservation of historical documents may be selective, leading to gaps in the information available for analysis. Certain crucial documents may be missing or inaccessible, hindering a comprehensive examination (Yin, 1994, p. 80).
3. **Changing Interpretations:** The interpretation of historical documents can be subject to change over time. New perspectives, information, or scholarly approaches may emerge, altering the understanding of past events and policies.
4. **The complexity of interpretation:** Historical documents may be complex and open to interpretation. Different researchers may interpret the same document in various ways, leading to potential disagreements in scholarly discourse.
5. **Dynamic Nature of Security Issues:** Security and defence policies are responsive to changing geopolitical conditions. Historical documents may not capture the dynamic and evolving nature of security challenges, potentially limiting their applicability to current and future contexts.

6. Dependency on Available Documentation: The analysis is constrained by the availability of relevant documents. If key documents are classified, destroyed, or otherwise inaccessible, it can impede a thorough examination.

Despite these potential drawbacks, a balanced approach that acknowledges these limitations can still provide valuable insights into the historical development of security and defence policy. To avoid potential limitations, this master's thesis uses a framework grounded in the principles of structural realism and built upon a study of the EU's strategic autonomy. This framework ensures an interdisciplinary approach that integrates insights from international relations and strategic studies. This enrichment of the methodological approach involves drawing on established theories and concepts from these fields to enhance the depth and breadth of the analysis.

6. European Strategic Autonomy and Historical Overview of the Development of European Security and Defence Capabilities

This set of chapters seeks to find out how the introduction and implementation of the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence will improve and strengthen European Strategic Autonomy (ESA). In order to gain a deeper understanding of European strategic autonomy and its importance for the development of the European Union's defence capabilities, the following chapters provide a systematic overview of its historical evolution based on the processed relevant literature and, in light of the current international political situation, attempts to identify possible directions for its further development through the implementation of the Strategic Compass. Supported by the views of classical realists who argue that great powers use membership in international institutions to promote their interests (Schweller & Priess, 1997; Waltz, 2000; Mearsheimer, 2014), this set of chapters also aim to clarify ambiguities regarding the scope of European strategic autonomy and its (un-)disputed compatibility with the roles of the U.S. and NATO in the European security architecture. Another disputed issue in the study of European strategic autonomy is that its indeterminacy stems from the overly broad definition provided in the EU Global Strategy, which leaves much room for different interpretations and debates. Considering that ESA is described as “the capacity to operate independently when required and in collaboration with partners whenever feasible” (The Council, 2016, p. 2), Juozaitis highlights the term's ambiguity and concludes that interpretations of ESA are mainly influenced by the interests and dynamics within the EU and its relations with the U.S. and NATO (Juozaitis, 2023, p. 6). This conclusion is supported by a plethora of debates on ESA that range from classical sceptics who believe that the pursuit of greater autonomy will undermine the transatlantic partnership (Retter et al., 2021; Lundestad, 1997), through advocates of greater independence from the U.S. and NATO (Howorth, 2017, p. 4; Biscop, 2019, p. 48-49), to those who seek to reconcile these two approaches through a division of responsibilities based on complementarity between the EU and NATO (Fiott, 2018; Major & Marrone, 2022). Accordingly, it is critical to determine why these approaches have different positions and, based on their clarification, to answer whether ESA is an extended instrument of U.S. power or a European mechanism that allows EU member states to exercise their full sovereignty. Finally, the further development of ESA and the implementation of the Strategic Compass is a two-way process that ultimately depends on the current and future directions of the EU's policy. To clarify the abovementioned dilemmas, this set of chapters is based on a historical review that provides insight into the dynamics of the development of

European security and defence capabilities, which has been profoundly affected by the complex relationships within the EU and the complexity of partnerships with the U.S. and NATO.

7. The European Defence Community and the Emergence of the Idea of European Strategic Autonomy

The issue of ESA is one of the most debated European defence topics that dates back to 1950 when French Prime Minister René Pleven proposed to the French National Assembly the plan for the creation of the European Defence Community² (EDC) with the primary goal of establishing a supranational European army composed of members of the European Coal and Steel Community (Pleven, 1950). Although European Defence Agency records suggest that Pleven was inspired by Robert Schuman's initiative to create the ECSC (EDA, 1947-1954), Kanter argues that the French idea of the EDC arose because of the U.S. insistence on rearming the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to counter the growing power and threats of the Soviet Union (Kanter, 1979, p. 204). In essence, the Pleven Plan was drawn up on the assumption that West Germany could still become revisionist and envisaged the rearmament of the FRG only in the context of an integrated supranational European army (Pleven, 1950, p. 3). On the other hand, Deutsch and Edinger point out that the German establishment saw rearmament as an effective means of achieving political equality and regaining substantive sovereignty (Deutsch & Edinger, 1959, p. 162). Despite French mistrust, the uncertainty surrounding German rearmament was to be resolved by the signing of the Convention on relations between the Three Powers and the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn on 26 May 1952 (Convention on relations, 1952), which marked the end of the occupation of the FRG and was supposed to enable its rearmament once the forthcoming Treaty on the Establishing the European Defence Community enters into force. With the previous support and insistence of the U.S. through negotiations with its Western European partners (Rhodes, 1987, pp. 42-43), the following day should have enabled the re-arming of the FRG and the strengthening of the European-NATO partnership, which was achieved in a short period by the signing of the abovementioned Treaty by the members of the ECSC in Paris on 27 May 1952 (Kunz, 1953). However, the Treaty of Paris³ could only come into effect upon ratification by the parliaments of all signatory states. Although France was one of the signatories of the Treaty of Paris, it also later expressed its reluctance to ratify it mainly due to fear of losing sovereignty over national security and defence as the command of the armed forces was to be transferred to the control of the delegated commissioners of the once established EDC (Česnakas, 2023, pp. 14-17). Another reason for French discontent was the establishment of NATO in 1949, which undermined the

² Although the plan was named after Pleven, it was mainly drafted by Jean Monnet.

³ The Treaty of Paris is another name for the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community.

authority of the Western Union and caused the dissolution of the Western Union Defence Organization (WUDO) due to the transfer of headquarters, personnel, and plans to NATO during the Korean War (Kaplan, 2007, p. 160). The dominance of NATO and the fact that the Treaty of Paris would reduce the role of France as the driving force behind European integration projects resulted in the rejection of the EDC in the French National Assembly on 30 August 1954 (French National Assembly, 1954). According to Teasdale, the Treaty of Paris could only be ratified if the implied interdependence in the EDC was acceptable under French terms (Teasdale, 2016, p. 6). The failure to adopt and establish the EDC led to the London and Paris conferences, where the Brussels Treaty of 1948 was amended into the Modified Brussels Treaty (MBT) on 23 October 1954 (Kunz, 1955). This modification is considered a political revival of the Western Union in the form of the Western European Union (WEU), whose most important component for future European integration processes was the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Italy to the Brussels Treaty (Brussels Treaty, 1954). One of the primary characteristics of the WEU was that it did not duplicate NATO's functions and, according to Česnakas, was overshadowed by NATO's dominance (Česnakas, 2023, p. 16). Referring to Dietl, Česnakas points out that the weakness of the WEU was also a consequence of the U.S. policy aimed at preventing alternative alliances to NATO and keeping the Alliance exclusively responsible for European security and defence (Ibid.). In addition, he also notes that the United Kingdom has been a strong proponent of NATO leadership in defence of Europe and has always been sceptical of the idea of a European army (Ibid, p. 22). As a result of NATO dominance and the adoption of the Modified Brussels Treaty, the Warsaw Pact was formed in 1955 (The Office of the Historian, 1955); the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) was signed in Rome on 25 March 1957 (Dedman, 2009, pp. 93-95); Franco-German friendship was formalized by the Elysée Treaty in 1963 (Karagiannis, 2013); West Germany began to assert its sovereignty and initiated a rapprochement with the USSR through its Ostpolitik (Schoenborn, 2020); and, among other significant developments it is noteworthy that France tried to regain its influence in the European defence affairs through the Fouchet Plan in 1961; and finally, as a result of dissatisfaction with its position, France withdrew its membership from NATO's military command structure under President Charles de Gaulle in 1966 (McDonald, 1976). Although the European Defence Community did not see the light of day, the ideas spawned by the Pleven Plan sparked a debate about the importance of European strategic autonomy that still intrigues the European and North Atlantic defence community. Namely, the discussion on the EDC agreement included the perspectives of European integration; German sovereignty and rearmament; negotiations with the Soviet

Union; and the future of NATO (Česnakas, 2023, p. 16). Compared to the current uncertainty, it becomes clear that all these topics have not lost their actuality and that, despite their evolution and modified form, they are more relevant than ever.

8. Development of European Strategic Autonomy from 1990 to 1998 and the Importance of European Security and Defence Identity

The process that began with the creation of the ECSC and the ideas that emerged from the Schuman Declaration (EU, 1950) and the Pleven Plan led to the establishment of the European Union with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (TEU, 1992). Since the beginning of the 1990s was marked by wars in the Balkans, European leaders realized that the EU did not have the appropriate tools to respond to the crisis in its neighbourhood and that it was necessary to improve the Union's capacities for joint foreign policy actions (Archick, 2023, p. 7). In response to growing tensions and the lack of appropriate mechanisms, ministers of the Western European Union adopted the Petersberg Declaration in June 1992, which defined humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and the role of combat forces in crisis management (WEU, 1992). At the same time, in 1993, the EU introduced the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) within the framework of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). The CFSP was designed to foster peace, improve global security, encourage international collaboration, and uphold the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Malovec, 2022, p. 1). In 1999, the CFSP was expanded to include the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) that incorporated the Petersberg Tasks and was integrated into the Treaty on European Union through the amendments outlined in the Treaty of Amsterdam (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997, pp. 125-131).⁴ In addition to the ESDP, the Amsterdam Treaty reaffirmed Europe's commitment to developing the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was in line with the Paris Declaration (WEU Council of Ministers, 1997, pp. 4-7) and the decisions adopted by NATO ministers in Berlin (NATO, 1996). The significance of these documents was that they aimed to strengthen European defence capabilities while simultaneously consolidating cooperation with NATO. For instance, the Paris Declaration emphasized the importance of European countries taking greater responsibility for their own security and defence. The Declaration also encouraged the development of the ESDI as a means to enhance Europe's ability to contribute to NATO's missions and operations (WEU Council of Ministers, 1997, pp. 4-7). The decisions taken by NATO ministers in Berlin in 1996 further emphasized the need for improved European defence capabilities and cooperation. They acknowledged that European allies needed the ability to conduct credible military operations, either within NATO's framework or, when NATO as a whole is not involved, through the Western European

⁴ The Treaty of Amsterdam was adopted in 1997 but came into force in 1999.

Union (WEU) or specific ad hoc coalitions. Accordingly, the Western European Union (WEU) submitted to NATO the framework of planned military operations that should have ranged from smaller brigade-sized humanitarian support missions to larger division-sized missions aimed at separating warring parties by force, with up to 85,000 troops on the ground, deployed at a distance of 6,000 kilometers, and lasting up to one year (De Decker, 1998, p. 242). This framework was later used as a basis for defining the European Headline Goal, as well as for the development of the first European Security Strategy in 2003.

Concerning European Strategic Autonomy (ESA), the aforementioned initiatives have not only reinforced the concept of ESDI but have also paved the way for the development of ESA. In this context, the Concept of European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) serves as a precursor or steppingstone towards achieving European Strategic Autonomy (ESA). On the other hand, it is necessary to underline that ESDI and ESA are related but distinct concepts. As already stated, ESDI focuses on improving European defence capabilities within the NATO framework (NATO, 1991), while ESA refers to the EU's ambition to be more independent in security and defence matters. Moreover, ESA goes beyond defence and includes a broader range of areas where the EU seeks to exert more influence and pursue its interests independently. In particular, the EU Global Strategy outlines the aspirations of European strategic autonomy encompassing not only defence and security issues but also technological development, economic resilience, foreign policy, and international partnerships (The Council, 2016). Although ESA is a much broader concept, the objectives of ESDI and ESA share a common goal: to strengthen Europe's ability to act autonomously and independently in defence and security matters while maintaining continuous consultations and cooperation with NATO. This common goal is consistent with the fact that the development of ESDI and ESA has always depended to some extent on the U.S. government, whose long-standing foreign policy position is that NATO should be the central pillar of transatlantic security. For instance, the U.S. foreign policy stance regarding the relations between the EU and NATO was highlighted by Madeleine Albright. In her famous '3D Statement' to the Financial Times in 1998, she emphasized that "European Defence Initiatives should avoid decoupling Europe from NATO, should not 'duplicate' NATO, and should not discriminate against non-EU NATO members" (Rutten, 2001, p. 11). Accordingly, Lundestad notes that this U.S. position indirectly limits the EU's ability to become an independent power (Lundestad, 2005, p. 278). This conclusion already originates from his earlier book "Empire on Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952", wherein he underscores that the U.S. managed to exert its influence over Europe

after World War II due to the invitation extended by Western Europeans to join NATO (Lundestad, 1997, p. 272). Subsequently, this alliance became the cornerstone of European security and defence both during the Cold War and after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

9. Theoretical Excursion: Waltz's Analysis of the post-Cold War Situation in Light of the Development of European Strategic Autonomy

Analysing the post-Cold War situation in Europe, Waltz notes that NATO's survival unveils an intriguing aspect of the balance of power theory, primarily manifested in the EU's dependence on the U.S. and NATO. In this context, he highlights the observations of Robert Art, who asserted that preserving NATO and upholding America's leading role after the Cold War was necessary to prevent security competition that could trigger internal conflicts within the EU (Waltz, 2000, p. 25). Elaborating on the rationale behind Art's conclusion, Waltz emphasizes that the external enemy has disappeared, and a motive had to be identified to justify the ongoing existence of NATO and the dominance of the U.S. On the other hand, he argues that European leaders have allowed this kind of domination. Referring to Keohane and his quote from a senior EU diplomat, he underlines that while European leaders could have agreed to accept US leadership, they were not aligned in assuming leadership among themselves (Keohane, 1993, p. 53; in Waltz, 2000, p. 26). In light of post-Cold War developments, Waltz concludes that the assumption of hegemonic power dominance hinders the emergence of a balance of power within Europe. Furthermore, he emphasizes that it is more suitable for the EU if the hegemonic power remains distant, separated by the Atlantic, rather than being a neighbouring (Ibid.). In reality, the U.S. never remained far away; instead, it has continued to expand its unipolar influence and unbalanced power through NATO. Correspondingly, Waltz points out that NATO not only survived the Cold War but also continued to add new members and promised to accept even more (Ibid., p.17). At the same time, he argues that the expansion of NATO has weak justifications, while the reasons against expansion are more justified. According to him, NATO's expansion creates divisions and alienates countries, especially Russia, weakening democratic and market-oriented influences. This strengthens forces opposed to Western values within Russia and hampers efforts for nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, NATO enlargement pushes Russia closer to China instead of fostering ties with the EU and the U.S. Additionally, Waltz underlines that NATO's disregard for Russia's concerns and past promises has fuelled Russian apprehension, with fears that former Soviet republics could join NATO. Therefore, NATO's increasing activities near Russia, including joint exercises and plans for Ukrainian membership, have caused Russia to shift its focus eastward (Ibid., p. 22). Lastly, Waltz cautioned that expanding NATO to the point of alienating Russia and attempting to lecture Chinese leaders on governance are policies that only a great power can afford and only a misguided nation would be tempted to pursue. In this context, the EU and its member states

had to be aware of Waltz's warnings to protect their strategic interests and investments in Russia and China. Otherwise, Russia's growing international aspirations and China's economic power (in addition to their military power) would undeniably lead to the realization of Waltz's observation that the U.S. would not be able to prevent the creation of a new balance of power (Ibid, p. 38). In this case, the EU and its member states should review their investments in non-allied countries and clearly define the strategic interests and directions of their future actions.

Given the current geopolitical situation, where the Russian invasion of Ukraine is shaping world politics, Waltz's observations provide valuable insight into the positions of the EU, NATO, the U.S., Russia, and Ukraine. However, his observations were neither prophetic nor Nostradamusian, but realpolitik observations based on an understanding of the interests of the great powers. In this regard, Waltz emphasizes that the realist theory provides answers about what will happen without specifying the exact timeframe of these predicted events. He also states that the realist theory envisions a restoration of disturbed balance over time. Highlighting that the post-Cold War world was shaped by the U.S. unipolar policy based on unbalanced power, Waltz simultaneously recalls the warnings of America's Founding Fathers about the dangers of power without checks and balances. Moreover, relying on historical examples and insights from realist theory, he points out that unipolarity is the most unstable international configuration that weakens the hegemonic state in the long term due to numerous tasks beyond its borders. This weakening can subsequently lead to the decline of an empire due to the concentration and abusive exercise of such imbalanced power. In essence, Waltz concludes that international politics rejects asymmetric power, and accordingly, some states faced with unbalanced power seek to increase their own power or align with others to balance the international distribution of power (Waltz, 2000, pp. 21-32). On European soil, a unique example of such a counterweight is the withdrawal of France from NATO during the time of President Charles de Gaulle. In the present time, the current foreign policies of Russia, China, and other BRICS countries provide clear instances of Waltz's observations (see: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2023).

Concerning European strategic autonomy, the post-Cold War unipolarity founded on U.S. hegemony has not altered the traditional American position that NATO should remain the cornerstone of European security. This perspective, moreover, was promptly underscored the day after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, when President Bush expressed his satisfaction with the creation of the EU while stressing the importance of further strengthening NATO as a central pillar for ensuring European security and defence (Waltz, 2000, p. 21). In this way, the

American administration directly sent a message to France and Germany that the further development of the European Security and Defence Identity could only occur within the framework of NATO. Compared with previous administrations, this position can be viewed as an extension of Clinton's policy, which perceived NATO as an instrument to "maintain the U.S. control over the foreign and military policies of EU member states" (Sheetz & Mastanduno, 1997, p. 170). As a result of such policies, the EU and its member states found themselves in a state of limited sovereignty and autonomy. This underscores Waltz's observations that unbalanced power dynamics can limit states' ability to fully exercise their autonomy. Thus, it is evident that the continued existence of NATO and the dominance of the U.S. have significantly influenced the development of European security and defence capabilities. However, the lingering question remains whether the EU could prevent overdependence on external actors, particularly the U.S. and NATO, in order to achieve greater strategic autonomy and act more decisively based on its own interests and objectives. The answer to this question will be given through further analysis of the development of European strategic autonomy from 1998 to the present day.

10. The Development of European Strategic Autonomy from 1998 to the Adoption of the European Security Strategy of 2003

The next milestone in the development of European Strategic Autonomy (ESA) after the Amsterdam Treaty was the signing of the Saint-Malo declaration in 1998, which marked a significant shift in the United Kingdom's stance towards the development and strengthening of the EU's defence capabilities. Previously hesitant, the UK expressed its willingness to support the EU in developing independent defence structures. According to Rutten, the turning point for the UK was the 1998 war in Kosovo, which demonstrated the growing need for an integrated Europe that should play a more significant global role to have both a political voice and the ability to support policies by acting in foreign affairs, security, and defence (Rutten, 2001, p. ix). In this sense, the Saint-Malo Declaration, signed by French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, was of great importance as it laid the foundation for the development of the CSDP. Notably, the declaration marked the need for the EU to have the ability to take autonomous military action and to provide the necessary means to support its political objectives in international affairs (Saint-Malo Declaration, 1998). Moreover, the declaration led to subsequent events, such as the Cologne and Helsinki summits, which further advanced the progress toward a more integrated and capable European Union in the areas of CFSP and CSDP. For instance, the Cologne “Declaration on Strengthening the Common European Security and Defence Policy” reaffirmed the European determination that the EU must possess the capability for independent action, supported by credible military forces, the authority to make decisions, and the willingness to employ them while maintaining cooperation with NATO. In this way, the EU sought to enhance its ability to contribute to world peace and security following the principles of the United Nations Charter (European Parliament, 1999). These efforts were further reinforced at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, where the European Council adopted a common European Headline Goal to improve the EU's military capabilities, including the development of rapidly deployable forces. In particular, member states were encouraged to voluntarily cooperate in the EU-led operations and develop the capability to deploy military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 personnel within 60 days and sustain them for at least one year. Even more significant for the Helsinki Summit is the emphasis within the Presidency's Conclusions that the creation of a European army was unnecessary. Instead, the EU was urged to develop autonomous decision-making authority and establish adequate military capabilities to address international crises. The path to achieving these objectives is highlighted in the Conclusions regarding the EU-NATO relationship, where

the importance of avoiding duplication with NATO is stressed. Furthermore, it is also underscored that the EU should enhance its military and non-military crisis management capabilities while maintaining regular consultation, cooperation, and transparency with NATO (Rutten, 2001, pp. 82-91). After the Helsinki Summit, a few more summits took place (Feira European Council in June 2000, Nice Summit in December 2000, Laeken European Council in December 2001), which further addressed various aspects of EU integration and reaffirmed the commitment to the ESDP and highlighted the importance of capabilities development and the need for increased cooperation with NATO. Overall, these summits further contributed to the development of European Strategic Autonomy by recognizing the need for the EU to have the ability to act autonomously in security and defence matters by strengthening its military capabilities and fostering closer cooperation between the EU and NATO. They also laid the groundwork for subsequent developments, including the creation of the first European Security Strategy, which further shaped the concept of European Strategic Autonomy. However, it is essential to note that the overall development of European defence capabilities was cautiously built within the already-mentioned framework of Madeline Albright's famous "3D statement" (Rutten, 2001, p. 11). The fact that NATO and the U.S. remain the central pillar of European security and defence was additionally reinforced by the 1999 U.S. National Security Strategy for the New Century, which explicitly stated that NATO remains the anchor of U.S. engagement in Europe and the backbone of transatlantic security. For this purpose, the U.S. committed to maintaining approximately 100,000 military personnel in Europe to fulfill commitments to NATO, provide a visible deterrent against aggression and coercion, contribute to regional stability, respond to crises, sustain vital transatlantic ties, and preserve the U.S. leadership in NATO (The White House, 1999). The importance of U.S. involvement in the EU is also emphasized in NATO's Strategic Concept (1999), which stresses that the security of Europe and North America is closely linked and that the presence of U.S. conventional and nuclear forces in Europe plays a critical role in ensuring that security (NATO, 1999, point 42). In addition, it was highlighted that the advancement of ESDI within the Alliance will further increase the EU's contribution to the common defence and international peace and stability, including through multinational formations. These initiatives provided the necessary impetus for the further development of the EU's defence and security capabilities, culminating in the adoption of the first European Security Strategy in 2003.

11. The European Security Strategy

The European Security Strategy (ESS) was adopted under Xavier Solana's mandate as the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and represents a pivotal milestone in advancing the EU's foreign and security policy. Its adoption significantly enhanced the potential for promoting European Strategic Autonomy. Namely, the ESS indirectly encouraged the advancement of ESA by highlighting the importance of a holistic security approach that integrates political, diplomatic, economic, and military aspects. This comprehensive approach is also evident in the fact that, for the first time in its history, the EU has defined the global challenges and primary threats that Europe faces and may encounter in the future. These core threats encompass terrorism and organized crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, energy security, climate change, regional conflicts, and the existence of failed states. Building upon the established objectives and threats, the ESS advocates a proactive and multilateral approach, underscoring the significance of collaborating with international partners and organizations (See: The Council, 2009).

In this sense, the ESS emphasizes the importance of a strong and capable Europe within the transatlantic partnership while also acknowledging the EU's need to act autonomously when necessary. To achieve this, the ESS calls for the development of effective command structures, as well as financial and administrative frameworks to enhance EU capabilities for various European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions. For this purpose, the EU established the European Defence Agency (EDA) in 2004 to support EU member states in improving their defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the ESDP. Furthermore, the ESS initiated the development of other mechanisms, such as the Pooling and Sharing (P&S) initiative, which encourages EU member states to collaborate and optimize their defence resources and capabilities (EDA, 2013). Consequently, European defence cooperation has been further strengthened by the adoption of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework, which enables participating countries to jointly develop defence capabilities and improve military readiness (Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315, 2017). These are just a few of the many instruments and mechanisms developed to strengthen European defence capabilities and promote greater self-reliance in security matters. In essence, they reflect the EU's commitment to becoming a more influential and autonomous actor on the global stage, capable of addressing security challenges independently when necessary while maintaining a robust transatlantic partnership with the U.S. and NATO.

Regarding the transatlantic partnership, the ESS acknowledges the pivotal roles that the U.S. and NATO play in ensuring the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond. In this context, the ESS explicitly highlights NATO as the primary organization entrusted with the collective defence of the EU (The Council, 2009, p. 27). This cooperation underwent additional reinforcement shortly before the strategy's adoption. Namely, the strong ties between these two entities were further deepened by the Berlin Plus agreements of 2002. These agreements essentially represent a comprehensive set of agreements between the EU and NATO primarily based on the outcomes of the NATO summit in Washington in 1999 (NATO, April 1999; NATO, June 1999). Williams notes that the advantage of these agreements is that the EU has been allowed to request NATO assets and capabilities for operations led and directed by the EU (Williams, 2018). In particular, the Berlin Plus agreements offer a mechanism ensuring the EU's access to NATO's resources and capabilities for crisis management operations when NATO opts not to participate in specific actions. Accordingly, Reichard underscores that the Berlin Plus agreements, in conjunction with the NATO-EU Information Security Agreement of 2002, provide the EU with the long-awaited opportunity to participate to a limited extent in crisis management in its broader neighbourhood (Reichard, 2004, p. 38). However, he concludes that the Berlin Plus Agreement falls into the category of non-binding legal agreements, implying that none of NATO's assets, including planning capabilities, are legally secured for the EU (Reichard, 2004, p. 67). Therefore, it was anticipated that the gradual reinforcement of European security and defence capabilities via the implementation of the ESS would considerably influence the evolving balance in the European security dynamic between NATO and the EU.

In addition to the relationship with NATO, the ESS places significant emphasis on the transatlantic partnership between the EU and the U.S. Within this context, the EU-U.S. relationship is characterized as an indispensable partnership, distinguished not merely by military collaboration but also by its robust economic bonds, dynamic political dialogues, and multifaceted cooperation across various domains. Furthermore, the ESS underscores the vital role of this collaboration in safeguarding global peace and prosperity, particularly in critical areas such as counterterrorism, non-proliferation, conflict prevention, and the promotion of democracy and human rights. At the same time, the ESS calls on Europe to contribute to fostering a more effective global multilateralism, which, according to Ruggie, is a unique product of American global hegemony (Ruggie, 1992, pp. 561-588). Although not directly recognized as an instrument of American global power, the ESS emphasizes the importance of

global multilateralism as a driving force in maintaining peace and stability in the international system. Therefore, the ESS calls on Europe to actively contribute to and strengthen this system by participating in and supporting international institutions, treaties, and cooperative efforts that uphold the principles of multilateralism (The Council, 2009, p. 36). In doing so, Europe not only enhances its own security but also plays a vital role in preserving the broader framework of global cooperation and governance. However, considering the historical development of relations between the EU and the U.S., EU policymakers should remain aware of Waltz's assertion that U.S. policy is primarily shaped by internal political pressures and national ambitions rather than external security concerns (Waltz, 2000, p. 29).

As a further demonstration of commitment to and alignment with the strategic guidelines of the U.S. and NATO, the ESS emphasizes the necessity of fostering relations with Russia (e.g., The White House, 1999, p. 32; NATO, 1999, point. 36; The Council, 2009, p. 17). This policy emerged due to the widespread conviction in the Western world regarding the triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism as the ultimate forms of governance and socioeconomic organization. Influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent era of unipolar global dominance led by the United States, the architects of the transatlantic strategic visions leaned heavily on Fukuyama's belief in a more harmonious and cooperative world order while overlooking Huntington's concerns that the post-Cold War era could witness clashes between different civilizations with distinct values, traditions, and identities (e.g., Fukuyama, 1992; Huntington, 1993). Although the policy of rapprochement with Russia had already begun with Brandt's Ostpolitik, the post-Cold War period brought the Western world the opportunity to deepen relations with its former main adversary. Accordingly, it is possible to conclude that this period was marked by Fukuyama's belief that even former adversaries could become partners. Following the dynamics of this geopolitical moment and transatlantic strategic directions, European leaders formalized a policy of rapprochement with Russia by signing the *“Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the EU, its Member States, and the Russian Federation”* in 1994 (EU–Russia partnership and cooperation agreement, 1994). Furthermore, shortly before the adoption of the European Security Strategy, the EU and Russia reached a new agreement in 2003 to advance their relations in four common areas “covering the economy, freedom, security and justice, external security, and research and education” (Russell, 2020, p. 2). In light of these developments, the ESS underscores the necessity of improving partnership relations with Russia. As a significant aspect of EU-Russia relations, the ESS underlines the pivotal role of energy and highlights the importance of securing transit

routes through Ukraine and Turkey. On the other hand, it points to the urgency of diversifying sources of energy supply and transit routes, a concern that has gained even greater relevance given Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In addition to energy cooperation, the ESS emphasizes the importance of coordinated efforts with the U.S., Russia, NATO, and other international partners to maintain regional stability and prevent possible major conflicts (The Council, 2009, p. 35). However, these strategic guidelines reflect more the geopolitical moment of that time (characterized by American unipolar dominance, the expansion of NATO, the penetration of Western capital into the countries of the former Warsaw bloc, dubious privatizations, etc.) rather than being the result of in-depth strategic thinking based on the long-term interests of the EU and its alignment with the interests of both large and small countries.

Moreover, it is highly questionable to what extent European strategies generally reflect the interests of all member states and how closely their national strategic guidelines align with the strategic visions of the U.S. and NATO. In this context, Česnakas and Juozaitis have contributed to the study of ESA and the relationship of EU member states toward the politics of the great powers. They pointed out that despite differences in positions between EU member states, the EU's compatibility with the U.S. and NATO “provides more opportunities for strengthening the national security of small states than challenges” (Česnakas & Juozaitis, 2023, p. 217). On the other hand, it is evident that European treaties, policies, agreements, and strategic documents are carefully crafted within a framework that enhances the synergy between European Strategic Autonomy and the transatlantic concept of European Strategic Defence Identity. Essentially, the development of the EU's defence and security capabilities is based on the assumption that Europe must strengthen its capacities while concurrently maintaining and improving NATO's position as the central pillar of European security.

Despite these considerations, the European Security Strategy (ESS) has played a significant role in advancing the development of the EU's security and defence capabilities within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Along with the establishment of the European Defence Agency, the Pooling and Sharing (P&S) concept, FRONTEX, and other initiatives, the ESS also encouraged the further development of the EU's ability to deploy troops to crisis areas. For instance, the EU deployed its first ESDP missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003. The mission was called “Operation Artemis” and aimed to support the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in stabilizing the situation in the Ituri region (Homan, 2007). At the same time, the EU deployed the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2003, focusing on

policy development and restructuring. To further support war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU deployed an additional mission (EUFOR, Althea) in 2004 to ensure a secure environment by supporting security sector reform and capacity building (Maczynska, 2014). In addition, the EU has conducted various other missions, including EU NAVFOR Atalanta (Somalia, 2008-present), a naval operation designed to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia by safeguarding vulnerable shipping routes and providing escorts for humanitarian aid vessels. These missions exemplify the EU's commitment to crisis management, conflict prevention, and security sector reform. Beyond these examples, the EU has deployed missions in regions such as Georgia, Niger, Mali, Kosovo, and the Sahel, underscoring its dedication to addressing global challenges and enhancing its role in international security (EEAS, January 2023).

Considering the definition of European Strategic Autonomy,⁵ it becomes apparent that the European Security Strategy has contributed significantly to the evolution of the previously vague concept of ESA. This contribution is exemplified by the EU's growing capacity to deploy its forces in crisis-affected regions, marking a significant step in enhancing its role as a global security actor.

⁵ “the ability to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible” (The Council, 2016, p. 2)

12. The Significance of the Non-ratified Constitutional Treaty and the Trajectory to the Lisbon Treaty

The next significant step in the advancement of the European Union's defence and security capabilities was marked by the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007. This treaty took effect on 1 December 2009, bringing significant changes to the EU in various aspects, including institutional arrangements, decision-making processes, and policies. However, this pivotal moment in the EU's history was preceded by a series of intricate developments and historical events that shaped the trajectory of European integration.

The roots of the Treaty of Lisbon can be traced back to the early 2000s when the European Council issued the Laeken Declaration in 2001, initiating a constitutional project for the future of the European Union (Laeken Declaration, 2001). Subsequently, in 2002 and 2003, the European Convention undertook the task of drafting the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, commonly known as the Constitutional Treaty (The European Convention, 2003). This treaty aimed to streamline and reform the EU's institutional framework, enhance its democratic legitimacy, and clarify its policies and competencies. In other words, the Constitutional Treaty was intended to replace existing EU treaties and create a more coherent and transparent framework for the EU. However, its ratification faced significant challenges, particularly in the form of two referenda held in May and June of 2005, which yielded unfavourable outcomes. Specifically, the French referendum on the Constitutional Treaty resulted in a decisive rejection of the treaty. Namely, the French voters rejected the treaty with a vote of 54.67% against it, compared to 45.33% in favour, reflecting a substantial margin of opposition, all within the context of a high voter turnout of 67.62% (IFES, 2005). In the Dutch consultative referendum held in June 2005, 61.54% of voters voted against the Constitutional Treaty, and 38.46% voted for it, for a turnout of 63.30%. This historic vote was the first national referendum in the Netherlands over two centuries, holding a non-binding status for the government. This implied that, despite the electorate's rejection of the Constitution, there remained a theoretical possibility of its ratification by the States-General. Nevertheless, the government publicly committed to respecting a resounding outcome, contingent upon a voter turnout surpassing the threshold of 30% (Nijeboer, 2005). Due to the rejections in France and the Netherlands, the Constitutional Treaty was effectively abandoned. The reasons behind opposition to the Constitutional Treaty differed across countries, but the common concerns included issues of national sovereignty, fears of losing control over domestic policies, and apprehensions regarding excessive centralization of power within the European Union (Hobolt & Brouard,

2011, p. 311). These concerns were the primary reasons for the rejection of the Treaty in France and the Netherlands.

The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by French voters echoed historical concerns over national sovereignty and the perceived centralization of power within the EEC. These parallels are noteworthy, as both instances of rejection hinged on fears of losing control over domestic policies and the potential encroachment on national sovereignty. Moreover, both of these French cancellations showed that the direction of European politics depends to a large extent on the national interests of the member states. Therefore, the issue of European Strategic Autonomy is conditioned by variety of factors, including the complex interplay of national sovereignty, historical legacy, and the evolving landscape of European politics.

The Constitutional Treaty provided significant impetus for further development of the EU's defence and security capabilities. Specifically, the Constitutional Treaty aimed to introduce substantial institutional changes within the EU concerning security and defence matters. Its ratification was supposed to officially establish the position of President of the European Council and extend the powers of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, often colloquially referred to as the Union's Foreign Minister (The European Convention, 2003, p. 16). In this context, Article 27 provided for the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs to hold the position of one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission. This new role also included expanded foreign policy duties, such as presiding over the Foreign Affairs Council and representing the EU in international forums. Although these new competencies were not realized due to the non-ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, they were later formalized by the Lisbon Treaty, which marked a crucial step toward a more cohesive and coordinated approach to the EU's foreign and security policies, thereby contributing to an elevated level of consistency in its international engagement.

Another integral component of the Constitutional Treaty was the reinforcement of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and its transformation into the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In this sense, the CSDP aimed to bolster the EU's capacity to effectively manage and respond to a spectrum of international crises, encompassing conflict prevention and peacekeeping operations (The European Convention, 2003, pp. 33-35). By emphasizing the significance of a unified CSDP, the Treaty laid the groundwork for a more consolidated and coherent approach to global security challenges. The Treaty also featured a mutual defence clause similar to NATO's Article 5. This provision stipulated that an armed

attack against one or more member states of the EU would be considered an attack against the entirety of the Union, thus mandating collective assistance and support from all member states in the event of such aggression (The European Convention, Article III-214, 2003, p. 164). The inclusion of this clause represented a significant development in European defence policy, solidifying the principle of mutual defence among EU member states.

At the same time, the Treaty underline the importance of close cooperation between the participating EU member states and NATO concerning mutual defence. The specific arrangements for participation, operation, and decision-making are detailed in Article 40. The EU's policy, as outlined in this Article, should not undermine the distinct security and defence policies of certain Member States or their obligations within NATO's framework, ensuring compatibility with the common security and defence policy established within NATO. With the inclusion of Article 40, the EU reaffirmed its commitment to NATO, emphasizing the importance of working together to ensure the security and defence of its member states. This collaborative approach should strengthen the overall security landscape in Europe and contribute to the broader goal of peace and stability on the continent. However, the non-ratification of the Treaty by France and the Netherlands indicated that the path to further European integration in the field of defence and security was not without its challenges. The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by these two member states underscored the complex interplay of national interests, historical legacies, and concerns about sovereignty within the European Union.

In response to the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty, the European Council initiated a two-year "period of reflection" to reevaluate the course of European integration. Finally, the path to the Treaty of Lisbon was paved by the Berlin declaration of March 2007, which set the stage for the European Council meeting held from June 21 to 22, 2007 (European Commission, 2013; The Council, 2007). During this crucial gathering, under the German and then Portuguese presidency, the European Council adopted a detailed mandate for an ensuing Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). The IGC, convened to address the evolving needs and challenges of the European Union, concluded its work in October 2007 (e.g., Duff, 2007, pp. 333-337). The Treaty of Lisbon, embodying the outcomes of this intricate process, was formally signed at the European Council meeting in Lisbon on December 13, 2007, and subsequently ratified by all EU Member States, heralding a new era in the Union's journey toward enhanced defence and security capabilities.

13. The Treaty of Lisbon and its Significance for the Development of the EU's Security and Defence Capabilities

13. 1. Brief Overview of the Treaty of Lisbon

In the annals of European Union (EU) history, the year 2009 holds particular significance, denoting a transformative juncture marked by the ratification and implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon. Initially referred to as the Reform Treaty, this international agreement introduced amendments to the two foundational treaties that constitute the EU's constitutional framework: the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

In contrast to the Constitutional Treaty, the Treaty of Lisbon does not explicitly incorporate an article that formally establishes the supremacy of Union law over national legislation (The European Convention, 2003, Article 10, p. 10). Instead, it contains Declaration No. 17, which reaffirms this principle. In particular, the Declaration concerning primacy asserts that the Treaties and Union legislation derived from the Treaties hold superiority over the laws of the Member States, as established by the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU (Declaration concerning primacy TEU)

Another significant aspect of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) is its comprehensive clarification of the powers of the EU. Namely, the TFEU introduces a classification of competencies into three distinct types:

1. Exclusive competence: Under exclusive competence, only the EU has the power to legislate, while the Member States are only responsible for implementation.
2. Shared competence: This category allows Member States to legislate and adopt legally binding measures if the EU has not exercised this authority.
3. Supporting competence: In situations involving supporting competencies, the EU can take action to support or complement Member States' policies. Significantly, the Treaty of Lisbon also allows for the return of Union competencies to Member States during a Treaty revision process (Article 3 to 6 TFEU)

In addition to classified competencies, the Treaty of Lisbon instigated significant changes in power dynamics within the EU. Among the various EU institutions, the European Parliament and the Council emerged as the primary beneficiaries of the treaty, constituting the major decision-making bodies of the EU (Article 14 and 16 TEU). For instance, the Parliament has

acquired enhanced powers, particularly in the areas of legislation, appointments, and budgetary matters. This newfound authority has enabled it to exert influence over pivotal decisions, including its ability to veto international agreements, such as the SWIFT data-sharing deal with the United States (European Parliament, 2010).

Concurrently, the European Council underwent a transformation, with its new full-time and longer-term President assuming a more prominent leadership role (Article 15 TEU). This shift in power from the traditional driver of integration, the European Commission, to the European Council led to increasing complexities, overlaps, and potential rivalries between the Commission and European Council presidents. Both presidents began attending international summit meetings, creating a grey area in their responsibilities. For instance, the 2011 EU-U.S. Summit illustrates the overlap and complexity that arose from the Lisbon Treaty. Namely, this summit was attended by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, representing the European Union. In addition, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, also attended the summit (European Council, 2011). However, their roles and the division of responsibilities were not clearly defined at the time. This caused uncertainty and raised questions regarding who had the power to represent and negotiate on behalf of the EU (Middelaar, 2019, p. 24). The situation highlighted the challenges arising from the dual presidency and the need for greater clarity in the roles of the Commission and European Council presidents in representing the EU at international events. Ultimately, it emphasized the complexity and potential rivalries that could arise from the overlapping competencies introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon.

On the other hand, Middelaar points out that the Treaty of Lisbon brought more continuity than change to the European Commission's executive role (*Ibid.*, pp. 25-26). For instance, he notes that Barroso and Van Rompuy had established a strong working relationship over time, recognizing the necessity of mutual support between the Commission and the European Council. This mutual support is evident in the Commission's need for backing from the European Council for its policy initiatives. On the other hand, the European Council relies on the expertise and procedural legitimacy of the Commission. This shift in dynamics, marked by the European Council's more prominent role, can be attributed to the EU's imperative to effectively engage in event-driven politics, necessitating both technical input and the ability to garner public support for occasionally contentious measures. Middelaar contends that this shift should be seen as a structural transformation rather than a cyclical one (*Ibid.*, p. 26).

The next significant milestone for the European integration process is that the Treaty of Lisbon grants the EU complete legal personality, enabling it to enter into international treaties within its designated powers and establish various forms of cooperation with international organizations (Article 47 TEU and Article 220 TFEU). In line with the new powers, as well as with its global and regional aspirations, the EU participates in the work of various international organizations and fora, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), NATO, the United Nations (UN) and other international and regional organizations and global processes such as G7 and G20 (European Parliament Resolution 2010/2298 (INI), 2011, p. 68). Considering that the global world order is based on the UN Charter, it is essential to note that the EU cannot become a full member of the UN. Instead, it has established a presence through permanent observer status, granted in 1974 (UNGA, 1974, A/RES/3208 (XXIX)). Accordingly, the EU holds observer status at the UN Economic and Social Council and participates in various UN bodies and commissions. Also, the EU gained enhanced observer status in 2011, although becoming a full UN member remains unlikely due to sovereignty-related concerns and the difficulties in achieving this status (UNGA, 2011, A/RES/65/276; Wouters et al., 2021, p. 151). In the UN Security Council, the EU was represented by France and the United Kingdom at the time of the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon. The representation of the EU's positions and interests is regulated by Article 34 TEU, which provides that Member States that are also members of the UN Security Council shall consult and keep the other Member States and the High Representative fully informed. In cases where the EU has adopted a position on a subject that is on the agenda of the UN Security Council, those Member States shall request that the High Representative be invited to present the Union's position (Article 34 TEU). However, BREXIT significantly reduced the influence of the EU within the UN Security Council, leaving France as the only permanent representative that comes from the EU in addition to the non-permanent representatives who serve two-year terms (General Assembly of the UN, 2022, Rule 142, p. 39).

Furthermore, the Treaty of Lisbon introduces a formal procedure for Member States wishing to initiate withdrawal from the European Union, as outlined in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. In particular, this procedure is designed to align with the constitutional requirements of the withdrawing Member States (Article 50 TEU). The significance of this procedure became evident when the United Kingdom invoked Article 50 on 29 March 2017, officially triggering the process that led to its withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020

(Alwahaibi, 2019, p. 355). Concerning the EU's security and defence capacity, the UK's departure from the EU significantly reduced European military capabilities, including its nuclear deterrent. This had wide-ranging implications for the EU's overall military strength, affecting EU defence initiatives, the European Defence Industry, PESCO, EU Battle Groups, and Security Policy and Decision-Making. According to Oleksiejuk, BREXIT's impact on the EU's security and defence capabilities was especially evident through the UK's absence from EU-organized peacekeeping and monitoring missions and the loss of the UK's contributions to the CSDP budget. (Oleksiejuk, 2020, p. 2). On the other hand, BREXIT also created opportunities for deeper defence cooperation and the advancement of EU defence initiatives among the remaining member states (Kirchmayr, 2022, p. 3). Therefore, the long-term impact on the EU's security and defence capabilities will depend on the extent to which member states can work together to fill the gap left by the UK's departure and pursue a more integrated approach to defence.

In summary, the Treaty of Lisbon had significant implications for the governance and decision-making structures of the EU. Although not exhaustively detailed, this text deals with some of the most important provisions of the Treaty. Concerning the provided analysis and its correlation to security and defence matters, it is possible to conclude that the Treaty of Lisbon has played a pivotal role in enhancing European Strategic Autonomy in the realm of security and defence by streamlining decision-making, clarifying powers, granting legal personality, and facilitating cooperation among EU member states. However, due to the scope and complexity of the TEU and the TFEU and the fact that not all its aspects can be covered in one chapter, the following sections focus primarily on its implications for EU security and defence.

13. 2. The Treaty of Lisbon and its Impact on the Development of the EU's Security and Defence Capabilities

The Treaty of Lisbon introduced several key provisions into the Treaty on European Union that fundamentally reshaped the EU's approach to security and defence, signifying a paradigmatic shift in the organization's ambitions and capabilities in this domain. Building primarily upon the unratified Constitutional Treaty, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) along with a mutual defence clause, enhanced the role of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, initiated the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), and laid the groundwork for the development of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

13. 2. 1. The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The introduction of the CSDP constitutes a crucial aspect of the Treaty's influence on the EU's approach to security and defence. Its roots can be traced back to the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which was created after the end of the Cold War to address the changing security landscape and provide the EU with effective means to tackle security challenges and crises. The ESDP laid the foundations for a more coordinated approach to security and defence within the EU and strengthened the military capabilities of the Member States. Its transformation into the CSDP was expected to occur with the adoption and ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. However, French and Dutch voters decided against ratifying the Constitutional Treaty in the referendums held, thereby delaying the expected transformation.⁶ Despite being rejected, the Constitutional Treaty contained the provisions that set the stage for the development of the CSDP (The European Convention, 2003, Article 40, pp. 33-35). Subsequently, the Treaty of Lisbon incorporated most of these provisions, making the CSDP the cornerstone of the EU's security and defence framework. As a result, the CSDP has become an essential element of the EU's approach to dealing with security challenges within and beyond its borders, demonstrating the EU's commitment to improving its ability to respond to security crises.

In terms of content structure, the CSDP comprises five articles, each dealing with specific aspects that determine the implementation and functions of the policy. For instance, Article

⁶ For more, see Chapter: The Significance of the Non-ratified Constitutional Treaty and the Trajectory to the Lisbon Treaty

42(1) highlights the position of CSDP as an integral part of the CFSP and clarifies its objectives. Specifically, the primary aim of the CSDP is to provide the Union with operational capabilities based on both civilian and military means. In a broader context, it outlines the goals focused on peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and strengthening global security, aligning them with the principles of the UN Charter (Article 42 TEU). Through these objectives, the European Union underscores its commitment to becoming a more influential player on the international stage by providing strategic directions for a comprehensive, integrated, and internationally coordinated approach to security and defence.

In order to achieve the envisioned objectives, the CSDP calls for the progressive development of the EU's collective defence policy. This policy should be designed to respect both the constitutional provisions and the distinct security and defence policies of the Member States, including those participating in NATO. Such a policy should lead to a common defence, and its possible introduction depends on the initiative and unanimous decision of the European Council (Article 42 (2) TEU). To drive this development forward, the CSDP calls on Member States to contribute their civilian and military capabilities to promote cooperation and achieve the objectives of the CSDP. This contribution includes the improvement of the military capacities of the Member States with the support of the EDA in the development of defence capabilities, research, procurement, and armaments (Article 42 (3) and Article 45 TEU). Furthermore, the CSDP has also provided the framework for establishing PESCO, intending to enhance defence cooperation among Member States that possess advanced military capabilities and have made more binding commitments to each other (Article 42(6) and Article 46 TEU). In achieving these goals, the CSDP underlines the importance of ensuring compatibility between the EU and NATO, thus indirectly acknowledging NATO's role as a fundamental pillar of European security and defence (Article 42 (2) TEU). This commitment to the NATO framework is reaffirmed in Article 42 (7) TEU, which describes the next milestone of the CSDP. In particular, this paragraph introduces a mutual defence clause allowing Member States facing an armed attack to receive assistance from other Member States. The principles for this clause are based on Article 51 of the UN Charter and should be consistent with NATO's commitments.

Finally, the decision-making process relating to the CSDP is entrusted to the Council, which makes unanimous decisions based on proposals from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy or initiatives from Member States. Moreover, the Council

has the authority to delegate the execution of a task to a group of Member States to protect the Union's values and interests (Article 42 (4) TEU).

13. 2. 2. The Significance of Article 42 (7)

Article 42 (7) establishes a mutual defence clause within the CSDP, providing a mechanism for Member States to seek aid and assistance consistent with the principles outlined in Article 51 of the UN Charter and within the framework of NATO commitments. Distinguishing itself from other solidarity commitments and NATO's Article 5, this clause obliges member states to provide aid while preserving the specific character of their security and defence policy (Article 42 (7) TEU).

In this context, the mutual defence clause serves as a safeguard for member states that may not be part of traditional military alliances, such as NATO. For example, countries with a long-standing tradition of neutrality (such as Ireland and Austria) benefit from this clause as they can contribute to collective defence efforts without jeopardizing their neutrality (Cramer & Franke, 2021). This inclusivity strengthens the cohesion of the EU defence framework and makes it more adaptable to the specific circumstances and preferences of individual Member States. In essence, the incorporation of the mutual defence clause represents a substantial empowerment of the EU and its member states, reinforcing their ability to navigate and adapt their defence strategies within the collaborative framework of the Union.

Furthermore, Article 42 (7) not only empowers the EU collectively but also strengthens the strategic autonomy of individual member states. For instance, France formally invoked a mutual defence clause on 17 November 2015, following the Paris terrorist attack on 13 November 2015. In particular, France requested backing and help from its EU partners, especially regarding its military operations against the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. The objective was to encourage other EU member states to join its efforts, either directly through military strikes or indirectly through support such as intelligence sharing and logistics. Additionally, France sought assistance in lightening the load on its military forces, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where it had ongoing commitments in Mali and the Central African Republic. In this context, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian described France's invocation primarily as a political act and emphasized its usefulness in expressing European solidarity and creating a corresponding framework (Emmot & Siebold, 2015).

On the other hand, France's decision to activate Article 42 (7) was influenced by its swift implementation process. Accordingly, High Representative Federica Mogherini highlighted that the activation does not require any formal decision or Council conclusions to be taken (The Council, November 2015, p. 6). At the same time, the decision to invoke an EU treaty provision offered the advantage of a unified response without resorting to NATO's Article 5. The potential involvement of NATO in Syria was seen as a risk that could escalate tensions with Russia and potentially undermine the ongoing Vienna peace talks (Galbert, 2015; Statement of the International Syria Support Group Vienna, 2015). Opting for NATO would have also meant the inclusion of the United States and Turkey, further complicating the decision-making process. By choosing Article 42 (7), France retained control over the process and engaged with other member states through bilateral consultations (Bakker et al., 2016, p. 24)

However, the French activation of Article 42 (7) revealed divergent positions among member states shortly after unanimous approval by EU defence ministers. For instance, the UK had shown openness to expanded military involvement against IS, but domestic politics and uncertainties complicated the situation. Germany awaited more details with caution, considering public opinion and political hesitancy. Spain, facing an upcoming election, ruled out bombing Syria but emphasized peacekeeping commitments. Italy avoided the term "war" and preferred political and diplomatic engagement over a purely military response. Poland was reluctant to send troops to Syria or Iraq but considered contributing to efforts in Mali or the Sahel. Other countries with military capabilities or a history of participation in CSDP or UN operations, such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, were also priorities for engagement by Paris (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2015).

In summary, the differing positions among Member States underscore the complexity of collective decision-making in security and defence matters. The diverse responses, ranging from openness to careful consideration and outright rejection, highlight the challenges in achieving a unified stance on crucial issues. Accordingly, the EU's ability to navigate these differences and foster collaboration will be pivotal in maintaining the cohesion of its defence framework. Regarding the EU-NATO relationships, the decision to invoke either Article 42.7 of the EU or NATO's Article 5 should depend on the nature of the threat. In this sense, NATO is better equipped for traditional military threats due to its extensive resources and quick mobilization capabilities. On the other hand, the EU's Article 42 (7) is more suitable for complex security challenges, allowing for a comprehensive response across different sectors. It is also important to note that these articles are not mutually exclusive; they can be activated

simultaneously, enabling a coordinated EU-NATO response. The EU and NATO can collaborate on various fronts, such as border management, cyber security, strategic communication, and societal resilience, showcasing a holistic approach to collective defence.

14. The Role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

One of the key reforms involves the establishment of a new office, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, which consolidates the roles of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Commissioner for External Relations (Shafiq, 2008, p. 101). Under the newly conferred powers, the High Representative chairs the Foreign Affairs Council, a forum convening all EU foreign ministers, and acts as the Union's representative on the international stage. Besides these duties, he/she also holds the position of the Commission's Vice President with the primary task of ensuring the coherence of the EU's External Action. Specifically, the High Representative is responsible for managing external relations within the Commission and overseeing the coordination of various aspects of the Union's external activities (Article 27 TEU). While executing the prescribed duties, the High Representative is assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS), and this work is also supported by the diplomatic service of the Member States (Article 27 (3) TEU). At the same time, the High Representative exercises authority over approximately 130 EU delegations in third countries and international organizations (General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, 2009, p. 2). The authority of the High Representative and the network of EU diplomatic delegations wield significant influence on a global scale, ensuring that the Union's values and interests are well-represented abroad.

The expanded position of High Representative/Vice-President was formally established on 01 December 2009, coinciding with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. Based on the agreement with the President of the Commission, the European Council appointed Cathrine Ashton as the first High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy under the Treaty of Lisbon (Ibid., p. 2). Her appointment followed a consensus decision that emerged unexpectedly due to the unpopularity of Tony Blair's candidacy for the European Council President (Howorth, 2014, p. 7). Ashton's appointment faced criticism due to concerns about her competence and the challenges of the multifaceted role of the High Representative, as evidenced by reports from the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2009, p. 11). For

instance, Nigel Farage criticized Catherine Ashton's rise in politics, claiming that she had little public experience and had benefited from its connections. He accused her of being part of a post-democratic era and suggested that her appointment was an embarrassment for Britain. According to Farage, Ashton's role in getting the Lisbon Treaty through the House of Lords without allowing a referendum was a significant factor in his criticism (Ibid., p.11). This kind of Farage's policy later significantly influenced British attitudes towards BREXIT.

The work of the High Representative has also come under the scrutiny of the academic community. Reviewing Ashton's work, Khaliq pointed to her position that the role of the High Representative was to ensure the coherence of the EU's foreign policies rather than making the EU speak with one voice (Khaliq, 2012, p. 253). However, Sultanova notes that the complexity of the newly established position led to tensions and a lack of coherence, with Ashton often preferring the opinion of the European Council over the Commission's (Sultanova, 2019, p. 547). This institutional behaviour intensified the competition between the Commission and the High Representative, especially with regard to the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Namely, Ashton faced significant challenges in launching the EEAS, mainly stemming from conflicting visions and political disagreements with the European Parliament, the European Commission, member states, and the media (Howorth, 2014, p. 8). In particular, the European Parliament initially proposed that the EEAS should operate as an agency of the European Commission, with parliamentary oversight of the budget and public hearings for top positions (Brok, 2009; Brok & Verhofstadt, 2010). Ashton responded with a suggestion for the EEAS to function as an independent agency under the supervision of the HR/VP, accountable to the Council, Commission, and member states, organized in a pyramidal structure led by a Secretary General (The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2010). Howorth points out that this dispute led to a protracted battle between the two sides, with MEPs threatening to veto the project unless concessions were made. Ultimately, Ashton secured unanimous support from the Foreign Affairs Council in April 2010. The standoff with the European Parliament was eventually resolved through bilateral discussions, resulting in a compromise in July 2010 (Howorth, 2014, p. 9). This compromise established the EEAS as an autonomous body working closely with the Commission, introduced several hierarchically equal Directors General, and allowed closed-door hearings for top positions, but without a veto (The Council, 2010).

Regarding these developments, Howorth concludes that Ashton's determination and negotiation skills played a significant role in establishing the EEAS within a year and

overcoming challenges from the Commission and Parliament (Howorth, 2014, p. 9). Although faced with criticism early in her tenure, Ashton has played a positive role in the negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo, as well as in the Iran Nuclear Deal, receiving recognition for her diplomatic efforts (e.g., Dempsey, 2014; Ribeiro & Kostas, 2021; Blair, 2013; Dahl, 2014). She participated in NATO and EU summits, delivered speeches at the UNSC, and presided over the Foreign Affairs Council, where she sought consensus on EU positions. As the crown of her work, some member states acknowledged the need to strengthen the High Representative's position, particularly by enabling them to coordinate within the Commission (Sultanova, 2019, p. 549). However, challenges remained, especially with member states increasingly leaning towards their national policies. In this context, Kirchner emphasizes that the EU continually faces the challenge of consensus building among its twenty-seven member states, which requires constant coordination and cooperation (Kirchner, 2011, p. 16). On the other hand, the engagement of the High Representative and the establishment of the EEAS strengthened the EU's ability to work closely with the foreign and defence ministries of the member states and to ensure the necessary coherence in the implementation of the CFSP and the CSDP.

15. The European External Action Service and its role in the implementation of the CFSP and the CSDP

The European External Action Service (EEAS) serves as the diplomatic service of the European Union. Its establishment is based on Article 27 (3) TEU. Despite initial structural differences between the High Representative and the European Parliament, the EEAS was officially founded in July 2010 by a decision of the Council of the European Union (The Council, 2010). Formally launched on January 1, 2011, the EEAS is tasked with implementing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to advance peace, prosperity, security, and the interests of Europeans globally (EEAS, 2021).

However, it is essential to note that the EEAS does not possess operational independence, unlike other EU institutions. For instance, Gatti notes that the EEAS is not explicitly granted any authoritative power in the Treaties. Specifically, he explains that the primary legal reference related to the EEAS is Article 27(3) TEU, which highlights the service's role in assisting the High Representative (Gatti, 2016, p. 148). Accordingly, Gatti concludes that the EEAS, operating as an administrative body, faces two implications. Firstly, it cannot establish legal acts concerning EU policy management and is limited to creating non-binding policy documents. Secondly, it falls under the explicit control of other authorities, primarily the High Representative, as delineated in Article 1(3) of Decision 2010/427 (The Council, 2010, p. 32). Therefore, EEAS staff members are mandated to adhere to the directives issued by the High Representative (Gatti, 2016, p. 148).

The tasks of the new European diplomatic service are defined by *the Council's Decision on establishing the organization and functioning of the EEAS* (The Council, 2010). In particular, the EEAS has several key responsibilities. Firstly, it supports the High Representative in fulfilling various mandates, including conducting the CFSP and the CSDP, ensuring consistency in the EU's external action, presiding over the Foreign Affairs Council, and acting as Vice-President of the Commission. Secondly, it assists the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, and the Commission in their functions related to external relations (Ibid., Article 2, p. 32). Lastly, the EEAS closely collaborates with the diplomatic services of the EU's Member States, the General Secretariat of the Council, and the Commission to ensure the coherence of the Union's external action and other policies. It also

provides support and cooperates with other EU institutions and bodies, especially the European Parliament (Ibid., Article 3, pp. 32-33).

In addition to these tasks, the EEAS is responsible for the operation of EU Delegations and Offices worldwide, as well as for the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) who promote EU policies and interests in crisis areas. According to the Council Decision (2010/427), the former Commission representations abroad were transferred to the responsibility of the EEAS as EU embassies, although the Commission originally wanted to retain control (Rettman, 2009). In line with prescribed mandates, the EU Delegations and Offices have the task of presenting and implementing EU policies, analyzing and reporting on host countries' policies and developments, and conducting negotiations. In the country where the delegation is accredited, the Head of the Delegation is authorized to represent the EU, and the EEAS Executive Secretary-General periodically evaluates both his work and the work of each delegation. These evaluations include financial and administrative audits and may be carried out jointly with the relevant department of the Commission at the request of the Executive Secretary-General of the EEAS (The Council, 2010, Article 5, p. 34).

On the other hand, the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) are engaged in regions and countries affected by conflicts, crises, or challenges to peace and stability. They work closely with local authorities, international organizations, and other relevant actors to facilitate dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation processes. Their efforts contribute to conflict prevention, addressing humanitarian problems, and promoting the rule of law in these fragile areas. In Europe in 2023, the EUSRs were engaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH), Kosovo, the South Caucasus and Georgia, as well as in the negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade (EU Special Representatives, 2023). For instance, the EUSR in BIH plays a vital role in promoting stability, reconciliation, and the country's progress on its path toward European integration. This involves supporting the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, fostering political dialogue, and working on issues related to governance, the rule of law, and socio-economic development (Henda, 2012). Beyond Europe, EUSRs also operate in regions affected by crises and conflicts outside of Europe, including the Sahel, the Gulf region, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East. In these regions, they work to advance the EU's objectives, with a focus on the promotion of peace, security, and cooperation. (EU Special Representatives, 2023).

15. 1. Organizational Structure of the EEAS

Organisationally, the EEAS is divided into eleven large departments covering different areas of the CSFP and the CSDP. For instance, the EEAS has six specific geographical departments that cover Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (EEAS – Organization Chart, 2022). These geographic divisions deal with political affairs and economic and global issues and are not duplicated in the Commission (Mahony, 2010). At the same time, multiple Directorates-General of the European Commission are also engaged in carrying out the EU's foreign policy. For example, Kammel and Rehrl highlight that trade and development policies continue to fall under the purview of the respective Commissioners (Kammel & Rehrl, 2021, p. 66). On the other hand, the establishment of the geographical departments within the EEAS provides a more efficient and region-specific approach to the EU's external relations, enabling it to effectively promote its interests, values, and policies in a global context. Each department is headed by the Managing Director, who is accountable for his work to the Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Affairs or the Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, depending on the department. Under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Affairs is also the Department for Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations. In addition to these departments, the EEAS also includes the Resource Management Department, which is responsible for the budget and human resources, as well as security and corporate services. This department houses the European Diplomatic Academy, which aims to create a European diplomatic corps that shares a common European culture and can promote and safeguard the EU's interests worldwide (European Diplomatic Academy, 2023).

15. 2. Departments responsible for the implementation of the CSDP

The cluster of departments responsible for the implementation of the CSDP operates under the authority of the Deputy Secretary-General for Peace, Security and Defence. This cluster is subdivided into two distinct departments, housing the Managing Directorate for the CSDP and Crisis Response (MD-CSDP-CR) and the Managing Directorate for Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (MD. CPCC). In addition to these directorates, this cluster includes the EU Military Staff Department (EUMS), whose Intelligence and Situation Centre reports directly to the High Representative (EEAS – Organization Chart, 2022). These departments and directorates are instrumental in the EU's ability to effectively plan, manage, and execute

security and defence missions. They contribute to the EU's role as a security provider, helping to address crises, promote peace and stability, and safeguard the EU's interests and values.

15. 3. The Managing Directorate for the CSDP and Crisis Response (MD-CSDP-CR)

The MD-CSDP-CR oversees two directorates: the Directorate for the Integrated Approach to Security and Peace (ISP) and the Directorate for Security and Defence Policy (SECDEFPOL). Under its management also falls the EU Satellite Centre. Supported by the EU Situation Room, a 24/7 division providing situational awareness for EU external actions, the MD-CSDP-CR plays a crucial role in coordinating various aspects of EU initiatives. Specifically, the ISP Directorate is tasked with coordinating the EEAS's contribution to the EU's Integrated Approach, emphasizing security, development, and diplomacy. It ensures coordination throughout the conflict cycle, from early warning to crisis management and peace efforts. The SECDEFPOL Directorate oversees the EEAS's efforts to counter external security threats and supports the EU Global Strategy in areas such as cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and disarmament (Kammel & Rehrl, 2021, p. 71).

The EU Satellite Centre (SatCen) functions as a decentralized agency within the European Union, operating under the oversight of the Council's Political and Security Committee and receiving operational directives from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Its primary mission is to provide critical support for the EU's decision-making processes and actions within the framework of the CFSP, with a particular focus on the CSDP. This support extends to EU crisis management missions and operations and is facilitated through the analysis of pertinent space assets and related data, such as satellite and aerial images, along with the provision of associated services (Raube et al., 2015, p. 86). SatCen's services are utilized by various entities within the EU, including the EEAS, the European Commission, EU member states, EU missions and operations, and other agencies. These services extend to third-party states and international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation (SatCen, 2022, p. 15).

15. 4. The Managing Directorate for Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (MD. CPCC)

The next department within this cluster is the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capabilities Directorate (CPCC), which serves as the Operational Headquarters for the civilian missions under the CSDP. These missions aim to promote stability and strengthen resilience by enhancing the rule of law at both the strategic and operational levels, particularly in fragile environments. The Council of the European Union determines the mandates for these civilian CSDP Missions, and their execution is steered by the strategic leadership of the Civilian Operations Commander and guided by the political direction of the Political and Security Committee and the High Representative (EEAS-CPCC, 2022). Civilian CSDP missions are vital as they support the rule of law, civil administration, and security sector reform in crisis-affected regions (EEAS-Civilian Compact, 2023). Also, these missions are vital in addressing broader security challenges within the EU, especially concerning irregular migration, hybrid threats, terrorism, and radicalization (Ibid.). The EEAS is currently overseeing a total of 13 CSDP civilian missions across three continents. These missions encompass a wide geographical spread, including initiatives such as the EU Advisory Mission in Iraq, the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing, and the Rule of Law Mission of the EU in Kosovo (EULEX), among others (The Council, May 2023).

15. 5. The European Union Military Staff (EUMS) Directorate-General

The department responsible for military affairs, the European Union Military Staff (which acts as the Directorate-General of the EEAS), provides strategic guidance to the High Representative and directs military operations from its operational Military Planning and Conduct Capabilities Centre (MPCC). Reporting to the High Representative and the European Union Military Committee (EUMC),⁷ the EUMS plays a crucial role in tasks such as early warning, situation assessment, and strategic planning. The EUMS comprises several Directorates, dedicated to distinct operational areas or functions within the EU's military framework. The presence of multiple Directorates within the EUMS ensures a comprehensive approach to military operations, covering everything from concept development and intelligence to logistics and external relations. This structure enables the EUMS to effectively

⁷ The EUMC is the highest military body established within the Council, consisting of the member states' Chiefs of Defence (CHODs), regularly represented by their permanent military delegates.

contribute to the EU's comprehensive security and defence strategies, ensuring a coordinated and efficient response to various challenges and crises. In particular, the EEAS is comprised of the eight Directorates, each with specific missions within the European Union's military framework:

1. The Concepts and Capabilities (CON/CAP) Directorate manages concepts, doctrine, and capability planning, including exercises, training, and collaboration with the European Defence Agency.
2. The Intelligence Directorate (INT) concentrates on delivering intelligence for early warning, situation assessment, and supporting the planning and evaluation of operations and exercises.
3. The Operations Directorate plans EU-led military crisis management operations, monitors CSDP operations, and develops the capacity for autonomous operations.
4. The Logistics Directorate serves as a central point for logistics, contributing expertise to logistic planning and providing administrative support.
5. The Communications and Information Systems (CIS) & Cyber Defence Directorate offers strategic and operational planning expertise for CIS and Cyber Defence, supporting policy development for communication, information systems, and Cyber Defence capabilities.
6. The ACOS (To assist the Chief of Staff) Synchronization assists in coordinating internal processes within the EUMS, facilitating support for the EUMC Chairman.
7. The ACOS External Relations is responsible for maintaining the military aspect of external relations, overseeing cooperation with international organizations, strategic partners, and third states.
8. The EU Cell at SHAPE (EUCS) unit prepares for potential EU operations utilizing NATO assets, supporting DSACEUR in the role of an operational commander, and ensuring transparency between NATO and the EU in crisis management (EUMS, 2022).

In summary, the EEAS provides the necessary framework for the European Union to effectively manage its military affairs and enhance its security and defence capabilities. The delineation of its various Directorates exemplifies the diversity of its functions, encompassing crucial roles in military planning, crisis management, and external relations within the European Union. This organizational structure, with its diverse set of missions, highlights the

EUMS's critical contribution to ensuring the EU's preparedness and efficacy in addressing different military and security challenges, both within and beyond its borders.

16. The Role of the EU's Institution in the implementation of the CSDP

16. 1. The European Commission

The European Union's institutions play vital roles in executing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). As already determined, the European External Action Service (EEAS) stands as the principal entity responsible for implementing the CFSP and the CSDP. The EEAS operates under the political leadership of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who also holds the position of Vice-President of the European Commission, often referred to as the HR/VP. This dual role of HR/VP ensures a consistent approach to foreign affairs, security, and external actions within the EU. For example, Ojeda highlights that the Commission, guided by the High Representative in his role as Vice-President, manages the CFSP budget. This budget supports civilian CSDP missions, EU Special Representatives, and initiatives related to non-proliferation and disarmament (Ojeda, 2021, p. 54). Moreover, it emphasizes that the European Commission not only plays a crucial role in implementing the CSDP through budget management and coordination with non-CSDP instruments but also makes a significant contribution to the inter-service process that supports the development and review of CSDP missions within the Council (Ibid., p. 55). In addition, the Commission oversees a range of interconnected external action policies encompassing international trade, humanitarian aid, and increasingly influential internal policies such as security, migration, climate, energy, transport, space, defence, and the internal market. These multifaceted policies possess substantial relevance to the Union's foreign, security, and defence strategies. As a result, the Commission actively engages in various Council bodies, notably the Political and Security Committee (PSC), and contributes to discussions and preparations across different configurations of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), including FAC Defence, FAC Development, and FAC Trade, alongside the EEAS bodies like the Politico-Military Group (PMG), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM). However, it is essential to note that the EEAS operates as a functionally independent body under the leadership of the High Representative, who, together

with the Council and the Commission, ensures consistency across the different areas of EU external action (The Council, 2010, p. 30).

16. 2. The European Parliament

In addition to the close partnership with the Commission, the effective functioning of the EEAS also depends on interaction with the European Parliament. Namely, the European Parliament holds a substantial position in shaping the external activities of the Union. This includes its responsibilities for political oversight, outlined in Article 14(1) TEU, as well as its involvement in matters of legislation and budgeting as stipulated by the Treaties (The Council, 2010, p. 30). At the same time, following Article 36 TEU, the High Representative maintains regular consultations with the European Parliament concerning the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP and the CSDP and ensures that the viewpoints of the European Parliament are thoroughly examined and taken into account. In this ongoing cooperation with the European Parliament, the High Representative is assisted by the EEAS.

Overall, the TEU excludes legislative acts from the CFSP but allows the European Parliament to indirectly influence the EU's external relations and responses to security challenges through its oversight and scrutiny functions (Article 24 TEU). To effectively carry out its responsibilities, the Parliament regularly conducts discussions, hearings, and workshops on a range of issues related to the CSDP. These include both civilian and military CSDP missions, global security crises, international security frameworks, arms control and non-proliferation, counterterrorism, organized crime, strategies for enhancing security and defence effectiveness, and updates on the EU's legal and institutional frameworks in these areas (Legrand, 2023, p. 5).

16. 3. The European Council

The European Council is another institution that plays a crucial role in shaping the EU's foreign and security policy and significantly influences the work of the EEAS. In particular, the European Council “identifies the EU's strategic interests, sets objectives, and provides general directives for the CFSP, including defence-related matters” (Article 26 (1) TEU). Additionally, it appoints the High Representative through a 'qualified majority' vote, whose expected responsibility is to implement the European Council decisions within the CFSP and the CSDP

(EEAS, 2021). Under the same procedure, the European Council may terminate the High Representative's term of office (Article 18 TEU). Amorim & Klein point out that the European Council usually makes decisions through consensus (Amorim & Klein, 2021, p. 45). Although it lacks legislative functions (unless the Treaties specify otherwise), the European Council identifies the strategic interests and objectives of the Union, and its decisions should be implemented following the procedures outlined in the Treaties (Article 22 TEU). In this context, the European Council adopted several conclusions that are particularly relevant to CFSP and CSDP matters, such as:

- The European Security Strategy (2003)
- Declaration on the enhancement of the CSDP (2008)
- Conclusions (EUCO 217/13) related to the improvement of the effectiveness of CSDP, defence capabilities, and the European defence industry (2013)
- Conclusions (EUCO 26/16) on the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy (2016)
- Conclusions (19/17) related to the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation – PESCO, the adoption of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme, and the implementation of the common set of proposals agreed in the framework of the two EU-NATO Joint Declarations, and more (Amorim & Klein, 2021, pp. 45-48).

In summary, the European Council has significantly improved the EU's strategic approach to security and defence and increased the effectiveness, visibility, and impact of CSDP. Moreover, the European Council's Conclusions indicate that the CSDP will continue to evolve in coordination with NATO, respecting their strategic partnership and independent decision-making processes (e.g., European Council, 2013, p. 2). This aligns with previous EU documents and underscores the importance of advancing European Strategic Autonomy within the EU-NATO strategic framework.

16. 4. The Council of the European Union (the Council)

The next EU institution responsible for implementing the CFSP and the CSDP is the Council of the European Union (the Council). The Council comprises ministerial-level representatives from each Member State, authorized to represent their respective governments and cast their votes. Organizationally, the Council consists of 10 different configurations, each covering specific policy domains, ensuring that the Council can effectively address various aspects of EU governance.⁸ The list of configurations was determined by the Council's Decision of December 1, 2009, which adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Council (The Council, December 2009, Annex 1, p. 51). Concerning the relationships between different Council configurations, it is essential to emphasize that there is no hierarchy among them. However, the General Affairs Council assumes a coordinating role and takes responsibility for institutional, administrative, and horizontal affairs (Ibid., Article 2, p. 37). In its work, the Council is also supported by the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC). The GSC is led by the Secretary-General, who is responsible for managing and coordinating the services offered by the GSC to the rotating and permanent presidencies of the Council, its preparatory bodies, and the President of the European Council (Amorim & Klein, 2021, pp. 48-49).

Alongside the European Parliament, the Council is responsible for the Union's legislative and budgetary functions (Article 16 TEU). Specifically, it collaborates with the European Parliament to negotiate and adopt legislative acts, primarily through the ordinary legislative procedure. This procedure is employed in policy areas where the EU holds exclusive competence or shares competence with Member States. In these instances, the Council develops legislation based on proposals put forth by the European Commission (The Council, 2023). In addition to legal acts, the Council negotiates and adopts non-binding documents such as conclusions, resolutions, and declarations. The purpose of these non-binding documents is to convey a political stance on matters within the scope of EU activities. It is important to note that these documents establish political commitments or positions and are not legally binding as they are not outlined in the treaties (The Council, December 2009, Article 8, p. 41).

Concerning the CFSP, the Council is responsible for shaping and making the decisions required for its definition and execution, guided by the general principles and strategic guidelines

⁸ The Council of the EU convenes in the following 10 configurations: 1. General Affairs, 2. Foreign Affairs, 3. Economic and Financial Affairs, 4. Justice and Home Affairs, 5. Employment, Social Policy, Health, and Consumer Affairs, 6. Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research, and Space), 7. Transport, Telecommunications, and Energy, 8. Agriculture and Fisheries, 9. Environment, and 10. Education, Youth, Culture, and Sport.

established by the European Council (Article 26 TEU). Decisions concerning the CFSP and CSDP, including the initiation of missions as outlined in Article 42 TEU, require unanimous approval by the Council. These decisions can originate from a proposal by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy or from a Member State's initiative. Once decisions are made, the Council and the High Representative are responsible for maintaining the Union's unity, consistency, and effectiveness in its actions (Article 26 (2) TEU).

The Council's configuration that oversees the EU's external actions, including foreign policy, defence and security, trade, development cooperation, and humanitarian aid, is the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). The work of the FAC is based on the monthly sessions that assemble the foreign ministers of member states, and ministers responsible for European affairs, defence, development, or trade may also attend, depending on the agenda. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy chairs the FAC, except when it meets in its trade-related capacity (FAC/Trade). In this case, the minister from the presiding member state chairs the meeting (The Council - FAC, December 2022).

Regarding the responsibilities, the FAC elaborates on the EU's external action based on the strategic guidelines of the European Council and ensures the coherence of EU action in this field (Article 16 TEU). In particular, the FAC's main role is to ensure unity, consistency, and effectiveness of the EU's external action, in collaboration with the European Commission and with the support of the HR/VP (The Council - FAC, December 2022). As part of the EU's integrated strategy for addressing external conflicts and crises, the FAC has the authority to initiate CSDP missions and operations, which encompass both civilian and military elements. Accordingly, the FAC is empowered to implement measures required for carrying out the EU's foreign and security policy, which may include the imposition of sanctions (Amorim & Klein, 2021, pp. 48-49). In its work, the FAC is supported by several committees and preparatory bodies, including the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, and the CFSP working parties (Summaries of EU Legislation, 2021).

In summary, the interactive roles played by the EU institutions, their collaborative approach, and their decision-making processes are crucial to the effective execution and evolution of the CFSP and the CSDP. These initiatives are designed to promote unity, consistency, and

effectiveness in European external activities, thereby enhancing the EU's strategic framework for security and defence.

17. The European Defence Agency (EDA) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

The next two components of the Treaty of Lisbon that are crucial for the development of CSDP are the strengthening of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

17. 1. The European Defence Agency (EDA)

The EDA is an intergovernmental agency that assists the Member States and the Council in their collaborative efforts to enhance defence capabilities, particularly in the realm of crisis management. The Agency was founded by the Joint Action of the Council of Ministers on 12 July 2004 and is intended to make a significant contribution to the implementation of the CFSP, with a focus on what was then known as the ESDP (Council Joint Action, 2004, Article 2, p. 4). However, its task is not only to support the existing CSDP but also to adapt to future developments in this field (The Council, 2011, Article 2, p. 17). In line with the Council Joint Action and the TEU, the EDA falls under the authority of the Council of the European Union and is headed by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Council Joint Action, 2004, Article 2, p. 4 and Article 7, p.4; Article 18 TEU). The High Commissioner's role involves overseeing the general organization and operations, ensuring guideline implementation and decision execution, and presiding over ministerial meetings of the Steering Board (The Council, 2011, Article 7, p. 19). The EDA's Steering Board, which serves as the agency's decision-making body, consists of the defence ministers from participating Member States along with a representative from the European Commission (Ibid., Article 8). The Steering Board oversees and approves various significant decisions, including the Agency's annual work program, budget, project approvals, staff appointments, administrative responsibilities, recommendations to the Council or Commission, financial arrangements, and other crucial determinations in alignment with the EDA's mission (ibid., Article 9). In addition to these activities, the Steering Board appoints the Chief Executive and their Deputies, following a suggestion from the Head of the Agency (HR/VP), for an initial term of three years, with the possibility of extending this term for an additional two years, to

work under the authority of the Head of the Agency and following their directives (ibid., Article 10).

Over the years, the EDA has evolved in response to the changing security landscape. The TEU reinforced its role and responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of bolstering European defence capabilities (Article 45 TEU). Accordingly, the EDA facilitates cooperation and collaboration among Member States, acting as a catalyst for defence capability development. It actively promotes defence Research and Technology (R&T), which is pivotal for keeping the European defence industry at the cutting edge. In particular, the EDA focuses primarily on several key aspects:

1. Efficient spending: The EDA manages joint projects to support Member States in the development or procurement of military assets to reduce duplication and costs.
2. Facilitating cooperation: The EDA provides a platform for collaboration between several EU countries to manage different capability development and research projects and ensure compatibility between various systems.
3. Identifying and filling gaps: It helps prioritize capability development, review inventories, and identify gaps in defence needs, working with mechanisms such as PESCO to develop joint projects.
4. Anticipating future defence needs: The EDA promotes innovation by bringing together expertise from different sectors and creating a Centre for European Defence Innovation (HEDI).
5. Joint Training and Readiness: The agency conducts joint training and exercises to enhance force readiness, covering various areas like drone operations and cyber defence. Additionally, it administers programs such as the Helicopter Initiative, which is scheduled to be operational in Portugal until the end of 2024 (EDA in Brief, 2023).

To efficiently fulfill its mission, the EDA encompasses three directorates, each focusing on distinct tasks: the Capabilities, Armaments, and Planning Directorate, the Directorate for Research, Technology & Innovation, and the Industry Synergies & Enablers Directorate.

1. The Capabilities, Armaments and Planning Directorate (CAP) plays a crucial role in promoting the harmonious growth of the European defence landscape by incorporating the EDA's contributions to the Capability Development Plan (CDP), the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence Policy (CARD) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

2. The Directorate for Research, Technology & Innovation (RTI) promotes and supports defence research at the EU level. Through the Overarching Strategic Research Agenda (OSRA) established in collaboration with Member States, the Directorate manages joint research initiatives and examines technical solutions addressing forthcoming operational requirements.
3. The Industry Synergies & Enablers (ISE) Directorate plays a vital role in various activities essential for collaborative defence capability enhancement. Apart from pinpointing Key Strategic Activities (KSA) on the EU level, ISE is accountable for efficiently involving the industry in the Agency's initiatives and aligning with priorities established by Member States.

Overall, the EDA's pivotal contributions have significantly influenced and boosted the development of the CSDP, thereby aligning with the primary objectives laid out in the Treaty of Lisbon (Article 45 TEU). Moreover, the EDA collaborates with the EEAS and its EU Military Staff (EUMS) General Directorate as part of the Secretariat of the PESCO, which aims to structurally integrate the armed forces of 26 out of 27 EU member states since 2017. However, it is important to stress that the EDA website points out that defence remains the sovereign responsibility of the 27 Member States of the European Union. Although the concept of an "EU army" is not on the table, the EU can play a supporting role by facilitating the joint procurement, development, and operation of new military assets by its members. This cooperative approach serves to achieve cost savings, promote closer military cooperation, and strengthen the NATO alliance (EDA in Brief, 2023).

17. 2. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)

PESCO is the TEU-based framework and mechanism designed to strengthen collaboration in defence among EU Member States, which possess the capability and willingness to engage in such endeavours. Its overarching goal is to bolster the EU's role as a global security participant, safeguard EU citizens, and optimize the efficiency of defence expenditures (Article 42 (6) TEU).

In particular, Article 46 TEU outlines the establishment and governance of the Permanent Structured Cooperation for Member States that fulfill specific military capability criteria and commitments. Participating states wishing to engage in this framework must notify the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The Council, within three months of notification, decides on the establishment of this cooperation and compiles a list of participating Member States. If a participating Member State fails to fulfill the required criteria or obligations, the Council has the authority to suspend its participation. A Member State may also withdraw from this structured cooperation by notifying the Council (Article 46 TEU).

However, Article 42(6) TEU indicates that the Permanent Structured Cooperation established under Article 46 should not interfere with the provisions detailed in Article 43 TEU. The distinction between the two articles is crucial for understanding the establishment and functioning of PESCO. Namely, Article 43 delineates the Union's use of military and civilian means for various missions, whereas Article 46 focuses on establishing and governing structured cooperation among Member States possessing specific military capabilities. Under Article 46, the Permanent Structured Cooperation defines explicit criteria and commitments for Member States seeking to engage in more demanding military missions. This framework also outlines the decision-making process for entering or exiting the collaboration.

Despite the emphasis on establishing PESCO in the TEU, its establishment was delayed by almost eight years, which indicates the complexity of relations within the European Union. Nevertheless, the EU member states agreed to sign the *Notification to initiate PESCO to the Council and the High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy* on 13 November 2017. This Notification contains a list of 20 binding joint commitments in the field of defence investment, capability development, and operational readiness (The Council, 2017, pp. 3-5). Marrone points out that this announcement carries immense political weight for several reasons. Namely, he emphasizes that PESCO not only deals with the growing demands of EU

citizens for improved security cooperation but also serves to strengthen the EU amid internal challenges such as Brexit, secessionist movements, and the growing influence of populist parties (Marrone, 2017). On the other hand, this Notification pushed the Council to adopt a decision on the establishment of PESCO and its list of participants on 11 December 2017. To take part in PESCO, 25 member states have committed to participating in the initiative (Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315, Article 2). Concerning the previous initiatives, this framework differs substantially from earlier declarations supporting increased European defence, as it involves binding commitments, compliance assessments for participating member states, and the potential for exclusion in case of non-compliance (Ibid., Article 3).

According to Marrone, the PESCO launch is an anchor and a driving force for defence cooperation, as it provides continuity in the European agenda and is supported by civilian and military institutions. Moreover, he notes that PESCO aligns with other initiatives like the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD) and the European Defence Fund (EDF), providing the framework for a genuine European defence system (Marrone, 2017). Beyond these initiatives, the EU institutions play a pivotal role in PESCO, with the HR/VP overseeing annual PESCO evaluations. The European Defence Agency (EDA) supports the development of capabilities and, together with the EEAS and the Directorate General of the EU Military Staff (EUMS), forms the PESCO Secretariat.

In carrying out its activities, PESCO operates at two primary levels:

1. Council level: This level is responsible for policy-making and decision-making processes and ensures compliance with the commitments of participating member states. Decisions on legal issues are generally taken unanimously, except decisions on suspension of membership or new accessions, which require a qualified majority and are reserved exclusively for PESCO members.
2. Project level: The effectiveness of PESCO is assessed based on the projects it initiates. Each project is led by a consortium of participating member states under the supervision of the Council. The governance rules for these projects were established by a Council Decision of 25 June 2018, which describes the structure for their implementation (EEAS, November 2021, p. 2).

Regarding the projects, PESCO encompasses multiple defence projects involving collaboration among member states across domains like training, land formations, maritime endeavours, air systems, cyber operations, joint enablers, and space initiatives. These projects focus on

enhancing defence capabilities and operational functions. For instance, training initiatives aim to standardize procedures and provide specialized training, while land and maritime projects focus on developing military assets and advanced capabilities. Cyber, command systems, joint projects, and space endeavours further fortify defence infrastructure and operational capabilities. In summary, PESCO projects reflect a collective effort among EU member states to strengthen defence capabilities across various domains (PESCO's Projects Overview, 2018).

Overall, the effectiveness of PESCO hinges on the sustained political commitment and support of EU Member States. Thus, it is necessary to maintain cooperation and foster consensus among Member States. This approach is vital for ensuring PESCO's effectiveness and achieving substantial results regarding capabilities, operations, and strategic direction. In this context, the Council Decision highlights the importance of creating synergies between European defence and the Atlantic Alliance. Within this framework, EU Member States participating in PESCO should collaborate with NATO by harmonizing their standards, criteria, and technical aspects, especially concerning the EU Battlegroup (EU BG) force package. This cooperation should ensure that EU and NATO forces can seamlessly and efficiently collaborate when the situation demands PESCO (Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315, Annex 1.).

18. The EU Global Strategy - "Shared Vision, Shared Action: A Stronger Europe"

This chapter aims to explain the role of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in promoting the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) through principled pragmatism. It also seeks to highlight the strategic directions that the EUGS has provided for the development of the Strategic Compass.

18. 1. Principled Pragmatism as the cornerstone of the EUGS

The EU Global Strategy, developed to address the complex challenges and opportunities facing the European Union on the global stage, envisioned the concept of principled pragmatism as the paramount guiding principle for the EU's external actions (The Council, 2016, p. 16). In particular, principled pragmatism is an approach that aims to achieve practical goals while adhering to core values and principles (Rieker & Riddervold, 2022, p. 460). On the other hand, principled pragmatism differs fundamentally from realism, which serves as the theoretical foundation of this master's thesis. Namely, realism is a perspective that emphasizes the importance of power, self-interest, and the anarchic structure of the international system in shaping the behaviour of states (Waltz, 1979; Milner, 1991, pp. 67-85). Given that the EUGS is based on principled pragmatism and the Strategic Compass is more driven by realism, their correlation could explain the existing limitations and promoting factors that both strategies generate and could produce. Although the EUGS has initiated the development of several tools and instruments to strengthen EU security and defence, the findings indicate that both the EUGS and the Strategy Compass suffer from a lack of understanding of the historical perspectives of international relations. Additionally, they exhibit a one-sided *realpolitik* approach that fails to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the complex security challenges facing Europe and the world today.

The EUGS is a foreign and security policy strategy of the EU adopted under the mandate of Federica Mogherini as the HV/VP in 2016. This strategy provides an operational framework for the EU's external action, focusing on promoting European interests and values worldwide and ensuring the security of its citizens and territories. In particular, the EUGS calls for the EU to take on a more active role in the world and to work to prevent and resolve conflicts, promote sustainable development, and address the root causes of instability and insecurity in its neighbourhood and around the globe (The Council, 2016, p. 14). In order to clarify the EU's position and its role in the world, the EUGS introduced principled pragmatism to establish a

balance between the fundamental principles of the EU (such as respect for human rights, the rule of law, and democracy) and the EU's foreign affairs. In this regard, the EUGS highlights that the EU's external actions will be driven by clear principles, balancing a realistic evaluation of the present strategic landscape with an idealistic aim to promote a better world (Ibid., p. 8). In line with these aspirations, Biscop describes principled pragmatism as a middle way between idealism and realism that seeks to establish a unique *realpolitik* approach based on European values (Biscop, 2018, p. 32). Authors of the Common Market Law Review further clarify this approach and note that the EUGS represents an attempt to “translate the abstract language of European treaties into pragmatism” (Ackermann et al., 2016, p. 1202). Namely, they point out that the EUGS aims to set specific policy priorities based on the general foreign policy objectives contained in Article 21 TEU and to formulate how the provisions of Article 3 (5) TEU (which states that the EU's external action should uphold and promote the Union's values and interests while ensuring the protection of its citizens) could be effectively implemented in practice (Ackermann et al., 2016, p. 1202). In this context, Mihalache notes that the expected harmonization should have been achieved by introducing a dose of political realism into the EU's foreign policy while retaining and promoting European values and principles. On the other hand, he points out that this approach does not always provide clear indications of how EU values can be prioritized over a pragmatic *realpolitik* analysis of a particular situation (Mihalache, 2016, p. 3). To overcome this potential gap, Biscop points out that principled pragmatism provides a “more realistic approach” because the EUGS established the EU's external action priorities based on initially defined and classified vital interests previously aligned with EU principles and values (Biscop, 2018, p. 32).

These considerations arise from the EUGS's identification of four key areas of the EU's vital interests: ensuring peace and security for European citizens and territories, enhancing the prosperity of its people, bolstering the resilience of its democracies, and supporting a rules-based global order grounded in multilateralism and the principles of the UN Charter (The Council, 2016, p. 8). Although these interests and principles are more/less already enshrined in the TEU, the EUGS classification of vital interests additionally fortified and specified the main priorities of the EU's future external action. Specifically addressing internal and external security challenges and taking into account defined vital interests, the EUGS outlines five main priorities of the EU's foreign policy: 1) Strengthening the EU as a security community, 2) Fostering the resilience of states and societies, 3) An integrated approach with conflicts and crises, 4) Cooperation and support with regional orders and 5) Support for global governance

for the 21st century (Ibid., pp. 9-10). Following the defined priorities, the EUGS stresses the need for a strong and united EU in addressing global challenges such as migration, terrorism, and climate change and calls on the EU to play a more active role in the world. It also emphasizes the importance of the EU's strategic autonomy, which basically means that the EU should strengthen its ability to act independently and effectively in pursuit of its goals while working in partnership with other actors where necessary (Ibid., p. 4). In terms of strengthening European strategic autonomy, the EUGS further boosted the development of different tools and instruments such as the PESCO, the CARD, the European Peace Facility, and the European Defence Fund, which further strengthened coherence among member states and enabled the financing of operational actions under the CFSP and the CSDP.

Regarding strategic partnerships, the EUGS recognizes the importance of NATO for the defence and security of Europe and emphasizes the need to deepen cooperation between the EU and NATO. Moreover, it points out that the EU's transatlantic partnership through NATO and with the United States and Canada will help to strengthen resilience, address conflicts, and contribute to effective global governance. At the same time, the EUGS seeks to balance the importance of cooperation with NATO with the need to enhance the EU's own defence capabilities and to strengthen its strategic autonomy. In addition to the partnership with NATO, the EUGS defines the EU's relations with countries around the world and recognizes that global challenges such as climate change, migration, terrorism, and cyber threats require coordinated international response, and that the EU must work with other countries and regions to address these issues. This cooperation includes strengthening partnerships with regional organizations, such as the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and deepening engagement with countries in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East (The Council, 2016, p. 10).

18. 2. Harmonizing Values and Interests

This chapter explores the challenges of aligning the EU's values and interests with those of other nations, revealing tensions that affect the effectiveness of the EUGS in shaping EU external actions. Given that the EUGS is based primarily on principled pragmatism that aims to introduce a dose of realism into EU foreign policy, it was to be expected that the planned cooperation with other countries would respect the historical perspective of international relations and differences in priorities, interests, and values. However, the concept of principled pragmatism is in sharp contrast with realism, and reality on the ground has shown that the EU's shared values and defined interests and priorities often do not coincide with the values and interests of other countries. Namely, there are cases where the EU's values and policies clash with those of other countries. For instance, the EU's values promoted in *the European Convention on Human Rights* and the *EU Gender Equality Strategy* are in constant collision with *the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (See: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 1990; European Court of Human Rights, 1950; European Commission, 2020). Although the EU's relations with Islamic countries are challenging, the EU has a policy of cooperation with countries around the world, even if they have different views or practices regarding human rights (EEAS, 2020). This cooperation policy is based on the belief that engagement and dialogue are more effective than isolation or confrontation in promoting human rights and democratic values. However, the EU also acknowledges that there may be situations where its values and principles are in direct conflict with those of other countries or organizations. In these cases, the EU will seek to uphold its values while also engaging in constructive dialogue to find common ground and resolve differences (EEAS-MENA, 2021; Council of Europe, 2008).⁹

In addition to differences in values, the EU's interests and priorities often do not coincide with those of other countries, leading to various challenges and reducing the effectiveness of the CFSP and the CSDP. These differences can arise due to various factors such as different values, political priorities, economic considerations, and security concerns. One of the recent examples refers to the relations of countries that have not imposed sanctions on Russia and thus have not

⁹ For instance: The EU has been present in the Middle East and North Africa since 1979 and has established a growing number of delegations in the region. The EU's approach to the countries of North Africa and the Middle East aims to promote political and economic reforms in the context of the individual countries (European Neighbourhood Policy). It also emphasises regional cooperation between the countries in the region and with the EU itself (Union for the Mediterranean). Through its active involvement in the Middle East peace process, the EU has committed itself to supporting initiatives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whereby it plays a key role as a member of the Middle East Quartet alongside the U.S., Russia, and the United Nations.

supported the EU's efforts in its vision to resolve the war in Ukraine (Bedford, 2022; Funakoshi et al., 2022). In this context, the example of India's response to the conflict in Ukraine and its relations with Russia demonstrates that some countries have completely different interests and priorities than those promoted by the EU. Clarifying his government's official position, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that Russia is a stable and reliable partner and that imposing sanctions on Russia is not in his country's interest (Patel & Das, 2022). He also pointed out that this is not a time of war, and that dialogue and diplomacy are the answer to this conflict (The Hindu News, January 2023). This view is quite the opposite of the current EU and U.S. policy of sanctioning Russia and arming Ukraine but is consistent with the EUGS's vision to promote peace, security, and stabilization (The Council, 2016, pp. 29-32). On the other hand, the current EU leadership has assessed that peace negotiations with Putin are not a reliable option and that weaponization of Ukraine will make Ukrainian victory possible (Von der Layen, 2022; EUMAM Ukraine, 2022). That peace negotiations were not and are not on the West's agenda is directly acknowledged by former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who said the U.S. and its closest Western allies "blocked" his attempts to negotiate a peace agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. In an interview given to Israeli journalist Hanoach Daumn on 4 February 2023, Bennet said that he almost reached a truce between the two sides on 7 March 2022, but the U.S., France, Germany, and the United Kingdom rejected this proposal (The Hill, 2023; Crowley, 2023; Sharma, 2023). Shortly after that interview, reacting to Elon Musk's comments, Bennett clarified his position on Twitter, stating he was unsure if an agreement would have been reached and it was uncertain if a peace deal was desirable (Bennett, 2023). However, it is worth noting that political leaders may have their own motivations and intentions when making public statements, and it is important to consider these factors when evaluating the accuracy and relevance of their statements. In order to confirm the credibility of Bennett's statements, it is necessary to conduct further research and analysis. Although these examples are relatively new, their causal relationship with the strategic priorities defined in the EUGS indicates the complexity of harmonizing values and interests between the EU and other states.

Moreover, the harmonization of values and interests within the EU also represents an open structural problem. The spectrum of internal disharmony in the EU is broad, and among numerous issues, it is possible to single out the problems of human rights violations in Hungary and Poland (Amnesty International – Hungary, 2022; Amnesty International – Poland, 2022); non-recognition of Kosovo's independence by Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus

(Turp-Balasz, 2021); or the inconsistency of political, economic, energy, and security goals between the member states and the EU. In addition, given that the EUGS is not a formally binding document, its effectiveness depends on the willingness of EU member states to support and implement its goals and recommendations. Considering that principled pragmatism aims to harmonize normative and practical approaches, this informality leaves EU member states room for arbitrariness in the implementation of the EUGS. In this sense, the EUGS's goal of improving the CFSP and the CSDP through principled pragmatism showed that the lack of formality and overly broad goals did not provide the right strategic directions for the EU and its member states. This has been particularly evident in the relationship between the EU and its member states with Russia. Namely, the EUGS concept of interdependence did not provide clear guidelines to EU member states for ensuring sustainable political, economic, energy, and security cooperation with Russia (The Council, 2016, p. 33).

In conclusion, the harmonization of values and interests between the EU and other nations presents multifaceted challenges, as evidenced by the clashes between European values and those of other countries, as well as the divergent interests impacting the effectiveness of the CFSP and the CSDP. Despite the EU's commitment to principled pragmatism and cooperation, navigating these complexities requires a nuanced approach that acknowledges the tensions between realism and idealism in international relations. Accordingly, addressing these challenges will necessitate a concerted effort to balance EU values with pragmatic considerations, while fostering dialogue and cooperation to find common ground and advance shared goals in an increasingly interconnected world.

18. 3. The Imperative of Energy Diversification

The imperative of energy diversification within the European Union (EU) presents a pressing challenge exacerbated by continued reliance on Russian energy sources, despite recommendations for diversification outlined in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS). As the conflict in Ukraine underscores the vulnerability of the EU's energy supply, it becomes evident that navigating the interplay between principles and practicalities in international relations demands a nuanced understanding of historical precedents, such as the energy crisis of 1973, and strategic approaches like Ostpolitik, to inform effective policy responses.

Considering the established interdependence between the EU and Russia and the imperative for diversification outlined in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) (The Council, 2016, pp. 22-33), it is evident that EU member states have ignored the EUGS recommendation on energy diversification. This disregard has resulted in continued dependence on Russian energy sources, leaving the EU vulnerable to energy supply disruptions (Bourgeot, March 2022; EPRS, July 2021). On the other hand, diversifying the EU's energy sources and reducing its dependence on Russia would not only provide a more secure energy supply but also enhance the EU's bargaining power and ability to respond to crises. However, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has had significant economic and political consequences for the EU and Russia and has demonstrated that interdependence requires a more realistic approach and not insufficiently elaborated principled pragmatism.

In this regard, the masterminds of the EUGS inevitably had to consider Waltz's reflections on international relations and his view that a high degree of interdependence among states can lead to mutual vulnerability (Waltz, 1979, p. 142). Given that the current energy crisis is undermining the foundations of well-being in the European Union, it is necessary to recall Waltz's observations about previous energy crises. To be specific, analysing the events of 1973 (the Yom Kippur War - President Nixon's false assurances to Saudi Arabia that he would not provide military aid to Israel - the oil embargo of October 1973), Waltz noted that the behaviour of nations in the energy crisis that followed the military one revealed the low political relevance of interdependence (ibid., pp. 152-154). To clarify, the 1973 energy crisis was triggered by the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to cut production and raise prices in response to Western support for Israel during the October war (see: U.S. Office of Historian, 1969/76; Alhajji & Huettner, 2000). The resulting oil embargo and price increase had far-reaching economic and political consequences (especially for countries heavily

dependent on oil imports) that globally led to a slowdown in economic growth and a rise in inflation (Stingelin, 1975). This crisis highlighted the strategic importance of energy resources in international relations and prompted countries to assess their energy policies and strategies. Accordingly, Waltz concluded that political interventions involving sharp and sudden changes in prices and supply create problems that are difficult to manage economically and politically (Waltz, 1979, pp. 152-154). He also pointed out that the crisis has revealed the close link between a nation's economic and military power and its political influence, with more powerful nations better able to shape their policies according to their interests. Although more focused on the U.S. policy approach, Waltz noted that Western European countries, which were heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil, were forced to focus on economic needs and the impact of their decisions on their access to supplies and markets, as they had less influence over oil-producing countries (Ibid.). With this observation, Waltz highlighted the challenges faced by states that are not as powerful as others in the international system and must constantly balance their decisions with their well-being and survival. The energy crisis of 1973 also played a role in the rapprochement between West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany) and the Soviet Union. The West German government, led by Chancellor Willy Brandt, recognized the importance of securing stable energy supplies for the country's economic development and sought to diversify Germany's energy sources by engaging with the Soviet Union. In 1970, Chancellor Brandt launched his Ostpolitik, a policy aimed at improving relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries (Schoenborn, 2020). As part of this policy, Brandt pursued a series of agreements with the Soviet Union, including the 1970 Treaty of Moscow that recognized post-World War II borders in Europe and the 1972 Treaty of Warsaw that established diplomatic relations between West Germany and Poland (Gray, 2016). In 1973, Chancellor Brandt signed the "Agreement on the development of economic, industrial, technological, and cultural cooperation" with the Soviet Union, which included the supply of Soviet oil and gas to West Germany (Békés, 2018, p. 180; Kapelinskii & Sling, 1975, pp. 24-42). This agreement was significant because it represented a major step towards energy diversification for West Germany, which had been heavily dependent on Middle Eastern oil (Cicco, 1975, pp. 303-325; A SIPRI Monograph, 1975, p. 75). After Brandt's controversial resignation as chancellor,¹⁰ Helmut Schmidt continued to partially promote

¹⁰ The rapprochement between West Germany and the Soviet Union was accompanied by a spy scandal in which it was revealed that Brandt's closest associate and confidant, Günter Guillaume, was a spy for the East German Stasi, which caused Willy Brandt to resign as chancellor on May 6, 1974. However, his resignation was not directly related to the spy accusations. Brandt explained that he was stepping down due to personal reasons and his desire to avoid further damage to his government or the Social Democratic Party.

Brandt's vision framed in the idea that Germany must simultaneously preserve its US-backed security and pursue the goals of Ostpolitik (Schoenborn, 2020; Nichter, 2014, pp. 61-76). In contrast to Brandt's vision of a new world political and social sphere, Schmidt supported Ostpolitik but preferred to return to the 1960 equilibrium, where relations with the Soviet bloc were understood in the context of the balance of power between East and West (Hibbs, 1983, pp. 50-57; Spohr, 2016). Despite its controversial nature, Ostpolitik is widely regarded as a successful policy that helped to ease tensions between East and West and fostered dialogue and cooperation between the two sides. At the same time, Ostpolitik facilitated Germany's future significant economic growth based on cheap Russian gas, which made Germany heavily dependent on Russian energy (Bösch, 2014, pp. 165-185).

Compared to the current energy crisis, it can be stated that the EU, and especially Germany, are facing a reversible process characterized by the renewal and strengthening of energy cooperation with the Middle East and a deviation from the original Ostpolitik principles that have evolved over time. In particular, the EU has found itself in an energy gap due to the war in Ukraine and is trying in every way to break away from dependence on Russian energy sources by strengthening its independence by diversifying its supply and establishing stronger energy cooperation with Norway, the USA, Kazakhstan, the Middle East, etc. (Kieninger, 2020, pp. 179-196). However, BASF President Martin Brudermüller said that “high energy prices are now putting additional pressure on profitability and competitiveness in Europe”, which indicates that the EU was not strategically prepared for the decisions it has made on its own (Wilkes, 2023).

Given the EU's chosen strategic approach, the conflict in Ukraine and the energy crisis that followed represent significant challenges that cannot be resolved and successfully answered with principled pragmatism. Namely, the EU has placed its principles and values above the practical realities of the conflict and abandoned the EUGS's concept of interdependence with Russia. In particular, the EU has taken a principled stance in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and has imposed additional sanctions on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. These sanctions have come at a cost to the EU's economic relationship with Russia, but the EU has viewed them as necessary to uphold its principles and deter further aggression. On the other hand, Kissinger said Ukraine was supposed to be a bridge between Europe and Russia, noting that the current conflict is reshaping international relations in a way that could lead to Russia's isolation from Europe. He also points out that this scenario could create a situation where Russia seeks permanent alliances elsewhere, leading to Cold War-like

diplomatic distances and setting global progress back decades (Bester, 2022). Considering that Ostpolitik initiated the establishment of relations with the Soviet Union and the EUGS failed to provide the proper guidelines to maintain EU-Russia relations, it can be concluded that principled pragmatism lacks a more realistic approach that recognizes the reality of the anarchic structure of the international system that is foremostly based on the balance of power and the strategic interests of superpowers. Accordingly, the Strategic Compass aims to overcome the shortcomings produced by the EUGS and to update and complement its security and defence dimension by relying on threat analysis and realistic assessment of the strategic environment by implementing the goals of the CFSP and the CSDP.

18. 4. The issue of nuclear threat

The issue of nuclear threat presents a complex challenge in contemporary international relations, as evidenced by the evolving military strategies of major powers and the historical precedents of nuclear weapon use, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of security dynamics. While current strategies like the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) and the Strategic Compass address specific nuclear threats, they often overlook broader geopolitical realities and the potential for atomic escalation in response to existential threats, underscoring the importance of adopting a realist approach to navigate these complex security challenges. Accordingly, it can be stated that both strategies have shown significant limitations in understanding the correlation between past events and contemporary international relations. For instance, Helmut Schmidt's statement that the most dangerous moment in the second half of the 20th century was the Cuban Missile Crisis (Spiegel, 2008) and the fact that Russia changed its military doctrine in 2014, according to which “the Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons when the very existence of the state is threatened”, leads to the conclusion that the EUGS and the Strategic Compass lack a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex security challenges facing Europe and the world today (De Vreij, 2022; Panda, 2020; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 355, 2020).

Regarding the issue of nuclear threats, the EUGS recognizes the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program and stresses the importance of adherence to international norms and rules-based approaches to nuclear security and disarmament (The Council, 2016, p. 15). However, the focus on Iran's nuclear program suggests a narrow and myopic approach to security that ignores

the broader geopolitical landscape and the potential for conflict with other major powers that might use nuclear weapons in cases where their survival is critically threatened. In this context, the Strategic Compass revises the earlier strategy by acknowledging the expansion of nuclear arsenals and the development of new weapons systems by Russia and China (EEAS, 2020, p. 22). It also points out that the Russian leadership is using nuclear threats in connection with its invasion of Ukraine. On the other hand, both strategies ignore the realist approach that emphasizes the possibility that world superpowers in a state of survival can be triggered to use nuclear weapons to protect their interests and their sovereignty. Although there should be no justification for the use of nuclear weapons, Samuel J. Walker in his book *“Prompt and Utter Destruction - Truman and the Use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan”* tries to find justifiable reasons for this type of military action. This book provides a detailed analysis of the decision-making process that led to the use of nuclear weapons in Japan. Walker argues that President Truman was motivated by a desire to end the war as quickly as possible and to avoid a costly land invasion of Japan (Walker, 1997). On the other hand, Alperovitz argues that the decision to use the bomb was influenced by political considerations, such as the desire to send a message to the Soviet Union (Alperovitz, 1995; Villa & Bonnet, 1996, p. 529). Considering Putin's conviction and statement that the West has long intended to destroy Russia and gain control of its remnants, European leaders should be aware that the growing Russian survival motive may trigger the use of nuclear weapons (Gerashchenko, 2023). In Putin's eyes, the Declaration on the Decolonization of Russia and the possible presence of NATO forces on the Russian-Ukrainian borders represent an existential threat to the Russian Federation, and such thinking can produce much more devastating consequences than the current war in Ukraine (Forum of free peoples of Russia, 2022). In this context, John Mearsheimer said that abstract rights such as self-determination (in the case of Ukraine) are largely meaningless when powerful states clash with weaker states. Moreover, he asks the question; “Did Cuba have the right to form a military alliance with the Soviet Union during the Cold War?” and states that; “The United States certainly did not think so, and the Russians think the same about Ukraine joining the West” (Mearsheimer, September/October 2014, p. 11).

15. 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the EUGS should be revised and build a new approach that combines both principled pragmatism and realism to provide a more real-politic basis for ensuring the security and prosperity of the EU. The one-sidedness of principled pragmatism is primarily reflected in the rejection of historical perspectives and ignoring the interests of other states (especially nuclear superpowers). In addition to these shortcomings, the issue of strategic autonomy is crucial for the further development of the EU's defence capability. Given that the interests of the EU can sometimes conflict with those of the U.S. and the United Kingdom (U.K.), which is not new, it is crucial to strengthen Franco-German cooperation to balance the established special partnership interests between the U.S. and the U.K (U.S. Department of State, 2022; James, 2022). Otherwise, the EU could continue to suffer from the “Maginot complex”, whose symptoms Biscop describes as a lack of self-confidence, incapacity to see the bigger picture, and a general state of lethargy (Biscop, 2018, p. 48).

19. Insights into the Circumstances Preceding the Adoption of the EU's Strategic Compass and the Imperative of Integrated Strategic Approach

This chapter discusses the importance of strategic thinking, highlighting the consequences of the strategic approaches adopted by the EU in its relations with Russia. In this context, it aims to underscore the significance of integrated strategic thinking that unifies geopolitical, geo-economic, and defence-security aspects within the EU's strategic documents. Building on this approach, it seeks to provide insight into the circumstances that preceded the adoption of the Strategic Compass.

Since 2003, the European Union has actively shaped strategic guidelines to safeguard its citizens, ensure internal market stability, and enhance capabilities to meet regional and global challenges. The adoption of the EU Strategic Compass in March 2022 represents a pivotal moment, building upon the foundations laid by the 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2016 EU Global Strategy. However, its initial adoption was postponed from February to March 2022 due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which triggered an economic and energy crisis in Europe and tested the validity of existing strategies. This event not only underscored the need for a comprehensive and updated approach but also highlighted the urgency of responding to real-time geopolitical developments and adapting to the rapidly changing global landscape.

Considering the global geopolitical landscape in 2022 and drawing insights from data in 2020 and 2021 (Eurostat, 2021; European Commission, 2023), which highlight Russia as the EU's primary import partner for oil, natural gas, and solid fossil fuels, the following question undoubtedly arises: Is the European Union strategically prepared for the challenges posed by the war in Ukraine? In this context, it is crucial not to overlook the interconnected nature of military power and economic strength. Therefore, the evident strain in relations between the EU and its strategic economic partners will inevitably impact the competitiveness of the European defence industry. This, in turn, raises concerns about the potential hindrance to the improvement of the EU's military capabilities.

To illustrate, the EU introduced a series of sanctions against the Russian Federation in reaction to its military aggression against Ukraine (EU Sanctions Map, 2023). These sanctions are designated to maximize the negative impact on the Russian economy while limiting the consequences for EU businesses and citizens (European Council, 2023). According to Bruegel's report, Russia's fiscal revenues have not been sufficiently affected by the sanctions, but given the scope of the sanctions, the Russian economy should suffer in the medium to long

term (Demertzis et al, 2022, p. 5). On the other hand, the European Union has been hit hard by the ongoing war, and the eurozone and most EU countries are facing an economic recession (European Economic Forecast, 2022). One of the most visible signs of recession is the increase in energy prices, which affected the competitiveness of businesses and increased the declarations of bankruptcies in the EU (Eurostat, 2022). For instance, Germany's most important gas importer "Uniper" reported a record loss of 40 billion euros in the first nine months of 2022 and is expected to be nationalized. This loss is the largest in German corporate history (Dezem, 2022).

Bearing in mind that the war between Russia and Ukraine has been ongoing since February 2014 and that Russia was the EU's main energy supplier, it was to be expected that the European Commission would develop an appropriate strategy to ensure energy independence in order to secure its own strategic autonomy. Accordingly, the 2016 EU Global Strategy indeed emphasizes the importance of the Energy Union's goals which should secure the internal and external dimensions of European energy security (The Council, 2016, p 22). However, the goals set for diversification of energy sources, routes and suppliers, especially in the gas sector, are not yet far advanced, as the current situation shows (European Commission, September 2022). Moreover, the destabilization of relations with Russia was the main impetus that forced the EU and its member states to rethink their previous approaches and, consequently, to reshape and accelerate their energy and climate strategies (European Commission, October 2022). This situation shows that the European Union was not prepared to protect its markets from external influences and that it is essential to develop an integrated strategy based on a geopolitical, defence, and geo-economic approach. Already in 2019, Biscop noted that the EU should adopt a geoeconomic approach that integrates trade policy into its overall foreign policy. He also emphasizes that Commission's Directorate General for Trade and the European External Action Service (EEAS) do not have sufficiently developed interaction and that Europe needs an integrated strategic approach that will minimize ad hoc solutions in the future (Biscop, 2018, p. 54). A possible example of an ad hoc solution is a new "*Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy*" signed between the EU and Azerbaijan (European Commission, 18. July 2022). At the press conference in Baku, President von der Leyen pointed out that Azerbaijan is and has been a crucial and reliable energy partner of the EU and that this memorandum will help offset supply shortages of Russian gas and contribute significantly to Europe's security of supply (von der Leyen, July 2022). What is not mentioned or what is perhaps an omission of the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU

INTCEN) is that the critical infrastructure needed for the extraction and transport of gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe is co-owned by Lukoil - the Russian oil and gas company (Radečić, 2022). Also, it is forgotten that Azerbaijan is an autocratic regime led by President Aliyev, who was named “2012 Person of the Year for Organized Crime and Corruption in the World” by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP, 2012). In addition, most of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) runs through Turkey and EU officials should remember the 2015 Migrant Crisis and be aware of the blackmailing potential that Turkey had at that moment (BBC, 2016). According to Radečić, the gas agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan is a repeated mistake that we have already seen through the failed cooperation between Russia and the EU (Radečić, 2022).

Regarding the EU's energy dependence, Lippert et al. pointed out that a strategically autonomous Europe should find and adopt a unified position on economic and energy policy to reduce the potential negative impact of various initiatives that might be launched by the Russian Federation (Lippert et al., 2019, pp. 29-30). They also note that the Nord Stream 2 Baltic gas pipeline has been criticized by those who prioritize foreign and security policy over energy supply (Ibid., p. 25), which clearly indicates a lack of integrated strategic thinking in Europe, as demonstrated by the controversial blasting of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines committed by unknown actors (Thomas & Maishman, 2022). This particular case also demonstrated the lack of trust between EU member states as well as the divisiveness within the European Union. Namely, under the guise of confidentiality, which is directly related to national security, Sweden has rejected plans to establish a formal joint investigation team with Denmark and Germany to investigate the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipeline ruptures (Reuters, 2022). The investigation launched by Sweden did not yield any significant results or answers, and the question is whether the organizers and perpetrators of the sabotage will ever be found. This case also confirmed that European security and interests have been threatened for a long time and that the EU must protect its investments and key energy resources. However, the European future is not only threatened by the energy crisis. For instance, the war in Ukraine and sanctions against Russia also threaten the further development of the Euro-Asia region by a possible stoppage of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (Jie & Wallace, 2021). In the same vein, Europe's economic competitiveness could be jeopardized by the inability to use the future Russian Arctic shipping route that could significantly shorten maritime distances and shipping traffic time (Sharma, 2021; Pascha, 2021; Brinza 2022).

In conclusion, the questions of who benefits most from the war in Ukraine and the crisis in Europe, why a possible Finlandization of Ukraine was avoided (Engelbrecht, 2022), and why Merkel's decision to block a possible eastward expansion of NATO has been forgotten (Williamson, 2008), require not only academic analysis but also the willingness to face the truth. However, the war in Ukraine showed the unity of member states that unanimously condemned the Russian military aggression, as well as European solidarity in providing military and economic aid to Ukraine (The Council, February 2022; European Commission, 2022/23). On the other hand, the current economic and energy crisis indicates the need to re-evaluate existing strategic approaches as well as to strengthen cooperation with strategic partners. In addition, each strategy should be updated from time to time in accordance with threat analysis and current challenges. Just as legal acts are subject to amendments, so strategies should be subject to change. To achieve the best-case scenario, it is crucial to have a team that will monitor the development and implementation of a particular Strategy, as well as a more competitive intelligence service that would provide an adequate short-term, medium-term, or long-term assessment of possible threats.

20. Development of the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence

20. 1. Exploring the EU's Strategic Compass: Ambitions, Challenges, and Realities

The EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence represents a novel document, and the scholarly discourse surrounding its implementation and impact remains relatively underdeveloped, understandably due to its recent adoption. However, the relevant epistemic community has long been engaged in discussions concerning the future of EU security and defence, including the conception and evolution of the EU strategic compass, its ambitions, perspectives, and limitations (e.g., Biscop, 2021; Fiott, 2020; De Castro & Lobo, 2022; Andersson et al., 2016). For instance, the Venusberg Group produced three reports on European Security Strategies, with its third report advocating for the formulation of a “Grand Strategy” for the CFSP in a globalized world (The Venusberg Group, 2007). This report underscores the imperative for increased European engagement in international security affairs, recommending significant enhancements to the EU's collective capacity for political, diplomatic, and occasionally military interventions. Notably, it suggests that the EU's military development should align with the objectives outlined in the 2010 Helsinki Headline Goal document, which builds upon the aspirations outlined in the 2003 European Security Strategy (European Parliament, December 1999; Lindstrom, 2007). Of particular significance is the recommendation to establish a robust strategic partnership with Russia to leverage mutual dependencies effectively (The Venusberg Group, 2007, p. 45). While this recommendation holds economic merit, it carries inherent risks to EU security and the European welfare state in the long term. Similar analyses and recommendations abound in the extensive literature on the future of European security strategy.

In a broader context, Europe's post-Cold War strategic trajectory reflects Fukuyama's liberal optimism, often overlooking the realities of realism and the geopolitical interests of states that are no longer considered global powers. Biscop contends that the evolution of European security strategy paralleled the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO, often disregarding the strategic interests of the Russian Federation. He emphasizes the importance of analyzing the geopolitical positions of all stakeholders in strategy formulation, as it dictates threat prioritization and shapes strategic outcomes (Biscop, 2018, p. 9). Integrating this analysis into strategy development facilitates effective decision-making and fosters mutually beneficial outcomes, allowing parties to safeguard their interests without resorting to coercive power. However, the 2003 EU Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy failed to account for

geopolitics and power dynamics, indirectly contributing to the conflict in Ukraine, economic instability in the EU, and the need for revising the nascent Strategic Compass. From Putin's perspective, the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO has always been a threat to Russia, as his primary objective has always been to uphold and expand Russian spheres of influence in former Soviet Union countries. Unfortunately, the preceding two strategies overlooked the necessity of a geostrategic approach encompassing the power aspects of international politics.

In this regard, the Strategic Compass endeavors to align geopolitical considerations with the development of the EU's defence capabilities, rectifying the deficiencies of prior strategic documents. Symbolically, the Strategic Compass symbolizes Europe's transition from a three-decade period dominated by American hegemony to the reality of a multipolar world order. It represents a continuum of European strategic thought and is regarded as a significant improvement over preceding EU strategic frameworks such as the Global Strategy (2016) and the Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises (Paul et al., 2022; The Council, January 2018). However, Fiott asserts that the Strategic Compass is not intended to replace the EU's Global Strategy but rather to complement and enhance it (Fiott, 2020, p. 2). Conversely, Shea contends that the Strategic Compass offers a pragmatic assessment of the global landscape rather than conforming to the EU's desired narrative (Paul et al., 2022; The Council, January 2018). These observations, combined with Europe's apparent disregard for the geopolitical interests of major global powers (excluding the U.S.), underscore the shortcomings of previous strategies in adequately addressing global geopolitical trends. Given the precarious geopolitical environment reminiscent of a new Cold War era, it is prudent to recall Santayana's admonition on the importance of historical memory: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Santayana, 1905, p. 172). Consequently, Europe appears to be edging toward a revival of the old Iron Curtain.

20. 2. Development of the Strategic Compass

The initiative to develop the Strategic Compass was launched during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union in June 2020. In line with this initiative, the EU Council tasked the European External Action Service (EEAS) to prepare a new military strategy document that will define the EU's security policy position and provide operational guidelines for the CSDP (Kaim & Kempin, 2022, p. 1). Simonet notes that its development was driven by member states and the EEAS with the simultaneous involvement of the European Commission and the EDA (Simonet, 2021, p. 3). In particular, this new strategy aims to clarify the Union's ambition level and is seen as a significant advancement that will help develop a more robust and capable European Union as a global security provider (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). This development is expected to enhance the EU's capacity and readiness to take action, bolster its resilience, and ensure solidarity and mutual support. Nováky highlights that the Strategic Compass aims to narrow the disparity between the EU's ambitions and its actual capabilities in external actions. Namely, it seeks to “foster the development of a shared strategic culture and to clarify the comprehensive landscape of EU defence cooperation shaped by PESCO, EDF, CARD, and other initiatives introduced since 2016” (Nováky, 2021, p. 112). To match ambition with reality, the Clingendael researchers argue that the EU should adopt a phased approach that defines a short-term military ambition and then sets a higher long-term level (Zandee et al., 2021, p. 2). Namely, the first phase (up to 5 years) should take into account the existing capabilities, and then set long-term goals that should guide the further development of capabilities in the next two decades. To achieve these goals, the Strategic Compass must precisely define the EU's level of military ambition, considering first and foremost the "threat analysis," which should provide a complex and comprehensive assessment of threats with implications outside and within the EU.

As expected, the initial draft proposal of the Strategic Compass was based on the November 2020 Joint Threat Assessment, which aimed to provide accurate information on the nature and severity of the threats facing the EU in the short and medium term (EEAS-MEMO, 2020; EU INTCEN, 2012; EU INTCEN, 2015). However, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Threat Analysis and the initial version of the Strategic Compass were already out of date. Consequently, both documents underwent a last-minute revision and adjustment before the final adoption of the Strategic Compass on 24 March 2022 (European Parliament, 2022). Since the Threat Analysis is a classified document that is not available to the public, it is impossible to evaluate its content and the work of the EU Intelligence Situation

Center (EEAS-MEMO, 2020). However, it is striking that the EU INTCEN failed to foresee the possibility of a Russian invasion. Therefore, the High Representative and the Council should review the reliability and competence of this agency because this oversight directly endangered the security and prosperity of Europe. Moreover, the new war on European soil has changed the level of the EU's military ambitions and highlighted the urgent need for increased investment in the military and defence sector by member states. In response to this 'unforeseen event', the EU heads of state and government issued the Versailles Declaration, in which they condemned Russian aggression against Ukraine. They also laid down further guidelines that should strengthen existing defence capabilities, reduce energy dependency, and improve the economic base (European Council, 2022, p. 2). Indirectly, this declaration indicates the need to develop a comprehensive approach that would incorporate geopolitics, geoeconomics, and security aspects into an integrated strategic whole. In the military sense, it points to existing shortcomings and advocates for increased investment in military spending, further development of the EU framework for joint defence procurement, investment in strategic enablers, support for partners through the European Peace Fund (EPC) and strengthening of research and development (RD) synergies between the civilian and military sectors (EDA, 2022; European Commission, 2022). Furthermore, the Versailles Declaration frames the ambitions of the Strategic Compass in a purely security and defence dimension, which limits the "scope of work of the Compass" to the level of an action plan that should provide military-strategic guidelines for the further development of the EU's security and defence capabilities. Bearing in mind that this declaration points out that a more secure and capable EU in the field of security and defence will only complement the capabilities of NATO, it remains unclear how this already-seen approach will affect the increase of the EU's military capabilities and improve the EU's strategic autonomy (European Council, 2022, p. 3). On the other hand, the unity and solidarity demonstrated by EU leaders in this declaration should encourage the implementation of the Strategic Compass, thereby boosting the essential investments by member states in the defence and security sector.

20. 3. Evolving Security Ambitions: Unveiling the Development and Impact of the EU Strategic Compass

The adopted Strategic Compass represents a consensus among 27 member states that have harmonized their national priorities through a diplomatic process and defined European defence and security objectives for the next 5 to 10 years. Although its adoption was largely influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Strategic Compass is not an a priori response to that war but rather a roadmap that sets out concrete actions (with clear deadlines for measuring progress) for the EU as a security provider in a deeply antagonized multipolar world (see; Appendix). Contrary to the EU's aspirations and actions, the growing antagonism in the world and the shift in the balance of power between states are becoming increasingly evident due to the ongoing war in Ukraine. The most obvious sign of disagreement with European policy is manifested in the attitude of global and regional powers (such as China, India, Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Africa, etc.) towards the Western sanctions imposed on Russia (European Council, October 2023). Despite the existing disagreement, the Strategic Compass recognizes the importance of multilateral and bilateral partnerships with most global and regional powers and proposes strengthening tailored partnerships based on shared values and interests (EEAS, 2022, p. 13). Of course, enhancing and deepening partnerships with the U.S., the UN, NATO, and other allies is one of the fundamental pillars of the Strategic Compass and serves as a crucial mechanism to support the EU's goal of emerging as a prominent global strategic actor capable of addressing the significant security shifts currently unfolding (EEAS, October 2022). This EU response should be based on joint action and a joint assessment of the strategic environment in which the EU operates, the threats and challenges it faces, and their implications for the EU (EEAS, 2022, p. 11). By defining its strategic environment, the Strategic Compass outlines the EU's ambitions and identifies the global, regional, neighbourhood, and transnational threats and challenges. In particular, the main threats and challenges are the return of great power competition, potential instability in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber-attacks, hybrid strategies, and disinformation campaigns (Ibid., pp. 14-15).

In line with the revised threat analysis, the Strategic Compass addresses four key areas that define its scope of action: 'ACT' with a focus on the EU's crisis management capabilities; 'SECURE' refers to the EU's ability to anticipate threats, manage a range of threats and protect its citizens; 'INVEST' aims to identify and respond to investment needs in technology and capabilities, and finally 'PARTNER' refers to the EU's strategic partners and how they can

contribute to the achievement of common goals (De Castro & Lobo, 2022, p. 116). Essentially, the Strategic Compass aims to enhance the EU's operational capabilities, bolster crisis management, and establish a Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) that would enable the EU to swiftly mobilize up to 5,000 troops in response to various kinds of crises (EEAS, 2022, p. 44). Planned capability development and potential deployment of EU forces should be advanced by closing critical gaps in strategic enablers by 2025 and revising the 2010 Helsinki Headline Goal by 2023 (Ibid., p. 50; EU Council Secretariat, 2006). Regarding this issue, the deployment of a single modular brigade of 5000 soldiers is a significant reduction of the initial 2003 Headline Goal that aimed to develop the EU member states' ability to create and deploy a multinational rapid-reaction force comprised of up to one army corps consisting of 50,000–60,000 soldiers (EU Council Secretariat, 2006; Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union Directorate B – Policy Department, 2006). However, the proposed troop reduction should increase the EU's efficiency in dealing with future crises and ensure the EU's position as a more capable and reliable security provider on the international stage. This assumption correlates with the final chapter of the Strategic Compass, which concludes that the EU's ability to plan jointly, deploy forces, and conduct operations is essential to achieving the effectiveness of the EU's external missions and operations. Following international law, EU external missions and operations should be carried out in cooperation with regional partners or international organizations. For instance, the Strategic Compass points to the importance of further developing joint operations and missions with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in the Western Balkans, the Eastern Neighbourhood, and Central Asia (EEAS, 2022, p. 54). Despite the limited scope of cooperation with the OSCE, the ambitions of the Strategic Compass are much broader and indicate the necessity of the EU's global presence and engagement. This has already been highlighted by Zandee et al., who stated that the geographical focus of EU external operations should be on the southern neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean, with the possibility of demonstrating a naval presence in the Pacific (Zandee et al., 2021, p. 2). Accordingly, the geographic distribution of the EU's external operations demonstrates the scope of the EU's geopolitical ambitions and points to the need to realize and protect clearly defined European interests in a given area.

In this sense, Biscop explains that the geographical location of a state is a fundamental pillar and starting point in understanding the geopolitics of a particular country. Therefore, the EU must constantly pay attention to its neighbourhood and vital zones of its interests in order to ensure its security and economic prosperity. He also underlines that the geopolitical position

of the EU is much more complex than the position of the United States because the wars in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Mali can directly threaten European trade routes and energy supply (Biscop, 2018, pp. 8-9). The validity of his claim is supported by the fact that the war in Ukraine has caused disruptions in trade, investment and energy supply not only in Europe but throughout the world (Ruta, 2022). Moreover, the mentioned wars produced several refugee crises, such as the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, the Ukrainian refugee wave in 2022, and the constant influx of illegal immigrants across the Mediterranean, the Balkan, and West African routes to the EU (Connor, 2016; Dhian et al., 2022; Frontex, 2021). In response to increasing instability in its neighbourhood and the resurgence of power politics in a conflict-prone multipolar world, the Strategic Compass acknowledges the significance of geopolitics and underscores the necessity of converting the EU's geopolitical awakening into a lasting strategic stance (EEAS, 2022, p. 4).

Considering the Strategic Compass ambitions and the “EU's geopolitical awakening”, the new document also reflects the European leadership's aspirations to expand the strategic role of the European Union and its relevance in international security affairs. These aspirations were foreshadowed in the speech of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who stressed that she would lead a “geopolitical commission”, and in the statement of EU Vice President Josep Borrell that the EU “must learn the language of power” (Rios, 2020; Weiler, 2020; Bayer, 2019). Accordingly, the inclusion of geopolitics and power in the EU's vocabulary is an important step in building a strategic culture and strategic autonomy. Unfortunately, these two concepts have long been sidelined in the EU. For instance, Biscop points out that the EU has enormous power potential because the EU is the largest economy in the world, it has the most egalitarian society, and apart from the U.S., it spends the most on defence. Despite all these potentials, the leading global and regional powers do not see the EU as a military power (Biscop, 2018, p. 2). This attitude stems from the fact that Europe forgot to think strategically and left strategic decisions to the U.S. and NATO during the bipolar Cold War and the unipolar post-Cold War period.¹¹ However, the new multipolar world order and the war in Ukraine finally led to a change in the EU's approach to the issue of power politics. Namely, the Strategic Compass indicates that the resurgence of power politics and even armed aggression within a contested multipolar world represents the most significant shift in international relations

¹¹ Of course, there were exceptions and some Western European countries refused to build their strategic path based on American dominance. In particular, France withdrew its membership from NATO's integrated military command structure during de Gaulle's presidency and continued to build its own nuclear strategy. In 2009, France rejoined NATO-SHAPE. More about these details will be covered in the chapter related to cooperation with NATO and the US.

(EEAS, 2022, p. 14). It also highlights that the revival of power politics has led some countries to act based on historical rights and spheres of influence instead of following internationally agreed-upon rules and principles (Ibid., p. 14).

To some extent, structural realists elucidated this argument by pointing out that “international law could be explained by knowing only the interests of powerful states”, and one of the fundamental state interests that can be predominant in international relations is ‘survival’ (Steinberg & Zasloff, 2006, p. 74). Waltz notes that the survival motive is taken as the basis of action in a world where the security of states is not guaranteed (Waltz, 1979, p. 71 and p. 91). For example, Benjamin Netanyahu said that survival is the driving force behind Israel's security, and that security is achieved by building a strong army based on intelligence, academia, and a competitive free market economy that provides fertile ground for further development of Israel's military technology and defence capabilities (Hoover Institution, 2022). In this context, Waltz has already pointed out that security is the ultimate goal in anarchy, which he sees as the first element of the structure of the international system (Waltz, 1979, p. 88 and p. 126). He also emphasizes that the balance of power in international politics is merely a theoretical framework explaining the outcomes of states' actions in an anarchic system (Ibid., p. 57). Building on Waltz, Milner adds that anarchy is characterized by the absence of a hierarchically superior, coercive force that can settle disputes, enforce laws, or regulate the system of international politics (Milner, 1991, pp. 67-85). Consistent with the established state of anarchy, Jervis argues that the absence of an international sovereign enables the outbreak of war and emphasizes that multipolar systems are usually more unstable and prone to conflict, given the increased complexity in managing alliance systems and the greater possibility of misjudging the intentions of other states (Jervis, 1978, p. 167 and p. 189). In relation to this complexity and the established international obligations of states, Krasner notes that the behaviour of states and related global outcomes should be shaped by international law. However, he points out that international law reflects the interests of powerful states, and accordingly international law is only an epiphenomenon of the fundamental power (Krasner, 1982, p. 200). In this sense, the EU should really learn the language of power and pay attention to successful examples of strategic approaches of other countries, such as the strategic approach of Israel, which bases its military strength on alignment with its competitive free market economy. Considering that the war in Ukraine caused the economic and energy crisis in the EU, as well as the severing of energy ties between Germany and Russia that date back to Willy Brandt, it is questionable how the EU will increase its defence competitiveness with the decline

of Germany's economic competitiveness (see: Westphal, 2020, pp. 406-423). As a solution to the ongoing changes in the world, but without a deeper understanding of the implications of breaking relations with Russia, the Strategic Compass highlights the urgent need for greater investment in the security and defence sector by EU member states (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). Consequently, the increased investment and more coherent approach should boost the EU's security and defence capabilities and enhance its strategic autonomy (Ibid., p. 23). However, NATO remains the basis of collective defence for its members and given that EU member states allocate significant resources to NATO, it remains unclear how the EU will strengthen its strategic autonomy (Kirk-Wade & Balakrishnan, 2022). Although Lippert et al. argue that the strategic autonomy debate should not be reduced to military components and defence spending, they point out that strategic autonomy cannot be achieved without improvements in military capabilities and the interoperability of European armed forces (Lippert et al., 2019, p. 35). And this is only possible with increased investment in military capacities and strategic enablers that will enable the EU to project military power beyond its borders and deploy it with as much precision and as little risk to its forces as possible (Biscop, 2018, p. 98). In line with these needs, the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) foresees the allocation of 43.9 billion euros for security and defence purposes, which represents an increase of more than 123% compared to the previous seven-year budget cycle (Jones, Kilpatrick & Maccanico, 2022, p. 3). Since the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine have affected the economic development of the EU, it is questionable how much the planned expenditures for security and defence will be subject to change. Given that EU member states have established a significant level of economic and energy ties with Russia, it is worth recalling Waltz's position on interdependence, which emphasizes that high levels of interdependence between states can lead to shared vulnerability (Waltz, 1979, p. 142). This vulnerability is evident in the European Commission's statement, highlighting that “the EU is one of the most exposed advanced economies to high prices, due to its geographical proximity to the war and significant reliance on gas imports from Russia” (Euronews, 2022). In order to understand the effects of balanced or disturbed interdependence, Waltz notes that understanding the foreign policy implications of high or low interdependence requires a focus on the politics of international economics rather than the economics of international politics (Waltz, 1979, p. 142). Since the Strategic Compass does not consider energy, food, technology, forced displacement, or securing resources in the face of scarcity, Riekeles argues that the Compass is not a strategy because security is also a function of economic conditions. He also notes that the Strategic Compass does not focus on geography sufficiently by pointing out its lack of focus on three maritime

hotspots, such as the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea (Paul et al., 2022). Given the aforementioned shortcomings, the Strategic Compass should be constantly aligned with the objectives of the Versailles Declaration and subject to revision based on geo-economic, geo-political, and security changes affecting and likely to affect the EU.

20. 4. Navigating the Postmodern Challenge: Implementing the EU Strategic Compass in a Complex Geopolitical Landscape

In order to achieve the successful implementation of the Strategic Compass and avoid possible limitations, the EEAS should also take into account the geopolitical specificities of the EU and the structural problems that exist within the EU. Namely, the EU is the first “postmodern region” whose member states have abandoned geopolitical competition and formed a “security community” by pooling their sovereignty (Biscop, 2018, p. 8). On the other hand, most countries still live in the “modern era” and compete with all available means to achieve and protect their interests in the global geopolitical arena. Some of them, such as Libya, Iraq, and Yemen, have even been stuck in the pre-modern era due to the collapse and are functioning in chaos and anarchy. Comparing other state systems, Europe has built a unique community of states in which sovereignty is no longer perceived as an absolute fact. This concept was built by Cooper, who points out that postmodern entities emerge from the evolution of the modern state system into a more advanced order that has minimized the influence of the balance of power relations and destructive nationalism of member-states within its system. In particular, he argues that the EU established its postmodern identity by moving away from the Westphalian concept of the nation-state and power politics, which was accompanied by the laying of new European foundations through the Treaty of Rome and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (Cooper, 2003, p. 26). Despite the new foundations, Cooper notes that the national identities and democratic institutions of member states remain inextricably linked to the territorial state in the postmodern era. Therefore, the traditional concept of the state will continue to form the fundamental unit of international relations for the foreseeable future, even though EU member states may no longer behave traditionally. Furthermore, Cooper emphasizes that contemporary international relations are firmly shaped by the concepts, values, and vocabulary of the modern world that Machiavelli and Clausewitz defined as a calculus of interests and forces (Cooper, 2003, p. 30). The most prominent international organization in the modern state system designed to stabilize the order of

traditional states is the United Nations. Unlike the European Union, where member states pooled their sovereignty, the United Nations bases its work on the UN Charter, which emphasizes the importance of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, and security of each member state (United Nation, 1945). Moreover, the UN Security Council's permanent membership reflects international efforts to regulate the balance of power between global powers after World War II. Bearing in mind that EU member states are an integral part of the UN, it can be concluded that the EU operates in conditions of incompatibility manifested in the coexistence of a modern system based on the balance of power and a postmodern system based on openness. Since the Strategic Compass reflects the aspirations of postmodern Europe, its success will depend on reducing the existing disharmony that the postmodern system could generate within its 27 constituent parts that simultaneously continue to form part of the modern world. As a solution to the mentioned problems, Lehne points out that the EU should strengthen the commitment of its member states to joint action, which is occasionally constrained by national foreign policy priorities (Lehne, 2022). In addition, the EU should reduce the frequent delays and blockages in important decisions often caused by the established decision-making process based on unanimity among member states. Regarding this issue, the EU should consider developing a rapid decision-making instrument for urgent matters. Finally, the EU should strengthen the cooperation between its institutions - such as the European Council, European Commission, and European External Action Service (EEAS) - to achieve a higher level of coherency and compatibility.

In conclusion, the Strategic Compass is a long-awaited document that aims to provide clear guidelines for the further development of the security and defence capabilities of the European Union, which should significantly improve the Union's strategic autonomy. Its successful implementation will depend on investments in the defence and security sector, the unity of EU members, the resolution of structural problems, and the geopolitical, geo-economic, and security situation in Europe and the world. However, the EU's position on geopolitics and power politics described in the Strategy Compass is rather vague and leaves room for speculation. Namely, the Strategic Compass does not provide clear directions for future cooperation with global and regional powers, and this lack of clearly defined strategic perspectives might lead to ambiguity in determining the future strategic goals of the EU. Since the war in Ukraine undermines the foundations of the existing world order and opens up space for the redefinition of a new one, it is essential that the EU clearly defines what kind of relations it would like to have with certain global powers. In particular, the stability and prosperity of

the EU depends not only on good relations with Western partners, but also on clearly defined strategic relations with Russia and China. On the other hand, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that the ongoing war in Ukraine can only be resolved by arming Ukraine and that the increasingly intensive cooperation between Russia and China threatens the world order established by Western countries (NATO, January 2023). The discussion about the possible “Finlandization of Ukraine” or about the effects that could be produced by a new Cold War is currently marginalized and not on the agenda. In this context, the successful implementation of the Strategic Compass will depend on resolving the current stalemate in Ukraine and on the further development of the geopolitical situation in the world. Given that key decision-makers in the Western world continue to ignore the theoretical considerations of American realists, it is questionable what results the discrepancy between practice and theory will produce.

21. The Strategic Compass Comprehensive Approach

The Strategic Compass represents a landmark initiative, reflecting a heightened commitment to shaping the trajectory of the European Union's security and defence agenda. It is designed to address contemporary challenges by focusing on four key axes - Act, Secure, Invest, and Partner - each pivotal to reinforcing the EU's security and defence posture. To provide clear guidance and ensure the effective implementation of these axes, the Strategic Compass offers a comprehensive approach that includes (1) providing a shared assessment of threats, (2) encouraging greater coherence among Member States in security and defence actions, (3) enhancing collective defence capabilities, and (4) establishing clear targets and milestones (EEAS, 2022, p. 15).

21. 1. Providing a Shared Assessment of Threats

This aspect involves a joint assessment of the strategic environment that includes the identification of threats and challenges affecting the European Union, followed by an in-depth analysis of the implications of these challenges for both the Union and its citizens (EEAS, 2022, p. 11).

The framework responsible for making and providing this analysis is the EU's Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC). This framework was established in 2007 as a cooperative scheme by combining the EU Joint Situation Centre (SITCEN) and the Intelligence Division of the EU Military Staff (The Council, 2008b, p. 98).¹² The concept of integrating civilian and military intelligence capabilities to improve the accuracy and reliability of situation assessments and risk analyses was presented by High Representative Javier Solana in 2006. This initiative aimed to address the pressing need for a comprehensive approach to the EU's security policies and was a response to significant deficiencies and intelligence failures observed during the 2006 Lebanon war, specifically the lack of raw intelligence to support INTCEN's production (Engberg 2014, pp. 66-67). According to Gruszczak, Solana's proposal aimed to create a broader knowledge base for intelligence analyses by combining civilian intelligence from EU INTCEN with early warnings and situation assessments from EUMS INT (Gruszczak, 2016, p. 235). In particular, EU INTCEN and EUMS INT are the only structures within the EEAS capable of producing comprehensive intelligence reports derived from voluntary intelligence contributions from the civilian and military intelligence services of EU Member States (Delcroix, 2019, p. 10). Both of these agencies operate as Directorates within

¹² SITCEN was officially renamed the European Union Intelligence Analysis Centre (EU INTCEN) in 2012.

the EEAS, directly accountable to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Their mission is to furnish intelligence analyses, early warnings, and situational awareness to the High Representative and the EEAS (Ibid.). For instance, the analytical products of EU INTCEN draw on information from diverse sources, including Member States' security and intelligence services, open sources (such as media, websites, and blogs), diplomatic reporting, consular warden networks, international organizations, NGOs, CSDP missions and operations, EU Satellite Centre, visits, and field trips. Based on the data collected, EU INTCEN produces various intelligence products, such as intelligence assessments, reports, summaries, and threat analyses. In addition, EU INTCEN conducts ad hoc briefings for different EU bodies, including the HR/VP, EU Special Representatives, various Council bodies, and the European Parliament (EU INTCEN, 2015). On the other hand, the EUMS INT's mission is to perform early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning for CSDP missions and tasks referred to in Articles 42 (1) and 43 (1) TEU (Delcroix, 2019, p. 11). The EUMS INT is composed of three divisions: Production, Policy, and Support. The Production Division serves as a crucial element, integrating intelligence inputs from various sources and Defence Intelligence Organisations (DIOs). The Policy Division is tasked with formulating intelligence strategies in collaboration with pertinent EU civilian agencies. It also plays a role in mission and operational planning, develops scenarios and intelligence specifications for exercises, and contributes to capability development. The Support Section acts as an information manager and central communication hub, enabling efficient distribution, sharing, and archiving of information and products (Ibid., p. 11).

The EU INTCEN and EUMS INT collaborate to constitute and support the EU Single Intelligence and Analysis Capacity (Gruszczak, 2016, p. 235). In this capacity, the SIAC offers assistance and information to diverse EU decision-making bodies involved in the CFSP, the CSDP, counterterrorism, and countering hybrid threats. Notable among these bodies are the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee, the European Council, and, when feasible, the Commission (Delcroix, 2019, p. 10). In addition, the SIAC makes its products available to the governments and intelligence services of the member states (Bossong, 2018, p. 2). To this end, the Centre monitors and assesses international events with a particular focus on sensitive geographical areas, terrorism, hybrid threats, and other global challenges. In addition, the SIAC produces a range of products, from high-level summary reports to comprehensive intelligence assessments or threat analyses.

In line with the requirements and development of the Strategic Compass, the EU SIAC has produced the first EU threat analysis based on contributions from the civilian and military intelligence services of the 27 EU Member States (EEAS, 2020, p. 1). This analysis focuses on strategically relevant threats and challenges for the EU and its member states. It emphasizes global trends, regional risks, and specific threats to the EU's security and interests. However, it does not provide a comprehensive global overview but analyses the threats that have a pronounced impact on the security of the EU (Ibid., p. 2). In addition, the Threat Analysis is a classified document inaccessible to the public. Its potential content is discerned through the analysis of the Strategic Compass and the EEAS Memo on Threat Analysis. These documents acknowledge concerns about evolving threats and challenges while addressing crucial issues at different levels:

- a) At the **global level**, the recognized challenges and threats include globalization's slowdown, economic rivalry among global powers, and the impact of water, food availability, and climate change on security. Additionally, dependence on fossil fuels and the supply of new energy sources pose strategic risks. Migratory pressures persist, and there is the potential for an increase in the actual use of military force, contributing to global instability and threatening the multilateral system (EEAS-MEMO, 2020, p. 1). However, these general challenges were rooted in the events of 2020, and the potential conflicts of 2022 and 2023 were not foreseen in this threat analysis. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia, catching European officials off guard with its unexpected and unprovoked nature (according to the EU's officials), prompted an immediate reassessment of the threat landscape. Consequently, the initially drafted Strategic Compass underwent revisions, aligning it with the newly adjusted threat analysis before being formally adopted. In this context, the Strategic Compass highlights that a major global challenge and threat is the resurgence of power politics within a conflict-ridden multipolar world. In particular, the EU is confronted with several global threats and challenges arising from Russia's military aggression on Ukraine, which has adverse impacts on the well-being of EU citizens, economic infrastructure, energy sufficiency, and border security.

In addition to Russia, which has long been considered a global power in decline, China emerges as the next global challenge for the EU. Within the Strategic Compass, China is seen as a partner and competitor, with the primary concern revolving around its increasing military capabilities. In response to challenges in its relationship with China,

the EU advocates for committed diplomacy and adherence to the basic principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Apart from the threats and challenges arising from global superpowers' politics, the EU also faces additional security risks from ongoing conflicts, terrorism, and geopolitical competition in Africa. In the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific region, and Asia, conflicts, geopolitical tensions, and the conduct of states like North Korea pose an additional threat to the EU's security. Clear examples of these risks are the war between Israel and Hamas, tensions between China and Taiwan, as well as terrorist actions by the Houthis in the Red Sea (e.g. Feldman & Mil-Man, 2023; Culver & Kirchberger, 2023; Sabbagh, 2024). In Latin America, socio-economic imbalances are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to political instability and migration issues. Finally, in the context of global threats and challenges, the Strategic Compass highlights the importance of respecting international rules, strengthening partnerships, and collaborating with key allies, including the United States (EEAS, 2022, pp. 17-20).

- b) **Regional Level:** The EU Strategic Compass outlines the complex regional threats facing the European Union. These threats are characterized by instability, conflict, and war on the borders of the EU. Tzirkotis points out that there are various risks to European security, including “armed aggression, illegal annexations, fragile states, revisionist powers, and authoritarian regimes” (Tzirkotis, April 2022). These risks can lead to terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime, hybrid conflicts, cyber-attacks, and the exploitation of irregular migration. In addition, financial instability and socio-economic inequalities can exacerbate security issues. These multi-layered threats extend across the southern and eastern borders and require active EU engagement to counter external influences (EEAS-MEMO, 2020, p. 2). In particular, the Western Balkans face security uncertainties influenced by foreign interference and information manipulation campaigns. Regarding this question, the Strategic Compass emphasizes that the sovereignty and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the promotion of EU-led dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade must take priority. In the Eastern Neighbourhood, countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the South Caucasus face immediate threats to their sovereignty amidst ongoing conflicts. Moreover, certain regions underwent ethnic cleansing by a key European partner for energy stability, thereby creating a contentious space for interpreting the relationship between the EU and its partners. For instance, the exodus of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh is a

glaring example of the violation of European values. Namely, over 100,000 Armenians fled Nagorno-Karabakh and sought refuge in Armenia in the closing days of September 2023. According to widespread reports, this mass exodus followed a ten-month blockade by Azerbaijan, which led to famine for the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result, the region was heavily bombed for 24 hours, forcing the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities to surrender. It is important to note that Nagorno-Karabakh had been inhabited by Armenians for thousands of years before its takeover. According to United Nations estimates, only around 50 Armenians still live in the region (Klonowiecka-Milart & Paylan, 2023). Regarding this conflict, the EU had already deployed an EU civilian mission with a two-year mandate to Armenia on February 20, 2023. The mission comprises 103 international staff from EU member states, including experts and observers. The EU Mission in Armenia was tasked with monitoring and reporting on the situation on the ground, contributing to the security of people in conflict-affected areas, and, based on these objectives, building trust between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan and, where possible, their authorities (EU Mission in Armenia, 2023). However, the presence of the EU Mission and the partnership with Azerbaijan proved insufficient to prevent this evident case of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, the EU's response was more than lukewarm and only condemned the Azerbaijanis without concrete actions (e.g., Lory, 2023; de Waal, 2023). Unsatisfied with the EU's response, the Members of the European Parliament requested the introduction of sanctions against Azerbaijan and a review of EU relations with Azerbaijan (Jones & Zsiros, 2023). However, the EU's response remained on the condemnation, highlighting the complex nature of policy decisions that balance humanitarian concerns with broader geopolitical interests. This episode underscores the challenges in reconciling the protection of human rights with maintaining strategic partnerships.

In addition, the regional challenges across the entire continent are diverse and go beyond the threats mentioned. They are complex and multi-layered and require a multidisciplinary approach. For instance, the Strategic Compass highlights the importance of the Arctic region, which is exposed to rapid changes driven by global warming, geopolitical rivalries, and heightened commercial interest (EEAS, 2022, p. 19). The expansion of Russian military bases and Russia-China joint exercises in the Arctic are threats that have sparked increasing concern among global stakeholders (e.g.,

Franiok, 2020; Gronholt-Pedersen & Fouche, 2022). For the EU, this strategic move by the two nations poses multifaceted challenges, ranging from geopolitical tensions to environmental concerns. In addition, cooperation between the EU and Russia in the Arctic is currently at an "impasse-stadium" due to the war in Ukraine (Gricius & Marinova, 2023). At the other end of the EU borders, the Black Sea region also experiences severe security impacts due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, affecting resilience, freedom of navigation, and economic development (e.g., Aronsson & Mankoff, 2023; Heller, 2023). Furthermore, the southern neighborhood grapples with unresolved crises in Libya and Syria, leading to lasting regional consequences, with terrorism, human trafficking, and organized crime posing threats on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea. In this context, the EU is committed to addressing these challenges through cooperation, peace-building efforts, and regional partnerships. In particular, tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean involve provocations, unilateral actions, and violations of international law against EU member states. The Strategic Compass emphasizes that the instrumentalization of irregular migration increases the potential for escalation and that it is necessary to strengthen diplomatic ties with countries such as Turkey and Libya in this region. Therefore, ensuring stability, security, and cooperative relations while maintaining the principle of good neighbourliness remains a common interest of the EU and its regional partners (EEAS, 2022, pp. 18-19).

- c) **EU-specific Threats:** The EU faces threats from state and non-state actors enhancing hybrid tools, deploying disruptive technologies, conducting information operations, and utilizing non-military sources of influence (EEAS-MEMO, 2020, p. 2). In 2018, the Council of the European Union adopted the updated version of the 2014 Cyber Defence Policy Framework to strengthen cyber resilience and develop robust cyber security and defence capabilities (The Council, November 2018). This policy designates cyberspace as the fifth domain in CSDP operations, complementing land, sea, air, and space. Additionally, the effectiveness of EU missions and operations is increasingly reliant on continuous, secure access to cyberspace, necessitating strong and resilient capabilities in this domain (Ibid., p. 2). In this context, the Strategic Compass highlights that cyberspace has emerged as a domain of strategic competition and advocates for the enhancement of cyber capabilities (EEAS, 2022, p. 12). In the same vein, EU Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen declared at the World Economic

Forum in Davos that the fight against disinformation and misinformation is the EU's top priority to prevent and avoid polarisation in Western society (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Concerning other specific threats, the Strategic Compass emphasizes that terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a grave threat to European security (EEAS, 2022, pp. 20-21). For instance, Member States reported a total of 28 terrorist attacks in 2022, encompassing completed, failed, and foiled attacks. According to EUROPOL data, this represented an escalation compared to the 2021 figures, where 18 attacks were reported, but remained below the 2020 figures of 56 (EUROPOL, 2023, p. 5). The EUROPOL's TE-SAT report states that the potential for attacks by domestic and international terrorist groups requires sustained efforts in intelligence sharing, law enforcement coordination, and comprehensive counter-terrorism strategies (Ibid., p. 84). Accordingly, the Strategic Compass advocates collaboration between the CSDP and EU justice and home affairs bodies, such as EUROPOL, EUROJUST, CEPOL, and FRONTEX (EEAS, 2022, p. 27). In addition to terrorism, the Strategy Compass highlights the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Specifically, it highlights that the expansion of nuclear arsenals and the development of new weapons systems by Russia and China pose a threat to both the European Union and the global order (Ibid., p. 22). To mitigate the consequences of such measures, the Strategic Compass underlines the importance of international cooperation, non-proliferation agreements, and diplomatic initiatives to prevent the acquisition and use of such weapons by hostile entities.

Besides these threats, the Strategic Compass underscores the threats arising from climate change, disasters, and emergencies. It particularly notes that climate change and environmental degradation impact crucial areas such as energy infrastructure, agricultural systems, and the depletion of natural resources (Ibid., p. 38). These impacts contribute to the exacerbation of existing social inequalities and pose new risks to vulnerable communities. Accordingly, the Strategic Compass seeks to enhance resilience against risks related to climate change, along with those posed by human-made and natural disasters. Simultaneously, it endeavours to establish a climate-neutral presence for the EU. To achieve these objectives, the Strategic Compass calls for the implementation of the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap (EEAS, November 2020). Namely, this Roadmap sets forth clear targets for Member States, such as

crafting national strategies to ready their military forces for climate change by the end of 2023. Additionally, it envisions the incorporation of environmental advisors into all CSDP missions and operations by 2025, with a mandate to report on their environmental impact (EEAS, 2022, p. 41).

In conclusion, the European Union finds itself at the intersection of traditional and emerging security threats. Adapting to the dynamic nature of these challenges requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach that encompasses military, technological, and diplomatic dimensions. By fostering unity among its member states and actively engaging in international partnerships, the EU can effectively address the diverse array of threats posed by state and non-state actors, thereby ensuring the safety and stability of the region. In this context, the Strategic Compass aims to avoid past shortcomings by establishing clear objectives for intelligence work and secure communication. Specifically, it endeavours to bolster the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) through regular and structured reviews of EU threat analysis in collaboration with Member States' intelligence services, ensuring adaptability to evolving strategic and security contexts. To achieve this goal, the EU will further strengthen its intelligence capabilities by enhancing the resources and capacities of the EU Satellite Centre for improved Autonomous Geospatial-Intelligence by 2025 (Ibid., p. 39).

21. 2. Encouraging Greater Coherence among Member States in the Field of Security and Defence

In response to an increasingly hostile security environment, EU Member States are urged to take a quantum leap forward, amplifying their capacity and willingness to act together while fostering resilience and solidarity (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). In this context, the Strategic Compass underlines the importance of Article 42(7) TEU, which establishes a mutual defence clause within the framework of CSDP, providing Member States with a mechanism to request assistance and support. Namely, this clause allows Member States to invoke collective defence measures, enabling them to respond collectively to an armed attack on one or more of their members. In addition, this provision operates following the principles outlined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, emphasizing the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence (United Nations, 1945). However, the Strategic Compass emphasizes that commitments and collaboration in this domain must align with the obligations of Member States towards NATO. Namely, for those states that are members of NATO, this alliance continues to serve as the cornerstone for their collective defence and the platform for its execution (EEAS, 2022, p. 28). At the same time, the mutual defence clause within the NATO commitments strengthens the joint security efforts of the Member States. Moreover, it serves as a foundational element in the strategic planning and coordination of responses to emerging security threats, facilitating a unified and concerted approach to challenges that may impact the security and stability of the European Union. By highlighting the importance of Article 42(7) TEU, the Strategic Compass underlines the cooperative nature of defence and security policy within the EU. This clause not only provides a legal framework but also demonstrates the commitment of Member States to work together to address evolving security challenges. As EU states enhance their collective capabilities and deepen their dedication to mutual defence, the Strategic Compass assumes a central role in guiding the Union towards a more secure and resilient future.

To secure such a future, the Strategic Compass advocates for an integrated approach that strengthens the EU's global presence and effectiveness through collaborative efforts and investments. This comprehensive approach involves leveraging all available EU policies and instruments to address internal and external security challenges, utilizing both the civilian and military dimensions of CSDP (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). Accordingly, the EU is working on strategic capability and cooperation projects to address critical capability gaps. These priority areas include land, sea, air, space, and cyber domains, with specific projects such as developing a land capability cluster, high-end naval platforms, next-generation combat systems, and

advancements in cyber capabilities. The aim is to reduce fragmentation, develop next-generation capabilities, and ensure interoperability between member states for effective crisis management and defence. In this context, the Strategic Compass underscores the importance of enhanced collaboration, building on collaborative opportunities presented in the 2020 CARD Report (EEAS, 2022, p. 50). This report recommends that Member States commit to strengthening their cooperation in capability development, focusing on making more binding commitments and initiating new ambitious projects by 2025 within the framework of PESCO (CARD Report, 2020, p. 4). Accordingly, the Strategic Compass recognizes that PESCO and the European Defence Fund are crucial for developing advanced technologies and interoperable high-end systems. For instance, the Strategic Compass outlines specific strategic capabilities to be developed in each domain, such as Soldier Systems and Main Battle Tank in the land domain, European Patrol Class Surface Ship in the maritime domain, and Anti Access Area Denial capacities and Countering Unmanned Aerial Systems in the air domain, among others. Additionally, efforts in the space and cyber domains are highlighted to ensure efficient operations in these areas and protect assets (EEAS, 2022, pp. 44-46). In conclusion, the Strategic Compass emphasizes collaborative efforts, innovation, and a comprehensive approach to address security challenges and enhance the EU's defence capabilities.

21. 3. Enhancing Collective Defence Capabilities

In the face of an increasingly complex security environment, the European Union (EU) recognizes the imperative to enhance its collective defence capabilities. Consequently, the Strategic Compass outlines a comprehensive approach focusing on rapidity, robustness, and flexibility to address a broad spectrum of crisis management tasks. The proposed plan includes the development of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, strategic capability projects, and leveraging EU funding instruments (EEAS, 2022).

21. 3. 1. The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity

The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) stands as a vital military element, enabling the rapid mobilization of a “modular force of up to 5,000 troops” (EEAS, 2022, p. 25). This flexible capability, incorporating land, air, and maritime units along with strategic enablers, is intended to address immediate threats and crises throughout different phases of the conflict cycle. The corresponding development is planned to be scenario-based, initially emphasizing “rescue and evacuation missions and the early phases of stabilization operations” (Ibid.). According to the Strategic Compass roadmap, the RDC is planned to be fully operational by 2025 (Ibid., p. 30). In the context of its operationalization, the EU defence ministers approved two possible scenarios for the RDC on 15 November 2022 that include: (1) focus on the first phase of stabilization and (2) focus on rescue and evacuation operations (Clapp, 2023). As an indicator of advancement, the first Annual Progress Report on the Strategic Compass Implementation reveals significant advancements in the conceptual development of the RDC (EEAS, 2023). For instance, in February 2023, the EU swiftly launched a civilian mission in Armenia to enhance sustained stability in the border regions, bolster local trust, and foster normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan (EU Mission in Armenia, 2023). Regrettably, this swift deployment of the civilian mission did not prevent ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh committed by the Azerbaijani forces in September 2023 (Sauer, 2023).

On the other part of the world, a military partnership mission (EUMPR Niger) has been established to aid Niger in combating terrorist armed groups, complementing the civilian mission EUCAP Sahel Niger (The Council, December 2022). This adaptable mission model is tailored to the specific needs of partner countries, ensuring both precision and scalability. In response to the swiftly changing security situation in the Sahel region, the EU is committed to delivering targeted civilian and military support to the coastal nations in the Gulf of Guinea (EEAS, 2023, p. 7). However, the coup d'état in Niger on 26 July 2023 and the increasing

Russian influence on the transitional government led by General Tiani posed considerable challenges for the EUMPR Niger in fulfilling its mandate (Yabi, 2023). Moreover, it led to the withdrawal of French, German, and Italian troops from Niger and the termination of the EUMPR mandate in December 2023 (Yabi, 2023; Euroactiv, 2023). Only the American troops and their drone base, 'Air Base 201', near the city of Agadez, remain stationed in Niger. The shifting alignment towards Russia and the distancing from the European Union, notably France, carry significant geopolitical and economic implications. It is important to note that Niger, being one of the top exporters of uranium to France, a nation heavily reliant on nuclear energy for its electricity supply, underscores the far-reaching consequences of this geopolitical realignment (Maad, 2023).

In addition to the ongoing development of the RDC, the Strategic Compass initiatives encompass substantial modifications of the EU Battlegroups. This involves pre-identifying the military forces and capabilities of Member States and addressing the remaining operational scenarios (EEAS, 2022, p. 25). The modification of EU Battle Groups aims to develop a more resilient and adaptable instrument featuring customized force packages, diverse operational readiness levels, and extended standby periods. In particular, commitments include increasing the readiness and availability of armed forces, providing associated assets, and ensuring strategic enablers such as “transport, force protection, medical assets, cyber defence, satellite communication, and intelligence” (EEAS, 2022, p. 25).

Regarding the relations between the EU Battlegroups and the RDC, the EU Battlegroups represent one facet of the various EU instruments and capabilities designed to ensure the safety of European citizens and contribute to promoting global peace and security. In particular, the EU Battlegroups are multinational military units, usually made up of around 1,500 personnel each. They play a crucial role in the EU's rapid military response to emerging crises and conflicts around the globe (EU Battlegroups, 2017, p. 1). Similar to any decision within the CSDP, their deployment is contingent on a unanimous decision by the Council (López, 2023, p. 14). Since 2007, the EU Battlegroups have been fully operational and proved their value as a tool for defence cooperation. However, their deployment has been hampered by challenges related to political will, operational capability, and financial solidarity (Koenig, 2021, p. 4). In this context, the Strategic Compass aims to address these challenges and enhance the role of the EU Battlegroups within the broader framework of the RDC. Namely, the RDC is envisioned to comprise of “substantially modified EU Battlegroups and pre-identified modules, incorporating the military forces and capabilities of Member States” (EEAS, 2022, p. 25). This

strategic integration positions the EU Battlegroups as a central element of the RDC, emphasizing their importance in the EU's collective security architecture.

In conclusion, the RDC represents a pivotal aspect of the European Union's commitment to crisis management within the CSDP. Accordingly, the Strategic Compass initiatives, including the ongoing development of the RDC and modifications of the EU Battlegroups, underscore the EU's dedication to enhancing its rapid response capabilities and ensuring the safety and security of its citizens.

21. 3. 2. Strategic Capability Projects

The EU's strategic capability projects are specific and targeted initiatives implemented by Member States under the EU Capability Development Plan (CDP). In particular, these initiatives reflect the Capability Development Priorities defined by the CDP. Namely, the CDP serves as a central reference and comprehensive framework for defence planning in the EU, guiding various defence-related initiatives such as the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence Policy (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), and all future instruments in support of EU defence (EDA, 2023, p. 1). Initially, the CDP was grounded in insights from four key sources, laying the foundation for understanding the evolving operational requirements stemming from the ESDP. These sources include (a) the initial Helsinki Headline Goal, encompassing the Rapid Reaction Force and the Petersberg Tasks; (b) insights derived from the operational experiences of early ESDP missions; (c) considerations related to the Headline Goal 2010 and the concept of Battlegroups; and (d) an examination of EU–UN collaboration in the context of military crisis management (European Parliament, 2006, p. 13). The CDP was later periodically updated and revised in line with developments within the CSDP, reflecting the changing landscape of European defence needs.

The agency responsible for creating and developing the CDP is the European Defence Agency (EDA). Since 2008, the EDA has continuously revised the CDP in cooperation with the Member States while involving expert contributions from the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff (EDA, 2023, p. 1). The preparation of the CDP is supported by Strategic Context Cases (SCC), which outline the main characteristics, opportunities, and challenges in the short, medium, and long term. These cases provide distinct roadmaps to address the identified priorities (EDA, 2019, p. 1). As a result, the CDP continuously provides a responsive and dynamic framework that adapts to the evolving nature of European defence needs. In this

process, the CARD also plays a vital role as a mechanism supporting the operationalization of the CDP. Specifically, the CARD facilitates the operationalization of the CDP by assessing how Member States are executing the EU Capability Development Priorities. This assessment aims to gradually build a thorough understanding of the European defence landscape, encompassing capability development, Research and Technology (R&T) endeavors, the defence industry support dimension, and operational aspects. For instance, the 2020 CARD Report recommends that participating Member States utilize its findings in the PESCO context to address fragmentation in the European defence landscape, emphasizing coordinated and continuous efforts in defence spending, planning, and cooperation. It also promotes greater utilization of EU defence initiatives, informs the development of the Strategic Compass, addresses capability shortfalls, enhances operational engagement forces, and focuses on next-generation capabilities and collaborative opportunities (CARD-Report, 2020, p. 1).

In the broader context of the CSDP, the Strategic Compass emerges as a crucial instrument, further accentuating the significance of strategic capability projects in advancing European security and defence. In particular, the Strategic Compass assumed a central role in strengthening the capability development and cooperation efforts proposed in the 2020 CARD report (EEAS, 2022, pp. 50-51; CARD-Report, 2020). This strategic framework underscores the necessity for increased collaboration and serves as a guiding element for aligning and enhancing the effectiveness of strategic capability projects. For instance, the Strategic Compass proposes collaborative efforts within PESCO and the European Defence Fund, focusing on developing strategic capabilities across various domains. This includes upgrading and modernizing crisis management capabilities in the Land domain, emphasizing advancements in Soldier Systems and Main Battle tanks. The Maritime domain aims for an assertive Union presence through high-end naval platforms, including European Patrol Class Surface Ships. The Air domain prioritizes next-generation and interoperable capabilities, integrating future combat systems and countering threats like Unmanned Aerial Systems. The Space domain focuses on cutting-edge technology for Earth Observation, Space Situational Awareness, and communication, aligning with the Defence in Space initiative. The Cyber domain emphasizes coordinated operations, utilizing technologies like quantum computing and AI for cyber defence, ensuring Enhanced Military Mobility (EEAS, 2022, pp. 44-47). To achieve these objectives, the Strategic Compass underlines the imperative of revising the Headline Goal process by 2023, promoting a unified and forward-looking approach to European security and defence. This involves aligning military capability development more closely with operational

needs, thereby playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Capability Development Plan (Ibid., p. 50). As a designated milestone, the Strategic Compass underscores the imperative for participating Member States in PESCO to meet all more binding commitments by 2025, ensuring that one-third of the ongoing PESCO projects successfully achieve the expected capability (Ibid., p. 46).

Overall, by addressing specific needs in each military domain - land, sea, air, space, and cyber - the Strategic Compass ensures a coordinated response to evolving threats and promotes innovation, interoperability, and a robust defence posture. In this context, it also promotes “synergies among civilian, defence, and space research and innovation, accentuating the investment in critical and emerging technologies for security and defence” (Ibid., p. 47).

A tangible outcome of the Strategic Compass is manifested in the updated 2023 version of the CDP, where 22 priorities have been delineated based on its guidelines and the recommendations of the 2022 CARD Report (EDA, 2023; CARD-Report, 2022). These priorities, strategically distributed across the five military domains (land, maritime, air, space, cyber), with an additional eight classified as strategic enablers and force multipliers, distinctly reflect the Strategic Compass guidelines, as well as the imprint of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the prevailing global geopolitical dynamics (EDA, 2023). Moreover, these priorities function as updated guiding directions for Member States, urging them to synchronize their military capability development with operational needs, thereby nurturing a defence strategy oriented toward the future.

In conclusion, the Strategic Compass stands as a cornerstone in advancing European security and defence, influencing the strategic capability projects and priorities outlined in the Capability Development Plan. Its multifaceted approach, encompassing collaboration, innovation, and alignment with operational needs, ensures that European defence capabilities remain at the forefront of addressing evolving threats.

22. Leveraging EU funding instruments

The Strategic Compass highlights the importance of EU funding instruments in bolstering European security and defence. These instruments provide crucial financial aid, promote defence industrial cooperation, maximize available financial resources, encourage innovation and research, incentivize joint procurement, and streamline arms export control practices (EEAS, 2022, pp. 49-51). By providing essential financial support, these instruments enable Member States to address critical capability shortfalls, invest in emerging technologies, and enhance their defence capabilities. Furthermore, fostering defence industrial cooperation through these instruments promotes a collaborative approach within the EU, maximizing synergies between Member States and contributing to a more integrated defence framework. Considering these objectives, the Strategic Compass advocates for enhancing defence industrial capabilities and joint research and development projects based on the findings of the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis (EEAS, 2022, p. 15; European Commission, May 2022). In this context, it emphasizes the importance of utilizing resources such as the European Defence Fund and strengthening collaborative defence industrial cooperation efforts through initiatives such as the Regulation on the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act, the European Defence Investment Programme, and the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EEAS, 2022, pp. 14-17).

22. 1. Strengthening Defence Capabilities through the European Defence Fund

EU funding instruments act as catalysts for improving defence capabilities by providing the essential financial impetus to facilitate investment in cutting-edge technologies, research and development. In line with this, the Strategic Compass highlights the central role of the European Defence Fund in strengthening the overall defence capabilities of EU Member States to ensure that their armed forces are well-equipped to face future challenges on the battlefield (Ibid., p. 46).

The European Defence Fund (EDF) is a Commission initiative established to support joint defence research and development, fostering innovation, competitiveness, and technological autonomy within the defence industrial base. Accordingly, the EDF aims to contribute to the Union's strategic autonomy by stimulating cross-border cooperation among Member States, enterprises, research centers, national administrations, international organizations, and universities. This collaboration spans defence products and technologies research and

development phases. To promote innovative solutions and an open internal market, the EDF supports and facilitates expanded cross-border cooperation, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and middle capitalization companies (mid-caps) in the defence sector. In addition, the Regulation on the establishment of the EDF highlights the consideration of regional and global priorities, including those outlined by NATO, ensuring alignment with the Union's objectives and actively facilitating the participation of Member States or associated countries with a specific emphasis on preventing unnecessary duplication (Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council, pp. 149-150).

At the core of this comprehensive initiative is a budget of €7.9 billion, allocated for the period 2021-2027, distributed across two strategic strands. The "research strand" is dedicated to collaborative research in innovative defence technologies, while the "development strand" co-funds the joint development of defence products and technologies. Specifically, €2.7 billion is allocated for collaborative defence research, and €5.3 billion supports collaborative capability development projects, thereby complementing national contributions to fortify the Union's defence capabilities (Ibid., Article 4). The allocation of this budget is based on Annual Work Programs for each year, strategically designed to maintain stability throughout the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093). In particular, the Annual Work Programs are developed in collaboration with Member States representatives, involving the EDA and the EEAS, focusing on priorities aligned with the CSDP, the CDP, and regional and international considerations. For instance, the 2023 Annual Work Program categorized 17 thematic and horizontal actions. These categories involve investments in (1.) Medical Response, CBRN & Human Factors, (2.) Information Superiority, (3.) Sensors, (4.) Cyber, (5.) Space, (6.) Digital Transformation, (7.) Energy Resilience & Environmental Transition, (8.) Materials and Components, (9.) Air Combat, (10.) Air and Missile Defence, (11.) Ground Combat, (12.) Force Protection and Mobility, (13.) Naval Combat, (14.) Underwater Warfare, (15.) Simulation and Training, (16.) Disruptive Technologies, and (17.) Innovative Defence Technologies (European Commission, March 2023, Annex 1, p. 4).¹³

The EDF eligibility criteria mandate that projects must involve collaboration among at least three eligible entities from three different Member States or associated countries, although smaller consortia are permitted for calls targeting disruptive technologies. Eligible recipients

¹³ Disruptive Technologies and Innovative Defence Technologies are categorized as horizontal actions.

and subcontractors must be established in the EU, with executive management structures within the EU and without control by non-associated third countries, unless approved security-based guarantees are provided (EDF, 2021, p. 3). Among associated countries, only Norway has opted in for the EDF. The implementation of Annual Work Programs is overseen by the Commission, with the possibility of delegating management to entrusted entities in justified cases (European Commission, March 2023, p. 1).

In summary, the EDF provides a pivotal financial impetus for enhancing security and defence capabilities within the European Union. Aligned with the Strategic Compass guidelines and the priorities of the CSDP, the EDF ensures a strategic and coordinated approach to bolstering defence capabilities, fostering innovation, and reinforcing the overall security framework within the European Union. The Commission's oversight of the EDF's implementation underscores its dedication to efficiency, innovation, and fostering collective defence efforts among EU member states (Ibid., p. 3). The comprehensive approach of the EDF, strategically structured through Annual Work Programs, reinforces its commitment to addressing critical capabilities and contributing to the Union's strategic autonomy.

22. 2. Promoting Defence Industrial Cooperation

The Strategic Compass emphasises the importance of promoting cooperation between Member States to improve the European defence industry. To achieve this goal, it underlines the need to identify and address critical capability gaps while advocating future investments under the European Defence Investment Programme (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). In particular, the Strategic Compass underscores the necessity of aligning the joint defence investments with the objectives set forth at the Versailles Summit in March 2022, where the HR/VP Josep Borrell presented a Joint Communication addressing EU defence investment gaps and proposed actionable measures to rectify them. At this summit, three dimensions of gaps were identified: a budgetary dimension, signifying under-investment by Member States in defence over the past two decades; a capability dimension, highlighting the deficiency of critical enablers in armed forces; and an industrial dimension, underscoring the need to adapt EU manufacturing capacities for defence equipment to meet the demands of peacetime and beyond (European Commission, May 2022, p. 2). In summary, this document underlines the need to Europeanise defence research and innovation, regulate the defence industry market and technology base, and effectively manage the costs associated with national defence efforts.

In line with the anticipated and subsequently adopted Defence Investments Gaps Analysis, the Strategic Compass highlights the importance of encouraging “short-term joint procurement of military equipment among Member States” (EEAS, 2023, p. 15). To facilitate this advancement, it also underscores the significance of *the Regulation on the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act* (EDIRPA) for 2022-2024 (European Commission, July 2022). Specifically, this Instrument promotes cooperation among Member States in defence procurement, fostering solidarity, interoperability, and efficiency in public spending. It also prevents crowding-out effects by ensuring that Member States can meet their defence equipment needs even in times of increased demand and reduces fragmentation within the defence industry. Moreover, this Instrument aims to boost the competitiveness and effectiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, particularly by facilitating the industry's adaptation to structural changes. This includes expediting the ramp-up of manufacturing capacities, which has become increasingly urgent in response to the evolving security landscape following Russia's aggression in Ukraine (Ibid., pp. 6-8). Accordingly, the Strategic Compass earmarked potential funds totalling EUR 500 million to achieve these goals (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). However, this new instrument only received EUR 300 million to ensure partial compensation to Member States that jointly acquire capacities via consortia of at least three members (The Council, October 2023). In addition, the EDIRPA aligns with established collaborative EU defence initiatives like the EDF and PESCO, creating synergies with other EU programs and fully supporting the objectives of the Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022, pp. 14-17; European Commission, July 2022, p. 2).

In the long run, the Strategic Compass highlights the significance of the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP) for enhancing the EU's defence industry and aiding Member States in joint defence equipment procurement. Accordingly, this program aims to establish conditions for VAT exemption of defence consortia (EEAS, 2022, p. 15). The Regulation on establishing the EDIP is expected to be presented by the European Commission after the finalization of EDIRPA in 2023 (European Parliament, January 2023, p. 63). Namely, the EDIP Regulation should be based on the successful implementation of EDIRPA, and its further development depends on the availability of adequate funding. Moreover, this Regulation should facilitate the creation of European Defence Capabilities Consortia (EDCC), providing criteria for Member States for joint defence equipment and capability development procurement. Once established, the EDIP will complement the European Defence Fund in

improving European defence capabilities (EPRS Strategic Foresight and Capabilities Unit, 2023).

As a result of this development, Commission President von der Leyen announced the launch of a comprehensive consultation process to shape a new European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) in her 2023 State of the Union speech (European Commission, September 2023, p. 39). This initiative is being prepared in cooperation between the Commission and the High Representative and should be presented in early 2024. This strategy will leverage insights from the Defence Investment Gap Analysis, the operational know-how gained from the European Defence Fund, and other EU defence mechanisms. Additionally, it will capitalize on recent efforts to bolster joint procurement among Member States and bolster industrial capacity to support Ukraine. In particular, this strategy aims to enhance the defence capabilities of EU member states by developing a modern and robust European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, thus creating a strategic framework for the future. This approach will enable Member States to procure new defence equipment and fortify the EU's role as a long-term security and defence actor, aligning with the objectives outlined in the Strategic Compass (European Commission, October 2023).

In conclusion, the Strategic Compass underscores the imperative of fostering defence industrial cooperation among Member States, aiming to address critical capability gaps and boost joint defence investments under the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP), aligning with the objectives set forth at the Versailles Summit. Moreover, the Regulation on the EDIRPA is set to improve cooperation in defence procurement and bolster the competitiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (European Commission, July 2022, p. 1). This strategic approach, supported by the forthcoming European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS), seeks to fortify EU defence capabilities, ensuring a resilient and effective response to evolving security challenges.

23. Strategic Compass Targets and Milestones

The strategic compass defines its goals and deadlines based on four pillars - Act, Ensure, Invest, and Partner. Accordingly, this chapter presents a tabular presentation summarizing these goals and milestones.

23. 1. The Act Pillar

The ACT Pillar of the Strategic Compass seeks to enhance the European Union's role as a proactive player in security and defence matters. This entails enabling swift and decisive action, prioritizing the Union's resilience, and fostering mutual assistance and solidarity among member states. The primary goal of this pillar is to encourage more robust planning procedures and strengthen existing command and control structures. It also promotes better preparedness by organizing live exercises and adopting a more integrated approach to crisis management. Accordingly, the Strategic Compass proposes the following objectives and deadlines:

Objective	Deadline	Details
EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC)	2025	By 2025, the EU plans to have a fully functional Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) that can quickly deploy a modular force of up to 5,000 troops in hostile environments. This objective entails agreeing upon operational scenarios by 2022 and initiating regular live exercises from 2023 onwards. These exercises are intended to enhance readiness and interoperability among participating forces.
Article 44 Implementation	2023	By 2023, the EU seeks to establish the practical steps for applying Article 44 TEU. This implementation will enable a coalition of willing and capable Member States to organize and carry out missions or operations within the EU framework, under the political supervision of the Council.
Military Planning and Conduct Capability	2025	The EU has set a goal to enhance the Military Planning and Conduct Capability to the point where it can efficiently plan and execute all non-executive military missions, as well as one medium-scale or two small-scale executive operations by 2025. Additionally, the operational framework will incorporate live exercises to improve capabilities and readiness.
Mutual Support and Coordination	Ongoing	Efforts are ongoing to strengthen mutual support and coordination between Civilian and Military CSDP missions and the EU-led ad hoc missions. Accordingly, establishing operational links between areas of operation like EUNAVFOR Atalanta and the European Maritime Awareness Mission contributes to cohesive operational planning and execution.

Maritime Operations	Ongoing	The ongoing expansion of maritime operations aims to enhance security and stability in strategically significant regions beyond current areas of interest, building upon the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept to address emerging challenges.
Air Security Operations	2023	A military framework for air security operations, including roles such as “air support, rescue and evacuation, surveillance, and disaster relief” (EEAS, 2022, p. 30), is set to be finalized by 2023. This concept will provide a framework for coordinated air operations to address security challenges effectively within the EU context.
Civilian CSDP Compact	Mid-2023	By mid-2023, the EU intends to introduce a new Civilian CSDP Compact. This Compact is designed to boost the efficiency of civilian CSDP missions by advancing operational capabilities and enhancing coordination among pertinent EU and Member States' justice and home affairs entities.
Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming	2023	The goal is to incorporate human rights and gender considerations into all civilian and military CSDP activities by 2023. This effort involves enhancing the representation of women in leadership roles within CSDP missions and operations and expanding the networks of human rights and gender advisers.
Exercises and Preparedness	Ongoing	Ongoing efforts involve holding routine exercises to strengthen mutual support in cases of armed aggression, as specified in Article 42(7) TEU. These exercises encompass various domains and include cyber exercises initiated in 2022, with plans for live exercises incorporating civilian and military elements from 2023 onwards.
Military Mobility and Infrastructure	Ongoing	Efforts to improve military mobility require significant investment and action in various areas. This includes initiatives to enhance digitalization, strengthen the cyber resilience of transport infrastructure, and utilize artificial intelligence, air, and sea lift capabilities to enhance military mobility.
Cross-Border Procedures	2025	By 2025, the EU aims to complete the improvement and harmonization of cross-border procedures. These procedures are critical for facilitating seamless cooperation and coordination among Member States during times of crisis or large-scale movements, contributing to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of EU security and defence initiatives.

Source: EEAS, 2022, pp. 30-31

In conclusion, the ACT pillar of the Strategic Compass underscores the European Union's commitment to fortify its role as a proactive entity in security and defence affairs. By prioritizing swift and decisive action, enhancing resilience, and fostering solidarity among member states, the EU aims to elevate its capabilities in crisis management and operational effectiveness. With a comprehensive approach that includes robust planning processes,

strengthened command and control structures, and increased readiness through live exercises, the EU is firmly committed to achieving its objectives within the given time frames. Furthermore, ongoing efforts across various domains underscore the EU's dedication to bolstering mutual support, advancing maritime and air security operations, and integrating human rights and gender perspectives into its actions. Ultimately, these initiatives aim to strengthen the EU's capacity to address security challenges effectively and promote stability within and beyond its borders.

23.2. The Secure Pillar

The Secure Pillar of the Strategic Compass prioritizes proactive measures to address rapidly evolving challenges. This involves a concerted effort to enhance resilience across various domains. In order to effectively counter hybrid threats, the EU aims to consolidate instruments and strategies by developing a Hybrid Toolbox. In this context, emphasis is placed on reinforcing cyber defence and cybersecurity measures and strengthening capabilities to deter and combat foreign information manipulation and interference. Additionally, securing access to and presence in critical domains such as the high seas, airspace, and outer space is paramount. Efforts also extend to enhancing resilience against climate-related risks and both human-made and natural disasters, with a commitment to achieving a climate-neutral EU presence on the ground. Strengthening capabilities for rescuing and evacuating citizens at risk beyond EU borders further underscores the pillar's focus on solidarity and mutual assistance (EEAS, 2022, pp. 33-39). Following the identified issues, the Strategic Compass proposes the following goals and deadlines:

Objective	Deadline	Details
Intelligence and Secure Communications	End of 2022	By the end of 2022, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity will reassess the EU Threat Analysis in close collaboration with the intelligence services of Member States. These assessments will be conducted regularly every three years, or more frequently if changes in the strategic and security environment require it. Efforts will be made to enhance the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity by 2025, focusing on increasing resources and capabilities. Additionally, by 2025, the EU Satellite Centre will be upgraded to enhance its autonomous geo-spatial intelligence capabilities. To improve the exchange of information, including classified data, new cybersecurity and information security standards and regulations will be implemented by EU institutions, agencies, and bodies in 2022..

Hybrid threats, cyber diplomacy, and foreign information manipulation and interference	2022-2024	In 2022, the EU plans to create the EU Hybrid Toolbox to manage responses to hybrid threats targeting the EU and its Member States. This toolbox will encompass a range of measures, including preventive, cooperative, stability-enhancing, restrictive, and recovery actions, aimed at reinforcing solidarity and mutual support. Efforts will also focus on expanding the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox and developing a Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox to identify, assess, and address such threats. Additionally, the establishment of EU Hybrid Rapid Response Teams is underway. By 2023, a mechanism for systematically gathering data on foreign information manipulation and interference will be implemented, supported by a specialized Data Space. By 2024, all CSDP missions and operations will be equipped to utilize relevant tools from the toolbox.
Strategic Domains	Various	In 2022, the EU plans to advance its Cyber Defence Policy to enhance its ability to protect, detect, defend against, and deter cyberattacks. Efforts will include ongoing development of the Joint Cyber Unit and the introduction of a new European Cyber Resilience Act. By the end of 2023, the EU aims to finalize an EU Space Strategy for security and defense, which will validate the Galileo threat response mechanism and assess solidarity and mutual assistance strategies for space-related threats. By 2025, the EU will focus on improving maritime security awareness and increasing naval visibility both within and beyond its borders. Additionally, a strategic review will be completed by the end of 2022 to ensure that European airspace remains open, safe, and secure.
Countering Terrorism	Early 2023	By early 2023, the EU plans to assess and enhance tools and initiatives designed to boost partners' capabilities in countering terrorism, particularly focusing on disrupting terrorism financing. Efforts will be increased to collaborate with strategic partners and engage in multilateral forums. Additionally, the network of Counterterrorism Experts within EU Delegations will be reinforced to improve overall effectiveness.
Promoting Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control	2023	By 2023, the EU will bolster efforts aimed at advancing disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control objectives. This will include enhancing support for partner countries and promoting new agreements beyond the New START treaty. Key activities will involve aiding partners in the effective implementation of sanctions and control measures.
Climate Change, Disasters, and Emergencies	2023-2025	By the end of 2023, Member States are expected to formulate national strategies to adapt their armed forces to the impacts of climate change, as outlined in the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap. By 2025, every CSDP mission and operation will be equipped with an environmental advisor and will be required to report on their environmental impact. Additionally, there will be efforts to enhance the ability of armed forces to assist the civilian sector during emergencies and improve coordination between civil and military entities, including through joint drills. Furthermore, by 2023, the EEAS's Crisis Response structures, such as the Situation Room, will be upgraded to better handle complex emergencies like evacuations and rescues abroad, in collaboration with the Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

Source: EEAS, 2022, pp. 39-41

In conclusion, the Security Pillar of the Strategic Compass embodies the European Union's commitment to fortifying its resilience and capabilities against emerging threats. Through a multifaceted approach encompassing intelligence enhancement, cyber defence, and strategic domain reinforcement, the EU aims to ensure the security of its citizens and interests. By adhering to the outlined objectives and deadlines, the EU demonstrates its determination to strengthen mutual assistance, solidarity, and preparedness in the face of evolving security challenges. This proactive stance underlines the EU's role as a reliable and assertive player in the areas of security and defence, committed to ensuring peace and stability both within and beyond its borders.

23. 3. The Invest Pillar

The Invest Pillar of the Strategic Compass prioritizes substantial enhancements in defence expenditures to narrow jointly critical military and civilian capability gaps. This entails fortifying the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base across the Union, fostering participation from small and medium enterprises across borders. This dedication encompasses initiatives such as the Defence Investments Gaps Analysis, the Regulation on the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), the European Defence Investment Programme, and the European Defence Strategy. The Binding Commitments outlined in Permanent Structured Cooperation mandate consistent real-term increases in defence spending to align with collective defence objectives (The Council, 2017, Annex 2). Furthermore, there is a commitment to enhance and leverage collective defence investments within the EU, particularly through the European Defence Fund. This includes advancing research and technology initiatives across various domains such as maritime, land, air, space, and cyber. Moreover, the EU investments aim to boost critical and emerging technologies to reduce dependencies, secure supply chains, and protect intellectual property. Additionally, cooperation with like-minded partners worldwide, based on reciprocity, is emphasized to maximize mutual benefits (EEAS, 2022, pp. 43-51). In line with these general goals, the Strategic Compass proposes the following objectives and deadlines:

Objective	Deadline	Details
Defence Expenditure	Mid-2022	By mid-2022, member states will hold discussions and share their national targets for increasing defence spending, focusing on security requirements, interoperability, and achieving economies of scale. The European Commission, in cooperation with the EDA, will assess the gaps in defence investment and propose measures to strengthen the European defence industrial and technological sector. In addition, new incentives to encourage joint investment in key defence capabilities will be introduced and reported on in the Annual Single Market Report.
Capability Development	2023	By 2023, the Headline Goal process will be updated to better align the development of military capabilities with operational requirements. Annual meetings of defence ministers will take place to discuss EU defence initiatives and focus on improving capabilities. In addition, a new civilian capability development process will be introduced to assess needs, define requirements and regularly review progress, in line with the updated CSDP Compact.
Strategic Capabilities	2025	By 2025, EU defence efforts will aim to significantly address key deficiencies in strategic enablers, with particular emphasis on enhancing capabilities in areas such as strategic airlift, space-based communication systems, cyber defence, and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR). Efforts will also concentrate on developing next-generation capabilities across all domains, including land, maritime, air, space, and cyber, to address emerging security challenges.
Strategic Technologies and Dependencies	2022-2023	In 2022, the European Defence Agency will set up a Defence Innovation Hub to leverage synergies with the EU Defence Innovation Scheme. The Observatory on Critical Technologies will be used to identify strategic dependencies in the defence sector, and efforts will be made to mitigate these dependencies by utilizing EU and Member States' tools and policies. There will be a concerted push to enhance research, technological advancement, and innovation across the EU, focusing on reducing strategic dependencies, especially in critical infrastructure and digital sectors..
	2023	In 2023, a joint assessment will be carried out with the European Commission to analyse the risks to critical infrastructure supply chains, focusing on the digital sector, to improve the protection of the EU's security and defence interests.

Source: EEAS, 2022, pp. 49-51

In conclusion, the Invest Pillar of the Strategic Compass provides a strategic roadmap for strengthening the European Union's defence capabilities through investment initiatives. Accordingly, the EU aims to enhance its military and civilian capability by committing to significant improvements in defence spending and reinforcing the European Defence

Technological and Industrial Base. In particular, the Invest Pillar emphasizes the importance of collaborative defence investments at the EU level through the European Defence Fund to foster innovation, reduce strategic dependencies, and secure vital supply chains. Furthermore, the EU seeks to maximize mutual benefits by leveraging strategic partnerships and promoting reciprocal cooperation with like-minded nations. The EU's concerted investment efforts aim to enhance its strategic autonomy, advance technological innovation, and ensure the security and resilience of its defence infrastructure in an ever-changing global environment.

23. 4. The Partner Pillar

The Partner Pillar of the Strategic Compass underscores the vital role of partnerships in advancing the EU's global strategic influence. Partnerships not only bolster the EU's security and defence capabilities but also reinforce the rules-based international order and promote effective multilateralism, with a special focus on the United Nations (UN) framework. Accordingly, the EU is committed to fostering tailored partnerships that align with its values and interests, particularly in conflict resolution, capacity building, and resilience efforts. Moreover, partnerships stand at the forefront of the European Union's ambition to become a global strategic player, reinforcing its commitment to international peace and security. As articulated in the Strategic Compass, multilateral and regional collaborations serve as cornerstones in navigating the complex landscape of global challenges (EEAS, 2022, pp. 59-60).

In this context, the EU recognizes the indispensable role of multilateral alliances, epitomized by its strategic partnership with NATO. This collaboration was especially evident during Russia's military aggression against Ukraine in 2022, highlighting the importance of Euro-Atlantic security. Accordingly, the EU's partnership with NATO remains foundational to its security framework, emphasizing collective defence, crisis management, and resilience-building efforts. The Joint Declarations signed by the EU and NATO in 2016 and 2018 serve as pillars of this cooperation and promote inclusivity, transparency, and mutual decision-making (The Council, December 2016; The Council, 2018). Building upon this foundation, the EU and NATO are committed to deepening their collaboration across various domains, from political dialogue to military capability development and joint and inclusive exercises (EEAS, 2022, p. 54).

Similarly, partnerships with regional organizations like the United Nations (UN) are pivotal in upholding the rules-based international order. In this context, the EU's commitment to supporting UN actions in peace and security underscores the importance of strategic cooperation. In particular, the EU collaborates with the UN through joint missions and operations, enhancing operational coordination and crisis management capabilities. In the framework of this cooperation, structured information exchange and foresight exercises enable proactive responses to emerging challenges, from climate change to cyber threats.

In addition to multilateral engagements, the Strategic Compass prioritizes **tailored bilateral partnerships**, aligning with the EU's shared values and interests. In particular, strategic cooperation with key allies such as the U.S., the UK, Norway, and Canada advances mutual security objectives, fostering dialogue on diverse issues, including emerging technologies and crisis management (EEAS, 2022, p. 56). Regular high-level dialogues and joint initiatives underscore the commitment to strengthening transatlantic relations and promoting mutual cooperation. Regarding the partnership with the U.S., the EU recognizes its strategic importance and seeks to deepen collaboration across a spectrum of security and defence domains. Leveraging the progress made from the EU-U.S. Summit Statement in June 2021, the EU is dedicated to deepening its collaboration with the U.S. on key security and defence initiatives. Through joint efforts, both entities aim to address shared security challenges effectively, bolstering resilience and safeguarding common interests (The Council, June 2021).

Moreover, the EU seeks to deepen partnerships with **neighbouring and regional** actors, including Turkey and the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Through enhanced cooperation, mutual resilience against hybrid threats and cybersecurity challenges is bolstered, contributing to regional stability and security. Addressing issues such as democratic governance and counter-terrorism remains central to nurturing these partnerships and promoting shared prosperity and security. In addition to neighborhood partnerships, the EU seeks to deepen partnerships with **regional actors** across Africa, Asia, and South America. By enhancing cooperation with African nations, the EU contributes to regional stability and security, tackling challenges like terrorism and irregular migration. In Asia, collaborative efforts with ASEAN and Indo-Pacific countries aim to bolster maritime security, counter extremism, and promote regional stability. In South America, partnerships address shared security concerns, such as organized crime and illicit trafficking, while fostering climate change and sustainable development dialogue (EEAS, 2022, pp. 55-57).

In summary, the Partner Pillar of the Strategic Compass highlights the indispensable role of partnerships in advancing the EU's global strategic influence, strengthening security capabilities, and upholding the rules-based international order. In line with the described partnerships, the Strategic Compass proposes the following goals and deadlines:

Objective	Deadline	Details
Multilateral	From 2022	Enhance and broaden the strategic partnership, political dialogue, and collaboration with NATO across all established domains, including resilience, emerging disruptive technologies, climate and defence, and outer space. Establish new joint priorities for EU-UN cooperation (2022-2024) that involve shared horizon scanning, strategic foresight, gender-sensitive conflict analysis, and improved political and operational coordination, alongside enhanced information sharing. Host the inaugural biennial Security and Defence Partnerships Forum in Brussels in 2022, with invitations extended to multilateral, regional, and bilateral partners by the HR/VP.
Regional	As of 2022	Intensify political discussions and enhance collaboration with the OSCE, African Union, and ASEAN on conflict prevention, on shared situational awareness, and resilience. Establish a collaborative roadmap with the OSCE focused on conflict prevention and crisis management. Revitalize and broaden cooperation with the African Union, emphasizing support for training, capacity building, and independent African-led peacekeeping missions. Fortify security and defence partnerships with nations in the Western Balkans, eastern and southern neighbourhoods, Indo-Pacific region, and Latin America. Plan and execute live maritime exercises with Indo-Pacific partners by 2023.
Bilateral	As of 2022	Enhance collaboration with the United States by establishing a focused security and defence dialogue, building on the June 2021 Summit Statement. Expand cooperation with Norway and Canada through current dialogue channels and maintain openness to engaging with the United Kingdom on security and defence matters. Enhance security and defence dialogues with partners across the Western Balkans, eastern and southern neighbourhoods, the Indo-Pacific, and Latin America. Broaden the network of military advisors and counter-terrorism specialists in EU Delegations to bolster international diplomatic efforts in security and defence.

Source: EEAS, 2022, pp. 59-60

In conclusion, the Partner Pillar of the Strategic Compass underscores the critical role of partnerships in advancing the EU's global strategic influence, enhancing security capabilities, and upholding the rules-based international order. Through strategic cooperation with its partners, the EU aims to respond to contemporary challenges and promote peace and security on a regional and global scale. The outlined objectives and deadlines presented in the Strategic

Compass provide a structured framework for deepening multilateral, regional, and bilateral partnerships, emphasizing proactive engagement and tailored cooperation initiatives. By adhering to these goals, the EU can strengthen its position as a global strategic player while fostering mutual understanding and cooperation with its partners across various domains. The commitment to fostering partnerships reflects the EU's dedication to promoting stability, resilience, and prosperity on a global scale.

24. The Implementation of the Strategic Compass – Brief Overview

The implementation of the Strategic Compass has been profoundly influenced by Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has fundamentally altered the security landscape of the continent and posed significant challenges to the rules-based international order (EEAS, 2023, p. 6). In response to the conflict, the EU Heads of State or Governments adopted the Declaration in Versailles in March 2022, condemning Russian aggression and urging the withdrawal of all forces and military equipment from Ukrainian territory (European Council, 2022, p. 1). This declaration articulated a collective stance on the war and provided additional guidance for refining the Strategic Compass. Consequently, the Strategic Compass implementation embodies Europe's commitment to solidarity, coherence, and proactive security measures in addressing regional and global challenges. Moreover, the Versailles Declaration and the guidelines outlined in the Strategic Compass catalyzed a swift and robust EU response to the conflict in Ukraine, characterized by concerted diplomatic efforts, stringent sanctions, steadfast support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and substantial military aid provisions.

Introducing the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass in March 2023, the HR/VP Borrell emphasizes that the EU's decision to provide military assistance to Ukraine represents a historic departure from traditional policy stances (EEAS, 2023, p. 6). Specifically, this move signifies a shift from passive observation to active support, underscoring the EU's commitment to upholding regional stability and defending shared values in the face of external aggression. Such decisive action heralds a new era of EU foreign policy, characterized by proactive engagement and solidarity with partner nations confronting security challenges. The HR/VP Borrell suggests that this rapid reaction demonstrates the transformation of 'geo-political Europe' from rhetoric to action (Ibid., p. 4).

Accordingly, the EU and its Member States have allocated €12 billion in military aid to Ukraine through March 2023. Of this, €3.6 billion was allocated for military supplies through the European Peace Facility, which also facilitated the training of 30,000 Ukrainian troops via the EU Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (Ibid., p. 5). This financial support was significantly increased during 2023, with the EU providing Ukraine with over €85 billion in financial assistance by January 2024, of which €28 billion was earmarked for military support (The Council, January 2024; for more, see: European Parliament, January 2024). In addition, the EU imposed a comprehensive set of sanctions on Russia, targeting various sectors such as

technology, media, critical infrastructure, and finance (Council Regulation N (EU) 2023/426). Concurrently, the EU diversified its energy supply sources, substantially reducing its dependence on Russian energy imports (European Commission, 24. October 2023, p. 3). According to HR/VP Borrell, these efforts are not only aimed at providing aid to Ukraine but also at ensuring the security of the European Union. In this context, he underscores the necessity of increased investment in the EU's common security and defence (EEAS, 2023, p. 5).

In line with these efforts, EU Member States significantly increased defence spending and investments in 2022, with collective defence spending reaching €240 billion, reflecting a 6% increase compared to the previous year (EDA, November 2023, p. 3). The 2022 CARD Report projected further increases in defence expenditure by up to €70 billion by 2025, with Member States expected to fulfill their commitments before this deadline (CARD-Report, 2022, p. 2). These increased investments underscore a concerted effort to strengthen defence capabilities and enhance security across the European Union. Advocating for these investments, the HR/VP Borrell points out that such spending should become the norm rather than the exception (EEAS, 2023, p. 5).

In addition to supporting Ukraine and increasing investment in security and defence by Member States, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the importance of partnerships with NATO and the U.S. In this context, the EU has further strengthened its cooperation with both partners in 2023. For instance, the Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation, issued on January 2023, reaffirms the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, emphasizing their shared values, commitment to peace, and the need for closer cooperation in addressing security challenges, particularly in response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and China's assertiveness (European Council, January 2023). Furthermore, the EU held a summit with the U.S. in Washington in October 2023, where both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepening their partnership, emphasizing shared values and representing nearly 800 million citizens. They prioritized areas such as security and stability, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, engagement with China, strengthened economic cooperation, climate action and sustainable development, technology cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges to bolster the transatlantic relationship. Additionally, they condemned Russian aggression and reaffirmed their support for Ukraine's sovereignty. They also addressed the conflict in Israel, condemning terrorism and supporting Israel's right to defend itself against attacks (The Council, October 2023). Overall, these events

underscore the importance for the EU to closely coordinate with its strategic partners, particularly within the framework of NATO's European Security and Defence Identity concept. This strategic alignment is central to promoting European strategic autonomy. By strengthening partnerships with NATO and the United States, as reflected in the EU-NATO Joint Declaration on Cooperation and the Washington Summit, the EU aims to bolster collective security, counter common threats, and assert its role in global security issues with unwavering conviction. Moreover, this strategic orientation serves as a cornerstone for further developing European Strategic Autonomy, ensuring that the EU can effectively address and respond to emerging security challenges while maintaining a robust transatlantic relationship.

In conclusion, this introduction provides an overview of the key developments and initiatives shaping the implementation of the Strategic Compass. The subsequent chapters will delve deeper into the analysis of the four pillars of the Strategic Compass: ACT, SECURE, INVEST, and PARTNER. These pillars form the foundation of Strategic Compass's approach to addressing regional and global security challenges, and a thorough examination of their implementation will provide valuable insights into the EU's efforts to enhance its strategic autonomy and strengthen its partnerships with key allies such as NATO and the U.S. (EEAS, 2022, p. 23).

25. The Implementation of the ACT Pillar

The ACT Pillar within the Strategic Compass framework is a focal point for the European Union's proactive engagement in security and defence matters. This pillar encompasses various initiatives, including the further development of the Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC), the implementation of Article 44 TEU, the enhancement of Military Planning and Conduct Capability, the promotion of Mutual Support and Coordination, the advancement of Maritime Operations, the establishment of Air Security Operations, the formation of a Civilian CSDP Compact, the integration of Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming, the conduct of Exercises and Preparedness activities, the improvement of Military Mobility and Infrastructure, and the harmonization of Cross-Border Procedures (EEAS, 2022, pp. 30-31). Year after the Strategic Compass adoption, the EEAS presented the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass, offering a more generalized assessment of Pillar implementation rather than a comprehensive one. Nevertheless, this general assessment provides guidelines for analyzing the relevant documents and reports, allowing a more comprehensive picture of what has been done concerning the implementation of the Strategic Compass. Therefore, this report serves as a vital tool for evaluating the EU's proactive engagement in security and defence, providing stakeholders with valuable insights into the achievements, challenges, and areas requiring further attention within the Strategic Compass framework.

25. 1. Support to Ukraine

Regarding the ACT pillar, the Annual Progress Report (EEAS, 2023) provides a brief overview of the achievements within this pillar over one year, emphasizing the assistance provided to Ukraine. Notably, almost one-third of the ACT implementing report, covering three pages, is entirely devoted to support for Ukraine. This type of policy indicates the determination and solidarity of the European Union in assisting a partner country, essentially reflecting Commission President von der Leyen's statement that the EU will support Ukraine “as long as it takes” in its conflict with Russia (France 24, September 2022). Following this commitment and foremostly the principles outlined in the Versailles Declaration, the EU established the European Union Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) in October 2022, aiming to enhance the defensive capabilities of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/1968). For this purpose, the EU established two training centers, one in Poland and one in Germany (EPRS, November 2022, p. 1). In particular, this mission is designed to

fortify Ukraine's territorial integrity and readiness to counter potential military threats from Russia and other aggressors. Working closely with allied international partners, EUMAM provides training assistance to Ukrainian forces and welcomes the participation of third-party states. With activities conducted exclusively on EU territory, the mission benefits from contributions from EU Member States, offering various training modules and personnel. According to the Annual Progress Report, the EU was expected to have trained approximately 30,000 Ukrainian soldiers by the end of 2023 (EEAS, 2023, p. 7). This target was already surpassed in November 2023, with over 34,000 soldiers trained by EUMAM Ukraine since the mission's inception (The Council, November 2023).

In addition to the training of military personnel, Ukraine was supplied with lethal and non-lethal equipment, further strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities. This supply was facilitated through the European Peace Facility (EPF), an entity operating outside the EU budget that has been active since July 2021. Its purpose is to fund the joint expenses associated with military operations and missions under the CSDP (The Council, March 2021, p. 15). To ensure the availability of EPF funds for assisting Ukraine, the Council swiftly and unanimously adopted 12 decisions by November 2022. These decisions comprise six tranches (in 2023, one more tranche is adopted), each with two support measures for the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF), consisting primarily of lethal equipment and non-lethal support. Each installment was budgeted at €500 million (EPRS, May 2022; EPRS, November 2022). By September 2023, the EPF allocations for military assistance to Ukraine amounted to €5.6 billion. This includes funding for the seven regular tranches, each amounting to at least €500 million, as well as the initial two phases of the ammunition plan. Additionally, €106.7 million has been allocated for the common costs of the EU military assistance mission for Ukraine, along with two aid measures valued at €16 million and €45 million, respectively. These measures were established by the Council decisions of November 15, 2022, and February 2, 2023 (The Council, November 2022; The Council, February 2023).

As a result of this support and investment, Ukraine was able to actively oppose Russia on the front line and launch the counteroffensive announced in June 2023 to liberate the occupied territories (The Washington Post, 2023). In addition to the EU, Ukraine received significant military and financial aid from the U.S., the UK, and NATO (see: Mills, 2023, pp. 13-18; U.S. Department of Defense, December 2023; NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2023; U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2024, p. 2). However, the Ukrainian counteroffensive failed, leading to a considerable loss of Ukrainian troops and a reduction of ammunition and missiles,

which caused an overall decrease in Ukrainian security and defence capabilities (Rodkiewicz & Iwański, 2023, p. 2; Khurshudyan, 2023). Accordingly, the European Council assessed progress within the Council regarding military assistance for Ukraine through the European Peace Facility and within the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, proposed expansion of its total financial limit. In this context, the Council should finalize negotiations by early March 2024 to revise Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509, considering the proposal for a Ukraine Assistance Fund by the High Representative and feedback from Member States (European Council, February 2024).

In summary, the EU support to Ukraine under the ACT pillar encompasses various initiatives, including military training and equipment supply, signifying the European Union's commitment to assisting its partner country in the face of Russian aggression. Through efforts such as the establishment of the EUMAM Ukraine and funding from the European Peace Facility, Ukraine has received substantial assistance in strengthening its defence capabilities. However, the provided support was not sufficient. In light of the failed Ukrainian counteroffensive, there is a pressing need for reassessment and potentially increased assistance to bolster Ukraine's defence capabilities.

25. 2. EU Military Partnership Missions and Civilian EU Missions under the CSDP

The Annual Progress Report on the Strategic Compass Implementation underscores the EU's commitment to promoting peace and stability in regions requiring assistance. In this context, the Report particularly points to the EU civilian mission in Armenia and the military partnership mission in Niger (EEAS, 2023, p. 7). However, both of these missions, as described in previous chapters, failed to prevent events such as the Azerbaijani invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh and the coup d'état in Niger.¹⁴ These events resulted in the ethnic cleansing of Armenians and increased Russian influence in the Sahel region, ultimately leading to the cancellation of the EUMPM Niger mandate in December 2023 (Klonowiecka-Milart & Paylan, 2023; Yabi, 2023; Euroactiv, 2023). Furthermore, the Sahel region also experienced a decrease of the EU influence in Burkina Faso in September 2022 when a military junta under Captain Ibrahim Traoré overthrew Interim President Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba due to his alleged inability to address the country's Islamist insurgency (Ndiaga & Mimault, October 2022). This change led to a remarkable reorientation of the West African country's foreign policy. Namely, interim President Traore opted for a strategic rapprochement with Russia and the termination of the French military's Barkhane anti-jihadist mission in November 2022 (France 24, November 2022; France 24, February 2023).

The significance of the Sahel region is underscored in the Strategic Compass and the Annual Progress Report on its implementation (EEAS, 2022, p. 2; EEAS, 2023, p. 7). This approach is based on the 2011 Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel and the 2021 EU strategic priorities for the Sahel (EEAS, 2011; European Parliament, July 2021). Historically speaking, the importance of the Sahel region for the EU stems from France's historical ties and active cooperation efforts since the 1960s, advocating for EU engagement in this region. Maślanka states that this push towards “Europeanisation” aimed to alleviate financial burdens and dispel accusations of neo-colonialism, supported by other EU members like Italy, Spain, and Germany (Maślanka, 2023, p. 1). Despite such criticism, the EU acknowledged the Sahel's strategic significance due to its location between the North African coast and southern sub-Saharan countries, making it a crucial transit point for migrants and a region of considerable interest. Moreover, the Sahel is at the epicenter of a multifaceted regional security and humanitarian crisis, where inadequate state governance and fragile political structures, especially in Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali, further escalate regional instability. Accordingly,

¹⁴ See following Chapters: Providing Shared Assessment of Threats / Regional Level, and The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity

the EU adopted the Strategy for the Sahel in 2011 and subsequently established the Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell for the Sahel (RACC) in 2014, aiming to support G5 Sahel structures and countries to enhance regional cooperation and operational capabilities in defence and security while reinforcing international collaboration, transparency, and internal EU coordination in the framework of the integrated approach to the Sahel (EEAS, 2011; EU RACC Sahel, 2022). However, events in 2020–2021 underscored the persistent political instability in the Sahel, as demonstrated by the military takeover in Chad following the unexpected death of President Idriss Déby in April 2021 and the subsequent coups in Mali in August 2020 and May 2021, which revealed vulnerabilities in democratic governance structures (Human Rights Watch, June 2021; Dion & Sany, 2021). In light of this, the EU launched a new integrated strategy for the Sahel in 2021, aiming to enhance political involvement by emphasizing governance mechanisms, human rights, and collaboration with civil society and local authorities while concurrently upholding security cooperation with regional partners (European Parliament, 2021). This commitment is further reinforced by the Strategic Compass, which emphasizes the significance of the enhanced EU engagement in tackling the instability in the Sahel region (EEAS, 2023, p. 7). On the other hand, coups in Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have strained the relations between countries in the Sahel region and EU member states, notably France, resulting in a shift in the foreign policy of this region towards forging closer ties with Russia. Accordingly, Maślanka points out that the challenges and restricted capacity in executing missions and operations under the CSDP in the EU's southern neighborhood have cast doubts on the future of EU crisis management, potentially allowing for increased engagement in the Union's eastern neighborhood and advancements in projects vital to bolstering NATO's collective defence (Maślanka, 2023, p. 1).

Aligned with these pressing challenges and following the Strategic Compass, the Council adopted the new Civilian CSDP Compact in May 2023. This updated policy framework builds upon the initial Compact endorsed in November 2018, aiming to strengthen the efficiency and capacities of civilian CSDP missions through specific commitments, achievements, and timelines embraced by member states and EU institutions (The Council, 22. May 2023). In particular, the adoption of the Civilian CSDP Compact coincides with escalating conflicts, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, geopolitical shifts, and challenges such as violations of international law and human rights, democratic backsliding, and climate change. Emphasizing the EU's responsibility for its security, the Compact underscores the importance of strengthening civilian CSDP missions' effectiveness, flexibility, and robustness to address

current and emerging security challenges. Accordingly, it provides strategic guidelines for enhancing civilian CSDP, focusing on rapid and robust action, investment in capabilities, and partnerships with host countries and international organizations while promoting human rights and gender equality and addressing climate change-related security challenges (EEAS, May 2023).

In conclusion, while the EU demonstrates a steadfast commitment to promoting peace and stability in regions of need, recent events underscore ongoing challenges and complexities. Failures in missions to prevent conflicts and respond effectively to crises highlight the need for enhanced strategies and capabilities. The adoption of the new Civilian CSDP Compact in May 2023 represents a significant step towards addressing these challenges, aiming to bolster the efficiency and capacities of civilian missions. However, geopolitical shifts, violations of international law, and climate change continue to pose significant obstacles. Given this backdrop, the effective implementation of the Strategic Compass guidelines, along with the fostering of enhanced partnerships and a focus on addressing emerging security threats, is essential to advance the EU's objectives in crisis management and conflict resolution.

25. 3. Advancements and Challenges in European Security and Defence Initiatives

The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass provides a concise overview of the progress made over the past year on various aspects of European security and defence initiatives (EEAS, 2023, pp. 8-9). One significant development highlighted in the report is the transformative impact of the European Peace Facility (EPF) on European and international security. Namely, the EPF has significantly bolstered military assistance efforts, notably by operationalizing the 'train and equip' model, enabling the financing and provision of non-lethal and lethal equipment to Ukraine (The Council, November 2022). As mentioned in the chapter "Support to Ukraine", the EPF has facilitated seven military assistance packages totalling EUR 3.6 billion, demonstrating a strong commitment to strengthening security measures in Ukraine. Moreover, the EPF's global scope extends beyond Ukraine, encompassing support for regions worldwide. In this context, the Annual Progress Report emphasizes plans to bolster military assistance in other regions, including Africa, the Middle East, the Western Balkans, and the Eastern neighborhood. Of particular note was the expected provision of lethal equipment for African partners, marking a significant expansion of the EPF's reach and impact (EEAS, 2023, p. 8). Accordingly, in March 2023, the Council approved an assistance measure through the European Peace Facility aimed at enhancing the military capabilities of the Nigerien Armed Forces to safeguard Niger's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as to enhance civilian protection against increasing terrorist threats (Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/509). The €40 million assistance measure, aligned with Niger's three-pronged approach (equipment, infrastructure, and training), was developed in collaboration with the EU military partnership mission in Niger (EUMPM Niger). Unfortunately, the coup d'état in Niger on July 26, 2023, along with growing Russian influence on the transitional government under General Tiani, presented significant obstacles for the EUMPR Niger in carrying out its mandate, culminating in the withdrawal of French, German, and Italian troops from Niger and the cessation of the EUMPR mandate in December 2023 (Yabi, 2023; Euroactiv, 2023). In light of these challenges, reassessing existing strategies and further developing the European Peace Facility and the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity is crucial to enable the European Union to respond effectively to crises and assert itself as a credible security and defence actor on a global scale.

In this context, the Annual Progress Report emphasizes the importance of operationalizing the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity by 2025, recognizing the imperative of rapid response capabilities in addressing imminent crises outside the Union. Regarding this issue, it is

underscored that progress has been made in the conceptual development of the EU RDC, alongside modifications to EU Battlegroups and pre-identification of Member States' military forces and capabilities (EEAS, 2023, pp. 8-9). The most visible sign of this progress is the European Parliament resolution of 19 April 2023 on the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, EU Battlegroups, and Article 44 TEU. This resolution outlines the importance of establishing the EU RDC in enhancing the EU's ability to respond to and manage crises worldwide effectively. In particular, it emphasizes the need for the EU RDC to reach full operational capability by 2025, with specific criteria outlined for its establishment, including troop numbers, operational tasks, readiness levels, joint exercises, funding mechanisms, and the role of the EU Satellite Centre. Additionally, the resolution calls for Member States to demonstrate political will, allocate adequate funds, adapt national procedures, address capability shortfalls, and enhance military mobility to support the development and operationalization of the EU RDC, emphasizing its crucial role in strengthening European security and defence capabilities (European Parliament, December 2023, pp. 5-8).

To achieve these goals, the Annual Progress Report underscores the necessity of credible and agile command and control structures to meet the ambitions of operational engagements. In this regard, attaining the full operational capability of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) by 2025 is essential to achieve the necessary capacity to manage all non-executive military missions and either one medium-scale or two small-scale executive operations while simultaneously addressing staffing, infrastructure, and communication requirements (EEAS, 2023, pp. 8-9). Following these guidelines, the European Parliament adopted the abovementioned Resolution on the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, EU Battlegroups, and Article 44 TEU in April 2023, underscoring the imperative of establishing a fully-fledged operational headquarters under the MPCC to ensure the effective functioning of the CSDP missions. Specifically, this resolution stresses the significance of adequate funding, infrastructure, and civil-military cooperation, highlighting the pivotal role of the MPCC in coordinating EU defence forces. Moreover, it advocates for maintaining national “high readiness” operational headquarters as fallback options and calls for regular updates on MPCC development (European Parliament, December 2023, p. 8). Complementing this institutional approach, a significant stride towards realizing the complete operational potential of the MPCC was demonstrated through the execution of the military exercise “MILEX 23”, which took place at Spanish Rota Naval Base from 16 - 22 October 2023. This exercise, led by the MPCC, culminated in the EU's inaugural live military exercise in October 2023. Involving a

Battlegroup-sized force from nine Member States, the exercise simulated a Stabilisation Operation, showcasing the EU's commitment to enhancing its rapid deployment capabilities and coordination mechanisms (EEAS, November 2023).

In achieving full operational capabilities, the Strategic Compass also points to the critical need to enhance the rapid mobilization of military forces and equipment within and beyond the European Union for collective security and defence (EEAS, 2022, p. 29). Following these directions, the European Commission adopted the Action Plan for Military Mobility in November 2022, intending to remove regulatory infrastructure barriers, promote partnerships, and enhance resilience to cyber and hybrid threats (European Commission, November 2022). According to the Annual Progress Report, efforts have been made to repurpose civilian infrastructure for dual-use purposes, with a significant portion of the military mobility budget allocated for this purpose (EEAS, 2023, p. 9). Specifically, the European Commission ensured EUR 807 million for 38 projects from 18 Member States by January 2024, aiming to upgrade a critical transport infrastructure in the EU for dual use, serving both civilian and defence purposes. In this context, Paloma Aba Garrote, the Director of the European Climate, Infrastructure, and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), asserted that these initiatives will not only bolster EU military mobility but also enhance strategic infrastructure across both the TEN-T network¹⁵ and the EU military network, thereby contributing significantly to the European security and defence (CINEA, 2024).

In addition, the Annual Progress Report underscores the practical arrangements of Article 44 TEU, enabling willing Member States to conduct missions under EU auspices, thereby enhancing flexibility and responsiveness (EEAS, 2023, p. 9). The milestone in strengthening this engagement is the Resolution on the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, EU Battlegroups, and Article 44 TEU, which emphasizes the benefits of utilizing Article 44 TEU for joint EU action in critical situations and urges Member States to maximize crisis management efficiency. In particular, the Resolution calls on Member States to act under Article 44 TEU, allowing for proposals by the VP/HR and unanimous endorsement by the Council, enabling qualified majority voting for subsequent decisions. It also emphasizes the need to change political and economic incentives to enhance the utilization of Article 44 TEU, advocating for greater access to shared funding and flexibility for operational decisions. Additionally, it highlights the advantages of using Article 44 TEU within the EU framework and calls for

¹⁵ Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)

necessary legal updates to support its implementation (European Parliament, December 2023, p. 8).

In conclusion, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass outlines significant advancements and challenges in European security and defence initiatives. Notably, it highlights the transformative impact of the European Peace Facility (EPF) on international security, particularly in Ukraine, demonstrating a strong commitment to bolstering security measures. However, obstacles such as political instability in partner countries like Niger and growing Russian influence pose challenges to the effectiveness of EU missions. To address these challenges, efforts to operationalize the EU RDC and improve military mobility are crucial, as emphasized by both the Strategic Compass and the Annual Progress Report. Additionally, practical arrangements regarding Article 44 TEU and the adoption of resolutions by the Council underscore the EU's commitment to enhancing flexibility, responsiveness, and crisis management efficiency. Moving forward, continued collaboration and adaptation of strategies will be essential to assert the European Union as a credible security and defence actor on a global scale.

26. Implementation of the SECURE Pillar

The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the European Union's commitment to implementing the Secure Pillar, which serves as a foundational framework for enhancing security measures and safeguarding the EU and its citizens. Within this context, the report emphasizes the continuous effort to anticipate and mitigate multifaceted threats by regularly updating the Common Threat Analysis and enhancing the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity.¹⁶ At the core of these efforts lies the EU's determination to strengthen its capability to anticipate threats, secure critical domains, and bolster resilience against various risks, including hybrid threats, cyber-attacks, terrorism, promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control, and addressing climate-related disasters (EEAS, 2023, p. 10).

26. 1. Countering hybrid threats, foreign information manipulation and interference, and strengthening resilience

The Annual Progress Report underscores the growing challenges faced by the EU from hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation, particularly those exacerbated by recent events such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These threats, orchestrated by state and non-state actors, involve the manipulation of various sectors like food, migration, security, energy, and lawfare. In response to these challenges, the EU is actively developing its EU Hybrid Toolbox, incorporating coordinated strategies and the establishment of EU Hybrid Rapid Response Teams to provide targeted assistance (EEAS, 2023, p. 10). Accordingly, in June 2022, the Council adopted *Conclusions on a Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns*, highlighting the increasing use of hybrid tactics and the significant threat they pose to the EU's security and that of its partners. These Conclusions emphasize the necessity of a comprehensive response, leveraging existing and new instruments to counter hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation. Notably, they place significant emphasis on developing the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox (FIMI Toolbox) to enhance the EU's capacity to detect, analyse, and respond to threats posed by foreign information manipulation and interference. The FIMI Toolbox is a crucial component alongside the EU Hybrid Toolbox in countering hybrid campaigns and ensuring a coordinated response across EU Member States and partners. Additionally, the once-established Framework should enhance resilience and solidarity among EU Member States while emphasizing cooperation

¹⁶ For more, see the chapter “Providing a Shared Assessment of Threats”.

with international partners and organizations to address evolving threats (The Council, June 2022).

In line with the anticipated development, the Council adopted *Implementing guidelines for the Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns* in December 2022. This document outlines the steps for establishing the EU Hybrid Toolbox (EUHT) and advancing the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox (CDT), while also focusing on the development of the Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox (FIMI Toolbox). In particular, the implementing guidelines should expedite decision-making by engaging all relevant decision-makers, enable a comprehensive cross-sectoral assessment of challenges and response options, facilitate coordination and coherence in the implementation of tools and measures, and include a follow-up process to assess their effectiveness and discuss next steps based on expertise developed by the relevant Council preparatory bodies (The Council, 14. December 2022, pp. 2-4). As such, the once-adopted Framework and its accompanying guidelines should serve as the foundational components of the EU Hybrid Toolbox, facilitating an integrated, strategic, operational, and systematic approach to countering hybrid campaigns across diverse domains. This Framework will establish a set of decision-making protocols that may be activated when a hybrid campaign occurs, thereby constituting the Hybrid Toolbox, which comprises measures aimed at minimizing and halting the effects of such campaigns as soon as they emerge. The EUHT will have the backing of Hybrid Rapid Response Teams, which will facilitate the quick deployment of relevant expertise that can be customized to address the specific threat at hand. These teams will comprise sector-specific national and EU experts, capable of addressing situations independently and providing support to national authorities (Laoen, 2022, p. 4).

Furthermore, the Council's implementing guidelines emphasize the importance of the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox (CDT), whose further development should play a crucial and supportive role in addressing cybersecurity threats by improving the EU's response to hybrid campaigns in compliance with established rules and procedures (The Council, 14. December 2022, pp. 4-5). The CDT represents a collaborative diplomatic initiative by the EU to counter malicious cyber activities based on the 2014 Cyber Defence Policy Framework and its 2018 updated version (The Council, November 2014; European Parliament, June 2018). This policy framework identifies priority areas for cyber defence and clarifies the roles of European actors while respecting the Union and Member States' responsibilities, institutional framework, and decision-making autonomy. By leveraging the principles outlined in the Cyber Defence Policy Framework, the EU aims to promote a rules-based international order in cyberspace while

effectively countering malicious cyber activities. Building upon this policy framework, the EU adopted the Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade under the Common Foreign and Security Policy in December 2020, which focuses on enhancing cyber resilience, promoting international norms of responsible behavior in cyberspace, and strengthening partnerships with like-minded countries and organizations (European Commission, December 2020). As an integral part of this strategy, the Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox (CDT) plays a crucial role in facilitating diplomatic efforts to “prevent, discourage, deter, and respond to malicious cyber activities” through dialogue, cooperation, and capacity-building initiatives (Ibid., p 16). Through the CDT, the EU reinforces its commitment to upholding cyber norms and fostering a secure digital environment conducive to innovation, growth, and cooperation. Regarding the coordinated EU's response to hybrid campaigns, the Council imperative is to ensure complementarity between the CDT and the EU Hybrid Toolbox, allowing Member States to determine whether to activate either or both toolboxes in the event of hostile campaigns featuring cyber and hybrid elements against the EU, its Member States, or agreed-upon partners, with the potential for simultaneous use based on the diverse array of tools they offer (The Council, 14. December 2022, p. 4).

As a third component, the forthcoming Framework should include provisions to tackle foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), which may not always manifest as part of a hybrid campaign but warrant independent attention. The FIMI Toolbox should comprise four key dimensions: (1) situational awareness, (2) resilience building, (3) disruption/preparation, and implementation of regulation, and (4) CFSP measures, with regular updates provided to the Council to facilitate informed decision-making. While CFSP measures adhere to Treaty governance, they should be implemented through the Framework, necessitating a cohesive integration of all measures to support the EU's coordinated response to such activities within existing mechanisms and instruments (Ibid., pp. 5-6). In this context, the EU has already gained experience combating foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) through various established instruments and mechanisms. For instance, several existing EU instruments are deployed to counter foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), many of which have been in operation for an extended period. These include established tools like the EU's Rapid Alert System, the Code of Practice on Disinformation, and the European Cooperation Network on Elections. Additionally, related initiatives such as the Digital Services Act and the Election Resilience Mechanism are also employed in this effort. Recognizing the importance of international cooperation, the EU engages with key partners on FIMI and

disinformation, which remains a crucial aspect of its response strategy across all dimensions outlined in the FIMI Toolbox. Furthermore, the FIMI Toolbox may extend support to global partners by enhancing their capacity and capability to counter FIMI, thereby contributing to a more robust global response to this challenge (The Council, 14. December 2022, p. 6). Moving forward, the European Parliament adopted the resolution on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation on 01 June 2023, addressing significant concerns regarding external interference in EU affairs. This resolution emphasizes the critical need for a coordinated EU strategy to combat foreign manipulation, particularly in the wake of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The resolution underscores the importance of safeguarding democratic processes and fundamental rights while advocating for measures such as enhancing strategic autonomy, bolstering strategic communication, and establishing mechanisms to combat disinformation effectively (European Parliament, June 2023).

In conclusion, the EU's response to hybrid threats, foreign information manipulation, and interference involves a multifaceted approach to enhance resilience and coordination. The development of the Framework for a coordinated EU response to hybrid campaigns, along with its implementing guidelines, serves as a cornerstone for this strategy, providing a comprehensive framework for decision-making and action. Additionally, the integration and compliance of the EU Hybrid Toolbox, Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, and Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox underscores the EU's commitment to addressing these challenges through coordinated and strategic means. By leveraging existing instruments and mechanisms while also adapting to new threats, the EU is poised to strengthen its response capabilities and mitigate the impact of hybrid campaigns on its security and that of its partners. Accordingly, ongoing collaboration and international partnership will remain pivotal in effectively confronting these dynamic threats and safeguarding the stability and security of the European Union and its allies.

26. 2. Securing the Space

The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the critical importance of space security, asserting that without it, security on Earth cannot be assured. In this context, the report particularly points to the effects of the Russian invasion on Ukraine, underscoring the vulnerabilities of space-based infrastructure and communication systems (EEAS, 2023, p. 11). Recognizing these vulnerabilities and guided by the Strategic Compass guidelines, the EU swiftly responded by adopting the Space Strategy for Security and Defence in March 2023 (EEAS, 2022, p. 40; European Commission, 10. March 2023).

The Space Strategy outlines a comprehensive framework to mitigate space-related risks and strengthen the resilience of space systems within the EU. Central to this strategy is the proposal for an EU Space Law and establishing an Information Sharing and Analysis Centre to bolster security and sustainability in space (European Commission, 10 March 2023, pp. 4-5). In particular, the strategy advocates initiatives to ensure the EU's autonomous access to space and minimize strategic dependencies. Moreover, it emphasizes expanding the existing space threat response mechanism and promoting space exercises to refine response capabilities. Furthermore, the strategy prioritizes optimizing space utilization for security and defence purposes through pilot projects and collaboration between the space and defence sectors. It also highlights the importance of achieving greater coherence with partners, particularly with the U.S. and NATO. In addition to these objectives, it prioritizes responsible behavior in space, advocating for norms and dialogues with third countries to support space security (European Commission, 10 March 2023).

In summary, the EU's response demonstrates a proactive and comprehensive approach to addressing space security threats, ensuring the protection of critical space infrastructure, and fostering international cooperation in this domain. Moreover, the rapid adoption of the Space Strategy indicates alignment with the objectives presented in the Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022, p. 40). However, it is important to note that while the Strategic Compass provides a valuable overarching framework, it offers only general guidelines for developing specific strategies. Accordingly, emerging challenges in space security, such as the proliferation of space debris, cyber threats targeting satellite systems, and the potential militarization of space are addressed in the Space Strategy. Furthermore, ongoing vigilance and adaptability are crucial to effectively respond to evolving threats and maintain the security and integrity of space activities. By continually assessing and refining strategies, the EU can remain at the

forefront of space security efforts and uphold its commitment to safeguarding space as a peaceful and secure domain for the benefit of all humankind.

26. 3. Securing the Maritime

The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the critical importance of the maritime domain in the security landscape, with a specific focus on the EU Maritime Security Strategy, Coordinated Maritime Presence, and the significance of critical maritime routes. Specifically, the report highlights the need to update the EU Maritime Security Strategy to strengthen the EU's role as a maritime security provider, enhance maritime situational awareness, secure sea lanes of communication, and address hybrid and cyber challenges at sea. This updated strategy is also expected to advance key technologies to bolster maritime defence capabilities and mitigate the impact of climate change and marine pollution (EEAS, 2023, pp. 12-13).

As a response to the recommendations of the Strategic Compass, the EU adopted the Revised Maritime Security Strategy in March 2023 (EEAS, 2022, p. 40; European Commission - Annex, March 2023). This updated strategy provides a framework for further action to safeguard EU interests at sea, and protect citizens, values, and the economy, particularly in light of recent military aggression by Russia against Ukraine. Aligned with the Strategic Compass guidelines, the revised strategy is structured around six strategic objectives, with approximately 150 concrete actions outlined in the accompanying action plan (European Commission - Annex, March 2023). These objectives include intensifying activities at sea, working with partners, improving awareness of the maritime sector, managing risks and threats, improving capabilities, and providing specialized training and education (The Council, 24. October 2023).

One of the key objectives of the revised strategy is to increase activities at sea, which includes organizing maritime security exercises, reinforcing existing EU naval operations, developing coastguard operations, and combating illegal activities at sea such as piracy and armed robbery. As an important condition for the efficient execution of these activities, the strategy emphasizes the importance of cooperating with regional and international partners to uphold the rules-based order at sea and intensify cooperation with NATO on maritime security. In addition, enhancing maritime domain awareness is another crucial aspect of the strategy, focusing on information collection and exchange among civilian and military authorities responsible for

monitoring and surveillance activities. This involves utilizing common information-sharing platforms and integrating space-based solutions to boost maritime situational awareness. Furthermore, the strategy emphasizes managing risks and threats by improving the collective resilience and protection of critical maritime infrastructure and conducting regular maritime exercises to address cyber and hybrid threats. Finally, the strategy aims to enhance capabilities in the field of maritime security by developing common requirements for defence technologies, building interoperable unmanned systems, and advancing work on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects related to maritime security. In this context, ensuring specialized education, skills, and training are prioritized to effectively tackle present and future maritime security challenges (The Council, 24 October 2023, pp. 7-35).

Concurrently, the EU's Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) contributes significantly to increased maritime security, particularly in regions facing security challenges such as the Gulf of Guinea and the Northwestern Indian Ocean. Accordingly, the CMP facilitates enhanced coordination of naval and air assets of member states, promoting international cooperation and partnerships at sea while ensuring compliance with international law. For instance, the EU launched the CMP concept in the Gulf of Guinea in January 2021 to complement existing maritime security efforts (The Council, January 2021). Through voluntary contributions from member states, the EU ensures a continuous maritime presence in the region, conducts joint exercises and promotes cooperation with like-minded partners such as the United States, Brazil, and India (EEAS, 2024). Similarly, in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, the EU launched the CMP concept in February 2022 as part of its Indo-Pacific Strategy (European Commission, September 2021). The CMP aims to promote international law, ensure freedom of navigation, and support the passage of merchant ships through strategic maritime routes. By promoting joint maritime exercises, port visits, and information sharing, the CMP helps establish a regional maritime security framework based on rules (EEAS, 2024). Through initiatives like the CMP, the EU demonstrates its commitment to fostering stability, security, and prosperity in maritime regions, in line with its strategic objectives and international obligations.

In conclusion, securing the maritime domain is integral to the EU's security and defence strategy, as outlined in the Strategic Compass and its Annual Progress Report (EEAS, 2022, p. 40; EEAS, 2023, pp. 12-13). By updating and implementing comprehensive maritime security strategies, bolstering cooperation with partners, and leveraging tools like the CMP, the EU reinforces its capacity to address evolving security challenges and uphold maritime security in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment.

26. 4. Countering terrorism, promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass provides a brief overview of the EU's efforts in countering terrorism, promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. In essence, the report highlights the EU's steadfast commitment to safeguarding global peace and security through proactive measures and strategic initiatives. However, the report is summarized in a few sentences, which only scratches the surface of the comprehensive strategies and actions undertaken by the EU in these critical areas.

26. 4. 1. Countering Terrorism

The Annual Progress Report underscores that countering terrorism is one of the top priorities for the EU, as evidenced by its active engagement in international forums and its efforts to enhance cooperation with neighboring countries, particularly in regions vulnerable to terrorist activities like the Western Balkans (EEAS, 2023, p. 13). In particular, this commitment was reaffirmed by adopting the Brussels Declaration at the EU - Western Balkans summit on 13 December 2023. This declaration emphasizes the need for further enhancing collaboration in addressing counter-terrorism and combating various forms of violent extremism, including the prevention of radicalization and terrorist financing (European Council, December 2023). Specifically, it acknowledges the progress made in implementing the Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism for the Western Balkans over the past five years and expresses its commitment to ongoing cooperation, particularly in light of emerging threats such as violent right-wing extremism, online dissemination of extremist content, and potential attacks on critical infrastructure (European Commission, October 2018; European Council, December 2023, p. 13). Additionally, the declaration emphasizes the need for decisive action to combat serious and organized crime, notably money laundering, high-level corruption, and drug-related activities, through strengthened law enforcement and customs cooperation facilitated by the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (European Council, December 2023, p. 13).

Furthermore, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the EU's pivotal position as the co-chair of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), emphasizing its leadership in crafting multilateral policies and fostering best practices to tackle this urgent global issue (EEAS, 2023, p. 13). For instance, the EU, co-chairing the GCTF high-level week, convened counterterrorism experts and diplomats for the 22nd Coordinating Committee and 13th Ministerial meetings in New York on 18-20 September

2023, together with GCTF co-chair Egypt. Kenya and Kuwait joined the Forum during this expansion, enhancing regional representation and focusing on Africa and frontline states. The meetings addressed challenges and opportunities in preventing violent extremism at the local level, emphasized gender-sensitive approaches and youth engagement, and highlighted women's indispensable role in peacebuilding. Additionally, the EU presented an initiative on oversight and accountability mechanisms in counterterrorism, demonstrating its commitment to promoting human rights in this domain (EEAS, September 2023).

In addition, the Annual Progress Report underlines the EU's efforts to expand its Network of Counter Terrorism/Security Experts in EU Delegations located in high-priority areas (EEAS, 2023, p. 13). Established in 2015, this Network comprises approximately 20 Experts currently stationed in EU delegations globally. These EU CT/Security experts play an important role in engaging with host governments, regional bodies, and civil society and represent the EU in a wide range of CT and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) activities with partner organizations (EEAS, October 2023). For instance, the EU's efforts in fighting terrorism in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region contribute to global security, demonstrating the EU's commitment to addressing crises beyond Europe despite facing significant security threats within its borders. In particular, the EU's commitment to fighting terrorism in the region is demonstrated by establishing the EU Training Mission in Mozambique and deploying troops from Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community to support Mozambique's army (Borrell, 2023, pp. 305-307). Additionally, the EU's comprehensive approach, combining security assistance with humanitarian, development, and peace-building actions, reflects its strategy to address the root causes of terrorism and promote stability in Mozambique.

Lastly, the Annual Progress Report emphasizes the EU's contribution to assisting partner nations in adhering to UN and EU regulations regarding Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism Financing, facilitated by the EU Global Facility (EEAS, 2023, p. 13). Accordingly, the European Commission established the EU Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (GF-AML/CFT) in 2017 to address deficiencies in third countries' AML/CFT regimes (EU GF-AML/CFT, 2024). This initiative aims to bolster measures to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing by enhancing compliance with EU AML/CFT Framework, FATF Recommendations, and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. By supporting the development of efficient AML/CFT systems in partner countries, the EU reinforces efforts to safeguard the EU's financial system, leading to decreased illicit financial flows and improved asset recovery mechanisms. The EU GF-

AML/CFT provides tailored technical assistance across three interconnected pillars, focusing on strengthening legislative frameworks, building institutional capacity, and enhancing national and international cooperation on AML/CFT issues. These efforts aim to foster stronger AML/CFT measures globally and reduce the financial support for terrorist organizations and organized crime (Ibid.). Moreover, the EU expanded the scope of its activities by establishing the EU-UN Global Terrorism Threats Facility in April 2022. This Facility aims to provide rapid and flexible support to Member States facing urgent terrorist threats, ensuring adherence to international law and human rights standards. Managed by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and located in Rabat, Morocco, it collaborates with the EU to enhance Member States' capacities to detect, prevent, and respond to evolving terrorist threats while upholding international legal frameworks (EU/UN Press Release, April 2022).

In summary, although the Annual Progress Report provides brief information on counterterrorism efforts, it nevertheless points to directions for comprehensive strategies and actions undertaken by the EU in addressing terrorism and its root causes. Moreover, these initiatives underscore the EU's commitment to implementing the Strategic Compass by intensifying collaboration with strategic partners, actively participating in multilateral forums, and bolstering the network of Counter Terrorism Experts within EU Delegations (Tzirkotis, April 2022).

26. 4. 2. Promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

In 2022, the international landscape for non-proliferation and disarmament faced significant challenges, notably due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. This aggression, violating international law and the UN Charter, strained trust among nations and undermined existing non-proliferation and disarmament mechanisms. Despite these challenges, the European Union (EU) remained steadfast in its commitment to promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.

This commitment is based on guiding principles outlined in strategic documents such as the 2003 EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the 2008 New Lines for Action, and the 2016 Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy (The Council, December 2003; The Council, December 2008; The Council, 2016, pp. 41-42). With the adoption of the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, the EU has further strengthened its strategic focus on non-proliferation and disarmament. In particular, the Strategic Compass reaffirmed the EU's commitment to upholding, supporting, and advancing the disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control framework amidst global and regional challenges (EEAS, 2022, p. 37). Its Annual Progress Report in this domain provides a brief overview, compressed into three sentences, highlighting the challenges arising from the war in Ukraine and the EU's commitment to upholding and strengthening multilateral instruments such as the UN General Assembly, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Moreover, it underscores the EU's preparedness to provide significant political and financial support to its initiatives in non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms export control, thereby strengthening partnerships in these vital realms (EEAS, 2023, p. 13).

Unlike the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass, *the 2022 Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU's Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction* provides a comprehensive overview of the EU's efforts in promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control (Council/2023/383). This report demonstrates the EU's unwavering commitment to upholding international norms and treaties in the face of significant challenges, particularly those posed by Russia's aggressive actions. Specifically, the report outlines the actions taken by the EU and highlights the challenges ahead. For instance, the EU condemned Russia's aggression in several international forums, including the Conference on Disarmament and the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (EEAS, March 2022; UN – Meetings Coverage, August 2022). Despite challenges, the EU played a constructive role in achieving positive outcomes, such as agreements reached during the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (UNIDIR, March 2023). In particular, these agreements included adopting an outcome document and establishing a Working Group of experts tasked with developing a mechanism to review and assess scientific and technological advancements pertinent to the Convention (Council/2023/383, p. 2). Regarding conventional weapons, the EU continued its efforts to prevent illicit trafficking through participation in multilateral fora like the Arms Trade Treaty and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Additionally, it engaged in capacity-building projects to enhance physical security and stockpile management in various regions, including Ukraine (Ibid., pp. 3-4).

In conclusion, the EU's dedication to promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control remained resolute despite the formidable challenges posed by events such as Russian aggression against Ukraine. The adoption of the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence further solidified the EU's commitment to these objectives, as outlined in key strategic documents. Through its Annual Progress Report, the EU underscores its unwavering support for upholding international norms and treaties while highlighting the ongoing challenges and the proactive measures taken to address them. Moreover, the EU's active participation in international forums and its role in achieving positive outcomes, such as those seen in the Biological Weapons Convention, exemplify its proactive stance in shaping global efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. Moving forward, the EU remains steadfast in its pursuit of enhancing global security and stability through concerted efforts in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control initiatives.

26. 5. Climate change, disasters and emergencies

The Strategic Compass recognizes the severe threats posed by climate change, disasters, and emergencies, extending beyond environmental concerns to impact critical infrastructure and exacerbate social inequalities. To address these challenges, it advocates for the implementation of the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap, requiring Member States to develop national strategies for climate change resilience by 2023 and integrate environmental advisors into CSDP missions by 2025. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of enhancing the armed forces' capacity to support civilians during emergencies and strengthening crisis response structures like the EEAS Crisis Response Centre to improve responses to complex emergencies globally (EEAS, 2022, pp. 38-41).

Accordingly, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass underscores the EU's ongoing efforts in addressing climate-related risks and enhancing resilience. In particular, it points to the EU's persistency in the implementation of the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap, considering evolving strategic circumstances and concerning climate forecasts (EEAS, 2023, p. 13). However, the Annual Progress Report offers only a concise overview, limiting the depth of evaluation regarding the progress made. In this context, the Joint Progress Report on Climate, Defence, and Security (2020-2022) provides insights into the progress made in implementing the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap. Specifically, the report highlights efforts to integrate climate change considerations into operational planning for the CSDP missions, deploy environmental advisors, and establish reporting mechanisms for environmental footprints. Furthermore, it outlines initiatives aimed at integrating climate aspects into conflict analysis screenings, developing training modules, and promoting energy efficiency within the armed forces. Lastly, the Joint Progress Report emphasizes that significant strides have been made in strengthening partnerships and multilateralism, especially with organizations such as the UN and NATO, to effectively address the climate-security nexus (EEAS, October 2022).

The next advancement in the EU's efforts to address climate change, disasters, and emergencies is the establishment of the EEAS Crisis Response Centre in December 2023. This Centre notably enhances the EU's capacity to safeguard its staff in delegations and aid Member States in safeguarding and rescuing EU citizens during security or consular crises. Moreover, it functions as the focal point for all crisis-related matters within the EEAS, operating 24/7 year-round. It provides extensive global situational awareness and coordinates preparations,

assessments, and responses to emergencies affecting the safety of EU Delegation staff or EU citizens abroad. With a dedicated team of approximately 150 personnel, including nearly 70 Regional Security Officers stationed in EU Delegations worldwide, the Centre ensures a unified and effective EU response to crises. This involves close cooperation with key partners such as the European Commission, notably DG ECHO's Emergency Response Coordination Centre, and the Council of the European Union, along with other relevant entities involved in crisis management efforts (EEAS, December 2023).

In conclusion, the Strategic Compass and subsequent progress reports underscore the EU's commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change, disasters, and emergencies. By implementing the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap and establishing structures like the EEAS Crisis Response Centre, the EU aims to enhance resilience and coordination in crisis management efforts. Despite progress made, ongoing vigilance and collaboration with key stakeholders remain essential to effectively navigate the complex landscape of climate-related risks and ensure the safety and well-being of EU citizens and staff worldwide.

27. Implementation of the INVEST Pillar

The Invest Pillar of the Strategic Compass embodies Member States' collective efforts to intensify defence spending and investments, emphasizing the necessity to increase financial resources and enhance their efficient allocation through collaborative endeavors. This entails mobilizing existing capabilities while innovating new approaches to incentivize joint procurement initiatives. Moreover, the pillar prioritizes investments in defence innovation to bolster technological sovereignty and reduce strategic dependencies within the European Union (EEAS, 2022, pp. 43-51).

Accordingly, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights key initiatives such as the European Defence Fund (EDF), the Regulation on European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), and the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP) in advancing the strategic objectives outlined in the Strategic Compass. Additionally, it underscores the importance of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in fostering deeper defence cooperation and maximizing the effectiveness of joint defence efforts. Finally, the Annual Progress Report emphasizes the imperative to align defence investments with long-term strategic goals to ensure the security and resilience of the European Union (EEAS, 2023, pp. 14-17).

The European Defence Fund (EDF) stands as a cornerstone initiative within the Invest Pillar, providing essential financial impetus to facilitate investment in cutting-edge technologies and research. With a substantial budget of €7.9 billion allocated for the period 2021-2027, the EDF supports collaborative research and development projects, fostering innovation, competitiveness, and technological autonomy within the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council, p. 162). In particular, financial support is primarily structured around grants covering up to 100% of eligible costs, with the exact amount contingent upon the nature of the activities involved. Additionally, a bonus system is in place, considering factors such as the involvement of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), mid-cap companies, and their connection to a project under the Permanent Structured Cooperation (European Commission, March 2024, pp. 38-45). This approach aims to incentivize participation and ensure equitable access to funding opportunities while fostering collaboration and innovation within the defence sector. By promoting cross-border cooperation and joint development projects, the EDF contributes to strengthening the

overall defence capabilities of EU Member States, aligning with the objectives of the Strategic Compass.¹⁷

In parallel, initiatives such as the Regulation on the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) play a vital role in promoting defence industrial cooperation among Member States. By facilitating joint procurement of military equipment and enhancing solidarity and interoperability, EDIRPA aims to prevent fragmentation within the defence industry while fostering competitiveness and efficiency in public spending (European Commission, July 2022). The regulation aligns with the goals of the Strategic Compass by addressing critical capability gaps and maximizing synergies between Member States (EEAS, 2022, p. 49).

Furthermore, the forthcoming European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP) is poised to strengthen the EU's defence industry and support joint defence equipment procurement. By establishing conditions for VAT exemption of defence consortia and fostering collaboration among Member States, EDIP complements existing initiatives such as the EDF and EDIRPA (European Parliament, January 2023, p. 63). The program underscores the EU's commitment to enhancing defence capabilities and promoting industrial cooperation, aligning with the overarching objectives outlined in the Strategic Compass.¹⁸

In addition to financial investments, the Annual Progress Reports emphasizes the importance of reducing strategic dependencies and securing supply chains within the defence sector. Initiatives such as the Observatory on Critical Technologies and the EU Sovereignty Fund aim to identify and mitigate risks associated with critical technologies, ensuring the resilience and competitiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EEAS, 2023, pp. 16-17). By screening foreign direct investments and implementing anti-coercion measures, the EU safeguards its strategic interests and bolsters industries' access to private funding, further reinforcing its strategic autonomy.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Invest Pillar of the Strategic Compass underscores the EU's commitment to enhancing its security and defence capabilities through substantial investments and collaborative initiatives. By leveraging EU funding instruments such as the EDF, EDIRPA, and EDIP, the EU fosters innovation, competitiveness, and industrial

¹⁷ For more: See Chapter “Strengthening Defence Capabilities through the European Defence Fund”.

¹⁸ For more: See Chapter “Promoting Defence Industrial Cooperation”.

cooperation within the defence sector. Moreover, efforts to reduce strategic dependencies and secure supply chains contribute to strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy and resilience in an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. As the EU continues to pursue its strategic objectives outlined in the Strategic Compass, the Invest Pillar remains integral to achieving a more secure and resilient European Union.

28. Implementation of the PARTNER Pillar

The European Union (EU) recognizes the critical importance of partnerships in fostering resilience and security. The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the EU's concerted efforts to cultivate relationships with bilateral, regional, and multilateral partners, guided by principles of mutual benefit and shared values. Faced with contemporary geopolitical challenges, notably Russia's war in Ukraine, the EU's commitment to robust partnerships has become increasingly vital. Accordingly, the EU has intensified its diplomatic engagements and cooperation with partners to address the multifaceted implications of the conflict in Ukraine. In response to the destabilizing actions of Russia, the EU bolstered the EU-NATO partnership, enhanced collaboration with the UN, and strengthened tailored bilateral engagements with key allies like the U.S. and the UK, particularly in supporting Ukraine. Moreover, the EU has expanded partnerships across diverse regions, enhancing cooperation in Africa, reinforcing commitments to the Sahel, deepening engagements in the Indo-Pacific, and actively pursuing strategic dialogues in the EU Neighbourhood, West Balkans, Middle East, and Latin America to address security challenges and promote regional stability (EEAS, 2023, pp. 18-21).

28. 1. Multilateral and regional partnerships

The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass outlines the European Union's (EU) commitment to defending and upholding the international rules-based order through deepening relationships with crucial multilateral and regional actors. Aligned with the Strategic Compass objectives, the EU intensified its diplomatic and operational efforts to effectively tackle contemporary security challenges by bolstering collaborations with NATO, the UN, and other multilateral and regional partners to foster stability, security, and resilience on a global scale.

28. 1. 1. Partnership with NATO

Given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the endeavors of Finland and Sweden to join NATO (Congressional Research Service, March 2024), the Annual Progress Report underscores the imperative for strengthened and intensified cooperation between the EU and NATO. Accordingly, the report highlights the ongoing efforts and initiatives undertaken by both entities in 2022 and 2023. Specifically, it points to the third EU-NATO Joint Declaration adopted on 10 January 2023, which marks a significant milestone in strengthening this strategic partnership, paving the way for expanded collaboration on resilience, emerging technologies,

outer space, climate change security implications, and countering foreign interference (EEAS, 2023, p. 18). In particular, the third EU-NATO Joint Declaration highlights common threats faced by both organizations, notably Russian aggression against Ukraine and challenges from authoritarian actors, conflict, fragility, and terrorism. It emphasizes the importance of the transatlantic bond, as reflected in the EU's 2022 Strategic Compass and NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept (EEAS, 2022, p. 52; NATO, June 2022). The declaration acknowledges progress in various areas of cooperation, including countering cyber and hybrid threats, operational cooperation, defence capabilities, and counter-terrorism. It commits to deepening existing cooperation and expanding into new areas like geostrategic competition, resilience, critical infrastructure protection, emerging technologies, and climate change security implications. Although NATO continues to be the foundation of collective defence, the declaration acknowledges the benefits of a more robust and capable European defence that is interoperable with NATO. Additionally, it acknowledges China's growing assertiveness as a challenge that needs addressing, reflecting cautious language influenced by the U.S. National Security Strategy (NATO, January 2023; The White House, October 2022, p. 24). To tackle these challenges, NATO and the EU are increasing engagement with Indo-Pacific partners (NATO, January 2023).

In the context of the EU-NATO partnership, NATO standardization plays a crucial role in ensuring effective collaboration among member countries, facilitating interoperability, and enhancing operational effectiveness during multinational operations. Guided by the NATO Standardization Office and the Committee for Standardization, the development and implementation of standards ensure compatibility and commonality among NATO forces and partner countries. Through Standardization Agreements (STANAGs) and Allied Publications, NATO promotes common understanding and optimizes resource utilization, contributing to mission readiness and effectiveness (NATO, October 2022). Regarding the EU, NATO standardization serves as a fundamental element in enhancing cooperation and interoperability in joint operations. The adoption of NATO standards by EU member states facilitates seamless integration into NATO forces and enables optimized communication and coordination. This harmonization increases the efficiency of joint missions and bolsters the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO. Moreover, this shared approach ensures mutual reinforcement of security objectives and strengthens the overall resilience of the Euro-Atlantic region.

Following this coordinated approach, the Annual Progress Report underscores that the Strategic Compass and NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept provide a solid foundation for

expanding the EU-NATO partnership (EEAS, 2023, p. 19). In this context, it points to the intensified political dialogue and the establishment of the EU-NATO Structured Dialogue on Resilience in January 2022, demonstrating ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation (EEAS, June 2023). Within this framework, the EU and NATO launched the EU-NATO Task Force on resilience of critical infrastructure on 16 March 2023, aiming to prevent disruptions to critical infrastructure that provides essential services to citizens and supports economies (European Commission, 29. June 2023). As a first outcome, the EU-NATO Task Force presented a final assessment report in June 2023, delineating the ongoing security challenges and identifying four key sectors of cross-cutting importance - energy, transport, digital infrastructure, and space - while providing concrete recommendations to enhance infrastructure resilience. In particular, the report recommends strengthening cooperation between the EU and NATO to protect critical infrastructure and effectively manage disruptions. It also underlines the need for rapid engagement of high-level officials, regular threat assessments, and intensified dialogue on resilience and military mobility. Additionally, it suggests promoting the exchange of best practices, raising awareness of security issues, and identifying alternative transport routes in case of disruptions. Lastly, these recommendations should be coordinated through the EU-NATO Structured Dialogue on Resilience (EU-NATO Task Force, June 2023, pp. 8-9).

In conclusion, the Annual Progress Report highlights the necessity for enhanced collaboration between the EU and NATO, referencing recent efforts such as the third EU-NATO Joint Declaration and the EU-NATO Structured Dialogue on Resilience. It emphasizes the significance of the EU-NATO Task Force on critical infrastructure resilience in addressing security challenges. Overall, the report reaffirms the commitment to bolstering the strategic partnership and addressing shared security threats.

28. 1. 2. Other Multilateral and Regional Partnerships

The Annual Progress Report on Implementation of the Strategic Compass underscores the importance of strengthening multilateral and regional partnerships to address evolving security challenges. In particular, the report highlights the EU's strategic engagements with key international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as critical components of its security and defence strategy. These partnerships are crucial for promoting peace, stability, and cooperation across various regions while addressing common security threats and advancing shared interests (EEAS, 2023, p. 19).

Within the framework of the UN, the EU continues to uphold and defend the principles of the UN Charter, despite challenges posed by Russia's disregard for the rules-based international order. Strategic exchanges between the EU and the UN have intensified, focusing on implementing agreed priorities for 2022-2024. In operational contexts, EU missions and operations collaborate closely with UN missions in regions such as the Central African Republic, Mali, and Somalia, demonstrating a commitment to coordinated efforts in conflict resolution and peacekeeping (EEAS, July 2023). Additionally, the EU supports the peace process in Yemen in collaboration with the UN, emphasizing the importance of joint efforts in addressing complex security challenges (EEAS, 13. November 2020).

The EU's cooperation with the African Union is another strategic priority, particularly in promoting security across the African continent and countering the global effects of conflicts such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Accordingly, high-level bilateral dialogues further solidify the EU's support for African-led Peace Support Operations, with substantial financial contributions aiming to enhance operational effectiveness. In particular, the EU's support for African-led Peace Support Operations is based on two assistance measures: EUR 130 million in 2021 and EUR 600 million in 2022-24. This funding includes aid for various initiatives, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Somali National Army, the Multi-National Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, and the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). These efforts aim to enhance operational effectiveness, strengthen resilience, and support security forces in affected regions (European Peace Facility, 2024, p. 3).

Also, the EU adopted various assistance measures in Africa, including support for the Mozambican Armed Forces/EU Training Mission in Mozambique (EUR 89 million) for

ground and amphibious mobility assets, technical devices, and a field hospital. Furthermore, support was provided to the Rwanda Defence Force in Mozambique, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Ghana Armed Forces, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Beninese Armed Forces, the Gulf of Guinea (Ghana and Cameroon), and Somali National Army, encompassing a range of equipment and training programs aimed at enhancing military capabilities and security in the region (European Peace Facility, 2024, p. 2). However, assistance to the Malian and Nigerien Armed Forces was suspended due to the coups in Mali in August 2020 and May 2021 and in Niger in July 2023, as well as the reorientation of their foreign policy (Dion & Sany, 2021; Yabi, 2023; Euroactiv, 2023). These events indicate significant challenges in ensuring stability and security in the Sahel region. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive reassessment of EU strategies and engagements in Africa, emphasizing the importance of political stability and democratic governance structures in fostering long-term security and development.

Lastly, the EU seeks to expand its engagement with regional organizations such as ASEAN to promote a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region. Recognizing shared interests in maritime security, trade, and regional stability, the EU aims to intensify engagements with ASEAN in the coming months to reflect its ambitions in the region better. The EU aims to contribute to regional peace and prosperity by fostering cooperation and dialogue with ASEAN member states while addressing emerging security challenges (EEAS, 2023, p. 19).

In conclusion, the Annual Progress Report highlights the significance of multilateral and regional partnerships in advancing the EU's security and defence objectives. Compared to the objectives of the Strategic Compass, the EU has made significant progress in enhancing multilateral and regional partnerships. However, the ongoing security challenges indicate that the EU and its partners must enhance cooperation and coordination to promote stability and contribute to peacebuilding efforts. This includes bolstering support for peacekeeping operations, conflict resolution efforts, and capacity-building initiatives in regions affected by instability and conflict.

28. 2. Tailored bilateral partnerships

28. 2. 1. Bilateral partnership with the U. S.

The partnership between the EU and the U.S. is a cornerstone of transatlantic relations and a vital component of the EU's security and defence strategic approach. As outlined in the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass, the EU-US partnership is instrumental in addressing evolving security challenges and promoting peace, stability, and cooperation on the global stage.

In this context, the report highlights increased cooperation between the EU and the U.S. in supporting Ukraine in the face of the 2022 Russian invasion. In particular, through significant political, military, economic support, and humanitarian aid, both entities have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to bolstering Ukraine's defence capabilities and upholding its sovereignty. From the European side, this support is particularly provided through the EU's Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) and the European Peace Facility (EPF). At the same time, the EU, the U.S., and other NATO allies have intensified their regular military exchanges in support of Ukraine through initiatives such as the Ukraine Defence Contact Group and the EU Military Staff Clearing House Cell (EEAS, 2023, p.19).¹⁹ The Ukraine Defence Contact Group, also known as the Ramstein group, is an alliance comprised of 56 nations, including 32 NATO member states, 24 other countries, and the European Union. This alliance was formed on the initiative of the U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin in April 2022. In particular, the Ukraine Defence Contact Group is dedicated to enhancing Ukraine's defence capabilities by providing military assistance and equipment. The work of this group is based on the regular monthly meetings that coordinate the ongoing provision of military aid (White House, February 2023). For instance, during the 20th meeting, the main agenda was to guarantee the supply of ammunition to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, specifically including 155 mm, 152 mm, and 105 mm artillery shells. Within this framework, Germany declared its intention to provide an additional €500 million in military aid to Ukraine. Moreover, Germany, Canada, and Finland have committed to participating in Prague's joint procurement initiative, which aims to purchase 800,000 artillery shells from non-EU sources for Ukraine (Mukhina, 2024).

¹⁹ The EU Military Staff Clearing House Cell is a coordination center established by the European Military Staff (EUMS) to manage supply and demand requests for military equipment from Ukraine.

Furthermore, the EU and the U.S. have enhanced their cooperation through the established security and defence dialogue, allowing both sides to identify opportunities for closer cooperation on crisis management, defence initiatives, and support for Ukraine (EEAS, 2023, pp. 19-20). This newly established dialogue is based on the 2021 EU-U.S. Summit Recommendations, which recognize the need to launch a dedicated dialogue on security and defence and pursue closer cooperation in this field (The Council, 2021, p. 7). Accordingly, the EU and the US held two security and defence dialogue meetings until 2024. During the second meeting, held in Washington on December 1, 2023, both parties exchanged updates on their respective security and defence initiatives and policies. Discussions encompassed a wide range of topics of mutual interest, including security assistance for Ukraine, cooperation within the defence industry, and the situation in Africa. Also, they committed to maintaining close collaboration in the Western Balkans, focusing on reinforcing democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and fostering continued dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina concerning the status of Kosovo. Additionally, both sides emphasized the importance of signing the Administrative Arrangement between the European Defence Agency and the US Department of Defence, which took place in Brussels on April 26, 2023. In summary, these dialogues strengthened the strategic partnership between the EU and the US in security and defence matters, further solidifying the transatlantic bond (EEAS, December 2023).

In addition to these dialogues, the Administrative Arrangement between the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the US Department of Defence (DoD) establishes a new framework for collaboration, facilitating dialogue on defence topics and participation in relevant meetings. It encompasses cooperation on issues such as military mobility, supply chain management, and the impact of climate change on defence, with an initial scope of cooperation agreed upon by both parties. The arrangement also enables a forum for exchange and dialogue, allowing for substantial defence discussions within the EDA's remit and invitations for US DoD participation in relevant meetings, along with U.S. involvement in the European Defence Standardisation Committee's open sessions (EDA, April 2023).

Finally, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass highlights the first EU-U.S. naval exercise in the Indo-Pacific region held in March 2023 (EEAS, 2023, p. 20). This exercise demonstrated mutual commitment to strengthening maritime security and paving the way for expanded military exchanges. In particular, the exercise involved vessels from both sides, including USS PAUL HAMILTON, EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta's Spanish Ship REINA SOFIA, and Italian ship CARLO BERGAMINI, aiming to enhance

interoperability through professional exchanges and training in boarding procedures and ship navigation. This joint effort underscores the EU-U.S. common commitment to upholding freedom of navigation and lawful sea use in the Indo-Pacific region (EEAS, March 2023).

In conclusion, the enhanced cooperation between the European Union and the United States reflects alignment with the objectives outlined in the Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022, p. 60). Moreover, it underscores the significance of transatlantic relations and the pivotal role of the EU-U.S. partnership in addressing contemporary security challenges while promoting peace, stability, and cooperation globally. The mutual commitment demonstrated through joint initiatives such as supporting Ukraine, enhancing security dialogues, and conducting naval exercises in the Indo-Pacific region signifies a deepening of cooperation between the two entities (EEAS, 2023, pp. 19-20). As such, the EU-U.S. partnership continues to be a cornerstone of international security efforts, reinforcing the transatlantic bond and advancing common objectives in an ever-changing global landscape.

28. 2. 2. Bilateral partnership with other countries

The European Union's commitment to fostering bilateral partnerships in security and defence underscores its dedication to addressing global challenges collaboratively. The Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass underscores the EU's sustained efforts in engaging with strategic partners worldwide.

In particular, the EU's traditional cooperation with NATO countries such as Norway, Canada, and the United Kingdom provides a solid framework for addressing common security challenges. The synergies between EU initiatives and NATO capabilities have strengthened the collective defence posture of Member States and contributed to maintaining regional and global stability. Moreover, the Annual Progress Report highlights the close bilateral cooperation between the EU and these countries in supporting Ukraine through coordinated efforts with the EU Military Staff Clearing House Cell and financial contributions to initiatives such as the European Peace Facility (EEAS, 2023, p. 20). In this context, the EU and Norway signed an administrative agreement in December 2022 for a voluntary financial contribution of Norway to the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine for 2023, providing €14.5 million to the European Peace Facility (The Council, 6. December 2022). At the same time, Canada's contribution to projects like Military Mobility within the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework highlights the potential for synergies between transatlantic partners in enhancing defence capabilities and interoperability. Namely, Canada joined the EU PESCO (alongside the U.S. and Norway) in December 2021, demonstrating an enhanced security partnership. Accordingly, Canada is actively engaged in EU civilian missions, such as EUPOL COPPS in the West Bank and EUAM in Ukraine, deploying Canadian police officers (Government of Canada, 2020-2022). Lastly, the United Kingdom's evolving relationship with the EU in the Brexit aftermath has emphasized the importance of maintaining close ties on security and defence issues. Despite the challenges posed by the UK's withdrawal from the EU, both parties have intensified engagement and cooperation, particularly in supporting Ukraine and exploring avenues for future collaboration. The UK's potential participation in initiatives like Military Mobility underscores a shared commitment to addressing emerging security challenges and upholding collective defence commitments (EEAS, 2023, p. 21).

Beyond traditional NATO partners, the EU's engagement with non-member states, such as Switzerland and Iceland, highlights the importance of fostering a network of strategic

partnerships to address common security challenges. For instance, Switzerland and the European Defence Agency (EDA) signed a Framework for Cooperation in armaments collaboration in 2012 (EDA, March 2012). This Framework grants Switzerland early access to armament policy developments. Also, it provides access to an extensive network, facilitating multilateral armament cooperation across Europe in various EDA activities, including research, development, armaments, education, and training (Mission of Switzerland to the European Union, 2023). Accordingly, Switzerland's longstanding cooperation with the EU on security and defence matters sets a precedent for effective collaboration between non-EU states and the bloc. Similarly, the EU's initiation of new contacts with Iceland reflects efforts to expand its network of allies and enhance collective security in the European neighborhood (EEAS, 2023, p. 21).

Furthermore, the Annual Progress Report emphasizes that the EU's commitment to Eastern partners, particularly in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, has been strengthened, with efforts underway to deepen cooperation agendas by leveraging EU candidate status and the European perspective. Accordingly, by February 2023, the EU and its Member States had allocated approximately EUR 67 billion to provide extensive support to Ukraine, covering various aspects such as military, financial, economic, and humanitarian aid (Ibid.). Productive security and defence dialogues with Georgia and Moldova have yielded tangible support through initiatives like the EPF and the hybrid threat survey, with further intensification expected (The Council, 4. May 2023). Support for Western Balkans partners have also been bolstered, with sustained presence and counter-terrorism efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina through EUFOR Althea (The Council, July 2023). Continuing engagement with the southern neighborhood remains crucial, addressing various security challenges, including terrorism, violent extremism, cyber threats, organized crime, and irregular migration. Accordingly, the EU remains committed to dedicated exchanges with nations such as Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Israel, and Turkey to enhance security cooperation (EEAS, 2023, p 21).

Additionally, efforts to counter the global consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine have been intensified, focusing on ensuring food security and expanding security and defence exchanges with African partners like Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa through various initiatives (For more, see; ECHO, 2023). For instance, the EU and South Africa held the 10th South Africa-EU Political and Security Dialogue Forum in Brussels on 5 September 2022. At this Forum, both sides emphasized the importance of linking dialogue with concrete follow-up actions on various issues, including European Security and Defence Cooperation, UN reform,

and regional developments such as the security situation in Mozambique and the Russian-Ukraine war. As a result, the forum agreed to establish a dedicated Security and Defence Dialogue and a Working Group on Counterterrorism and Illicit Financial Flows to address key security concerns and policy challenges (The Cooperation Council, February 2023, pp. 2-3). Furthermore, the Annual Progress Report underscores the EU's commitment to strengthening security and defence exchanges with key stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific region, including Japan, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and Australia. Concurrently, the EU maintains open dialogue and consultations with China. In Latin America, the EU aims to enhance its role in security and defence matters through ongoing dialogues and encouraging participation in missions and operations (EEAS, 2023, p. 21).

In conclusion, the European Union's commitment to fostering bilateral partnerships in security and defence reflects its steadfast dedication to addressing global challenges through collaborative efforts. The Annual Progress Report underscores the EU's sustained engagement with strategic partners worldwide, emphasizing its traditional cooperation with NATO countries like Norway, Canada, and the United Kingdom. These partnerships have not only strengthened the collective defence posture of Member States but have also contributed significantly to maintaining regional and global stability. Moreover, the EU's engagement extends beyond traditional NATO allies to include non-member states such as Switzerland and Iceland, highlighting the importance of fostering a diverse network of strategic alliances. Also, the strengthened commitment to Eastern partners, combined with intensified efforts to support Ukraine and bolster security cooperation in regions like the Western Balkans, Africa, the Indo-Pacific, and Latin America reflects the EU's proactive approach to global security (EEAS, 2022, pp. 56-58). By leveraging its candidate status and the European perspective, the EU is poised to deepen cooperation agendas and tackle security challenges with resolve and collaboration on the international stage.

29. Conclusion

The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence represents a comprehensive strategic framework developed by the European External Action Service to guide the EU's security and defence actions, focusing on identifying threats, defining objectives, and outlining the means to achieve them. In a broader sense, this strategic document mirrors the ongoing evolution of European security and defence policy, which initially originated with the 1950 unratified Pleven Plan and has progressed to the 2016 EU's Global Strategy, demonstrating the continuous development and adaptation of European policies and strategic approaches in addressing contemporary security challenges. Accordingly, this master's thesis delves into the evolution of European security and defence policies and correlated capabilities, tracing their historical development from the French initiative to establish the European Defence Community to the present day. Specifically, it explores key milestones such as the European Security Strategy, the Lisbon Treaty, and the EU Global Strategy, examining their impact on the ongoing development and adaptation of the EU's security and defence policies in response to the changing geopolitical landscape. Building on the understanding of their evolution, it further investigates the development, adoption, and implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Furthermore, this master's thesis is complemented by findings rooted in realism and research concerning the advancement of European strategic autonomy. These findings provide insights into the power dynamics within the EU and its interactions with external actors, as well as the EU's ability to develop and improve its strategic autonomy. Lastly, this master's thesis offers valuable insights into the organizational framework of the European External Action Service, thereby enhancing understanding of key stakeholders and their roles in implementing the Strategic Compass.

Based on this approach and conducted research, it has been determined that the adoption and implementation of ***the Strategic Compass significantly strengthened the security and defence capabilities of the European Union, thus confirming the accuracy and relevance of the first hypothesis***. This conclusion is essentially based on the findings resulting from an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Strategic Compass. For this purpose, the Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass has been utilized to gain insights into the progress achieved in implementing the objectives outlined in the ACT, SECURE, INVEST, and PARTNER pillars of the Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2023). Accordingly, it has been found that the implementation of the Strategic Compass has led to notable advancements across all pillars, thereby increasing the EU's capacity to effectively address diverse security challenges,

foster strategic partnerships, and enhance its resilience in an ever-evolving global security landscape. In particular, the following findings, stemming from the implementation of all four pillars, demonstrate the positive impact of the Strategic Compass on strengthening the EU's security and defence capabilities:

First, the implementation of the ACT pillar of the Strategic Compass has significantly bolstered the European Union's security and defence capabilities by enhancing the EU's Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC), establishing Military Planning and Conduct Capability, promoting Mutual Support and Coordination, and providing financial and military support to Ukraine. Notably, the EU's support to Ukraine under the ACT pillar has been substantial, with initiatives such as the establishment of the European Union Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine and the provision of military training and equipment through the European Peace Facility (The Council, November 2022). Despite these efforts, the 2023 Ukrainian counteroffensive faced challenges, highlighting the need for reassessment and potentially increased assistance. Additionally, the EU has faced challenges in other regions, such as the Sahel, where events like the coup in Niger have impacted EU missions (Euroactiv, 2023). In response to these challenges, the EU adopted the new Civilian CSDP Compact in May 2023, thereby strengthening the EU's civilian response to crises and conflicts and integrating human rights and gender into all civilian mission activities (The Council, 22. May 2023). Further progress was made with the adoption of the European Parliament's Resolution on the EU's Rapid Deployment Capacity, EU Battlegroups, and Article 44 TEU, which set out specific criteria for achieving full operational capability of the RDC by 2025 and emphasized the importance of coordination and preparedness for effective crisis response (European Parliament, December 2023). In general, the Act pillar's implementation underscores the EU's dedication to enhancing its security and defence capacities in alignment with the Strategic Compass objectives. However, amidst ongoing challenges like the war in Ukraine and instability in regions such as the Sahel, there is a pressing need for continued development of the EU's security and defence capabilities. This involves bolstering existing capabilities and exploring new avenues for cooperation and coordination among Member States. Additionally, enhancing partnerships with international actors and organizations is vital for addressing security challenges that transcend national borders. By actively engaging in collaborative efforts and adapting its strategies to the evolving threat landscape, the EU can strengthen its ability to uphold peace and security within and beyond its borders.

Further improvement of the EU's security and defence capabilities was achieved through the implementation of the SECURE pillar of the Strategic Compass. This pillar encompasses proactive measures to address emerging security challenges across various domains, including cyber defence, hybrid threats, maritime and space security, terrorism, disarmament, and climate-related risks. In particular, this comprehensive Pillar firstly underscores the EU's commitment to anticipating and mitigating multifaceted threats by continually updating the Common Threat Analysis and enhancing the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (EEAS, 2023, p. 10). Following the defined threats and risks, implementation efforts of this pillar include the development of specific strategies, tools, and mechanisms to achieve these objectives. For instance, the EU's response to hybrid threats, foreign information manipulation, and interference involves the development of the EU Hybrid Toolbox, Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, and Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox to address emerging challenges. These efforts are supported by the adoption of the Conclusions on a Framework for a Coordinated EU Response to Hybrid Campaigns in June 2022 and the Implementing Guidelines for the Framework for a Coordinated EU Response to Hybrid Campaigns in December 2022, aiming to enhance resilience and coordination among EU Member States and partners (The Council, June 2022; The Council, 14. December 2022). Furthermore, the EU has also formulated specific strategies, such as the Space Strategy for Security and Defence and the Revised Maritime Security Strategy, to safeguard critical domains and enhance resilience against evolving risks (European Commission, 10. March 2023; The Council, 24. October 2023). Additionally, the EU's efforts in countering terrorism, promoting disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control demonstrate its dedication to global peace and security, reflected in initiatives such as the EU Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (EU GF-AML/CFT, 2024). Finally, by addressing climate change, disasters, and emergencies, the EU reinforces its readiness to tackle emerging threats and enhance crisis response capabilities, exemplified by integrating climate change considerations into operational planning and establishing the EEAS Crisis Response Centre in December 2023 (EEAS, December 2023). In summary, the implementation of the Secure Pillar of the Strategic Compass has significantly enhanced the EU's security and defence capabilities by addressing diverse security challenges through the development of tailored strategies, tools, and mechanisms, fostering collaboration, and ensuring a robust response to emerging threats.

Third, the implementation of the INVEST Pillar of the Strategic Compass marks a significant step to enhance the European Union's security and defence capabilities through increased

defence expenditures and strategic investments. In particular, the EU has enhanced its capabilities by utilizing funding instruments such as the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility, which have facilitated strategic investments in defence research, development, and peacekeeping initiatives (EEAS, 2023). Moreover, further advancement was achieved through the adoption of the Regulation on European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), which promotes defence industrial cooperation by facilitating joint procurement and enhancing solidarity among Member States (European Commission, July 2022). Additionally, the forthcoming European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP) is set to bolster the EU's defence industry through VAT exemptions and collaboration, thereby reinforcing the EU's capacity to improve defence capabilities and encourage industrial cooperation between the defence and civilian sectors. These initiatives also seek to reduce strategic dependencies, secure supply chains, and promote technological autonomy, thus strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy and resilience in the face of evolving geopolitical challenges. As part of this strategic approach, the EU actively promotes and allocates substantial investments towards collaborative defence projects within the PESCO framework, fostering joint research and development endeavors spanning diverse domains such as cyber defence, maritime security, and emerging technologies. Overall, the accomplishments outlined within the INVEST Pillar underscore the EU's dedication to building a more secure, resilient, and strategically autonomous European Union. By leveraging and enhancing existing resources, the EU aims to strengthen defence capabilities, promote industrial cooperation, and address emerging security challenges effectively. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the implementation of this Strategic Pillar significantly strengthened the EU's security and defence capabilities, positioning it to effectively address present and future threats.

Fourth, the Strategic Compass has also introduced guidelines for enhancing bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international partnerships through the PARTNER Pillar. The implementation of this pillar has significantly impacted the EU's security and defence capabilities, acknowledging the crucial role of partnerships in fostering resilience and security. In response to contemporary geopolitical challenges, such as Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the EU has intensified diplomatic engagements and cooperation with key allies like the U.S. and the UK, while also strengthening collaborations with NATO and the UN. These efforts have resulted in increased support for Ukraine, improved dialogue and cooperation on shared security threats, and the reinforcement of strategic partnerships globally. Furthermore, the EU

has expanded its engagement with regional organizations like ASEAN to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, while also enhancing partnerships in its neighborhood, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America (EEAS, 2023, pp. 18-21). This underscores its commitment to addressing security challenges through tailored partnerships across diverse regions. Overall, the implementation of the Partner Pillar has bolstered the EU's ability to effectively address diverse security challenges by promoting collaboration, dialogue, and coordination with international partners, thus enhancing its security and defence capabilities.

Based on the Strategic Compass and its implementation, particularly the Partner Pillar, it has been determined that ***the enhanced EU security and defence capabilities complement NATO and U.S. power***. This conclusion is derived from the highlighted necessity for enhancing cooperation between the EU and NATO, as outlined in the Strategic Compass and the Annual Progress Report on its implementation (EEAS, 2022, p. 10; EEAS, 2023, p. 6). This necessity is underscored by the actions taken by both entities in 2022 and 2023. For instance, the signing of the third Joint Declaration by the EU and NATO in January 2023 emphasizes their shared commitment to addressing common security challenges and deepening collaboration across various domains (NATO, 10. January 2023). This milestone agreement signifies a strategic alignment between the two entities and outlines key areas of cooperation, including resilience, emerging technologies, outer space, and countering foreign interference. In the context of this partnership, it is essential to highlight the significance of NATO standardization, which plays a pivotal role in ensuring effective collaboration among member countries, enhancing interoperability, and optimizing operational effectiveness during multinational operations (NATO, October 2022). Consequently, this standardization significantly influences the development of security and defence capabilities of the EU member states that are also NATO members, thereby further underlying the need for complementarity between the EU and NATO. Moreover, the adopted declarations and the recent NATO enlargement (Sweden and Finland) indicate that NATO remains the cornerstone of the EU's security and defence (Brooke-Holland, 2024).

This approach also reflects the alignment of the EU security and defence policy with the U.S. strategic directions, whose traditional political stance is most vividly manifested in Madeleine Albright's famous '3D Statement' that European Defence Initiatives “*should avoid decoupling Europe from NATO, should not 'duplicate' NATO, and should not discriminate against non-EU NATO members*” (Rutten, 2001, p. 11). As a sign of dedication to the transatlantic partnership, the 1999 U.S. National Security Strategy underscored NATO's crucial role in

European security, committing to maintaining 100,000 military personnel in Europe to deter aggression and uphold transatlantic security (The White House, 1999). This commitment was reaffirmed in NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept, highlighting the interconnectedness of European and North American security and the pivotal role of U.S. forces in maintaining stability (NATO, 1999, point 42). Furthermore, the new 2022 U.S. National Security Strategy emphasizes deepening the alliance with Europe, promoting collective defence under NATO's Article 5, and encouraging European Allies to increase their contributions. Additionally, the U.S. stands behind Ukraine and supports European aspirations for stability, democratic development, and economic growth, fostering resilience and cooperation across the Eurasian region. Through collaborative efforts with the EU, including trade, investment, and technological cooperation, the U.S. aims to promote shared democratic values and address global issues, reaffirming its commitment to consult regularly and act together to pursue common goals (The White House, October 2022).

Accordingly, the Strategic Compass and its Annual Progress Report reaffirmed the EU's commitment to its partnership with NATO and the U.S., emphasizing the necessity of strengthening these alliances and aligning EU security and defence policies more closely with those of NATO and the U.S. (EEAS, 2023, pp. 19-20). This alignment not only enhances interoperability and strategic coordination but also reinforces the transatlantic bond, crucial for addressing common security challenges effectively. As a result, the EU, the U.S., and other NATO allies have intensified their military exchanges in 2022 and 2023, particularly in supporting Ukraine through initiatives like the Ukraine Defence Contact Group and the EU Military Staff Clearing House Cell. Additionally, the EU and the U.S. have deepened their cooperation through a security and defence dialogue, rooted in the 2021 EU-U.S. Summit Recommendations, leading to two meetings held until 2024 (EEAS, 2023, p. 19; The Council, 2021). Furthermore, the Administrative Arrangement between the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the US Department of Defence (DoD) facilitates collaboration on defence issues, including military mobility and climate change's impact on defence. The arrangement also allows for substantial defence discussions and invites the U.S. DoD participation in relevant meetings (EDA, April 2023). Finally, the Annual Progress Report highlighted the significance of the first EU-U.S. naval exercise in the Indo-Pacific region in March 2023, showcasing mutual commitment to enhancing maritime security and interoperability (EEAS, March 2023). ***In summary, the findings from the Strategic Compass implementation, notably the Partner Pillar, confirm the validity of the second hypothesis, highlighting the synergy between***

enhanced EU defence capabilities and NATO/U.S. power. This affirmation is rooted in the demonstrated necessity for increased cooperation between the EU and NATO, as underscored by the Strategic Compass and subsequent actions, solidifying the strategic alignment between these entities, and emphasizing the importance of complementarity in addressing shared security challenges.

Finally, the Strategic Compass implementation has bolstered European strategic autonomy by enhancing the EU's security and defence capabilities and fostering stronger partnerships with the U.S. and NATO, thus enabling the EU to address security challenges independently while remaining aligned with transatlantic allies. At the same time, these efforts reinforce the NATO concept of European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) and pave the way for the further development of European Strategic Autonomy (ESA), indicating a progression toward greater self-reliance in security matters. While ESDI focuses on enhancing European defence capabilities within the NATO framework, ESA represents the EU's broader ambition to assert autonomy across various domains beyond defence. Specifically, the EU Global Strategy outlines the scope of ESA, and with the Strategic Compass implementation, the EU has taken concrete steps to realize this ambition by prioritizing key areas such as technological development, economic resilience, foreign policy, and international partnerships. By aligning its security and defence policies with those of NATO and the U.S., the EU strengthens its position as a reliable and capable security actor on the global stage, while also asserting its independence in decision-making and action. This balanced approach ensures that the EU can effectively contribute to collective security efforts within the NATO framework while pursuing independently its strategic objectives and interests. Overall, the Strategic Compass implementation underscores the EU's commitment to advancing its strategic autonomy while maintaining strong transatlantic partnerships, thus contributing to a more secure and resilient international security environment.

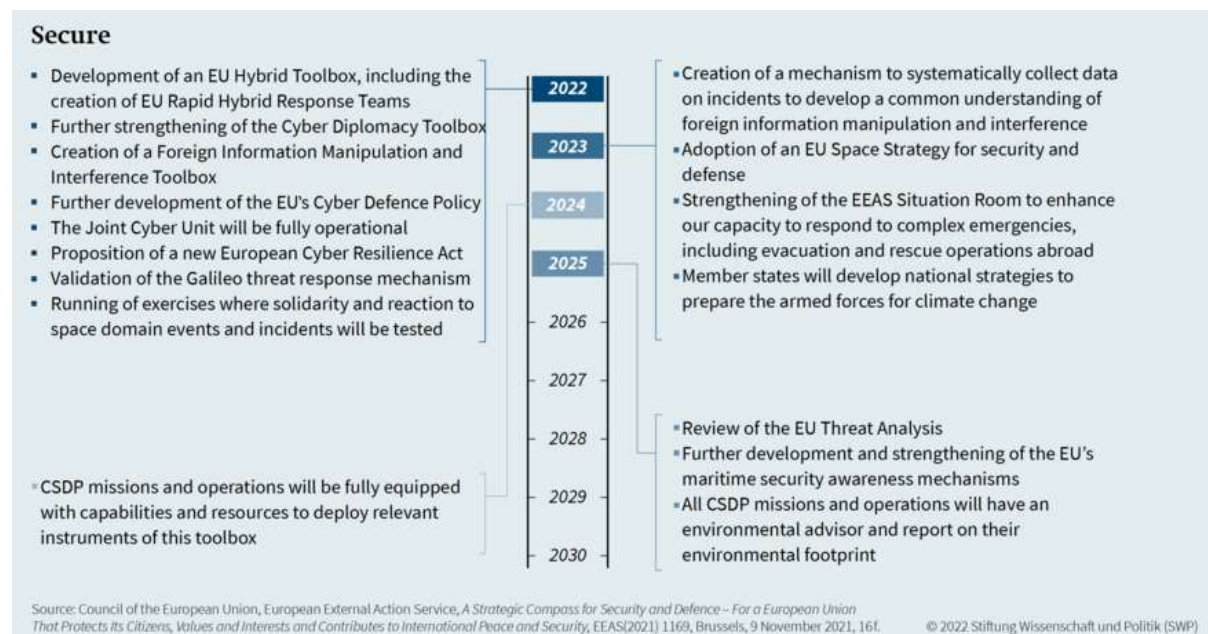
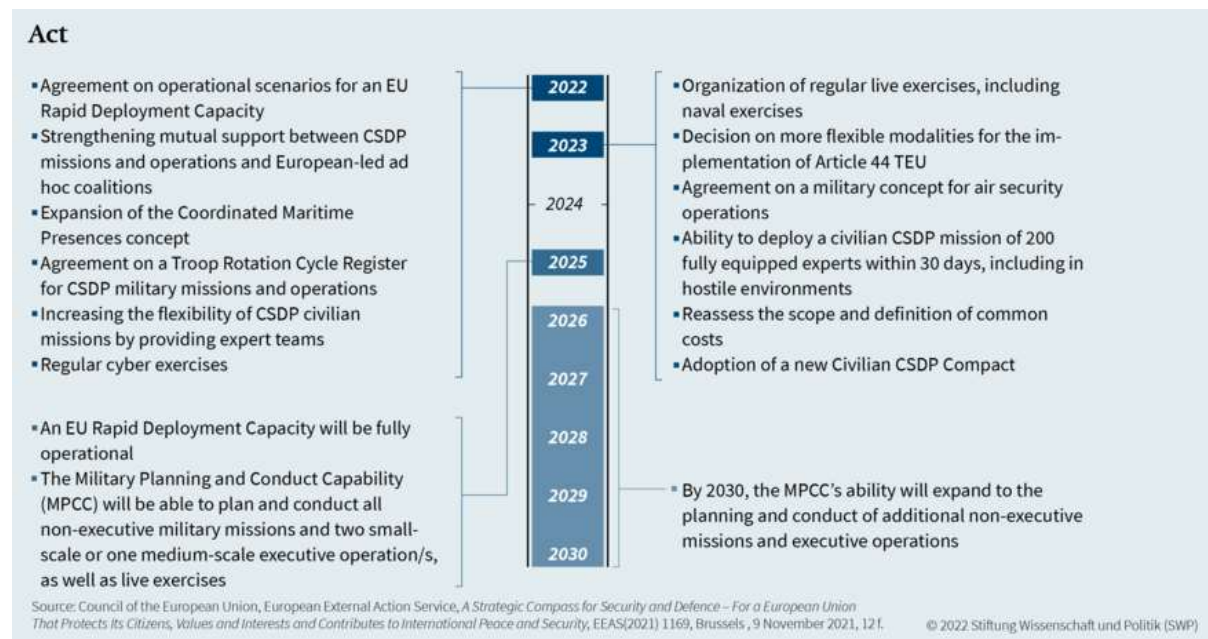
Based on these findings, ***the validity of the second part of the first hypothesis regarding the improvement of European Strategic Autonomy can be confirmed.*** Namely, the Strategic Compass implementation has demonstrated a clear progression towards greater autonomy in security matters, aligning with the EU's broader ambition outlined in the EU Global Strategy. Through prioritizing key areas such as technological development, economic resilience, foreign policy, and international partnerships, the EU has taken tangible steps to assert its independence and enhance its capacity to address security challenges effectively. At the same time, by solidifying partnerships with the U.S. and NATO, the EU has demonstrated its

commitment to collaborative security while simultaneously asserting its ability to address security challenges independently. This dual approach not only reinforces the principles of ESDI within the NATO framework but also propels the broader ambition of ESA, as outlined in the EU Global Strategy. In summary, the implementation of the Strategic Compass has significantly bolstered European strategic autonomy by enhancing security and defence capabilities, fostering stronger partnerships with the U.S. and NATO, thus paving the way for further development of European Strategic Autonomy.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Strategic Compass represents a significant milestone in the evolution of European security and defence policy, reflecting the EU's commitment to enhancing its security capabilities while maintaining strong partnerships with NATO and the U.S. By bolstering European strategic autonomy, the EU aims to address security challenges independently while remaining aligned with transatlantic allies, thus contributing to a more secure and resilient international security environment. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and challenges that may arise in the implementation process, including geopolitical tensions, resource constraints, and diverging strategic interests among EU member states. Additionally, the effectiveness of the Strategic Compass in achieving its objectives will depend on continued commitment from all stakeholders and adaptation to evolving security dynamics. Accordingly, present geopolitical challenges and future perspectives suggest the need for ongoing cooperation, coordination, and investment in defence capabilities to effectively address emerging threats and maintain stability in the European neighborhood and beyond. Therefore, while the Strategic Compass marks a significant step forward in European security and defence policy, its full impact and success will depend on sustained efforts and collaboration in the coming years.

30. Appendix

Overview: The Package of Measures 2022-2030 of the "Strategic Compass" of the EU, The German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP):



Invest

- Annual Defence Ministerial meetings organized and chaired by the High Representative
- Establishment of a Defence Innovation Hub within the European Defence Agency (EDA)
- Identification of strategic dependencies in the defense sector through the Observatory on Critical Technologies and possible gaps in those available
- Boosting of research, technology development, and innovation and reduce our strategic dependencies on critical technologies and value chains

Source: Council of the European Union, European External Action Service, *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union That Protects its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*, EEAS(2021) 1169, Brussels, 9 November 2021, 21 ff.

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Partners

- Deepening of political dialogue and cooperation with NATO
- Dedicated security and defense dialogue with the United States
- Deepening cooperation with Canada and Norway
- Openness to engage with the United Kingdom on security and defense
- Implementation of the new joint set of priorities for EU-UN cooperation
- New security and defense dialogues with African partners and association of African countries
- Strengthening of dialogues with other partners in the Western Balkans
- Strengthening of dialogues with other partners in eastern neighborhoods
- Strengthening of dialogues with other partners in southern neighborhoods
- Strengthening of dialogues with other partners in the Indo-Pacific
- Strengthening of dialogues with other partners in Latin America
- Deepening of political dialogue and strengthening cooperation with the African Union
- Deepening of political dialogue and strengthening cooperation with the OSCE
- Deepening of political dialogue and strengthening cooperation with ASEAN
- Biennial Security and Defence Partnerships Forum in Brussels



Source: Council of the European Union, European External Action Service, *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union That Protects its Citizens, Values and Interests and Contributes to International Peace and Security*, EEAS(2021) 1169, Brussels, 9 November 2021, 27 f.

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32. List of Abbreviations:

- ACOS: Assistant Chief of Staff
- AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia
- AML/CFT: Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism
- ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- BASF: Badische Anilin- und Soda-Fabrik (a major chemical company)
- BIH: Bosnia and Herzegovina
- BTWC: Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
- CAP: Capabilities, Armaments and Planning Directorate
- CARD: Coordinated Annual Review of Defence
- CDP: Capability Development Plan
- CDT: Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox
- CESI: Confederation of European Security and Intelligence
- CFSP: Common Foreign and Security Policy
- CINEA: European Climate, Infrastructure, and Environment Executive Agency
- CIS: Communications and Information Systems
- CIVCOM: Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
- CON/CAP: Concepts and Capabilities
- CPCC: Civilian Planning and Conduct Capabilities
- CSDP: Common Security and Defence Policy
- CT: Counter-Terrorism
- DG ECHO: Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
- DoD: Department of Defence (U.S.)
- ECHO: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
- ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community
- EDA: European Defence Agency
- EDC: European Defence Community
- EDCC: European Defence Capabilities Consortia
- EDIP: European Defence Investment Programme
- EDIDP: European Defence Industrial Development Programme

- EDIRPA: Regulation on the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through the Common Procurement Act
- EDIS: European Defence Industrial Strategy
- EDU: European Defence Union
- ERDT: European Defence Roundtable
- EEC: European Economic Community
- EEAS: European External Action Service
- EPF: European Peace Facility
- EPRS: European Parliamentary Research Service
- ESA: European Strategic Autonomy
- ESDI: European Strategic Defence Identity
- ESDP: European Security and Defence Policy
- ESS: European Security Strategy
- EU: European Union
- EUAM: EU Advisory Mission
- EUCAP Sahel Niger: European Union Capacity Building Mission in the Sahel Niger
- EUCO: European Council Conclusions
- EUFOR: European Union Force
- EUGS: EU Global Strategy
- EUHT: EU Hybrid Toolbox
- EU INCEN: EU Intelligence and Situation Centre
- EULEX: European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
- EUMAM Ukraine: European Union Military Assistance Mission in Ukraine
- EUMC: European Union Military Committee
- EUMS: European Union Military Staff
- EUMPM Niger: European Union Military Partnership Mission in Niger
- EUMPR: European Union Military Partnership
- EUNAVFOR: European Union Naval Force
- EUPM: European Union Policy Mission
- EUPOL COPPS: EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (West Bank)
- EUR: Euro (currency)
- EU RDC: EU Rapid Deployment Capacity

- EUROPOL: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- EUSRs: EU Special Representatives
- FAC: Foreign Affairs Council
- FATF: Financial Action Task Force
- FIMI: Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference
- FIMI Toolbox: Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox
- FRG: Federal Republic Germany
- FRONTEX: European Border and Coast Guard Agency
- Galileo: European Global Navigation Satellite System
- GCTF: Global Counterterrorism Forum
- GF-AML/CFT: EU Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism
- GSC: General Secretariat of the Council
- G5 Sahel: Group of Five Sahel
- HEDI: The Hub for European Defence Innovation
- HR/VP: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission
- IGC: Intergovernmental Conference
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- INT: Intelligence
- INTCEN: European Intelligence and Situation Center
- IS: Islamic State
- ISAC: Information Sharing and Analysis Centre
- ISE: Industry Synergies & Enablers Directorate
- ISR: Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
- ISP: Integrated Approach to Security and Peace
- JCT: Joint Cyber Unit
- KSA: Key Strategic Activities
- MBT: Modified Brussels Treaty
- MD-CSDP-CR: Managing Directorate for the CSDP and Crisis Response
- MD CPCC: Managing Directorate for Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
- MEP: Member of the European Parliament

- MFF: Multiannual Financial Framework
- MONUC: United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic Congo
- MPCC: Military Planning and Conduct Capabilities Centre
- NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- NPT: Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
- OCCRP: Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
- OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- OIC: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
- OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
- OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- OSRA: Overarching Strategic Research Agenda
- P/CVE: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
- PESCO: Permanent Structured Cooperation
- PM: Politico-Military Group
- PSC: Political and Security Committee
- P&S: Pooling and Sharing
- RACC: Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell
- RD: Research and Development
- RDC: Rapid Deployment Capacity
- RTI: Directorate for Research, Technology & Innovation
- SatCen: EU Satellite Centre
- SADC: Southern African Development Community
- SAMIM: Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique
- SCC: Strategic Context Cases
- SECDEFPOL: Security and Defence Policy
- SIAC: Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity
- SITCEN: EU Joint Situation Centre
- SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises
- STANAGs: NATO Standardization Agreements
- SWIFT: Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications
- TEU: Treaty on European Union

- TEN-T: Trans-European Transport Network
- TFEU: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
- The Council: The Council of the European Union
- UAF: Ukrainian Armed Forces
- UK: United Kingdom
- UN: United Nations
- UNGA: United Nations General Assembly
- UNIDIR: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
- UNSC: United Nations Security Council
- U.S.: United States of America
- USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- VAT: Value Added Tax
- WEU: Western European Union
- WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction
- WUDO: Western Union Defence Organisation