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Securitizing European Transportation Infrastructures? A
Qualitative Content Analysis of the Military Mobility Related
Communication by the European Commission from 2017 until
2025

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Abstract (Deutsch)

Diese Forschungsarbeit untersucht den Wandel europäischer Verkehrsinfrastrukturen von einer vorwiegend zivilgesellschaftlichen Wahrnehmung hin zu einem sicherheitsorientierten und militärischen Verständnis, welches durch die Kommunikation der Europäischen Kommission zum Thema Militärische Mobilität zwischen November 2017 und Juni 2025 vorangetrieben wurde. Um die Frage zu beantworten, ob die Kommission im gewählten Zeitraum versucht hat, europäische Verkehrsinfrastrukturen zu versicherheitlichen, untersucht diese Studie zentrale Elemente der Theorie der Versicherheitlichung und beleuchtet den konstruktivistischen Charakter des Versicherheitlichungsversuchs mittels einer qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse. Empirisch analysiert die Studie dafür 19 von der Kommission veröffentlichte Dokumente, die sich mit dem Thema Militärische Mobilität und den damit verbundenen infrastrukturellen, rechtlichen und regulatorischen Mängeln befassen, und nähert sich dem Material mithilfe eines deduktiven und induktiven Kodierungsprozesses. Untersucht wird hierbei die Kommunikation auf drei Bedeutungsebenen: einer ersten Ebene der existentiellen Bedrohungslogik, auf der eine externe Bedrohungslage die Europäische Union gefährdet; einer zweiten Ebene der Verteidigungs- und Abschreckungsfähigkeiten, die durch eine unzureichende Mobilität des Militärs bedroht sind; und einer dritten Ebene, auf der die zugrunde liegende Infrastruktur diese Bewegung von Militärpersonal und -gütern gefährdet. Dadurch deckt diese Arbeit sowohl textuelle als auch kontextuelle Elemente auf, die stark auf einen Versicherheitlichungsversuch hindeuten. Dies ermöglicht der Kommission letztlich, ihre Rolle in der Verteidigungspolitik auszubauen und ihren institutionellen Handlungsspielraum zu erweitern.

Schlagwörter: Europäische Verteidigungspolitik, Europäische Kommission, Militärische Mobilität, Transportinfrastrukturen, TEN-V, Versicherheitlichung, Kopenhagener Schule

Abstract (English)

This research examines the transformation of European transportation infrastructures from a primarily civic reading to a security-oriented understanding, driven by the European Commission's communication on military mobility between November 2017 and June 2025. To answer whether the Commission attempted to securitize European transportation infrastructure in the chosen timeframe, this research traces central elements of Securitization Theory and uses a Qualitative Content Analysis to examine the constructivist nature of the securitization attempt. Empirically, the study analyses 19 documents published by the European Commission that focus on military mobility and the infrastructural, legal, and regulatory shortcomings associated with it, and uses a mixed-methods approach that follows a deductive and inductive coding process. By researching the communication over three total layers of meaning-making, consisting of a layer of an existential threat logic in which an external threat landscape is said to endanger the European Union; an internal logic of defense and deterrence capabilities threatened by an inadequate mobility of the military; and a third layer in which the underlying infrastructure threatens this very movement of military personnel and goods, this thesis reveals both textual and contextual elements that strongly point towards an apparent securitization attempt. This ultimately enables the European Commission to strengthen its role in defense and expand its institutional powers.

Keywords: European Union, European Commission, Military Mobility, TEN-T, Transportation Infrastructures, Securitization Theory, Copenhagen School

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List of Abbreviations

CEF	-	Connecting Europe Facility
CFSP	-	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CI	-	Critical Infrastructure
CS	-	Copenhagen School
CSDP	-	Common Security and Defence Policy
EC	-	European Commission
ECA	-	European Court of Auditors
EDA	-	European Defence Agency
EDF	-	European Defence Fund
EDIDP	-	European Defence Industrial Development Programme
EEAS	-	European External Action Service
EP	-	European Parliament
EPCIP	-	European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection
EU	-	European Union
EUMS	-	European Union Military Staff
MENA	-	Middle East and North Africa (Regions)
MFF	-	Multiannual Financial Framework
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PESCO	-	Permanent Structured Cooperation
QCA	-	Qualitative Content Analysis
ST	-	Securitization Theory
TEN-T	-	The Trans-European Transport Network

1 Introduction

European transportation infrastructure has long occupied a central place in the integration efforts of EU institutions, underpinning the functioning of the single market and territorial cohesion of the Union by enabling the free movement of goods and people across the territories of the individual member states. Being central to the integration of the Union, these transportation infrastructures have historically been portrayed in a rather civic light, in which they have been widely regarded as vital and critical for economic, ecological, political, and social reasons, while largely disregarding the military dimension seemingly inherent to transportation infrastructure and systems.

In recent years, however, there has been a fundamental shift in the geopolitical security context of the European Union that directly challenged these assumptions of a predominantly civic character of infrastructure through the apparent need to facilitate the movement of military personnel and goods in this new security environment. This environment has been marked by intensified geopolitical competition within the global order, persistent instability in various regions of the EU neighborhood, most notably Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022, or political turbulence in the MENA region, all of which exposed vulnerabilities in the EU's deterrence and defense capabilities. These developments ultimately led to security debates over geopolitical stability and brought new attention to military capabilities and the need for preparedness in this new (in-)security environment.

In this context, concerns about the inadequate movement capabilities of the military and the underlying infrastructure necessary to facilitate this very movement became increasingly prominent. Relating to this framework, the ability to move both military personnel and equipment within the territory of the European Union, but also beyond, has appeared to be a remaining challenge, shaped by various hindrances such as regulatory fragmentation, technical limitations, diverging national standards, and an overall underfunding that all lead to inefficiency and obstacles of material and immaterial nature in the movement of the military.

In response to this, different institutions within the European Union, but also transatlantic partners of the Union, have emphasized the need to adapt policies and capabilities to this contested security environment, which became particularly visible through efforts of actors such as the European Commission and projects like the European Defence Fund (EDF) or the Permanent

Structured Cooperation (PESCO), already indicating fundamental shifts in how this architecture is structured compared to the historical structuring of defense in the EU.

I argue that one very specific dimension of this shift could be seen in the materialization of military mobility issues on both a discursive and practical level, turning military mobility into a central dimension of this process of building a new security architecture. Specifically, the discursive level is of particular interest for this process, as reflected in the European Commission's communicative efforts, beginning with a first Initiative on Military Mobility published by the EC in November of 2017, followed by Action Plans in March of 2018 and November of 2022, alongside various further discursive efforts to potentially shift the issue of military mobility and the issue of infrastructure into the focus of attention. With its implementation as the PESCO MilMob project under the Permanent Structured Cooperation in 2019, and a participation of most of the member states in this project, Military Mobility appears to have further developed into a concrete project meant to materialize insecurity and turned into a key area of both EU and transatlantic cooperation (European Court of Auditors 2025; European Union External Action 2024, pp. 1-2; Manthey and Rödel n.d.).

The central research focus of this paper, therefore, lies on the European Union and its transportation infrastructures within the context of European security creation, with a strong focus on the very process, centered around the power of language, in which the transformation of transportation infrastructure away from the civic towards a more militarized nature came to be. Building on this interest, this paper engages with the concept of securitization, which understands security as fundamentally constructed through language and focuses on how issues are framed and communicated as matters of security. The research, therefore, moves beyond the analysis of material shortcomings in infrastructure and analyses how these shortcomings have been discursively portrayed and linked to defense and deterrence capabilities in an attempt to move infrastructure into the domain of security.

In this light, I argue that the European Commission plays a central role in this process by framing transportation infrastructure in the context of military mobility, thereby positioning it as an existential issue for European security. The selection of this actor is further based on the fact that the European Commission, in recent years, has undergone an apparent process of supranationalisation with the creation of the EDF and the initiation of PESCO, through which it established itself as one of the more relevant players for defense in the European Union.

Through the EC's communication, infrastructure is potentially linked to external threats and internal vulnerabilities, ultimately connecting geopolitical pressures with infrastructural capacity limitations in order to potentially justify further interventions by the Commission in the field of defense and thus integrating itself deeper into the defense-policy field.

To understand this process of securitization in the European Union, it is necessary to understand the Union as located in a complex geopolitical landscape that affects the European Union, its member states, and partners with external security threats and uncertainties that generate pressure from an outer sphere. It is also necessary to propose an approach to securitization that understands military mobility as the core subject around which the discourse evolved as the communication, such as the first Initiative presented in November 2017 was proposed to ensure the rapid and seamless redeployment of military personnel, material and equipment, if necessary, at short notice and on a large scale, within and outside the EU (European Court of Auditors 2025; European Union External Action 2024, pp. 1-2).

Against this background of multiple uncertainties and European security planning, I examine exactly how these uncertainties and security concerns around European transportation infrastructure manifested in the European Commission's communication, and how transportation infrastructure, as a subject, has undergone a securitization process, ultimately being attributed a concrete security and defense dimension. I expect this transformation of perceived threats into verbally securitizing infrastructure also resulted in an answer of increasingly concrete material and physical design and implementation through the PESCO Military Mobility project, and further concrete physical policies and steps taken on the EU level, as well as on the national level.

To research this apparent attempt of security creation centered around the securitization theory, this paper will answer the following research question: *“Did the European Commission attempt to securitize European Transportation Infrastructures through its military mobility-related communication in the timeframe of November 2017 until June 2025?”*

Following this introductory chapter, which presents my research question and situates it within a wider context, the paper will proceed as follows: the literature review will examine the role and history of my chosen theoretical approach and provide an overview of its theoretical and practical implications. Important here is a first reflection on the usefulness of the theoretical lens, its possible shortcomings, and problems that need clarification. Additionally, the literature review will examine other theoretical approaches and lenses that appear highly viable for

understanding the conceptual elements used in this work. In the second half of the literature review, the focus will shift to the empirical case and the field of research that has addressed military mobility and its technical implementation, providing a needed introduction to key elements of this research process and the historical approaches used to make sense of them.

The paper will then proceed to unravel a theoretical conception constituting itself of the theoretical approach, in this case, the securitization theory, as well as concepts of “critical” infrastructures and transportation infrastructures. Subsequently, a conceptualization of a mobility-security nexus will be proposed, which includes both a historical approach of understanding the link between mobility and security, specifically in relation to the role of transportation infrastructures and mobility for the case of the military and defense.

Having created the necessary theoretical and conceptual framework, I then proceed with presenting the research design that involves the methodology, which takes the theoretical approach into account, in this case, a Qualitative Content Analysis as proposed by Mayring in the form of a mixed method consisting of deductive and inductive coding elements. It will additionally involve a presentation and clarification of my chosen case, as well as clarification of the approach and the source of the material that my analysis will build on.

In the latter half of this thesis, an in-depth analysis will be conducted that reflects on all the relevant elements of the securitization theory including a “brute” threat context that appears to be highly relevant to the case, the European Commission as the actor who is hypothesized to be the driving force behind a possible securitization attempt, a receptive audience made of a complex arrangement of members, and most importantly the content analysis of the material which lies at the heart of this thesis and unravels the communication of the European Commission in the timespan of November 2017 until June 2025 related to transportation infrastructure and the military mobility framework in which military mobility has materialized.

2 Literature Review

This literature review will delve into the current research trends and relevant research conducted in the fields that my work will locate itself in and draw on. Firstly, I will reflect on the theory of securitization, which lies at the heart of this research and is generally understood as the process by which a security threat is constructed by political actors. In the course of the review of academic literature, I will reflect on the field of securitization itself, as well as on the critique of the theory that has been voiced in the past. This is relevant as I draw on this theoretical approach to answer my research question, which also creates the necessity to reflect on the usefulness and the limitations of this approach before connecting the theoretical framework with the conceptualizations of transportation infrastructures, mobility, and security in the theoretical framework chapters of this thesis.

In addition to reflecting on the theory of securitization, I will further present other theoretical approaches, namely politicization theory, militarization theory, and European integration theories, such as intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism, as they seem highly relevant for the task of making sense of and researching European defense policy, specifically when it comes to the European Commission as a political actor in the areas of defense.

Another research focus in the field, which is fundamental for my work, has aimed to shed light on the case of military mobility and is found in a wider field of research that is located around the topic of European defense politics. Especially, the project of Military Mobility appears as one of the most relevant projects in the defense framework of the EU, as it directly tackles military flexibility on an infrastructural dimension.

Reflecting on the Theory of Securitization, it becomes clear that it has proven to revolutionize the field of security studies and had a significant impact on security research, following the first introduction of the framework by Wæver in his text *Securitization and Desecuritization* published in 1995 and Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde's book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* published in 1998 as well as the book titled *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* published by Barry Buzan in 1983. Those authors introduced a new school of academic thought, titled the so-called "Copenhagen School" that formed itself in the proximity of the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute and had the aim to gain understanding of the "process through which certain issues come to be perceived and treated as security threat" (Baele and Jalea 2022, p.376).

The approach they choose to understand this process of how something becomes, or rather is made to be perceived to be a security threat, can be regarded as primarily constructivist and linguistic by understanding the process and term of securitization, broken down to a very basic definition, as “a speech act whereby a securitizing actor constructs an issue as an immediate and existential threat to a referent object, which must be accepted by a relevant audience in order to legitimate the use of emergency measures” (Flohr 2025).

Since then, securitization theory underwent a process of constant development and fluctuating popularity, according to the research done by Stephane Baele and Diana Jalea in their article *Twenty-five Years of Securitization Theory: A Corpus-based Review* from May 2023. Following a rather slow adaptation of the theory until the early 2000s, it climbed in academic popularity during the 2005-2006 period and peaked in 2011. From 2011 until 2020, it followed a cycle of rising and falling popularity but remained at a base level of a minimum of five published ST papers a year in the selected journals¹ analyzed by the authors (Baele and Jalea 2022, p.379).

Most strikingly, while ST's popularity has grown over time and experienced a rich theoretical development, there has been an imbalance between the efforts of developing the theory and the strengthening of the empirical work. The second central finding of the paper is that the theory has not seen an increase in a global popularity but a “distinctly local anchoring”, meaning that the highest number of papers, has in fact related to the Geographical Area of Europe, including Turkey, with 39 of the 171 papers analyzed focusing on this geographical area, followed suite by 35 papers covering the Asian continent, 21 covering North America, 16 Africa, and each 3 papers covering the area of South America and the Australian-Pacific area (ibid., p.381).

While there has been a wide range of criticism regarding the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School, one central criticism has been that the original framework lacked the ability to say anything meaningful about the moral value of securitizations and desecuritization, as well as the ability to explain why certain actors securitize. This is already recognized by Wæver, as he states that, based on the methodological approach through discourse analysis and the analysis of public texts, it does not try, and might even be unable to get the actual thoughts and motives behind and beyond what has been stated (Floyd 2010, p.43). Despite these shortcomings when it comes to judging the motivations of actors, the lens of securitization still leaves us room to interpret motivations through the way they portray threats, point to objects at threat, and the measures that are called for.

¹15 major International Relations journals, in total covering 171 papers published since 1995

Besides the Copenhagen School as a central branch of international security studies, the Paris School can be understood as another important branch, specifically as a part of critical security studies, which highlights the role of security professionals, shifting the importance away from a linguistic focus towards a sociological focus of securitization that includes autobiographical narratives, routines, and anxiety. Here, the Paris School looks at the practice of security in the context of insecurity and security practices (Gricius 2023, pp.322-325). Fundamentally, the difference between the CS and the Paris School lies in understanding security as a set of “interrelated practices, and the processes of their production, diffusion and reception/translation that bring threats into being” (Balzacq 2019, 333), and focuses not just on security but also on insecurity, as the outcome of (in)securitization created by bureaucratic routines and the everyday practices of security professionals (Gricius 2023, pp.325-326).

While the lens of securitization appears to be a highly viable lens when trying to research military mobility and even more so the shift of infrastructure into the domain of security, there is a variety of theoretical lenses that contend in the field of critical defense studies and attempt to explain European policymaking, specifically when it comes to the field of defense. Central to the studies of the European Union have been *integration theories*, which aim to explain the process of political integration that is grasped as the “process whereby political actors in several, distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” (Haas 1958, p.16). The end result of this process is a new political community superimposed over the pre-existing political community (ibid., p. 16). In the European case, this then refers to the process of “intensifying political cooperation in Europe and the development of common political institutions, as well as on its outcome. It also includes the theorization of changing constructions of identities and interests of social actors in the context of this process” (Diez and Wiener 2018, p.3).

Dominant approaches within the field of integration research have been the lens of neo-functionalism as well as the lens of intergovernmentalism which are both concerned with the process of integration much more than with the political system as the outcome of said integration, however, there has been a recent focus on the shape of what is called a new system of governance in the European Union (ibid., p.7).

The major difference between the two theoretical approaches ultimately lies in a different understanding of both the process and outcome of integration. The lens of neo-functionalism builds on functionalist ideas and puts an emphasis on the “move away from the anarchic state

system and towards supranational institution-building by focusing on societal and market patterns and how they pushed élites towards advocating supranational institutions within their policy areas” (ibid.,p.12). The European Commission appears as a prime example of governance on the supranational level, involved in governing over several policy areas that are functionally interconnected, through which spill-over mechanisms become possible.

Because of the functional interconnectedness of policy areas, these shared policy initiatives in so-called ‘low politics’ areas were seen as having the potential for ‘spilling over’ into other policy areas, at first to those closely related to market policy, but ultimately beyond (functional spill-over) (ibid., p.12).

This view on supranational institution-building is opposed by intergovernmentalists who see integration as the result of bargains made between nation-states that all follow specific geopolitical interests, militating towards the pooling of sovereignty. Intergovernmentalists do not fully deny the societal impact of supranational institution-building, however, their focus has been on “governmental actors whose capacity for decisions were enhanced by supranational institutions, but not constrained by them” (ibid., pp.12-13).

The field of defense on the European level, through the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and through the Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP), has been a historic example of intergovernmentalistic structure, with nation-states ultimately organizing the tasks of defense on a nation-state level, through the Council, and through intergovernmentalistic organizations such as the European Defence Agency (ibid., p.8). This lens could ultimately explain efforts like the EDF, PESCO, or the attempts to set military mobility on the agenda.

Another highly important concept is the lens of politicization, which is essential to understanding the theory of securitization, as it is, to some degree, directly linked to the securitization process. Politicizing, at its core, can be understood as a triadic process that involves an increased salience of an issue, the polarization of positions centered around this issue, and the mobilization of actors who engage with it or contest it (Braun and Carteny 2025, p.1). The lens of securitization, on the other hand, focuses on the discursive (lingual) construction of security through the construction of existential threats to reference objects that, if successful, leads to political consequences such as the legitimization of emergency measures that take the political process out of the ordinary.

Both lenses appear to be viable ways of looking at the domain of security, but ultimately follow different aims, that is, securitization can be seen as a politically effective speech act on an emergency level through framing an existential threat, while the politicization of security can be

seen as a process through which security as a political practice itself comes into debate as underlying subject of a discussion between political actors:

Security as a political practice can itself become the subject of political discussion - the use of surveillance technologies by state security apparatuses such as the police, military, or secret services, and group-related protective measures such as self-defense being some examples. Actors can publicly scrutinize state or societal security practices, push for (new) regulations or demand their introduction. This politicization of security takes place in political discourse, through which security becomes a public issue without the need for the construction of an existential threat (Bonacker 2025, p.9).

The link between securitization and politicization then lies in the course of political decision-making, as the theory of securitization grasps the invoking of existential threats as a depoliticization. In this context, depoliticization is grasped as a change of quality in political communication when *politics* are “shifted to a different arena and made less contentious and accessible in the process, but remains latent” (ibid., p.21). Paradoxically, the lens of securitization can also contribute to politicization as it puts perceived threats on a political agenda, which then puts the securitization lens at the foundation of politization as it renders issues political and therefore activates it for being addressed in the political system, this makes the securitization process highly dependent on the acceptance of an issue, as conflicts can arise even if a securitizing actor frames something as existentially threatening. In this line, the process of de-securitization is essential for understanding how perceived threats are reduced and issues are redefined away from security concerns, and normal political processes are restored (ibid., p.21; Shefrin 2025).

Another theoretical lens that can be perceived as relevant alongside the lens of securitization is the lens of militarization and militarism, which are closely interlinked with my research approach, as I suspect militarization and militarism to be one of the outcomes of this possible securitization attempt. The lens of militarization and militarism is thus highly useful to understand the shifting of a status from civil to the military domain, as militarization refers to a process through which military relations exert influence over social relations as a whole, if read from a sociological perspective, and militarism is understood as the end-state of this process (Stavrianakis 2015, p.491). Militarization thus helps with understanding the process of securitization, as it could be viewed as a military expression of security concerns through the military, leading to the cultural, symbolic and material preparation for war, which, much like securitization, is an intentional process and something “a state or group must set out to do” (Bickford 2015, p.484), by which it “draws from, and shapes, cultural contexts and histories and individual life courses” (ibid., p.484). Other readings of militarism refer to militarism as the military buildup, such as the quantitative increase of weapons or military expenditure, which could

relate to the buildup of infrastructures that support the mobility of military forces (Stavrianakis 2015, p.491).

Shifting our focus on the empirical research conducted by scholars, it becomes clear that neither the PESCO MilMob project, the Initiative on Improving Military Mobility from November 2017, or the Action Plans from March 2018 and November 2022 released by the EC experienced wide scholarly attention in comparison to other defense and deterrence issues and projects, especially in the frame of the CSDP, leaving a rather blatant research gap in the field of research when it comes to the issue of military mobility on the European level.

The *CEPA Military Mobility Project* conducted by the Washington-based Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) and their report titled *The CEPA Military Mobility Project - Moving Mountains for Europe's Defense* published by Heinrich Brauss, Ben Hodges, and Julian Lindley-French in March 2021, as well as the research conducted by Calle Håkansson with his work titled *The strengthened role of the European Union in defence: the case of the Military Mobility project* from the year 2023 appear to be the central works centered on the issue of military mobility and its materialization in the European policy making.

Specifically the CEPA Military Mobility Project takes a central and unique place in the field of research as the project is itself embedded in the policy creation surrounding military mobility on the European level through being designed to “promote the establishment of the multiplicity of conditions (legal and regulatory standards, infrastructure and military requirements, the management of risks to the security of transiting forces) needed to enable, facilitate, and improve military mobility across Europe” (Brauss, Hodges and Lidnley-French 2021).

The intent of the research, which mainly focused on five different political military scenarios that were examined by a multination working group in a series of military mobility workshops, is therefore to pinpoint the underlying issues of military mobility as well as emphasizing the need to improve military mobility, especially in the context of NATO and EU cooperation which are said to have a “clear common responsibility to establish the conditions needed for the expeditious movement of military forces throughout Europe” (ibid.).

In their research, these military scenarios were drawn up against the backdrop of a “challenging contemporary strategic context” (ibid.) with three scenarios addressing “high-end military dilemmas in varying forms in response to a possible threat from Russia, all of which would require the use of significant force” (ibid.) while two further scenarios considered “the use and utility of military force across a much broader spectrum of civil-military interventions” (ibid.).

The first three scenarios, namely Scenario I concerning the “Nordic-Baltic Route”, Scenario II concerning the “Suwalki Corridor”, and Scenario III concerning the “Focsani Gate”, tested the movement of the military for reinforcing eastern allies, therefore supporting NATO’s northeastern and southeastern flanks based on a political-military framework set by political leaders of NATO. Those scenarios are centered on the threat of Russia beyond the invasion of Ukraine, possibly crossing Moldova to invade Romania or other routes over which foreign forces could invade. The three scenarios, building on the foundation laid by the Warsaw Summit, examined the potential need to move NATO forces throughout the EU. The first scenario tested the movement from Norway through Sweden and across the Baltic Sea to the Baltic states and Poland, focusing on the political, legal organizational, and infrastructural challenges. The second Scenario examined the movement of forces through the Suwalki Corridor, a 60-kilometer-wide, possible “choke point” to allied forces stretching along the Lithuanian-Polish border. The third scenario tested the reinforcement of the southeastern region of NATO, specifically the movement of forces across the Carpathian Mountains, with the Danube river possibly being utilized for the transport to the Focsani Gate (ibid.).

Scenario IV concerning the “Western Balkans” and Scenario V concerning “Libya” tested the planning assumptions of the Union beyond their respective border in regard to possible crisis responses. The fourth Scenario hypothesized an EU-led operation in which NATO assets and capabilities had to be moved to the Western Balkans to restore stability through countering Russian influence in a destabilized and unstable region weakened by hybrid warfare and military competition. The fifth scenario tested the technical, logistical, and military challenges of moving the military through Europe and over the Mediterranean Sea into a region marked by instability, conflict, and civil war for a prolonged time (ibid.).

The outcome of the project by CEPA has been the provision of a list of recommendations, including principal considerations, as well as recommendations regarding the *Rules, Regulations and Procedures; Transport Infrastructure; Command, Control and Coordination; Funding; Special Capabilities; Resilience Exercises*, as well as a *persistent NATO-EU Cooperation on Military Mobility*. Central principal considerations that CEPA advises have been *engagement*, which refers to the need for awareness at the highest levels of political leadership; *planning*, referring to the need for comprehensive and effective military planning and a *whole-of-government approach*, which refers to the role distribution between the levels of national civilian, military authorities and actors both on the national and EU level (ibid.).

In the category of Rules, Regulations and Procedures, the streamlining of Cross-Border Movement Permissions, the standardization of regulations for the transport of dangerous goods, the promotion of standardized customs procedures, and the acceleration of response time for CBMP have been the major recommended points. In the domain of transport infrastructure, the undertaking of a comprehensive infrastructure assessment, making the best use of the European Commission's trans-European transport network policy, building for heavier military equipment, and standardizing rail interfaces are the most central recommendations (ibid.).

When it comes to command, control, and coordination, they recommend the standardization of networks of National Points of Contact; the establishment of national territorial Commands and making full use of NATO's Joint Support and Enabling Command. Essential for the improvement of military mobility is also the dimension of funding, for which they recommend a general increase of EU funding for military mobility and extending the NATO common funding. Special Capabilities are a consequence of the need to fully harness capability catalogs, enhancing national military transportation capacities and establishing logistic hubs. Increasing resilience then builds on the fostering of a culture of cyber resilience, including increasing awareness, as well as countering information warfare (ibid.).

On an international level that incorporates the alliance between NATO and the EU, establishing a systematic and comprehensive program of EU-NATO civil-military exercises, using exercises to promote a shared civil-military understanding, as well as testing and improving NATO and national planning, are portrayed as essential. Beyond that, in the frame of a persistent NATO-EU cooperation on military mobility, the enhancement of the Structured Dialogue on Military Mobility and Senior leadership engagement are the central calls for improvement (ibid.).

Concluding on their work, CEPA fundamentally understands the ability of forces to move "far more rapidly than today across Europe and around Europe's extended borders" as the central element of defense that goes beyond the mere sufficiency of relevant forces. Ultimately, CEPA argues that the issues that Europe faces in the geopolitical context need to be accounted for through working on the specifically critical enablers, such as legal and political permissions, as well as a robust network of road, air, rail, sea, and river transportation infrastructures and systems, which need to be tackled collectively through all relevant actors (ibid.).

Going beyond the CEPA Military Mobility Project as cornerstone of military mobility research from a practical perspective, the text *The strengthened role of the European Union in defence: the case of the Military Mobility project* written by Calle Håkansson (2023) seems to be a

fundamental effort in an attempt to make sense of the military mobility framework in the case of the European Union by reconstructing and tracing the process of developing and launching the PESCO project within the European Union. Håkansson does this by researching Military Mobility through a lens of agenda-setting and policy transfer, which enables him to situate the project in a wider process of policy creation. Researching Military Mobility through a process-tracing approach enables him to reflect on the role of the European Commission in the field of security and defense policy in a worsening security situation, uncovering the intentions of the EC in expanding its competences in the field of defense, which is important as the project of Military Mobility is understood as an important aspect of deterrence and defense for the EU while also revealing how the dynamics behind EU integration are shifting and moving the Commission into the direction of a more supranational player, moving current security and defense policy in the EU beyond intergovernmentalism (Håkansson 2023, pp.436-451).

The theoretical lens that is used by Håkansson is strongly tied to his method of choice, as he takes on Kingdon's work on agenda setting, in which the problem, political, and policy streams build the foundation for his approach. The problem stream is characterized by indicators of problems "through reports, studies, data and so on; by focus events, such as crises or disasters; or by powerful symbols or feedback processes that make policymakers more inclined to focus on and address an issue" (ibid., p.439). The political stream refers to the acceptance and changes of ideas and proposals, including a wide field of actors, while the policy stream focuses on the transformation of ideas into policies (ibid., p.439). I further argue that this cycle of policy creation is highly important for the process of securitization, as securitizing actors, but also the audience, are located in those streams of policy development and creation.

For the "problem" stream, Håkansson underscores that the problem regarding the mobility of the military originated mostly from discussions of NATO, to which the infrastructure and legal problems presented obstacles and hurdles for the movement of troops, a discussion that was further deepened following the annexation of Crimea by Russia, in which those obstacles took on a new dimension. As NATO does not possess the competencies needed to solve those problems on a policy level, it turned towards EU officials. This fact is important as it reveals, to some degree, the context in which military mobility became a topic of relevance for the Commission and also, arguably, leveraged its position in the field to argue for the importance of improvement when it comes to the obstacles related to military mobility. Military mobility was thus born out of a deteriorating security situation in and around the European Union since the

year 2014, following a clear problem stream that had its starting point with both external pressure through outside allies and the geopolitical situation (ibid., pp.439-442).

In the political stream, the European Commission, but also member states of the EU, such as the Netherlands, acted as “policy entrepreneurs when putting the issue of Military Mobility and enhanced EU-NATO cooperation high on the agenda”, following a high politics route in the process. Especially the European Commission was, at first, internally divided when it came to their own defense ambitions, according to interviews conducted by Håkansson with high-level Commission officials, who further reported that the highest level in the EC, the President, told them to write the Communication on Military Mobility. This communication paper then needed to deliver results quickly, in accordance with the European Defence Action Plan, which explains why the Action Plan on Military Mobility focused “on outlining the infrastructure and legal and procedural issues on which the EU could prove its added value” (ibid., p.443). The creation of the communication paper must be seen as a move that was possible due to the political opportunity, as the EC, with the momentum of PESCO and the support of the Netherlands for the Military Mobility proposal, created a new opening in the political stream (ibid., p.444).

In the policy stream, Håkansson reconstructed the process through which military mobility as an EU project was developed, and emphasized the role of NATO for the creation, as they were, together with EUMS and EEAS, involved in setting the scope and military requirements. Later on, NATO and the EU “developed a close working relationship through both staff-to-staff talks and the structured dialogue process” (ibid., p.446).

In his work, Håkansson further reflected on the challenges and possible future developments for the project at the time of the publication of his scientific paper in 2023. One of those challenges for the EU Military Mobility project has been the funding, which was reduced from the €6.5 billion proposal to €1.69 billion following the negotiations on the 2021–2027 EU budget (ibid., p.447). Military Mobility also marked a political and strategic turn for the European Commission, which, through the Military Mobility project, but also further projects like the European Defence Fund, seemed to position itself as a more active actor in the field of EU security and defense policy, raising the expectations for a continued spill-over into the area of defense.

3 The Conceptual Framework

This research builds on the theory of securitization, which is further developed and operationalized by integrating a defense-critical understanding of mobility infrastructure that involves both “civil” and “military” perspectives. This, in turn, allows for an examination of the direct relationship between transportation infrastructure and security, allowing us to reflect on why mobility matters in the context of security and why security matters in the context of transportation infrastructure. On this basis, the study analyzes how military mobility has been discursively constructed and how transport infrastructure has been increasingly framed as a security issue by the European Commission over its military dimension.

3.1 The Theory of Securitization

During the mid-1980s, observers frequently noticed that the concept of security had been subjected to little reflection in comparison with how much and how strongly it had been used. Only a few years later, conceptual reflections on the concept of security have become so common that it is almost embarrassing to, once again, discuss or re-conceptualize security.

- Ole Wæver (1995)

Following those important and reflective opening words in his seminal text, *Securitization and Desecuritization* from 1995, Ole Wæver proceeded to present a rather fundamental and novel approach to comprehending the concept of security. This approach, which is nowadays relatively widely known as the theory of securitization, and which has turned into a whole field of research on the securitization process, lies at the heart of this study and, broken down to its core, understands security and securitization over the dimension of discourse, in which security is created by and through acts of speech (Wæver 2007, pp.66).

In other words, the theory of securitization tries to explain the whole process in which security threats are constructed through the acts, primarily speech and propaganda, of specific political actors, such as a political elite, state governments, social or advocacy groups, and militaries (Romanuik and Webb 2015, p.225). Yet, the theory of securitization not only constitutes of securitizing acts, in the form of speech but tries to “explain politics through which (1) the security character of public problems is established, (2) the social commitments resulting from the collective acceptance that a phenomenon is a threat are fixed and (3) the possibility of a particular policy is created” (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka 2016, p.494).

One of the most basic premises of the securitization theory has been and remains the assumption that language has the potential and the capacity to “to transform the functional status of events, phenomena, or things” (Balzacq 2019, p.333). For Wæver, this need to centralize speech acts resulted from the procedure of how security was understood in the past, in which security was not seen as constructed or dependent on speech, but rather as given. Wæver created an approach that, in itself, questioned the procedure of how security came to be understood.

Why not turn this procedure upside down? In place of accepting implicitly the meaning of ‘security’ as given and then attempting to broaden its coverage, why not try instead to put a mark on the concept itself, by entering into and through its core? This means changing the tradition by taking it seriously rather than criticizing it from the outside. I begin by considering security as a concept and a word (Wæver 2007, p.67).

Wæver, following this short introduction, proceeded to reflect on the general move of broadening the security agenda in the 1980’s by several approaches, one of them being the shift from focusing on the state (and national security) towards a focus that puts the emphasis on the security of people. While Wæver builds on this emphasis on the security of the people, who can be affected in their security over several dimensions like economic welfare, environmental concerns, cultural identity, or political rights, yet, at the core of securitization remains a strong relation to defense and the state (ibid., p.67).

For this, he subscribes to an approach of security taken by Barry Buzan in his work *People, States and Fear*, from 1983, in which Buzan constructed a three-level analysis of the individual, the state, and the international system. While the approach to analyze security might have just resulted from contextualizing national security or was conceptualized like this on purpose, it is highly relevant to the understanding that securitization and national security are linked to dynamics and political processes at these levels of individual security and international security (ibid., p.69). National security must therefore not be understood purely on the state level but as dependent on those international dynamics and individual level dynamics, which were portrayed by Wæver in the hourglass model of security, in which he comprehends the national level as influenced by the international and individual level dynamics.

3.1.1 A Notion of “Security”

If we then reflect on the concept of security as it was treated and discussed in the 1980s, much more on the level of a semantic identity and less those of an actual concept of security, it was necessary for Wæver to find the specificity of security not in a clearly definable objective “security” or a specific state of affairs which could also resemble “security”, but within field itself

and in certain operations in the field, so called “speech acts – ‘security’ - and modalities - threat-defense sequences” (Wæver 2007, p.70).

Wæver has the premise that we can identify a “specific field of social interaction, with a specific set of actions and codes, known by a set of agents as the security field” (ibid., p.70). In this field, he approaches security policy from the outside, by taking the concept of security as understood in the classical discussion, strongly revolving around national security, threat and sovereignty, and shows how they take on new forms under new conditions and de-links the discussion from the state and moves to the society, which he does so by discerning security as a language game (ibid., p.71).

While this can be understood as a move away from security in military terms to security in the political, economic, ecological, and societal sectors, security is still understood as beginning in the military dimension, which becomes increasingly challenged by those sectors. The focus therefore wanders on the military sector and the idea that military threats could and would result in an outcome highly threatening to the nation and to societies, as a state would find itself “laid bare to imposition of the conqueror’s will” (ibid., p.71). From this perspective, security is, in its basic definition, understood as the freedom from threat, which would in turn affect the sovereignty and self-determination of a unit such as a state (ibid, p.71).

The instrument of securitization can thus be used by those in power to gain control over specific issues, which in turn makes it necessary to clarify what exactly security is, and to which Wæver answers by drawing on the language theory.

What then is security? With the help of language theory, we can regard ‘security’ as a speech act. In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). By uttering ‘security,’ a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it (ibid., p.73).

Looking at this approach of comprehending security raises the question, what exactly constitutes the difference between the classic definition of security and the description of security understood in this framework? Arnold Wolfers argues, as referred to in the work *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde from the year 1998, that security can be approached both “objectively (there is a real threat) and subjectively (there is a perceived threat) and nothing ensures that these two approaches will line up” (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.30). The theory of securitization, in turn, understands security as

an essentially intersubjective process, as it is of highest difficulty to judge securitization against the seriousness of an issue as an acute “real” threat.

The distinction between subjective and objective also becomes highly useful to highlight the fact that we perceive security as determined by multiple actors and is, therefore, arguably, rather subjective than objective (ibid., p.31).

Expanding this logic, it is this intersubjective process in which an issue is brought up and assessed. To fully grasp this intersubjective nature of securitization theory, it needs further elements, as securitization is not merely the utterance of the word security but is a process that constitutes itself of securitizing actors, the depiction of an existential threat, referent object(s), and audiences, as well as emergency measures (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.27). I argue that, in addition to this, facilitating (social) conditions and context must be seen as further central elements that influence the process of securitization.

3.1.2 The Elements of Securitization Theory

It makes sense, in the context of this paper, to define and reflect on the specific elements of securitization, even if the focus of this thesis lies on the securitizing move of speech acts. Yet it is relevant to emphasize that those speech acts are just one element in a complete process, in which they are embedded and influenced by other elements. In practice, looking at the field of securitization, it becomes obvious that some of those elements have been paid more attention than others. This paper will therefore try to reflect on the elements equally, as I propose that all of them are reflected in the discourse and therefore make it important to at least acknowledge their role in the process.

3.1.2.1 The Securitizing & Functional Actors

In the securitization theory, the securitizing actor acts as an agent that presents an issue as a threat through a securitizing move. If we go back to the word of “security” and understand it as being inherently performative, as it is constructed in an intersubjective process, we can already assume that the process of securitization stands and falls with the securitizing actor who is the one that actively aims to construct this security (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka 2016, p.495).

It should be noted that, as no one conclusively holds the power of securitization, by putting the actors at the fixed point of analysis, an analysis of the securitization process would fall short.

The field is structured or biased, but no one conclusively ‘holds’ the power of securitization. Therefore, it is our view (contra Bigo)² that one can not make the actors of securitization the fixed point of analysis—the practice of securitization is the center of analysis. In concrete analysis, however, it is important to be specific about who is more or less privileged in articulating security. To study securitization is to study the power politics of a concept (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, pp.31-32).

Thus, I will approach securitization, knowing that even though the securitizing actor is not in the central focus of my analysis, it is important to determine who the agent is that securitizes, or attempts to securitize, through securitizing moves. Firstly, it is important to note that the securitizing actor does not necessarily have to be a singular person, but can constitute itself as a whole group and collective. The most common players that fill out this role are usually political leaders, bureaucracy, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups (ibid., p.40).

For the case of the European Commission, it is necessary to, in the empirical part of the paper, determine its exact role. This is important as the notion of a securitizing actor itself can already be problematic, as it is tricky to precisely say who or what acts because:

one can disaggregate any collective into subunits and on down to individuals and say, ‘It is not really ‘the state’ that acts but some particular department—or in the last instance individuals.’ But to disaggregate everything into individuals is not very helpful, because much of social life is understandable only when collectivities are seen as more than the sum of their ‘members’ and are treated as social realities (methodological collectivism). (ibid., p.40)

While the role of the securitizing actors has been reflected on, there is another type of actor that needs to be mentioned; this being the functional actor. Functional actors are understood by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde as the actors:

who affect the dynamics of a sector. Without being the referent object or the actor calling for security on behalf of the referent object, this is an actor who significantly influences decisions in the field of security. A polluting company, for example, can be a central actor in the environmental sector—it is not a referent object and is not trying to securitize environmental issues (quite the contrary) (ibid., p.40).

On the level of the European Union, it is even more important to realize that there are a multitude of layers when it comes to how policy is created and shaped, even more so in the military sector, which is rich in a variety of actors that all influence certain dynamics at play in specific sectors while not being the referent object or the securitizing actor. This becomes even more relevant when thinking of the Military Mobility Initiative and project and transport

² Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde refer to Didier Bigo’s work “The European Internal Security Field: Stakes and Rivalries in a Newly Developing Area of Police Intervention” (1994)

infrastructure over the military dimension, as influenced not only by defense bureaucracies or armies of states, but also by nation-states and actors involved in the creation, regulation, and upkeep of transportation infrastructures (ibid., p.56).

3.1.2.2 The Acts of Speech

In the field of securitization as understood by the Copenhagen School, there is a rather fundamental agreement that something becomes a security problem through discursive politics, which puts speech acts in the center of attention as they are the core element in the ST. However, there are different approaches to characterize this insight. Thierry Balzacq takes on the three main approaches, namely constructivism, poststructuralism, and critical theory, in his text *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. (2010).

In essence, the basic idea of the speech act theory is, simply expressed: certain statements, according to Austin, do more than merely describe a given reality and, as such, cannot be judged as false or true. Instead these utterances realize a specific action; they ‘do’ things: they are ‘performatives’ as opposed to ‘constatives’ that simply report states of affairs and are thus subject to truth and falsity tests (Balzacq 2010, p.1).

According to Balzacq’s definition, there are two emphases. While that former quote resembles an approach to securitization that Balzacq describes as “philosophical”, there is also another one influenced by social theory, which comprehends it in the terms of context, power relations, or practices that all relate to the construction of a threat, with less emphasis put on the “philosophy of language” (ibid., p.1). This is a further development from the first generation of the Copenhagen School.

In a sense, the philosophical emphasis reduces security to a “conventional procedure” in which the conditions of the success of a speech act must fully prevail. The speech act solely seeks to establish “universal principles of communication” and is thus universal pragmatic, as it is primarily concerned with fundamental principles underlying communicative action. Compared to this, the sociological view comprehends securitization as a strategic process that is part of, and occurs within, a configuration of circumstances, involving a context, power relations, and practices, which characterize the construction of a threat (ibid., pp.1-2).

In other words, if the strategic action of discourse operates at the level of persuasion and uses various artefacts (metaphors, emotions, stereotypes, gestures, silence, and even lies) to reach its goals, the speech act seeks to establish universal principles of communication, the value of which is to be functional whatever the context, culture, and whatever the relative power of the actors (ibid., p.2).

While the audience plays a role in both those understandings, it is seen as more passive and receptive to speech acts in the philosophical view, while it is understood as rather active in the sociological view.

Balzacq suggests that the sociological view allows securitization to be understood either discursive and also non-discursive, intentional, and non-intentional, as well as performative but not as “an act in itself”(Balzacq 2010, p.2). This makes it necessary to move deeper into the logic of speech, where Balzacq then draws on the theorists Austin and Searle, as they developed specifically the performativity of language in philosophy. For Austin, a sentence can (it does not always have to) convey three types of acts, which, in combination, constitute the total speech act situation:

From Austin’s perspective, each sentence can convey three types of acts, the combination of which constitutes the total speech act situation: (i) locutionary—the utterance of an expression that contains a given sense and reference; (ii) illocutionary—the act performed in articulating a locution. In a way, this category captures the explicit performative class of utterances, and as a matter of fact, the concept ‘speech act’ is literally predicated on that sort of agency; and (iii) perlocutionary, which is the ‘consequential effects’ or ‘sequels’ that are aimed to evoke the feelings, beliefs, thoughts or actions of the target audience (ibid., p.5).

The locutionary act is therefore an instance of using language, this is the physical act of speech itself. The illocutionary act is performed by merely saying something, that is, a conventionalized script which the speaker must follow to infuse mere utterances with a performative power. This means there is an illocutionary force of the utterance, which is the act behind the utterance, in practice, which could be a question, or a command, but also a suggestion, etc.; for this, an actor also needs authority. Finally, the perlocutionary effect is coming about through the illocutionary act; it is the effect of the speech on the audience, which means not every intended effect of an utterance is also perceived and felt by the audience the way it was intended (Potts 2022, pp.1-3; Stępką 2022, p.20).

In the case of securitization theory, the script the speaker must follow depends on two key elements: a definition of an existential threat and a referent object (Stępką 2022, p.20). The context and facilitating conditions then have a severe influence on how the audience perceives (perlocutionary) the speech acts.

The act of speech, as I suggest, can also be seen as framing, in which the frame has the role of structuring properties of a “threat”; for this, it needs a semantic repertoire of security, in which

a combination of a textual meaning and cultural meaning together form a frame of reference that makes security utterances understandable. The role of framing, as Balzacq remarks, is to:

structure various properties of an entity or development under the same label—'threat'—by virtue of the conventions governing the use of the concept and the conditions under which its invocation is justified. More pragmatically, the basic idea is this: the performative dimension of security sits between semantic regularity and contextual circumstances (ibid., p.14).

This framing is, as I argue, tied to the context in which the securitization act takes place, such as the social and political power of securitizing actors, in this case the European Commission and their relationship to the audience, or the existence of brute threats, which are perceived as such and therefore support a portrayal of a threat image.

3.1.2.3 The Audience

While securitizing actors communicate and construct this security, to some degree, there also needs to be a receiver, which perceives the construction to a specific degree of security. If a security threat is then portrayed as strong enough and accepted by the receiver as a salient threat, the actors with authority can proceed to establish specific measures within society and within the system and legitimize themselves with the degree to which a threat or object has been securitized (Chambers 2022).

The way a threat is perceived becomes highly relevant, as it does matter how others, besides the securitizing actors, respond to a security claim. The perception of the securitizing actors and the perception of the others about a “real” threat strongly shape the interplay of securities in the international system, as the “extent of shared intersubjective understandings of security is one key to understanding behavior” (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.31).

It is, at last, not the securitizing actor but the audience of the security speech act that the success of the securitization depends on. It depends on the acceptance of the audience of something as an existential threat to a shared value. “Thus, security (as with all politics) ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but *among* the subjects” (ibid., p.31).

Historically speaking, the Copenhagen School left the concept of the audience notoriously underdeveloped, a fact acknowledged by Wæver himself. This has been a topic of debate, as the role of the audience is generally discussed, depending on the focus of the research. But who is the audience? Broadly speaking, the audience is the target that must be persuaded that the referent object is under threat. Most frequently, this role is usually, in the case of statehood, filled by the public or the parliament, but there are also other entities that can take on the role, such

as the media. In reality, the audience can constitute itself not just a singular entity but can be a combination of several entities and audiences (Wertman and Kaunert 2022, p.69).

Mainly, there are two types of support that a securitizing actor is sensitive to. In case of, for example, launching a war, the securitizing actors build on both the moral support from the public as well as a formal support of the relevant institution needed for mandating the government with the execution of military action (ibid., p.70).

Attempting to categorize the audience, in another work, the authors Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert, titled *Reconceptualizing the audience in securitization theory* suggest an approach that categorizes the audience into three different streams of “problem”, “policy,” and “politics”.

In the ‘problem’ stream, the audience role is performed by other decision makers involved in the policymaking process. In the ‘policy’ stream, the audience role is performed by specialists and technocrats, who tend to be convinced by arguments based on knowledge, rationality, and efficiency. In the ‘politics’ stream, the audience role is performed by the decision making process and the general public. Thus, this stream comprises elements such as public mood, pressure groups, popular campaigns, and election results, which may have an important impact on whether policy proposals are adopted (ibid., p.70).

Referring back to the research conducted by Håkansson on military mobility, it becomes clear that an approach of understanding the audience in those categories of problem, policy, and politics is strongly linked to the process in which policies are created, and thus refers to the whole policy cycle.

Identifying the role of the audience might leave the impression of being less relevant when looking at solely the discursive speech acts, but for understanding the securitization process, if the goal of securitization theory is to understand the process of securitization as a whole, the acceptance and the role of the audience is essential in doing so, as it helps acknowledging the possibility of securitizing moves that failed (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka 2016, p.501).

I further argue that a serious reflection on which entities constitute the audience is needed to contextualize the setting in which an actor securitizes, and could eventually help in decoding the meaning of speech fragments. As it is the audience that needs to be convinced, the speech act is directed at them, which I believe further speaks for the fact of taking a perspective that sees the process of securitization as an intersubjective process.

3.1.2.4 The Social Power and Facilitating Conditions

It is important to keep in mind that the audience and the securitizing actor create security in an essentially intersubjective process. In this process, many factors become relevant, some of

which I have already pointed out, for the success of a securitization act, as security does not rest „with the objects nor with the subjects but among the subjects” (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.31). The securitizing actors, in this structured field, are then placed into positions of power through the general acceptance of being a legitimate voice of security, by having the power to define security (ibid., p.31).

As time goes on, those actors can change their positions of power, and no one is guaranteed the acceptance of their attempts to securitize, as no one conclusively holds the power to securitize; this also can result in further actors articulating their alternative interpretations of “security” (ibid., p.31).

It then becomes a necessity to understand speech acts dependent on those conditions that are, in the theory, understood as facilitating conditions. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde refer to the philosopher J. L. Austin and describe it in the following:

Facilitating conditions are the conditions under which the speech act works, in contrast to cases in which the act misfires or is abused. Conditions for a successful speech act fall into two categories: (1) the internal, linguistic-grammatical—to follow the rules of the act (or, as Austin argues, accepted conventional procedures must exist, and the act has to be executed according to these procedures), and (2) the external, contextual and social—to hold a position from which the act can be made [...] (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.32).

If we continue this thought, this position in (social) power of the securitizing actor is seen as one element that falls in the category of an external facilitating condition and is understood as a social condition, in which the securitizing actor must be in a position of authority. The other external condition refers to the perceiving of a threat; that is, a “threat” can be more easily conjured as a serious threat if it is already widely understood and perceived as a threat (see section 3.1.2.6) by the audience, such as a military threat like tanks, artillery, etc. (ibid., p.33).

In general, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde sum up the facilitating conditions as:

(1) the demand internal to the speech act of following the grammar of security, (2) the social conditions regarding the position of authority for the securitizing actor—that is, the relationship between speaker and audience and thereby the likelihood of the audience accepting the claims made in a securitizing attempt, and (3) features of the alleged threats that either facilitate or impede securitization (ibid., p.33).

This is underlined by Balzacq, who points out the relationship between securitizing actors and the need for them to identify with the audience, which I argue emphasizes the performativity of a speech act:

Despite pervasive ambiguities surrounding agents’ perception of a threatening external development or a state of affairs, it can be argued that the success of securitization is highly

contingent upon the securitizing actor's ability to identify with the audience's feelings, needs, and interests (Balzacq 2010, p.9).

Balzacq further sees every process of securitization as a historical process that takes place between an influential set of events and their impact on the interaction between the subjects. This historical process between events that conditions the success of the securitization attempts involves acts that must be seen as concurrent, as they are carrying either reinforcing or aversive consequences for the securitization (ibid., p.14).

3.1.2.5 The Referent Object(s)

The central part of a securitizing move is the framing of an issue as an existential threat and elevating it above normal politics. In terms of the securitization theory, this issue, as an existential threat, is framed as threatening a referent object, in an existential manner, which then, in turn, justifies exceptional measures.

Questioning what can be turned into a referent object needs further analysis that is provided by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde as they write:

In principle, securitizing actors can attempt to construct anything as a referent object. In practice, however, the constraints of facilitating conditions mean actors are much more likely to be successful with some types of referent objects than with others. Security action is usually taken on behalf of, and with reference to, a collectivity. The referent object is that to which one can point and say, 'It has to survive, therefore it is necessary to . . .' (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.36).

Thus, the referent object is at the center of the speech act as it is the element that is referred to, and that allows the securitizing actor to pinpoint exactly what it is that has a legitimate claim to survival. While it should seem obvious what exactly the referent object is in an act of speech and in the process of securitization, it proves to be more complicated than this, as it is, for example, in the case of transport infrastructure and military mobility, not necessarily clear what the object is that is at threat; I will reflect on this later on in this paper.

Specifically, the military sector is pointed out in the text of *Security: A New Framework for analysis* by Barry Buzan, Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. The text from 1998 builds on the proposed approach by Wæver and extends it with further elements. Notably, they mention that the military sector is a sector in which securitization is more likely to be institutionalized, and reflects the condition of a contemporary international system in which it is embedded (ibid., p.49).

The role of Military Mobility will become relevant when it is not solely understood as falling into the military sphere but also into a political sphere in which, possibly, the EU as a whole

and the individual states remain a referent object, besides other objects of reference over multiple layers. The military sector is a special case scenario for the ST as it stands in the tradition of an approach to international relations that is built around the basic understanding of a state-centric security comprehension, grasping the state as the sole legitimate referent object for military security (ibid., p.53).

In the state-centric, Westphalian conception of international society that grew up in Europe and was transplanted to the rest of the world, the state was conceived to be, and in some places came close to being, the sole repository of both the right and the capability to use force (ibid., p.53).

This might sound like a contradiction at first, but in the military sector, it is oftentimes the national state that is vulnerable to challenges from within, becoming the referent object at threat, while at the same time, oftentimes being the agent of securitization. While the military securitization is usually focused on nation-states, there are possibilities for a securitization of referent objects at the subsystem and system level (ibid., pp.54-55).

3.1.2.6 The Referent Threat(s)

When it comes to the referent threat, the logic of the threat unfolds the constructivist, intersubjective approach of “security”, as already presented before. This is because a referent threat is an “issue” that is, in the securitization process, addressed as a security issue, and through this addressing as such an issue, eventually constructed into one. It is therefore self-referential, as Balzacq points out:

Highlighted in this context, the word ‘security’ does not point towards an objective reality; it is an agency in itself to the extent that it conveys a self-referential practice instantiated by discourses on existential threats that empower political elites to take policy measures (sometimes extraordinary) to alleviate ‘insecurity.’ Furthermore, this approach reinforces the CS view that ‘real rhetorical urgency’ does not always equal the existence of a ‘real threat’ (Balzacq 2010, p.12).

While it does not always indicate the existence of a real threat, the referent threat could, in reality, be a real existential threat, but this requires detailed explanation. Thierry Balzacq distinguishes between two types of threats: the institutional threat and the brute threat. He makes this distinction as he understands institutional threats to be born out of communicative relations between agents, while brute threats refer to threats that, according to Balzacq, “do not depend on language mediation to be what they are: hazards for human life” (ibid., p.12).

I do not fully disregard this notion of that distinction; however, I raise the already proposed distinction between subjective and objective in the securitization process, as I argue that the

sincerity of a threat in the domain of the discourse is not decided by the objective degree of threat but by the subjective impression of a threat. The analytical approach to perceiving security as “real security” and a threat as a “real threat” is, as I note, just partially relevant as it does not necessarily change the outcome and degree of securitization, if the audience decides on the legitimacy of a threat and therefore legitimizes the securitizing actor to carry out measures against the threat (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.31).

Balzacq himself points this out, as he suggests not to over-emphasize either institutional or brute threats. The distinction between brute threat and institutional threat can however have real effects, firstly, regardless of the use of language, brute threats can do real harm to communities, if not dealt with, and secondly, they can have a real effect on the securitization process, as they affect the audience and therefore the securitizing actor, as it is easier for this actor to (further) securitize a threat that is already, widely and in its essence, understood as a threat to the public (Balzacq 2010, p.12). I also argue for the importance of seeing brute, external threats as enablers, catalyzers, and eventually as one reason for securitization. Therefore, I will understand those external threats as an element of the context in which securitization occurs.

3.1.2.7 The Emergency Measure(s)

Lastly, emergency measures are widely understood as the outcome of a successful securitization process, as they are the legitimized acts that found their legitimization through the acceptance by the audience of a portrayed threat and the need to fix it. However, there is debate in the field whether the adoption of an emergency measure, which is also described as an exceptional or extraordinary measure by some, is a significant element from which the success of a securitization can be measured. Debate is also centered around the thought that if emergency measures are seen as the success of a securitization process, how does one decide what is seen as exceptional?

It makes sense to answer these questions in the reverse order, as it is relevant to clarify what one could perceive as an exceptional measure. Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde see in the extraordinary a break of the normal political rules of the game; examples of this are “in the form of secrecy, levying taxes or conscription, placing limitations on otherwise inviolable rights, or focusing society’s energy and resources on a specific task” (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.24). It strongly depends on what is seen as normal political rules; “normalized” processes in dictatorships take differing forms from those in liberal-democratic nations. There is no fixed

rule of a truly exceptional measure that fits it all, but it is strongly dependent on the analyst and what this analyst perceives as exceptional.

The focus should thus not lie solely on possible exceptional measures, but I suggest, along the lines of Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, that a missing adoption of whatever is perceived as exceptional does not necessarily speak for an unsuccessful securitization attempt. They themselves point out that they do not push the demand so high that an extraordinary measure must be adopted in order to speak of securitization:

only that the existential threat has to be argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity. If no signs of such acceptance exist, we can talk only of a securitizing move, not of an object actually being securitized (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 2022, p.25).

They understand the definition and criteria for securitization as the intersubjective establishment of what is perceived as an existential threat with a corresponding saliency that is sufficient enough to have substantial effects on politics (ibid., p.25). Drawing on theoretical thinking on Rita Floyd, this argument is strengthened, as for her, securitization is successful in the case that:

(1) the identification of a threat that justifies a response (securitizing move) is followed by
(2) a change of behaviour (action) by a relevant agent (that is, the securitizing actor or someone instructed by the same), and also (3) the action taken is justified by the securitizing actor with reference to the threat they identified and declared in the securitizing move (Floyd 2016, p.677).

3.2 Conceptualizing a Mobility-Security Nexus

I suggest that when trying to comprehend how mobility of the military, infrastructure, and security relate to each other, grasped as a mobility-security nexus, it is essential to understand mobility itself, first and foremost, in relation to underlying infrastructure systems and as a direct translation of infrastructural capabilities. As such, it is necessary to first explore the infrastructural complex, both on a theoretical basis and in the case of the European Union, before then turning to the dimension of mobility, not only over the singular dimension of mobility of the military but also reaching wider into other domains such as its historically relevant relations to the political and economic order. This is because the speech acts surrounding transportation infrastructures and military mobilities not only include strictly military threats and arguments but appear in relation to other sectors such as the economic and political dimension and order of the European Union, involving the role of infrastructure for society and governments alike

on, local-level, state-level as well as a supranational-level and invoking a discourse that transcends the purely military sector, as understood in the ST.

Yet, it is necessary to recognize the specific security character that transportation infrastructure and mobility gain through speech acts, which in turn leads me to the task of conceptualizing the specific role of mobility over transportation and mobility infrastructures, as well as the role mobility has for governments.

When talking about the critical role that transportation infrastructures and systems have for nations and states, it becomes obvious that mobility, over these infrastructures, drawing on the definitions of critical transportation infrastructures, is central to the way modern societies work. But what exactly is meant when talking about mobility? How could it possibly relate to security? And how does it matter for the state & the military?

3.2.1 The Infrastructural Dimension of the Mobility-Security Nexus

It is necessary to define what exactly is meant when referring to transport and mobility infrastructure, especially European transport infrastructure, as it answers an array of questions specifically related to the role it has played and can play for states and other actors, such as the European Commission. This is important as, since the 1990s, European transport infrastructure has been mainly developed for purely civilian purposes, and the military aspects have been widely disregarded (Laïci 2020, p.3).

To fully grasp the “critical” role mobility infrastructure and mobility inherits, it makes sense to understand it in the context of and in relation to further infrastructure which is understood as critical for society and widely coined with term of *Critical Infrastructure*, and which in the past has, to some degree, already been understood as securitized (Distler and Hein-Kircher 2022, p.11; Nolte 2022, pp.45-54). It is important to understand that in the communication of the European Commission, as will be reflected on in the analysis of the material, the EC rhetorically refers to those elements and potentially moves the topic of infrastructure from “critical” to society in its civic form, to the dimension of the military.

3.2.1.1 A historical frame of “critical” infrastructure

Looking at the way infrastructure is portrayed as critical for the military, it is necessary to first reflect on a rather classic reading of its criticality, for which I will draw primarily on civic readings of infrastructure presented by the European Parliament. This makes sense as military

mobility-centered discourses within the EU have made intensive remarks on the dual-use nature of infrastructure.

When approaching the infrastructure from a security understanding that is based on a primarily civic role, it is essential to understand critical infrastructure in the social and economic framework in which it exists. There are certain socioeconomic activities that are vital to the functioning of a country. This can include communication, banking and finance, or the distribution of electricity and water, but also the transportation of goods and people (Moteff 2015, p.2). This is relevant as infrastructure is deeply embedded in but also necessary for the functioning of a socio-economic system in which a primary focus is the creation of value through production. A civil use case for critical infrastructure is therefore central, as society and governments depend on it on a day-to-day basis.

Focusing on the European Case, a definition provided by the European Parliament, has been formulated in the Directive 2008/114/EC, which is understood as a “key pillar of the European program for critical infrastructure protection (EPCIP)” (Anglmayer 2021, p.1), as it is central for the EU-wide procedure for both identification and designation of European critical infrastructures and the common approach that is proposed to tackle a multitude of security questions and dangers (ibid., p.1). Article 2 of the directive provides the following definition:

‘critical infrastructure’ means an asset, system or part thereof located in Member States which is essential for the maintenance of vital societal functions, health, safety, security, economic or social well-being of people, and the disruption or destruction of which would have a significant impact in a Member State as a result of the failure to maintain those functions (Council of the European Union 2008).

Following an evaluation in July 2019, the European Commission concluded that the context in which CI infrastructure operates has undergone a substantial change since the directive entered into force. Following this assessment, there has been a repeal of the Council Directive 2008/114/EC, from which a focus already shifted away towards a new approach to the European programme for critical infrastructure protection, and the Directive (EU) 2022/2557 was introduced as an adaptation (Anglmayer 2021, p.1).

The Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14th December reshaped the way it understands the role of entities related to critical infrastructures. This role of entities is important as they, in their role of being a critical entity, are providers of essential services and “play an indispensable role in the maintenance of vital societal functions or economic activities in the internal market in an increasingly interdependent Union economy”

(European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2022). Specifically, to CI they refer with: “‘critical infrastructure’ means an asset, a facility, equipment, a network or a system, or a part of an asset, a facility, equipment, a network or a system, which is necessary for the provision of an essential service;” (ibid.).

All of the definitions provided see critical infrastructures as embedded in an economic model, as they are seen as vital for the market and therefore vital for the way capitalist societies operate. This will be relevant when conceptualizing mobility, as transport infrastructures can be understood as the backbone of a system that is meant to guarantee socio-economic stability, and reveals that, to some degree, transportation infrastructure is already understood as an object of security in this domain. On the other hand, CI is regularly attributed a clear security dimension in those definitions, whether it be as being threatened and in need of security or as involved in creating security itself, whether through states or other entities, which then becomes highly relevant for the case of military mobility.

3.2.1.2 Theorizing Transportation Infrastructures Systems

Having contextualized the field of critical infrastructure that transportation & mobility infrastructure is embedded in, I will now proceed with looking at the role and the scope of transportation infrastructure, specifically for the case of the mobility of the military. Looking back at critical infrastructure, it can be stated that CI as a whole is, as its name suggests, critical for society and governments alike.

Transportation & mobility infrastructure is no different, as it is with regard to how the definition is approached, part of this wider field of critical infrastructure. When trying to understand transportation & mobility infrastructure it is necessary to see it as one gear in a whole system, in which it can and has to play specific roles; here I argue that the military role has been disregarded in recent years, which later allowed the European Commission to initiate a process of creating a construction centered around the connection between defense & deterrence capabilities, infrastructure and the mobility of forces.

Remaining in the theoretical terrain of transportation infrastructure, we can find one comprehensive definition that has been provided by Michael A.P Taylor, who understands transport infrastructure as ubiquitous and critical for the economic and social well-being of a modern society, thus taking a similar view as seen before. He argues this is the case because transport infrastructures provide for “personal mobility, accessibility to services and the movement of goods and facilitating economic activity and social interaction” (Taylor 2021, p.47).

Looking at the elements that constitute transportation infrastructure, we can see a multi-dimensional and complex arrangement, such as:

ports, harbours and airports, road, rail and pipeline networks, the depots and facilities associated with these networks and the public and private transport services that operate on them. The physical components on transport infrastructure include bridges, tunnels, pavements, rail tracks, culverts, wharfs, aprons and pipes. These elements are located on the ground or above or below ground level – but always associated with or attached to the ground (ibid., p.47).

The spatial dimension of infrastructure becomes even more important as transportation systems as a whole are a constitution of infrastructure components in connection across a region, which I believe makes them inherently integrative as they stretch beyond countries and across borders.

Transportation systems belong to the set of distributed infrastructure systems, in that their infrastructure components are connected and spread across a region. The physical components of the system exist in a connected network spanning that region allows the movements of people, vehicles and goods across the region. The physical elements are thus subject to the prevailing environmental and climatic conditions of the area. Land-based transportation systems – road and rail – require connected physical assets for their operations. Water-based transportation requires some fixed assets besides ports and harbours for operations (e.g., locks and canals). Aviation systems require airport facilities, but otherwise no fixed connective assets except for service and supply by the land-based systems, and thus are also reliant on them (ibid., p.48).

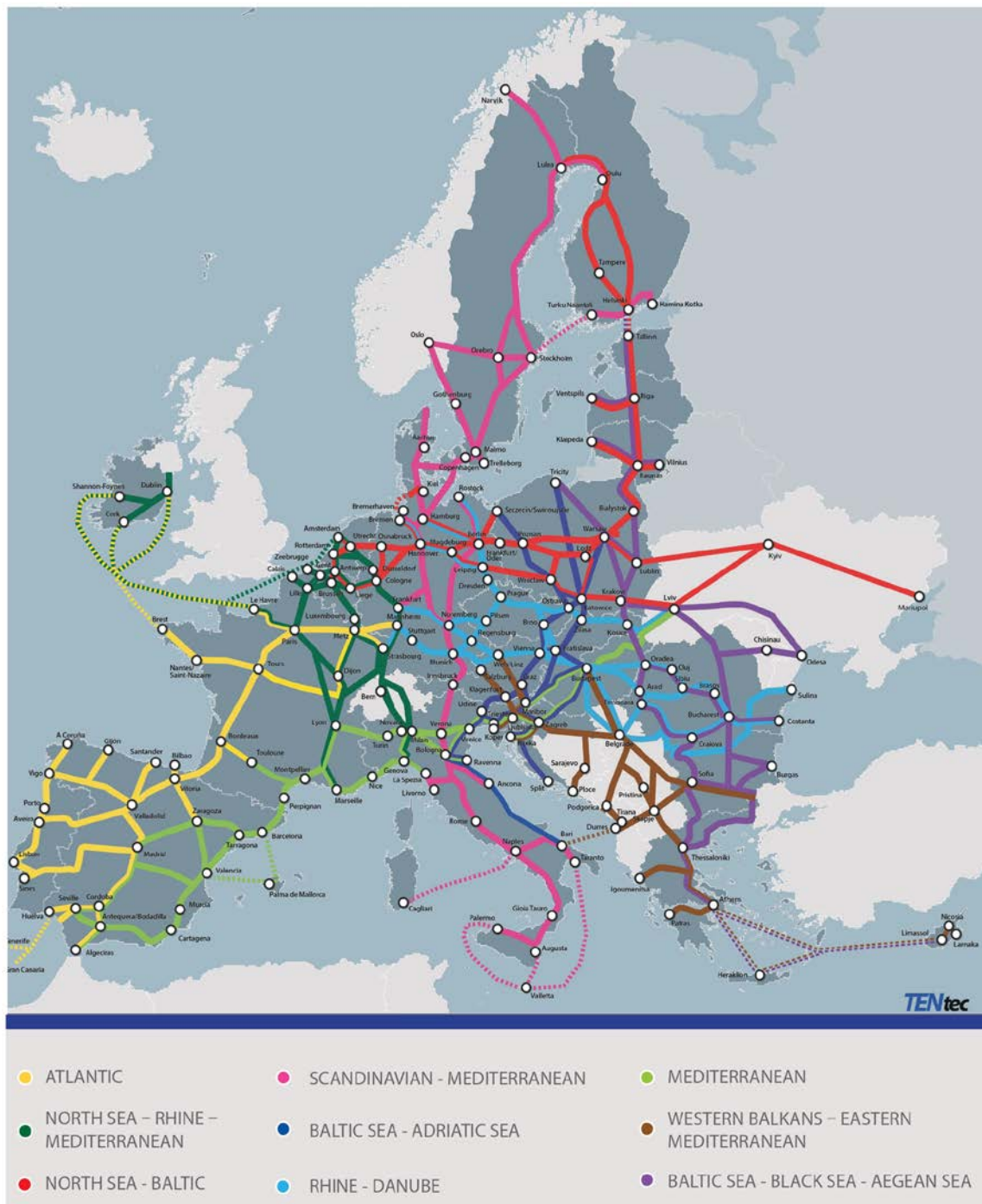
This is important as mobility infrastructure in the case of the Military Mobility project is, de facto, identical with the civil transport infrastructure, as it has been developed over decades. Only in recent years, and based on the research conducted in the course of this thesis, it is understood not only over its civilian dimension but through a dual-use logic that also includes the military dimension. Any attempt to introduce further physical infrastructures, or to change existing physical infrastructures, not only changes the military dimension but also the civilian dimension, which in the case of the military mobility framework is mostly taking place over the trans-European transport network as underlying infrastructure on the European level, which will be reflected on in the following.

3.2.1.3 The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)

In the context of the European Union, the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) must be regarded as the central dimension over which European infrastructure development takes place, making the TEN-T policy the “key instrument for planning and developing a coherent, efficient, multimodal, and high-quality transport infrastructure across the EU” (European Commission n.d.-a). By fulfilling the role of building a “multimodal transport network by rail, road, inland

waterways, and inland sea routes or by air, in order to ensure sustainable economic growth for European states” (Manolache and Manolache 2024, p.241) the TEN-T has a historic relevance of connecting the European member states and guiding the European Union towards more integration, thus supporting attempts to achieve a single market.

Figure 1: The TEN-T and its nine core network corridors as of 2024 (European Commission 2024)



To fully grasp TEN-T as the underlying infrastructure to which capacities of military movement are bound, it is essential to understand the tradition of European transport-infrastructure development as it has taken place in the past. Already with the establishment of the European Union through the Maastricht Treaty, which was signed on the 7th of February 1992 and became effective on the 1st of November 1993, the Trans-European Networks (TENs) were created, revealing the importance of transportation networks for the European Community, from a civil standpoint. The importance of transportation becomes more evident as transportation as an objective preceded the actual founding of the EU, being fixed as the first transport objective in the treaty that established the European Coal and Steel Community, before being integrated in the Treaty of Rome in the year 1951 and the founding of the European Economic Community in the year 1957 (Böttcher 2006, p.51).

In the years following the establishment of the European Economic Community, several attempts have been made to create a more integrated transportation infrastructure within Europe. Attempts like the *Memorandum on the Role of the Community in the Development of Transport Infrastructure* from 1979, were further supported by the adoption of the first Action Plan on trans-European networks in 1990 by the European Commission, shortly before the creation of the EU, and the final fixation of the Trans-European Networks in the Maastricht Treaty in the year 1993, supporting European goals of completing the EU Single Market (Commission of the European Communities 1979; European Commission 2005, pp.2-6).

Following this Action Plan and the fixation of TEN through the treaty, a group of personal representatives of the heads of the European member states started working in 1994 to find and create recommendations on transportation network projects that included a list of 14 priority projects that were later adopted by the Essen European Council in the frame of the trans-European transport network and found their way into the TEN-T guidelines that were then ultimately adopted through the *Decision No 1692/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 1996 on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network*, giving a legal basis to the trans-European transport network and initiating its development as part of the Trans-European Networks (Böttcher 2006, p.51).

In December of 2013, based on a new Regulation for TEN-T guidelines titled *Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU* as well through the Regulation on the establishment of the Connecting Europe Facility titled *Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council*

of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, the Trans-European Transportation Network underwent major changes both through a new structuring of the network and through the establishment of the Connecting Europe Facility as a central financing tool for TEN-T to “accelerate investment in the field of trans-European networks and to leverage funding from both the public and the private sectors, while increasing legal certainty and respecting the principle of technological neutrality” (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2013, p.129)

Following those regulations, the TEN-T comprises a total of three layers, consisting of a core network that includes the most important connections between major European cities and nodes (due to be completed by 2030), an extended core network (due to be completed by 2040) and a comprehensive network (due to be completed by 2050) that connects all regions of the European Union to the core network. The core network, as well as the extended core network, are further defined through nine corridors, reflecting the major long-distance routes of the European internal market (Bundesministerium für Verkehr 2026). As regulated in the year 2013, the network consisted of the following nine corridors: the Atlantic Corridor, the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor, the Mediterranean Corridor, the North Sea-Baltic Corridor, the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor, the Orient/East-Med Corridor, the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, the Rhine-Danube Corridor, and the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor.

To address a new shift to cooperation with neighboring countries, TEN-T underwent extension efforts to further areas beyond Union borders, extending the indicative TEN-T to the European Economic Area and European Free Trade Association, the Western Balkans (including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), the Eastern Partnership (including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), as well as Turkey. In the year 2021, this shift was supported by the Communication titled *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the extension of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) to neighbouring third countries* from the 14th of December 2021, taking a clearer stance on further extension efforts in the Mediterranean Region and a focus on neighborhood development in link with the Global Gateway Joint Communication (European Commission 2021).

Following the final approval to review the plan for the trans-European transport network in 2024 and through Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, the TEN-T was restructured to its current form, consisting of the following corridors: Atlantic, Baltic Sea – Adriatic Sea, Mediterranean, North

Sea Baltic, North Sea – Rhine – Mediterranean, Scandinavian – Mediterranean, Western Balkan - Eastern Mediterranean, Baltic Sea-Black Sea-Aegean Sea, Rhine-Danube. The Network was additionally structured through two horizontal priorities of European Maritime Space and the European Rail Traffic Management System (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2024).

To finance the TEN projects, the European Commission introduced the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in the year 2014 to support “the development of high performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy and digital services” (CINEA n.d-a). The Connecting Europe Facility for Transport must be seen as a central financing vehicle for the funding of investments meant to reach the policy objectives of the TEN-T, by offering a total of €13,174 billion for the period from 2014 until 2020 and a total of €25.81 billion from 2021 until 2027. In addition to the CEF, TEN-T projects are co-financed by the European Investment Bank and national governments, which are co-funded in the implementation through the CEF (BMIMI n.d.; Dimitrova 2025; CINEA n.d.-b; The Rail Agenda 2025).

3.2.2 Historizing Mobility & Security

The relationship between security and mobility is marked by historical legacies that have, in the past and even to this day, determined the multidirectional and complex setting that links together both concepts of mobility and concepts of security. It is thus essential to widen our scope to grasp the relationship of those two beyond a pure military understanding, as infrastructure, in its synthesized nature of dual-use, links together both mobility and security to a military and a civic domain. Relating it to a historical and multifaceted view of what can be grasped as a wide understanding of a mobility-security nexus is therefore especially useful to this research (Distler and Hein-Kircher 2022, p.3).

Depending on the context, mobility can have a multitude of meanings, for example in a state-centered imperial context in which “mobility infrastructures like railroads or canals were considered essential for administrative percolation of territories, for commerce, for the movement of and supply of military, and as well as for maintaining communication, like the Trans-Siberian Railroad in the 19th century or the Suez Canal” (ibid., p.3). This already reveals a tight connection between the enforcement of political power and even the creation of power through structures and mobility, a fact that becomes more obvious when the concept of mobility is expanded beyond strict military understandings.

Especially through a colonial and postcolonial lens, the importance of mobility for the order of empires is underlined, and mobility is tightly connected with relations to power, as mobility and the control over it reflect but also reinforce power. However, it has been long before colonial times that mobility became part of politics. Already since ancient times, mobility was necessary to secure governments and control different territories, building the basis for tightening the rule of others but also following expansive politics by widening administrative control to new regions (ibid., p.6).

They further add to this by stating that either by enhancing or by preventing mobility, it has always been political for its power of determining social, economic, and political power that is closely tied to security governance of authorities, which have always been dependent on mobility, whether it be through security agents, equipment, or data. Thus, security is not only a main driver for forms of mobility but is an integral feature of infrastructures (ibid., p.4).

I argue that infrastructure and mobility, since then, have not fundamentally changed their nature, but that infrastructure and mobility, in contrast, have changed their surroundings fundamentally as they have been the driving motor behind globalization (Distler and Hein-Kircher 2022, p.3), creating a network of fast-paced transport of people, goods, and information. Building on this argument of a dense and vast network, I further argue that the integrative effects of infrastructure and mobility have led to close-knit structures and dependencies, which have, in turn, further led to infrastructure being framed as critical and widely accepted as such when it comes to ordering and social movement, and in a colonial context. This integrative effect, especially of infrastructure, spanning across states and creating connections and dependencies, has also been a major driving force not only for globalization but for the project of a united Europe in the form of the European Union, expressed through efforts such as the trans-European transport network.

3.2.3 Interlinking Mobility, Infrastructure & The Military

Having conceptualized the role of mobility and infrastructure for society and nation-states, as it has been mainly read and understood in the past, I now suggest adding a further element, which transcends the domain of mobility for political order by adding mobility to one core responsibility of modern states, that of defense and the military. I will thus add to the already presented concept by diving deeper into the role of mobility and infrastructure for the military. This is, given the long history of militarized conflicts around the world and a standing tradition

of implementing the role of infrastructure in the process of making war, nothing new, yet it seems to have been underrepresented in the field of mobility and securitization research.

The critical point of this paper revolves around the fact that mobility is central to the effectiveness of the military; there is little doubt about the brute threat that underlies an army that is immobile in the realms of defense. Thus, it is necessary to go into the specific details about the reasons why mobility of armies matters, and what it is that is in need of transportation and transport networks, such as the TEN-T network in the case of the European Union.

For unraveling the deeper meaning of military mobility itself, I will understand military mobility primarily from the perspective of defense & deterrence; this is important, especially in the case of the EU, as there are persuasive arguments in the discourse that the military needs to be mobile and infrastructure needs to be adequate for exactly the reason of deterrence and defense. For this, I will have to reflect on the terminus of deterrence, which is understood as the “threat of force in order to discourage an opponent from taking an unwelcome action. This can be achieved through the threat of retaliation (deterrence by punishment) or by denying the opponent’s war aims (deterrence by denial). This simple definition often leads to the conclusion that all it takes to deter is to put enough force on display” (Rühle 2015). Applying game theory then makes it obvious that, if both sides act rationally, the potential of the military on display will keep each other in check (*ibid.*).

It is then important to understand that military mobility is essential for the effectiveness of deterrence, as “[i]t is about speed and the ability to move our forces as fast or faster than any potential adversary. It gives political leaders options to head off a crisis and the ability to deter — something other than a liberation campaign” (Brauss, Hodges and Lindley-French 2021).

But for military mobility to be effective and efficient itself, two principles, that of speed of assembly and speed of engagement, are important. The main principle of mobility of the military is “the ability of combat forces and their weapons to move expeditiously toward their objective, and for combat support and combat service support forces to maintain the fighting efficiency of such a force once engaged” (*ibid.*). This becomes even more important for defense in times of a vastly modernized war in which the focus lies on the ability of the military to move rapidly as well as securely:

Over the past century, the pace and reach of military mobility has gone from the pace and range a regiment or unit could walk to rapid air mobility. With the increasing use of robotics and automation in the battlespace, it is likely that future military mobility could take place at hyper speed. Consequently, the speed of command is accelerating as well as the distance

from which such a force can be attacked by increasingly ‘intelligent’ systems, which poses a range of challenges for military mobility because forces will be at their most vulnerable during a war when they move into position (ibid.).

With this in mind, it becomes evident that the success of deterrence but also the success of defense is tied to the success of mobility itself, which then requires physical “corridors through which forces must pass to exploit their mass and to maintain speed of command and action” (ibid.). Thus, the role of infrastructure is highlighted by the fact that the need for mobility is dependent on the underlying infrastructure, which is the determining variable for the effectiveness, not only on land but also in the air, giving greater flexibility “through more phased responsiveness and graduated readiness in crises” (ibid.).

Such movement also reinforces the need to move all allied forces rapidly in the event of a military attack. However, while air movement by its very nature depends on specific infrastructures, the mobility of land forces can only be credible if the infrastructures and systems that enable it are sufficiently robust, the network endowed with sufficient redundancy, and, above all, if the necessary infrastructures and permissions are in place (ibid.).

It then becomes necessary to look at the exact role of infrastructure for mobility in the domain of the military. I do so by focusing on military logistics, seen as a process that „supports military organizations in their development into a capable and functional sustaining military force“ (van Fenema and van Kampen 2021, p.1).

Paul C. van Fenema and Ton van Kampen, in their work *Foundational Concepts of Military Logistics*, reflect on Military Logistics mainly through the supply chain, in which the supply, through transportation, is vital for the success of the military (notably for defensive and offensive actions):

If we shift our attention to the military, logistics has played at least an equally important role throughout history in this realm of societal activity. Soldiers and their machines cannot fight without constant supplies, at places most of us will never visit. Throughout history, many military leaders had not realized the essence and importance of logistics and failed to appreciate its impact on the battlefield. They paid dearly for their negligence (ibid., p.2).

The authors then take into account the military and commercial (civilian) domain of logistics as they define it as the “planning, implementing, and controlling for the efficient and effective transportation and storage of goods from the point of origin to the point of consumption.” (ibid., p.3). This underlines the idea not just for logistics, but for the whole domain of transportation infrastructure, which rests on the premise of a dual-use, as the logic of transportation in the military and in the commercial domain does not fundamentally differ from one another.

I suggest that when trying to understand the logic of transportation, one must recognize the principles of transportation; that is, different transported goods require different technical requirements).

Notably, logistics has always played an essential role in war, as logistics have been considered as the “practical art of moving armies” (Jomini et al. 2007 cited by van Fenema and van Kampen 2021, p.3) for the movement of a sheer size of troops and basic supply:

Back then, war was about huge numbers of soldiers and basic, disconnected technologies. Military scientists started to realize the importance of logistics to enact strategies and tactics. With technological advances, war and military logistics have co-evolved. In our era, logistics is still defined as the science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces (ibid., p.3).

Logistic support is then understood as essential for the operational use of material, such as fuel, spare parts, and ammunition, but also of military vehicles themselves and military personnel, as it is needed to realize and sustain this operational use and is thus made the critical element for the success of military operations (ibid., p.4).

Concluding on the theoretical role of infrastructure for the mobility of the military and thus for the possible role of mobility for deterrence and defense, which both interconnects with a classical understanding of security, it becomes evident that those two domains are strongly tied together, with the success of mobilities seemingly dependent on the physical structures over which they take place, such as roads, airports, rails and logistical hubs.

In the past, transportation & mobility infrastructures, by being widely understood as critical for society, as seen through their very definition, have already been, to some degree, tied to a specific security understanding which is reproduced as such every time it is mentioned in the same breath of the utterance of the word critical and when portrayed as existential for the wellbeing of society in political and economic but also ecological sectors. While in recent history it had many dimensions that one could already describe as securitized, it did not receive as much attention in the past from the perspective of the military when it comes to mobility and movement capabilities for defense and deterrence. It is exactly because of this fact that the theory of securitization appears to be a feasible approach needed for explaining the potential shift of focus from a rather civil understanding of transportation infrastructures, or a security understanding in which infrastructure is itself at threat, to an eventual and apparent newfound importance of its military understanding.

4 The Research Design

The design of this study follows a clear logic that links together the concept of security as proposed by the Copenhagen School, putting emphasis on the nature of security as a construct made by one or multiple securitizing actors, with the underlying case which we aim to analyze, and the available material that is fulfilling the role of constituting this construction as building blocks, as understood in the approach of securitization. Reflecting on the case selection in a first step is central for the task of diving into the specifics of what it is exactly that interests us and the scope of what we try to make sense of by applying our chosen method. Proposing said method in the following step then allows us to form a better understanding of the requirements that the case and the material have to fulfill in order to answer our research question. Determining the material further supports the scope-setting of our case, clearly filling out the parameters of width and depth of our research, and also fulfills the necessary step of our methodology, as it is a part of the reflection of origin needed for our method.

4.1 The Case-Selection

The case selection is fundamentally guided by the question of the relevance of this research topic, on which I build on the theoretical work of Gustafsson and Hagström (2018). They suggest that research should be undertaken based on three rationales, not all of which must be present, but which can coexist within a single research project: a research gap, a real-world problem, and a research puzzle (Gustafsson and Hagström 2018, pp. 635-645).

The primary reason for this research is the clear and identifiable research gap in the literature over multiple levels. First, research on the European Commission in the area of defense has not been explored deeply in the past, likely due to historic reasons, as the field of defense could have been described as widely intergovernmental, with most of the power and capacities to create and shape policies and politics resting in the hands of nation-states and not with supranational organizations such as the European Commission. Secondly, there has been very little research on the European Commission as a securitizing actor in various fields, making the Commission an overlooked actor that needs more research due to its political authority and power, which appears to be deepening in several domains. Thirdly, European infrastructure itself, in relation to the military and its capabilities, has received rather little attention when researched from a political point of view, especially with infrastructure understood not as in danger but as a threat.

Similar to the overlooked role of the EC, the choice to research Military Mobility is fundamentally based on the fact that there is scarce research regarding the framework. Håkansson reflects on the reason for this gap in the field, which he attributes to the fact that Military Mobility, as an initiative and a project, especially in its early stages, found wide acceptance by the EU member states, with little to no pushback towards the EC, and a fundamental agreement by the states that something needs to be done to improve it.

Yet, the research gap is not the only rationale underlying this research, as there is a clear real-world problem at play, which is both the spill-over of the Commission into the area of defense policy and the EC as a potential securitizing actor in a deteriorating security context in which new risks emerged that changed the status quo. In this political context, real brute threats were suddenly pushed onto the agenda of many political actors, such as NATO, and found their way into international communication and discourse, which then enabled the Commission to take a more active stance on security issues. Besides the limited research on the European Commission as an actor in the field of defense, there is comparatively little research that applies the lens of securitization to the European Commission. This research then tries to apply this theoretical lens, which, in the past, has arguably been over-theorized compared to the amount of practical research conducted using the securitization lens.

4.2 The Methodology

The research method is the core element that builds the bridge between the chosen theoretical lens and the empirical data in focus, which then makes it relevant to understand the methodology as dependent on both the available data and the theoretical approach, including the research question, which shall be the guiding principles when choosing the most fitting and useful method. Through introducing their constructivist approach to comprehending security, in which it is understood as fundamentally constructed through language, the Copenhagen School of thought follows the idea that security is not given but rather grasped as a construction, building on elements of speech which are uttered by securitizing actors towards an audience. In a sense, securitization, according to the CS, thus becomes an inherent part of whatever method it is analyzed through and with.

Reflecting back on the theory, it becomes quite obvious which methods are more adequate in explaining the process of securitization and in which way the theory also limits the choice of methodology. This is revealed when looking at the historical use of methods in this field, as it

has been dominated by qualitative types of analysis due to the inherent nature of security as it is understood in the Copenhagen School.

With the discourse analysis seemingly being the most popular method in the field of securitization, Balzacq identified multiple further techniques that could be of use to analyze the securitization process, namely ethnographic research, process-tracing, and lastly the content analysis (Balzacq 2011, p.38), which shall be the primary research method applied this thesis, used in its qualitative form as illustrated by Mayring (2014).

By asking the research question “*Did the European Commission attempt to securitize European Transportation Infrastructures through its military mobility-related communication in the timeframe of November 2017 until June 2025?*” the objective of the method becomes apparent, it must be able to grasp whether the Commission used elements of speech that would indicate the construction of security to a degree that legitimizes further (potentially extraordinary) steps in a wider social and (geo)-political context.

Having clarified that speech-acts will be central in this paper it becomes important to emphasize what this paper actually attempts to achieve, which is, in short, finding and structuring the elements that show the construction of security constituting of elements at the very basis of securitization theory, such as the framing of threats, the naming of referent objects and the reference to and for needed measures, in the acts of speech of the European Commission.

With this in mind I believe a qualitative content analysis (QCA) seems to be the most adequate choice for answering the guiding research question as it allows me to systematically describe the meaning of qualitative data through “assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame” (Schreier 2014, p.170), thus providing me with the tools necessary to find the answers regarding whether there have been securitizing moves and therefore an attempt to securitize the underlying issue. Specifically, the approach of qualitative content analysis as shaped by Mayring in his work *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken* from 1983 and since then reiterated in many editions, such as in his work *Qualitative content analysis: theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution* from 2014, which proves to be a fitting approach in regard to the theoretical lens and the available material.

The qualitative content analysis allows for a hermeneutical position in my text analysis, embedding itself in constructivist theory, which securitization theory could be categorized as, allowing me to analyze a rather large corpus of data that would not seem feasible with a more linguistics-oriented approach, such as discourse analysis. This is because content analysis helps

with both reducing the amount of material and selecting the aspects that relate to the research question while also being highly systematic, following a sequence of steps, such as assigning segments of the material to categories through a process called coding (Schreier 2014, p.170).

Shortly, the content analysis, specifically the qualitative content analysis, as opposed to a positivistic position (quantitative approach), tries to understand the “meaning of the text as interaction between the preconceptions of the reader and the intentions of the text producer” (Mayring 2014, p.7), relating strongly to the intersubjective dimension of the ST.

This hermeneutical approach is particularly important in securitization theory, where the four central ideas of the hermeneutical process unfold. The first idea is the horizon structure, which means that specific text passages can only be understood in relation to the whole text and its context as background, a point essential to this research. The circle structure refers to the idea that texts can only be understood in relation to the interpreter's preknowledge and preconceptions, and to the text itself, thereby marking the interpretative nature of the research. The dialog structure understands texts as being embedded into an interaction process between the author of a text and the interpreter, which further relates to the intersubjective understanding of securitization theory. Lastly, the subject-object structure sees the reference to real-life objects as central, as they are mentioned in the text and add to the interaction process between the involved subjects and the text objects (ibid., p.28).

Mayring recommends a strict and systematic process made of a sequence of steps, which are portrayed in the general content-analytical procedural model. The process begins with a definition of the material, followed by an analysis of the situation of origin, the analysis of the formal characteristics of the material, as well as setting the direction of the analysis. Building on this, a theoretical differentiation of sub-components of the problem is carried out, leading to the determination of techniques of analysis and the establishment of a concrete procedural model. Once the appropriate techniques are chosen, the content analytical units are defined. The analysis then proceeds with the analytical steps taken by means of the category system, which may include summary/inductive category formation, explication/context analysis, structuring/deductive, or mixed method. The category system is then re-checked by applying it to theory and material, followed by an interpretation of the results in relation to the main problem and research question. Finally, the research process concludes with the application of content-analytical quality criteria (ibid., p.54).

The central element of the analysis is the interpretation of the material, for which Mayring proposes several interpretation procedures that build on the former steps, following the same systematic path by being theory- and rule-bound while also proving to be systematically understanding and interpretative of the underlying textual material.

The specific techniques of qualitative content analysis concern the interpretative, systematic analysis of the material, for which Mayring proposes nine basic forms of interpretation, of which three are described as the fundamental forms of interpretation: summary, explication, and structuring. He describes those fundamental interpretation techniques as follows:

1. Summary: “The object of the analysis is to reduce the material in such a way that the essential contents remain, in order to create through abstraction a comprehensive overview of the base material which is nevertheless still an image of it” (ibid., p.64).
2. Explication: “The object of the analysis is to provide additional material on individual doubtful text components (terms, sentences...) with a view to increasing understanding, explaining, interpreting the particular passage of text” (ibid., p.64).
3. Structuring: “The object of the analysis is to filter out particular aspects of the material, to give a cross-section through the material according to pre-determined ordering criteria, or to assess the material according to certain criteria” (ibid., p.64).

Mayring then further differentiates those forms of analysis and arrives at nine distinct forms (see Table 1) in which the three fundamental interpretation techniques are further separated into procedures that are then, in parts, reliant on the process of category formation, which is an essential part of analysis in this thesis and will be reflected on in the following.

Table 1: Nine distinct forms of analysis (Mayring 2014)

Reduction	Summarizing
	Inductive category formation
Explication	Narrow contextual analysis
	Broad contextual analysis
Structuring	Nominal deductive category assignment
	Ordinal deductive category assignment
Mixed	Content structuring/theme analysis
	Type analysis
	Parallel forms

Out of those distinct forms of analysis, this study adopts a mixed approach that incorporates two differentiated techniques based on the approaches of reduction and structuring: the inductive category formation as well as a nominal deductive category assignment. This selection of techniques is made against the backdrop of both theory and material, which I will elaborate on in the following passages. The techniques center around the formation of categories, which is the systematic division of text into segments for interpretation, referred to as the process of coding, in which categories are assigned to segments of text.

This assignment to segments of text then requires the setting of the content analytical units for the application of categories. The content analytical units that shall be analyzed will be defined as follows: The unit size must consist of at least (at a minimum) three words, which can be understood as a cohesive statement, and at most (at a maximum) consist of 200 words of text, which are logically interlinked and reliant on one another. Ideally, the content analytical unit is to be one paragraph of text, if the intention of the text within this unit is cohesive and the speech act is fulfilled.

As the intention of this thesis is not of a quantitative nature, this possible variance within unit size allows for a contextual analysis rather than a numerical one, allowing us to shift in the unit size for the sake of grasping the meaning and intent of the speech act.

Turning to the most central content-analytical method, as described by Mayring, the structuring of the material has proven to be highly fitting in the context of theoretical embeddedness, following the goal of extracting a certain structure from the material, which is “brought to bear on the material in the form of a category system” (ibid., p.95). This procedure is called deductive due to the reason that the category system is established before the coding of the material, with the categories being deduced from theory, other studies, or previous research (ibid, pp.95-97).

This extraction of structure from the material through the category system must follow fundamental structuring dimensions that have to be exactly determined, deriving from the issue of the problem concerned and the theoretical approach. The determination of the particular categorization is central for this and will be done as recommended by Mayring, through a basic process of three stages in which the categories are defined and deciding in which given category a text component belongs (Definition of the categories), giving typical examples to illustrate the character of those created categories (Anchor samples) and the creation of formulates rules for the purpose of unambiguous assignment to the specific categories (Coding rules).

Following this determination of the category system, test extracts are made with the underlying material to check for the quality and applicability of the categories. The trial run-through, as well as the main run-through, are done through two steps of operation, the first step being the marking of the material in the text, according to the category that is concerned (points of discovery), and in a second step, processing the material in accordance with the structuring intention by being copied out of the text (extracting and processing).

This process then seems ideal for the theoretical lens that this thesis builds onto, already giving us three major categories that concern the framing of referent threats, referent objects that are threatened, and the call for measures to be taken with varying degrees of drasticity. Conceptually, the thesis also relates to a specific logic in which the creation of security through speech, in this case, can be understood as a process in which transportation infrastructure is only made relevant due to its linking to military mobility, making it relevant based on its linking to defense and deterrence. Through this theoretical and conceptual basis, the category system finds its shape, consisting of three dimensions that have to be analyzed, and further three dimensions relating to the inherent structure of securitization theory through which the transitive properties of the securitization process are revealed.

While the material is captured and structured with this systematic categorization based on the theoretical and conceptual approach, the variance within the communication, relating to specific dimensions such as different variants of threats, objects, and called-for measures, would remain unaccounted for and unstructured. For this reason, reducing the material through the method of inductive category formation appears to be a necessary step within the analysis.

The reduction of text can either be conducted through summarization or the inductive formation of categories, both following the same goal of reducing material. The summarizing technique does so by making use of a level of abstraction in which the material is reduced through the now rudimentarily portrayed procedure of paraphrasing of content-bearing text passages, the selection and erasure of identical paraphrases, and the following binding, construction, and integration of paraphrases, through which it is gradually transformed into an increasingly abstract reflection of the text.

This reduction of the material by summarization is incredibly useful but also proves to be very extensive, as reflected by Mayring, which then stands opposed to the inductive category formation, which brings several advantages that ultimately outweigh the advantages of the summarizing technique in the course of this thesis. The inductive category formation overall proves

to be both faster as well as being more economical, as not all material is regarded for analysis, linking it closer to the specific research question and the theoretical approach through which we arrive directly at summarizing categories without the steps of paraphrase building.

The coding process involves several iterations. After working through 50% of the material, no new categories should be found, and the category system should be checked for clear, non-overlapping categories. Additionally, it needs to be checked that the level of abstraction fits the aims of the conducted analysis. Overall, the level of abstraction has to be defined so that a good overview is created without generating too many categories. This mixed approach, using both an inductive and deductive category development, proved highly fruitful regarding the concept and material, creating a concrete and fitting systematic frame of categories, as depicted in the following table (see Table 2).

Table 2: Rudimentary Code System

	Referent Threat(s) <i>Deductive Category</i>	Referent Object(s) <i>Deductive Category</i>	Needed Measure(s) <i>Deductive Category</i>
First Layer (Existential Significance)	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Russian Aggression	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: European Union	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Deterrence & Defense Capabilities
<u>Interlinked</u>			
Second Layer (Defense & Deterrence Significance)	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Military Mobility	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Deterrence & Defense Capabilities	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Improvement of Military Mobility
<u>Interlinked</u>			
Third Layer (Infrastructural Significance)	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Physical transportation infrastructure	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Military Mobility	<i>Inductive Category</i> Example: Improvement of transportation infrastructure

4.3 Determining the Material

The material my research builds on involves official documents in written form released by the European Commission that are centered around the topic of Military Mobility and infrastructure. The discourse, which is reflected through the communication of the Commission, is thus grasped through written bodies of texts “‘that bring ... ideas, objects and practices into the world.’ This suggests that discourses are both resources and practices” (Balzacq 2010, p.39).

The majority of the material was collected from the press corner of the European Commission, where press material is made available through the Commission Spokesperson’s Service for public access. The website of the European Commission allows filtering for several parameters, such as keywords, the timeframe including a start-date and an end-date, the document type, the policy area under which the document falls (in total 69 possible areas), and the commissioner (in total 27 possible currently active commissioners). For the variable of the commissioner, I made no choice, because former commissioners, important for the timeframe, were not possible to choose from, and would thus be filtered out by making an active choice here. In addition to this, I also did not choose the policy area as I did not want to exclude material before sighting it, and for the second reason that it appears that over time new policy areas have been introduced and other policy areas have shifted or undergone a renaming.

I further opted to include the Joint Communication papers to the European Parliament and the Council as they are fundamental documents in the communication of the European Union, consisting of the documents titled *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Improving Military Mobility in the European Union* released on 10th of November 2017, the *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - on the Action Plan on Military Mobility* released on the 28th of March 2018 and the *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Action plan on military mobility 2.0* released on 10th of November 2022, all accessible under EUR-lex run by the Publications Office of the EU.

The timeframe for the material was set to begin with the release of the first Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council by the European Commission through the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in November 2017, as this release of the communication paper marked the first introduction of the Initiative of Military Mobility, with no mention of the key term before that date. As the end date, the 30th of June 2025 has been chosen, arguably covering a rather long period, which I believe was necessary

as the quality of the material is fluctuating in density and quality, due to the context in which it is formulated, in addition to the development of the field over the years.

For the documents relevant to this research focus, I searched using the keyword “military mobility” which resulted in 119 documents being available. Due to the technical design of the search function on the website, the output on the platform included all documents in which the words “military” and “mobility” were used in one document, both as one keyword and also separately from each other. To solve this, the documents were later manually scanned for the actual term of “military mobility” which allowed me to exclude 51 of the 119 documents, leaving 68 documents in which Military Mobility has been mentioned to varying degrees. The three additional Joint Communications pushed the number of documents to 71 (see Table 3).

Table 3: Material Overview (Before 3rd round of selection)

Year	Press Release	Speech	Statement	Joint Communication	Total
2017	2	-	-	1	3
2018	3	6	-	1	10
2019	1	2	-	-	3
2020	-	2	1	-	3
2021	1	-	-	-	1
2022	7	2	-	1	10
2023	6	3	1	-	10
2024	2	4	-	-	6
2025	5	17	3	-	25
Total	27	36	5	3	<u>71</u>

In a third round of selection, the documents were all reviewed based on the content of the material, being manually filtered depending on the actual relevance of military mobility within the document, as well as the occurrence of threat language and elements of securitization. The third round of selection was therefore already part of the qualitative content analysis, with the methodological framework being applied in order to look for elements of securitization. This means the documents were analyzed but deemed irrelevant to answer my research question. In total, 19 final documents remained relevant to this research: 6 press releases, 9 speeches, 1 statement, and 3 Joint Communications (see Table 4).

Table 4: Material Overview (After 3rd round of selection)

Year	Press Release	Speech	Statement	Joint Communication	Total
2017	1	-	-	1	2
2018	2	1	-	1	4
2019	1	-	-	-	1
2020	-	1	-	-	1
2021	-	-	-	-	-
2022	2	1	-	1	4
2023	-	1	1	-	2
2024	-	1	-	-	1
2025	-	4	-	-	4
Total	6	9	1	3	<u>19</u>

Overall, the quality of the data appears sufficient for the research process and offers enough material to analyze, albeit there are differences in the individual texts depending on their nature and the document-specific use of rhetoric and language. It is thus essential in the analysis to keep the nature of the material in mind: the joint communications would appear to be over-represented if we choose the texts individually, but adequately represented if we choose them relative to the volume of the texts, due to differences in the length of the material.

4.4 Limitations in the Research Design

Conceptually, the limits of this research stem from the CS's theoretical approach, which has not explored the transitive properties in a multidimensional security creation that understands securitization primarily through its extraordinary nature and a rather limited security language. Other approaches, such as the Paris school, could counter these specific drawbacks. While theoretically, the Copenhagen School is also firmly limited in its ability to speak about the intention of the securitizing actor, there are also practical limitations, such as the inability to deeply research the securitization process as an intersubjective field, as the choice of the method limits the width and depth of analysis, both for the audience and the securitizing actor and their movement within the field over the course of the analysis. Choosing to analyze the material through a QCA allowed for an adequate analysis with respect to the material size and the limits of this thesis, yet led to an outcome in which the material could not be as deeply reflected on as would be possible with other methods, such as a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. Due to the scope of this research, it was further necessary to reduce the material in a very strict round of selection, as more material would not have allowed an analysis of every document to the necessary extent without drastically reducing research quality.

5 The Analysis of the Securitization Process

Before going over to conduct the Qualitative Content Analysis with the relevant material published by the European Commission, it is necessary to first reflect on the military mobility framework, including the Military Mobility Initiative, Action Plans and the PESCO MilMob project, through a historic and technical assessment in relation to the theorized mobility-security nexus before analyzing further elements of the securitization process, as suggested through the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School.

Having given a historical and technical assessment, this thesis will then delve deeper into the specific threat background as part of the analysis that needs to be reflected on, as the threat scenario embeds the ongoing discourse at the EU level and sustains it. In this case, the threat background is highly relevant as it is intensely referenced within the communication of the Commission, which brings us to an essential element that shall be analyzed: the European Commission as the central securitizing actor within this research.

The communication conducted by the EC within the chosen timeframe requires a receptive audience, as another pivotal element of the analysis. Here, I will reflect on several audience members who appear to be the central receptors of the communication. Based on the analysis of the named elements, this research then turns to the elements of speech, which shall be analyzed based on the QCA as suggested by Mayring. Following the analysis of all relevant elements of the ST, the findings will be discussed against the backdrop of this thesis's conceptual approach.

5.1 The Military Mobility Framework

As presented in the introduction and literature review of this thesis, military mobility has been identified as an integral part of the central research focus because I regard military mobility as the clear linkage between transportation infrastructure and the reading of security according to the Copenhagen School of securitization. It is thus especially relevant to further reflect on the Military Mobility project as part of PESCO, and on the Military Mobility Initiative and Action Plans as underlying layers around which the communication and securitization process is built. Those materializations of military mobility will in the course of this thesis be summarized under the term of a *military mobility framework*. Looking at both the historical and technical dimensions of the military mobility framework is therefore essential to understanding it as both a part and an expression of a mobility-security nexus.

Since the year 2014, the European Union has experienced fundamental shifts in the security environment in and around Europe, giving rise to new threats and challenges based on the annexation of Crimea in Ukraine and the later escalation of the conflict into a full-scale invasion by Russia, resulting in an ongoing war. Several conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa further added to the deteriorating security environment, as well as a reordering of the global system towards a new multipolarity in the shadows of a decades-long hegemony of the United States and its ally, the European Union, through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as the primary defense cooperation between the two (see section 5.4.1).

Based on this shift, by the year 2016, the European Union advanced its strategic positioning through the EU Global Strategy focusing on three main priorities meant to stabilize and give direction in the area of defense by “responding to external conflicts and crises, building partners’ capacities, and protecting the bloc and its citizens” (Brauss, Hodges and Lindley-French 2021) arguably reshaping the character of the Union through positioning itself as a “European Defense Union” (Csernaton 2021, p.14). As such, the relationship with its transatlantic partners came to the foreground, marked by external pressures through NATO for the European Union to enhance its defense and deterrence capabilities at different levels (Håkansson 2023, pp.441-442).

Already as early as September of the year 2014, months after the illegal and illegitimate annexation of the Crimea in March of the same year, the NATO Readiness Action Plan was proposed at the NATO Summit in Wales, in an attempt to respond to the changed security environment, including assurance measures for NATO allies in Central and Eastern Europe and highlighting the fact that the political landscape fundamentally changed for the member states of the defense alliance (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2014).

Following this summit that, to big parts, revolved around infrastructural and legal problems when it comes to the movement of the military, NATO established a working group to promote military mobility through the EU and began with the communication of these problems to European leaders in the context of building up capabilities related to deployment and sustainment to quickly reinforce the Eastern Flank members of the North Atlantic Treaty organization in order to respond to the worsened threat landscape and immediate threats (Boyer and Sass n.d.; Fiott 2017, p.1; Håkansson 2023, p.437; Terlikowski 2018, p.1).

Out of this scenario, requiring the ability of swiftly and effectively responding to arising crisis situations, the need for expeditious movement of the military over the European continent, both

within the European Union and beyond, was cemented and materialized itself in discussions within the EU over multiple layers and institutions as well as with its partners, leading to a European Parliament report on defense in October 2016 centered around the need for the rapid movement of defense forces, personnel, equipment and supplies in the European Union through a sort of “military Schengen” (Fiott 2017, p.1).

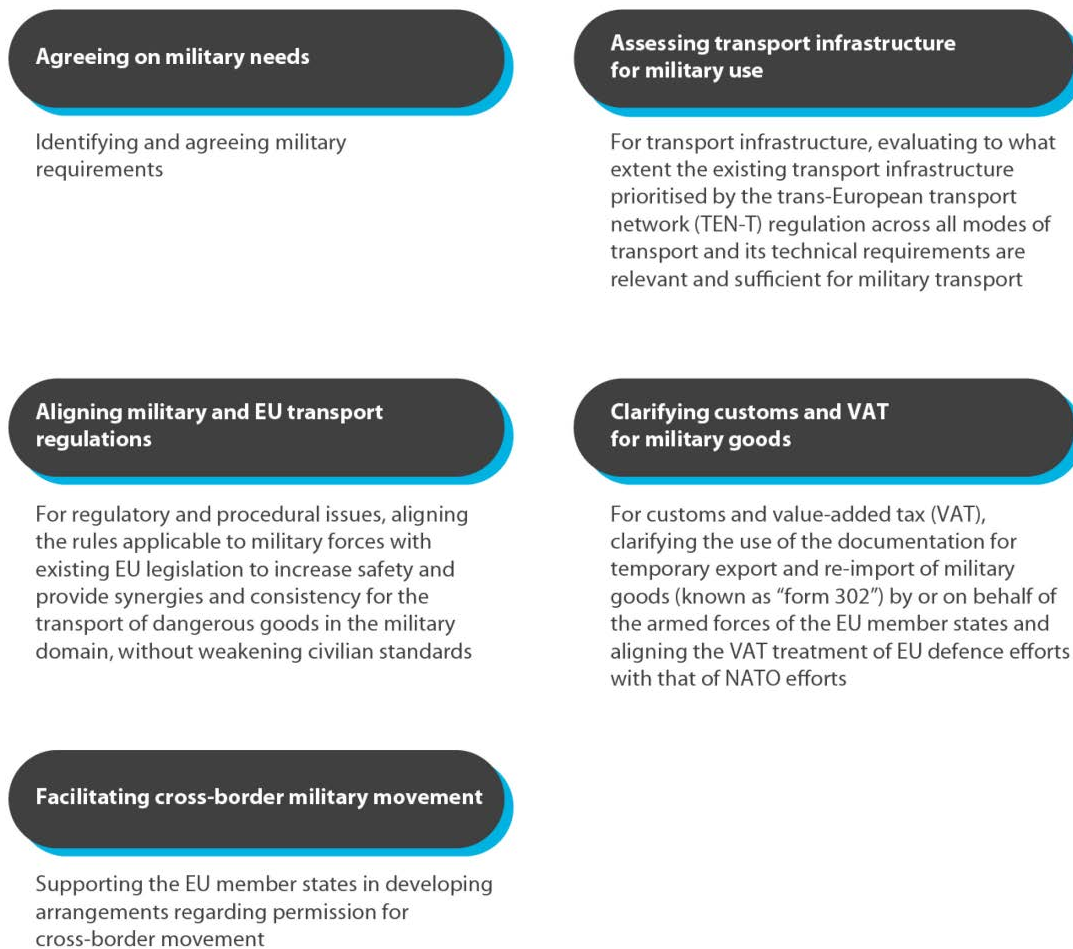
With the signing of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration in July 2016 and through the EU Global Strategy, the issue of mobility was already picked up, and further manifested in the Council Conclusions on security and defence from the 14th November 2016 through stating: “[r]especting that CSDP missions and operations are deployed outside the Union, the EU can contribute from a security and defence perspective to strengthening the protection and resilience of its networks and critical infrastructure” (ibid., p.1).

Through the first Joint Communication titled *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Improving Military Mobility in the European Union*, released on the 10th of November 2017 by the European Commission, military mobility was officially introduced by the Commission to the population, member states and institutions of the Union as a major issue for the defense and deterrence capabilities in the context of needs of the Common Security and Defence Policy. The first Joint Communication must therefore be regarded as an elemental step in officially spearheading the issue of military mobility in the EU and taking on the multitude of problems through communicating the dimensions, central barriers as well as obstacles for military mobility and, as a result calling out major issues for European defense and deterrence capabilities arising out of inadequate military mobility (ibid., p.1-2).

With the release of the Action Plan on Military Mobility, titled *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - on the Action Plan on Military Mobility*, released on the 28th of March 2018, the European Commission built on its previous Joint Communication calling for several key actions (see Figure 2) meant to improve the issue of military mobility in the European Union.

The Action Plan, in comparison to the first Joint Communication on Military Mobility, took on a more concrete shape, officially laying out a plan to tackle the issues that are said to hold back the efficient and timely movement of troops and equipment within and beyond the EU.

Figure 2: Key Actions from the Action Plan on Military Mobility (European Court of Auditors 2025)



In time with the release of the Action Plan on Military Mobility, the European Union underwent fundamental changes in its structure when it comes to defense cooperation as a result of the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) that began its official work in 2018 (see section 5.4.2), taking onto the issue of Military Mobility amongst its first projects and thus linking it closely to the Action Plan on Military Mobility from the same year.

Titled the *PESCO Military Mobility project* (PESCO MilMob) it marked the most distinctive project of the cooperation right from the start, with an initial 25 participating member states dealing, in the course of the project, with the facilitation of moving troops and equipment by tackling barriers that are said to delay or hamper the movement of the military, including military equipment, supplies, troops and weapons between the member states (PESCO Secretariat n.d.-a.; Terlikowski 2018, p.1).

The issue at the core of military mobility, as well as the aims meant to be followed by the project, are then also pointed out directly on the PESCO website, with the project description

remarking the commitment to both simplifying and standardizing cross-border military transportation procedures as well as avoiding long procedures to move military personnel and assets, but leaving out the dimension of physical infrastructure:

The project supports member states' commitment to simplify and standardize cross-border military transport procedures in line with the Council conclusions of 25th June 2018. It aims to enable the unhindered movement of military personnel and assets within the borders of the EU. This entails avoiding long bureaucratic procedures to move through or over EU member states, be it via rail, road, air or sea. Issues on which the project is currently focused are the sharing of best practices, implementing the deliverables of the FAC-Defence Council conclusions of 25th June 2018 and strategic communication (PESCO Secretariat n.d.-a).

Since the beginning of the project, the Netherlands has served as the chair of MilMob, with the 25 EU member states being further supported by three strategic partners (the United States, Canada, Norway) and one observing country (France). Those strategic partners, namely the United States, Canada, and Norway, joined respectively on the 6th May 2021. As a result of Brexit, the United Kingdom requested to participate in the PESCO project on the 19th October 2022 and received permission to join by 14th November of the same year, along with Northern Ireland.

The project is described by PESCO as a project that must be seen as an important platform, as many of the improvements needed are a responsibility of the member states:

The project is thus an important platform for taking steps in the field of improved military movements. The goal of PESCO MilMob is to improve Milmob on the European territory, focusing on the relevant national legislation, procedures and competences of the participating countries. The focus here lies on solving both bureaucratic and physical challenges. In addition, the project acts as a central policy platform to discuss EU Milmob, brings together the political-strategic level with subject matter experts (SME) for tangible progress on Milmob and is the forum where national and international efforts related to Milmob are aligned (PESCO Secretariat n.d.-b)

The PESCO MilMob project, through being realized in the frame of PESCO, is one indicator of how inter-institutional and multilateral the issue of military mobility is tackled, as it brings together the state-level policy making through the inclusion of the member states and connects it with other institutions such as the EEAS, the EDA and the EUMS through their role serving jointly as the PESCO secretariat. Especially the degree to which military mobility is worked on a multilateral level is revealed through including non-EU member states such as the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom, and thus integrating NATO into the policy-cycle (European Court of Auditors 2025, pp.16-17).

On the 10th of November 2022 the second Action Plan on Military Mobility, titled *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Action plan on military mobility 2.0*, was introduced jointly by the European Commission and the HR/VP, further advancing with taking onto the issue of military mobility but adapting it to the change in the EU's security environment following the full-scale invasion of the Ukraine by Russia. Building on the achievements of the first Action Plan, which covered the four-year-long period of 2018-2022, the Action Plan 2.0 covers the period of 2022-2026. For the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework under the Connection Europe Facility, the Commission initially proposed a budget for military mobility projects nearly four times as high as the final budget, which was reduced from €6.5 billion to €1.7 billion following the conclusion by the member states and the Council. In total, the CEF Transport programme supported TEN-T projects with €25.8 billion for the period of 2021-2027 (Clapp, Kiss and Gullentops 2025, p.10; CINEA n.d.-a).

In total, the new Action Plan includes a total of 38 formulated actions, of which 29 are located at the EU-level, and nine are addressed directly to the member states of the European Union. The actions are further divided into four main pillars (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Four main pillars from the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 (European Court of Auditors 2025)



The European Court of Auditors (ECA) as central auditing institution for the Action Plans on military mobility (see section 5.4.5) published the pivotal special report 04/2025 titled *EU military mobility - Full speed not reached due to design weaknesses and obstacles en route* on the 5th of February 2025, in which it examined the progress made regarding EU policy on military

mobility with a special focus on the Action Plan 2.0 from November 2022. In their report, they reviewed the governance structures of EU military mobility, looked at the design weaknesses of the Action Plan 2.0, and reflected on the progress of the four pillars of the EU's Action Plan 2.0, which, in the course of this paper, resembles one part of the materialization of military mobility besides the individual infrastructural projects undertaken.

In regard to the governance structures, the ECA found that governance on the EU level involves many actors that overlap in their responsibilities and competences, revealing a highly complex field that lacks a central function or body coordinating military mobility activities in the Union. Actors like the European Parliament lack powers to oversee all activities due to the complex structures, leading to little awareness of the differences in accountability between the various bodies financed by the EU budget, such as the EC or the EEAS, EU executive agencies, and intergovernmental entities such as the EDA (European Court of Auditors 2019, p.18).

When it comes to the design of the Action Plan 2.0, the ECA found that several weaknesses hindered the implementation, effective monitoring, and reporting on the issue of military mobility. Those weaknesses included that at the time of publishing, the EC had not estimated the overall funding required to achieve the objectives and targets. The Action Plan in itself was additionally a result of compromise in the way it was worded, as it needed to ensure common agreement of the member states, diluting its overall effectiveness. Other weaknesses include the lack of comprehensive information on the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as a lack of reporting on the progress achieved, as the Action Plan 2.0 did not set out to systematically map out actions that have been taken.

Finally, the ECA assessed the four pillars of the Action Plan 2.0, finding that the progress has been variable. For the first Pillar, the ECA pointed out the limitations of the EU budget, which has been used up before the most urgent priorities have been determined. Overall, the 2021-2027 MFF's budget of €1.69 billion has been regarded as modest by several stakeholders, with individual major infrastructure projects often costing more than the total fund available set in the MFF's budget.

In the evaluation process for dual-use infrastructure project applications, military assessment, as well as geostrategic dimensions, have not been taken into account in a sufficient manner. Ultimately, the governance structures and application processes lead to different member states directly bordering one another following different types (such as rail, road, air, maritime) of projects, leading to inconsistency in the demands of the infrastructures (ibid., pp. 15-16, 26).

The progress of actions under the four pillars has also been mixed, while there has been solid progress on key actions for the first pillar of “Multimodal corridors and logistical hubs”, with three key actions having been completed and two still being ongoing at the time of the assessment through the ECA. There has only been some progress on the second pillar of “Regulatory support measures”, with four of the actions primarily addressed to the EDA still ongoing. The third pillar of “Resilience and preparedness dimension” has also experienced mixed progress, with five of the six actions addressed to the EDA, which could not be audited by the ECA, still ongoing. For four key actions at the EU level, the EU institutions did not reveal any progress information, while four more key actions are ongoing. The fourth pillar, “The partnership dimension”, also experienced some progress but ultimately did not deliver finalized results (ibid., pp.35-39). Overall, the outcomes of the report showed that the practical implementations of the military mobility framework stayed behind expectations and that military mobility did not experience a needed and deep overhaul of regulations and infrastructural systems.

5.2 The Threat Background of the Securitization Process

It is important to understand that the military mobility framework and the corresponding building blocks such as the Initiative and Action Plans on Military Mobility, were not born out of, or into, a vacuum but have to be understood as reliant on preceding happenings that then enabled the European Commission to push forward with a first initiative, making use of pre-existing brute threats that were widely understood as such threats to the European Union from a military and political perspective, thus becoming part of what is theoretically grasped as facilitating conditions. While there are arguably a multitude of other factors, including economic and ecological dimensions, I believe that in a first stance, the Military Mobility Initiative itself must be primarily understood as having first and foremost a deeply military, and to some extent an economic character that is organized around and integrates the pre-existing, formerly established, economically and politically read dimensions of mobility infrastructures as proposed and reflected in the theoretical part of this thesis.

5.2.1 Crisis Moments of the Liberal International Order

For the decades following the second world war, specifically since the founding of the European Community, and later through the European Union, the member states of the EU had been deeply embedded into a liberal international order, which was primarily built by the United States and its partners, centering around economic openness, multilateral institutions, security cooperation as well as democratic solidarity (Ikenberry 2018, p.7).

In this global order, in which Western Europe and Japan first emerged as key partners to the U.S., and that later spread outwards to regions around the globe, the European Union had a unique position as a specifically normative actor that centered its strength around multilateralism and rule-keeping, making the EU widely regarded as a civic power, opposed to actors like the United States or Russia and their military powers.

During the time after the Second World War, the postwar order expanded through governing institutions such as NATO the WTO in an attempt to stabilize international relations. In recent years, however, this liberal international order experienced various shocks, such as the COVID-19 outbreak, which acted as a significant shock to the international system, but also a global rise of geopolitical tensions. Those geopolitical tensions revealed themselves through crisis moments as seen in the MENA Region, the economic and political strengthening of China, in which the strategic competition of the United States and China continued to intensify, and the war of aggression in Ukraine, which revealed an undermining of a rules-based system that was already overly strained through the seemingly retreat of liberal democracies around the globe and the rise of authoritarianism (Liu and Yang 2023, pp.1-18; Ikenberry 2018, pp.7-9).

The election of President Donald Trump for a first, and later on second term, fueled the crisis moment of the liberal international order, as Donald Trump openly made statements against the rules and values of the liberal world order and against its partners, such as the European Union, which already internally experienced a crisis moment through the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (Ikenberry 2018, p.7).

While some argue that this liberal international order is giving way to “various mixtures of nationalism, protectionism, spheres of influence and regional Great Power projects” (ibid., p.8), other scholars, like Ikenberry, argue that liberal internationalism still has a future. Undoubtedly, however, the apparent de-alignment of the United States with Europe is adding fuel to European insecurities that reflect in debates regarding a need for strategic autonomy and projects such as the European Defence Fund or the Permanent Structured Cooperation.

In this overall shakeup of the international order, the European Union experienced various internal conflicts regarding its strategies and divided stances on topics like a standing EU Army, with a seeming drift towards militarization, especially after the beginning of the second presidential term of Donald Trump, which added to the doubt of member states regarding the military support of their long-standing Atlantic partner.

I argue that, against this backdrop, specifically the Russia-Ukraine War as well as the political instability in the MENA region, added to the shaping of the military mobility issue in the policy-making of the European Union, in which the challenges to military mobility in the European Union became central to a security debate and pivotal to the communication of the Commission.

5.2.2 The Russia-Ukraine War

There seems to be wide scholarly agreement that the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014 can be regarded as a major turning point in the strategic planning of the European Union and its member states, fundamentally altering the European security landscape. The following full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which began on the 24th of February 2022, further intensified this momentum of change by placing an armed conflict on the continent of Europe and on the borders of EU territory.

Unraveling what occurred since the year 2014 in the Crimea peninsula and Ukraine as a whole is thus essential, as it has to be seen as one of the major causes of insecurity in the European Union when it comes to its own territorial integrity. The annexation by Russia, which can be regarded as the initial starting point of the Ukraine war, directly challenged the international security order, in which, for decades, the EU, as a central player and peacekeeper, deployed its normative power based on multilateral agreement-making (Ehrhart 2019, p. 114).

Following the Orange Revolution, the pro-Russian politician and former prime minister of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, became president of the country in 2010. Due to his close ties to Russia and his backing by the Russian state and president, he agreed to Russia stationing up to 25,000 troops in Sevastopol³ under the Kharkiv agreement. Following three years of presidency, rising conflicts and protests in Kyiv contesting the presidency of Yanukovich, finally lead to the ousting of him in the beginning of the year 2014, ultimately forcing him to flee Kyiv in February of the same year and triggering a stealth take-over of the Crimea island that began with the seizing of the Crimean parliament building by unmarked, and at that point in time unidentified, Russian troops (Encyclopædia Britannica 2025; Ray 2025; Ray 2026). President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, with the approval of the Russian parliament and following the takeover of key sites in Crimea by the unmarked gunmen, officially dispatched military troops on the Peninsula, seizing the region, which was followed by the illegitimate Declaration of Independence of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol on March

³Sevastopol is the largest city on the Crimean peninsula. Located on the southwestern coast, it historically functioned as a major port in the area due to its strategic location on the Black Sea, harboring the Russian fleet in that region.

11th and the incorporation of Crimea to the Russian Federation, that to this day, remains unrecognized by the NATO, the European Union and the United States (Marsili 2021).

This annexation of territory, especially before the full-scale invasion in 2022, has to be seen as a “unique case where, in peace time, a State has occupied and annexed a section of territory that belongs to another State, thereby breaching all existing international and intergovernmental agreements” (Dolya 2016, p.1). This reflection on the meaning of the annexation is important as it shows the uncertainty the European Union faced amidst the breaking of rules through an aggressor close to the border of EU member states.

While uncertainty was then caused by the willingness of an aggressor state to break the rules, the annexation had to be seen as a strategic achievement of Vladimir Putin, not only for his Russian fleet and the seizure of an important strategic position, but also because it did not provoke severe pushback from the West. Neither the United Kingdom nor the United States, who signed the Budapest Memorandum guaranteeing the sovereignty of Ukraine, nor Ukraine itself, managed to oppose the annexation, proving to Russia the little willingness of the West to react beyond the level of sanctions. For the European Union, this case represented an arguable brute threat on its borders, especially for the Baltic States, but also for Georgia and Moldova outside the Union, a fear that partly became reality through the full-scale invasion in the year 2022 (ibid., pp. 3-7).

5.2.3 Political Instability in the Middle East and North Africa

The regions of the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA), widely referred to as the “Arab World” have undoubtedly experienced intense and deteriorating moments of political, economic and social instabilities over the course of the last decades, specifically since the early 2010s, which mounted into a wave of revolutions in the events surrounding the Arab Spring (Aras and Kardaş 2021, p.397).

The structural transformation in the MENA has unleashed such forces whereby the region has been destabilized by multi-faceted conflicts, which have seen the involvement of many local, regional and global actors. The risks and security challenges produced by the wave of instability and conflicts have altered the international relations of the MENA region to a significant extent (ibid., p.397).

The transformation of the regional order and the attempts to shift towards a wider process democratization have been strongly influenced by the European Union’s southern neighborhood policies and vice-versa strongly influenced the various strategies of the European Union as a political actor in the region, in which the Union was actively involved in stabilizing-efforts that

were ultimately not fully successful and lead to significant repercussions for the “identities, borders, balance of power and alignments” (ibid., p.397) in the region.

However, no actor’s efforts alone were enough to assist the political transformation agenda, and diverging positions pursued by different international actors resulted in the stalling of political reforms. Increasingly, the region has been drawn into a cycle of violence as observed in Libya, Syria or Iraq, creating myriad security challenges that are threatening the local actors, as well as producing security externalities for the international system at large. This new security environment eventually altered the regional and extra-regional attitudes towards the issue of political transformation, narrowing the scope for a reform agenda (ibid., p.397).

The struggle to transform and stabilize the region was overall marked by failed attempts of regional actors to develop “effective instruments to prevent, mitigate or stabilize either political disputes or military conflicts” (ibid., p.398), revealing the proneness of the sub-system to international penetration.

Indeed, from their very beginning, the crises in the region have been internationalized. The Arab uprisings triggered the regional and global geopolitical rivalries in the MENA region. From its beginning, the geostrategic structures based on the pro-Western vs. anti-Western dichotomy were shattered (ibid., p.398).

Especially over the last decade, the regional security environment of the MENA region has led to an influx of migratory streams, fueling insecurities of both NATO and the European Union, in regard to the future stability of the region. Those security concerns already became evident in the CEPA Military Mobility Project, in which the “arc of instability”, in reference to the MENA region, is regarded as a pivotal security issue and one of the two major reasons, besides the Ukraine War, that call for military mobility improvements (Brauss, Hodges and Lindley-French 2021).

5.3 The Securitizing Actor: The European Commission

The choice to analyze the communication of the European Commission, as already reflected on in regard to the case-selection, is fundamentally determined by the question of its relevance to the research topic of military mobility and transportation infrastructure, for which the Commission seems to be a highly relevant choice as it takes a unique and fundamental position in the policy making process of the European Union due to the reason that it is the executive body of the European Union, holding both power of executive but also legislative nature (Jones 2026).

Structurally, the Commission is composed of the European Commission president and a team of Commissioners, one from each EU member country, who are each responsible for specific policy areas assigned to them. During the term of Jean-Claude Juncker as president of the

European Commission from 1st of November 2014 until 30th of November 2019, the political leadership team was constituted of a total number of 27 commissioners and the president (European Commission n.d.-b; European Commission n.d.-c). Of those commissioners, besides the president Jean-Claude Juncker, the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and the commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc have the highest relevance for this paper, as Mogherini and Bulc are both quoted in the material directly and have been the active spokespeople in several instances.

For the successor to Jean-Claude Juncker, the German-based candidate Ursula von der Leyen was elected, following as the new president of the Commission for a first term from 2019 until 2024 and being re-elected for a second mandate by the European Parliament in July 2024 for the remaining time until the European elections in 2029. Following the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union in January 2020, coined as *Brexit*, the total number of EC commissioners was reduced as the overall number of member countries decreased, reducing the number of Commissioners to 26 in addition to the President von der Leyen (European Commission n.d.-d).

In the frame of this thesis, reflecting back onto the theoretical approaches to the securitizing actor, I suggest that it does not make sense conceptually to disaggregate the European Commission into its smallest entities of individual personnel members that work in the Commission, equipped with their own ambitions or followed goals but that it makes sense to treat the Commission in this discourse as one supranational body consisting of individuals that strategically follow the same set of goals with an array of shared intentions and motivations.

Grasping the Commission as the central securitizing and relevant political actor, a reflection on its competences and core tasks is needed, which in the case of the Commission includes the initiation and drafting of legislation within the EU community, giving it the “right of initiative” to propose new EU laws and policies as well as then monitoring their implementation, which is ultimately tied to the Commission’s core task of managing the EU budget which allows the EC to set EU spending priorities (together with the Council and the Parliament). Drawing up the annual budget and supervising the spending of the money under scrutiny by the Court of Auditors is another field of work for the Commission.

Besides those rather EU-internal roles, the Commission further represents the Union on an international level, being in charge of negotiating international agreements for the European

Union as a whole and speaking on behalf of member countries in international bodies (European Union n.d.; European Commission n.d.-e).

This repertoire of tasks enables the European Commission to take a strong and leading role as a supranational organization in various fields that are being touched but also limited due to the competencies of the EC, ultimately making the Commission an influential actor in the European policy cycle, putting it at the forefront of agenda-setting, equipped with a political, technical and informal agenda-setting power (Håkansson 2023, p.438; Oztas and Kreppel 2022, pp.408-409).

However, its agenda-setting power has come under scrutiny, as, even if the centrality of the Commission is emphasized, the legislative process is increasingly influenced by other actors, through informal networks, epistemic communities, and decision-making rules. While the Commission is granted powers of initiation in the legislative process, its power does not necessarily always translate into effective agenda-setting authority, making its success dependent on opportunity structures and internal constraints, depending on the specific policy issues. Despite this variance in success, the EC generally enjoys informal agenda-setting powers through defining issues and offering “solutions that would create a bargaining point and an equilibrium” (Oztas and Kreppel 2022, pp.410). As a result, the lens of securitization seems like a very fitting approach to making sense of the EC as an agenda-setter that relies on issue definition and solution offerings.

Looking at the area of defense, which on the level of the European Union is grasped as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), as part of a wider Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), it must be noted that it historically remained one of the least integrated policy areas, showing a strong intergovernmental character in the decision- and policy-making process in the past, despite the political backing of several member states and institutions for a more integrated defense policy on the EU level (Molnár 2024, p.292).

The Commission's reach in the domain of security and defense, both for the CSDP and the CFSP, has mainly been exercised, in limitation, through the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy as the chief co-ordination and representation of the CFSP in the European Union, as the role includes a seat on the European Commission as Vice-President ex-officio. This role of the High Representative is highlighted in the relevant material, as the HR/VP has been the co-publisher of several documents, including the Action Plans on Military Mobility.

As Vice-President of the EC for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and as President of the Foreign Affairs Council, the HR/VP also exercises the role of an agency executive for the European External Action Service (EEAS), making both the High Representative and the EEAS deeply embedded in the securitization process. The role of the EEAS is therefore unique as it does not implement or propose policies but supports the EC through preparing acts to be adopted by the EC, the Council, or the HR. It is, however, financed independently and not from the Commission's budget, which suggests that it should be regarded as an independent institution.

In this thesis, I will not focus specifically on the HR/VP but regard it as an extension of the Commission. In the case of the EEAS, while deeper research might reveal its embeddedness in the securitization process, it will not be treated as the subject of research but rather as a functional actor within the field, neither a securitizing actor nor an audience member.

Shifting back to the Commission as active research subject, it's relevant to emphasize that the deteriorating security landscape in recent years seemingly triggered a shift in the defense agenda of the European Union, gradually strengthening the role of the EC directly, with an increasing blur of traditional boundaries between intergovernmental and supranational decision-making procedures, in which the European Commission, through a spill-over effect, extended its core tasks in the field of defense, specifically into the defense industry. This became apparent both in the communication of the European Commission and in the materialization of specific policies (Molnár, pp. 292-293).

Following the Russian annexation of Crimea, Jean-Claude Juncker took an increasingly political stance, already stating in an interview in March 2015 that there was a necessity to set up an EU army and that NATO alone did not suffice for the defense of European territory, marking a clear shift in the Commission's course. While this EU army did not materialize at the time of writing, the European Defence Fund (EDF), based on the European Defence Action Plan, as proposed in 2016 and established in 2017 by the Commission, was a clear sign of a bigger involvement of the EC in the area of defense (ibid., p.293).

With the European Defence Fund, the Commission managed to undergo an offensive functional spill-over from its rather economic policy role to the area of defense, integrating itself by implementing the fund meant to coordinate and complement the investment of member states for several tasks such as “defence research, prototype development, and the procurement and acquisition of defence equipment and technology” (ibid., p.293), ultimately connecting the

financing of military expenditures with the EU budget, as one of the core responsibilities of the European Commission.

I argue that the Action Plan on Military Mobility from March 2018 is then one further initiative that underlines this integration of the European Commission in the area of defense, that also lead to an internal restructuring of the Commission by establishing the Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) in the year 2020 by the von der Leyen Commission in order to manage space-related issues as well as implementing the procurement regulations through the Directive 2009/81/EC, the European Defence Fund as well as Military Mobility (ibid., p.303).

Reflecting then back on the agenda-setting power of the Commission, and the contestation in the policy-process through other actors, as already noted, it becomes evident that this influence is arguably stronger in the area of defense due to the historic institutional fragmentation, in which the European Defence Agency (EDA) competes with the Commission. Risks to further integration of the Commission are the differences in “the member states’ threat perceptions, their strategic cultures and their diverging relationship with the US and NATO” (ibid., p. 309), which can weaken the Commission’s efforts.

This contestation and competition in the field might be one indicator why the Commission possibly attempted to securitize, but certainly politicized, military mobility and transportation infrastructure in the European Union, especially as transportation infrastructure on the EU level in its economic dimension falls under the area of responsibility of the EC, creating a spill-over effect from the domain of economy to defense (ibid., p.309).

Military mobility and the underlying infrastructure could be grasped as an attempt by the European Commission for further integration that is eventually connected to the threat context that enabled the EC to spill-over through implementing the EDF in the first place. Making use of the securitization theory will then reveal if the European Commission argumentatively framed and highlighted specific threats and needs to avoid further contestation and gain support by the member states and other institutions such as the European Parliament, the European Council or NATO as an external partner by creating solutions which can be understood as a bargain for the individual actors that have their own national interests, follow a protectionist course or have a motivation to increase their political power (ibid., p.310).

5.4 The Audience: Between a Problem, Policy, and Political Stream

Being embedded in a broad political and legislative context in which the European Commission pursues a variety of goals, such as further integration in the area of defense, it becomes necessary to include the audience as an integral part of the discourse. This is especially relevant from the perspective of the ST, as the audience plays a vital role in legitimizing the securitizing actor, and, in the case of the Commission, in empowering and, to some extent, institutionalizing its role in defense.

Conceptually, as already presented in the theoretical frame of the thesis, the audience is comprehended as being subject to the communication through its role in the political process, which can be grasped through different understandings, such as through Kingdon's work on the problem, political and policy streams, which can explain the role that certain audience actors take. While the acceptance of the audiences will not be the central element of analysis in this paper, it is fundamental for the elements of speech to understand who it is addressed to, as the audience is referenced in the communication itself and used in the argumentation of the European Commission.

5.4.1 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) plays a significant role in the area of defense for the European Union and a majority of its member states as a security collective with the aim of providing "mutual defense through military and political means if a member state is threatened by an external country" (Mudge 2025). In its historic background the organization was designed to "help organize the United States and its European democratic allies to defend against the perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union and communism" (Sloan 2016), following the end of the Cold War, the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact as well as the disintegration of the Soviet Union, NATO arguably lost parts of its relevance as an alliance if grasped as a "balancing partner" in the international system. NATO was, however, not established to just meet a specific threat but was designed with the intention of having a lasting utility for the member states, embedding a value foundation that was shared by them (ibid.).

The organization thus goes beyond being a strict military alliance as it is also a political tool for the member states, one that lies at the center of a cooperative European security system, being an instrument to promote political change, as could be seen since the end of the Cold War in efforts to create cooperation within the Euro-Atlantic security system. The decision of the United States and its allies to keep NATO alive and finding a new challenge in dealing with the

conflict in Yugoslavia in the 90's becomes particularly important against the background of the Russian seizure of the Crimea, as the alliance of NATO and the EU has been used by Russia in justification efforts and since then found a new challenge in the Ukraine war (ibid.).

As an integral part of the European defense and security system that the European Union relies on, NATO must be seen as a central stakeholder when it comes to mobility and effectiveness of military forces, which then explains its role in the shaping of military mobility as a major risk, with NATO locating itself actively in the problem stream, as argued for by Håkansson (Håkansson 2023, pp.437-441).

As such a stakeholder in the domain of defense, it was the organization which pushed forward with discussions and exercises as early as 2015, following the 2014 Wales summit, in which the infrastructure and legal problems presented the most central obstacles and problems to the movement of troops, and as a result, started to communicate these problems to European leaders, arguing for necessary abilities concerning a quick reinforcement of the Eastern Flank NATO members, with additional military units (ibid., pp.437; Terlikowski 2018, p.1).

[T]he speedy movement of troops, weapons, and equipment is a cornerstone of the credibility of NATO defence and deterrence policy in the context of Art. 5 scenarios (though, it also has a role in facilitating crisis-management missions as logistical delays in EU military operations in Africa and the NATO mission in Afghanistan showed) (Terlikowski 2018, p.1).

The communication of the European Commission must then be seen as strategic and oriented towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a partner in the area of defense, but also beyond those purely military domains. Further, the communication must be understood as being posed directly towards the organization, besides other actors in the audience, by offering solutions and measures that would then serve the interests stated by NATO through addressing them publicly. Through talking about military mobility as an issue and topic, the Commission also publicly comments on the relationship between the European Union and NATO itself, and therefore re-materializes a historical collaboration and dependencies in both directions.

The role of NATO arguably goes beyond being a sole audience member, as it has been seeking the Commission and European member states to act on the issue of military mobility, therefore requesting securitization as they perceive a real threat (Floyd 2020, p.4). NATO does this because it does not possess the official authority to enact change in this field, beyond its own abilities to utilize securitization speech. Through this, I argue, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization becomes an audience member while also becoming a functional actor in the field.

5.4.2 The Permanent Structured Cooperation

The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) appears as a special case for an audience member in the Commission's communication, as PESCO is a treaty-based framework for the participating member states. PESCO did not necessarily precede the Military Mobility Initiative but was created with Military Mobility as one of its initial projects from the beginning, which was made a political priority in the establishment of PESCO in December 2017 (Håkansson 2023, pp.443-444).

Fundamentally the Permanent Structure Cooperation, similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, can be understood as a vehicle for cooperation but shifts the focus away from military collective defense commitments, such as Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to an approach that builds on increasing European defense capabilities to support the Common Security and Defence Policy (North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2025; Terlikowski 2018, p.1). It does so by building on two pillars, with the first pillar being: “common commitments of states with regards to the financing, transformation, and technical modernisation of their armed forces, as well as defence cooperation with their EU partners” (Terlikowski 2018, p.1) thus putting an emphasis on capability and capacity building rather than collective defense, and the second one being “collaborative capability-oriented projects undertaken by groups of willing states” (ibid., p.1), marking the character of PESCO as a framework for collaboration on defense projects, such as Military Mobility. With the establishment of PESCO, Military Mobility became the most distinctive project at the start, with 25 participating states, which was then given a frame as a PESCO project through the Action Plan for Military Mobility in March of 2018 (ibid., p.1).

The creation of PESCO was marked, to some degree, by the same geopolitical context as the initiation of the Military Mobility Initiative. While the establishment of PESCO itself was rather born out of the need to create Eurocentric capabilities, arguably to avoid dependencies on NATO following the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States and his anti-European rhetoric during the first, and later the second, period of presidency. Military Mobility, on the other hand, could be viewed as a deepening of NATO-PESCO and thus a NATO-Europe cooperation.

Therefore, I argue that, similarly to the case of NATO, the role of PESCO goes beyond simply being a member of the audience, as PESCO in itself is a functional vehicle for the Commission to pursue the issue of military mobility and materialize the issue into a more concrete project through the PESCO MilMob.

5.4.3 The European Defence Agency & The EU Member States

The European Defence Agency has been one of the central pillars of the CSDP since its founding in 2004, as it has given member states of the Union a collaborative platform for working on defense and security issues, being an indicator of the dominant intergovernmental approach to organizing defense-industrial cooperation in the EU between states.

On a European level, this co-operation, specifically for the case of EDA, refers to “joint capability development programmes between the European Union member states, partnerships on civil-military research and development (R&D), and agreement on defence market regulations at the EU-level” (Fiott 2015, p.542) with the aim of increasing efficiency on defense markets of Europe between states/governments, institutions on the European-level as well as defense firms. As such, the EDA represents both member states and the defense-industrial complex, which directly translates into the projects by the EDA.

Here the EDA follows an ad-hoc approach, being tasked by the European Council to “participate in defining European capabilities and armaments co-operation initiatives, identify operational requirements, evaluate the improvement of military capabilities and strengthen the European Defence Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB)” (ibid., p.544), as opposed to the Commission, as the only supranational institution, that was already involved in European defense-industrial co-operation before the founding of the EDA, following a “structural approach” through “initiatives that are designed to shape the internal market” (ibid., p.545), altering the fundamental structures of the defense and arms market.

For the specific case of military mobility, the EDA is especially relevant for several reasons, mainly as there is an arguable “rivalry” between the Commission and the EDA in a power struggle for European defense-policy creation, in which the Commission strived to “further its purview over defence-industrial policy” (ibid., p.542), thus expanding its authority in the field of defense, which was already reflected on as possible intention of the Commission when forming the Initiative and Action Plans on Military Mobility.

In the case of the Initiative and later project of Military Mobility, there have been early developments relating to Military Mobility, namely the involvement of the European Commission, besides the EEAS and the EUMS, serving on an EDA working group centered around Military Mobility, which then fed into the development of the Action Plan on Military Mobility from 2018 (Håkansson 2023, p. 443).

5.4.4 The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union

The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union are central audience members that the communication of the Commission tries to reach, as the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union are the institutions in the European Union with primary legislative powers and the ability to adopt initiatives of the European Commission.

For the topic of military mobility, however, the regulatory influence of the EP and the Council of the European Union is only tangentially relevant in its defense dimension, as they possess very limited legislative power in the sector of defense, increasing the importance of the civil-infrastructure component. Specifically in the case of military mobility, the TRAN (Transport and Tourism) and SEDE (Security and Defence) committees have been highly relevant as they were involved in the formation of military mobility as an issue on a European level, adding expert knowledge to the discussion while also giving plenary room to the European Commission, with the EP being the directly addressed recipient of the joint communication documents (European Parliament 2024, pp.39-40).

Looking at the involvement of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, their legislative powers, in the political stream, became evident in several occasions, like the revision of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) regulation through the European Parliament, in which military mobility was added to the regulation or the resolution on military mobility which was adopted in 2018 through the European Parliament by 437 votes, with members of the parliament stressing the centrality of military mobility as a strategic tool in order to “pursue security and defence interests effectively” (European Parliament 2018) and through the adoption of the joint report on the implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 on the 23rd of October 2023.

While those adoptions in themselves were arguably already taking over views of the EC, by the year 2025, this legitimization of the Commission's push and adaptation of talking points became, in consequence, evident, through the communication of the Parliament, stating:

Moreover, Parliament stresses the urgent need to invest in military mobility by removing bottlenecks and closing missing links, and highlights the importance of swiftly implementing projects and regulatory measures under the action plan on military mobility 2.0. It supports strategic investments in dual-use infrastructure such as ports, airports, and highways to facilitate the movement of troops, equipment, and humanitarian aid. MEPs call on the Commission to adopt an integrated approach to military mobility and logistics, ensure the Council's pledge to remove all remaining barriers by 2026, and provide sufficient funding in the next MFF (Clapp, Kiss and Gullentops 2025, p.11).

5.4.5 The European Court of Auditors

I argue that the European Court of Auditors (ECA) plays one of the most central roles in the legitimization of the military mobility framework within the European Union, as it is the central auditing institution at the level of EU policymaking. The tasks of the ECA include the auditing of EU revenue and expenditure, which enables it to check if EU funds are correctly raised and spent, and whether the investments return value to the Union, ultimately checking any person or organization handling EU funds, such as the European Commission. In cases such as military mobility, the task of writing up audit reports that include findings and recommendations is most important, as well as producing annual reports for the EP and the Council of the EU, based on which the Parliament decides to approve the Commissions handling of the Unions budget (European Court of Auditors n.d.-a; European Court of Auditors n.d.-b.; European Court of Auditors n.d.-c.).

For the case of the EU defense field, the ECA has been involved in a majority of main audit arrangements, as one auditor besides the College(s) of Auditors and national audit institutions and bodies for the MFF 2014-2020 and the MFF 2021-2027. For the Multiannual Financial Framework from 2014 until 2020, the ECA has been appointed to audit the EEAS administrative expenditures, the African Peace Facility, PADR, and EDIDP, as well as auditing CSDP Agencies such as the European Defence Agency. Major auditing arrangements for the Multiannual Financial Framework from 2021 until 2027 include the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility (European Court of Auditors 2019, p.70).

For the case of the military mobility framework, the ECA has been the main auditing institution, being the auditor of the Military Mobility Action Plan based on the Commission's legislative proposals for the MFF 2021-2027 as well as for the PESCO MilMob project in the MFF from 2014-2020 (ibid., p.70).

In its role as the central auditing instance for the military mobility framework, it published the already reflected-on special report 04/2025, titled EU military mobility - Full speed not reached due to design weaknesses and obstacles en route, in February 2025. In this report, the ECA concluded that the Action Plan fell short in its ability of translating security concerns into materialized projects.

5.5 The Acts of Speech: Unraveling the Securitizing Elements in the Communication of the European Commission

Analyzing the communication conducted by the European Commission in the timeframe of November 2017 until June 2025, that centered around military mobility and the issue of transportation infrastructure, is the crucial component of this research, as unraveling the communication of the Commission equals to unravelling the core element of the securitization process, which is best explained through regarding discursive politics as the driving act behind the success of a securitization attempt.

Having examined the context of the securitization process by reflecting on the facilitating conditions, such as the brute threat context, that surround both the audience as receptor of the communication, and the securitizing actor as the driving force with its own ambitions and goals, this paper has already established the importance of grasping the speech acts beyond a purely technical view, by analyzing it through a wider social and contextual understanding.

To analyze the material with regard to the research question and with regard to the securitization lens, this thesis, based on the theory of securitization, proposes that a securitizing speaker must follow a script that includes two key elements: defining an existential threat and defining a referent object, which are elements that are strongly tied to both a technical and contextual view on discourse, in which the framing of issues becomes pivotal to the success of the attempt. I suggest that adding the dimension of argued-for/needed measures is necessary, as it allows us to reflect on the Commission's intentions and the prospects for creating “security”.

The analysis will follow a clear logic that builds on a novel approach in which transitive properties within the discourse are analyzed over three levels of communication, namely a layer of existential significance, a layer of defense and deterrence significance, and a layer of infrastructural significance. I suggest that the securitization of transportation infrastructure must be preceded by the securitization of military mobility and, therefore, by the securitization of existential external threats.

5.5.1 The First Layer: An Existential Significance

In its first layer, the underlying material will be analyzed for its discursive elements that create and give an existential significance to necessary defense & deterrence capabilities of the European Union, in which the existential need both for these capabilities and for a concrete dimension of it, namely of military mobility, unfolds. Following the logic of the securitization theory, on this level of the European Commission's communication, the European Union, portrayed as

a multi-layered subject, is argumentatively located in a wider existential threat context that then requires deterrence and defense capabilities to respond to threats and crises that endanger the European Union, its citizens, and territorial integrity in an existential way.

Through this first layer, in which a direct link between defense & deterrence capabilities and the existence of the European Union is created, the Commission builds a foundation that takes on transitive properties that ultimately pass further and deeper into the other layers of communication and substantially influence the reasoning around the Initiative and Action Plans on Military Mobility and Military Mobility 2.0. It is only through this threat context and argumentation for the need for capabilities meant to avert negative outcomes that the internal shortcomings of an infrastructural dimension, among others, become persuasive.

5.5.1.1 Referent Threats on the First Layer

On the first layer of existential significance, the existential threats can be grasped as being primarily of military nature, building on a brute threat context that; in the communication, shifted, from being rather ambiguous in the first timeframe of Military Mobility to taking on a more concrete dimension with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine through Russia and the introduction of Military Mobility 2.0 through the Action Plan from 2022.

Beginning with the introduction of the topic of military mobility through the *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council – Improving Military Mobility in the European Union* in November of 2017, the European Commission located the European Union in an "unpredictable security environment" (European Commission 2017a, p.1) from which, the Commission argues, the Union and its citizens need to be protected through taking necessary steps, that should then enable the European Union to react to "internal and external crisis situations" (ibid., p.1). This emphasis on internal and external crises was then reiterated in the press release accompanying the Joint Communication from 2017, drawing on an ambiguous threat context that remains unspecified in both documents but implies the existence of an internal and external threat landscape. This reading is then supported by remarks about "today's security environment" (European Commission 2017b, p.5) that require European defense forces to move quickly in both the EU but also NATO context (ibid., p.5).

Throughout the Commission's political communication, references to these crisis situations were among the central elements in this layer of discourse, while the Commission remained rather vague about the characteristics of these specific crisis situations until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022. Following this full-scale invasion of Ukrainian territory, the

European Commission released the *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Action plan on military mobility 2.0*, in which they formulated an adapted approach, including additional measures, for the period of 2022-2026 (European Commission 2022a, pp.1-18).

With the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the security context of the European Union shifted radically, which is revealed through the change in the communication to openly name Russia in the threat context and in relation to the addressed crises. Already in the introductory paragraph of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0, the Commission referred to the Strategic Compass on Security and Defence, quoting: “‘Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine has confirmed the urgent need to substantially enhance the military mobility of our armed forces within and beyond the Union’” (EEAS 2022, p.29 cited in European Commission 2022a, p.2).

The framing of Russia as a security threat was reiterated in the document, drawing another link between the need for military transportation capabilities, while also remarking on crises erupting at the external border of the European Union, by stating:

The EU Member States’ forces need to be able to respond quickly and with sufficient scale to crises erupting at the EU’s external borders and beyond. Moreover, in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine we have learned how important it is to move military aid as quickly and smoothly as possible (European Commission 2022a, p.2).

This threat depiction was continuously reused in several instances of the EC’s communication, framing Russia’s threatening nature in the context of an international rules-based system in which peace and the system itself are undermined, referring to the fundamental and dramatic change of the European security environment (European Commission 2022b, p.2). Enriched is this threat portrayal, in which Russian threats are seen as the most immediate, through additional references to China in the context of its apparent attempt to reshape the international rules-based system and an apparent rise of multipolarity by the year 2023, stating: “The Russian threats and challenges are the most immediate, but they are not the only ones. We also witness China increasingly attempting to reshape the international order to its benefits” (European Commission 2023a, p.1).

This change of the international security context towards a deteriorating security environment was emphasized again, remarking the role of Russia in this environment as a clear aggressor, which ultimately and fundamentally changed the world and the status quo of stability, stating:

We are now more than 700 days – nearly two years – into Russia's war of aggression in the sovereign territory of our neighbour and friend Ukraine. This invasion has fundamentally

changed the world we live in, putting an end to the post-Cold-War certainties and stability to which we had become so accustomed (European Commission 2024b, p.1).

By the year 2025, the security rhetoric of the EC regarding Russia and regarding the security environment found its fullest intensity by talking about possibilities of war if defense capabilities were not to be improved and clearly shifting the European Union towards a more active role when it comes to defense, as Commissioner Kūbičius stated in a speech at the European Defence and Security Summit:

I started by saying that the European Union is not at war, but we live in times of war. We can still avoid war. By building up our defence readiness. By building up a defence ready defence industry. By building up a new European security architecture. And a European Defence Union (European Commission 2025b, p.10).

While Russia can be regarded as the major external threat in this context and in the form of a national actor, the European Commission throughout the years, beginning in 2017 until 2025, also directly named and pointed to hybrid threats as a danger to the European Union on multiple levels, through which it took on a rather materialized status as hybrid threats appear to be a direct and physical, already ongoing, threat to the European Union, especially for the dimension of (critical) infrastructure and its extension through the cyberspace (European Commission 2022c, p.1).

This direct threat to infrastructure of the EU through hybrid threats also overarches the layers of the communication and creates a cycle of meaning-making as infrastructure becomes both a threat to military mobility, and thus to defense and deterrence capabilities (as will be unraveled in the course of this content analysis), but also directly turns infrastructure into an issue in itself, as its lack of robustness “causes” its own threatened status through becoming vulnerable to external attacks. In a sense, infrastructure therefore becomes both threatened and, at the same time, a carrier of threat in the Commission's communication.

While the dimension of hybrid threats is ultimately brought up as a separate policy issue due to its scale and importance, with its own Joint Communication titled *Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats – a European response* (European Commission 2017a, p.2), besides further communication papers by the Commission, it is referenced as early as 2017 and stays relevant throughout the communication until 2025, with the full range of hybrid threats mainly referring to cyberattacks and disinformation. The EC also gives direct examples, such as the hybrid attacks against Latvia, Poland, and Lithuania, which the Lukashenko regime of Belarus has organized (European Commission 2023a, p.1).

5.5.1.2 Referent Objects on the First Layer

When it comes to the referent object on this layer of analysis, the European Commission constructed a complex arrangement of multiple threatened objects, such as territory, citizens, or the Union as a whole, which, if layered upon each other, constitute one bigger European complex at threat. The objects in threat were, however, not purely limited to the people and physical territorial status of the European Union but also took on the shape of a wider system of international order and rule-based political stability.

The most frequent object located in a threat context by the EC is that of European citizens, who are seen by the Commission to be in need of defensive protection. Beginning as soon as 2017 with the first Joint Communication on the topic of military mobility, the security of the citizens is emphasized as a priority, rhetorically calling on their expectations for action and thus using them for legitimization: “The security of Europe's citizens is a priority for the Union, and an issue they expect the EU to address” (European Commission 2017a, p.2). This role of citizens is also seen at other points in the discourse, as the Commission argues for their understanding when it comes to the need for the European Union in its role in defense (*ibid.*, p.1).

While one role of the “citizens” is used rhetorically, building a justification for the creation of defense & deterrence capabilities on their understanding or expectations, they are also placed in the role of being threatened with their safety and thus seen as something in need of protection, especially in relation to the security environment:

To protect the Union and its citizens in today's unpredictable security environment, the EU will take the steps which are necessary to ensure its ability to react effectively and in timely manner to internal and external crisis situations, including by enhancing its preparedness and resilience (European Commission 2017a, p.2).

The material also shows that in the communication of the EC, there is a clearly articulated logical link created between the protection of citizens and the need to improve military mobility, as can be seen in 2017 in the press release accompanying the first Joint Communication: “As part of the drive to better protect citizens and improve the Union's security environment, the European Commission and the High Representative are proposing a number of actions to improving military mobility within the European Union” (European Commission 2017b, p.1) as well as in the Joint Communication in the year 2018 which then refers back to the Joint Communication from the year 2017:

Facilitating the movement of military troops and assets is essential for the security of European citizens, and to build a more effective, responsive and joined-up Union, as identified

in the Joint Communication on improving military mobility in the EU from November 2017 (European Commission 2018b, p.1).

Following the war of Aggression in Ukraine, the EC remained their emphasis on the need to address the deteriorating security environment to protect citizens and infrastructure alike through the introduction of a new Action Plan:

Today, the Commission and the High Representative put forward a Joint Communication on an EU Cyber Defence policy and an Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 to address the deteriorating security environment following Russia's aggression against Ukraine and to boost the EU's capacity to protect its citizens and infrastructure (European Commission 2022c, p.1).

When it comes to this need to protect citizens, the European Union clearly connects two strongly related policy domains and topics more closely through adhering to a logic of infrastructure. This logic integrates infrastructure both as being a threat to being in threat, relating to an already institutionalized and widely established view on infrastructure as “critical” and as being the topic of security through its vulnerability to attacks from the outside, which in this specific case refers to cyberspace, as one domain of critical infrastructure that integrates into physical infrastructure such as energy or transportation infrastructure:

Cyberspace has no borders. Recent cyber-attacks on energy networks, transport infrastructure and space assets show the risks that they pose to both civilian and military actors. This calls for more action to protect citizens, armed forces, as well as the EU's civilian and military missions and operations, against cyber threats (European Commission 2022c, p.1).

While the role of the citizens takes the central role of being a referent object, the Commission further addresses member states of the EU directly by referring to their defense needs, which then implies that there is a necessity on a state-level for defense and protection. Concerning the territories of those states, the European Commission also points to territory as being in need of security and protection in both the Joint Communications from the years 2017 and 2018, following a rather classic security understanding that is most common in the military sector for the securitization theory (European Commission 2017a, p.1; European Commission 2018a, p.1).

In its communication, the EC goes beyond just grasping and portraying the European Union as a complex that is being threatened but also refers to the international order and global system as being threatened through Russia, which in turn further justifies the involvement of NATO arguing that the Russian aggression against Ukraine is “undermining peace [and] the international rules-based system globally” (European Commission 2022b, p.2). Ukraine and its territory are therefore portrayed as being threatened directly but also seen as an indicator, and thus

an extension, of the liberal international order, which has suffered through Russia's war of aggression, through which the sovereign territory of Ukraine was unlawfully damaged and post-Cold-War certainties brought to an end (European Commission 2024b, p.1).

5.5.1.3 Needed Measures on the First Layer

On this level of analysis, there is a clear proposal of the European Commission for the need for measures that need to be taken for both defense and deterrence, thus focusing on a general necessity of defense and deterrence capabilities in order to avert the threats as framed by the Commission. In the communication of the EC, there is both reference to a wider array of measures, such as the need for the European Defence Fund (European Commission 2018c, IP12 1050), and a general call for unspecified defense capabilities, as well as a direct call for the need of a military that is mobile and can react to threats and crises, thus justifying the existence of the Military Mobility Initiative and later Military Mobility project. In doing so, the Commission further locates itself as an active defense player in the area of defense, also by stating the role it has to play in order to protect the referent objects on this layer.

Here, the European Commission also connects its overarching role to a wide field of policies that are not necessarily based around defense and security politics, marking the integrative efforts of the EC by attaching defense issues to already potentially integrated policy fields:

In order to further help meet Europe's current and future needs, the European Defence Action Plan committed the Commission to work with other EU relevant actors to increase coherence and synergies between defence issues and other Union policies where an EU added-value exists (European Commission 2017a, p.2).

The role of the Union for defense is reiterated on several occasions, marking a clear stance on this topic and positioning itself as a protector: "In his State of the Union address of 13 September 2017, President Juncker stressed the imperative of creating a fully-fledged European Defence Union by 2025. Each of these initiatives serves a single purpose: to build a Union that protects" (European Commission 2017a, p.2).

This line of talk was deepened in 2018, mentioning not only the need for a fully-fledged Defence Union but also talking in detail about a Union with capabilities and priorities in connection with threatened elements such as citizens and territory:

In his State of the Union Address of 2017, President Juncker stressed the imperative of creating a fully-fledged European Defence Union by 2025. The EU is already taking the necessary steps to build a more effective, responsive and joined-up Union, capable of pursuing EU's shared interests and priorities in promoting peace and guaranteeing the security

of its citizens and territory, as also called for in the Global Strategy for the EU Foreign and Security Policy (European Commission 2018a, p.1).

Essential to this line of talk also becomes the link to specific policies that are all portrayed in connection to security, specifically stating their implications for security and framing the Union as a security project by stating:

Most of our Union's policies have direct security implications. Our transport policy, for military mobility. Our agricultural policy, for food security. From trade to research, from energy to communications. At times of unprecedented threats, we must refocus our attention on the security dimension of all our policies. We must once again think about our Union as, intrinsically, a security project. (European Commission 2023b, p.2)

This view of a European Defence Union is then also referenced directly in relation to strategic challenges such as the “blackmailing” of Russia with gas, which is an argument made in favor of this very European Defence Union as the future of the EU, stating:

The next chapter is a fully fledged European Defence Union. So that Europe can finally take strategic responsibility for its own future. It is one of the big tasks that our Union faces for the years ahead. And I am confident that Europe will once again answer to the call of history (European Commission 2023b, p.5).

Cooperation within the European Union, but also beyond the Union, is seen as necessary to enhance preparedness and resilience. Referring to the unpredictable security environment and the steps the EU will take to ensure its ability to react effectively, the EC notes:

In this context Member States are also working towards deepening their defence cooperation, including through the Permanent Structured Cooperation as provided for in the Treaties. There is both an opportunity and a strategic need to fully exploit civilian/military synergies to expedite military mobility – both within our borders as well as with a view to rapidly deploying military operations abroad (European Commission 2017a, p.2).

The Commission then also refers to the role of the EU member states for defense, in which they are seen as the primary responsible actors, however with a conjunction that levels up the role of the European Commission through taking an active role in the coordination between member countries: “while defence remains the primary responsibility of Member States, there is a lot that we, as European Commission, can do to step-up our game. Especially through organizing a more integrated and efficient coordination between countries” (European Commission 2022b, p.1).

Even though coordination between member states and a more active European Commission in the area of defense are the two major themes on this level of analysis, the role of the Commission is further supported by its competences when it comes to its relationship with NATO, which

is seen as a vital player for European defense by the Commission: “besides the material side of our defence, we need to seriously look into institutional arrangements of our defence on the European continent. NATO definitely will stay a backbone of our collective defence” (European Commission 2025a, p.10).

This reliance on and need for NATO is one central argument that is, however, mitigated by the shift in the international political context, which is commented on by the EC through stating: “Americans are preparing to move out from Europe and Russians are growing stronger” (European Commission 2025a, p.10). Because of this context, it is suggested that the European Union must start discussing how this overhauled European security architecture will look like, but also how a “true European Defence Union with the responsibility to defend Europe independently will be created” (European Commission 2025a, p.10) and further how the progressive framing of a common Union defense policy as an obligation of the Treaty on European Union shall be realized (European Commission 2025a, p.10).

5.5.2 The Second Layer: A Defense & Deterrence Significance

In the second layer of the communication, the European Commission builds onto the logic of the first layer, in which a need for defense & deterrence measures is created in order to counter the array of threats. In this next layer of the communication, the Commission rhetorically shifts the focus from a need for capabilities meant to defend and deter threats to understanding military mobility itself as a threat to the needed defense & deterrence capabilities due to its limitedness and lack of mobility capacities.

5.5.2.1 Referent Threats on the Second Layer

Military mobility on this level of the analysis is framed as essential for defense & deterrence capabilities, strongly drawing on inferences from the first layer in order to problematize military mobility capacities, but also inferring and directly pointing out that military mobility must be seen as a problem due to the existence of underlying problems that hinder military mobility itself in a third layer of the communication. It is thus necessary to understand that, to some degree, by calling for measures such as increasing defense and deterrence capabilities in a first step, military mobility is already seen as a fundamental problem, as it is mentioned in a context in which a security environment requires the enhancement of defense readiness and resilience while also being limited in potential. The EC, however, also directly emphasizes the role of military mobility and unveils problems that go along with the status quo of the mobility of both European and NATO military, directly affecting its effectiveness in defending and deterring.

To portray military mobility as an issue for defense capabilities, the EC, in the Joint Communication on improving military mobility, points to the fact that military mobility is an ongoing issue, stating: “it is often difficult for the military to respond as quickly as can be needed” (European Commission 2017a, p.3). It is, however, not only important for defense but also portrayed as a possible deterrent. In the Action Plan from 2018, the Commission connects the need to facilitate military mobility within the European Union, specifically to its role for deterrence by preventing crises: “By facilitating military mobility within the EU, we can be more effective in preventing crises, more efficient in deploying our missions, and quicker in reacting when challenges arise” (European Commission 2018b, p.1).

Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine they further emphasize the importance of military mobility for defense and security of Europe by stating that military mobility is “vital for our European security and defence” (European Commission 2018a, p.2), but shift their rhetoric, no longer locating the need for military mobility only within the EU but also beyond: “The EU Member States’ forces need to be able to respond quickly and with sufficient scale to crises erupting at the EU’s external borders and beyond” (European Commission 2018a, p.2) and thus directly referring to the necessity of a quick response to crises both on EU’s borders but also pointing to a necessity for a response to crises beyond European territory, which can be grasped as an attempt of attributing an international defense role to the EU on foreign soil.

This reference to the need to respond to crises on European border but also beyond the border was made again in the press conference on the topic of European Security and Defence package accompanying the release of the Action Plan on military mobility in which military mobility is further seen as critical for security and resilience: “EU Member States' military personnel need to be able to respond quickly and at sufficient scale to any crises at EU's external borders or beyond, making military mobility critical for our security and resilience. It is an additional deterrent” (European Commission 2022b, p.4).

In the communication of the Commission, this connection between both the critical role of military mobility for defense capabilities, understood as the ability to move troops and equipment quickly, is restated during the conference:

We need to adapt our mobility system for our troops to be able to transport and deploy quickly all their military capacities. This is critical for our defence: the capacity, the ability to move troops and equipment quickly from one side of the European Union to the other side of the European Union; from the West to the East – mainly -, to our external borders; but also, beyond our external borders when we deploy our military missions around the world. This requires to make bridges, tunnels and roads, and trains ready to transport our

military capacities. Our military support to Ukraine has shown clearly that this matters a lot (European Commission 2022b, p.2).

What becomes visible is also the connection by the EC of European defense capabilities to the role of military mobility, further creating a direct link to the physical transportation infrastructure of the European Union, which is, in the third layer, then reflected on as a fundamental issue to the capabilities of military mobility (European Commission 2022b, p.1)

In reference to the provision of equipment for Ukraine, having to travel across all of Europe, they further add to this Ukraine-specific context that “for military forces to make a real difference on the ground, they must move fast. They must not be blocked over bureaucracy or a lack of adapted infrastructure” (European Commission 2022b, p.1). A circumstance that was aimed to be solved, as argued by the Commission, by the first Military Mobility Action Plan from 2018, and brought up again by the second Action Plan on Military Mobility (European Commission 2022b, p.1).

5.5.2.2 Referent Objects on the Second Layer

Defense and Deterrence capabilities can be regarded as the central element that is portrayed as threatened on this level. Drawing on the already presented fragments of the communication, the role of defense and deterrence is already visible, but is then also directly addressed within the communication of the European Commission, understanding military mobility as embedded in a wider Security and Defence agenda, linking military mobility to a bigger defense frame, as stated by Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc in a speech at the North Atlantic Council in 2018:

Moreover, military mobility should be seen as part of the wider Security and Defence agenda that the EU is now pursuing in the wake of the Global Strategy, in order to allow Europe to respond faster to crises and increase its resilience to external threats (European Commission 2018c, p.1).

Military Mobility is once again brought up as “critical” for both European security and European resilience, pointing to it as further taking the role as a deterrent, making it essential for prevention:

EU Member States' military personnel need to be able to respond quickly and at sufficient scale to any crises at EU's external borders or beyond, making military mobility critical for our security and resilience. It is an additional deterrent (European Commission 2022b, p.4).

On this level, the European Commission also refers to the situation in Ukraine and the deliverance of weapons and equipment to the state of Ukraine in support of their fight against Russia's Invasion, marking the clear role of military mobility for defense and deterrence both for the

European Union but also partners of the European Union such as Ukraine, while also proving to be highly motivational through pointing to the urgency by stating:

One of the main lessons from the delivery of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine to fight Russia's invasion is that every second matters. Fast military mobility is crucial to respond to crises emerging at our borders and beyond. Much has been done to date, but the Strategic Compass has set higher ambitions and we are delivering. With this new Action Plan on Military Mobility, we will address existing bottlenecks to allow for swift and efficient movement of our armed forces. We will ensure that our armed forces have access to strategic lift capabilities and that infrastructure is better protected from cyber and other hybrid threats. And we will do this with our partners, including NATO (European Commission 2022d, p. 2).

While Military Mobility is central for the defense and deterrence capabilities of the European Union, the Commission already makes clear connections between security and deterrence by remarking the necessity of dual-use transportation infrastructure in relation to those capabilities of the European Union to defend itself: "Dual-use transport infrastructure – you are well familiar with that, like roads and bridges that are used by military convoys –, is essential for our security and deterrence" (European Commission 2023b, p.3).

5.5.2.3 Needed Measures on the Second Layer

On this level, the call for improvement of military mobility is the centrally needed measure to improve defense & deterrence capabilities of the European Union and individual states. This call for improvement of military mobility happens over two dimensions, the first being the introduction of the Military Mobility Initiative in 2017, the Action Plan on Military Mobility from 2018, as well as the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 from 2022, along with all the other acts of communication, that without going on the textual level, must already be seen as a call for improving military mobility. At the level of the text, it is then argued that the aim of those documents and communication overall is to improve military mobility, also directly calling for improved movement capacities within Europe.

This can be seen in the first Joint Communication on the Military Mobility Initiative, where the purpose for the release is directly linked to the need to facilitate military mobility, therefore making the release of this document a needed measure that is combined with the need and call for improved military mobility:

The purpose of this Joint Communication is therefore to set out how the EU, including with its existing policies, will work to facilitate and help to expedite military mobility ranging from day-to-day needs to strategic pre-deployment of military forces and resources, in synergy with non-military activities and without disrupting civilian use of infrastructure or avoiding unnecessary inconveniences (European Commission 2017a, p.3).

The importance of swift and smooth movement is then also brought up in the context of military exercises, pointing out the need for decision making in times of crises: “in order to be prepared for crises including through military exercises and to react to them, it is necessary to ensure that those decisions can be taken fast and that, when taken, troops and equipment can move swiftly and smoothly” (European Commission 2017a, p.2).

The Commission also refers to the historic case of the Cold War, arguably drawing parallels by pointing out that major exercises have become less frequent, but due to the change of environment in which Europe is, the ability for European defense forces to move quickly has found new importance:

Since the end of the Cold War, military movement in Europe – for example for major exercises – has become much less frequent. In today's security environment however, the European defence forces depend on the ability to move quickly, both in the EU as well as NATO context (European Commission 2017b, p.2).

In the Action Plan on Military Mobility this improvement of military mobility is seen as a necessary measure that ties into the first layer of analysis by connecting the improvement of military mobility both to a defense role of the Union itself and therefore directly grasping military mobility as a needed defense lever: “Improving military mobility in the European Union is one of the practical steps to that end, hence contributing to building a Union that protects, where European solidarity and mutual assistance are implemented effectively” (European Commission 2018a, p.2).

The direct aim of the Action Plan, as referred to in the speech accompanying the release of the Action Plan, is then also tied to the need to improve military mobility, not just within but also beyond the EU, specifically in the context of NATO and in the context of CSDP missions, with the argument in favor of military mobility that allows member states of the European Union to act faster:

The aim of the Action Plan is to improve the mobility of military forces within and beyond the EU, allowing the EU and its Member States to act faster, in line with their defence needs and responsibilities – both in the context of Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations, as well as national and multinational activities (e.g. in the framework of NATO) (European Commission 2018c, p.1).

Following the attack of Russia on Ukraine, the need to improve military mobility then becomes a central call in which the threat context of the first layer is folding over the threat on this second layer, directly connecting the aggression of Russia with the necessity of military mobility, while adding a security language that marks drasticity by stating: “Russia's military aggression against

Ukraine has unfortunately confirmed that we need to substantially improve the military mobility of our armed forces – and urgently” (European Commission 2022b, p.4).

The call for military mobility, and its connection to underlying physical infrastructure, is then also directly brought up in the context of an undefined possibility for crisis moments:

We need to make sure that when a crisis hits, Member States' military can move quickly. That bridges and roads used for everyday travel can support the heavy-duty vehicles of the army. That military trucks and containers can seamlessly cross the borders of our Union. This goes for military personnel, but also equipment (European Commission 2022b, p.1).

Overall, military mobility is directly framed in connection with resilience defense and security, particularly in the current geopolitical landscape, which also then relates to the need for prioritizing armed forces and their access to infrastructure as an emergency measure in times of crisis (European Commission 2025d, p.12, European Commission 2022a, p.13).

5.5.3 The Third Layer: An Infrastructural Significance

This third layer in the communication is most essential to the European Commission, as it is this dimension around which the majority of communication for military mobility revolves. It makes sense to understand this layer of the communication as being set in a policy dimension in which the, in layer two of the analysis portrayed need for defense and deterrence and the need for military mobility, as discursively argued for by the Commission, meet the actual competence repertoire of the Commission, as it is this dimension in which the Commission combines both initiative power with their responsibility and power centered around financial leverage through controlling the budget of the EU.

5.5.3.1 Referent Threats on the Third Layer

Threats to the mobility of the military are taking on a wide variety of forms and characteristics in the communication of the Commission, as they can be viewed as intangible, concerning an array of legal, regulatory, administrative, and financial threats, but also tangible physical threats that directly concern the physical transportation infrastructure as the underlying structural frame needed for effective military mobility. The focus of this thesis lies on this very transportation infrastructure, as it can be viewed as the central theme of the communication, taking on a security and defense dimension in which it is framed as a central problem for the mobility of the military. Specifically, legal, regulatory, administrative, and financial threats are then not only framed as affecting military mobility alone but also fade into the area of infrastructure, interlinking the mobility of the military to the transportation structure upon which it rests.

Already in the Joint Communication from the year 2017, regulatory, legal, and physical problems are addressed as fundamental issues by stating: “the swift movement of military personnel and equipment across the EU is currently hampered by a number of physical, legal and regulatory barriers” (European Commission 2017a, p.2). Within the communication of the Commission this legal dimension is emphasized multiple times and military mobility directly linked to a legal framework to which it is bound: “Due to the specific status of armed forces and equipment, military mobility is legally bound by a wide range of national decisions and EU rules that determine whether national and international movements are possible” (European Commission 2017a, p.3).

This movement of the military through national territory and beyond international borders is then also coupled with the transport infrastructure of the European Union, talking about the military requirements that include “[l]egal parameters for access to the transport infrastructure within EU, including for import/export of forces and military equipment outside of Europe, including for dangerous goods [...]” (European Commission 2017a, p.4).

When it comes to regulatory and procedural issues, the European Commission points to customs, the legislation on the transport of dangerous goods that is “currently not applicable to military transport” (European Commission 2017a, p.7), as well as national procedures that affect military mobility due to member states’ specific requirements, procedures and practices (European Commission 2017a, p.7). In this legal and regulatory context, the frame is, however, not solely set by the European Union but also depends on NATO as a partner, as it provides “standards and procedures in this area for its members” (European Commission 2017a, p.3), which becomes relevant when looking at the called-for measures on this level of analysis.

Looking at the discourse of the EC, European transportation infrastructure can be regarded as the central threat theme, as it is deeply embedded in the line of argumentation surrounding military mobility, being framed as the major key threat to mobility capacities and abilities of European forces for both the transportation of troops as well as military goods such as vehicles or ammunition. In particular, physical infrastructure becomes a tangible threat to military mobility, which in turn is linked to defense and deterrence capabilities, as revealed in the Commission's communication.

In the Joint Communication from the year 2017, in reference to the context of crisis preparation, the Commission is mentioning: “the rapid and swift movement of military personnel and equipment across the EU is currently hampered by a number of physical, legal and regulatory barriers,

such as infrastructure that cannot support the weight of a military vehicle” (European Commission 2017a, p.2) thus linking the movement of the military directly to physical barriers related to the infrastructure of the European Union which can also be seen at other points where they refer to the physical and legislative framework which is portrayed as an obstacle by increasing the difficulty of the military “to respond as quickly as can be needed.” (European Commission 2017a, p.3). Those barriers are also directly connected to the potential of the military force to make a difference on the ground, implying its existential relevance by painting a highly ambiguous threat scenario (European Commission 2022b, p.1).

In relation to these barriers, the EC draws on past experience to support a framing of physical barriers as an issue among other, stating: “As experienced during recent major military exercises, such barriers can thus lead to delays, disruptions, higher costs and increased vulnerability” (European Commission 2017a, p.2) and therefore connecting it to serious and negative outcomes for both the member states and the EU as a whole.

The European Commission, in a further step, also goes beyond just warning of outcomes such as delays, disruptions, higher costs and increased vulnerability, as revealed by conducted military exercises, and points to infrastructural as well as regulatory bottlenecks that are then seen as an underlying problem for military movement which is, in turn, directly linked to the defense needs of the European Member States (European Commission 2017a, p.4).

Connections are also made between the lack of coordination of member states and a lack of common understanding on infrastructure, including regulatory and legal issues that concern the mobility of the military, as well as a clear pointing to the quality of the underlying infrastructure that leads to the obstruction of executing movement (European Commission 2017a, p. 5).

The Action Plan in 2018 is then argued for and based on this threatification of physical and administrative obstacles, inferring the existence of infrastructural problems, to which the Commission then adds a time dimension, revealing how intensely military mobility is affected:

This Action Plan stems from the fact that military exercises are hampered by physical and administrative obstacles. We are speaking about days and sometimes weeks of those troops and assets being blocked somewhere in the EU before being able or allowed to proceed further (European Commission 2018c, p.1).

Within the Action Plan on Military Mobility itself, the Commission made infrastructure, as an underlying problem to military mobility, the major theme, reflecting on a pilot analysis which was initiated in 2017 for the countries of the North Sea-Baltic Corridor of the trans-European transport network by the Estonian Presidency, with the aim of identifying preliminary elements

that could have proven useful for a full-scale analysis. Here, the Commission stated, in reference to this exercise, that it has “indeed proved useful” (European Commission 2018a, p.5). Further stating that the member states that participated “identified weak points in their transport networks for military purposes, which need to be upgraded, and have established a related list of priorities” (European Commission 2018a, p.5).

The European Commission then provided two concrete examples for this pilot analysis:

the analysis showed that in several EU Member States' road networks, the maximum height clearance of road bridges, as well as the weight tolerance of certain bridges, is not sufficient for oversized or over-weighted military vehicles; equally, as regards transport by rail, in certain cases there is insufficient loading capacity to move oversized military equipment (European Commission 2018a, p.5).

Here, the Commission emphasized the opportunities for dual-use of civilian infrastructure, which in these statements is then already described as being both a civilian as well as military infrastructure, pointing to a dual-use logic that fully unfolds throughout the communication of the Commission on this level of analysis:

The pilot exercise identified that there are major opportunities for dual-use civilian-military infrastructure, amongst others in multimodal platforms allowing to quickly shift assets from ports and airports to rail and road, in improving the capacity of inland terminals and in adequate loading gauges on freight rail lines (European Commission 2018a p.5).

This linking of infrastructure to its civil core dimension is then also visible at other points in the communication, drawing a picture of a, in a first step, civilian infrastructure: “You know that there is no road for military vehicles – there is not a specific road, they use the same roads” (European Commission 2022b p.2), that is in a further step levitated to a military dimension by continuing the statement with: “But look at which is the weight of a Leopard tank, which is the length of a train to transport military warfare. And then, you could imagine, easily, that not all infrastructures are ready to support the weight and the length of the military warfare” (European Commission 2022b, p.2).

By the year 2022, in the context of the Ukraine War and five years after the Military Mobility Initiative was launched, the proposed Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 builds on the former work done by the Commission but argues for new measures in order to prioritize the work on military mobility, specifically in its transport infrastructural dimension:

The Action Plan addresses the need to further improve the capacity of transport infrastructure to handle the weight, size and scale of military movement with new measures to prioritise our work and include the fuel supply chain requirements for military transports (European Commission 2022a, p.1).

This argument in favor of deepening the work for military mobility and showing the relevance of the underlying transportation infrastructure is then referred to by the Commission:

Building on the progress made since the military mobility initiative was launched in 2017 , this new Action Plan opens the next chapter of work on military mobility for the period 2022-2026. Enlarged in scope and proposing additional measures, it will contribute to a well-connected military mobility network, with shorter reaction times and capable, secure, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure and capabilities (European Commission 2022a, p.2).

Specifically for military mobility and transportation infrastructure, the context of the Ukraine war and Ukraine as a country are made relevant factors through the need for cross-border movement in relation to the movement of military aid, remarking on the different systems of rail between the European Union and the Union:

At the same time, we have also witnessed limitations - for example the different rail systems between Ukraine and EU Member States as well as within the European Union prevented optimal mobility solutions. The strong dependence on contracted civilian transportation solutions also became apparent (European Commission 2022a, p.2).

The Commission then goes as far as directly linking the defense of its borders, clearly portraying a direct threat to European territories through linking it to physical infrastructural bottlenecks such as bridges or roads and tunnels that lead to a total hinderance for the movement of tanks or artillery, in relation to European defense: “We can't move tanks or artillery to defend the border, if the bridges or roads are too weak to carry them, or tunnels too small” (European Commission 2025b, p.8).

Funding of infrastructure remained a central threat theme of the thesis, with several EC commissioners directly stating funding as an issue, such as Commissioner Vălean commenting on the fact that the funds for military mobility infrastructure spending fell short of the initially proposed budget in the context of the CEF, making it not ambitious enough for adapting the TEN-T network to military mobility needs (European Commission 2020, p.6). Commissioner Tzitzikostas later reflected on the CEF and the MFF by stating that the entire envelope was “spent within two years on 95 dual-use projects in 21 Member States” (European Commission 2025c, p.6) and described those efforts as insufficient by stating: “let's be honest: this was far too little” (ibid., p.6). Those remarks further concerned inefficiencies in the coordinated implementation of dual-use projects and the fact that the EU is “far from having a well-connected and resilient dual-use transport network” (ibid., p. 6).

5.5.3.2 Referent Objects on the Third Layer

At this level, it is the mobility of the military and Military Mobility as a project that are in danger due to the threats portrayed by the Commission. While the role of military mobility is already revealed in its threat context as the underlying object that is hampered and threatened, the European Commission directly refers to military mobility as being in danger in several instances through the years, incorporating dimensions of military mobility such as the movement of equipment and personnel:

The Joint Communication adopted today outlines steps to be taken to address the obstacles which are hampering the movement of military equipment and personnel across the EU with the aim of facilitating and expediting their mobility to react in a fast and effective way to internal and external crises. In doing so, the European Commission and the High Representative are delivering on the commitment to use all the tools at their disposal to build a Union that protects (European Commission 2017b, p.1).

This reference to the movement of military personnel and equipment is also made in other instances in which the multitude of barriers are connected to the dimension of movement: “The swift movement of military personnel and equipment is hindered by physical, legal and regulatory barriers” (European Commission 2017b, p.1).

Military mobility is then also connected to specific scenarios, such as military exercises for which military mobility is needed: “military exercises are hampered by physical and administrative obstacles. We are speaking about days and sometimes weeks of those troops and assets being blocked somewhere in the EU before being able or allowed to proceed further” (European Commission 2018c, p.1).

In its local dimension, military mobility is firstly seen in relation to European territory in which it is confronted with obstacles and barriers: “This plan will suggest recommended actions, implementing actors and ambitious timelines on how to address identified barriers hampering military mobility in European territory” (European Commission 2017b, p.2). Military mobility over its dimension of obstacles and barriers is, however, not only seen within the EU but also beyond its borders.

5.5.3.3 Needed Measures on the Third Layer

On this layer of analysis, when it comes to the needed measures, the European Commission delivers a highly complex arrangement of measures that are seen as necessary to improve the mobility of the military. The calls for measures, on one hand, concern an intangible dimension, which was already seen when it comes to threats to military mobility, consisting of a legal,

regulatory, and administrative nature that affects the mobility of the military. Here, cooperation and the need to identify weaknesses become central, putting a bigger emphasis on the need for cooperation within the Union and beyond with partners like NATO. On the other hand, this call for measures also directly concerns this physical transportation infrastructure itself, which is linked in this context to the trans-European transport network as the underlying network. Through this, the call for the need for synergies between the civilian and military dimensions becomes most obvious, directly building on a need and logic of dual-use in which infrastructure is no longer grasped purely as civilian but also portrayed as being of military nature.

Creating a shared understanding, streamlining of procedures, identifying weaknesses, increasing cooperation, or an overall change of legislation, as well as the need for change of funding in size and efficiency, are turning into the primary needs on this level that primarily concern military mobility itself, but also the underlying infrastructure. This is relevant as in the final layer of analysis, the focus is fully shifted from military mobility to the underlying infrastructure, which is attached to an economic reasoning regarding this transportation infrastructure that finds its way into the communication.

Looking at this intangible dimension, the European Commission emphasizes the need for what can be described as an overall coordinated and cooperative approach within the Union, but also beyond, on all infrastructural issues. This becomes visible through the call for more collaboration on the European as well as on the international level, which includes a call for the creation of a shared understanding of needs and requirements, specifically for the infrastructural component of military mobility.

Already in the first joint communication, the European Commission argues for more coordination regarding infrastructure, which is framed in its movement dimension, stating: “Actual movement requires close coordination between EU Member States. It requires a common understanding on the infrastructure to be used” (European Commission 2017a, p.5). Emphasis is also put on coordination that maximizes the value the European Union as a whole can add, as well as referring to the need for synergies between a civilian and a military dimension (European Commission 2017a, p.4).

This approach to civilian and military synergies, through which there is a clear linkage of the military and the civilian domain, is a recurring frame specifically in the dimension of infrastructure itself and for coordination and cooperation, in which a required effort by multiple actors is turned into a talking point:

While carrying out this work will require efforts by different actors at different levels, there are areas where the EU could offer possible solutions in line with the Treaties and create synergies relying on policies and projects developed over the years primarily for civilian purposes (European Commission 2017a, p.5).

To this point of coordination on the EU level, the Commission adds an external dimension of cooperation and coordination with other stakeholders, like NATO, as a partner highly relevant for European defense capabilities, remarking the overall need to avoid unnecessary duplications (European Commission 2017a, p.7). The role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is then also portrayed as relevant when it comes to aiming to effectively address existing barriers through ensuring a coherent approach and synergies between the EU and NATO:

The intention is to ensure a coherent approach and synergies between the EU and NATO aiming to effectively address existing barriers, including legal, infrastructure and procedural, in order to facilitate and expedite movement and border crossing of military personnel and material (European Commission 2018a, p.3).

Cooperation, however, is not limited to NATO alone but is also constituted of further cooperative efforts combining the Permanent Structured Cooperation with NATO as one actor involved in PESCO. The necessity for this is created, and the relevance for such cooperative efforts is increased by inferring a worsening security environment:

It will be another step in deepening our cooperation at EU level, also in the framework of the Permanent Structured Cooperation we have formally launched recently, and with our partners, starting with NATO. For us, as EU, cooperation remains the only way to be effective in today's world (European Commission 2018b, p.1).

The Permanent Structured Cooperation, as one of the central organizations for European defense, as well as other players such as the European External Action Service or the intergovernmental European Defence Agency are then also brought up and addressed in the communication, in reference to their role for the military mobility project while highlighting the role of member states and NATO, specifically to ensure coherence and synergies. In relation to this, the EC emphasizes the need for a shared understanding of what is necessary to improve the underlying issues of effective military mobility (European Commission 2018b, p.2; European Commission 2017a, p.4).

This argument is brought up repeatedly, with the Commission arguing for the need to both develop a “shared understanding of the needs and requirements, which will need to be further examined and agreed upon by the Member States” (European Commission 2017b, p.2) as well as to develop “a common understanding on the infrastructure to be used and its impact on the infrastructural standards” (European Commission 2017b, p.2). This is also related to the need

to avoid duplications and is used as an argument for increasing synergies and avoiding unnecessary duplications (European Commission 2017a, p.4).

One key task the Commission sees to improve military mobility is to streamline procedures that hamper military mobility on a European level and locate regulatory and procedural issues, which the Commission emphasized must be explored (European Commission 2018a, p.8; European Commission 2018b, p.2), stating:

By end of 2018, the Commission will explore possible options for streamlining and simplifying customs formalities related to the customs related activities for military operations. It will also ensure the uniform application and implementation of the related customs provisions. (European Commission 2018a, p.8)

Related to these customs procedures, which have been established in the EU Customs Legislation, the Commission further proposes the development of a digital system for information exchange, positioning itself as an active part in this development process (European Commission 2022a, p.11).

In the communication of the EC, one central call when it comes to improving infrastructure and therefore military mobility are the standards of said infrastructure. Infrastructure is thus made an integral part of military mobility and one of the most important levers to improve the mobility of military forces. Fundamentally, standards are tied to the technical requirements necessary, which were brought up already in the first joint communication when they refer to the need and availability of “physical infrastructure complying with the necessary technical requirements for all transport modes and multimodal nodes” (European Commission 2017a, p.4).

The Commission then continues with the need to assess infrastructure and define standards through the process of analysis, which is portrayed as an enabler for multimodal transportation, a phrase that is reused by the Commission throughout the communication:

It will thus be necessary to assess current infrastructure and define infrastructural standards that take also into account military requirements. Such an analysis would enable the EU to develop an infrastructural standard that integrates the military profile for multimodal transport. This could cover both the development of new infrastructure and the upgrading of existing one. A close link with the long term infrastructure investment of the Union needs to be established, as the financial implications of this work stream have not yet been quantified (European Commission 2017a, p.5).

The connection of transportation infrastructure, specifically TEN-T, is also made in relation to specific military requirements across both geographical and technical dimensions, showing the integration of military needs into the existing European transportation network:

Regarding transport infrastructure, we first need the detailed description of the military requirements, across all relevant modes of transport, both in geographical terms (which airport, which rail line etc.) and in terms of technical performance (weight capacity, length etc.). [...] On that basis, we will need about 6 months to compare the EU's transport network (TEN-T) and the military requirements, both in terms of geographical coverage and technical performance, and then to quantify the gaps (European Commission 2018c, p.1-2).

While military requirements and standards for infrastructure are portrayed as needed, the identification, but also the agreement for military requirements, are brought up as a multi-layer process in which EU member states and national authorities are becoming relevant players, (European Commission 2018a, p.4) This is visible as early as 2017, in which the agreement of member states is seen as the basis for the European Union to take action. Specifically, transport modes and multimodal nodes as dimensions of the underlying infrastructure are then pushed to the center of those requirements to be examined regarding their availability (ibid., p.4).

The assessment of current infrastructure also relates to the already mentioned coordinated approach between member states of the European Union, in which a common understanding of this infrastructure is required. Here, the Commission also points to a direct connection between the quality of infrastructure and differences in standards that obstruct movement capabilities:

Actual movement requires close coordination between EU Member States. It requires a common understanding on the infrastructure to be used. Due to the quality of the infrastructure itself and to differences in standards, submitting movement requests is very time consuming. This may lead to unexpected obstruction during the execution of the movement (European Commission 2017a, p.5).

The Commission then argues that it is necessary to “assess current infrastructure and define infrastructural standards that take also into account military requirements” (European Commission 2017a, p.5). For this assessment of infrastructure, the Commission proposes a plan for the next steps to be taken in its Action Plan from 2018, reflecting on the need for cooperation in the EU for the identification of gaps concerning the trans-European transport network:

By end of 2018, the Commission will identify, in cooperation with EU Member States, the European External Action Service/EU Military Staff and the European Defence Agency, the gaps between the current technical requirements applicable to the trans-European transport network on the one hand, and what would be adequate for military transport on the other. In addition, the gaps related to the geographical scope will also be identified (European Commission 2018a, p.6).

To this, they further add the need to identify not only gaps but also parts of the TEN-T network which are already suitable for military transport, but also refer to the need to identify dual-use projects regarding necessary upgrades to be conducted:

By 2019, the Commission services will identify the parts of the trans-European transport network suitable for military transport, including necessary upgrades of existing infrastructure. Dual-use projects will be specifically identified and their cost quantified. On the basis of the findings made, a list of priority projects will be identified. In addition, an estimation of the total volume of investments for military needs on the trans-European transport network will be carried out (European Commission 2018a, p.6).

They further add the necessity for assessment of the need for adoption: “By 2020, the Commission will assess the need to adapt the trans-European transport network Regulation to include upgraded technical requirements – possibly also covering military requirements” (European Commission 2018a, p.6). On a technical dimension, this cooperative effort is expressed through the call to determine whether the linking of military and civilian databases in the form of TENtec seems feasible:

By end of 2019, the Commission will determine, in cooperation with the relevant parties, the feasibility of interlinking the military and civilian (TENtec) databases and the possible scope of any such action. On that basis the Commission will identify any further adaptations to the TENtec functionalities that would be required for these purposes and determine a procedure to keep the databases updated (European Commission 2018a, p.6).

The identification of gaps in the infrastructure is thus central in the process of increasing standards. Following the beginning of the war in Ukraine, this identification is then portrayed as a necessity in the context of the war for the largescale and short-notice movement of military forces, stating that it needs an “[i]dentification of possible gaps in the infrastructure, informing future actions to prioritise improvements and integrate fuel supply chain requirements, to support short-notice largescale movements of military forces” (European Commission 2022d, p. 1).

To this general dimension of assessment, analysis, and standard setting of relevant infrastructure throughout the years, the Commission further adds a concrete policy dimension of funding directly related to the setting of standards and requirements, thus integrating a clear investment and financial dimension into the domain of the military and of infrastructure:

Infrastructure policy and investments offer opportunities for more synergies between civilian and military needs. By 2019, the Commission will identify the parts of the trans-European transport network suitable for military transport, including necessary upgrades of existing infrastructure (e.g. the height or the weight capacity of bridges). A priority list of projects will be drawn up (European Commission 2018b, p.2).

What can be grasped as a continuation of the argument towards the need for a fundamental assessment of infrastructure requirements in relation to military mobility, and the definition of such standards, is then the call to upgrade physical transportation infrastructure. Here, a rather

natural argumentative development becomes evident as the majority of calls for the improvement of physical infrastructure are found in the communication following the end of the first budgetary term of the Military Mobility Initiative and project, while the call for assessment and definition of standards is predominantly found before the introduction of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0.

In the first joint communication, the EC emphasizes the assessment of requirements but already suggests that this is necessary as it would enable the EU to: “develop an infrastructural standard that integrates the military profile for multimodal transport. This could cover both the development of new infrastructure and the upgrading of existing one“ (European Commission 2017a, p.5).

The shift to a communication that heavily emphasizes this upgrading of infrastructure, however, becomes central in the period following 2022 through the introduction of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0. Important in this articulation, regarding the need to upgrade infrastructure, is the strong emphasis on a dual-use logic, which can be read as one fundamental framing in which the logic of civilian-military synergies unfolds as the upgrading of infrastructure is not only understood as necessary for military mobility but further leads to improvement of infrastructure for civilian causes.

The Action Plan addresses the need to further improve the capacity of transport infrastructure to handle the weight, size and scale of military movement with new measures to prioritise our work and include the fuel supply chain requirements for military transports (European Commission 2022a, p.2).

The upgrading of this very infrastructure then encapsulates two specific dimensions; first a dimension that revolves around a general need of upgrading and extending an infrastructural transportation network as a whole, for which the geographic component of military mobility becomes central, and second, the upgrading of physical infrastructure directly relating to technical military requirements, as could already be seen in the speech by Violeta Bulc at the North Atlantic Council (European Commission 2018c, pp.1-2). Specifically, the call for this geographic component of military mobility becomes central in the Action Plan on military mobility 2.0:

To ensure the coherence of these actions, reflect the enlarged scope of ‘military mobility 2.0’ and facilitate an effective involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, a strategic approach is required. The strategic approach of this Action Plan is centred on the need to develop a well-connected military mobility network (European Commission 2022a, pp.3-4).

The Commission argues this network must consist of: “multi-modal transport corridors, including roads, railways, air routes, and inland waterways with dual-use transport infrastructure capable of handling military transports” (European Commission 2022a, pp.3-4) as well as “transport nodes and logistical centres that provide the required host- and transit nation support and sustainment to facilitate the deployment of troops and materiel” (ibid., pp.3-4). In the case of maritime mobility of the military, this would primarily refer to ports which need to be “military mobility enabled” and thus equipped with specialized infrastructure and further connected to strong road and rail connections (European Commission 2025d, p.10).

This call for upgrading the infrastructure is then directly addressed as dual-use transportation infrastructure that ties into the military mobility network, referencing both the geographical routes needed as well as its capacities of handling military equipment that has specific requirements, stating:

At the heart of military mobility is the need to upgrade the dual use transport infrastructure along the military mobility network – comprising multi-modal transport routes connected by logistical hubs – so that it is capable of handling potentially heavy and large-scale military transports at short notice (ibid., p.3).

The Commission then further refers to this dual-use infrastructure in which the overlap of military and civilian use is tied to specific developments and upgrades needed, remarking on the necessary strengthening of TEN-T through the development of multi-modal transport corridors and transport nodes (ibid., p.4). It is then this infrastructure system of TEN-T that requires further efforts, such as identifying gaps and bottlenecks in the physical transportation infrastructure of individual member states (European Commission 2022a, p.7), to which the European Commission further comments:

The objective is to increase the capacity of the infrastructure and optimise its use, for both civilian and military purposes. This requires high resilience of the infrastructure, supporting technologies and access to energy, allowing military forces to move substantial capacity within very short notice (ibid., p.7).

As part of this comment, the Commission then specifically covers Fuel Supply Chain Infrastructure as a necessary domain in the infrastructural scope that relates to TEN-T and highlights the relevance of military logistics that relates to the supply that supports military organizations and sustains military force:

Therefore the Military Requirements within and beyond the EU need to be updated to enable further alignment of the standards for the trans-European transport network and the EU military transport network. As part of this update, the scope of the Military Requirements should be broadened to cover a Fuel Supply Chain Infrastructure. When moving

large-scale forces over a long distance in times of crisis, it is essential to have a secure supply of fuel available along the way. [...] Furthermore, the Military Requirements should also address the infrastructures and systems for an effective access to airspace and use of air navigation systems. Further increase of TEN-T capacity requires also exploring links to the development of logistics hubs (ibid., p.7).

In the Action Plan on military mobility 2.0, the gap analysis, which was presented in 2019, is used as a foundation to argue for further identification needs, in which not just the technical dimension of infrastructure is made relevant, but also a geographical assessment becomes pivotal to military mobility, especially regarding financing and priority funding:

There is a need to identify to what extent the EU military transport network practically meets the Military Requirements for infrastructure. Building on the Gap Analysis between civilian and military requirements (first presented in 2019 and then updated in 2020), an assessment needs to be done to what extent the physical infrastructure meets the military requirements. Such an assessment would allow identifying in which regions there are gaps, and what types of gaps, in consultation with NATO as appropriate. It would then be easier to prioritise infrastructure development and funding at the EU level to accelerate the development of dual-use infrastructure and to ensure the resilience of transport network (European Commission 2018a, p.7).

This quote then signifies the importance of resilience, which is essential when reflecting back to the first layer, where hybrid threats are seen as threatening transportation infrastructure, closing the cycle of transportation infrastructure being portrayed as both threatening and threatened, thus increasing the importance of taking action.

Based on their take on the need to accelerate the development of dual-use infrastructure, the Commission then also argues around a highly civil security issue, namely the combating of wildfires, through which a civilian use case is emphasized, and the dual-use logic is charged with a social, political, and environmental security dimension as well as a military security one (European Commission 2022a, p.8).

Ultimately, the power of the European Commission resides in its financial capabilities, which must be seen as one, if not the central measure, in the Commission's repertoire of actions. Here, two structural measures by the Commission unfold: firstly, the Connecting Europe Facility as a lever for financing European transportation infrastructure, as well as the European Defence Fund as a lever for financing European defense capabilities and structures.

Specifically, the Connecting Europe Facility is presented by the Commission as a strategic EU investment instrument that has proven to be "very effective in mobilising rapidly investments into improving EU transport infrastructure and in focusing on the projects generating the high EU added value" (European Commission 2017a, p. 6). In reference to the Connecting Europe

Facility, the Commission already noted as early as 2017 that good quality infrastructure required “sufficient investment and maintenance, in particular to ensure appropriate and seamless multi-modal connections with mutual civilian and military benefits” (ibid., p.6).

As the most important investment tool for the EC when it comes to transportation infrastructure, the CEF has been designed to cover civilian projects, a status which shifted in the communication of the EC through remarking on the benefits for military goals, which ultimately positions the CEF at the forefront of military investment through a dual-use logic:

While the Facility concentrates on the transport civilian priorities only, there are obvious examples where additional investment could yield significant benefits for military goals, such as projects of cross-border nature, critical infrastructure and key infrastructure components. Identifying the possible synergies and looking at such dual use, alongside reinforcing budgets where needed, is thus an absolute must for both the civilian and military infrastructure. It could be reinforced to achieve the TEN-T core network by 2030 and the European Defence Union by 2025 (ibid., p.6).

This take is then reiterated throughout the communication by the EC in further instances, in which the financing of civilian-military dual use transport infrastructure is connected directly with the €6.4 billion funding and its contribution to a “fully-fledged Defence Union by 2025” (European Commission 2018d, p.2), which is also described as a political priority of the Commission. Specifically, the CEF is here seen as fundamental for dual-use transport infrastructure, which proves a consistent theme and argument throughout the communication of the EC, in which it is seen as the key funding tool for areas in which member states do not invest enough, making it highly critical (European Commission 2025a, p.1). It is, however, not solely the Connecting Europe Facility that is presented as a vehicle for investment, but also the Cohesion Fund, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the InvestEU, the €100 billion research and innovation programme *Horizon Europe* or the European Defence Fund, all of which are portrayed as a funding instrument for a secure military mobility network (European Commission 2019, p.3; European Commission 2020, p.6; European Commission 2022d, p. 1, European Commission 2025a, pp.1-2).

Overall, this funding dimension is continuously tied to a call for improvement through an urgent increase of funding amidst “today’s geopolitical realities” in which it is portrayed as too small (European Commission 2025a, p.2), arguing that the EU “must urgently increase funding for military mobility, both now and in the next Multiannual Financial Framework” (European Commission 2025c, p.8) and portraying funding, in accordance with creating a fully-fledged Defence Union, as a political priority of the Commission (European Commission 2018d, p.2).

6 Discussion of Findings

The military mobility framework, as understood in this research thesis, has proven to be a highly complex arrangement of communicative materializations, technical building blocks, and actions aimed at improving the mobility of the military within and beyond the European Union in the context of European and transatlantic security cooperation. The framework is therefore deeply interconnected with the European Commission's process of security creation in the European Union, as explored through the lens of securitization, thereby highlighting its discursive nature.

The individual parts of this military mobility framework, including the Initiative on Improving Military Mobility from 2017, the Action Plan on Military Mobility from 2018, the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 from 2022, as well as the PESCO Military Mobility project from 2018 have all been central steps in setting military mobility on the agenda of defense debate within the European Union (as well as its partners) and could be seen as clear indicators of a forward push when it comes to materializing solutions aimed to create security against the threats portrayed in a multi-layered communication by the Commission.

Against this background, research on the EC as an influential securitizing actor has yielded several meaningful insights. Even though the lens of securitization theory has theoretically remained unable to directly explain the moral value and the intentions of certain securitizing actors beyond the general aim of legitimizing (potentially extraordinary) measures through the shifting of an (non)-issue into the domain of security, this thesis reflected on potential motives for undertaking a securitization attempt in the case of the European Commission between November 2017 and June 2025.

Having described the European Commission as a highly political and strategic actor, its unique position within the EU has granted it political strengths and tools to effectively manage EU politics for years, including executive and legislative powers. These powers, however, have historically been restricted to certain policy areas, limiting the Commission's influence despite its possession of political, technical, and informal agenda-setting authority. I argue that through projects such as PESCO and the EDF, the EC has taken pivotal and historic steps to integrate itself in the field of defense in the past, which is understood in the frame of the CSDP as part of the CFSP, and has already managed to partially spill-over into defense-making on the EU level. Understanding the issue of military mobility and the EC's action when it comes to military mobility issues as an extension and deepening of these efforts makes sense, as military

mobility covers policy sectors such as the defense-industrial complex and an infrastructural-industrial complex, therefore allowing the EC to take action based on its previous integration into the infrastructural policy field.

To further its influence in the field of defense policy, the Commission ultimately needed to convince a complex set of actors who have generally been identified as the audience for the acts of speech in this research. This shift of the Commission to be a more active actor in the field of defense has therefore been dependent on several facilitating conditions that this thesis reflected on, such as the unique threat background and internal as well as external pressures in which the Commission, the audience, and the communication by the EC are embedded in.

On the level of the audience, my research found a complex arrangement of actors including institutionalized cooperations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (on a transatlantic level) and the European Defence Agency (on the European level) as well as important institutions on the EU policy-making level such as the European Parliament, the Council and the European Court of Auditors, all of which have been relevant in the process of securitization through their unique qualities and roles in the field.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization took on a very unique role in the securitization process as it was both a functional actor and audience member at the same time. Through locating military mobility as a central issue and thus participating in the agenda-setting of military mobility, NATO became a central stakeholder for the mobility and effectiveness of military forces as early as 2015, marking its functional character. As a result, it also became an audience member, as its expectations led to the need for the EC to convince it by communicating sincere intentions regarding fixing issues around military mobility, and therefore to send clear signals to its transatlantic partners in an attempt to strengthen relations.

Another important defense cooperation on the EU level has been the European Defence Agency (consisting of the individual member states of the EU), which could be described as a competitor in the field of defense due to an ongoing rivalry over power with the EC since its founding in 2004, after which the EDA became one of the central pillars of the CSDP. This is essential for understanding the securitization attempt by the Commission, as the EC repeatedly attempted to spill-over into the field of defense.

Through their legislative powers and the power to adopt the European Commission's initiatives, both the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union became central audience members, despite their limited regulatory influence in the defense dimension. Their

involvement in the military mobility framework was therefore primarily visible through work on the TEN-T regulations, in which military mobility became officially regulated in connection with the network as a strategic tool for defense. Here, we could see through the communication by the EP that it legitimized the talking points of the EC by stressing the relevance of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0.

Lastly, the European Court of Auditors could be regarded as a central check and balance on the work of the European Commission, as it is the primary auditing institution at the level of EU policymaking, with tasks centered on auditing EU revenue and expenditure. Having had the main audit arrangements when it comes to the Military Mobility Framework, it audited the Military Mobility Action Plans, in which it found several severe shortcomings.

In addition to the securitizing actor and the audience as pivotal elements of the securitization process, this research also reflected on the brute threat background in which the communication by the EC, the securitizing actor, and the audience has been situated. In particular, the Commission's communication drew on these threats, demonstrating their contextual relevance to the speech acts in a meaningful number of instances. In this thesis, the individual threats displayed have been selected on the basis of their relevance to the securitization process within the EU context. The relevance of the “brute threats” is visible throughout the communication, either through direct or indirect referencing by the Commission, indicating an awareness of the threat's potential among the various audience members. While these threats exhibit individual properties, they all commonly share a high geopolitical relevance, such as the crisis moments of the liberal international order, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the political instability in the Middle East and North Africa.

Beginning with the crisis moments of the liberal international order, this paper described the deteriorating circumstances in which the European Union has found itself in recent years, following a period in time after the second world war in which the European Union existed in a global system of power which was built and sustained by the United States and its partners and that centered around economic openness, democratic solidarity, security cooperations and multilateral institutions. In this system, the EU played an important role through its normative power, which suffered following the election of President Donald Trump for a first and second term, fueling a crisis moment of the liberal international order, which arguably gave rise to a multipolar system with new centers of power such as China. I argue that this led to immense external pressure and gave new importance to both cooperation for European security and efforts to bolster transatlantic security cooperation. Specifically, transatlantic cooperation came

under geopolitical pressure following a period of political instability in the MENA region and the Russia-Ukraine War, which heightened concerns about military mobility within NATO. The Russia-Ukraine war, which began with the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, must be seen as another historic turning point for the EU's security planning, as it deeply altered the Union's security landscape. The extension of the conflict, through the full-scale invasion, further added to this turning point, as it escalated the situation in Ukraine to the first major war in decades and revealed the willingness of Russia to break the rules of the liberal international order. Further pressure was additionally added by the political instability in the MENA region, which was plagued by destabilization that ultimately led to an influx of migratory streams and a fueling of insecurities for both NATO and the EU.

This facilitative context of the communication already points towards the properties of the field in which the European Commission conducted its communication, and must be seen as important for two reasons, one of them being that this specific arrangement of the contextual elements indicates a fulfilment of the conditions necessary for securitization to take place (this research found elements such as an actor with the power to securitize while also possessing an intrinsic motivation to do so, an receptive audience with the power to legitimize, and a threat context which could be described as being likely perceived to be threatening by the general audience), and the second one being that those elements found their way into the communication of the Commission, ultimately tying together the technical aspects of the speech acts with the contextual aspects, which were revealed through the qualitative content analysis and reflected in its findings.

Those findings have been present throughout the communication, which has been analyzed “vertically” and “horizontally” through a mixed approach of deductive and inductive coding procedures. These procedures categorized the communication along three essential elements of the securitization act, namely the referent threat(s), the referent object(s), and the argued-for measure(s), as well as categorizing the communication along three important layers which I would describe as having transitive properties, cumulating in their full existence to an integrated ensemble of securitizing speech acts.

In the first layer, termed *An Existential Significance*, the material was analyzed for the discursive elements that ultimately presented a mix of various, external and existential threats that “created” the need for both defense & deterrence capabilities, and as such, the military mobility capabilities as an expression of those defense & deterrence capabilities of the EU. Overall, this

layer is essential to the communication, as it is through this that military mobility and infrastructure as a security issue are brought into existence.

Looking at the referent threats on the first layer, it became clear that throughout the communication, the European Commission clearly shifted from describing the threat context rather ambiguously throughout the timeframe of the first Initiative up until the release of the second Action Plan, and only with the beginning of the war in Ukraine, openly started to describe Russia as a direct and existential threat. The ambiguous threat portrayal up until the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 must be expected to have referenced an overall threat landscape that emerged following Russia's annexation of Crimea, increased political instability in the MENA region, and an overall crisis of the liberal international order. Against this background, the ambiguity in threat description seems to be a very effective technical type of speech as it leaves room for interpretation, while shifting to a direct threat naming after the full-scale invasion of Russia, allowing the European Commission to operationalize the threat presented through Russian aggression by calling for specific actions needed over the three layers of communication in direct connection to Russia. As an extension of Russia's status as a threatening actor, hybrid threats were repeatedly raised, allowing the EC to frame infrastructure as threatened in itself and adding further motivation beyond merely portraying it as a threat. Specifically, this motivational rhetoric of the EC comes through, creating a clear sense of urgency to act, which, if left too long, would lead to highly negative consequences.

On the level of referent objects, the EC created a framework of a European, and even more of a European Union-centric identity, as well as widening the referent objects to a general system of rule-based political stability and an international order, which has been presented as threatened specifically through the open breaking of rules by Russia. The European Union as a threatened object was presented as being in danger over individual dimensions, most notably over its citizens, territory, and member states. Overall, it can be said that the EC created a clear connection between the ambiguous threat landscape and Russia as a threatening instance with the referent objects, while also creating a direct connection between a motivational call of urgency for protecting citizens within this landscape of threats.

This call for protecting the European Union and its various dimensions ultimately ended in a call for the need to establish better defense & deterrence capabilities, referencing both a wider array of measures like the EDF or PESCO, an increase in cooperation within the EU, as well as the need for a mobile military. Here, the Commission portrayed the Union as a “fully-fledged Defence Union” and reiterated the role of the Union for defense in several instances, which

could be understood as a shifting of the Union away from the civic into a militarized setting, specifically positioning the Commission as being in charge of increasing defense integration and thus already integrating itself into the area as a result.

Through this first layer, in which a direct link between defense & deterrence capabilities and the existence of the European Union was created, the Commission built a foundation that took on transitive properties and ultimately passed further and deeper into the other layers of communication, substantially influencing the reasoning around the Initiative and Action Plans of Military Mobility and Military Mobility 2.0. It is then only through this threat context and argumentation for the need of capabilities meant to avert negative outcomes that the internal shortcomings of an infrastructural dimension, among others, become persuasive.

On the second layer, titled *A Defense & Deterrence Significance*, this logic was extended into one of internal threat, shifting the focus from external threats and the need for defense & deterrence to a logic of military mobility shortcomings through which military mobility in its “inadequacy” has become threatening to defense & deterrence capabilities. While this layer of the Commission’s discourse is, at some points of the communication, circumvented through directly linking the threat context of the first layer to the need to improve military mobility, it is nevertheless essential to understand military mobility in direct relation to European defense and deterrence capabilities, which is pointed out in several instances.

The central threat in this layer is therefore inadequate mobility of the military, which is reiterated in several instances by pointing to difficulties of the military to respond in an adequate manner and as quickly as needed. This inadequate movement is then set into relation to the crisis and threat landscape drawn up in the first layer of communication, making the mobility of the military a central factor for preventing crises and reacting to challenges accordingly. As a result of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the mobility of the military is specifically brought up as an inherent and vital part of European defense and security. The active international role of the EU is also reflected in the geographical component of the EC’s speech acts, as it not only identifies the need for military mobility within the EU but also beyond its borders.

Object to this threat of immobility of forces are then European defense & deterrence capabilities in the context of “security creation”. Here, military mobility is portrayed as part of a wider Security and Defence agenda, and the movement of military personnel and goods a direct reflection of defense & deterrence capabilities. Motivationally, the EC then draws a connection to the case of Ukraine, for which European mobility capabilities are regarded as vital. On this

layer, a first insight into a dual-use logic is demonstrated, as dual-use transport infrastructure in itself is described as essential for European security and deterrence, showing the shift from a purely civil understanding to one of civic and military security nature.

The central call on this level is the improvement of military mobility, alongside an improvement of overall defense and deterrence capabilities. Swift and smooth movement of military forces, especially in the context of military exercises, but also in the context of NATO and the CSDP missions, is ultimately reflected as a cornerstone for crisis handling and management, for which calls for improvement are made.

The third layer of the communication titled *An Infrastructural Significance* proves to be the most technical and policy-centered layer, as it is in this layer that the Commission's speech acts meet with its actual competence repertoire through the EC's legislative and executive powers. Especially the power of the Commission to set the agenda and initiate proposals, as well as its financial leveraging through controlling the European Union's budget, is fully unfolding.

In this layer, the mobility of the military itself is openly called out as being threatened through a wide array of problems that consist of physical infrastructure as well as other shortcomings of legal, regulatory, and cooperative nature. Specifically, the dimension of physical infrastructure, both in its material dimension and through its legal, regulatory, and cooperative extension, turns into the fundamental security issue and the existential threat to the mobility of the military through the Commission's speech acts.

The portrayal of referent threats at this level has unfolded through a complex, multilayered arrangement of various threats that go beyond purely transport infrastructural shortcomings, centering on regulatory, legal, and physical problems as overarching categories of said threats. Specifically, legal and regulatory issues at the bottom of military mobility capacities have to be seen beyond a solely infrastructure-based view (such as procedures, customs, and standards), even though they have proven to be largely centered on infrastructure overall. This focus on infrastructure has been the leading theme of the communication across all layers and dimensions, highlighting the relevance of infrastructure to the case made by the EC. Infrastructure must therefore be seen as the primary threat in communication at this level, as it has frequently been portrayed between 2017 and 2025, both through its direct legal and regulatory dimensions and, most evidently, through its physical dimension.

The physical dimension of infrastructure is situated within a broader framework of legal parameters and regulations, including specific national procedures and practices. This problem,

however, is not limited to the EU's member states but also to NATO as a partner, as NATO sets standards and procedures for the movement of military forces. However, regulations, procedures, and legislation are only part of the overall set of issues addressed by the Commission, as it does not possess far-reaching competences in these areas. It does, however, possess more influence over infrastructure through its physical dimension, as the EC is deeply integrated into the infrastructure policy field through the TEN-T network of European transportation infrastructures. This can help in explaining why it is specifically infrastructure that the European Commission pays the biggest part of its attention to in the chosen material.

This infrastructure is then portrayed over several rhetorical acts, for example, by reflecting on the past in order to support a framing of physical barriers by pointing out experiences made in major military exercises, but also by pointing to future scenarios and warning of outcomes that would ultimately lead to an increased vulnerability through physical inadequacies of the infrastructure. Here, the EC also points to the issue of coordination, which is described as insufficient and ultimately feeds into regulatory and procedural issues, both for the cases of European coordination and transatlantic coordination with NATO.

European transportation infrastructure is repeatedly portrayed as physically weak and underdeveloped, as it is said to be unable to support the weight of military vehicles such as the Leopard tank, which the Commission uses as an example. Here, the external threat landscape is also rhetorically made use of, as the Ukrainian war is reflected on over physical cross-border movement obstacles due to different rail systems. The Commission then also goes further to directly point to Russia and its military aggression towards Ukraine by pointing to the need to improve the capacity of transport infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and rail tracks, in the context of Russia. In this militarized frame, the Commission also directly links the defense of the EU's borders to physical infrastructure such as bridges or roads and tunnels that lead to a total hindrance for the movement of tanks or artillery if they are too weak or small. Logically, military mobility is turned into the referent object at threat, both within the EU and beyond the Union's borders, thus shifting the mobility of personnel into the focus of the Communication and connecting it with clear references to specific threats and territorial dimensions.

As a result of the threats at this layer and of military mobility being directly under threat, the European Commission proposes a wide array of measures to be taken, with most of them representing steps towards deeper integration. Creating a shared understanding, streamlining procedures, identifying weaknesses, increasing cooperation, or an overall change in legislation, as well as the need for changes in funding in terms of size and efficiency, are becoming the primary

needs at this level that concern not only military mobility itself but also the underlying infrastructure. This is relevant as in the final layer of analysis, the focus is fully shifted from military mobility to the underlying infrastructure, which is attached to an economic reasoning regarding this transportation infrastructure that finds its way into the discourse.

Stakeholders like NATO and the individual states, through PESCO and the EDA, are directly addressed when it comes to cooperation, with the EC arguing for the need to take steps that ensure a coherent approach and synergies to address barriers brought up in the communication. Specifically, a shared understanding of the needs and requirements of infrastructure, as well as streamlining procedures and regulations, is brought up in direct reference to the member states. Here, the Commission also highlighted its own role, which it could play by working on legal amendments and on monitoring the development of systems meant to exchange information related to military mobility and thus ensuring a legal framework that member states can work with and which is aligned with EU customs procedures. This shared understanding is then meant to lead to equal standards for which assessments of infrastructures are needed and called for, such as describing military requirements across modes of transport, geographical and technical standpoints in direct connection with the TEN-T network, which is meant to fulfill a dual-use logic of supporting both civic as well as military functions and requirements.

As a continuation of the argument towards the need for assessment and the definition of standards is the direct call for physical upgrades to the infrastructure in order to improve its capacities to handle the weight, size and scale of military movement and to ultimately develop a well-connected military mobility network consisting of roads, railways, air routes and inland waterways with dual-use transport infrastructure capable of handling military transports as well as developing transport nodes and centers to effectively deploy troops and material.

To physically upgrade this very “dual-use” infrastructure, the Commission then adds a pivotal dimension by connecting the call for investments made to the TEN-T network with the CEF as the financial mechanism to finance the transportation network. Here, the Commission enables itself to fund infrastructure both through a civic and through a defense dimension including the CEF, the EDF, the Cohesion Fund, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the InvestEU and the programme Horizon Europe, ultimately blending both domains through a dual-use logic that then ties to the need to improve infrastructure both for its own security, concerning hybrid threats, but more importantly to improve infrastructure as a result of defense and deterrence needs linked to the first and second layers of the communication.

Overall, the speech acts by the Commission have proven to contain an intensive use of a semantic security repertoire that combines textual and cultural meaning to form a coherent threat framework across the three layers of analysis, having a high performative power inherent to the illocutionary act. The textual threat meaning, as well as the cultural meaning within the communication, become visible in a high frequency of instances by relating to a lexical repertoire of threat language based on words that aim to initiate the creation of threat images, as well as connecting these words to the contextual frame of outside “brute” threats. Such instances are revealed in cases where the Commission points to specific geopolitical impacts, such as various crises, the aggression of a foreign actor, and the potential for a war in the EU that could be avoided by building up defense readiness, a defense-ready defense industry, a new European security architecture, and a European Defence Union on the first layer. On this level of the communication, the findings of the QCA indicate a securitization of both an ambiguous threat landscape and a clear securitization of Russia as an external and existential threat to both the European Union and a wider political system.

On the second layer, this language usage continues by framing military mobility in the context of crisis prevention and response to challenges from the first layer of the communication, pointing directly to the military mobility’s defense and security relevance. Here, the communication refers to the need to respond quickly and on a sufficient scale to any crises at the EU’s external borders and beyond, and portrays it as critical for security, resilience, and deterrence. Overall military mobility is directly located into the dimension of defense & deterrence on this level, showing a clear contextual and linguistical usage of security speech, turning military mobility (rather the lack thereof) into an existential issue and ultimately securitizing military mobility. This is, however, (partly) dependent on the first layer of the communication, as without the first layer, the second layer would not build up its meaning and significance for defense and deterrence, making it necessary to link those layers together when trying to understand their call for improvement of military mobility. In the same manner, the third layer connects back into the first and second layers of the communication by drawing on the contextual embeddedness.

The third layer of communication thus proved to be specifically contextually charged by drawing on the previous layers, but also made linguistic use of a security speech repertoire, including references to defense needs, connecting physical barriers to increase vulnerability, and linking military aggression to the need to improve the capacity of transport infrastructure. Dominant at this level is a technical language of policy-making, which is primarily centered on the Commission's competences.

Judging whether the European Commission ultimately attempted to securitize European transportation infrastructures, and answering the research question, requires us to reflect on this against the theoretical assumptions of securitization theory as defined by the Copenhagen School and the assessed findings of the empirical part of this thesis. Having already looked at the European Commission as the securitizing actor, we can see that it was highly privileged in articulating security within a structured field of other actors. Additionally, it proved to possess inherent motivations to do so, such as the motivation to integrate itself into the field of defense and extend its powers by spilling over into this policy area. In particular, this logic of integration is what I argue should be understood as the “extraordinary measure”.

While we can see multiple measures that the EC called for, the underlying logic of a spill-over mechanism seems to be the most persistent factor of the extraordinary, eventually not breaking but at least bending the rules of power to restructure the policy-making. This mechanism of a spill-over is then constituted of the individual measures, such as calling for a Defence Union or arguing for a higher financial leverage for the Commission, in which it becomes evident. In particular, these financial capabilities are where the Commission's power resides, as they are among the central measures in the Commission's repertoire. The call not just to increase funds at the state level, but to supply funding by managing the EU budget, allows the Commission to ultimately set spending priorities and nudge states into taking on the issue using the Commission's funds. By having introduced the Connecting Europe Facility as a vehicle for monetary distribution on a transport-infrastructure level and the European Defence Fund on a defense-structural level, the EC created the components needed to integrate itself.

The field also proved to be structured by various audience members in a complex arrangement that proved to be deeply embedded in the process of policymaking and appeared to be receptive to the Commission's speech acts. Whether this reception also led to positive legitimization would need to be debated in further studies, but it shall not be the focus of attention in this thesis, as it requires a deep reconstruction of policy measures taken in the timeframe and of materialized acts of speech and physical doing. Undoubtedly, however, there has been a clear brute threat context, which in itself appears to be adding intensely to the securitization process.

On the level of speech I argue that the findings indicate an attempt of a discursive securitization, understood as a securitizing move, over the three layers of communication, namely on the level of *An Existential Significance*, on the level of *A Defense & Deterrence Significance*, and on the level of *An Infrastructural Significance*, based on both textual and contextual meaning making of threats that interconnect to each other, as well as by reflecting on the receptive audience, the

securitizing actor, the facilitating conditions and brute threat context. This connection of the first, the second, and the third layer of communication is transforming European transportation infrastructure into a threat to defense and deterrence capabilities, which ultimately makes infrastructure nothing short of an enabler of external existential threats to the European Union directly and indirectly, and ultimately turns it into an existential threat in itself. Infrastructure is therefore becoming an object in threat, as understood in older readings of critical infrastructure, by being a referent object to hybrid attacks, but more predominantly becomes an existential threat in itself to the EU, risking the lives of citizens, threatening the protection of European territories, and leading to an overall threat of the political and defense-strategic capabilities.

Overall, it can be said that the theoretical lens provided by the securitization theory has proven to be highly useful and fruitful by giving a clear and cohesive framework to understand the communication and, therefore, the process of turning the European Union's transportation infrastructure into a topic of security relevance. Methodologically, the Qualitative Content Analysis has allowed me to untwine layers of communication in relation to the theory, allowing me to directly combine coding categories stemming from the theory of securitization with the material in question and a spoken reality, mixing the approach through inductive and deductive coding and allowing us a better understanding of the securitizing moves visible in the material.

Choosing this methodological lens has, however, shown clear limitations for the research process, such as the limited capabilities of the method when it comes to assessing the influences in the field and changing positions of the audience, as the field is either structured or biased, but in most cases fluid in the positions of privilege to securitize and fluid in the positions of having the power to legitimize. While the CS does not overemphasize the role of the audience, this limitation must be acknowledged if the aim was to determine whether there has been a successful securitization that materialized beyond the EC's rhetorical attempt. Here, a major limitation also stems from the theory itself, as it doesn't provide us with the tools necessary to reflect deeply on the Commission's motivations. This has been lessened as the motivation to spill-over has been revealed through the calls for measures and has been reflected on in the research field before. Further motivations could only be speculated about and would require different theoretical and methodological approaches.

7 Conclusion

This thesis conceptualized the link between a constructivist understanding of security, the mobility of military forces, as well as transportation infrastructures, providing a systematic analysis of the European Commission's attempt to securitize European Transportation Infrastructures in the timeframe of November 2017 until June 2025 through various streams of public communication, with this work aiming to answer the posed research question:

“Did the European Commission attempt to securitize European Transportation Infrastructures through its military mobility-related communication in the timeframe of November 2017 until June 2025?”

Using the primary lens of securitization theory, this study developed a framework to explain how the Commission rhetorically used the topic of defense and deterrence capabilities in the form of (inadequate) military mobility, embedded this topic into a wider brute threat context, and ultimately shifted European Transportation Infrastructures into the domain of security to allow the extension of power through integration in the area of defense policy-making.

By deploying a Qualitative Content Analysis, this thesis puts the focus on a multi-layered and highly contextual construction of infrastructure into an (existential) issue over several dimensions and elements through analyzing 20 communicative documents published by the Commission. By using a mixed approach of deductive and inductive coding procedures, this research both structured and summarized communication in relation to securitization theory, both “vertically” and “horizontally”, thereby respecting both the theoretical conceptualizations and the properties and qualities of the material.

Following a specific hermeneutical procedure allowed to categorize the material “horizontally” through three essential elements of the securitization act, namely the referent threat(s), the referent object(s) and the argued for measure(s), as well as categorizing the communication along three important layers which could be described as having transitive properties, adding together to an integrated arrangement of securitizing speech acts.

To further structure and summarize the material, the communication has been categorized “vertically” over three layers of meaning-making consisting of the layers titled *An Existential Significance*, *A Defense & Deterrence Significance*, and *An Infrastructural Significance*, which feed into one another and must be seen as a fully aggregated communicative attempt in shifting infrastructure into the domain of the military and ultimately securitizing European

Transportation Infrastructures. Within the cross-over points of those categorizations, the individual codes created then represented the specific dimensions of those category sets, revealing the different expressions of referent threats, referent objects, and called-for measures over the three layers.

By reflecting on further elements of the securitization theory, including the securitizing actor, the audience, and the brute threat context, this paper concludes that through a delicate construction of threats, objects, and called-for measures, the Commission managed to construct security over the three layers of communication by making use of textual and contextual acts of speech that have an inherent performative power.

On the first layer, this security resembles a classic understanding of security, with an ambiguous threat landscape on one hand and Russia (as well as Russian aggression) together with hybrid threats directly threatening the European Union, resulting in calls for measures to improve defense & deterrence capabilities. On the second layer, these very capabilities were portrayed as threatened by inadequate military mobility, and the improvement of military mobility capabilities (as one dimension of defense & deterrence capabilities) was called for. On the third layer, this logic was extended, positioning European transportation infrastructure as an existential threat to military mobility, which ultimately calls for improvements through various regulatory and physical measures.

Those findings have further implications that are highly important for several reasons: they have real-world impact, both theoretical and practical, demonstrating the relevance of this research thesis and highlighting its contributions to the wider scholarly field.

First, the findings indicate that the Commission is a highly political and strategic actor that uses various means to integrate itself into other fields and ultimately extend its powers. We could potentially see this over other frames, such as the securitization of infrastructures in light of climate change, or for movement regarding migration, in which the Commission potentially tries to spill-over into other dimensions of security, as portrayed by the original theoretical understanding of the Copenhagen School.

Second, the research process has shown that linking securitization theory to other theories seems highly fruitful and could reveal bigger patterns in future cases. I argue that the findings of our thesis underline the need to examine lenses such as neo-functionalism and militarization, both by-products or even end-results of the securitization process for the military domain, but also beyond.

Last, and I would argue most important for a theoretical understanding, is this rather novel approach of transitive properties that are revealed through a contextual rather than a technical reading of speech acts. Here, my approach of assessing the communication has been revealed to be highly contextual but, more importantly, highly constructivist. This work went beyond the theoretical approach of construing a threat as existential in itself and understood it as existential through reference to and relation with other threats portrayed as existential, thereby cumulatively layering multiple securitization attempts. Theoretically, the emphasis is thus placed on a mechanism of enablement that would allow a securitizing actor to securitize threats with a greater potential for success.

All those implications are important, and point towards the need to conduct further research both on a theoretical basis when it comes to the reading of security as it has been understood by the Copenhagen School, but also on an empirical basis. Specific to the case of the European Commission and specific to the case of infrastructures, the lens of securitization could be applied by extending the areas of securitization empirically to the communicative link between infrastructure and economical dependencies, ecological impacts in the light of climate change, or social and political roles of infrastructure when it comes to the movement of people within and to the European Union.

By taking the first step in examining the European Commission's securitization attempt, this thesis ultimately establishes an important and necessary research direction regarding the Commission's role as a highly political and strategic actor in the European Union. It further highlights the importance and relevance of future research on the European Commission's involvement in defense amid fundamental changes in the European Union's security environment, both in the past and in the foreseeable future.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Material Overview

In Text Citation	EC Code	Date	Title	Document Type	Source
European Commission 2017a	JOIN/2017/41 final	10.11.2017	Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Improving Military Mobility in the European Union	Joint Communication	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017JC0041
European Commission 2017b	IP/17/4385	10.11.2017	The European Union is stepping up efforts to improve military mobility	Press Release	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_17_4385
European Commission 2018a	JOIN/2018/5 final	28.03.2018	Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - on the Action Plan on Military Mobility	Joint Communication	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018JC0005
European Commission 2018b	IP/18/252	28.03.2018	Action Plan on military mobility: EU takes steps towards a Defence Union	Press Release	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_18_2521
European Commission 2018c	SPEECH/18/4126	11.06.2018	Speech by Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc on military mobility at the North Atlantic Council	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_18_4126
European Commission 2018d	IP/18/4029	06.06.2018	EU Budget: Commission proposes increased funding to invest in	Press Release	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_18_4029

			connecting Europeans with high-performance infrastructure		
European Commission 2019	IP/19/1050	12.02.2019	Defence: European Commission paves the way for first joint industrial projects under EU budget	Press Release	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_19_1050
European Commission 2020	SPEECH/20/2615	20.02.2020	Speech by Commissioner Vălean at the TRAN Committee - European Parliament	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_20_2615
European Commission 2022a	JOIN/2022/48 final	10.11.2022	Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - Action plan on military mobility 2.0	Joint Communication	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022JC0048
European Commission 2022b	SPEECH/22/6767	10.11.2022	Press conference on the Security and Defence Package	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/it/speech_22_6767
European Commission 2022c	IP/22/6642	10.11.2022	Cyber Defence: EU boosts action against cyber threats	Press Release	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_6642
European Commission 2022d	IP/22/6583	10.11.2022	Military Mobility: EU proposes actions to allow armed forces to move faster and better across borders	Press Release	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_6583
European Commission 2023a	STATEMENT/23/121	10.01.2023	Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg and President Michel following the signature of the	Statement	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/hu/statement_23_1201

			Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation		
European Commission 2023b	SPEECH/23/6207	30.11.2023	Keynote speech by President von der Leyen at the EDA Annual Conference 2023: Powering up European Defence	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_6207
European Commission 2024b	SPEECH/24/604	31.01.2024	Speech by Commissioner Vălean at High-level Symposium on Military Mobility 2024	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_6207
European Commission 2025a	SPEECH/25/1632	26.06.2025	Commissioner Tzitzikostas' keynote speech at the LUISS Guido Carli University	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_1632
European Commission 2025b	SPEECH/25/1461	10.06.2025	Keynote Speech by Commissioner Kubilius At European Defence and Security Summit	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_1461
European Commission 2025c	SPEECH/25/941	02.04.2025	Commissioner Tzitzikostas' statement at the EP Plenary Session on the importance of trans-European transport infrastructure	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_941
European Commission 2025d	SPEECH/25/1029	09.04.2025	HoC Panagopoulou keynote speech on behalf of Commissioner Tzitzikostas at the 8th Feport Conference	Speech	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_1029

Appendix 2: Codebook

Code	Name of the Code	Definition	Rule	Example
<u>C.1</u>	<u>Layer 1: Existential Significance</u>	Overarching coding set for codes in this layer that create an existential foundation in which military mobility and transportation infrastructure are gaining relevance, as the Union, Citizens, Territories are framed as threatened from the outside	-	-
C.1.1	L1: Referent Threat	Overarching coding set for codes related to the referent threat in this layer	-	-
C.1.1.1	Security Environment	Code for threats concerning an unsafe security environment	Includes statements about the security environment of any kind, both in relation to specific happenings as well as in ambiguity. It excludes direct statements about Russia or the direct mentioning of Crisis/Crises	“To protect the Union and its citizens in today’s unpredictable security environment [...]” (European Commission 2017a, p.1)
C.1.1.2	Crisis & Crises	Code for threats concerning a crisis or multiple crises	Includes statements about individual crisis or multiple crises, both the indirect mention as well as direct	“[...] internal and external crisis situations [...]” (European Commission 2017a, p.1)

			examples (excluding Russia or the mentioning of a diffuse security environment)	
C.1.1.3	Russia	Code for threats concerning Russia as aggressor	Includes statements about Russia as aggressor influencing European actors (Ukraine, EU)	“Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine has confirmed the urgent need to substantially enhance the military mobility of our armed forces within and beyond the Union” (European Commission 2022a, p.2)
C.1.1.4	Hybrid Threats	Code for hybrid threats	Includes statements about hybrid threats that are understood and read as cyber threats	A well-functioning military mobility network needs to be resilient, including in the context of cyber, climate change and other hybrid threats that may target critical nodes in the transport system used by the military. For example, a cyber-attack on systems used in airports, harbours or railroads or a cyber-attack on military assets could have major consequences. (Action plan on military mobility 2.0, S. 12)
C.1.2	L1: Referent Object	Overarching coding set for codes related to the referent object in this layer	-	-

C.1.2.1	Territory	Code for territory as a threatened object	Includes statements about both the individual territories of member states as well as the overall territory of the EU in its physical sense. Additionally includes statements about the EU's borders	"[...] Russia's war of aggression in the sovereign territory of our neighbour and friend Ukraine" (20240131 - Opening speech Military Mobility Symposium 2024, S. 1)
C.1.2.2	Citizens	Code for citizens as a threatened object	Includes statements about the collective people of Europe on both the EU and member state basis.	"The security of Europe's citizens is a priority for the Union, and an issue they expect the EU to address" (European Commission 2017a, p.2)
C.1.2.4	European Union	Code for the "Union"/European Union as a threatened object	Includes statements about the European Union as an overall threatened object (excludes the mentioning of the former codes)	To protect the Union and its citizens in today's unpredictable security environment, the EU will take the steps which are necessary to ensure its ability to react effectively and in timely manner to internal and external crisis situations, including by enhancing its preparedness and resilience. (European Commission 2017a, p.2)
C.1.2.5	European Infrastructures	Code for European Infrastructures as a threatened object	Includes statements about European Infrastructures if threatened by external factors	"Cyberspace has no borders. Recent cyber-attacks on energy networks, transport infrastructure and space assets show the risks that they pose to

				both civilian and military actors. This calls for more action to protect citizens, armed forces, as well as the EU's civilian and military missions and operations, against cyber threats” (European Commission 2022c, p.1).
C.1.3	L1: Needed Measures	Overarching coding set for codes related to the needed measures in this layer	-	-
C.1.3.1	Military Mobility for Defense	Code for MM as called for measure	Includes statements about the need for military movement and Military Mobility as project(s)	“There is both an opportunity and a strategic need to fully exploit civilian/military synergies to expedite military mobility – both within our borders as well as with a view to rapidly deploying military operations abroad” (European Commission 2017a, p.2)
C.1.3.2	Resilience & Preparedness	Code for Resilience & Preparedness as called for measure	Includes statements about the need to be prepared as a Union and on a member-state basis	EU Member States' military personnel need to be able to respond quickly and at sufficient scale to any crises at EU's external borders or beyond, making military mobility critical for our security and resilience. It is an additional

				deterrent (European Commission 2022b, p.4).
C.1.3.3	Defense Capabilities	Code for increasing Defense Capabilities as called for measure	Includes statements about specific defense capabilities (e.g. air defense), without direct relation to Military Mobility	In this context Member States are also working towards deepening their defence cooperation, including through the Permanent Structured Cooperation as provided for in the Treaties (European Commission 2017a, p.2)
<u>C.2</u>	<u>Layer 2: Defense & Deterrence Significance</u>	Overarching coding set for codes in this layer that create a defense & deterrence significance needed to argue for improvement of military mobility as underlying justification for MM	-	-
C.2.1	L2: Referent Threat	Overarching coding set for codes related to the referent threat in this layer	-	-
C.2.1.1	Military Movement	Code for Military Mobility as a threat to Defense and Deterrence Capabilities	Includes statements about military movement and inadequate military mobility projects as essential to Defense and Deterrence Capabilities	EU Member States' military personnel need to be able to respond quickly and at sufficient scale to any crises at EU's external borders or beyond, making military mobility critical for our security and resilience. It is an additional deterrent. (European Commission 2022b, p.4).

C.2.2	L2: Referent Object	Overarching coding set for codes related to the referent object in this layer	-	-
C.2.2.1	Defense & Deterrence Capabilities	Defense & deterrence capabilities as threatened through insufficient military mobility	Includes statements about Defense & Deterrence capabilities as a threatened object.	We need to adapt our mobility system for our troops to be able to transport and deploy quickly all their military capacities. This is critical for our defence: the capacity, the ability to move troops and equipment quickly from one side of the European Union to the other side of the European Union; from the West to the East – mainly -, to our external borders; but also, beyond our external borders when we deploy our military missions around the world. (European Commission 2022b, p.2)
C.2.3	L2: Needed Measures	Overarching coding set for codes related to the needed measures in this layer	-	-
C.2.3.1	Improvement of Military Mobility	Code for the Improvement of Military Mobility as called for measure	Includes statements about a call for the general improvement of military movement.	The aim of the Action Plan is to improve the mobility of military forces within and beyond the EU, allowing the EU and its Member States to act

				faster, in line with their defence needs and responsibilities – both in the context of Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations, as well as national and multinational activities (e.g. in the framework of NATO) (European Commission 2018c, p.1)
<u>C.3</u>	<u>Layer 3: Infrastructural Significance</u>	Overarching coding set for codes in this layer that create an infrastructural significance needed to argue for improvement of physical transportation infrastructure	-	-
C.3.1	L3: Referent Threat	Overarching coding set for codes related to the referent threat in this layer	-	-
C.3.1.1	Physical Infrastructure	Code for physical infrastructure	Includes statements about the physical dimension of infrastructure, which relates to the physical demands and physical inadequacy of infrastructure.	But look at which is the weight of a Leopard tank, which is the length of a train to transport military warfare. And then, you could imagine, easily, that not all infrastructures are ready to support the weight and the length of the military warfare (European Commission 2022b, p.2)

C.3.1.2	Legal issues	Code for legal issues as threat	Includes statements about legal issues that relate to rules that allow or restrict movement such as national laws, EU law and lawmaking	Due to the specific status of armed forces and equipment, military mobility is legally bound by a wide range of national decisions and EU rules that determine whether national and international movements are possible (European Commission 2017a, p.3)
C.3.1.3	Administrative issues	Code for administrative issues as threat	Includes statements about administrative issues that relate to how legal rules are processed in practice, including coordination, organization and procedural issues.	Actual movement requires close coordination between EU Member States. It requires a common understanding on the infrastructure to be used. Due to the quality of the infrastructure itself and to differences in standards, submitting movement requests is very time consuming. This may lead to unexpected obstruction during the execution of the movement (European Commission 2017a, p. 5)
C.3.1.4	Funding	Code for funding as a source of threat	Includes statements about funding as a source of threat, such as underfunding as issue for the development of infrastructures, or inefficient funding with European sources.	We must urgently increase funding for military mobility, both now and in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (European Commission 2025c, p.8)

			Can include statements about the funding platform, funding streams or inefficient spending on certain projects.	
C.3.2	L3: Referent Object	Overarching coding set for codes related to the referent object in this layer	-	-
C.3.2.1	Military Mobility	Code for Military Mobility as threatened object	Includes statements about military mobility as threatened by underlying obstacles and issues	The swift movement of military personnel and equipment is hindered by physical, legal and regulatory barriers (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2017B, p.1).
C.3.3	L3: Needed Measures	Overarching coding set for codes related to the needed measures in this layer	-	-
C.3.3.1	Upgrading Physical Infrastructure	Code for the upgrading of physical infrastructure as called for measure	Includes statements about the need to upgrade physical infrastructure and infrastructure systems. This includes roads, rails, waterways etc. Excludes statements that relate to the financing of the upgrades as well as	At the heart of military mobility is the need to upgrade the dual use transport infrastructure along the military mobility network – comprising multi-modal transport routes connected by logistical hubs – so that it is capable of handling potentially heavy and large-scale military transports at short

				notice (European Commission 2022a, p.3).
C.3.3.2	Shared Understanding	Code for a shared understanding as called for measure	Includes statements about the need to create shared understanding relating to infrastructures, legislature, administrative procedures and other measures. Excludes the specific setting of standards resulting out of this shared understanding	Actual movement requires close coordination between EU Member States. It requires a common understanding on the infrastructure to be used. Due to the quality of the infrastructure itself and to differences in standards, submitting movement requests is very time consuming. This may lead to unexpected obstruction during the execution of the movement (European Commission 2017a, p.5).
C.3.3.3	Identifying Weaknesses	Code for the identification of weaknesses as a called for measures	Includes statements about the need to assess infrastructure and processes for their weak points	The objectives of the working group are to identify obstacles and barriers in cross-border and transiting for surface movement of military personnel and assets, to map existing initiatives and shortfalls, identify relevant actors at EU and national level and to develop an action plan with dedicated tasks, responsibilities including a

				roadmap with timelines. (European Commission 2017a, p.5).
C.3.3.4	Defining Standards	Code for the definition of standards as called for measure	Includes statements about the need to define standards relating to infrastructures, legislature, administrative procedures and other measures.	It will thus be necessary to assess current infrastructure and define infrastructural standards that take also into account military requirements. Such an analysis would enable the EU to develop an infrastructural standard that integrates the military profile for multimodal transport. This could cover both the development of new infrastructure and the upgrading of existing one (European Commission 2017a, p.5).
C.3.3.5	Avoiding Duplications	Code for the need to avoid duplications as a called for measure	Includes statements about the need to avoid duplications (resulting out of a lack of synergies and lack of cooperation & coordination)	Any further EU actions should take into account these ongoing projects and seek synergies and consistency, avoiding unnecessary duplications or contradictions (European Commission 2017a, p.4)
C.3.3.6	Streamlining Procedures and Regulations	Code for the streamlining of procedures and regulations as a needed measure	Includes statements about the specific need to streamline procedures and regulations both in a legislative and	By end of 2018, the Commission will explore possible options for streamlining and simplifying customs

			administrative ways. Important divider is the call for streamlining and simplification rather than the general need for similar standards. Excludes generalized calls for defining standards and only relates to the specific call for streamlined procedures and regulations.	formalities related to the customs related activities for military operations. It will also ensure the uniform application and implementation of the related customs provisions. (European Commission 2018a, p.8)
C.3.3.7	Change of Funding	Code for the increase of funding as a needed measure	Includes statements about the need to increase funding and statements of a need to make available funding more efficient. Further includes statements about the systems and platforms of financing. Includes statements both of the need to finance military mobility as an overall project and statements about the need to change the funding of the existing TEN-T network.	To ensure a well-connected, capable and secure military mobility network, the European Commission is supporting the Action Plan with funding instruments such as the Connecting Europe Facility (funding dual-use transport infrastructure projects), and the European Defence Fund (supporting the development of interoperable logistical and digital systems). (European Commission 2022d, p. 1)
C.3.3.8	Increasing Cooperation & Coordination	Code for the increase of cooperation and coordination as called for measure	Includes statements about the need to increase cooperation and	Coordination with efforts under the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the separate PESCO

			increase/improve coordination both within the EU but also with transatlantic partners.	project on military mobility will equally be ensured. Cooperation and consultation with NATO on issues of military mobility will be further pursued in the framework of the implementation of the Joint Declaration to ensure coherence and synergies (European Commission 2018b, p.2).
C.3.3.9	Dual-Use	Code for the need of “Dual-Use” as needed measure	Includes statements about the need for Dual-Use infrastructure and the need for a Dual-Use logic when assessing, planning, and building infrastructure.	The pilot exercise identified that there are major opportunities for dual-use civilian-military infrastructure, amongst others in multimodal platforms allowing to quickly shift assets from ports and airports to rail and road, in improving the capacity of inland terminals and in adequate loading gauges on freight rail lines (European Commission 2018a p.5).