

# European Security: Is the European Army a Fantasy or Is It Necessary for Survival?



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**T**he discussion of the European army is a subject that has been present in the public debate since the beginning of the creation of a common Europe.

The answers to the question of whether it is crucial to create a European army to ensure the security of the European Union (EU) and its borders vary greatly. According to some experts<sup>1</sup>, creating an army is an urgent necessity because the continent is not secure anymore. Therefore, Europe *must have* its joint army, which will respond to any security challenges. Another argument is that if the EU aims to become a global power, it cannot achieve it without its own military force.

On the other hand, for other people discussing this matter, the idea of a European army is a pure fantasy. The reason for this is the fact that military integration in the European Union has been discussed on various occasions, yet so far without success. This policy field still remains a sensitive area when it comes to national sovereignty of member states. Moreover, the militarization of the EU is also described as a challenge to its role of ‘civilian power’

Nevertheless, considering the threat that Europe is now facing in light of the current war in the eastern part of Europe, namely the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this topic is becoming more critical than ever. Therefore, security challenges for Europe, the general views among the societies and political officials of the European Union about the possibility of creating a joint army, the obstacles preventing much closer integration in the military field shall be addressed.

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://euobserver.com/opinion/154311>; <https://www.brusselstimes.com/author/avgeorgiou489>; <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/59312>

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### SECURITY CHALLENGES

The European Security Strategy published by the European Union in 2003, starts as follows: “Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history.”<sup>2</sup> This statement has, however, been recently rendered obsolete. The security environment compared with the time of drafting the document became far more complicated,

<sup>2</sup> Council of the European Union (2009) *European Security Agency: A Secure Europe in a Better World*, Brussels: DGF Communication/Publications.

and the situation on the European continent has deteriorated in terms of a peaceful coexistence. A range of challenges to security, in both civil and military spheres, appeared since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, the scope of the emerging and existing threats has also diversified.

In the 2000s, terrorism and organized crime, unregulated migration, energy security, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction were identified as threats and challenges to European security interests<sup>3</sup>, and, in fact, these threats did not demand a military response at the time. However, in the past years, these threats became more significant and complex. In addition, the unpredictability and uncertainty of the geopolitics became more evident. Of course, in the evolving international stage, the question of whether the EU should remain a completely civilian power, or whether the block should develop autonomous defense capability, is crucial.

Since the end of the World War II, NATO has been a key player in terms of defense and protection in the region, and European countries had never doubted that. However, the deteriorating transatlantic relations under President Donald Trump played a key role in bringing European countries much closer on the subject of strategic autonomy<sup>4</sup>.

Since taking office, Donald Trump and his administration have harshly criticized the European Union and individual member states. The now former president of the United States threatened to withdraw from NATO, as he was dissatisfied with NATO



## THE DETERIORATING TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS UNDER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN BRINGING EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MUCH CLOSER ON THE SUBJECT OF STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

spending. According to him, “NATO is unfair, economically because the US pays a disproportionate share.”<sup>5</sup> In a recent interview, Former National Security Advisor to Trump, John Bolton, claimed that if Trump won a second term, he might have withdrawn the U.S. from NATO, what Russian President Vladimir Putin was waiting for<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-14.

<sup>4</sup> Zandee, D. et al. (2020) *European Strategic Autonomy in Security and Defence*, Clingendael Report, December, p.23.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/03/21/a-transcript-of-donald-trumps-meeting-with-the-washington-post-editorial-board/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/bolton-putin-waiting-for-trump-to-withdraw-from-nato-in-2nd-term-2022-3>

Doubt about the U.S. security guarantees might disappear in the post-Trump era, but in many European countries, it has already changed the mindset of the people. Moreover, pressure on Europe to take more responsibility for its own security will remain in place regardless of who will be in power in the United States. More European responsibility can no longer be viewed simply as fair burden-sharing in NATO – it is also about Europe becoming a geopolitical player.

On the other hand, international rules-based order is becoming weaker, the influence of global institutions on the processes is decreasing, large powers are demonstrating an unwillingness to be bound by rules. All of this makes it urgent for the EU to think about safeguarding its security.

In 2017, President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, sent an open letter to EU member states outlining the three major threats Europe faces: an assertive China, an aggressive Russia, and terror and anarchy in the Middle East<sup>7</sup>. In this context, the most relevant example of those countries rejecting international order in these days would be Russia. The Kremlin's wars in the neighborhood of Europe (in 2008 in Georgia, the 2014 invasion of Crimea, and the interference in the eastern part of Ukraine), and the threatening rhetoric of Moscow have served as a wake-up call for Europe. And, today, Russia is grossly violating international law and principles by waging an unjustified war and invading neighboring Ukraine.

These days, in response to Moscow, the solidarity and unity that the NATO alliance demonstrates is often highlighted by both NATO chief and officials of respective



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member states. However, at the same time, there is still another question that should be borne in mind: if Donald Trump actually had won the second term, what performance would we have seen by NATO? The uncertainty that would have ensued makes it crucial to consider reducing dependency on others as a priority for Europe.

### HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION

In November 2018, on the eve of the centenary anniversary of the World War I Armistice, international media published the news on French President Emmanuel Macron's call for a "true European army" to protect Europe from threats<sup>8</sup>. And this was not the first time President Macron had talked about creating a European army.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/01/31/tusk-letter-future-europe/>

<sup>8</sup> BBC (2018) *France's Macron Pushes for "True European Army"*, November 6.



## THE KREMLIN'S WARS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF EUROPE AND THE THREATENING RHETORIC OF MOSCOW HAVE SERVED AS A WAKE-UP CALL FOR EUROPE

In his first radio interview since becoming the president in May 2017, he claimed Europe has to protect itself with respect to China, Russia, and even the United States. He also stated that *"We will not protect Europeans unless we decide to have a true European army."*<sup>9</sup> Looking at the history of European defense policy, one may see that the idea of collective European defense is as old as the story of European integration. France has been one of the leading countries to push forward this idea.

In 1950, Jean Monnet, the then General Commissioner of the French National Planning Board, expressed his will to launch a European defense on a supranational basis, an initiative inspired by French foreign minister Robert Schuman's plan for establishing the European Coal and Steel

Community (ECSC)<sup>10</sup>. Known today as the 'Pleven Plan,' it was submitted by French Prime Minister René Pleven to the National Assembly in October 1950. The proposal known as the 'European Defense Community' (EDC), which constituted one of the tenets of the said plan, proposed creating the European Army to be placed under the supranational authority and to be funded by a common budget.

According to this proposal, the management of European armament and equipment would be under the authority of a European Defense Minister operating under a European Defense Council. And founding member states of European integration (Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) all signed it, with four of these states ratifying it. However, during the 1954 National Assembly, France rejected it<sup>11</sup>.

After an unsuccessful attempt to launch the European Defense Community, throughout the years, a number of bilateral efforts aimed at strengthening and deepening cooperation in the defense area (such as the Elysée Treaty between France and West Germany) were launched. However, in general, in the Cold War era, the influence of NATO in defense and security issues of Europe was strong, and creating a separate army was not a goal on the agenda.

Nevertheless, within NATO, European members of the military block were interested in close cooperation. For example, thirteen European members created in 1976 a coordinating body, called the 'Independent European Program Group' (IEPG), whose mission was to stimulate

<sup>10</sup> The road to European defense cooperation (1947-1954). See: <https://eda.europa.eu/our-history/our-history.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/1/the-first-treaties>

<sup>9</sup> Euractiv (2018) *Macron Calls for "True European Army to Defend against Russia, US, China"*, November 7.

cooperation on armaments procurement among the countries<sup>12</sup>. The paragraphs on cooperation in the field of security and defense are reflected in the signed treaties and agreements within the European Union. Later, in the 1990s, European governments made moves towards creating capabilities tailored for force projection and humanitarian intervention (for both conflict prevention and crisis management)<sup>13</sup>.

Then, the Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, redefined the integration process in Europe and created the European Union, based on three pillars. One of these pillars – Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – embraced the definition of a “Common Defense Policy”<sup>14</sup>. In the same year, the Western European Union (WEU), a former association (existing in the years 1955-2011) of ten countries, approved the Petersberg Declaration<sup>15</sup>, which defined the legal framework and procedures.

According to the declaration, the military intervention of WEU could be used for the so-called ‘Petersberg Tasks,’ which included: humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making<sup>16</sup>. The Petersberg Declaration also presented a practical approach to crisis



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management within and beyond European borders.

Although the Amsterdam Treaty, signed in 1997, did not create a common defense policy, it increased responsibilities in the realms of peacekeeping and humanitarian work. This Treaty underlined the possibility of developing a future common defense policy for the EU<sup>17</sup>. Later, at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999, the EU member states defined the Helsinki Headline Goal, which aimed at voluntary cooperation in EU-led operations. According to this goal, by 2003, member states were to be able to deploy within sixty days and sustain for at least one-year, military

<sup>12</sup>The road to European defense cooperation (1947-1954). See: <https://eda.europa.eu/our-history/our-history.html>

<sup>13</sup> Quille, G. (2006) *The European Security and Defense Policy: From the Helsinki Headline Goal to the EU Battlegroups*, Policy Department, European Parliament.

<sup>14</sup> Missiroli, A. (2000) “CFSP, Defence and Flexibility”, [in]: *Chaillot Papers*, Vol 38. Available [online]: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cp038e.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Western European Council of Ministers (1992) *Petersberg Declaration*. Available [online]: [https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/16938094-bb79-41ff-951c-f6c7aae8a97a/publishable\\_en.pdf](https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/16938094-bb79-41ff-951c-f6c7aae8a97a/publishable_en.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Pagani, F. (1998) “A New Gear in the CFSP Machinery: Integration of the Petersberg Tasks in the Treaty on European Union,” [in]: *European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 9.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/3/the-maastricht-and-amsterdam-treaties>



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forces of up to 50,000–60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks<sup>18</sup>.

In the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), Article 43(1) explained in which cases the European Union may use civilian and military means.

*"[I]t shall include joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories"<sup>19</sup>, the Treaty reads.*

Eventually, in order to coordinate the process and put forward initiatives in terms of the development of defense cooperation within the EU, the European Defense Agency was established in 2004. It was the European Council which decided that an agency in the field of defense capabilities development, research, acquisition, and armaments should be created. It was designed to have four key roles: 1) developing defense capabilities in the field of crisis management; 2) promoting and enhancing European armaments cooperation; 3) strengthening the European defense industrial and technological base; and 4) creating a competitive European defense equipment market as well as promoting, in liaison with the community's research activities, where appropriate, research aimed at leadership in strategic technologies for future defense, and security capabilities<sup>20</sup>.

Another crucial moment in defense cooperation among member states of the EU was the launching of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in 2017.

Through PESCO, *"collaboration between the participating EU member states would*

<sup>19</sup> Quille, G. (2009) *The Lisbon Treaty and Its Implications for CFSP/CSDP*, Policy Briefing.

<sup>20</sup> Quille, G. (2006) *The European Security and Defense Policy: From the Helsinki Headline Goal to the EU Battlegroups*, Policy Department, European Parliament.

<sup>18</sup> Quille, G. (2006) *The European Security and Defense Policy: From the Helsinki Headline Goal to the EU Battlegroups*, Policy Department, European Parliament.

*be gradually shifted from isolated projects towards planned and impact-based co-operation activities with the objective to establish a more coherent European capability landscape. It is a framework and a structured process to gradually deepen defense cooperation to deliver the demanded capabilities to also undertake the most demanding missions and thereby provide improved security to EU citizens.”<sup>21</sup>*

PESCO projects reflect both support for capability development and the provision of substantial support within means and capabilities to Common Security and Defense Policy operations and missions. It complements two other important current initiatives: the European Defense Fund, which shall support certain collaborative projects financially, and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD) which supports member states’ efforts to better identify opportunities for new collaborative initiatives (in particular, the PESCO projects). The coherence of these initiatives with PESCO and their orientation towards the agreed EU Capability Development Priorities is key to focusing the new dynamic in European defense matters towards a more coherent European capability landscape and a full-spectrum force package usable for operations and missions.

### **WHAT EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION THINKS**

It should be admitted that the concept of creating a defense identity of the European Union is ambiguously accepted. This is not just because people believe that the EU should retain its function of a normative, soft, and pure economic power, but also, at the same time, it remains to be seen how such a force shall be shaped and under what framework it would function needs to be clarified.



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However, it is true that, over the years, there has been a resurgence of calls in favor of a European army – especially, since 2014, when Russia invaded eastern parts of Ukraine. At that time, the security threat became more obvious, and the concept of a European army gained momentum. It must be noted that Europe’s defense has strongly depended on the military power of the United States and the NATO alliance. However, after the Russian invasion of the Crimean Peninsula, citing increasing security threats, European leaders began to seriously contemplate a future where the EU stands alone militarily.

At the highest level, the concept of a European army had already received support. Jean Claude Juncker, the former President of the European Commission, in his 2015 interview for the German newspaper *Welt am Sonntag*, said that a common army among the Europeans would convey to Russia that Europeans are serious about

<sup>21</sup> <https://pesco.europa.eu/about/>



defending the values of the European Union<sup>22</sup>.

According to Juncker, getting member states to combine militarily would make spending more efficient and would encourage further European integration. “Such an army would help us design a common foreign and security policy,” he stated<sup>23</sup>. A common army would also strengthen Europe’s reputation. At that time, this approach received the support of others. Ursula von der Leyen, the then Defense Minister of Germany, said that the future of Europeans would one day be a European army, but “not in the short term.”<sup>24</sup> She added that such a move would “strengthen Europe’s security” as well as “a European pillar in the transatlantic alliance.”<sup>25</sup> As the President of the European Commission, she once again has demonstrated her determination on this matter. Ursula von der Leyen has said the EU should seek to strengthen its military capabilities to counter security threats and global crises. “It is time for Europe to step up to the next level,” Ms. von der Leyen claimed in her annual State of the Union address<sup>26</sup>.

Former German chancellor Angela Merkel also supported the idea of creating a European army after French President Macron touched upon this issue in his interview in 2018. Merkel delivered a speech in the European Parliament, where she stated that “the EU has to look at the vision of one day

creating a real, true European army.”<sup>27</sup> The chancellor said the idea would complement NATO.

Hungarian, Czech Republic, and Italian officials had also expressed their support for the idea.<sup>28</sup> However, no one has given any details on when the ambitious idea could become a reality.

Opinions of European citizens about the creation of the European joint army are not negative either [See: Figure 1]. According to a poll on the subject conducted by Eurobarometer in 2017, 74% of respondents in the Netherlands and Belgium supported an EU army, 65% in France, and 55% in Germany, favored the concept. In the EU’s neutral countries, the support was at the levels of 45% in Austria, 46% Ireland, 42% in Finland, 55% in Malta, and 40% in Sweden, which is quite significant. According to a poll, the Central and Eastern European countries are also in favor of this idea, the percentage of respondents in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia who support the joint European army is around 60 %, even in Lithuania this figure is over 70%<sup>29</sup>.

However, in general, various surveys and polls<sup>30</sup> show that European society heavily relies on the power which already exists: NATO. Across Europe, people have a positive view and trust NATO [See: Figure 2].

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/08/jean-claude-juncker-calls-for-eu-army-european-commission-military>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Mahony, H. (2015) “EU Commission Chief Makes Case for European Army,” [in]: *EUobserver.com*, March 9.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> BBC (2021) *EU Must Step Up and Build Defence* – Von der Leyen, September 15.

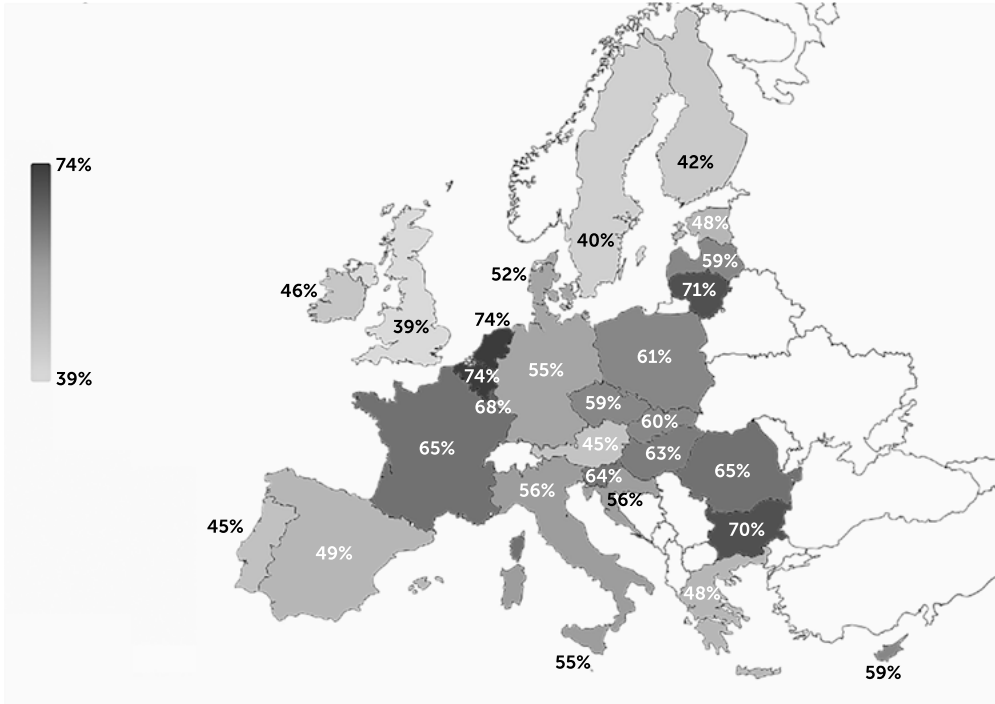
<sup>27</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/13/merkel-joins-macron-in-calling-for-a-real-true-european-army>

<sup>28</sup> Reuters (2016) “Hungarian PM Orban Calls for Joint European Army” and “Czech PM Calls for Joint EU Army,” [in]: *EUobserver.com*, August 22.

<sup>29</sup> Statista (2019) *Where Support Is Highest for an EU Army*, January 24.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/06/10/nato-continues-to-be-seen-in-a-favorable-light-by-people-in-member-states/>; <https://www.romania-insider.com/survey-nato-eu-trust-jan-2022>; [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_184687.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_184687.htm)

Figure 1: The percentage of respondents supporting the creation of EU army (2017)



Source: Eurobarometer

According to the 2020 survey conducted by Pew Research, a median of 53% across sixteen member countries surveyed had a favorable view of the organization<sup>31</sup>.

Positive ratings of NATO among members of the European Union range from a high of 82% in Poland to 37% in Greece. The majority of people in Poland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany rate NATO positively in Europe. Opinions are also relatively positive in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, Spain, Hungary, and Bulgaria<sup>32</sup>. Interestingly, Eastern Europe and the Baltics trust on security issues the United States more than some EU countries.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/09/nato-seen-favorably-across-member-states/>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

## OBSTACLES IN MILITARY INTEGRATION

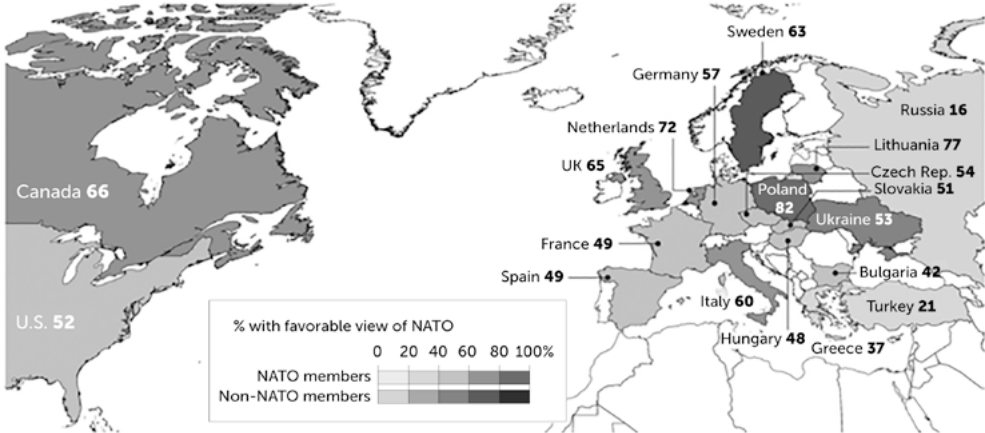
The European Union has achieved deep integration in different fields, with the economic sphere being a good example. However, when it comes to the integration of member states from the military perspective, and the possibility of the establishment of a common army, one cannot speak about the same level of success. So, why could an idea as old as that of European integration not have been implemented successfully so far?

When one considers the possibility of establishing a joint European military, conformists and Eurosceptics usually argue that there cannot be a European army unless there is a European nation or a 'European identity.' This argument may

Figure 2: Survey in member states on NATO

### NATO seen favorably in member states, but few in Turkey agree

% who have favorable opinion of NATO



Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey, Pew Research Center

sound logical to a certain extent, but it is not enough. There are other firm reasons which explain why Europe has not created its own army, including capability, political will of states, fear of being 'instrumentalized,' financial regulations related to defense spending, and some questionable points in legislative acts. Let us make these reasons clear.

The confrontation can come out among the member states in terms of capabilities relating to three problems: some European states are not spending enough on defense. This is an argument that even former USA president Trump had criticized. In recent history, while other countries such as China, India, and Russia have continued to increase their military spending, the economic crisis has caused a sharp cut in the military and defense budgets of EU Member States.

According to the report published by the EUISS, the total defense spending of EU member states has declined 14.5% since 2007: in 2015 EU member states were annually spending EUR 36 billion less than in 2007 (from EUR 216 billion down to EUR 180 billion). EU Member States' average defense spending remains at 1.5% of GDP on defense; below the target of 2% of GDP agreed by NATO members in the 2014 Wales Summit. It is a fact that defense spending by European NATO members fell by 35% between 1985 and 1995<sup>33</sup>.

Maybe we can find a linkage between this fact and the collapse of the Soviet Union, thus European states felt safe after the dissolution of Soviet empire. Now we

<sup>33</sup> Wołkonowski, J. (2018) "NATO Defense Expenditures in 1949-2017," [in]: *SHS Web of Conferences*, Vol. 57(01032).



## SMALL NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRIES PRODUCING SIMILAR HARDWARE FOR SMALL NATIONAL MILITARIES ARE A RECIPE FOR DUPLICATION AND WASTE

understand better that even though the USSR collapsed almost thirty years ago, the Kremlin's aggressive foreign policy has not changed. It should be acknowledged that 'tranquility' has disappeared after the Russian military attack on Ukraine, and now European countries are increasing defense spending.

Four days after Russia started the invasion of Ukraine, on February 27, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a plan to increase the German military by pledging EUR 100 billion (USD 112.7 billion) of the 2022 budget for armed forces<sup>34</sup>. It seems that others will follow suit<sup>35</sup>.

The second issue is about the disparities between member states. Before Brexit,

France and the United Kingdom made up 45% of total EU defense spending, whereas the countries such as Cyprus, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Greece, were the only member states to spend around 2% of GDP, which NATO has deemed to be the minimum requirement, even other countries paid much less.

In 2017, only four nations met the threshold: the United States (3.6%), Greece (2.4%), the United Kingdom (2.1%), and Poland (2.0%) [See: Figure 3]. However, in 2021, ten countries reached the percentage target – among them, Croatia is in the third place with 2.79%, while Estonia (2.28%), Latvia (2.27%), Poland (2.1%), Lithuania (2.03%), Romania (2.02%), and France (2.01%) also made up the ten countries meeting NATO's proportional 2% target<sup>36</sup>. Fourteen EU member states which are also NATO members still cannot reach the NATO defense spending target, with their defense spending within NATO being under 2%<sup>37</sup>.

The EU's Member States have the second largest army in the world, however in the last decade, the consolidated number of military personnel has decreased by 23%. The total number of deployable and sustainable land forces has also fallen. Despite large workforce budgets, the scale of military manpower is not sufficient and not well prepared for immediate military operations<sup>38</sup>.

Thirdly, the problem is related to the long-standing fragmentation of the defense market. Small national defense industries producing similar hardware for small

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-commits-100-billion-to-defense-spending/a-60933724>

<sup>35</sup> <https://breakingdefense.com/2022/03/seven-european-nations-have-increased-defense-budgets-in-one-month-who-will-be-next/>; <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/03/16/russian-invasion-prompts-region-to-rethink-defence-spending/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.forces.net/news/world/nato-which-countries-pay-their-share-defence>

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/210611-pr-2021-094-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/210611-pr-2021-094-en.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/REW19\\_09/REW\\_EU-defence\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/REW19_09/REW_EU-defence_EN.pdf)

Figure 3: Defense expenditure in NATO (2014-2021)

	2014	2021e	Real change 2014-2021 (%)	Share of real GDP 2014 (%)	Share of real GDP 2021e (%)
Albania	150	188	25.62	1.35	1.44
Belgium	4,400	5,404	22.81	0.97	1.12
Bulgaria	640	901	40.80	1.31	1.56
Canada	15,562	23,576	51.50	1.01	1.39
Croatia	892	1,512	69.47	1.85	2.79
Czech Republic	1,683	2,958	75.70	0.94	1.42
Denmark	3,399	4,758	40.00	1.15	1.41
Estonia	432	624	44.44	1.92	2.28
France	43,936	50,971	16.01	1.82	2.01
Germany	39,274	53,736	36.82	1.19	1.53
Greece	4,358	7,417	70.19	2.22	3.82
Hungary	1,035	2,333	125.27	0.86	1.60
Italy	20,788	25,595	23.12	1.14	1.41
Latvia	245	691	181.80	0.94	2.27
Lithuania	357	1,003	180.79	0.88	2.03
Luxembourg	212	380	79.63	0.38	0.57
Montenegro	59	76	28.27	1.50	1.74
Netherlands	8,650	12,027	39.04	1.15	1.45
North Macedonia	106	177	67.58	1.09	1.61
Norway	5,862	7,715	31.61	1.55	1.85
Poland	8,532	12,047	41.20	1.86	2.10
Portugal	2,562	3,272	27.72	1.31	1.54
Romania	2,324	4,432	90.74	1.35	2.02
Slovak Republic	832	1,700	104.25	0.99	1.73
Slovenia	411	629	53.04	0.97	1.28
Spain	10,608	12,749	20.19	0.92	1.02
Turkey	11,783	16,851	43.01	1.45	1.57
United Kingdom	61,378	69,082	12.55	2.14	2.29
United States	660,062	725,709	9.95	3,73	3,52

Source: Own calculation based on statistical data for Hungary

national militaries are a recipe for duplication and waste<sup>39</sup>. There has been no shortage of neither declaratory nor practical initiatives aimed at solving this problem. Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, in his speech at the Le Bourget Air Show in 2007, condemned the waste inherent in a system where each country demanded ‘*juste retour*’, arguing that the “future is in joint programs”<sup>40</sup>.

In 2009, two EU directives – one on defense procurement, the other on intra-EU transfers of defense products – were introduced, aiming to overcome these difficulties by making defense markets more efficient and opening them up to EU-wide competition. But still, member states make active use of offset requirements in defense procurement to shore up national industries and jobs, or circumvent the rules by referring to essential security interests.

The political will of European states is one of the arguments that have the possibility to be an obstacle to military integration. For instance, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) observed that the political will and ability to utilize the resources pose, indeed, a certain difficulty<sup>41</sup>. Some member states are more willing than others to agree on the use of force, and to sacrifice their own blood. Firstly, the political will is related to a fear of ‘loss of sovereignty’. EU member states “fear relinquishing control over this policy.”<sup>42</sup>

Defense issues are a national competence, and the deepening of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) could result

<sup>39</sup> Genschel, P. and M. Jachtenfuchs (2013) *Beyond the Regulatory Polity? The European Integration of Core State Powers*, Oxford Scholarship Online, p.76.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



DIFFERENT STRATEGIC CULTURES – MARKED BY DIFFERENT HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES OF EACH EU MEMBER STATE – CAN AFFECT THE SPEED OF INTEGRATION, TOO

in a loss in their autonomy of decision-making and, in certain cases, even a loss of sovereignty. This could be controversial for the member states that do not share the same interests and, are therefore not interested in the strengthened cooperation in this policy area. Together with the anxiety of loss of sovereignty, these member states fear being ‘instrumentalized’. Here, let us recall the year 2006, when Germany declined to send its newly constituted battlegroup to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), citing concerns over its lack of experience of high-risk deployments<sup>43</sup>. Similarly, as fighting in the DRC intensified during the second half of 2008, those member states whose battlegroups were scheduled to be on standby (Germany and the United Kingdom) turned out to be among the most vocal opponents of intervention.

<sup>43</sup> Menon, A. (2009) “Empowering Paradise? The ESDP at Ten,” [in]: *International Affairs*, Vol. 85(2), March.

Opposition to intervention by Germany stemmed from the reluctance to send troops to Africa, based on a growing suspicion that German soldiers were being used as a 'cover' by certain partners to legitimize an intervention in their former colonies. German officials revealed their fear of being, precisely, 'instrumentalized' by their French and Belgian counterparts, with some expressing the sentiment that the former colonial powers should deal with the issue themselves<sup>44</sup>. Increasing resentment of such perceived 'instrumentalization' also played a part in provoking German hostility towards the idea of an EU intervention in Chad in 2008.

From a military perspective, internally, different strategic cultures – marked by different historical experiences of each EU member state – can affect the speed of integration, too. Regarding this aspect, along with the tradition of neutrality of some EU member states (Finland, Austria, Ireland, Sweden, and Malta) it seems evident that, for example, the north and east of Europe have their territorial defense against Russia at the core of their security strategies, while the south of Europe is more focused on the challenges coming from North Africa and the Middle East.

From an economic viewpoint, the presence of inflexible financial rules on the EU level is clear in the following aspects. First, the creation of a European Union start-up fund which would finance the costs of preparatory activities with military/defense implications<sup>45</sup>. Second, the current list of 'common costs' covered by the Athena mechanism (made up of contributions from the EU member states according to

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> There is still no such start-up fund, hence the EU tries to address these issues through the European Defense Fund.



## LOOKING AT THE LEGISLATIVE ACTS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SEE CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL POINTS THAT CAN BE POTENTIAL OBSTACLES IN CLOSER INTEGRATION

their GDP)<sup>46</sup> is not sufficient. Third, the basic rule for financing military operations is the principle of "*costs lie where they fall*," under which "*countries pay for most of the expenses that they incur when participating in an operation*"<sup>47</sup>. All three aspects emphasize the non-existence of strong financial cooperation and support, which prevents the European Union and its member states from developing the CSDP.

Looking at the legislative acts, it is possible to see certain controversial points that can be potential obstacles in closer integration. In the Treaty of Lisbon, the intragovernmental method is retained for the Common

<sup>46</sup> Council of the European Union (2014) *Financing of Military Operations: The ATHENA Mechanism*. Available [online]: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/29090/139880.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Chevleski, A. and A. Gligorova (2018) "Financing EU Military Operations: The Athena Mechanism," [in]: *International Refereed Scientific Journal Vision*, Vol. 3(2), December.



FOR THE NEAR  
FUTURE, A JOINT  
EUROPEAN ARMY  
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Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), of which the CSDP is an integral part. Sovereignty is still paramount to member states with regard to the CSDP. Member states adopt decisions unanimously; this policy is not supranational and the European Commission – influential and considered the driving force of the EU in other fields – has so far remained in the background.

Although the Treaty of Lisbon provides for a qualified majority in various foreign policies, in particular, related to EU positions in the field of human-rights issues in international forums, decisions on sanctions, and on EU civilian missions<sup>48</sup>, it does not apply to important decisions in military or

defense policy. To ensure having effective and comprehensive integration of the military dimension, there should be a strong legal framework – binding legislative acts – and all member states must be obliged to pursue those acts.

Overall, there is no doubt that there exist certain problematic areas that affect close military cooperation at the EU level. National interests of the states, domestic factors, the level of development of the European states, among others, may be included in the list. In the current situation, it is impossible to predict future developments in terms of integration exactly. However, Brexit, the past experience under the Trump administration, and, most importantly, the current developments – increasing tensions between the West and Russia – suggest that the political will for a much closer defense and security cooperation within the European Union will strengthen.

For the near future, a joint European army equipped with European-made and owned weapons, instead of the U.S exported ones, is unrealistic. Nevertheless, the European Union has taken measures to develop defense capabilities and industry. The European Commission has already initiated the European Defense Fund, which supports collaborative research and development of capabilities in the defense field with the EU budget. This Defense Fund will financially support a consortia of companies from member states conducting cooperative defense research and development of defense products and technologies<sup>49</sup>. This can accelerate the integration of a defense industry for European countries.

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<sup>48</sup> [https://pism.pl/publications/The\\_Introduction\\_of\\_Qualified\\_Majority\\_Voting\\_in\\_EU\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_-\\_Member\\_State\\_Perspectives](https://pism.pl/publications/The_Introduction_of_Qualified_Majority_Voting_in_EU_Foreign_Policy_-_Member_State_Perspectives)

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<sup>49</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-defence-fund\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-defence-fund_en)



## CONCLUSIONS

Considering global developments, a more militarized European future is unavoidable. Defense spending is increasing globally, and Europe shall not lag behind. A common army of Europe is something that it is not a fantasy conjured for the sake of security and protection of European citizens; still, it is not a realistic goal for the near future. The European Union is unique and unlike any other political body across the globe. Major actions within this transnational union require unanimity, and this element makes the implementation of this idea complicated.

In a military context, deciding *how* and *when* to utilize a joint army would raise certain questions: Who will control such an army and who will decide when it takes action? Would it be a collective decision, or rather the decision of the EU's bureaucrats. According to a security expert of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the idea of an EU army *"must be seen as an element of political rhetoric, rather than military reality."*<sup>50</sup> The European Union has the capacity to create a joint army, but it would require years of increased and sustained spending and defining its legal framework.

In the meantime, it seems crucial to strengthen cooperation among EU member states in the military platform that already exists, NATO, to create joint military projects that will allow European countries to share experiences and learn from each other, both *beyond* and *within* Europe, and to participate in joint missions – which would, in turn, strengthen mutual trust.

While writing this piece, we have already read the DPA's report on EU foreign and defense ministers adopting a new common defense policy allowing the European Union to establish rapid response forces. A major component of the new defense policy is the creation of joint forces made up of as many as 5,000 soldiers to respond quickly to the outbreak of crises<sup>51</sup>. How this development will materialize remains to be seen. Taking the latest developments in the Eastern Europe into the consideration, member states will most likely support the implementation of this initiative. However, sending response forces beyond European borders is not seen realistic.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.hedged.media/politics/eu-eyes-security-player-role-with-new-rapid-response-forces-2/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.courthousenews.com/europe-talks-of-an-eu-army-and-dreams-of-sovereignty/>



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