

EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE – KEY ELEMENTS OF DEEP INTEGRATION AT THE LEVEL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to highlight the key elements in European security and defence that enables a deeper integration within the European Union. The security and defence represent a fundamental domain in the European architecture, a benchmark, and a challenge regarding the loyal cooperation between Member States. The methodology used is represented by a synthetic qualitative documentary analysis with an additional quantitative support. The research hypothesis is related to the correlation of key elements in the field of security and defence with the development of a deeper integration of Member States into the European project. As their own defence and security policies belong to the Member States, the research question will provide the answer to whether key elements in European security and defence generate better cooperation between Member States and deeper integration. This article aims to provide a profound understanding of the obligations, challenges, and the impact on the Member States policy on common defence. Following the latest developments in implementing the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, new steps should be taken to achieve the common defence goal. The presentation will also seek to highlight whether the coherence of Member States policies on achieving the common goal is linked to their deeper integration into the European project.*

Keywords: *Cooperation; common defence; strategies; legal framework; integration, challenges.*

1. Introduction

The European security and defence require today a systematic and full recognition as a fundamental domain in the European Union (EU) development. It stands as a benchmark but also as a great challenge in Member States cooperation, a pivotal point in writing the future of the Union.

From the political standpoint the development of the security and defence at European level represents a main goal and an achievement in deepening the Member States integration. But from a security and defence point of view are the Member States capable of developing a coherent and unique approach to achieve this goal? Are they prepared and do they really cooperate in a loyal and foreseeable manner?

The Treaty of the European Union (TEU), better known as *The Maastricht Treaty* imposed a common goal for the Member States, respectively to achieve the *common defence*, without interfering into their national security and defence policies. For that, the research hypothesis is going to be analysed in relation with the key elements in the field of security and defence. Since their own defence and security policies belong to the Member States, the research question will provide an answer if the core developments of the European security and defence could generate better cooperation among the Member States and a deeper integration within the European architecture.

The present research focuses, firstly, on providing a profound understanding of the obligations, as well as of the challenges faced by the Member States in achieving the common objective – the European defence. The harmonization with Member States' security and defence strategies and policies adopted or in process of being enacted could provide the proper answer to a deeper collaboration and integration in the European defence.

Using a synthetic qualitative documentary analysis including a literature review with an additional quantitative support, the article aims to provide the impact of the security and defence policies of the Member States on the common defence objective.

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2. A deeper integration in security and defence

2.1. *Strategic Compass – a step forward to a deeper integration*

European Union defence readiness can be defined as a steady state of preparedness of the Union and its Member States to protect the security of its citizens, the integrity of its territory and critical assets or infrastructures, and its core democratic values and processes (European Commission 2024). The definition given by the European Commission in March 2024 in the new European Defence Industrial Strategy comprises the general understanding of the role of all the actors in implementing a real European common defence.

A pivotal shift in implementing a common defence remains the unprovoked, illegal, and unjustified on-going aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, started in February 2022. It should be noted that Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was signalling not only its assertiveness or the audacity in tackling the West (how it was interpreted), but also the fact that all former boundaries, established after the fall of the Iron Curtain were at risk.

Either way, EU shifted from a long, standing non-confrontational relation with Russia to a more practical and strategic oriented one. The Strategic Compass represents a capstone document that was negotiated and embraced by all Member States. They acknowledged the need for common defence and cooperation, to counterpose Russian aggression. In addition, their cooperation in developing The Strategic Compass was aiming to reshape the strategic vision of EU as a united block for the next decade.

The Strategic Compass for security and defence is a programmatic document, a strategy, a vision of the Member States in boosting together their security and defence on four major pillars – Act, Secure, Invest and Partner. EU is posing itself as a real Union in security and defence.

The EU acknowledged the need to enhance its strategic autonomy and ability to work with partners to safeguard its values and interests. A stronger and more capable EU in security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO (Council of the EU 2022).

Two years after the Strategic Compass, EU is more than ever aware of the necessity to establish a European Defence Union that maximizes the effectiveness of its missions and operations abroad, the joint development and procurement of defence capabilities, and the robustness of the European defence industry (EEAS 2024).

On the *Act* pillar EU is projecting a Rapid Deployment Capacity who will comprise 5,000 troops and is designed to be more flexible, with the ability to include specialist units and air and sea capabilities. This implies the capacity to deploy force in case of wider range of scenarios, such as the rescue of EU citizens from a civil war zone or the stabilization of a country in the immediate aftermath of hostilities (Gallagher 2022).

EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) is planned to be fully operational by 2025. As of 2024, three operational scenarios have been finalised, including military support to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, allowing EU to advance on the planning and requirements. The first ever EU live military exercise with units, troops, and personnel from 19 Member States took place in October 2023 in Spain and is essential to enhance the readiness and interoperability of Member States's troops. The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) is transforming by doubling numbers in staff and operating new infrastructure equipped with state-of-the-art capabilities and secure communications (EEAS 2024).

In order to boost EU's intelligence-based situational awareness, on *Secure* pillar, steps were made in strengthening the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity and Satellite Centre from Torrejon which provides an unique and autonomous geo-spatial intelligence capability (Union and Policy 2023).

Also, The EU's cyber defence policy is to be better resourced to counter cyber-attacks from criminals and belligerent nations, and a "hybrid toolbox" is to be created to respond to hybrid threats (Gallagher 2022).

Furthermore, the establishment of the FIMI Information Sharing and Analysis Centre provides a common analytical framework and methodology among Member States, partners and other actors, to expose, attribute and propose restrictive measures against perpetrators (EEAS 2024).

The fight against terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, cyber and hybrid threats, organized crime are topics on which EU is increasing its efforts to take effective measures.

Climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters are impacting security landscape over the next decades and are proven drivers for instability and conflict around the globe (Council of the EU 2022). Alongside with the ongoing harsh and tide race and competition for natural resources (energy, rare metals, etc.) all are detailing a security environment that need to be approached on a common manner by EU and the Member States.

In the *Invest* pillar, the defence spending in the EU has been on a rise. In 2022, total defence expenditure amounted to EUR 240 billion, of which EUR 58 billion was allocated to investments. In 2023, the defence expenditure, including investment, were estimated to reach EUR 290 billion and EUR 92 billion, respectively. While EU Member States collectively surpass the 20% investment target, total defence expenditure is still only 1.5% of the Gross Domestic Product overall, albeit with large differences between Member States (EEAS 2024).

Furthermore, EU promoted, in March 2023, the Ammunition Initiative, as a reaction to Ukraine and Member States' urgent needs for artillery ammunition and missiles. This was financed with EUR 2 billion from the European Peace Facility, and EUR 500 million from the EU-budget for industrial ramp-up, and was enacted in The Act in Support of Ammunition Production (EEAS 2024).

Also, to respond to the need for collaboration for short-time joint procurements of ammunitions, air and missile defence or platforms and replacement of legacy systems, EU adopted the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act, with a total budget of EUR 310 million.¹

Moreover, in March 2024 in order to achieve readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry in a turbulent geopolitical environment EU adopted The European Defence Industrial Strategy (European Commission 2024).

As *partner*, EU developed robust bi and multilateral partnerships to enhance and boost interests and security and address global challenges. These partnerships cover different regions on the world's map and involve cooperation with both individual countries and international organizations. The EU-NATO partnership is fundamental, NATO remaining the main element and pillar in Europe's defence. Also, the transatlantic strategic partnership with the USA has been enhanced. The relations with the UN, the African Union and ASEAN have been strengthened. EU is engaging in Western Balkans more and is providing aid, support, or assistance to its Eastern partners like Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, or Armenia. The tailored bilateral partnerships with UK, Canada, Norway, Iceland, or Switzerland have been enforced. Discussions and cooperations on security and defence with Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana, and Nigeria from African region or with Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Israel, and Türkiye from the Mediterranean region have been engaged and deepened. Also, Latin America has become a point of interest for EU.

A special mention is the Indo-Pacific region in which EU has already shown boosting interest. Dedicated security and defence dialogues and consultations took place with Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, Japan, India and the Republic of Korea, enabling increased coordination and pursuit of shared interests (EEAS 2024).

On the other hand, EU defined its own relations with China and Russia. China is seen as a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor, and a systemic rival. China is increasingly both involved and engaged in regional tensions and has substantially developed its military means aiming impact on regional and global security (Council of the EU 2022). With China, EU continues to hold security and defence consultations (EEAS 2024).

¹ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edirpa-procuring-together-defence-capabilities_en, accessed at 10.06.2024.

While China is a rival, Russia is an aggressor state that violated the international law and the principles of UN Charter, undermining European and global security and stability (Council of the EU 2022).

The mentioned point of view over China and Russia represents an important re-evaluation in EU policy and EU vision, by aggregating a new way of relating with the two states. It is an improvement by comparison with 2016 EU Global Strategy – where Russia, for example, was seen as a state who violates international law, but still a state interdependent with EU (EEAS 2017) – and it could stand as a solid foundation for further development in EU foreign and security policies.

Nevertheless, the Strategic Compass is a relevant step forward in fostering the security and defence on a limited scale, having its own shortcomings and limitations. For example, in enhancing crisis management capacity, the Strategic Compass should have defined a specifically defence role for the EU beyond the coordination of the national defence policies. (Sweeney and Winn 2022). However, this did not happen, so the Strategic Compass remains a document with limited obligation and force.

2.2. Security and defence strategies among the Member States

The new clear and present threats posed by the Russian aggression, or the surge of new potential or ongoing conflicts (in Middle East, Indo-Pacific region, Sahel, and Sub-Sahel Africa) have raised awareness of the Member States in tackling the complex security and defence domain.

In this general case we must ask the question if the steps taken together by the Member State will overwrite the national policies in terms of security and defence, or the national policies will prevail and generate shrinkage and neck bottling opinions on EU integrated approach on security and defence?

The answer is divided by two choices:

- A declarative approach that will always generate political discussions and contradictions.
- A factual one, based on the analysis of the measures and policies taken by the EU and the Member States on security and defence.

The factual base is regarded as a main proven track to understand the insight and development of European security and defence at Member States and EU level. Looking at the documents and strategies adopted or in process of being enacted nowadays, may provide relevant conclusions on EU's security and defence.

Member States started to update, rewrite, or simply review their security and defence strategies, giving the EU security and defence a proper framework and a different approach comparing to former strategies and doctrines.

France adopted in 2022 a National Security Review an ambitious document in correlation with the Strategic Compass that stipulates France's role as a key player in world security, but also EU's role. EU is perceived to become a global player, a credible defender of free access to contested domains ((cyber, space, seabed and air-sea spaces)) in the face of its competitors' hybrid strategies (SGDSN – Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale 2022).

Germany adopted in 2023 its first National Security Strategy, a monumental shift in country's political and strategical vision regarding security and defence after World War II. The strategy recognises Germany's identity, its values and interest. Germany sees as a major responsibility for itself, ensuring that the EU will be able to geopolitically act and to uphold its security and sovereignty for the coming generations (Bundesregierung 2023). Germany remains committed to NATO and the EU and sees the development of EU security and defence as a key element in achieving its own goals and interests.

The Netherlands reshaped its view on security and defence by approving The Security Strategy for the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2023 in which they established their strategic course in security and defence. The Netherlands remains committed on developing and strengthening both NATO and the EU through investment in necessary military capabilities and intensified (European) defence cooperation (Government of The Netherlands 2023).

Denmark, a country which adopted after the Maastricht Treaty a form of non-engagement in EU security and defence policies through an opt-out clause, reviewed completely its approach (Milne and Nordic 2022)(Tani 2022), and approved a new security and defence strategy. It stands in between the NATO commitment on collective defence and the EU security and defence necessary development with a complementary and mutual beneficial expected outcomes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2023).

The Baltic states and the Northern states were and are also in process of adjusting their security and defence policies.

Whether they already shifted their vision through a more focused approach on defence, provided primarily and fundamentally by NATO – Latvia (SAEIMA – Latvia Parliament 2023), Estonia (RIIGIKOGU – Estonian Parliament 2023) or Lithuania², or they are in process of adopting new security and defence strategies embracing the same vision (Sweden³, Finland⁴), all the mentioned countries remain committed to the EU projects on security and defence, being aware of the importance of EU as a global actor on the international stage.

Moreover, Luxembourg, in its Defence Guidelines 2035, is focusing on the development of European defence autonomy and enhanced EU-NATO cooperation (The Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg 2023).

This approach resembles with the strategies adopted earlier by Poland (Republic of Poland 2020), Romania (Parliament of Romania 2020), or Slovakia (National Council of the Slovak Republic 2021) in which NATO remains the main pillar of defence. In these cases, EU security and defence development becomes a relevant political task for the countries, their commitment in EU security and defence projects being profound. Also, the EU-NATO enhanced cooperation remains a fundamental pillar and a key topic.

In Slovenia's case, a proportionate part of Slovenian defence capabilities is devoted to the joint efforts of NATO and the European Union in security and defence areas. This aims to ensure a proportionate share of the joint responsibility for collective defence, solidarity, and security within NATO and the European Union (National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia 2019).

In the same manner, Belgium (Conseil National de Sécurité 2021) or Spain are committed to greater European strategic autonomy, which calls for promoting the necessity of a greater cohesion and resilience among the Member States in order to implement the Common Security and Defence Policy and to give EU a leading role in assuring world order and security (Gobierno de Espana 2021).

The conclusion is partially applicable even in Hungary's⁵ case, even if the Hungarian National Security Strategy adopted in 2020 sets the political necessity of a profound and deeper dialogue and collaboration with Russia and China.

On the other hand, Italy, a founding nation of the EU, a middle power, a G7 member with a considerable military force, is on the track of adopting its new first national security strategy⁶, a milestone moment in the history and politics of a state that was always characterized by a political turmoil and non-consensus in this matter⁷. This strategy will emphasize Italy's role in the world being focused on its vision over Mediterranean region or North-Africa, Sahel, and Sub-Sahel region but also its ongoing and full commitment to NATO and EU security and defence development.

Also, Greece as a consistent supporter of the development of CSDP is engaging in military operations, civil missions and hybrid initiatives working towards its commitment to implement the strategic autonomy and to establish EU as an international security and stability main actor⁸. To

² <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/3ec6a2027a9a11ecb2fe9975f8a9e52e?jfwid=rivwzvpvg>, accessed at 25.04.2024.

³ <https://www.government.se/articles/2024/04/swedish-defence-commission-submits-final-report-on-military-defence-strengthened-defence-capability-sweden-as-an-ally/>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

⁴ <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410869/finnish-government-to-draw-up-national-security-strategy>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

⁵ <https://honvedelem.hu/hirek/government-resolution-1163-2020-21st-april.html>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

⁶ <https://decode39.com/7322/italy-new-national-security-strategy/>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

⁷ <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/missioni-militari-governo-meloni-continuita-potenziali-novita/>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

⁸ <https://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-policy/greece-in-the-eu/eu-common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp.html>, accessed in 29.04.2024.

conceptualize and to codify the EU and NATO commitments and to tackle the most complex security problems and challenges, Greece is developing its own National Security Strategy⁹.

Furthermore, Portugal is reviewing its Strategic Defence Concept and is going to provide a clear vision of its place in the world, being fully committed to develop its policies based on NATO Strategic Concept and EU Strategic Compass¹⁰.

In the same manner Croatia is updating its own security strategy¹¹, the main pillars in defence being NATO, as a guarantor of peace, stability, and security, and EU. Within EU's CSDP, Croatia actively contributes to missions and operations¹².

A particular case in EU, Austria, a neutral country by its constitutional definition (Austrian National Council 1955), is updating its national security strategy. As the Austrian government mentioned, recent developments in the field of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) such as EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, which defines the EU's objectives and priorities and takes steps towards an EU Security Union are also not sufficiently reflected in the former security strategy adopted in 2013¹³.

In terms of neutrality, Ireland is also discussing and debating on security policy. Since the war in Ukraine started, the Irish government has increased its security and defence engagement with the EU and NATO by joining the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), the European Hybrid Threats Centre of Excellence and a range of EU PESCO defence projects¹⁴. Furthermore, in 2023, a national Consultative Forum on International Security Policy established its purpose as being to build public understanding and generate discussion on the link between the State's foreign, security, and defence policies (Louise Richardson 2023). Ireland's role in multilateral fora and involvement in defence-related areas through such activities as the CSDP and PESCO in the EU and Partnership for Peace with NATO (Louise Richardson 2023) represents real steps taken in enhancing Ireland's security.

Malta, another member state, neutral by its own constitution, has maintained a moderate line in security and defence policies, not actively participating in either CSDP or other cooperation formats.

On the other hand, Cyprus, a Member State that has important security issues at hand due to the non-recognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, has taken actions on security and defence by putting into force his first National Security Council, with a mission to generate ideas, recommendations, and practical proposals regarding matters of national security (including a national security strategy), to decision-making bodies in Cyprus¹⁵.

3. Discussion and conclusions on common and loyal cooperation among states on security and defence

Discussions

Common defence is a goal and a perspective. Whether all the EU States Members are *de facto* involved in the EU common defence project is still debatable. But, *de jure*, all Members States, directly or indirectly (by abstention), are fully committed to define and implement a policy whose main objective is to define and put in place a framework that will lead to a common defence (Member States 2012).

⁹ <https://www.eliamep.gr/en/publication/%CF%83%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%AC%CE%B6%CE%BF%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%82-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CF%83%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%B5%CF%83%CF%89%CF%84%CE%B5%CF%81/>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

¹⁰ <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/en/gc23/communication/news-item?i=new-strategic-concept-for-defence-will-clarify-the-vision-on-our-place-in-the-world>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

¹¹ <https://total-croatia-news.com/news/politics/croatia-preparing-new-national-security-strategy/>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

¹² <https://balkandefencemonitor.com/strategic-document-croatia-2023/>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

¹³ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/sicherheitspolitik/sicherheitsstrategie.html>, accessed at 29.04.2024.

¹⁴ <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/90935>, accessed at 30.04.2024.

¹⁵ <https://cyprus-mail.com/2023/05/31/cabinet-approves-establishment-of-national-security-council/>, accessed at 30.04.2024.

The main goal is a “progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides” (Article 42(2) TEU)(Member States 2012). But all these are achieved only through a major and collaborative cooperation between the Member States on one side and the Member States and EU institutions on the other.

Starting with the Treaty of Lisbon, CSDP became the main legal framework in EU security and defence. Written in the fundamental treaties of the EU (Treaty on European Union – TEU), CSDP represents the political and legal vision and acknowledgement of the EU security and defence domain. It enables the EU to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict preventions and strengthening the international security¹⁶. Also, it allows the Member States to take part in putting into practice the EU’s role as a contributor to global security.

But it must be mentioned as a rule that the defence and security policies remain in the Member States national competence. As such, the general principles of CSDP delineated in Article 42 TEU (Member States 2012) ensure that specific national defence policies or memberships of defence frameworks outside of the EU are respected (Sabatino et al. 2023).

The clauses of the Treaty of the European Union (TUE) concerning the security and defence matters are binding on normative characteristics. *De facto* are seen and interpreted as rules of conduct, established to achieve the determined objective. The main cause of this is the sanctioning element who does not prevail in case of non-fulfilment of the expected legal effects. So, to explain the binding relationship of law in the field of defence and security the main characteristic is generated *ipso facto* by EU membership.

The manifestation of state sovereignty in security and defence determines the evolution of the Member States and the involvement in the EU project. Moreover, the principle of subsidiarity, assumed as a fundamental element of the European construction, has no efficiency in terms of defence and security.

As already presented, Member States are aware of the necessity of having policies and strategies regarding their own security and defence.

The unique approach of each Member State on security and defence is generated by its own form of organization and its own decision-making process. In that case, the legal approach for their strategies and doctrines is different from Member State to Member State, the documents adopted having legal statuses and different legal bindings.

Whether are adopted by the national parliaments, the governments, or the national security councils, these strategies reflect Member States’ political will to develop their security and defence.

The strategies have or will have different point of view or different approaches. There are more centred strategies or more balanced, all confirming their commitments towards NATO (except neutral and non-members) and EU. On one hand, NATO is and will remain the main security and defence provider and, on the other hand, EU’s project on development of its own security and defence represents a focus and a vital domain at political and strategic decision-making level.

This demonstrates that even though the Member States have different points of view on various aspects and policies they can speak on a united voice about their common goals.

Also, this provides us a better factual understanding regarding the Member States’ approach on common defence. Whether is different from a Member State to another, the main goals and the primary guidelines remain the same.

On a particular aspect, regarding the fact that European strategic autonomy is a concept with a history fraught with tensions and ambiguities, Member States were not all directly committed to its enhancement and development. But after the Russian invasion to Ukraine, the vision has slowly shifted towards a more focused approach.

The Member States have started to acknowledge the fact that the European strategic autonomy in security and defence represents the ability of Europe to make its own decisions, and

¹⁶ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/common-security-and-defence-policy_en, accessed in 12.03.2024.

to have the necessary means, capacity and capabilities available to act upon these decisions, in such manner that it is able to properly function on its own when needed (Zandee et al. 2020).

Furthermore, European strategic autonomy is fully tied with some key points facts and policies, that, will boost European cooperation among Members States in the field of security and defence and are appropriated by the Member States:

- Military capabilities development, strengthen defence among EU Member States (increasing defence spending, investing in research, development, and procurement of advanced military technologies, development of common defence capabilities).

- Continuous development of Strategic Partnerships with States and organizations that shares common values and interests.

- Technological sovereignty that will ensure critical defence technologies, in domains like cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and space capabilities.

- Strong political will and loyal cooperation and coordination among states and states representatives, policymakers, military leaders, and defence industry stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Even if the Member States had different points of view on specific topics or matters, the definitive answer was always provided as a common action of the Member States, the unanimity concept being applied. The more policies driven and managed together, the deeper integration among the Member States and within the EU project is provided.

On a normative and practical analysis, the EU security and defence evolution still reveals a discrepancy between what the EU has aimed and managed to achieve in terms of defence and security. And considering that the security and defence domain is a national prerogative, Member States can turn and reshape the EU's security and defence using legal tools and loyal political cooperation.

On a broader and conceptual approach, Member States have at their disposal the necessary tools to overcome a strategic shrinkage or contraction and overcome or avoid security and defence pitfalls only by applying Article 24 (3) of the Treaty on European Union. That provision stipulates the fact that the Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Union's action in this area (Member States 2012).

The lack of strict and binding legal obligations at regulatory level regarding the imperative nature of a European defence *per se* requires loyal and deep collaboration among all involved actors.

The TEU establishes a real code of conduct among the Members States to accomplish the main goal by stipulating the domains of action and the foreseen results. Still, a binding, mandatory provision in establishing the European defence is not directly mentioned within the TEU, so, all the legal requirements and all the developments in that area remain at Member States own decision and action.

Their own security and defence strategies present Member States' views on the topic. The approach on security and defence is not yet uniform, but there are similarities and commitments to a safer and more secure European Union. EU Member States are committed to the EU's project and their vision (sometimes different from one Member State to another) or their actions provided under CSDP are clearly recognized.

The CSDP framework, an important European defence catalyst, represents a framework for the Member States to enforce EU's security and defence (even thaw CSDP, is a compromise between the Member States and the EU), since:

- CSDP is a framework for launching crisis management operations on behalf of the EU, projecting the EU capacity in this domain.

- It provides the synchronicity between the different instruments of European Union foreign policy.

- It represents an insurance policy that Europeans can act autonomously (Sven Biscop and Daniel Fiott 2013).

Furthermore, all the measures taken in implementing CSDP, all the frameworks and instruments of cooperation like PESCO, CDM, EPF, CARD, or the Strategic Compass' implementation were generated through a united voice under the EU's umbrella. In force planning, capability development, procurement and defence industrial policy, the EU and the Member States are now focusing on the state-of-the-art, near-peer conflict, promoting a fundamental shift in larger and more centred investment in land, sea, and air warfare capabilities, as well as advances in cyber warfare and defence in space. Developing common military capabilities, increasing defence spendings, investing in cutting-edge technologies in a fully collaborative manner are all measures already taken.

Member States are stepping up and coordinating in what is known today as strategic responsibility. The idea of strategic responsibility drives the security and defence domain in the present. For the first time EU is giving military assistance to a country under attack (Ukraine), EU is training troops involved in an inter-state European war and is mobilizing its defence industry to sustain one country's war effort. With the new Act to Support Ammunition Production EU quadrupled its production capacity for ammunition. EU today is looking to switch its defence industry to wartime mode¹⁷.

All these elements represent a factual demonstration of the research hypothesis, that Member States are providing a deeper integrational approach in the European project.

In Brief, the European defence remains a fundamental component and goal for the European Union's policies, a first-rate concern for both EU and Member States. The achievement of a common European defence is fully linked to the coherence of Member States' policies in this field, but also to their common and loyal actions towards the related objective generating a deeper integration into the European project.

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