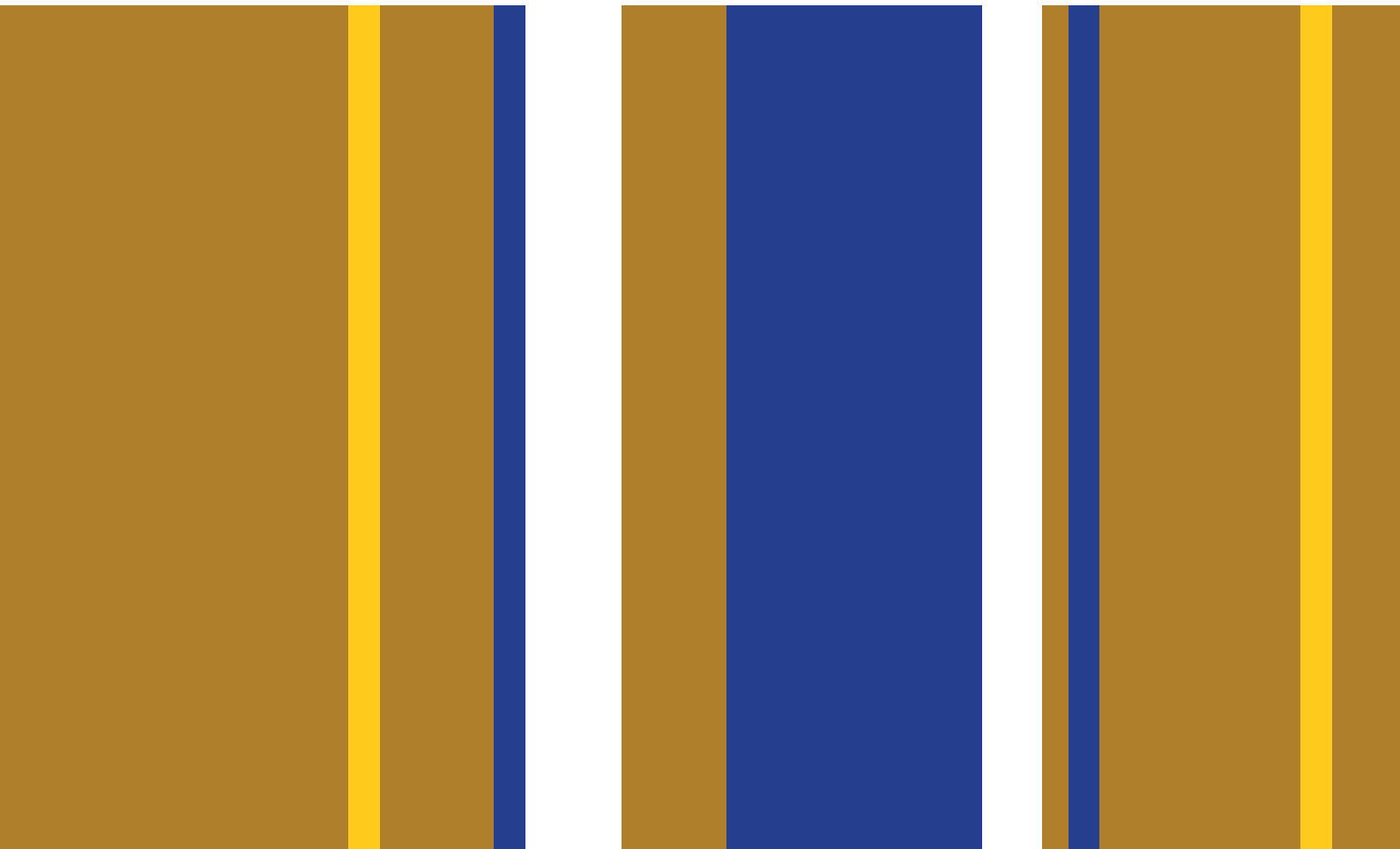# The bundle of sticks: a stronger European defence to face global challenges

Pedro A. Serrano de Haro

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Working Paper

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Summary

'… then, handing the bundle to each of his sons in turn, he told them to try to break it. But although each one tried his best, none was able to do so. The father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his sons to break one by one. This they did very easily' (Aesop).

Introduction[1]

The past three years have seen significant developments in the field of European security and defence. Mostly, they have been pursued in the framework of the implementation of the Global Strategy presented by the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HRVP), Federica Mogherini, in June 2016. The main aim is to improve the EU's capacity to promote its interests and values in an increasingly challenging international environment.

Terrorism, irregular migration, cyber-attacks and foreign interference, including disinformation, figure among the most pressing security concerns of European citizens and societies. Some of these issues are having a significant impact on Europe's national political landscapes. But to tackle them properly it is key to have a clear and common understanding of their causes.

The Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, and resulting conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya, as well as destabilisation in the Sahel, have unsettled regional balances and provided space for a new wave of terrorism. Instability and refugees fleeing from conflict have contributed to opening new routes for irregular migration. Organised crime has found a fertile ground in which to spawn, strengthening links to terrorist groups and promoting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. To the East, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine has brought back into Europe pressing threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity. Hybrid methods of aggression have shown the need to respond in a more complex manner and to enhance societal resilience. A return to global strategic competition further interferes with regional crises and adds new transnational dimensions to challenges and threats.

The EU and its Member States are directly affected and concerned. The level of threat at their doorstep has increased exponentially in the past decade. And they are inevitably part of the broader strategic competition. During the past few years they have been actively developing security and defence instruments and capabilities, they have enhanced their engagement with their partners, notably with NATO, and they have continued to pursue a multilateral track to reinforce international peace and security.

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1 This paper expresses the author's personal views, which are not necessarily those of either the European External Action Service or the EU itself.

Cooperation on development of defence capabilities has, no doubt, been one of the areas of greater expansion, notably through the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and work on a European Defence Fund (EDF). But the EU is also increasing its crisis-management effectiveness with initiatives such as the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), the Civilian Compact and the proposal for a European Peace Facility (EPF). The EU is looking more strategically at its deployments to maximise the impact of its efforts, be it in the Sahel or on the high seas, or in other regions, including the Middle East. Conscious of the complex nature of the challenges, it is also developing instruments to face hybrid threats and enhance awareness, including improved cyber security and defence capabilities. The protection of strategic sectors and infrastructure has become a priority.

While enhancing its capacity to act, including autonomously if required, the EU is convinced of the need to cooperate with its partners in addressing security challenges.

The Transatlantic relationship remains crucial to Europe's security. Ties with NATO have been strengthened considerably through Joint Declarations in 2016 and 2018, co-signed by Secretary General Stoltenberg, President of the European Council Tusk and President of the European Commission Juncker. In fact, much of what the EU has developed recently in the field of defence will support NATO directly, notably as regards capabilities and military mobility. It will also contribute to an improved burden-sharing, particularly as regards hybrid threats and challenges coming from the South.

And a new and strong relationship in the field of security and defence will need to be built with the UK after the latter's departure from the EU. Challenges and interests will remain common. Most of the EU's security and defence instruments, including those developed more recently, foresee openings for cooperation with third States. It is to be hoped and expected that the UK will wish to avail itself of such possibilities.

Finally, the EU has continued pursuing a multilateral approach to international peace and security, seeking to strengthen common understandings of the challenges within the international community and develop common approaches to contain proliferation, promote disarmament and prevent an arms race, including in outer-space and in the use of artificial intelligence.

The EU offers its Member States an unparalleled platform for cooperation on all these matters. The breadth of its scope for action and variety of tools allow it to develop integrated approaches covering the complex nature of today's challenges and linking the internal and external dimensions of security. Jointly, the EU and its Member States are among the world's most powerful actors. They can project a capacity that dwarfs most others. But having such a capacity is not enough. Tyrtaeus, a Spartan poet, sung that it is not the athletic, artistic or intellectual qualities of a soldier that will bring victory, but his fortitude when faced with the terrible sights of war and his courage in fighting the enemy. The success of the EU will ultimately depend on its Member States' commitment to promote and defend their

common interests and on their determination in this collective engagement. The EU and its Member States are reaching a watershed moment. It is important that this be clearly understood and acted upon.

After an overview of external challenges, this paper will describe some of the main initiatives developed by the EU in the field of security and defence during the last three years and how this has led to a stronger engagement with key international partners. It will conclude with some reflections regarding the value of the EU as a platform for cooperation to face global challenges and on strategic autonomy.

1. The challenges

The so-called Arab Spring revolutions of 2011 and the 2014 conflict in Ukraine have created new realities and have spread instability in the immediate vicinity of the EU. At the same time, global strategic competition, including tensions in Asia, is at the heart of today's international dynamics.

1.1. The Middle-East and the Gulf

There is a major regional conflict in the Middle East/Gulf. While the situations in Syria, Iraq and Yemen all respond to specific realities in each of these countries, they also reflect rivalries between major regional players. It will be difficult to address all this successfully in any sustainable manner unless the broader context and dynamics are considered. Informally, many have been calling for a Westphalian-type concert for the region, but international efforts continue to address each of these situations separately. It is important to note, as well, that UN mediation efforts will only bear fruit if the main international players truly support them and cease pursuing divergent agendas. The impact of these crises on European security cannot be clearer, be it as regards the spread of a new brand of terrorism exemplified by Daesh, be it as regards their impact on uncontrolled movements of people into the EU. What they represent in terms of international insecurity is obviously much greater.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that crises in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have in practice diverted international attention from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This does not mean it has disappeared, nor that its potential for mobilisation is gone. It will come back to the fore, and in the meantime options for advancing towards the two-State solution will have become even harder to pursue.

1.2. The African 'safety belt': Libya, the Sahel and the Horn

The stabilisation of Libya and the adjacent Sahel region are a priority for the EU.

Since Gaddafi's overthrow in 2011 Libya has remained submerged in instability. The internationally-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli, wields limited practical authority. As a result, organised crime, including that responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, is flourishing and terrorist groups, such as Daesh, while defeated in Sirte, have established strongholds in various parts of the vast desert country.

New arrangements to re-establish a nationally-accepted State authority are a priority. This is the goal pursued by the UN. But stronger, genuine international support is crucial. While

currently external interference would appear more manageable than in the case of the Middle East/Gulf conundrum, it remains by no means negligible and helps fuel the myriad militias and armed groups that under various denominations exercise practical control of the country's territory. In addition to the insecurity this creates for the Libyan population itself, it puts at risk security in neighbouring countries, including in Europe.

Indeed, the dissolution of the Libyan State has had a very damaging effect on the broader Sahel region and contributed to Mali being virtually overrun by rebel and terrorist groups in 2012. This also transmitted further instability to its neighbours. As a result, one of the poorest regions in Africa is threatened by terrorist groups and organised crime in an unprecedented manner. A threat that, as seen in Mali or in the Central African Republic, can become of an existential nature. The leadership in the Sahel countries has nevertheless reacted in a courageous and enlightened way. It has opted to confront these threats head-on through enhanced regional coordination. To this effect they created the 'Group of Five Sahel Countries' (G5)[2] to coordinate efforts not only through security instruments (such as the Joint Force[3] created to operate along their internal borders) but also as regards economic and social development.

G5 countries are thus implementing two of the main lessons learnt over the past few years: (1) internal security challenges can only be addressed effectively if their external sources and ramifications are equally dealt with; and (2) security measures are insufficient to achieve stabilisation and it is at least equally important to address development and governance problems at the same time.

Fault lines continue towards the East. The situations in the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Somalia are clear flash points. While in the first two, internal dynamics are predominant, Somalia is a case of implosion where regional dynamics and the spread of terrorism, including the most recent developments in the Gulf, have combined to create a security situation that has been challenging its neighbours and the international community for more than 20 years.

Security and stability in the Sahel belt, from Mauritania to Somalia, is no doubt a major strategic challenge for the region itself, but also for Europe's own security. Increased demographic pressure in the coming years risks aggravating tensions. Fragile States will find it even more difficult to fight terrorism and organised crime, including networks responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Porous borders open up paths towards Europe.

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2 The G5 Sahel was formed on 16 February 2014 at a summit of the five Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) in Nouakchott. A convention on its establishment was adopted on 19 December 2014.
3 The G5 Sahel Joint Force was officially launched on 2 July 2017 at a G5 Sahel summit in Bamako. It had been endorsed by the African Union and by the UN Security Council through Resolution 2359 (21 June 2017).

1.3. Russia

The outbreak of conflict in Ukraine in 2014 marks the other big turning point for Europe's security. The illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia and Moscow's support for the separatists in the Donbas region constitute major breaches of the European security order as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. In addition, the way these actions were carried out highlights a more sophisticated modus operandi, comprising –among others– disinformation, covert action and the exploitation of internal weaknesses that we currently describe as 'hybrid' aggression.

Since then, EU relations with the Russian Federation have continued to deteriorate and a more antagonistic Russian stance is visible, be it in Ukraine (the Azov Sea being the most recent example), other European theatres (Moldova and Georgia, but also the Western Balkans) or beyond (Russian intervention in other crisis theatres including Syria). The Minsk process, on which a formal review of relations with Russia hinges, remains stalled and has inherent weaknesses. The Skripal case, adding a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) dimension and Russian violations of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) directly impacting on European security, completes this quick description of a very worrying current state of affairs. While this occurs, Europe is suffering from increased disinformation campaigns against EU interests, interference in internal political processes and elections, and cyber-attacks, all of which breed further mistrust.

EU policy towards Russia is based on the Five Guiding Principles agreed by the Council in March 2016[4] and endorsed by the European Council. At the same time, Russia remains a key world player. It is also the main energy supplier for many EU Member States and new connections continue to be developed. When looked at from a geo-strategic perspective, it would appear that there are in fact substantial common interests, including in the fight against terrorism, and that, as dreamt by many in the 90s, a mutually beneficial relationship with the Russian Federation, while currently considered difficult to achieve, would indeed be possible.

1.4. A return to global strategic competition

In addition to the most immediate and direct security challenges just described, it is important to take into account other major global developments that have become even more apparent over the past decade and that impact directly on Europe's security.

First and foremost, there is a clear(er) return to strategic competition between major powers, in particular the US, China and Russia, within a multi-polar world. Some of its manifestations

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4 (1) Full implementation of the Minsk agreements; (2) strengthening relations with Eastern partners and other neighbours, including Central Asia; (3) strengthening the resilience of the EU; (4) selective engagement with Russia on issues of interest to the EU; and (5) need to engage in people-to-people contacts and support to Russian civil society.

are well known and are reflected in interventions in key conflict areas (Syria being a case in point), the search for territorial gain or influence (in Eastern Europe or the South China Sea) or competition over natural resources (in Africa or the Arctic). It is important to note that, contrary to the prevailing narrative during the Cold War, the rivalry is not based primarily on ideological grounds, with one model of society trying to impose itself upon others. What we are seeing is power structures that seek to prevail or place themselves in a position of pre-eminence that will ultimately allow them to set the agenda for others, quite often following a zero-sum game logic.

Secondly, the Asian continent, with its economic, technological and demographic capacity and potential, will occupy the international centre-stage in the years to come. At the same time, with its numerous security fault-lines, absence of an overarching regional security structure and with considerable nuclear military capability, it also raises serious concerns. Increased tensions or conflict in Asia will have consequences far beyond the region. Superpower rivalry and power politics are already active in this theatre.

Third, it must be noted that the values of democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, for which the EU and its Member States stand, are not equally understood, or recognised and accepted within the international community. It is essential to ensure that these values are not stifled, which would eventually endanger their survival, but, on the contrary, are further embraced by other societies as they evolve and develop.

Fourth, the renewal of competition over an old domain –the seas– is now coupled with competition over two other key interconnecting spaces: cyber-space and outer-space. The significance of the latter two areas hardly needs to be emphasised in terms of communications, information control and situational awareness, including their military implications. In fact, to the extent that they have a direct impact on the control of territory and oceans, they increasingly constitute decisive elements of power in the 21st century.

2. Addressing the challenges

What I have described so far is by no means an exhaustive list of international threats and challenges, which, unfortunately, are much broader, both in terms of countries and regions affected by turmoil, or in terms of planetary problems that need to be addressed, from climate change to development issues. But it does reflect some of the main security issues the EU and its Member States have to tackle if they want to promote and defend their interests effectively.

It also shows that to protect Europeans against terrorism, organised crime, disinformation and cyber-attacks, or even to maintain Europe's capacity to develop economically, it is important to look beyond the EU's borders and actively address some of the key international problems that confront it and be well aware of their interlinkages. Thinking that higher walls or independent action by Member States will provide any real protection is, at best, a baseless illusion.

During the past three years the EU has therefore deployed a significant effort in developing its security and defence tools. It has worked comprehensively, since tackling many of the threats requires a combination of instruments ranging from security and defence, to diplomacy, development and trade, amongst others.

In the following sections I shall review some of the most important initiatives launched in the fields of defence capability development, crisis management, and security and defence policy.

2.1. Development of defence capabilities

While many of the security challenges the EU and its Member States are facing require a multi-dimensional response, defence capabilities remain a crucial component for international engagement in support of international peace and security, for the direct protection of EU citizens and as a key element of deterrence, without which overall the EU Member States' security would be compromised. The need for defence capabilities is even more important at times when other powers are investing significantly in this domain. This requires investing more and investing more wisely. An important part of EU efforts in the past two years has been devoted to these objectives.

Cooperation among Member States in producing defence capabilities will bring down costs, through improved economies of scale, and enhance interoperability. It will also contribute to consolidating Europe's defence industry and strengthening its technological and research capacity. Bearing in mind that more and more EU Member States will be called to operate jointly either under an EU, NATO, UN or other multinational framework, enhanced cooperation amongst them to develop defence capabilities is an obvious choice.

The EU has therefore developed three main tools to assist and support cooperation: Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD).

PESCO

Under PESCO, in line with the Treaty of the EU[5] and implementing Council Decision,[6] the Member States that have decided to join ('participating States') have assumed commitments to invest more in defence, to do this jointly –in cooperation– and to be ready to deploy jointly as well, in promotion of common interests. Participating States must report annually on the implementation of these commitments through National Implementation Plans, which are then subject to assessment. The commitments are implemented, among other ways, through PESCO projects, of which there are two main types: (1) those that aim to develop mechanisms or procedures to bring together existing defence assets in view of their joint use or deployment, for instance in training or in the development of joint command and control structures or components; and (2) those that develop new defence capabilities from the research phase to coordinating industrial production. A 'PESCO Secretariat' (integrated by the EEAS and EDA) supports the participating Member States in implementing their reinforced cooperation under PESCO, as well as the High Representative in her functions within the PESCO framework.

The 25 Member States that currently participate in PESCO (all except Malta, Denmark and the UK) have so far agreed on a total of 34 projects.[7] Some of them are quite significant from an industrial and defence perspective. In addition, while PESCO is a mechanism for cooperation between Member States, cooperation with third countries on a case by case basis for specific projects is also foreseen.[8] Modalities for this are being developed. The main goal is to ensure that third-State participation will bring real added value to the project (operational, technological or financial) and will not compromise the nature and goals of PESCO within the Union framework.

EDF

As regards financial support, the EDF regulation is currently being negotiated within the broader discussions on the 2021-27 EU Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF). It will be modelled on its predecessor, the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), with a total of €500 million per year until 2021. The EDF proposal foresees €13 billion for the 2021-27 period. This fund, which would be established within the EU budget,

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5 Articles 42-6, 46 and Protocol 10.

6 Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of participating Member States.

7 Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 of 6 March 2018 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO and Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1797 of 19 November 2018 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO.

8 Article 9 of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of participating Member States.

would finance both research activities in the field of defence (up to 100% of the costs) and the development of projects up to the level of a prototype (up to 20% of the costs, and 30% for PESCO projects). The European Commission will propose a yearly programme based on project proposals received from the defence industry. EU financing is intended to incentivise cooperation, make industry more competitive and help mobilise greater investment from Member States.

CARD

Finally, the CARD process complements these instruments. Through a periodic monitoring of national defence plans, it provides precious information that will facilitate identifying gaps in European investment while also serving as a pathfinder for further possibilities for cooperation between Member States who intend to invest in the same type of capabilities. Ultimately, CARD will contribute to the integration of these EU tools and methodologies within respective national defence planning processes in Member States.

The combination of these instruments results in the most ambitious and comprehensive multilateral cooperation mechanism for the development of defence capabilities ever conceived.

To ensure internal coherence, the mechanism is based on a common identification of priorities established within the EU Capability Development Plan (CDP). The CDP is a primary reference for development of projects and programmes within both PESCO and EDF/EDIDP. It will help avoid the dispersion of efforts and ensure that EU capability defence development is aimed at addressing the most important gaps and thus enhance Member States' operational capacity. In this regard, the CDP takes into account not only capability requirements within EU crisis management, but also the national defence requirements of Member States and capability goals agreed through the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP).

In addition to the CDP, links have been established between PESCO and EDIDP/EDF management procedures to ensure that these instruments support each other and that industrial projects under PESCO can benefit from EDF/EDIDP financing. The High Representative/Vice-President, also in her capacity as Head of the European Defence Agency, is chairing regular meetings with relevant European Commissioners to fulfil the Council mandate[9] of bringing coherence to these initiatives. She is also co-chairing a 'Project Team Defence Union' with European Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki Katainen, to facilitate coordination among broader defence initiatives pursued within the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

This level of cooperation for the development of defence capabilities can only be established between States that share values and a common perception of threats, and that,

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9 Council Conclusions of 13 November 2017 and 19 November 2018.

acknowledging their interdependence, are willing to mobilise jointly in order to promote their security interests. This, however, does not exclude the association of third partners to specific projects, as signalled above as regards PESCO, but also for EDIDP and EDF, where specific provisions provide for cooperation with companies controlled by third countries or by third countries' entities. The open nature of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and a clear understanding of the need to work with a broader group of partners, notably within NATO, has therefore been reconfirmed.

The success of these cooperation instruments will depend essentially on the willingness of Member States and the European industry to make them work. The benefits are evident –notably in terms of economies of scale, pooling of investments, enhanced research capacity and reduction of duplication of efforts– but results will require readjustments in a sector closely linked to national sovereignty and that has operated mostly in more secluded environments, not always for its own longer-term benefit. Implementation reports, such as those prepared by the 'PESCO Secretariat', and the CARD assessments will bring important elements of analysis that will help alert Member States on the effectiveness of actions undertaken. A new mentality of cooperation –as the default option for defence capability development– will need to take root. Ultimately, this will strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. The present situation is widely acknowledged as unsustainable, with real risks of loss of industrial and technological capacity, but old 'habits' are difficult to break. Strong political follow-up at the EU Council level will remain crucial.

2.2. Development of crisis management structures and instruments

An important dimension of CSDP, as defined in the Treaty,[10] is the capacity of the EU to promote international peace and security through the deployment of civilian and military crisis management missions and operations outside the territory of Member States. Building on the so-called Petersberg tasks, the Treaty[11] now describes the range of crisis management actions that could be undertaken and that comprise, in its most demanding form, military combat operations. CSDP has, in fact, been an area of considerable success, which allows the EU to address security challenges throughout the full conflict cycle. Since 2003 the EU has launched and run 34 operations and missions on three continents, of which 22 were civilian, 11 military and one –in Darfur– mixed. Today, there are 16 ongoing CSDP operations, 10 civilian and six military.

The Western Balkans was the primary focus of initial deployments, but the emphasis has now shifted towards the South. Indeed, CSDP actions in the Sahel, Libya, Somalia and the Central African Republic constitute an important element of the comprehensive support that the EU is providing these countries in order to address their security challenges. Naval

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10 Article 42-1 of the Treaty of the EU.
11 Article43-1 of the Treaty of the European Union.

operations, such as those in the Central Mediterranean (operation SOPHIA) or off the coast of Somalia (operation ATALANTA), have opened up a CSDP maritime security dimension with a strong potential for wider strategic projection. Europe remains, of course, a key theatre for CSDP engagement. Support for the Western Balkans is now complemented with key civilian deployments in Georgia and Ukraine. These signal a clear EU intent and constitute a contribution to deterrence. Finally, in the Middle East, the EU continues its support for the Palestinian authority through State-building activities, notably as regard police and border management, and has recently deployed an advisory security-sector reform mission to Iraq.

Since the launch of CSDP crisis management at the Helsinki European Council of 1999, different arrangements and procedures for its implementation have been progressively developed. During the past two years substantial progress has been made, notably through two main decisions taken by the Council at the proposal of the High Representative/Vice-President: the establishment of a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)[12] and the agreement on a Civilian Compact[13] to enhance the EU's civilian crisis-management capability. A third proposal of the High Representative/Vice-President, the European Peace Facility,[14] crucial to ensure the effectiveness of EU support for partners in crisis management, is currently under discussion and will, it is hoped, be adopted over the course of 2019. Finally, an increasing emphasis is being placed on conflict prevention, where the EEAS has also recently improved its early-warning capacity and developed other relevant tools.

2.2.1. The MPCC

The creation of a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in 2017 to manage non-executive military missions[15] has filled a gap in the EU toolbox. Before the creation of the MPCC, these non-executive missions were deployed without an out-of-area Operational Headquarters (OHQ). Consequently, they did not benefit as much from support or guidance from EU structures, or from lessons learned, and were overall less resilient. This situation required frequent travelling of the Operations Commander/Head of Mission to Brussels and direct mission investment in management actions that are best handled centrally.

The situation has now changed completely. The MPCC exercises command and control responsibilities. Horizontal operating procedures and lessons learned can be implemented across missions much more easily, for instance within the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Links to broader EU action have been strengthened and institutional memory

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12 Council Decision (EU) 2017/971 of 8 June 2017 determining the planning and conduct arrangements for EU non-executive military CSDP missions.

13 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact, of 19 November 2018.

14 Proposal of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with the support of the Commission, to the Council of 13 June 2018 for a Council Decision establishing a European Peace Facility.

15 At present the EU has three capacity building missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia. Other non-executive military missions could comprise observer missions, for example.

and continuity enhanced. In addition, the MPCC facilitates the exercise by the Political and Security Committee (PSC) of political control and strategic direction on non-executive military missions, as the Operation Commander is now based in Brussels instead of in the field.

The benefits of this system have been very quickly evident to all. This has led to the agreement by the Council in November 2018[16] to extend the responsibilities of the MPCC to cover an executive military operation of EU Battlegroup size (approximately 2,500 troops). The existing system of national OHQs[17] placed by some Member States at the disposal of the EU, and the possibility of making use of Berlin plus arrangements (as for Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia Herzegovina, where SHAPE provides the EU OHQ), remain unaffected by these arrangements. The MPCC thus provides a complementary capability that will enhance EU readiness. The MPCC should undertake its new tasks by 2020 and a review is also foreseen by then to consider any possible additional developments.

The MPCC has been established at a relatively low cost in terms of personnel and building on support immediately provided by the EU Military Staff, whose Director General was appointed to head the MPCC. In total the MPCC should be consisting of 60 permanent staff, with an augmented capacity of an additional 95 staff to be called upon in case of the deployment of an executive operation. This is a lower number than if a national OHQ were to be activated for such an operation, particularly bearing in mind that other non-executive missions would be run in parallel. In addition to the already described advantages, it will bring a higher level of readiness and greater know-how of EU-specific planning processes.

Finally, the creation of the MPCC has built a bridge, the Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC), to its civilian 'brother', the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC). The JSCC should facilitate synergies and coordination when civilian and military missions and operations are deployed in the same theatre. It should also facilitate the sharing of experience and broader mutual support.

2.2.2. The Civilian Compact

Civilian CSDP crisis management missions constitute a powerful security tool for the EU. Twenty-four have been launched since the early 2000s. Among others, they have assisted in developing partner capacities in police and the rule of law (from Afghanistan to DRC, BiH, Palestine, Libya and the Sahel), in the management of borders and the monitoring of

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16 Council conclusions of 19 November 2018.

17 Centre for Planning and Conduct of Operations (CPCO) in Paris, France; Armed Forces Operational Command (EinsFüKdoBw) in Potsdam, Germany; Hellenic European Union Headquarters (EL EU OHQ) in Larissa, Greece; Italian Joint Force Headquarters (ITA-JFHQ) in Centocelle, Rome, Italy; Naval Station Rota (NAVSTA Rota) in Rota, Spain; and Multinational Headquarters (MNHQ) at Northwood Headquarters in London, UK. This latter OHQ will no longer be an EU HQ after the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

boundary lines (Gaza, Libya and Georgia). They have also provided observers in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) processes (Aceh), and supported stabilisation and the development of security structures in complex post-conflict processes (Kosovo). The value of civilian CSDP has been further highlighted by the need to respond to new challenges, such as terrorism and organised crime.

Member States thus agreed in November 2018[18] to further enhance their capacity to provide civilian experts for CSDP missions and operations and to improve the EU's overall capacity to deploy civilian CSDP missions and operations. To this effect, they have entered into a 'compact', assuming commitments to review their internal procedures and legislation in a way that will recognise the relevance of contributing to civilian CSDP and facilitate the provision of experts for such missions and operations. Although the Feira[19] priorities remain mostly valid, a review is also underway to better identify the type of expertise required by addressing some of the most pressing and novel challenges, notably those related to the fight against terrorism, organised crime, border management and cyber threats. The EEAS and the European Commission, for their part, have made the commitment to support these efforts, including through training, synergies[20] with other instruments (Justice and Home Affairs agencies) and review mechanisms. An Action Plan to ensure the implementation of the Compact is currently under preparation and should be presented to the Council in the spring of 2019.

2.2.3. The European Peace Facility

Building on the experience of these past few years, the High Representative/Vice-President, with the support of the European Commission, has presented a proposal[21] to develop an extra-budgetary fund, the European Peace Facility (EPF). The Facility would finance CSDP military operations, as currently done through the ATHENA mechanism. It would support military operations of partners in a crisis management context, as currently done through the African Peace Facility (APF), but without geographical limitations, ie, also outside the African continent. Finally, it would finance the military equipment of partners, also within a crisis management scenario. At present the latter function can only be performed in a limited manner and in the context of the APF, or linked to a development objective, following the recent reform of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

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18 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the establishment of a Civilian CSDP Compact of 19 November 2018.

19 European Council of 19-20 June 2000 in Feira identified the police, rule of law, civilian administration and civil protection as key priority areas for the development of civilian crisis management capabilities.

20 The establishment of a Crime Information Cell on board of the EUNAVFOR MED SOPHIA flagship, to liaise with EUROPOL and EBCG is a major step in this direction.

21 Proposal of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with the support of the Commission, to the Council of 13 June 2018 for a Council Decision establishing a European Peace Facility.

The EPF would therefore seek to overcome the limitations of present instruments by providing the EU with a flexible tool that, always upon the explicit decision of the Council and within the parameters detailed therein for each specific situation (including monitoring mechanisms to ensure human-rights-compliant implementation), would facilitate support for the defence efforts of partners, be it individual nations or regional or sub-regional organisations or coalitions, in a crisis management/stabilisation context and with the aim of contributing to international peace and security. The same instrument would deal with the financing of the EU's own CSDP military missions and operations, thereby simplifying decision-making procedures, bringing greater unity and coherence to EU action in these contexts (as CSDP military missions often need to be accompanied by the equipping of local forces being trained and broader support for regional efforts as in the cases of AMISOM or the G5 Sahel Joint Force), as well as facilitating the availability of funds to launch a new CSDP military operation. An increase in common costs for EU military operations is also proposed to enhance solidarity.

Discussions on this instrument are currently ongoing in the context of the EU Multi-annual Financial Framework negotiations. A positive outcome would allow the EU to become a far more effective and influential partner in support to international crisis management. While most Member States understand and agree to this, there are still technical aspects that need to be worked out to ensure full acceptance and ultimately adoption of this proposal.

2.2.4. Conflict prevention

Many of the tools just discussed can contribute to crisis management as much as support a preventative agenda. The Civilian Compact is particularly clear in this respect. Furthermore, during the last two years the EU has made important efforts to improve its capacity to detect potential crises and intervene before they erupt: early warning leading to early action.

Building on past practice, an improved and updated new methodology for conflict prevention informs annual analyses based on a full list of key risk factors. This results in the identification of countries where structural weaknesses with a potential to lead to violent conflict in the coming years are highest. This analysis is refined in a whole-of-EU approach, led by the EEAS and associating all relevant European Commission services, resulting in the selection of four to five countries per year where the risk is deemed higher, where the impact on EU security may be significant and where the EU as such has some capacity and leverage to influence developments. Member States are continuously informed and involved throughout the process. They are associated to the subsequent phases of implementation that entail a conflict analysis (root causes and potential triggers) and the development of an 'action plan'. An annual report explains the measures adopted by the EU and its Member States and assesses their impact and further developments. The evaluation of this methodology is still underway and the first annual report was only presented in October 2018.

This mechanism, aimed at the early detection of countries structurally at higher risk of conflict and at deploying concerted EU action to try to address some of the weaknesses identified, is complemented by a shorter-term EEAS 'horizon scanning' tool that looks into the immediate future (three to six months ahead) to warn of more imminent risks and to identify potential triggers. This latter tool has been up and running for a year and its performance is monitored and constantly improved.

2.3. Other developments in the field of defence and security

In addition to the points above, important work has also been carried out these past years in the field of security and defence policy. New frameworks for action within the EU and engagement with partners have seen the light in areas ranging from hybrid threats to cyber defence and security, counterterrorism, maritime security and disarmament and non-proliferation. The need for horizontal action in many of these fields has been highlighted and coordination and cooperation between the EEAS and the European Commission has gained in strength and consistency.

2.3.1. Countering hybrid and cyber threats

As mentioned above, the conflict in Ukraine opened up a new chapter in the way security threats are considered within the EU. Following on the European Commission and High Representative Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats[22] of 2016, considerable progress has been made in identifying areas for assistance to Member States in order to increase resilience to hybrid attacks, notably as regards the protection of critical infrastructure, but also on disinformation, cyber resilience and overall hybrid awareness.

A variety of tools have been developed in these fields during these last two years, including awareness-raising and analysis mechanisms, such as the Hybrid-Fusion Cell[23] established within the EEAS INTCEN (in charge of horizon scanning and alert functions), response mechanisms, such as the cyber diplomatic-toolbox,[24] and cyber response support teams (a PESCO project), a cyber response training platform,[25] an Action Plan against disinformation,[26] etc. The Helsinki Hybrid Centre of Excellence, while not strictly an EU project, has also been developed in this context and provides an excellent forum for the exchange of experience

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22 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council JOIN/2016/018, Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats, a European Union response.

23 Council conclusions of 19 April 2016.

24 Council conclusions of 19 June 2017.

25 On 20 and 21 November 2018, the European Security and Defence College inaugurated the cyber platform on education, training, evaluation and exercises in the field of cyber security and defence.

26 European Council conclusions, 13-14 December 2018.

and information, including with NATO. In addition, the EU is increasingly assisting partner countries in analysing and addressing their fragilities in these areas.

The recent Hybrid Exercise –Multi-Layer (HEX ML 18)–,[27] run jointly by the EEAS and the European Commission in the framework of EU-NATO cooperation, provided a remarkable opportunity to test the various crisis management mechanisms of the EU when confronted with a complex hybrid attack of external origin. It showed that the EU has valuable tools for the response to crises in a diversity of sectors (security, defence, diplomatic, economic, environmental, health, civil protection, humanitarian…) and that they can be mobilised in a coordinated manner to allow EU Member States to provide an effective response, difficult to conceive otherwise and virtually impossible to provide at national level.

Such exercises, based on hybrid scenarios, will most likely continue. This will allow the EU to further fine-tune its mechanisms and, it is hoped, to develop a stronger cooperation with partners, in particular NATO. New and more effective EU inter-institutional dynamics are being created.

2.3.2. Countering terrorism and organised crime

Terrorism and organised crime figure prominently among the perceived security concerns of EU citizens. They mobilise much political energy and encourage sometimes inward-looking policies. Addressing these threats is a priority for the EU.

Organised crime often contributes to finance terrorism and many common routes are used by both criminal networks and terrorists. They both take advantage of weak State structures and contribute to weakening them further. Finally, the means to fight them both have commonalities. They require strengthening State security and defence structures and more effective control of borders. They also call for better governance and development opportunities.

But some preliminary considerations on the fight against terrorism and organised crime may be useful.

First, instability and conflict in the immediate vicinity of Europe provides sanctuaries and facilitates the development of criminal and terrorist structures and their business model. As regards radicalisation and violent extremism, conflict also offers a motivation, this was particularly the case in the Syrian conflict which led to the development of Daesh. Addressing these crises and active engagement with external partners is therefore essential. Internal

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27 Parallel and Coordinated exercise, one of the common actions agreed in the framework of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration of 8 July 2016, through Council conclusions of 18 May 2017.

protective measures will otherwise remain insufficient. Strong links between internal security measures and external action is required.

Secondly, addressing the root causes of terrorism and organised crime requires a multidimensional response ranging from purely security approaches to development and governance. The EU needs therefore to deploy a variety of instruments, covering these fields, in a coordinated and well-targeted manner. This is what we call in the EU an 'integrated approach'.

Third, no Member State has the breadth of instruments, leverage and capacity to cover the vast geographical and thematic scope required to be effective. A concerted EU effort is therefore necessary. This should also encourage greater solidarity when dealing with the impact of these challenges, the debate on irregular migration being a case in point.

These considerations have been at the heart of the EU's international engagement over the past three years.

The EU has deployed key security and defence capacity building missions in the Sahel and in Libya, and a major naval operation in Central Mediterranean, Operation SOPHIA, to enhance its partner's ability to confront these challenges, and, in the case of SOPHIA, to directly disrupt the business model of organised criminal networks responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Enhanced cooperation is being developed between CSDP missions and operations and Justice and Home Affairs agencies, in particular EUROPOL and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCG), as shown by the Crime Information Cell, established on board the Operation SOPHIA flagship. These actions are complemented with reinforced political dialogue and development efforts targeting areas where State control is limited, thanks notably to the development of new, more flexible instruments, such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

In parallel, the EU has enhanced considerably its international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, deploying counter-terrorism experts in key EU Delegations with priority in the immediate neighbourhood, but progressively to other regions as well. New efforts are underway to strengthen existing instruments for anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. Formal dialogues have been developed with a number of countries, as well as with the UN. Action plans on the fight against terrorism have been coordinated, notably in the Balkans. This has been a fully inter-institutional effort, with the EEAS, European Commission services and the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator (CTC) working hand in glove.

Much of this work has concentrated on the issues of the exchange of information on the return of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) and experience on the prevention and countering of

radicalisation. Cyber-space has an important role here as a vehicle for terrorist recruitment and incitement. The removal of content from the web is a key issue where the EU has also developed strong relations with leading Internet service providers, as well as enhanced understanding through the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). While terrorism remains a major threat to key partners in the EU's vicinity, many of the most immediate terrorist threats in European cities are now home-grown, although often externally inspired.

External efforts have therefore been accompanied by remarkable developments within the EU itself, notably enhancing the capacities of agencies such as EUROPOL and EBCG, and the overall exchange of information and increased capacity to coordinate the management of external borders. But this lies outside the scope of this paper.

2.3.3. Maritime security

With 80% of world trade transiting through sea lanes, there is no doubt that the maritime domain is of key importance for international security. Sovereignty-related disputes and threats from piracy and organised crime affect the freedom of navigation and endanger major trade routes. In addition, environmental concerns and the use of maritime natural resources have, if anything, acquired greater significance. The revised EU Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan adopted in June 2018 seeks to enhance the EU's role as a global maritime security provider.

The EU is active in this domain through its Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), capacity-building projects, notably in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, as well as two key CSDP maritime operations: EUNAVFOR Med Operation SOPHIA in the Central Mediterranean and a second one, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, off the coast of Somalia. SOPHIA's main mandate is the fight against organised crime responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Other security elements have been added by relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions,[28] in particular the implementation of an arms embargo imposed on Libya and the monitoring of oil smuggling from Libya. The operation is therefore evolving into a broader maritime security operation in an area of key importance for the security of the EU. Operation ATALANTA's mandate against piracy off the Coast of Somalia, also based on UNSC authorisation[29] has not evolved significantly since its launch. Nevertheless, other trafficking (weapons, drugs, coal, militants…) is heavily present in this area and affects the security of riparian States. Bearing in mind the relevance of this maritime route for international transport, consideration could usefully be given to a broader maritime security mandate for ATALANTA.

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28 Implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya according to UNSCR 2292 (2016), UNSCR 2357 (2017) and UNSCR 2420 (2018). Surveillance activities and gathering information on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya in accordance with UNSCR 2146 (2014) and 2362 (2017).
29 UNSCR 1814 (2008), 1838 (2008), 1844 (2008, 1846 (2008), 1851 (2008), 1897 (2009), 1918 (2010), 1976 (2011), 2015 (2011), 2020 (2011), 2077 (2012), 2125 (2013), 2184 (2014), 2246 (2015), 2316 (2016), 2383 (2017), 2442 (2018).

Both CSDP naval operations have become major hubs for international cooperation with other navies or maritime stakeholders (shipping and insurance companies), including through innovative mechanisms such as the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE). Success and innovative approaches in this domain open the door to other ideas that could be explored short of launching new CSDP maritime operations proper, such as coordinated EU maritime presences in areas of maritime security interest.

In addition to operational action, the EU is heavily engaged in maritime cooperation with other international partners, in particular with the African Union (AU) and other African regional organisations in supporting efforts in the Gulf of Guinea, in particular the Yaoundé process since 2013. The EU is promoting maritime security in the widest sense within broader international forums, where maritime security issues are being discussed, including the UN and the Our Ocean Conference. The preservation of the freedom of navigation remains a central objective as it directly affects the EU's broader international engagement.

2.3.4. Disarmament and non-proliferation

The EU is a leader in supporting the universalisation and effective implementation of non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions to which all of its Member States are parties. Unfortunately, both terrorist threats and increased great-power rivalry have resulted in a number of new challenges, undermining the positive trends of the previous two decades or so.

This is the case for chemical weapons (CW). Despite the successes of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), unfortunately, in recent years the international community has witnessed the renewed use of chemical weapons (or toxic chemicals, such as chlorine, as weapons) in the Syrian conflict, and as tools of political assassination. The EU has reacted resolutely to combat the impunity of CW usage, both within the CWC and in a new French-led initiative. It strongly supports the work conducted by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague, including its Fact-Finding Mission in Syria.

The trend of decreased reliance on nuclear weapons in security and defence doctrines has also been stopped, if not reversed. The breach of the Budapest Memorandum by the Russian aggression against Ukraine has put into question the negative security assurances provided to Ukraine and some other States when they renounced nuclear weapons and joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear-weapon States. The NPT review process has also been affected by other challenges, such as the long-standing issue of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The fate of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces in Europe (INF) is an equally worrying development directly affecting the EU.

Conventional weapons also remain a matter of grave concern. The new EU Strategy against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms and Light Weapons, and their Ammunition, adopted in November 2018, takes account of the increased threat posed by conventional weapons in the hands of terrorists, as well as developments in weapons design and manufacturing (3D printing). The EU strongly supports the new UN Arms Trade Treaty. Furthermore, it spends considerable resources on the promotion of effective arms export controls and on strengthening border security in its neighbourhood and beyond, in order to prevent trafficking of arms, including from failed States and regional conflicts.

Other fields, such as artificial intelligence and the protection of outer space require continued attention. The possible use of artificial intelligence in automated weapons, for instance, is an issue that is quickly coming to the forefront. At present efforts are centred on a code of conduct agreeing to ensure that all weapons systems will ultimately need a human decision to be triggered. As regards outer space, the EU and its Member States continue to promote a multilateral, inclusive and cooperative approach for responsible behaviour in the framework of the UN, more particularly building on the work on Long-Term Sustainability guidelines by the Committee for the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS).

Finally, a word on arms export control. While the EU has established a Common Position on arms export control with a view towards the increased convergence of Member States' policies, it becomes increasingly evident that the export of dual-use equipment often facilitates the development of important defence capabilities in third countries. Such transfers of technology may ultimately have an impact on the collective security of Member States. Awareness in this regard is on the rise. The actual decision to export arms, however, remains the competence of Member States.

Non-proliferation and disarmament will remain at the heart of super-power relations. The EU can and should continue to play a key role in mobilising the international community on these matters and pushing for a peace and security agenda.

Over the past few years, the EU has expanded its action in outer space, notably through the Galileo programme. This set of satellites provides the EU with a unique geo-localisation system and access to the many uses this can offer. These efforts –coupled with the Copernicus programme aimed at the observation of the Earth and with intelligence instruments, such as the SATCEN agency that provides imagery analysis– are finally giving the EU an effective outer-space capacity. These are key contributions to international peace and security.

3. Cooperating with partners

The EU is well aware that even while bringing together all the capabilities of its Member States, influencing world events also requires cooperation with other partners. This is firmly ingrained in the EU's nature and its multilateral creed. It was acknowledged in the 2003 Security Strategy and reiterated in the Global Strategy of 2016.[30]

Cooperation with partners and international organisations is therefore present in all aspects of the EU's security and defence policy. It ranges from participation of partners in CSDP crisis management operations, engagement in the fight against terrorism and organised crime and even extends to participation in defence capability development projects. It needs to be based on a shared understanding, shared interests and, as much as possible, on shared values, with specific decisions taken most of the time by the Council of the EU on a case by case basis.

A new overarching framework for cooperation with partners on CSDP is currently under consideration in the EEAS. The aim would be to provide greater clarity on the overall network of EU engagement with international partners on security and defence issues, and greater flexibility to tailor specific relationships to the characteristics of, and commitments assumed by, each partner. It could, among others, comprise a review of modalities for participation of third countries in CSDP missions and operations, aimed at extending political ownership and benefiting more from the experience and capacities that partners may bring.

More could be said of relations developed with a number of key bilateral partners, which translate into regular summit meetings and consultations at high official level in many fields, including security and defence issues. This will also be the case, it is hoped, with the UK when it leaves the EU. Nevertheless, further discussion of these matters would require greater space and exceeds this paper's ambition. I shall focus here on relations with multilateral partners.

Indeed, in line with its general approach aimed at strengthening effective multilateralism, multilateral partners occupy a privileged position in the EU's international engagement on security and defence. Without wishing to be exhaustive, special reference must be made here to recent developments in the EU's cooperation with NATO, the UN, the AU and ASEAN.

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30 'Partnerships' is acknowledged to be one of the principles guiding the EU's external action; furthermore, engagement with others is reiterated throughout the strategy and specific references are made to NATO 's role in defence.

NATO is a cornerstone of European security. Its role in collective defence is explicitly acknowledged in the Treaty of the European Union.[31] NATO is also a main instrument for the operationalisation of the Transatlantic relationship. Accordingly, engagement with NATO has been a priority for the EU during these past three years, while unfolding momentous security and defence initiatives. As an outcome, EU-NATO relations have improved substantially in terms of mutual understanding and practical cooperation.

The joint declarations by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, in July 2016 and 2018 constitute the framework for this development. A set of 74 common actions have been identified covering: countering hybrid threats; operational cooperation including at sea and on migration; cyber security and defence; defence capabilities; defence industry and research; exercises; and supporting Eastern and Southern partners' capacity-building efforts. This has led to a constant process of engagement between the staff of both organisations, reciprocal briefings to respective committees and Councils and the reactivation of PSC-NAC meetings. All this is carried out in full respect of the autonomy of decision-making of each organisation, and on the basis of inclusiveness and reciprocity.

The mutual benefits and complementarity of efforts deployed by both organisations is increasingly evident. The contribution of the EU to military mobility with a full action plan,[32] including harmonisation of legislation and practices and revamping of critical transport networks in Europe, is a case in point. Similarly, as explained earlier, defence capabilities developed through PESCO and EDF are based on priorities (within the Capability Development Plan) that take into account NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP). In fact, responding to NATO requirements is a key criterion in the selection of PESCO projects. The most recent parallel and coordinated exercise (PACE) HEX-ML 18, where the EU was in the lead, developed a scenario that highlighted the unique tools the EU has to address a very complex hybrid attack. EU engagement in the South, Libya and the Sahel, at a time when NATO is deploying its Enhanced Forward Presence to the East of Europe, further underlines the complementarity of operational efforts.

Thus, developments over the past few years have clearly shown the EU's willingness to share information and work in a manner supportive of NATO. On its part, NATO decides on issues that are vital to the security of the EU and its Member States, such as deployments in Eastern Europe, or discusses other key issues for the EU, such as the INF Treaty. A greater

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31 Article 42-2('The policy of the Union in accordance with this Section shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defence realised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework') and 42-7 ('Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation').

32 Adopted on 28 March 2018.

exchange of views between the two organisations on these other strategic issues would be equally welcome.

Some of the issues that render the relationship more complex, and that come to the surface from time to time, are well known and it is important to distinguish between positions of individual members or allies and the responsibilities of respective organisations.

The UN is at the centre of EU efforts to promote effective multilateralism. Cooperation with the UN in crisis management[33] has been a key dimension of CSDP since its very beginnings in the early 2000s. The first EU CSDP operations took over from the UN in the Balkans (EUPOL BiH and EULEX Kosovo) or supported UN deployments in the DRC and Chad. At present, important cooperation with the UN is underway in CAR, Mali (and more generally the Sahel region), Somalia and Libya.

A Steering Committee gathers UN and EU senior officials twice a year to review progress on crisis management and provide strategic guidance. Cooperation between respective missions and operations in the field is a daily matter and the EU is amongst the strongest supporters of UN efforts in the field of peace and security. A new set of priorities[34] for cooperation in this area was agreed in September 2018, mostly based on operational cooperation, but emphasising Women, Peace and Security, as well as a preventative agenda. A conflict prevention dialogue with the UN is now also in place.

The relationship is equally strong on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, and a new framework for partnership on counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation is being finalised and will be adopted in the first semester of 2019.

Many EU crisis management activities are carried out in Africa. The security of the African continent is of essential interest for Europeans. Consequently, the EU is one of the key supporters[35] of the African Union (AU) and its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as well as financiers of AU operations, such as AMISOM (Somalia). An African Peace Facility was created out of the European Development Fund for this very purpose and the new European Peace Facility will no doubt prove crucial in maintaining strong backing to African peacekeeping efforts. The EU further supports AU mediation work, including in the Central African Republic (CAR), and its engagement in other peace endeavours in the Great Lakes and Libya. It also supports AU efforts at the UN to guarantee sustainable financing for AU peace operations.

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33   The EU-UN partnership in the field of crisis management and peacekeeping was established in September 2003, when the EU and the UN issued their first Joint Declaration on EU-UN cooperation in Crisis Management.

34   Endorsed by the Council on 18 September 2018

35   EU has supported the APSA with €486 million under the APF (€348 million) and Regional Indicative Programmes (€138 million) between 2008 and 2020.

In order to further develop this cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding on EU-AU cooperation[36] on Peace, Security and Governance was agreed on the occasion of a European Commission to African Union Commission meeting in spring 2018. It comprises a decision to organise yearly meetings at senior-official level to review progress in crisis management cooperation, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, maritime security, conflict prevention and small arms and light weapons (SALW) matters, among others. Implementation has started and a dialogue on conflict prevention was already launched in 2018.

Trilateral EU-UN-AU engagement in all these matters is gaining strength and, if well managed, could become a real driver of a multilateralism agenda. It is also good to note that EU cooperation with African partners extends to other sub-regional actors, with special mention to the G5 Sahel and its Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Force of the Lake Chad Basin.

In closing this overview of EU engagement with multilateral partners, Asia deserves a special mention. Developments in this continent during the coming years will mark the world's future. Cooperation with regional organisations in Asia is quite a challenge as, differently from the Americas, Europe or Africa, there is no pan-continental security organisation or arrangements and, at the same time, there are numerous security fault-lines and unsolved conflicts, including territorial disputes. In this regard, the work performed over the years by ASEAN is quite remarkable. This grouping of States has managed to develop, in various concentric circles around itself, different level arrangements for cooperation/discussion of Asian regional security matters, involving the broader international community and thus introducing elements that may help compensate regional imbalances.

The EU and ASEAN recently agreed in principle to upgrade their relationship to a Strategic Partnership. In this context, the EU is engaging actively in the various security cooperation formats that ASEAN has established. The EU maintains its aspiration to become a permanent guest to the (ASEAN) East Asia Summit. This builds on the already existing participation of the EU in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) ministerial meetings.

This is complementary to the ASEM forum, where the EU already meets all Asian leaders at Head of State or Government level every two years.

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36 AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance, adopted on 23 May 2018.

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4. The EU: an unparalleled platform for cooperation on security and defence

Bearing in mind the nature and magnitude of the challenges they are confronted with, it is clear that only operating jointly will EU Member States be able to address them and have an effective capacity to engage with other major world players. Individually, not even the most powerful Member State can intervene at a level equivalent to that of some of the other major players, mobilise the wide range of tools required and cover the broad spectrum of threats.

Three main developments underline the value of the EU in addressing security and defence challenges.

4.1. Integrated approach

It has become more evident than ever that most security challenges and crises have multiple dimensions. The EU constitutes an unparalleled platform for cooperation. It covers all sectors and offers a full set of tools and procedures for their coordinated mobilisation, including diplomacy, sanctions, crisis management, development, trade, humanitarianism, etc. Only within the EU can a global and comprehensive strategy for international engagement that takes into account the multiple variables and interconnections be implemented. This is described within the 2016 Global Strategy as the 'integrated approach'. Many formal and informal mechanisms have been developed since the presentation of the Strategy, increasing considerably the coordination between the European Commission and the EEAS in addressing security and defence challenges. This is reflected now in countless joint strategies and action plans, but more importantly in actual engagement.

4.2. Internal-external nexus

The security challenges of the past years have led to an intensified development of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) mechanisms and agencies. This is notably reflected in the expansion of competencies and capabilities of both EUROPOL and the re-configured and re-baptised European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCG, the former FRONTEX). But there are many other examples, including cyber, where common training platforms and rapid reaction teams are being created. At the same time, it has become more evident that there is no solution exclusively 'within' the EU. Most of the internal security challenges have an important external dimension and, as much as possible, need to be addressed before they reach the EU's borders. Consequently, as seen in other parts of this paper, the past few years have seen increased concerted EU engagement abroad to deal with issues such

as the fight against terrorism and organised crime, including through capacity building, greater international projection of JHA agencies and enhanced links and the exchange of information between CSDP missions and operations and JHA agencies. While Member States' bilateral international cooperation in such matters remains important, the breadth of engagement offered by the EU is no doubt of great value.

4.3. Development of defence and crisis-management capabilities

Finally, as examined in other sections of this paper, the past three years have shown that the EU remains a unique forum for defence-related initiatives. PESCO, EDF and CARD provide a solid architecture for cooperation between Member States in the development of defence capabilities, comprising joint prioritisation of requirements, political commitments for increased investment and cooperation and financial incentives. Integration of these tools into national defence planning processes will ultimately change the paradigm of European defence cooperation and transform Member States' defence industrial and technological base. At the same time, the MPCC, JSCC and Civilian Compact have raised the EU's crisis-management capacity to unprecedented levels and placed the EU amongst the top three multilateral crisis management actors.

As mentioned above, the two civilian space flagships, the positioning, navigation and timing system Galileo and the Earth observation capability Copernicus, complement in a significant manner the EU's overall security and defence capabilities.

5. To conclude

We have examined the magnitude of the challenges the EU is facing in its immediate vicinity and the need to address them in a context of renewed strategic rivalry between major powers. We have also seen how the EU helps Member States unite their efforts to deliver a multiplying effect in addressing such challenges and developing the capabilities required. Finally, we have discussed how the EU facilitates and enhances engagement with international partners, including multilateral partners. And while the EU will seek to act with partners as much as possible (this is its 'default option'), it needs to have the capacity to do so on its own when required.

'Strategic autonomy' is a rallying cry to do more and invest more in defence, and thereby have the capacity to 'shoulder a greater part of the burden' in the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion and defence of its own interests. It is also an expression of determination. Unfortunately, sometimes the use of these words leads to misunderstandings regarding the EU's commitment to transatlantic relations or even NATO's role. Part of the problem is that there is no agreed definition of what is meant by strategic autonomy within the EU (or even more broadly). One thing is quite clear: absolute strategic autonomy, in the sense of having the capacity to face all security and defence challenges and threats without any external support, is unattainable.

In the case of the EU, this argument is further reinforced by clear limitations included in its founding Treaty. Indeed, Article 42-7 indicates that 'the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation…, for those States that are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation'. This means that higher-end military mobilisations aimed at guaranteeing collective defence remain a NATO responsibility and the EU will not develop structures or procedures to substitute them. In itself this answers a related question: nuclear military deterrence remains outside the scope of EU actions.

However, despite the fact that there is no agreed definition of strategic autonomy, and that a broader definition of strategic autonomy taking into account trade and economic aspects, amongst many others, is also possible, greater convergence of what is meant by this within the field of defence is emerging within EU Member States. Three main components can be identified:

- Capacity of decision, which also comprises situational awareness.
- Development of defence capabilities.
- Operational capacity.

Let us analyse them briefly:

(a) Decision-making capacity and situational awareness

The EU, as a political international actor, needs to have a fully autonomous capacity for decision making and instruments at its disposal that will allow it to assess a situation and decide on the best course of action. EU decision-making mechanisms are indeed autonomous and the EU possesses a broad range of equally autonomous capabilities that allow it to collect and analyse information and develop a comprehensive assessment of any international security situation with a view to taking relevant decisions. Among such capabilities, the 140 EU delegations across the world and the Satellite Centre (SATCEN) in Torrejón (Spain) –which provides a useful tool for analysing satellite imagery– deserve pride of place. All this is usefully complemented by the intelligence provided by Member States through the Single Intelligence Analysis Capability (SIAC), which brings together analyses from the EEAS Intelligence Centre (INTCEN) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS) Intelligence Directorate.

(b) Defence capabilities

Being able to act when deemed necessary in a security context requires having the necessary defence capabilities, security of supply of such capabilities and access to relevant technology. This ultimately calls for the development of a stronger European Defence Industrial and Technological Base (EDITB). At the same time such a defence industrial base is a multiplier for economic development and cannot be neglected in the EU's industrial policy. PESCO, EDF and CARD are tools that support these goals.

In any case, defence capabilities developed in an EU framework will remain Member States' capabilities. The EU itself does not possess defence capabilities, nor is it foreseen that it will have them. EU crisis management operations will be deployed on the basis of capabilities put at the disposal of the EU by its Member States, as stated in the Treaty of the EU.

Member States that are NATO allies will be able to use these capabilities for NATO operations as well. In fact, as seen, the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) has been taken into account in the identification of EU capability priorities that inform work within the PESCO and EDF. And greater investment by Member States in defence capability development will help implement NATO targets on its Allies' defence expenditure. Reinforced cooperation between Member States in development of defence capabilities will further increase interoperability of their defence forces, to the benefit of NATO as well.

Finally, while mechanisms such as PESCO and EDF have been developed to promote cooperation between Member States, there are possibilities of widening that cooperation to third States, as long as it serves the interests of the project itself and does not create security risks.

All in all, the efforts carried out within the EU for the development of defence capabilities will help consolidate and strengthen the defence industry of Member States and their technological capacity. From a NATO perspective, this should be understood as strengthening a 'European pillar' within NATO and therefore contributing to greater burden-sharing, as often requested by the US.

(c) Operational capacity

The EU itself has clarified in the Treaty that a key goal of its Common Security and Defence Policy is crisis management. The type of actions it intends to be able to carry out is defined within the 'EU level of ambition' (LoA). Its most recent iteration can be found in the November 2016 Council conclusions. At the higher end of the spectrum, these are expeditionary crisis management type of operations that can include combat operations, with a limited level of concurrency. All of them taken together remain well beneath what could be interpreted as 'collective defence', but do provide a significant capacity to project power, drawing lessons from most recent international experience.

Furthermore, the past 16 years have proved that there is, in fact, good practical division of labour between EU and NATO in crisis management. In any case, common elements of membership should help defuse conflict regarding decisions in any given situation. The added value of the EU in certain theatres and its capacity to mobilise a variety of tools (diplomatic, economic, development, humanitarian, etc), beyond security and defence, as explained above, will no doubt be factors to be taken into account. In fact, the capacity of the EU to deliver an 'integrated approach' also strengthens its strategic autonomy and its capacity to shoulder the burden of maintaining international peace and security, in line with its own assessment of a given situation and within its agreed LoA.

I believe that there is fundamental agreement within the EU on these few elements. I also believe our main international partners should support this in their own interest.

Strategic autonomy is both an overarching goal and the capacity to act when required. As an overarching goal, it aims to mobilise the Member States' energies and EU mechanisms to develop the required defence capabilities and strengthen their readiness to intervene when required. The outcome must deliver the capacity to act, with partners in most cases, but also independently when required. Deepening of this understanding and greater awareness of the challenges that we are facing collectively should help Member States develop a stronger common 'strategic culture' that will help build determination and facilitate decisions on joint action to confront threats.

Aesop's fable of the bundle of sticks should not be forgotten. The EU and its Member States can provide a solid response to today's challenges. They can preserve the security of EU citizens and promote EU interests and values. They are, when standing together, a 'super-power' in their own right. But they need to believe in it and act as one.

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