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ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΔΙΕΘΝΩΝ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΚΩΝ ΑΝΑΛΥΣΕΩΝ
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ANALYSES

The European Security & Defence at a crossroads: Between survival & ambition

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Georgios KOUKAKIS

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
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LTC (Ret.) Georgios KOUKAKIS

October 2024

Disclosure Statement

The opinion expressed in this paper represents the author's personal views and in no way reflects the official position of the Center for International Strategic Analyses (KEDISA) or any other Institute or Organization he is affiliated with.

Heraklion (Crete), 12 October 2024

Georgios Koukakis

LTC (Ret.) Georgios KOUKAKIS

Secretary General & Senior Researcher of KEDISA
Academic Head of the 'Security Studies in the Mediterranean'

Academic Head of the '*Security Studies in the Mediterranean*'
Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning (CE-LL) Programme
of the CE-LL Center of the University of the Aegean

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATA	Annual Threat Assessment
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CMP	Coordinated Maritime Presence
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
COPPS	Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support
CRM	Critical Raw Materials
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DPCI	Defence Project of Common European Interest
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDF	European Defence Fund
EDIP	European Defence Industrial Programme
EDIS	European Defence Industrial Strategy
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIBM	European Integrated Border Management
EMAC	EU-Moldova Association Council
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
EPF	European Peace Facility
ERDF	European Regional Development and Fund
EU	European Union
EUAM	European Union Assistance Mission

EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission
EUCAP	European Union Civilian Crisis Management Mission
EUFOR	European Union Force
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
EUMAM	European Union Military Assistance Mission
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission
EUMPM	European Union Military Partnership Mission
EUMSS	European Union Maritime Security Strategy
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
EUPM	European Union Partnership Mission
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FIMI	Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
HR/VP	High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission of the European Union
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IC	Intelligence Community
ILO	International Labour Organisation (
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISF	Internal Security Fund
JRC	Joint Research Centre

MAOC-N	Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSR	National Strategic Review
NSS	National Security Strategy
ODNI	Office of Director of National Intelligence
PCI	Project of Common European Interest
PMSC	Private Military & Security Companies
PRC	Public Republic of China
RCA	Central African Republic
RDC	Rapid Deployment Capacity
RMVE	Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists
S&D	Security & Defence
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SFR	Strategic Foresight Report
SRA	Strategic Risk Analysis
UK	United Kingdom
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
USA	United States of America
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WTO	World Trade Organization

Abstract

Despite the fact that the European Union (EU) was established as an organisation between six states –the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)– that focused on economy and trade, it gradually evolved to a Union of 27 member-states upgrading its role to a security provider with global perspectives. Two of the ambitions that the EU has set are its enlargement by the accession of additional member-states, and its involvement in maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.

The military crises though that occurred in Ukraine and the Gaza strip in 2022 and 2023 respectively, have changed the conditions of the regional security environment threatening –according the latest Draghi report– the EU’s survival. This means that the EU and its member-states must re-evaluate the goals that have been set in order to safeguard the European and national interests and make the necessary reforms in several policy fields such as Security & Defence.

This paper presents the Security & Defence framework of the European continent, examines the National Security Strategies of France and Germany, identifies the existing & emerging security threats, presents the recent developments regarding the European Security & Defence, examines the Draghi report, and analyses the two aforementioned dangerous ambitions of the EU explaining where the danger lies.

Key words: European Union, France, Germany, Indo-Pacific, Security, Defence, Strategy, Enlargement, Russia, China, Industry, FRONTEX

1. Introduction

The ongoing armed conflicts in **Gaza** and in **Ukraine** –between Israel and Hamas that began on **7 October 2023** and between Ukraine and Russia that began on **22 February 2022** respectively– that threaten not only regional but international security too, confirmed in the best possible way the characterization of our era as an era of permacrises and polycrises,¹ as the military crises that were created were accompanied by an economic, energy, migration, and food crisis. In this framework of insecurity and turbulence, the EU –having expressed its ambition to become a world wide security provider since 2016– was forced to take measures in order to counter Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. Despite the fact though that the EU did not send any troops in Ukraine, the need for change in the European Union’s perspective regarding “hard power” had been underlined a few years ago by its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission of the European Union (Josep Borrell), who had declared that:

“Europe must learn quickly to speak the language of power”.²

The present research paper examines the challenges faced by the European Union regarding the reform of its Security & Defence sector in order to address the security threats that endanger its own existence, in relation to its aforementioned ambition of becoming a global security provider. Its importance lies in the fact that it draws information from recent official strategic documents of the EU and its member-states, providing a comprehensive analysis of their desired strategic ends. Thus, the paper contributes not only in the existing literature regarding *Strategic Studies and Security Studies*. Its purpose is to evaluate the *grand strategy* of the EU and its member-states regarding the security & defence sector, in order to assess the future status of the European security environment.

¹ Koukakis, G. (2023). Permacrises and Polycrises: Outlining the Contemporary Security Environment through References to Strategic Documents of Regional and International Actors. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 4(2), 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hapscpbs.36661>

² European Union External Action. (2020, October 29). Several Outlets - Europe Must Learn Quickly to Speak the Language of Power. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/several-outlets-europe-must-learn-quickly-speak-language-power_und_en

The **main conclusion** of the research is that –given the contemporary conditions of the security environment– internal security must become EU’s first priority so that the European ambitions will not come at the expense of the security of the Union or its citizens.

The research paper briefly presents the Security & Defence framework of the European continent in order to present the evolving dynamics in the specific policy field, then it examines the National Security Strategies of France and Germany which are the two major European states and global actors in order to identify their Security & Defence objectives, it proceeds to the identification of the existing & emerging security threats as they are presented in three strategic documents of the EU, FRONTEX and the USA in order to evaluate the conditions of the contemporary security environment, after that it presents the recent developments regarding the European Security & Defence in order to understand how the EU is reacting to the aforementioned threats, it continues by examining the Draghi report in order to identify the reforms that must be done so that the EU can be more effective, and finally analyses the two most dangerous ambitions of the EU (action in the Indo-Pacific and enlargement) explaining where the danger lies.

2. The European Security & Defence Framework

Since the establishment of the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** in 1949,³ the security of the European continent was assumed by the aforementioned Organization, as article 5 of its founding treaty defined that:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking

³ NATO was established by the North Atlantic Treaty –mostly known as the Treaty of Washington– that was signed on 4 April 1949 and entered into force on 24 August 1949. For further information visit: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (n.d.). *The North Atlantic Treaty* [Official Document]. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/history_pdf/20161122_E1-founding-treaty-original-treaty_NN-en.pdf

*forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area [...].*⁴

No	NAME OF STATE	EU MEMBERSHIP	NATO MEMBERSHIP	REMARKS
1	Albania	Candidate State	2009	Applied in 2009 - Granted in 2014
2	Austria	1995	Not a member	
3	Belgium	1952	1949	Founding member of the EU & NATO
4	Bulgaria	2007	2004	
5	Canada	Not a member	1949	Founding member of NATO
6	Croatia	2013	2009	
7	Cyprus	2004	Not a member	
8	Czechia	2004	1999	
9	Denmark	1973	1949	Founding member of NATO
10	Estonia	2004	2004	
11	Finland	1995	2023	Joined NATO after Russia's invasion of Ukraine
12	France	1952	1949	Founding member of the EU & NATO
13	Germany	1952	1955	Founding member of the EU
14	Greece	1981	1952	
15	Hungary	2004	1999	
16	Iceland	Not a member	1949	Founding member of NATO
17	Ireland	1973	Not a member	
18	Italy	1952	1949	Founding member of the EU & NATO
19	Latvia	2004	2004	
20	Lithuania	2004	2004	
21	Luxembourg	1952	1949	Founding member of the EU
22	Malta	2004	Not a member	
23	Montenegro	Candidate State	2017	Applied in 2008 - Granted in 2010
24	Netherlands	1952	1949	Founding member of the EU & NATO
25	North Macedonia	Candidate State	2020	Applied in 2004 - Granted in 2005
26	Norway	Not a member	1949	Founding member of NATO
27	Poland	2004	1999	
28	Portugal	1986	1949	Founding member of NATO
29	Romania	2007	2004	
30	Slovakia	2004	2004	
31	Slovenia	2004	2004	
32	Spain	1986	1982	
33	Sweden	1995	2024	Joined NATO after Russia's invasion of Ukraine
34	Turkiye	Candidate State	1952	Applied in 1987 - Granted in 1999
35	United Kingdom (UK)	Not a member	1949	Founding member of NATO Joined the EU in 1973 - Withdrew in 2020
36	United States of America (USA)	Not a member	1949	Founding member of NATO

Note: The states in BLUE cells are EU members and the states in GREEN cells are candidate members of the EU.

Table 1: The member-states of the EU and NATO

Source: Compiled by Georgios KOUKAKIS

⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2023, October 19). The North Atlantic Treaty. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm

Initially, the above-mentioned admission was taken for granted by both parties, as the EU's role was limited to other areas such as the economy, trade, human rights, justice, etc. However, from **1992** onwards, the EU started to become actively involved in security and defence issues, aspiring to gradually become a dynamic security provider. Despite the fact though that 23 of the 27 EU member-states are also NATO member-states (Table 1), the aforementioned ambitions of the EU affected the relations between the two organisations to the point that some analysts have described them as a *frozen conflict* because NATO officials viewed the EU actions as an attempt to expel the Alliance from the European continent. Over time, however, EU-NATO relations stopped being antagonistic and were gradually normalized, reaching the current point where NATO actually supports a more active role the EU in the S&D sector, as the latest **NATO 2022 Strategic Concept**⁵ referred that the Alliance:

*«[...] recognizes the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to, and interoperable with NATO [...].»*⁶

2.1 The European Union as a Security Provider

The European Union (EU) was founded in **1951** as the **European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)**, aiming at the enhancement of solidarity among European states and the promotion of peace through pooling coal and steel production. Despite the fact though that it began as a regional economic organisation, it gradually evolved into an ambitious global security provider. The first time the EU addressed security issues was in **1992** by establishing the **Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)**, while in **2003** it published its first **Security Strategy** and conducted peacekeeping operations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2022). NATO 2022 Strategic Concept. <https://www.act.nato.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/290622-strategic-concept.pdf>, 6-10.

⁶ Ibid, 10-11.

Element	2003 European Security Strategy	2016 Global Strategy	2022 Strategic Compass
Ends	Addressing threats Building security in the EU neighbourhood Effective multilateralism	Security of the Union State & Societal Resilience to East & South Cooperative Regional Orders ----- Integrated Approach to Conflicts & Crises Global Governance for the 21 st Century	<i>ACT</i> Become a more assertive S&D actor <i>SECURE</i> Be prepared for fast-emerging challenges <i>INVEST</i> Increase defence expenditures Reduce critical military & civilian capability gaps <i>PARTNER</i> Deepen cooperation with partners Further tailor partnership packages

Table 2. The ‘ends’ of the 2003, 2016 and 2022 EU Security Strategies

Source: Compiled by Georgios KOUKAKIS ©

In **2016** the EU published its second security strategy widely known as the **2016 Global Strategy**, setting security as the Union’s first priority. Finally, in **2022** the Council of the EU endorsed the EU’s third security strategy entitled **Strategic Compass**, which provided inter alia for the establishment of an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) that will allow the EU to deploy up to 5,000 troops, setting the foundations for the establishment of a European Army.

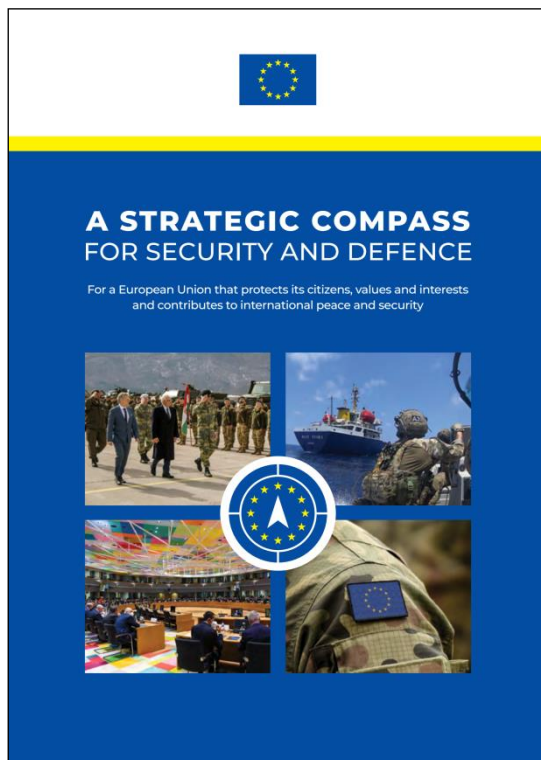
2.2 The 2022 EU Strategic Compass

European Union’s strategic document was endorsed by the Council of the EU on **21 March 2022** by the title «A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence: For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security».⁷ It is a **64 pages** long document comprising of a foreword by the EU High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) Joseph Borrell, an Executive Summary, an Introduction, Part 1 (The world we face), Part 2 (**Act**), Part (**Secure**), Part 4 (**Invest**), Part 5 (**Partner**) and Part 6 (Conclusion).

As stated inside the document, it «[...] details how the European Union and its Member States will strengthen our security and defence. [...] provides the strategic perspective and details the tools and initiatives required to ensure more rapid, decisive

⁷ Council of the European Union. (21 March 2022). A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>

and robust EU action».⁸ Strategic Compass is mainly affected by **Russia's** invasion of Ukraine, stressing the return of power politics but also the need for effective multilateralism.⁹ It also acknowledges **China's** attempts to extend its spheres of influence, characterizing it as «[...] a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival»¹⁰ and the instability that prevails in the modern world, along with the emergence of new centers of global competition such as the Indo-Pacific.¹¹



Picture 1: The cover page of the EU 2022 Strategic Concept

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf

In addition, Strategic Compass defines **major threats and challenges** such as terrorism and violent extremism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns, climate change, environmental degradation, natural disasters and global health crises.¹² In order not only to counter all these threats but also

⁸ European Union. (2022). *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence* [Official Document]. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf, 62.

⁹ Ibid, 17.

¹⁰ Ibid, 18.

¹¹ Ibid, 20.

¹² Ibid, 20-23.

be prepared for the emergence of new ones, the EU defined a Strategy of four pillars - each one analyzed in Parts 2 to 5– providing the guidelines to the member states to «*Act more quickly and decisively when facing crises, Secure our citizens against fast-changing threats, Invest in the capabilities and technologies we need, and Partner with others to achieve common goals*».¹³

The main characteristic of the Strategic Compass is the fact that at the end of each Part, it sets out specific objectives along with timeframe to be accomplished. The most challenging one is the creation of a fully operational EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5,000 troops by 2025¹⁴, a capacity that will allow the EU to act as **a security provider**. A matter of concern though is the EU ambition to enhance its presence in the **Indo-Pacific**,¹⁵ an action that will most probably provoke China.

2.3 The 2023 European Union Maritime Security Strategy

The **European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS)** was endorsed by the European Commission on **10 March 2023**,¹⁶ and approved by the European Council on 24 October 2023.¹⁷ EUMSS is based on the overall guidance provided by the **Strategic Compass**,¹⁸ and is the second strategic document of the European Union (EU) regarding maritime security,¹⁹ having as a goal to:

¹³ Ibid, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid, 30.

¹⁵ Ibid, 57.

¹⁶ European Commission. (2023, March 10). Maritime Security: EU updates Strategy to safeguard maritime domain against new threats. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1483

¹⁷ European Council. (2023, October 24). Maritime security: Council approves revised EU strategy and action plan. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/10/24/maritime-security-council-approves-revised-eu-strategy-and-action-plan/#:~:text=The%20Council%20today%20approved%20a,plan%20being%20updated%20in%202018.>

¹⁸ Koukakis, G. (2022, April 01). Προς τα που δείχνει η Στρατηγική Πυξίδα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Center for International Strategic Analysis. <https://kedisa.gr/pros-ta-pou-deichnei-i-stratigiki-pyksida-tis-evropaikis-enosis/>

¹⁹ The 1st EUMSS was published in 2014. For further information visit: Council of the European Union. (2014, June 24). European Union Maritime Security Strategy. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST%2011205%202014%20INIT/EN/pdf>

“[...] promote international peace and security, as well as respect for international rules and principles, while ensuring the sustainability of the oceans and the protection of biodiversity”.²⁰



Picture 2: Factsheet regarding the 2023 European Union Maritime Security Strategy

Source: https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/publications/factsheet-eu-maritime-security-strategy_en

The 2023 EUMSS is a **16 pages** long strategic document,²¹ is comprised of an *Introduction* and five parts, namely ‘Evolving and growing threats to maritime security’; ‘EU maritime security interests’; ‘Strengthening the EU’s response’; ‘Tools and instruments to support EU action on maritime security’; and ‘Way forward’.

As far as the **maritime threats** are concerned, the EUMSS underlines intense geopolitical competition (especially in the Indo-Pacific region), climate change and marine pollution, hybrid and cyber-attacks targeting maritime infrastructure, and several illicit activities, such as piracy and armed robbery at sea, organised crime (including smuggling

²⁰ European Commission. (n.d.). Maritime security strategy. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/ocean/blue-economy/other-sectors/maritime-security-strategy_en

²¹ Koukakis, G. (2023, March 22). Η νέα Στρατηγική Θαλάσσιας Ασφάλειας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. *Huffpost Greece*. https://www.huffingtonpost.gr/entry/e-nea-strategyike-thalassias-asfaleias-tes-eeropaikes-enoses_gr_6412f17ce4b0bc5cb64e9a30

of migrants and trafficking of human beings), trafficking of arms and narcotics, terrorism, unauthorized exploration in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of EU Member States, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and unexploded ordnance (UXO) at sea.

The EUMSS also defines the following 10 **maritime security interests**:

1. The security of the European Union, its Member States, citizens and partners.
2. The preservation of global peace and stability, and keeping maritime shipping routes free and open.
3. The upholding international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the overarching legal framework governing all activities in the ocean, and promoting sound international ocean governance, including through regional sea conventions, as well as the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement on fisheries subsidies.
4. The protection of natural resources and the marine environment, and managing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on maritime security
5. The assurance of the resilience and the protection of critical maritime infrastructure (onshore and offshore), including by addressing the risks and threats related to climate change, and those that arise from foreign direct investments.
6. The strengthening the resilience and protection of logistical hubs, i.e. ports, including addressing risks associated with corruption and illicit activities.
7. The protection of economic activities at sea, thereby contributing to a sustainable blue economy (both onshore and offshore).
8. The protection of the EU's external borders, and its internal security, to address the smuggling of migrants, trafficking of human beings, and other illegal activities including unauthorized exploration and drilling activities for hydrocarbons

9. The assurance of the capacity to act promptly and effectively in the maritime domain, and in other operational domains (i.e. land, air, cyber and outer space)

10. The assurance of the safety and security of seafarers in line with the requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention and other relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

As far as strengthening the EU's response is concerned, in order to step up actions the EUMSS defines the following six **strategic objectives**:

1. Stepping up of the EU activities at sea,
2. Promoting cooperation with partners,
3. Taking the lead on maritime domain awareness,
4. Managing risks and threats,
5. Enhancing the EU capabilities, and
6. Providing high level education & training.²²

Finally, the necessary **tools** for achieving the formentioned objectives include the following funds, programmes, instruments, institutions and mechanisms:

1. European Defence Fund (EDF),
2. European Peace Facility (EPF),
3. Horizon Europe programme,
4. Internal Security Fund (ISF),
5. Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI),
6. Union Civil Protection Mechanism,

²² European Council. (2023, October 24). *ibid*.

7. Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI),
8. Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III),
9. the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget,
10. European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF),
11. European Regional Development and Fund (ERDF), and
12. Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics (MAOC-N).

2.4 The EU CSDP missions

In the context of the **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**, the EU has established the following **missions**:

1. Military CSDP missions

- ✓ **EUFOR ALTHEA** in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²³
- ✓ **EUMAM UKRAINE** in Ukraine.²⁴
- ✓ **EUMPM NIGER** in Niger.²⁵
- ✓ **EUNAVFOR MED IRINI** in the Mediterranean Sea.²⁶
- ✓ **EUNAVFOR ATALANTA** in the Horn of Africa.²⁷
- ✓ **EUTM MALI** in Mali.²⁸
- ✓ **EUTM MOZAMBIQUE** in Mozambique.²⁹

²³ European Union External Action Service. (n.d.). European Union Force in BiH Operation ALTHEA. <https://euforbih.org/>

²⁴ Koukakis, G. (2022). How the war in Ukraine is changing the European security environment: European Union's new CSDP mission in Ukraine [Research Paper No.84]. *Center for International Strategic Analyses*,. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10715.44329>

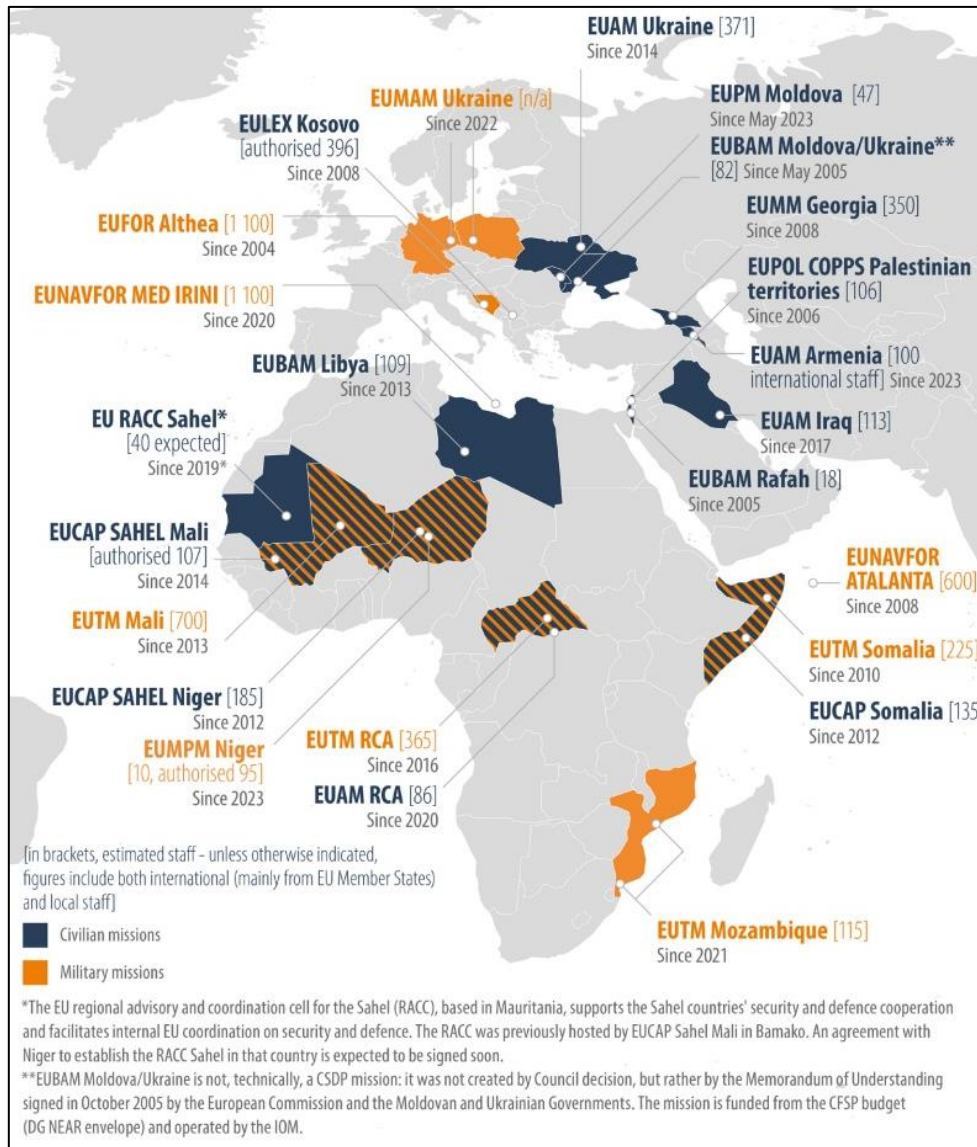
²⁵ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eumprm-niger_en

²⁶ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUNAVFOR MED operation IRINI. <https://www.operationirini.eu/>

²⁷ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA. <https://eunavfor.eu/>

²⁸ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUTM MALI. <https://eutmmali.eu/>

- ✓ **EUTM SOMALIA** in Somalia.³⁰
- ✓ **EUTM RCA** in the Central African Republic.³¹
- ✓ **EUNAVFOR ASPIDES** in the Red Sea region.³²



Picture 3: The military & civilian CSDP missions of the EU

Source: <https://i0.wp.com/epthinktank.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CSDP-missions-and-operations.jpg?ssl=1>

²⁹ European External Action Service. (n.d.). European Union Training Mission in Mozambique. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eutm-mozambique_en

³⁰ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUTM-SOMALIA. <https://www.eutm-somalia.eu/>

³¹ European External Action Service. (n.d.). European Union Training Mission in Central African Republic. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eutm-rca_en

³² EUNAVFOR Operation ASPIDES. (2024, February 20). About the Operation EUNAVFOR ASPIDES. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eunavfor-aspides/about-operation-eunavfor-aspides_en

2. Civilian CSDP missions

- ✓ **EUAM UKRAINE** in Ukraine.³³
- ✓ **EUAM ARMENIA** in Armenia.³⁴
- ✓ **EULEX KOSOVO** in Kosovo.³⁵
- ✓ **EUBAM LIBYA** in Libya.³⁶
- ✓ **EUBAM RAFAH** in the Rafah passage.³⁷
- ✓ **EUCAP SAHEL MALI** in Mali.³⁸
- ✓ **EUCAP SAHEL NIGER** in Niger.³⁹
- ✓ **EUCAP SOMALIA** in Somalia.⁴⁰
- ✓ **EUMM GEORGIA** in Georgia.⁴¹
- ✓ **EUPOL COPPS/PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES** in Palestine.⁴²
- ✓ **EU RACC SAHEL** in Sahel.⁴³
- ✓ **EUPM MOLDOVA** in Moldova.⁴⁴
- ✓ **EUAM IRAQ** in Iraq.⁴⁵
- ✓ **EUBAM Moldova/Ukraine** in Moldova/Ukraine.⁴⁶
- ✓ **EUAM RCA** in in the Central African Republic.⁴⁷

³³ EUAM Ukraine. (n.d.). About us. <https://www.euam-ukraine.eu/our-mission/about-us/>

³⁴ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EU Mission in Armenia. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/euma_en?s=410283

³⁵ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EULEX KOSOVO. <https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/>

³⁶ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eubam-libya_en

³⁷ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUBAM RAFAH. <https://www.eubam-rafah.eu/>

³⁸ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUCAP Sahel Mali. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eucap-sahel-mali_en

³⁹ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUCAP SAHEL NIGER. <https://www.eucap-sahel.eu/>

⁴⁰ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUCAP Somalia. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eucap-som_en

⁴¹ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUMM. <https://www.eumm.eu/>.

⁴² European External Action Service. (n.d.). EUPOL COPPS. <https://eupolcopps.eu/>

⁴³ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EU RACC Sahel. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eu-racc-sahel_en

⁴⁴ European External Action Service. (n.d.). EU Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova (EUPM). https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eupm-moldova_en

⁴⁵ EUAM Iraq. (n.d.). About EUAM Iraq. <https://www.euam-iraq.eu/en/about>

⁴⁶ European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine. (n.d.). Who we are?. <https://eubam.org/who-we-are/>

3. National Security Strategies of major European states

Besides the aforementioned institutional security framework defined by the EU, several major European states have issued their own National Security Strategy (NSS) expressing their individual ambition as far as their role in the EU framework is concerned. These actors include the two leading EU states– namely France and Germany– and the former EU member-state of the United Kingdom, all of which play a significant role in the European security & defence.

3.1 The 2022 National Strategic Review of France

France's new strategic document called «National Strategic Review» was announced by its President on **9 November 2022**.⁴⁸ The new strategic document is a **60 pages** long document comprising of a foreword by the French President, three parts describing the “*Strategic analysis*”, the “*Challenges to be met*”, and “*The strategic objectives*”, concluding with a list of acronyms, names of operations and abbreviations.

In the Forward, the **President of the Republic of France** (Emmanuel Macron) sets his **vision** stating that:

*«[...] By 2030, I want France to have consolidated its role as a balancing, united, globally influential power, a driving force for European autonomy, and a power that assumes its responsibilities by contributing, as a reliable and supportive partner, to the preservation of multilateral mechanisms based on international law».*⁴⁹

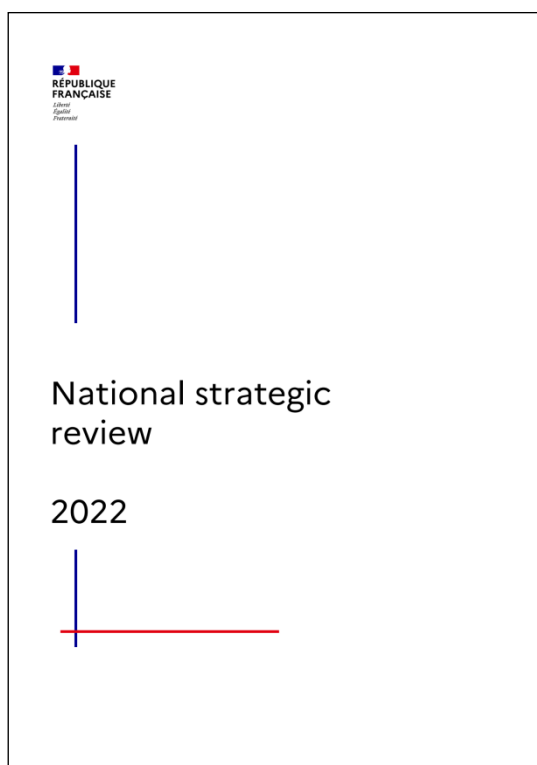
Later on, the document stresses the fact that «*We are consequently moving from latent competition to open confrontation on the part of **Russia** and, increasingly, to*

⁴⁷ EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic. (2021, October 06). About EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA). https://www.eeas.europa.eu/euam-rca/about-eu-advisory-mission-central-african-republic-euam-rca_en?s=3344

⁴⁸ France 24. (2022, November 09). Macron unveils shift in military posture as war returns to Europe. <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20221109-france-reorientates-its-military-goals-as-war-returns-to-europe>

⁴⁹ Presidency of the Republic of France. (2022). *National Strategic Review* [Official Document]. <https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/files/files/rns-uk-20221202.pdf>, 1.

*greater competition with the **People's Republic of China (PRC)***»,⁵⁰ stating that the war in Ukraine revealed the need for nuclear power in order to confront revisionist actors like Russia. It also states that despite the fact that the United States have focused their foreign policy mainly on dealing with China, the Atlantic Alliance has been strengthened by the situation and France is reaching out to new partners.⁵¹



Picture 4: The cover page of the French 2022 National Strategic Review

Source: <http://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/uploads/2022/12/rns-uk-20221202.pdf>

As far as France's three **security priorities** are concerned –while France is also trying to expand its strategic functions in areas such as Knowledge-Appreciation-Anticipation, Deterrence, Protection-Resilience, Prevention, Intervention and Influence⁵²– these include the following:

1. Strengthening our strategic autonomy,
2. Attaining European Sovereignty and consolidating our Alliances, and

⁵⁰ Ibid, 9.

⁵¹ Ibid, 14-15.

⁵² Ibid, 21-24.

3. The defense of a stable international order based on the rule of law and multilateralism,⁵³

The **ten strategic objectives**⁵⁴ that France has set in order to achieve its President's vision include:

1. A robust and credible nuclear deterrent,
2. A united and resilient France,
3. An economy contributing to a defence mindset,
4. First class cyber resilience,
5. To be an exemplary ally in the Euro-Atlantic area,
6. To be a driving force behind European strategic autonomy,
7. To be a reliable sovereignty partner and a credible provider of security,
8. Guaranteed autonomy of assessment and decision-making sovereignty,
9. The capacity to defend and act in hybrid fields and
10. Freedom of action and the capacity to conduct military operations, including high-intensity operations, autonomously or in a coalition, in all fields.

As far as the **Indo-Pacific**, the **EU** and **NATO** are concerned, the National Strategic Review states that «By 2030, France:

«[...] will contribute through its influence and with its partners to the stability of the Indo-Pacific area. It will defend its sovereignty and respect for international law within that area»,⁵⁵ and that «France is working to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance in a

⁵³ Ibid, 20-21.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 27-28.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 27.

*pragmatic approach to its role, which rules out an extension to other geographical areas and in particular the Indo-Pacific».*⁵⁶

The main characteristic of the new National Strategic Review is the ambition of France to play an enhanced role as a security provider in the international security environment, also acting as a leading state among the European Union.

3.2 The 2023 National Security Strategy of Germany

Germany's first ever **National Security Strategy (NSS)** entitled "Integrated Security for Germany" was published on **14 June 2023**.⁵⁷ According to Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the goal of the German historic strategic document is to maintain security for the citizens of Germany and contribute to Europe's security. The German NSS is a **76 pages** long document,⁵⁸ is comprised of a Foreword by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, an Executive summary, and three main parts, namely 'Germany in Europe and the World', 'Integrated security for Germany', and 'Building integrated security together'.

As far as the part "*Germany in Europe and the World*" is concerned, the 2023 NSS emphasizes that security is a comprehensive concept, states that Germany bears a special responsibility in regional and international level regarding security, prosperity and stability due to its population and economy, highlights its value-based foreign and security policy, and defines the following **national interests**:

1. Protecting the people, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country, the European Union and our allies.
2. Protecting our free democratic order.

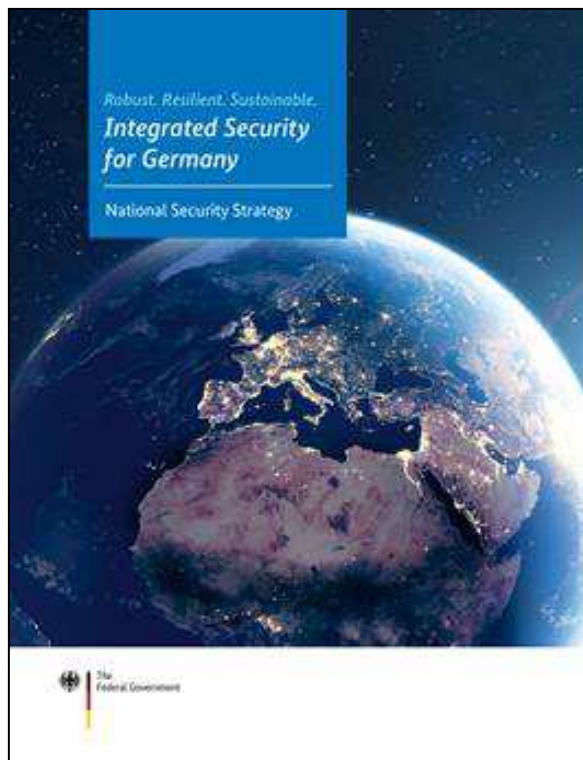
⁵⁶ Ibid, 41.

⁵⁷ Federal Foreign Office. (2023, June 14). National Security Strategy adopted by the German Federal Cabinet. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/-/2601730>

⁵⁸ Koukakis, G. (2023, June 18). Η πρώτη «ιστορική» Στρατηγική Εθνικής Ασφάλειας της Γερμανίας". *Foreign Affairs The Hellenic Edition*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.gr/articles/74201/georgios-koykakis/i-proti-%C2%ABistoriki%C2%BB-stratigiki-ethnikis-asfaleias-tis-germanias>

3. Strengthening the European Union's ability to act and its internal cohesion and further deepening the profound friendship we share with France.
4. Consolidating the transatlantic alliance and our close partnership based on mutual trust with the United States of America.
5. Fostering prosperity and social cohesion in our country by protecting our social market economy.
6. Promoting an international order based on international law, the United Nations Charter and universal human rights.
7. Fostering peace and stability worldwide and championing democracy, the rule of law, human development and participation by all population groups as a prerequisite for sustainable security.
8. Promoting the sustainable protection of natural resources, limiting the climate crisis and managing its impacts, securing access to water and food, as well as protecting people's health.
9. Maintaining an open, rules-based international economic and financial system with free trade routes and a secure, sustainable supply of raw materials and energy.

Moreover, the document characterises Russia as the most significant threat to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area, China as a partner, competitor and systemic rival, and identifies several other security threats such as conflicts, terrorism and extremism, cyber-attacks, the erosion of the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, economic crises, pandemics, international competition in the technological field, organised crime, intelligence operations, climate crisis, poverty and hunger, and large migration flows.



Picture 5: The cover page of the 2023 National Security Strategy of Germany

Source: <https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf>

Finally, the part “*Integrated security for Germany*” of the 2023 NSS is divided in the following three sections:

1. **Wehrhaft (robust): Defending peace and freedom**, focusing on national and collective defence, civil preparedness, civil protection and disaster prevention and relief, strengthening the European peace project, engaging the international crisis, supporting development policy to promote security, and preserving and further developing the global arms-control architecture.

2. **Resilient: Safeguarding our values through inner strength**, focusing on protecting and strengthening democracy, defending and upholding the principles of a rules-based international order, safeguarding human rights, boosting economic and financial resilience and raw materials security, protecting and promoting technology and innovation, and enhancing cybersecurity and space security.

3. **Sustainable: Safeguarding our natural resources**, focusing on limiting the climate crisis and protecting biodiversity and ecosystems, strengthening global food security, and improving global pandemic prevention.

4. Existing & emerging security threats

The EU's survival depends greatly on the effective tackling of the numerous existing and emerging security threats. These threats are identified in a number of strategic documents issued not only by the EU but several other actors as well, one of the most important of which is the USA. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the context of such documents in order to evaluate the danger posed by these threats.

4.1 The 2023 Strategic Foresight Report of the EU

On **6 July 2023**, the European Union published its fourth **Strategic Foresight Report (SFR)**.⁵⁹ The **36 pages** long strategic document⁶⁰ is based on the results of a foresight exercise of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), consultations, discussions and several other activities, and:

"[...] analyses how to put 'sustainability and people's wellbeing at the heart of Europe's Open Strategic Autonomy' and suggests ten concrete actions to achieve this aim. [...] To equip policymakers with economic indicators which also consider wellbeing, it proposes to adjust Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to take account of different factors such as health and the environment".⁶¹

The 2023 SFR comprises an Introduction part, three main parts namely 'Key intersections between social and economic sustainability challenges', 'Key areas for

⁵⁹ European Commission. (2023, July 06). 2023 Strategic Foresight Report: sustainability and wellbeing at the heart of Europe's Open Strategic Autonomy [Press Release]. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3623

⁶⁰ Koukakis, G. (2023, July 21). Η Έκθεση Strategic Foresight της ΕΕ για το 2023. *Foreign Affairs The Hellenic Edition*. <https://www.foreignaffairs.gr/articles/74240/georgios-koykakis/i-ekthesi-strategic-foresight-tis-ee-gia-to-2023>

⁶¹ European Commission. (2023, July 06). Ibid.

action’, and ‘Delivering on the promise of the sustainability transition’, as well as an ‘Endnotes’ part.



Picture 6: The cover page of the 2023 SFR of the European Union

Source: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ca1c61b7-e413-4877-970b-8ef619fc6b6c_en?filename=SFR-23-beautified-version_en_0.pdf

As far as the **Key intersections between social and economic sustainability challenges** mentioned in the first main part are concerned,⁶² the 2023 SFR highlights the following:

1. The rise of geopolitics and reconfiguration of globalisation.
2. Quest for sustainable economy and wellbeing.
3. Increasing pressure to ensure sufficient funding.
4. Growing demand for skills and competencies for the sustainable future.

⁶² European Commission. (2023). Strategic Foresight Report 2023 [Official Document], 6-21. https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ca1c61b7-e413-4877-970b-8ef619fc6b6c_en?filename=SFR-23-beautified-version_en_0.pdf

5. Increasing cracks in social cohesion.
6. Threats to democracy and existing social contract.

Moreover, the 10 **key areas for action** defined in the second main part of the 2023 SFR in which measures must be taken in order to ensure the wellbeing of people and society,⁶³ are as follows:

1. Ensure a new European social contract with renewed welfare policies and a focus on high-quality social services.
2. Deepen the Single Market to champion a resilient net-zero economy, with a focus on Open Strategic Autonomy and economic security.
3. Boost the EU's offer on the global stage to strengthen cooperation with key partners.
4. Support shifts in production and consumption towards sustainability, targeting regulation and fostering balanced lifestyles.
5. Move towards a 'Europe of investments' through public action to catalyse financial flows for the transitions.
6. Make public budgets fit for sustainability through an efficient tax framework and public spending.
7. Further shift policy and economic indicators towards sustainable and inclusive wellbeing, including by adjusting GDP for different factors.
8. Ensure that all Europeans can contribute to the transition by increasing labour market participation and focusing on future skills.
9. Strengthen democracy with generational fairness at the heart of policymaking to reinforce the support for the transitions.

⁶³ Ibid, 22-32.

10. Complement civil protection with 'civil prevention' by reinforcing the EU's toolbox on preparedness and response.

Finally, the last part entitled '**Delivering on the promise of the sustainability transition**' is concerned,⁶⁴ the 2023 SFR stresses the importance of sustainability transition, as:

*“For current and future generations of Europeans, this will mean living healthier and longer lives, finding private and professional fulfillment, and having a greater say in the future they want. For EU business, using the first-mover advantage of a net-zero economy, with globally leading sustainable products and services”.*⁶⁵

4.2 The 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the USA

The **2024 Annual Threat Assessment** of the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) was published on **11 March 2024**.⁶⁶ The aforementioned 41 pages-long strategic document comprises an Introduction part, a Foreword, and two main parts namely 'State Actors' and 'Transnational Issues', while –as stated in its Introduction part– the aforementioned strategic document:

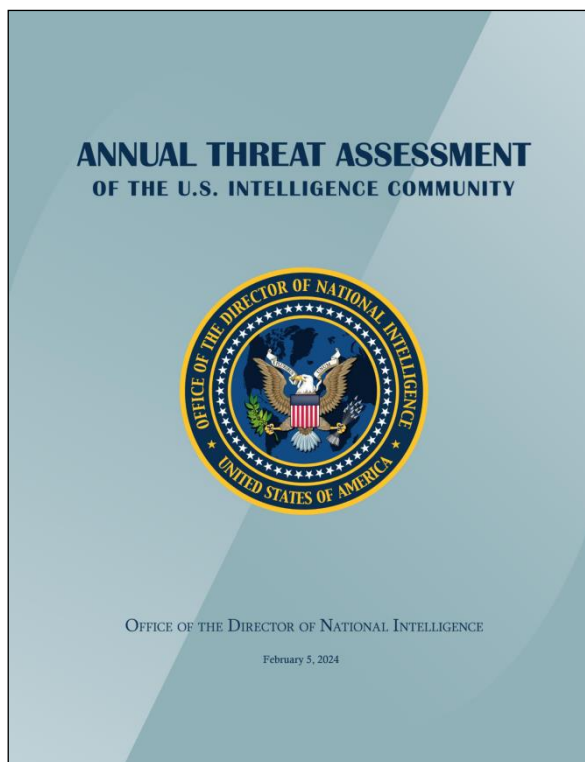
“[...] reflects the collective insights of the Intelligence Community (IC), which is committed every day to providing the nuanced, independent, and unvarnished intelligence that policymakers, warfighters, and domestic law enforcement personnel need to protect American lives and America’s interests anywhere in the world. This assessment focuses on the most direct, serious threats to the United States primarily during the next year. The order of the topics presented in this assessment does not necessarily

⁶⁴ Ibid, 31-33.

⁶⁵ European Commission, “2023 Strategic Foresight Report: sustainability and wellbeing at the heart of Europe's Open Strategic Autonomy”. Ibid. p. 32.

⁶⁶ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. (2024, March 11). ODNI Releases 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community [Press Release]. <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/press-releases-2024/3789-odni-releases-2024-annual-threat-assessment-of-the-u-s-intelligence-community>

*indicate their relative importance or the magnitude of the threats in the view of the IC. All require a robust intelligence response, including those where a near-term focus may help head off greater threats in the future”.*⁶⁷



Picture 7: The cover page of the 2024 ATA of the USA

Source: <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2024-Unclassified-Report.pdf>

As far as **state actors** are concerned,⁶⁸ the 2024 ATA assesses that the most direct and serious threats to the national security of the USA are posed by:

1. China, especially in regard of economics, technology, WMD, the military, space, cyberspace, malign influence, and intelligence.
2. Russia, especially in regard of the conflict in Ukraine, the military, WMD, cyberspace, malign influence, and space.

⁶⁷ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. (2024). *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* [Official Document], 12. <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2024-Unclassified-Report.pdf>

⁶⁸ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. (2024). *Ibid.* 7-27.

3. Iran, especially in regard of WMD, the military, cyberspace, and malign influence.
4. North Korea, especially in regard of WMD, the military, and cyberspace.

As far as **conflicts and fragility** are concerned,⁶⁹ the 2024 ATA assesses that the most direct and serious threats to the national security of the USA are posed by:

1. The Gaza conflict.
2. Potential Interstate Conflict, as it can have broader cascading implications on a regional and even global scale, such as:
 - ✓ China maritime.
 - ✓ India-China.
 - ✓ India-Pakistan.
 - ✓ Azerbaijan–Armenia.

3. Potential Intrastate Turmoil, as it can fuel cycles of violence, insurgencies, and internal conflict, such as in:
 - ✓ The Balkans.
 - ✓ Afghanistan.
 - ✓ Sudan.
 - ✓ Ethiopia.
 - ✓ The Sahel.
 - ✓ Haiti.
 - ✓ Venezuela.

As far as **transnational issues** are concerned,⁷⁰ the 2024 ATA assesses that the most direct and serious threats to the national security of the USA are posed by:

1. The contestation regarding:

⁶⁹ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. (2024). Ibid, 24-29.

⁷⁰ Office of the Director of National Intelligence. (2024). Ibid, 30-40.

- ✓ Disruptive technology, especially AI and biotechnology.
- ✓ Digital authoritarianism & Transnational Repression, especially from China.
- ✓ Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), especially from China, Russia and North Korea.

2. The shared challenges of:

- ✓ Environmental change & extreme weather.
- ✓ Health security, especially pandemics.
- ✓ Migration.

3. Non-state actor issues such as:

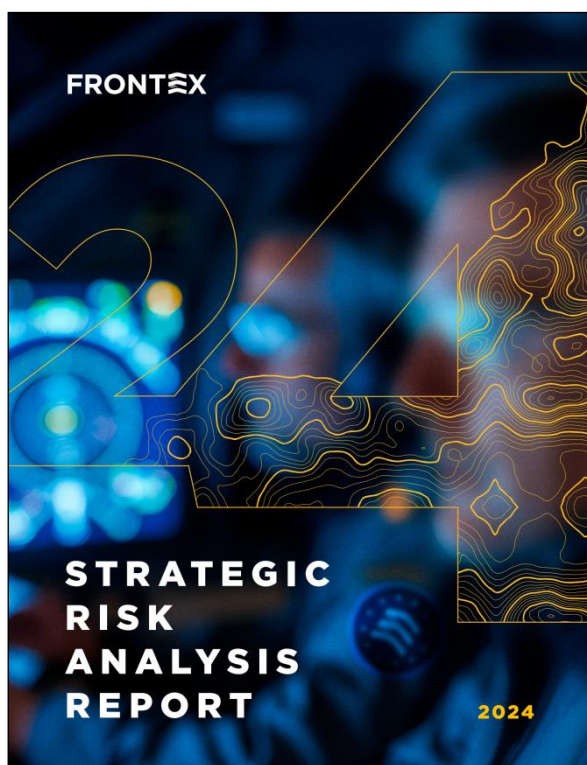
- ✓ Transnational Organised Crime, especially foreign illicit drugs, money laundering, financial crimes, cybercrime, and undermining the rule of law.
- ✓ Human Trafficking.
- ✓ Global Terrorism, especially ISIS, Al-Qa'ida, Hizballah, and transnational Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists (RMVE).
- ✓ Private Military & Security Companies (PMSC), especially from China, Russia, Turkey, and the UAE.

4.3 The 2024 Strategic Risk Analysis (SRA) of FRONTEX

The annual **Strategic Risk Analysis (SRA)** of FRONTEX was published by FRONTEX on **30 September 2024**.⁷¹ The aforementioned 88 pages-long strategic document comprises a Foreword by the Executive Director of FRONTEX, an Executive Summary, an Introduction part, six main parts namely 'Megatrends implications assessment', 'Migration and returns', 'Cross-border crime', 'Terrorism', 'Hybrid Threats', and 'Future Scenarios', and a Conclusion part. As stated in its Introduction part, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency's strategic document:

⁷¹ FRONTEX. (2024, September 30). *Frontex Releases Strategic Risk Analysis 2024* [Press Release]. <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-releases-strategic-risk-analysis-2024-Ziqtoj>

*“[...] informs policy, strategic decision-making and planning in the context of the multiannual strategic policy cycle on European IBM. In this context, futures thinking on megatrends and thematic areas of interest to Frontex is essential to assess global risks and provide long-term foresight and alternative scenarios. Foresight allows internal and external stakeholders to engage in strategic conversations about the future. [...] It is an approach that supports organisational adaptation and effectiveness inside an everchanging and increasingly turbulent global environment”.*⁷²



Picture 8: The cover page of the 2024 SRA of FRONTEX

Source: <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/>

Some of the most important **conclusions**⁷³ of the 2024 SRA regarding the European security landscape are the following:

⁷² FRONTEX. (2024). *Strategic Risk Analysis 2024* [Official Document], 12.

⁷³ FRONTEX. (2024). *Ibid*, 6-8.

1. EU border and migration management will face multifaceted challenges in the next decade.
2. Migratory pressures will most likely increase during the next decade.
3. Technological advancements are likely to play an important role in reshaping future migrant-smuggling activities.
4. The ongoing wars and instability in the EU's neighbourhood, together with any new security crises, will likely be the key drivers of migratory and refugee movements to Europe.
5. The top 20 source countries for irregular migration and the key migratory routes to the EU will likely remain the same in the next decade.
6. Megatrends related to geopolitics and security will exert a profound influence on regional and International developments over the next decade.
7. The AI revolution will have both positive and negative implications for EU border management.
8. Enhanced technical cooperation will be required not only between FRONTEX and the member states but also with the competent agencies of third countries in Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia on migration, returns and cross-border crime.

Finally, the 2024 SRA presents four future scenarios regarding the conditions of the security environment are concerned, as follows:

1. According to the **best-case scenario**,⁷⁴ the future security environment will have the following characteristics:
 - ✓ A major peaceful shift has taken place over this decade since 2024.

⁷⁴ FRONTEX. (2024). Ibid, 64-68.

- ✓ The new vision of humanity is articulated and agreed upon at the united nations, confirming the overarching need for humanity to work together and pave the way towards a future of peaceful co-existence and cooperation
- ✓ The levels of trust and cooperation between the great powers, developed and developing countries are enhanced through positive diplomacy and political negotiations.
- ✓ The international community makes a genuine attempt to move away from the anarchic state of affairs.
- ✓ The strengthening of global governance systems and structures enables the implementation of programmes and the achievement of significant results for the benefit of the international community.
- ✓ The EU's grand strategy achieves significant results and the EU emerges as a leading and trustworthy international actor demonstrating geopolitical pragmatism, regulatory power and adherence to normative values of global significance.
- ✓ The EU also develops a 'grand strategy' in the policy field of border management, asylum and migration.
- ✓ The security paradigm sees a profound shift from hostile to peaceful multipolarity mainly due to a better understanding between the great powers and the general improvement of international relations.
- ✓ The megatrends drive favourable developments in the EU policy field of border management, asylum and migration.
- ✓ International cooperation with the top-20 countries of origin and transit of irregular migration, the creation of legal channels of migration, better integration schemes for migrants and refugees and a host of other measures contribute to positive outcomes.
- ✓ FRONTEX plays an important role in the implementation of far-reaching reform on border, migration and asylum management.

- ✓ Border controls demonstrate high levels of professionalism, effectively protecting the integrity of the external border and respecting the human rights of migrants and refugees.
- ✓ Border surveillance gets significant upgrades in terms of capabilities and capacities, empowering the agency's law enforcement role and activities against cross-border crime and terrorism.
- ✓ FRONTEX emerges as a key strategic partner not only for national border and coast guard authorities, but also for EU and national law-enforcement agencies that fight cross-border crime and terrorism.
- ✓ FRONTEX's risk and intelligence analysis capabilities are significantly improved with appropriate human resources and deployment of state-of-the-art technological applications.
- ✓ Quality-control mechanisms help improve the processes and outcomes of European integrated border management at all organisational levels.
- ✓ Solidarity mechanisms including funding instruments are in place to allow EU border management to fulfill its mission.
- ✓ A new set of rules managing migration and establishing a common asylum system are in place (the pact on migration and asylum).

2. According to the **worst-case scenario**,⁷⁵ the future security environment will have the following characteristics:

- ✓ A turbulent geopolitical and security environment generates new challenges for border control, exacerbating hybrid threats.
- ✓ EIBM is challenged by the increased pressure on border control.

⁷⁵ FRONTEX. (2024). Ibid, 69-72.

- ✓ By 2034, the lack of cooperation between law-enforcement agencies responsible for border control at national level has generated a considerable downturn in border security.
- ✓ Tense relations with third countries has generated vulnerabilities for border checks and has precluded readmission and return activities, which in turn acts as a pull factor for irregular migration.
- ✓ By midterm future (a five-year perspective) border control relies upon a high level of digitalisation creating substantial vulnerabilities within the process.
- ✓ The quality control mechanism fails to support border control.
- ✓ EU funding for EUIB cut.
- ✓ There is no capacity from member states to perform any fourth-tier police measures meant to tackle irregular migration and cross-border crime.
- ✓ Increasing demographic imbalances have engendered migration towards the EU's external borders and large communities of irregular migrants are accumulating in the countries neighbouring the EU.

3. According to the **baseline scenario**,⁷⁶ the future security environment will have the following characteristics:

- ✓ Challenges for border control have evolved over the years influenced by megatrends and societal changes.
- ✓ The changing security paradigm and world multipolarity, along with the presence of non-state actors challenges identification processes in border-control systems and complicates assessments of whether individuals pose a threat to the internal security and public order of the Schengen area.
- ✓ Rapid technological changes including AI and big data systems have created opportunities as well as challenges for border control.

⁷⁶ FRONTEX. (2024). Ibid, 72-74.

✓ Increased digitalisation of cross-border crime makes the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators very difficult and increases the attractiveness of migrant smuggling even over cigarette and drug smuggling.

4. According to the **hybrid-threat scenario**,⁷⁷ the future security environment will have the following characteristics:

✓ Hybrid threats, including the instrumentalisation of migration, are increasingly common ways for hostile strategic actors to exploit democratic vulnerabilities in Europe to achieve their objectives.

✓ The speed of technological advancements and over-reliance on technology has drawbacks that hybrid actors may capitalise on.

✓ European integrated border management faces hybrid threats from multiple directions.

✓ A European Border and Coast Guard equipped to respond to hybrid threats.

5. Recent developments regarding the European Security & Defence

Despite the negative impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 in the European security environment, the ongoing war in Ukraine also functioned as a catalyst for European Security & Defence, as it facilitated many positive changes regarding the aforementioned sector the most important of which are presented in the following paragraphs.

5.1 Finland's & Sweden's accession to NATO

One of the most significant changes that occurred as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is that **Finland** and **Sweden** –the two Nordic states that were 'traditionally' keeping a 'safe distance' from NATO due to their proximity to the Russian Federation– simultaneously applied to join NATO on **18 May 2022**.⁷⁸ Despite the initial

⁷⁷ FRONTEX. (2024). Ibid, 75-78.

⁷⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2022, May 18). Finland and Sweden submit applications to join NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_195468.htm

objections on behalf of **Turkiye** and **Hungary**,⁷⁹ Finland became an official member of the Alliance on **4 April 2023**,⁸⁰ while Sweden joined NATO a year later on **7 March 2024**.⁸¹ What is interesting in regard to the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO is that, as the U.S. Secretary of State noted:

“[...] this is maybe the one thing we can thank Mr. Putin for, because he, once again here, has precipitated something he claims to want to prevent – by Russia’s aggression, causing many countries to believe that they have to do more to look out for their own defense and to make sure that they could deter a possible Russian aggression going forward”.⁸²



Picture 9: The Finnish and Swedish Ambassador to NATO convey the letters of application to join NATO to its Secretary General at the Alliance’s Brussels headquarters

Source: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_195468.htm

⁷⁹ Κουκάκης, Γ. (2023). Η ένταξη της Φινλανδίας στο NATO και το μέλλον της υποψηφιότητας της Σουηδίας [Ερευνητική Εργασία No.92]. Κέντρο Διεθνών Στρατηγικών Αναλύσεων. <https://www.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22751.53920>

⁸⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2024, October 03). Relations with Finland. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49594.htm

⁸¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2024, March 28). Relations with Sweden. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52535.htm

⁸² U.S. Department of State. (2023, April 04). Secretary Antony J. Blinken and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Before Their Meeting. <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-nato-secretary-general-jens-stoltenberg-before-their-meeting-7/>

5.2 European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS)

On **5 March 2024** the European Union published its first **European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS)** entitled “*A new European Defence Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry*”, a strategic document that –if properly implemented– can surely act as a game changer for the European Security & Defence as it aims to:

“[...] enhance and support the efforts of the EU’s member-states in order to increase and improve their investments in security and defence, facilitate their collaboration and coordinate their actions in the security and defence sector”.⁸³



Picture 10: EU Factsheet about EDIS

Source: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/european-defence-industrial-strategy-factsheet_en

The **strategic ends** (goals) provided by the aforementioned strategic document are mirrored in its respective chapters, namely:

⁸³ European Commission. (2024, March 05). First ever defence industrial strategy and a new defence industry programme to enhance Europe's readiness and security [Press Release]. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_24_1321 (07/03/2024).

The European Security & Defence at a crossroads: Between survival & ambition

1. Achieving Defence Readiness through a more responsive and resilient European Defence Industry.
2. Leveraging Readiness through investment: More, Better, Together, European.
3. Securing availability: A responsive EDTIB under any circumstances and time horizon.
4. Financing the Union's ambition for defence industrial readiness.
5. Mainstreaming a defence readiness culture, including across EU policies.
6. Achieving readiness and resilience through partnerships.



Picture 11: EU Factsheet about EDIP

Source: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/european-defence-industry-programme-factsheet_en

In addition to EDIS, the EU Commission proposed a Regulation in order to establish a **European Defence Industrial Programme (EDIP)** that will allow the implementation of the measures defined in EDIS by:

1. Providing financial support from the EU budget over the period 2025-2027.
2. Strengthening the competitiveness, responsiveness and resilience of the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base.
3. Fostering cooperation with Ukraine on the recovery, reconstruction and modernization of the Ukrainian defence industry.
4. Providing a toolbox, and notably a new legal structure for EU Member States to facilitate cooperation across the whole life cycle of defence capabilities.
5. Ensuring the availability and supply of defence products on a steady basis, in time and in the requisite volumes.

5.3 The EU-Moldova Security & Defence Partnership

On **21 May 2024** the European Union proceeded to another innovative action, the signing of its first-ever '**Security and Defence Partnership**' (*Annex A*) with the Republic of Moldova,⁸⁴ that provided for the following institutions:

1. The *EU-Moldova Association Council* (EMAC),
2. The *EU-Moldova High Level Political and Security Dialogue*,⁸⁵
3. The *EU-Moldova Security and Defence Dialogue*,⁸⁶ and
4. Additional thematic consultations on several fields of cooperation.

The aforementioned strategic document also defined eleven (11) **areas of cooperation** between the two parts, namely:

1. EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations.

⁸⁴ European Union External Action Service. (2024, May 21). *Security and Defence Partnership* [Official Document]. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/security-and-defence-partnership_en?s=223

⁸⁵ At the level of the Political Director of the EU and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova.

⁸⁶ At the level of Head of Directorate/Managing Director.

2. Countering hybrid threats.
3. Cyber issues.
4. Capacity building in security and defence.
5. Strategic communications and countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI).
6. Non-proliferation and disarmament, conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons (SALW).
7. Counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism.
8. Consultations on relevant defence initiatives, tools and instruments.
9. Training and education.
10. Integrated border management.
11. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

5.4 Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

On **27 June 2024** the European Council adopted **Strategic Agenda 2024-2029** (*Annex B*),⁸⁷ the European Union's official document which sets its priorities and strategic orientations for the next 5-years institutional cycle,⁸⁸ referring that:

“Our destiny is in our own hands. We have the talent, courage and vision to successfully shape our future. This Strategic Agenda is

⁸⁷ European Council. (n.d.). Timeline - Path to the strategic agenda 2024–2029. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/timeline-path-to-the-strategic-agenda-2024-2029/>

⁸⁸ European Council. (n.d.). Strategic Agenda 2024-2029. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/>

*our joint pledge to unequivocally serve our citizens and fulfill our founding objective of peace and prosperity”.*⁸⁹



Picture 12: The cover page of the Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

Source: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/4aldqfl2/2024_557_new-strategic-agenda.pdf

One of the most important provisions of Strategic Agenda 2024-2029, is its **2nd Pillar** entitled "**A strong and secure Europe**" –out of totally three (3) pillars– which defined the following seven (7) **priorities**:

1. Continued support for Ukraine, including its reconstruction and the pursuit of a just peace.
2. A stronger EU defence readiness and capacity and increased defence spending and investment.
3. Cooperation with transatlantic partners and NATO.

⁸⁹ European Council. (2024). *Strategic Agenda 2024-2029* [Official Document]. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/4aldqfl2/2024_557_new-strategic-agenda.pdf

4. The fight against organised crime, radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism.
5. Strengthening resilience, preparedness, crisis prevention and response capacities to protect citizens and societies against different crises, such as natural disasters and health emergencies.
6. A merit-based EU enlargement process with incentives, to run in parallel with necessary internal reforms.
7. A comprehensive approach to migration and border management.

5.5 Commissioner for Defence and Space

Regarding the new composition of the European Commission,⁹⁰ on **18 July 2024** the President of the European Commission (Ursula von der Leyen) established the position of the **Commissioner for Defence and Space** by appointing *Andrius Kubilius* –the former Prime Minister of Lithuania⁹¹– as the EU’s first respective Commissioner.

Among the **tasks** entrusted to Andrius Kubilius by Ursula von der Leyen –which are defined in the latter’s Mission Letter (*Annex D*)⁹²– in order to create a true **European Defence Union** also stressing that the EU member states will always be responsible for their national defence, were the following:

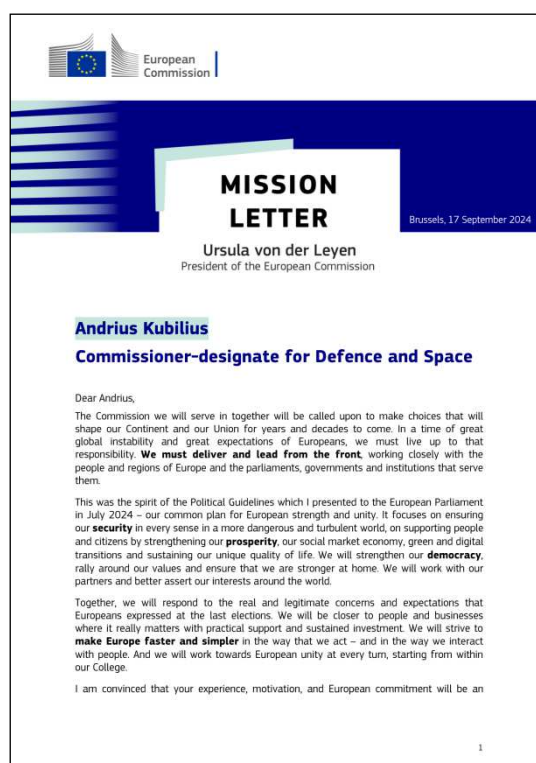
1. The presentation of the White Paper on the Future of European Defence within one hundred (100) days.
2. The creation of a Single Market for Defence.

⁹⁰ European Commission. (n.d.). Commissioners-designate (2024-2029). https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/towards-new-commission-2024-2029/commissioners-designate-2024-2029_en

⁹¹ The CV of Andrius Kubilius can be found in *Annex C*.

⁹² European Commission. (2024, September 17). *Andrius Kubilius - Mission letter* [Official Document]. https://commission.europa.eu/document/1f8ec030-d018-41a2-9759-c694d4d56d6c_en

3. The definition of Defence Projects of Common European Interest (DPCI), emphasising on the design and implementation of a European Air Shield and a cyber-defence common project.



Picture 13: The 1st page of the Mission Letter of the President of the European Commission to the Commissioner-designate for Defence and Space

Source: https://commission.europa.eu/document/1f8ec030-d018-41a2-9759-c694d4d56d6c_en

4. Overseeing the implementation of the European Defence Industrial Strategy, the European Defence Industrial Programme, and the EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence.⁹³

5. Reinforcing the European Defence Fund.

6. Proposing an EU Space Law and common EU standards and rules for space activities.

7. Propose the publication of a Space Data Economy Strategy.

⁹³ European Union External Action. (2023, April 14). EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-space-strategy-security-and-defence-0_en

6. Europe's survival: The Draghi report

Despite the aforementioned ambitious goals of the European Union, its member-states and the United Kingdom, the extremely hostile conditions of the contemporary security environment pose a severe threat to several European policy fields. This situation was stressed by **Mario Draghi** (Special Advisor to the President of the European Commission), during his address to the European Parliament on **17 September 2024**,⁹⁴ where he presented a report –requested by the President of the European Commission– entitled “**The future of European competitiveness**”.⁹⁵ In his speech, he warned the members of the European Parliament that:

*“Europe faces a choice between exit, paralysis, or integration”.*⁹⁶

The aforementioned report –also known as the ‘Draghi report’– is a 69 pages-long document comprising of a Foreword, and 6 parts namely ‘*The starting point: a new landscape for Europe*’; ‘*Closing the innovation gap*’; ‘*A joint decarbonisation and competitiveness plan*’; ‘*Increasing security and reducing dependencies*’; ‘*Financing investments*’; ‘*Strengthening governance*’. In his Foreword, Mario Draghi notes inter alia that the foundations on which the EU was built are being shaken, that Europe’s need for growth is rising and that this situation is an existential challenge for Europe, as:

“If Europe cannot become more productive, we will be forced to choose. We will not be able to become, at once, a leader in new technologies, a beacon of climate responsibility and an independent player on the world stage. We will not be able to finance our social model. We will have to scale back some, if not all, of our ambitions. [...] The only way to meet this challenge is to grow and become more productive, preserving our values of equity and social inclusion. And

⁹⁴ European Parliament. (n.d.). Sitting of 17-09-2024 [Video]. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/vod.html?mode=chapter&vodLanguage=EN&internalEPId=2017001168557&providerMeetingId=1e25c62f-14b0-4361-a244-08dcd233e338#>

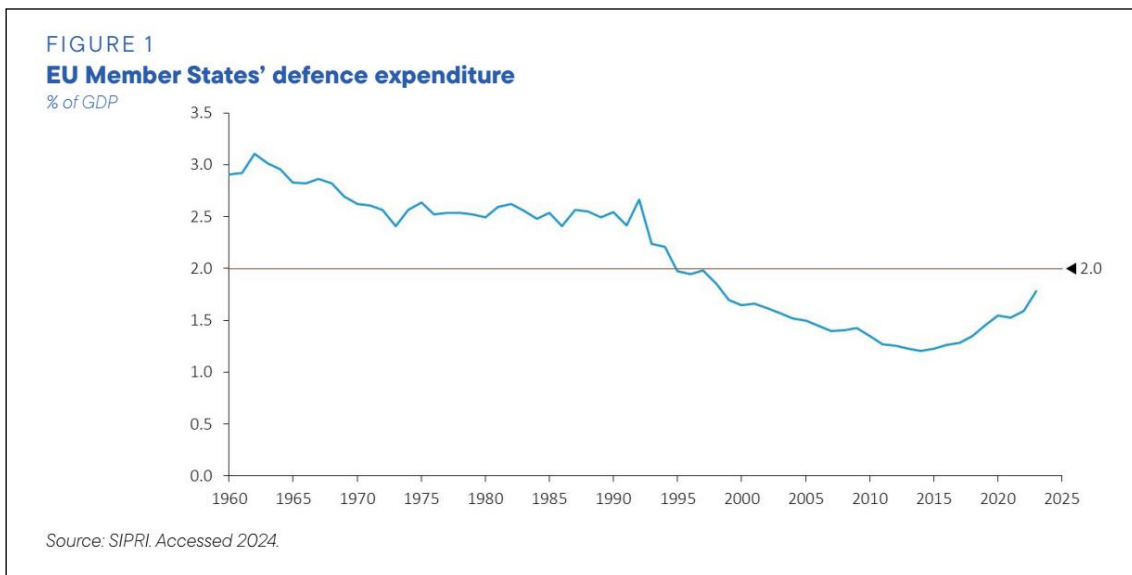
⁹⁵ European Commission. (2024, September). *The future of European competitiveness* [Official Document]. https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en?filename=The%20future%20of%20European%20competitiveness%20%20A%20competitiveness%20strategy%20for%20Europe.pdf

⁹⁶ European Parliament. (2024, September 17). Draghi to MEPs: “Europe faces a choice between exit, paralysis, or integration”. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240913IPR23903/draghi-to-meps-europe-faces-a-choice-between-exit-paralysis-or-integration>

the only way to become more productive is for Europe to radically change.⁹⁷

Moreover, he emphasizes that despite the fact the EU member-states implement several individual policies, these policies are not coordinated in the framework of the EU in order for the latter to reach its full potential. According to Mario Draghi, this situation is caused by the following **three barriers**:

1. Europe is lacking focus, as the EU articulates common objectives, but it does not back them by setting *clear priorities* or following up with *joined-up policy actions*.
2. Europe is wasting its common resources, as despite the fact the EU has a large collective spending power it dilutes it across *multiple different national and EU instruments*.
3. Europe does not coordinate where it matters, especially as far as its industrial strategy is concerned, as the degree of coordination between national and EU efforts is low, and the EU decision-making rules have not evolved leading to a 19 months average time period regarding new laws.



Picture 14: EU member-states defence expenditure (1960-2025)

Source: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en?filename=The%20future%20of%20European%20competitiveness%20-%20A%20competitiveness%20strategy%20for%20Europe.pdf

⁹⁷ European Commission. (2024, September). Ibid, 01.

In order for these challenges to be met, Draghi proposes the implementation of a new industrial strategy, stressing that the private sector must be supported by the EU and that increased productivity is a matter of political will that will eventually create more fiscal space which will in turn make this support easier. According to the report, the focus of this new industrial strategy should be on the following three **areas for action** in order for growth to be reignited:

1. Closing the innovation gap with the US and China.
2. Developing a joint plan to link the goal of decarbonisation with increased competitiveness.
3. Boosting Europe's security and reducing its dependence on foreign economic powers.

As far as the fourth part '**Increasing security and reducing dependencies**' is concerned, the 'Draghi Report' underlines the following factors:

1. Europe is vulnerable to both coercion and, in extreme cases, geo-economic fragmentation.
2. Deteriorating geopolitical relations also create new needs for spending on defence and defence industrial capacity.
3. Becoming more independent creates an "insurance cost" for Europe, but these costs can be mitigated by cooperation.
4. Access to Critical Raw Materials (CRM) is critical for the clean tech and automotive industry, yet supply is highly concentrated.
5. CRMs are subject to a global race to secure supply chains, and Europe is currently falling behind.
6. Strategic dependencies also extend to critical technologies for the digitalisation of Europe's economy.

7. The EU needs to develop a genuine “foreign economic policy” based on securing critical resources, in order to reduce its vulnerabilities.
8. The EU must harness the potential of domestic resources through *mining*, *recycling* and *innovation* in alternative materials.
9. The EU should pursue a coordinated EU strategy for strategic industries in order to bolster domestic production capacity and to protect key network infrastructures.
10. The European defence industry not only suffers from lower defence spending but also a lack of focus on technological development.
11. The European defence industry is fragmented, limiting its *scale* and hindering *operational effectiveness* in the field.
12. The EU has developed a world-class space sector, despite much lower levels of funding, but is now starting to lose ground.
13. Insufficient aggregation and coordination of public spending in Europe compounds industrial fragmentation for both defence and space industries.
14. In the absence of common European spending, policy actions for the defence sector need to focus on aggregating demand and integrating industrial defence assets.
15. Together with the urgent need to increase overall defence investment, there is a strong case to reinforce cooperation and pooling of resources for defence R&D at the EU level.
16. The European space sector would benefit from updated governance and investment rules, and greater coordination of public spending in a true Single Market for space.

7. The “dangerous” ambitions of the EU

Despite the numerous security threats that the EU and its members states are facing, they have set several ambitious goals through a variety of official documents. The two

most dangerous ones are the involvement of the EU and their members-states in the Indo-Pacific region, and the EU's enlargement through the accession process of several states that comply with specific criteria.⁹⁸

7.1 The EU and its member-states in the Indo-Pacific

The region of the Indo-Pacific (*Picture 15*) –the maritime region that comprises the Indian and the Pacific Ocean which was invented by Karl Haushofer⁹⁹– is of **great importance**, not only for the EU but for several other actors as well, due to many reasons related to a large number of policy fields. According to the **2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy of the USA**,¹⁰⁰ the importance of the Indo-Pacific lies in the fact that:

1. More than 50% of the world's population (including 58% of youth) lives in the Indo-Pacific.
2. The Indo-Pacific region is responsible for almost 60% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
3. The Indo-Pacific region is responsible for almost 70% of the global economic growth.
4. Almost 65% of the world's oceans and 25% of the world's land is located in the Indo-Pacific.
5. Many of the world's conflicts/disputes are located in the Indo-Pacific.
6. The volume of the CO₂ emissions produced in the Indo-Pacific is the biggest worldwide.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ EUR-Lex. (n.d.). Accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/accession-criteria-copenhagen-criteria.html>

⁹⁹ Teekah, E. (2024, October 10). Indo-Pacific. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Indo-Pacific>

¹⁰⁰ The White House. (2022). Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States [Official Document], 5. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

¹⁰¹ Statista. (2024, September 18). Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the Asia-Pacific region from 2014 to 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1280819/apac-co2-emissions/#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20the%20total%20carbon,than%2021%20billion%20metric%20tons.>



Picture 15: The geopolitical region of the Indo-Pacific

Source: <https://cdn.britannica.com/38/258938-050-819B301D/map-of-indo-pacific-maritime-region.jpg>

In fact, the U.S. President **Joe Biden** stated during the **QUAD**¹⁰² Leaders' Summit that took place **on 24 September 2021** that:

*“The future of each of our nations –and indeed the world– depends on a free and open indo-pacific enduring and flourishing in the decades ahead”.*¹⁰³

Moreover, its importance was underlined by the EU in its **2022 Strategic Compass** where it refers that:

“A new centre of global competition has emerged in the Indo-Pacific, where geopolitical tensions endanger the rules-based order in the region, and put pressure on global supply chains. The EU has a crucial geopolitical and economic interest in stability and

¹⁰² The QUAD (formally known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) is a cooperative scheme in the field of security, comprising the USA, Australia, India, and Japan. For further details visit: Smith, S. (2021, May 27). The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: What to Know. *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-indo-pacific-what-know>

¹⁰³ The White House. (2022). *Ibid*, 2.

security in the region. [...] China is the EU's second biggest trading partner and a necessary one to address global challenges. But there is also a growing reaction to its increasingly assertive regional behaviour [...].¹⁰⁴

To this end, on **19 April 2021** the Council of the EU endorsed the '**EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**',¹⁰⁵ a strategic document which highlighted the following seven priority areas:

1. Sustainable and inclusive prosperity.
2. Green transition.
3. Ocean governance.
4. Digital governance and partnerships.
5. Connectivity.
6. Security and defence.
7. Human security.

As far as the 6th priority area of **Security & Defence** is concerned, its goal is to promote an open and rules-based regional security architecture through the following actions:

1. The conduction of joint naval exercises by EUNAVFOR ATALANTA with partners, such as Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Oman, and the United States.
2. The development of the security partnership between the EU and Japan by increasing cooperation in areas including maritime security, cybersecurity, hybrid threats, counter-terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation.

¹⁰⁴ European Union. (2022). Ibid, 20.

¹⁰⁵ European Commission. (2021, September 16). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_21_4709

The European Security & Defence at a crossroads: Between survival & ambition

#EUIndoPacific
#GlobalGateway

January 2024




Why an EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific?

The European Union and Indo-Pacific countries have a stake in each other's prosperity and security. Our regions share the same interest in upholding the rules-based international order - with the UN Charter at its core - and in supporting responsible cooperation in international relations. Our futures are inter-dependent.

Towards a deeper and stronger EU engagement

The EU has been stepping up its engagement with Indo-Pacific partners that share common goals and face similar challenges. Its efforts and actions are guided by the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Endorsed by its Member States in 2021, the Strategy sets out seven priority areas for deepening EU Indo-Pacific cooperation: sustainable and inclusive prosperity, green transition, ocean governance, digital governance and partnerships, connectivity, security and defence, and human security.



Find out more about the 3rd EU Indo-Pacific Forum here



Concrete EU actions

Progress achieved since 2021 is testament to the EU's commitment to building partnerships that support peace, stability and long-term prosperity for people in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific. The EU and its Indo-Pacific partners have advanced concrete cooperation across all seven priority areas. Below are just some key examples.



Sustainable and inclusive prosperity

to support the global economic recovery and build shared prosperity that leaves no one behind

- New Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Malaysia and Thailand; ongoing negotiations with Bangladesh;
- New Partnership Agreement signed with the Members of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), known as the "Samoa Agreement";
- Economic Partnership Agreement signed with Kenya; ongoing talks with Tonga, Timor-Leste, Niue, Tuvalu and Vanuatu on the accession to the EU-Pacific Economic Partnership Agreement;
- Free Trade Agreement signed with New Zealand; ongoing negotiations with Australia, Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA), Indonesia, India and Thailand.



Green transition

to tackle climate change, accelerate a fair clean energy transition, protect the environment and foster the sustainable management of resources

- The Team Europe Initiative, **Green Blue Alliance for the Pacific and Timor-Leste**, which includes support for hydropower capacity in Fiji;
- Green Team Europe Initiatives on green and clean energy transitions with ASEAN, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mozambique, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and Tanzania;
- The **Green Alliance** and a Memorandum of Cooperation on hydrogen with Japan;
- The **Green Partnership with the Republic of Korea**;
- The **Green Economy initiative in the Philippines**;
- Just Energy Transition Partnerships** launched with Indonesia, Viet Nam and South Africa;
- Support to **transport decarbonisation** in the Indo-Pacific, including in maritime and air transport.




Ocean governance

to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity

- Adoption of the **UN Treaty of the High Seas**;
- New Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements agreed with Cook Islands, Madagascar, and Kiribati;
- Support to the creation of a representative system of **Marine Protected Areas around Antarctica**;
- The EU is currently preparing to launch the "Sustainable Western Indian Ocean" (SWIOOP) programme, which will include Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros;
- Promote the sustainable management of marine resources through Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, and the continuous work done in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.



Digital governance and partnerships

to foster cooperation for a safe and secure digital space

- Digital Partnerships established with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore;
- Digital Trade Principles between the EU and Singapore, and the EU and the Republic of Korea;
- Digital connectivity **Team Europe Initiative** in the Philippines to support the digital transformation;
- Digital4Development Hub launched for Asia-Pacific;
- Cross-border data flow agreement between EU and Japan;
- EU and India Trade and Technology Council;
- Increased EU-ASEAN digital cooperation to support the ASEAN Digital Master Plan

Connectivity

to promote sustainable connectivity for all and establish common standards

- Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement between the EU and ASEAN;
- ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity Package spanning the transport, energy, digital, people-to-people, trade and economic, and connectivity sectors;
- Horizontal Agreement on air services between the EU and Japan;
- Increased partner access to Copernicus programme's earth observation data;
- Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure between the EU and Japan;
- EU-India Aviation Summit under the EU-India Connectivity Partnership;
- First High-Level Transport Dialogue with the Republic of Korea.

Security and Defence

to promote an open and rules-based regional security architecture

- Joint naval exercises conducted by EUNAVFOR ATALANTA with partners, such as Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Oman, and the United States;
- EU and Japanese Leaders agreed at the 2023 Summit, to develop their security partnership by increasing cooperation in areas including maritime security, cybersecurity, hybrid threats, counter-terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation;
- At the EU-ROK Summit in 2023, Leaders agreed to establish a security partnership and a Strategic Dialogue at Foreign Ministerial level to enhance cooperation on global peace and security;
- New EU Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM-Moz);
- Coordinated Maritime Presence in the North-West Indian Ocean;
- EU participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum;
- EU-funded thematic projects with a regional outreach:
 - CBMADRO - capacity building and maritime information sharing solutions;
 - ESINA - practical cooperation on counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, maritime security and crisis management;
 - Global Action on Cyber Crime Programme.



Human Security

to support healthcare systems and enhance disaster risk reduction and preparedness

- Humanitarian aid and assistance for vulnerable people in Myanmar (forced displacements), Bangladesh (Rohingya refugees), Vanuatu (cyclones), Pakistan (floods), Yemen (food crisis), and Micronesia (drought);
- Copernicus Emergency Management Service over Pakistan, the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Vanuatu;
- Support to the World Health Organisation South-East Asia Health, Pandemic Response and Preparedness Programme.



Picture 16: Factsheet of the 2021 EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Source: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/EU%20Indo-pacific%20FS-01-24->

V3_0.pdf

3. The establishment of a Security Partnership and a Strategic Dialogue between the EU and the RoK at Foreign Ministerial level to enhance cooperation on global peace and security.
4. The establishment of a new EU Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM-Moz).
5. The promotion of the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) in the North-West Indian Ocean.
6. The participation of the EU in the ASEAN Regional Forum.
7. The promotion of EU-funded thematic projects with a regional outreach such as CRIMARIO, ESIWA, and the Global Action on Cyber Crime Programme.

Besides the comprehensive EU Indo-Pacific strategy, several of its member states issued their own **national Indo-Pacific strategic documents** in order to (1) streamline the actions of their public institutions to the EU policy guidelines, (2) protect their national interests in the region, and (3) claim an enhanced role in the implementation of the EU Indo-Pacific Strategy.

One of these states is **Germany**, which on **2020** issued an official document entitled '**Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific**'.¹⁰⁶ The objectives set in the German strategic document are the following:

1. Strengthening multilateralism.¹⁰⁷
2. Tackling climate change and protecting the environment.¹⁰⁸
3. Strengthening peace, security and stability.¹⁰⁹

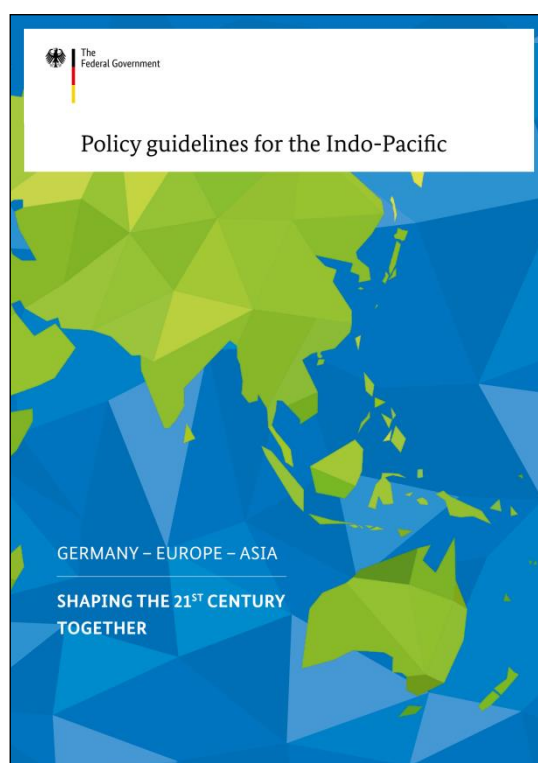
¹⁰⁶ The Federal Government. (2020). *Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific* [Official Document]. <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2380514/f9784f7e3b3fa1bd7c5446d274a4169e/200901-indo-pazifik-leitlinien--1--data.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 23-26.

¹⁰⁸ The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 29-33.

¹⁰⁹ The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 35-39.

4. Promoting human rights and the rule of law.¹¹⁰
5. Strengthening rules-based, fair and sustainable free trade.¹¹¹
6. Rules-based networking and the digital transformation of regions and markets.¹¹²
7. Bringing people together through culture, education and science.¹¹³



Picture 17: The cover page of the German 2020 Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific

Source: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2380514/f9784f7e3b3fa1bd7c5446d274a4169e/200901-indo-pazifik-leitlinien--1--data.pdf>

The second major EU member-state that issued an Indo-Pacific strategic document is **France**, which on **2021** issued an official document entitled '**France's**

¹¹⁰ The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 41-44.

¹¹¹ The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 47-51.

¹¹² The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 53-57.

¹¹³ The Federal Government. (2020). Ibid, 59-61.

Indo-Pacific Strategy,¹¹⁴ which was updated on **2022**.¹¹⁵ The objectives set in the French strategic document are broken down in the following four pillars:

1. **Security and Defence**,¹¹⁶ which comprised the following main objectives:

- ✓ Ensuring and defending the integrity and sovereignty of France, the protection of its citizens, its territories, and its EEZ.
- ✓ Contributing to the security of regional areas by promoting military and security cooperation.
- ✓ Preserving, alongside its partners, access to common areas in a context of strategic competition and increasingly restrictive military environments.
- ✓ Participating in the maintenance of strategic stability and military balances of power through international action based on multilateralism.
- ✓ Anticipating security risks brought about by climate change.

2. **Economy, connectivity, research, and innovation**,¹¹⁷ which comprised the following main objectives:

- ✓ Ensuring diversification of supply of strategic goods and reducing dependencies.
- ✓ Promoting and enforcing existing international standards in order to establish a fair competitive framework.
- ✓ Meeting needs in terms of connectivity and infrastructure.
- ✓ Supporting efforts of French companies in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ✓ Deepening partnerships in research and innovation.

3. **Multilateralism and the rule of law**,¹¹⁸ which comprised the following main objectives:

¹¹⁴ Government of the French Republic. (2021). *France's Indo-Pacific Strategy* [Official Document]. https://franceintheus.org/IMG/pdf/Indopacifique_web.pdf

¹¹⁵ Government of the French Republic. (2022). *France's Indo-Pacific Strategy* [Official Document (2nd updated version)]. https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/en_dcp_a4_indopacifique_022022_v1-4_web_cle878143.pdf

¹¹⁶ Government of the French Republic. (2022). Ibid, 54-56.

¹¹⁷ Government of the French Republic. (2022). Ibid, 57-59.

- ✓ Promoting multilateralism in countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ✓ Contributing to strengthening regional centres of cooperation.
- ✓ Fostering strong involvement and better visibility of the European Union.
- ✓ The central importance of the rule of law and the primacy of the law of the sea.
- ✓ Promoting the rule of law, particularly when it comes to international human rights law, environmental and social standards, rules of international trade and freedom of navigation, all while ensuring respect for the sovereignty of nations.



Picture 18: The cover page of the French 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy

Source: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/en_dcp_a4_indopacifique_022022_v1-4_web_cle878143.pdf

4. **Climate change, biodiversity, sustainable management of oceans,**¹¹⁹ which comprised the following main objectives:

¹¹⁸ Government of the French Republic. (2022). Ibid, 60-62.

¹¹⁹ Government of the French Republic. (2022). Ibid, 63-65.

- ✓ Increasing partner involvement in the region in fighting climate change and in making progress on energy transition.
- ✓ Fostering strengthening of actions for biodiversity.
- ✓ Developing partnerships for ocean protection.
- ✓ Contributing to improving natural disaster response.
- ✓ Enhancing the use of the skills of our territories and regional cooperation on all of these issues.

7.2 The enlargement of the EU

As far as the enlargement –the accession of new states– of the EU is concerned,¹²⁰ it must be stressed that it occurs after a specific **accession process**,¹²¹ which includes the following steps:

1. The candidate state that wants to join the EU applies for EU membership.
2. The state's request is agreed to by all EU member states.
3. Formal accession negotiations are opened.
4. An Accession Treaty is composed, after accession negotiations on all policy areas are completed.
5. The Accession Treaty is submitted to the European Parliament, in order to get its consent.
6. The Accession Treaty is submitted to the European Council, in order to get its unanimous approval.
7. The Accession Treaty is signed by the EU member states and the candidate state.

¹²⁰ European Union. (n.d.). EU enlargement. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/eu-enlargement_en

¹²¹ European Council. (n.d.). EU enlargement policy. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/>

8. The signed Accession Treaty is ratified by all the contracting parties in line with their respective constitutional rules.

9. The candidate state becomes an EU member state on the date set out in the accession treaty.



Picture 19: Map indicating the 27 EU member-states

Source: https://european-union.europa.eu/easy-read_en

Furthermore, it needs to be noted that in order for a state to apply for EU membership it must satisfy specific accession criteria widely known as the **Copenhagen criteria**, which include political criteria, economic criteria, administrative and institutional criteria.¹²² So far the EU consists of twenty seven member-states (*Table 3*) and is currently assessing the **accession** of the ten **states** (*Table 4*).

No	ACCESSION	EU MEMBER-STATE	REMARKS
1	1952	France	Founding member
2		Germany	Founding member
3		Italy	Founding member
4		Belgium	Founding member
5		Netherlands	Founding member
6		Luxembourg	Founding member
7	1973	Denmark	
8		Ireland	
9		United Kingdom	Withdrew on 31 January 2020
10	1981	Greece	
11	1986	Portugal	
12		Spain	
13	1995	Austria	
14		Finland	
15		Sweden	
16	2004	Czechia	
17		Cyprus	
18		Estonia	
19		Hungary	
20		Latvia	
21		Lithuania	
22		Malta	
23		Poland	
24		Slovakia	
25		Slovenia	
26	2007	Bulgaria	
27		Romania	
28	2013	Croatia	

Table 3: The EU member-states and their date of accession

Source: Compiled by Georgios KOUKAKIS ©

¹²² EUR-Lex. (n.d.). Accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/accession-criteria-copenhagen-criteria.html>

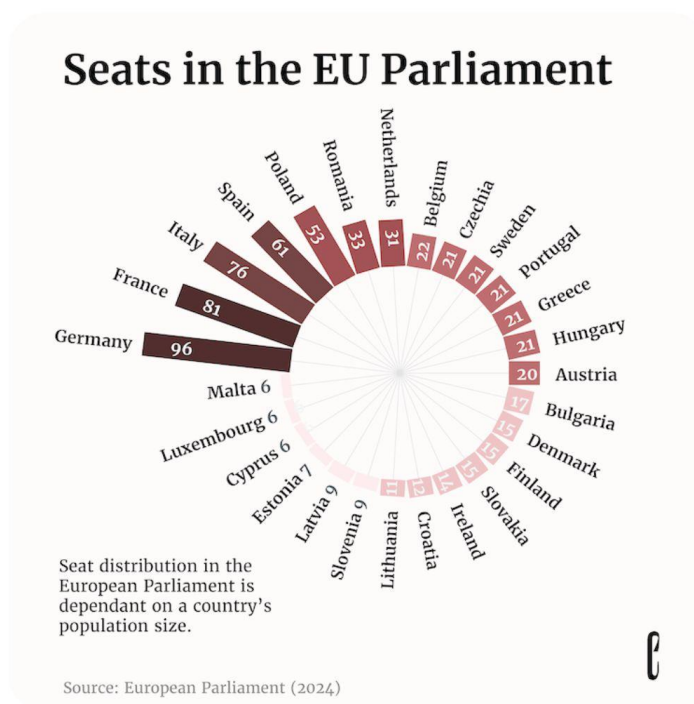
No	EU CANDIDATE-STATE	APPLICATION	CANDIDATE STATUS	NEGOTIATIONS OPENED
1	Albania	2009	2014	2020
2	Bosnia and Herzegovina*	2016	2022	-----
3	Georgia**	03 Mar 2022	2023	-----
4	Moldova*	03 Mar 2022	23 Jun 2022	-----
5	Montenegro	2008	2010	2012
6	North Macedonia	2004	2005	2020
7	Serbia	2009	2012	2013
8	Turkiye	1987	1999	2005
9	Ukraine*	28 Feb 2022	23 Jun 2022	-----
10	Kosovo***		Not Granted	-----
<p>Notes</p> <p>* The European Commission has given a positive recommendation on the accession of the candidate state.</p> <p>** The accession process halted in June 2024 due to back-sliding in matters of rule of law.</p> <p>*** This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.</p>				

Table 4: The EU candidate-states

Source: Compiled by Georgios KOUKAKIS ©

7.3 Where does the danger lie?

As far as the EU's and its member-states' presence in the **Indo-Pacific** is concerned, the danger lies in the fact that the European assets located in the specific region not only require increased logistic support due to the long distance from the European continent, but they are also deprived of other regions in the Europe where they could have been used instead. Moreover, the EU's attempt to safeguard the freedom of navigation and promote UNCLOS in the Indo-Pacific through its maritime presence, is against China's national interests, as the latter's actions in the South-China Sea have shown that China –at least when it comes to its maritime disputes–does not respect International Law, and will most probably have a negative impact on the relations between China and the EU and its member-states.



Picture 20: The number of the representatives of the EU member-states in the European Parliament

Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/1cqwn96/how_many_seats_does_your_state_get_in_the_eu/#lightbox

As far as the **enlargement** of EU is concerned, the danger lies in the fact that the accession of new member-states **affects in a negative** a significant number of **policy fields** and the **functioning of the EU institutions**. Besides the fact that according to the EU its enlargement benefits the Union –in the way that: (1) the European citizens and businesses have increased prosperity and opportunities, (2) the EU’s ‘voice’ becomes stronger on the world stage, (3) the cultural diversity is increased, (4) democracy, rule of law, and human rights are widely promoted, and (5) accession is seen as an investment in peace and security in Europe¹²³ it also makes the legislative procedures more complicated as in every accession the seat distribution in states the European Parliament changes (*Picture 20*), and the decision-making process more difficult as the possibility of reaching to unanimous decision is decreased.¹²⁴

¹²³ European Union. (n.d.). EU enlargement. Ibid.

¹²⁴ De Wall, T. (2024, May 16). The End of the Near Abroad. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/05/the-end-of-the-near-abroad?lang=en>

Moreover, **the possible accession of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine** –all of which are former Soviet Socialist Republics¹²⁵ that applied to join the EU short after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine (*Table 4*)– **to the EU will definitely act as a red flag for Russia**, as the latter views its bilateral relations with the states of its ‘*Near Abroad*’¹²⁶ as a matter of national interest, and the EU as a threat similar to NATO.¹²⁷ The real danger though, lies in the **acceptance for political reasons of candidate states** –especially the three aforementioned ones– **that have not fulfilled the all the accession criteria**, fearing that they will be attracted by other actors. This will most probably lead to the **overall malfunctioning of the EU** for many reasons,¹²⁸ which was stressed by the Press Secretary of the Russian President during a statement on the possibility of the accession of Ukraine to the EU in which he noted that:

*“[...] to accept a country like Ukraine into the EU [...] would simply undermine the entire system of the European Union. And sober heads understand that this will be a load that the EU simply cannot lift, and the EU will fall apart [...]”.*¹²⁹

8. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, acknowledging the fact that we are living in an era of polycrises and permacrises and that –according to the old saying– extreme situations require extreme measures, it must be stressed that **the EU needs to proceed to several reforms regarding inter alia its Security & Defence sector**. Nevertheless, the leaders of EU and

¹²⁵ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, April 29). *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics summary*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Soviet-Union>

¹²⁶ For further information on the decision-making process of the EU visit: European Union. (n.d.). How EU policy is decided. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en#:~:text=EU%20decision%20making%20process,representing%20the%20EU%27s%20overall%20interests and European Commission. (n.d.). How decisions are made. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/how-decisions-are-made_en

¹²⁷ Lokker, N. (2024, July 15). For Putin, the EU Is a Bigger Threat Than NATO. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/15/russia-putin-nato-eu-ukraine-membership-threat-european-union/>

¹²⁸ Bechev, D. (2024, June 20). Can EU Enlargement Work?. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/06/can-eu-enlargement-work?lang=en¢er=russia- Eurasia>

¹²⁹ Teslova, E. (2023, December 22). Russia says Ukraine's accession to EU may undermine entire union's system. *Anadolu Ajansı*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/russia-says-ukraines-accession-to-eu-may- undermine-entire-unions-system/3089874>

its member-states need to **make sure that the core values in which the European Union was founded or its democratic functioning will not be affected** by these changes, keeping in mind Thomas Jefferson's quote which notes that:

"In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle, stand like a rock".¹³⁰

To achieve this, **internal security must become EU's first priority so that the European ambitions will not come at the expense of the security of the Union or its citizens.** Moreover, the European and EU leaders must not get carried away by the '*Indo-Pacific tilt*' trend driving most of the international actors' actions, but **assess the contemporary security situation and carefully plan their next move**, as according to the US President *Abraham Lincoln*:

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe".¹³¹

Finally, despite the fact that Security & Defence is a crucial sector for both state and non-state actors, **the 'hard power' of military force must always be the last resort** for every actor, as the use of diplomatic, economic, financial, informational, etc. means that constitute '*soft power*' has been proven to be quite effective in most cases. Thus, the EU must focus on establishing new partnerships, enhancing the old ones and promoting innovation through research & development. Besides, what nature teaches us according to *Charles Darwin* is that:

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, not the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change".¹³²



¹³⁰ Marschhausen, J. (2018, August 16). In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock. *Life in Focus*. <https://lifeinfocus.me/2018/08/16/in-matters-of-style-swim-with-the-current-in-matters-of-principle-stand-like-a-rock/>

¹³¹ Malsam, W. (2024, August 22). 34 of the Best Planning Quotes. *Project Manager*. <https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/planning-quotes>

¹³² Ibid.

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Annex A. The EU-Moldova Security & Defence Partnership



SECURITY AND DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

1. The European Union (EU) and the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) face an increasingly challenging security environment inter alia due to ongoing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU and Moldova are committed to strengthening rules-based international order and upholding the respect for the United Nations (UN) Charter.
2. Relations between the EU and Moldova are based on the Association Agreement (including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area -DCFTA-) and founded on shared values of democracy, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. The Association Agreement refers to a joint commitment to deepen cooperation of the parties in the field of security and defence.
3. The EU recognised Moldova's substantial progress and commitment to reforms on its EU path. In view of this, the European Council in December 2023 took the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Moldova and in March 2024 invited the Council to swiftly adopt the negotiating framework and to take the work forward without delay.
4. The EU and Moldova have respectively adopted important strategic documents that will guide their security and defence policies for the upcoming years. The EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence adopted in 2022 sets out a clear vision for a more robust EU role in security and defence, with strong tailored partnerships at its core. Moldova's National Security Strategy, adopted in December 2023, identifies EU accession as one of the key objectives and aims at expanding collaboration with the EU and other allies and partners, to address transnational challenges.

5. Both the EU and Moldova seek to seize the momentum to further intensify cooperation to better address shared challenges and strengthen Moldova's resilience. The EU and Moldova therefore undertake to further develop, deepen and strengthen cooperation and dialogue across the whole range of security and defence topics, making use of existing frameworks and exploring new cooperation avenues, taking into account that security increasingly encompasses a broader range of closely linked dimensions, such as cyber and hybrid threats, including disinformation.

General Framework

6. The EU and Moldova have decided to establish and implement a tailor-made, mutually beneficial Security and Defence Partnership, underpinned by a series of dialogue mechanisms to provide steering and oversight:

- ◇ Making use of the EU-Moldova Association Council to ensure monitoring of the implementation of the Security and Defence Partnership and provide guidance as appropriate.
- ◇ The annual EU-Moldova High Level Political and Security Dialogue (at the EU side Political Director and Moldova's side Foreign Minister/State Secretary) will be a key format to discuss political and security landscape of the region, as well as to discuss peace, security and defence issues.
- ◇ Upgrading the existing EU-Moldova security and defence consultations to an annual EU-Moldova Security and Defence Dialogue at Head of Directorate / Managing Director level, to discuss the broad strategic environment, thematic and geographic security and defence issues, to explore possible cooperation and, as appropriate, to prepare deliverables and ground for discussions at the EU-Moldova Association Council and the EU-Moldova High Level Political and Security Dialogue.
- ◇ Exploring the establishment of additional thematic consultations on specific domains of shared interest (such as on cyber issues, countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) etc).

7. The EU and Moldova will work toward expanding the scope of and increasing the classification level of information that can be exchanged based on the current agreement on security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information, by assisting Moldova in transposing and

implementing the EU standards and building capacities related to protection of classified information, including exchange of the classified information in digital format.

8. The EU and Moldova will increase coordination in multilateral fora, including with other like-minded partners in relevant areas.

Areas of Cooperation

9. In addition to exchanges on security and defence policies and relevant regional security, as well as strategic and geopolitical issues in order to better align each other's policy, the EU and Moldova will hold targeted consultations and boost cooperation in the following areas:

EU CSDP missions and operations

10. Moldova will continue its participation in the EU CSDP missions and operations. The EU and Moldova will continue developing and strengthening Moldova's military forces and capabilities, including with a view to consolidate participation in EU military CSDP missions and operations. This may entail, once decided, Moldova's contribution to the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity deployment, as well as in EU military exercises, including live ones, as appropriate. The EU and Moldova will examine options for developing Moldova's civilian capacities with a view to experts' participation in EU civilian CSDP missions.

Countering hybrid threats

11. The EU and Moldova will further deepen cooperation on countering hybrid threats, including by sharing analysis and promoting cooperation between academic institutions, think tanks and centres of excellence on both sides.

12. The EU and Moldova will continue the follow-up to the relaunched Hybrid Risk Survey completed in 2023, including the implementation of its recommendations.

13. The EU Partnership Mission in Moldova (EUPM) will contribute to strengthen Moldova's crisis management structures and enhance its resilience to hybrid threats.

14. The EU and Moldova will share best practices in developing strategies, structures and policies, including diplomatic responses to hybrid threats, and will participate in exercises organised by both sides as appropriate.

Cyber issues

15. The EU and Moldova will deepen the existing cooperation, including by enhancing regular exchanges on the cyber threat landscape, respective policy frameworks and practical cooperative efforts in multilateral fora, including the UN. The EU and Moldova will also exchange on tools to prevent, deter and respond to malicious cyber activities, including through diplomatic measures in the framework of EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox.

16. The EU will further support Moldova's efforts to strengthen cyber resilience, including through cyber capacity building and rapid response assistance, where relevant. EUPM will further provide strategic advice and operational support to Moldova's National Cyber Security Agency. The EU will continue supporting Moldova with the implementation of the 2023 Cybersecurity law.

Capacity building in security and defence

17. The EU and Moldova will continue advancing cooperation under the European Peace Facility to enhance Moldova's national security, stability and resilience in the defence sector. Building on EPF support, the EU will continue to support the Moldovan Armed Forces efforts to enhance their operational effectiveness, accelerate compliance with EU standards and interoperability, and thereby better protect civilians in crises and emergencies. The EU will continue to support the strengthening of Moldova's capacities to participate in EU military CSDP missions and operations.

Strategic communications and countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)

18. The EU and Moldova will proactively share information on threats assessments in the disinformation domain through bilateral exchanges on FIMI and explore the possibility for operational cooperation.

19. The EU will further support Moldova in building capacities of its institutions to counter FIMI and to increase information resilience of the population, including by operationalisation of the Center for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation.

Non-proliferation and disarmament, conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons (SALW)

20. The EU and Moldova will deepen consultations on non-proliferation, disarmament, conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons.

Counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism

21. The EU and Moldova will explore the potential for cooperation on CT related matters by designing activities for greater interaction between CT-P/CVE agencies, such as addressing the online dimension of radicalisation or the community policing approach to countering violent extremism.

Consultations on relevant defence initiatives, tools and instruments

22. The EU and Moldova will consult on their respective defence initiatives, tools and instruments. They will i.a. explore the possibilities and interest for Moldova's participation in PESCO projects, in line with the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects, in accordance with the relevant EU and Moldova rules and procedures as well as in the initiatives related to defence industry, including joint procurement. In addition, holding technical consultations between the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the Ministry of Defence of Moldova will also be explored in line with the respective processes.

Training and education

23. The EU and Moldova will continue cooperation in the field of training and education related to the CSDP, including developing cooperation with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). The activities will include participation in the ESDC activities, organising training and education activities in collaboration with an ESDC Network Member as the ESDC Associate Network Partner (e.g. the Armed Forces Military Academy and Ștefan cel Mare Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs).

Integrated border management

24. The EU and Moldova will explore opportunities for further cooperation in the external dimension of integrated border management, including irregular migration/human trafficking, fight against transnational organised crime and arms trafficking using the platform offered by the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova (Security Hub).

Women Peace and Security

25. The EU and Moldova are committed to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which consists of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, and will ensure that gender equality is integrated in their areas of cooperation on security and defence.

26. Therefore, the EU and Moldova will exchange good practices on implementing women, peace and security commitments, and continue close collaboration to ensure gender equality as a political and security related priority and with an aim to reinforce joint responses to current and emerging security and geopolitical shifts.

Way Forward

27. The areas identified in the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed regularly in the framework of the EU-Moldova Security and Defence Dialogue, taking stock of progress made, giving further impetus, and reporting to the EU-Moldova Association Council with a view to exploring ways to further strengthen and develop the cooperation.

28. The content of the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed as appropriate.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/security-and-defence-partnership_eu-md_for-website-publication.pdf

Annex B. The Strategic Agenda 2024-2029





The European Union was founded on the imperative of securing peace in Europe, building on cooperation, solidarity and common economic prosperity. This original promise still guides us and serves as the basis for our priorities for a strong and sovereign Europe.

The global political landscape is being reshaped by strategic competition, growing global instability, and attempts to undermine the rules-based international order. Russia has brought war back to our continent. In our neighbourhood, the situation in the Middle East is dramatic. Our natural environment is facing increasing damage and disruption due to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The fast development of new technologies brings opportunities and potential risks.

These unprecedented challenges have led us to break new ground in our cooperation and integration in the past five years. Together, we have set key goals to fight climate change and put in place an ambitious framework for the digital transition. Together, we developed and distributed vaccines across Europe and beyond and set up a major recovery fund in response to a pandemic that affected our societies in unforeseeable ways. Together, we protected our economies during the energy crisis. And together, we have been providing Ukraine with significant military and economic support to defend itself against Russia's war of aggression and protect European security. But we will not rest here. We will live up to the call of the Union's founders and ensure that the creativity of our responses matches the size of the challenges ahead of us.

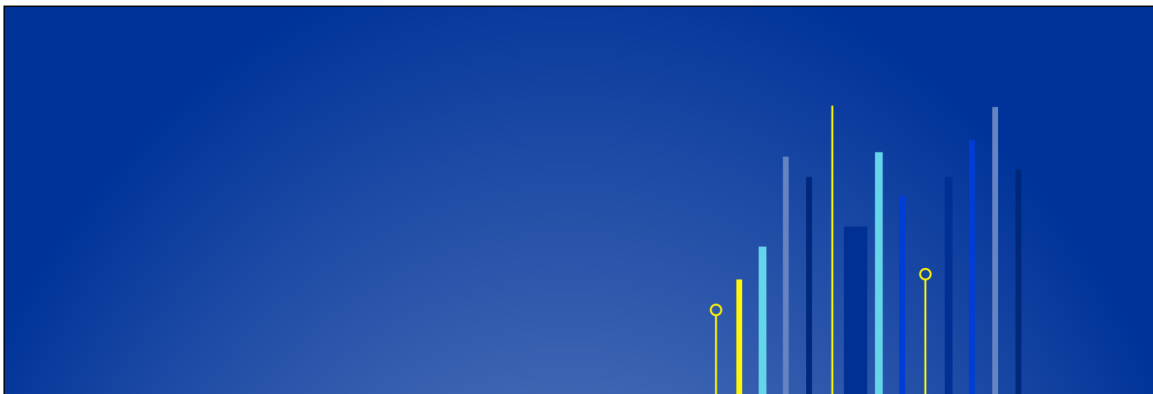
As the Union and Member States, we will combine our strengths and resources to face the coming years with unity and resolve. We will address the aspirations of our citizens.

We will strengthen our competitiveness and become the first climate-neutral continent, making a success of the climate and digital transitions, leaving no one behind. We will tackle the challenges of migration. We will take the necessary responsibility for our security and defence and reinforce our capacity to act to defend our interests and become more influential in the world. We will take the lead in addressing global challenges, championing international law and institutions, fair global governance, inclusive multilateralism and sustainable growth and development.

Strong and competitive social market economies will be the driving force in achieving our ambitions. In today's hypercompetitive world, we need to unleash the European spirit of entrepreneurship. Europe is a continent of doers, makers and innovators. Trusting our companies to turn risks into opportunities will spur investment, boost economic growth and make Europe a world leader in green and digital industries and technologies.

Our values and the rule of law are our compass, both internally and externally. They are the foundation for a stronger, more prosperous and more democratic Union for our citizens.

The European Council agrees on the following priorities and invites the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to put them into action during the next institutional cycle, respecting the institutional balance of powers as set out in the Treaties and the principles of conferral, subsidiarity and proportionality. The next Multiannual Financial Framework for the Union will have to reflect these priorities, ensuring that the EU budget is fit for the future and that European responses are given to European challenges. In this respect, we will work towards the introduction of new own resources.



A free and democratic Europe

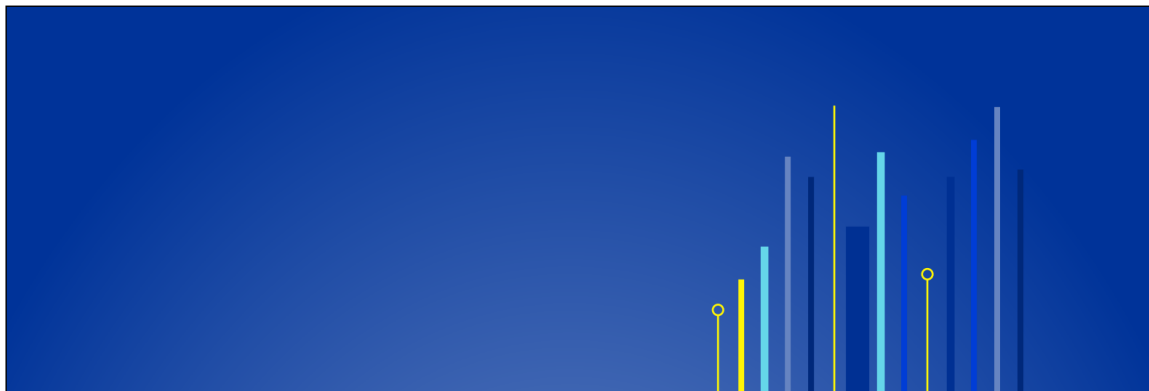
Upholding European values within the Union

Our values are our strength. We will protect and promote our founding values – respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities – which remain the cornerstone of our Union.

We will promote and safeguard respect for the rule of law, which is the basis of European cooperation, upholding the principles of objectivity, non-discrimination and equal treatment of Member States. We will strengthen our democratic resilience, including by deepening citizen engagement, protecting free and pluralistic media and civil society, tackling foreign interference and countering attempts at destabilisation, including through disinformation and hate speech. We will strengthen democratic discourse and ensure that tech giants take their responsibility for safeguarding democratic dialogue online. We will promote our cultural diversity and heritage.

Living up to our values at global level

The European Union shall continue to be the strongest supporter of the international legal order, steadfastly upholding the United Nations and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. In particular, the European Union will pursue efforts to promote global peace, justice and stability, as well as democracy, universal human rights and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all international fora. We will strive for a reformed multilateral system, making it more inclusive and more effective.



A strong and secure Europe

Ensuring coherent and influential external action

The world around us has become more confrontational, transactional and uncertain. We will adapt to the ever-evolving circumstances, asserting the European Union's ambition and role as a strategic global player in the new multipolar geopolitical context.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine is also an attack on a free and democratic Europe. The European Union will stand by Ukraine as it fights to retain its independence and sovereignty and regain its territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We will also support its reconstruction and the pursuit of a just peace. We will intensify our work to promote security, stability, peace and prosperity in our neighbourhood and beyond.

We will closely engage with partners and develop mutually beneficial strategic partnerships to address shared challenges. We will leverage both internal and external EU policies in the best interests of the Union in a well-coordinated manner.

Strengthening our security and defence and protecting our citizens

Europe must be a place where people are and feel free and safe. The European Union and Member States have taken bold steps to strengthen the Union's defence readiness and capacity, including increased defence spending. Going forward, we will invest substantially more and better together, reduce our strategic dependencies, scale up our capacities and strengthen the European defence technological and industrial base accordingly.

Increasing our security requires a solid economic base. We will mobilise the necessary instruments to bolster our security and the protection of our citizens, and to respond to new emerging threats. We will enhance interoperability between European armed forces. We will urgently improve conditions for scaling up the European defence industry by creating a better integrated European defence market and by promoting joint procurement. We welcome flagship projects and defence initiatives by Member States. We will improve access to public and private finance, exploring all options, including through the enhanced role of the European Investment Bank Group as a catalyst.



A stronger and more capable European Union in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains, for those States that are members of it, the foundation of their collective defence. We will cooperate with transatlantic partners and NATO, in full respect of the principles set out in the Treaties and by the European Council, without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and taking into account the security and defence interests of all Member States.

To strengthen security within the Union, we will fight crime offline and online and prevent and tackle corruption, using all the law enforcement and judicial cooperation tools of our Union. We will be resolute against organised crime and disrupt the flow of illicit profits from cross-border criminal activity. We will fight attempts to sow division, radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism.

The European Union will strengthen its resilience, preparedness, crisis prevention and response capacities, in an all-hazards and whole-of-society approach, to protect our citizens and societies against different crises, including natural disasters and health emergencies. We will step up our collective response to cyber and hybrid warfare, foreign manipulation and interference and threats to our critical infrastructure. We will pay particular attention to enhancing societal resilience.

Preparing for a bigger and stronger Union

The new geopolitical reality underscores the importance of enlargement as a geostrategic investment in peace, security, stability and prosperity. There is new dynamism in the enlargement process. Both the EU and aspiring members now have a responsibility to make the most of this opportunity and communicate this clearly.

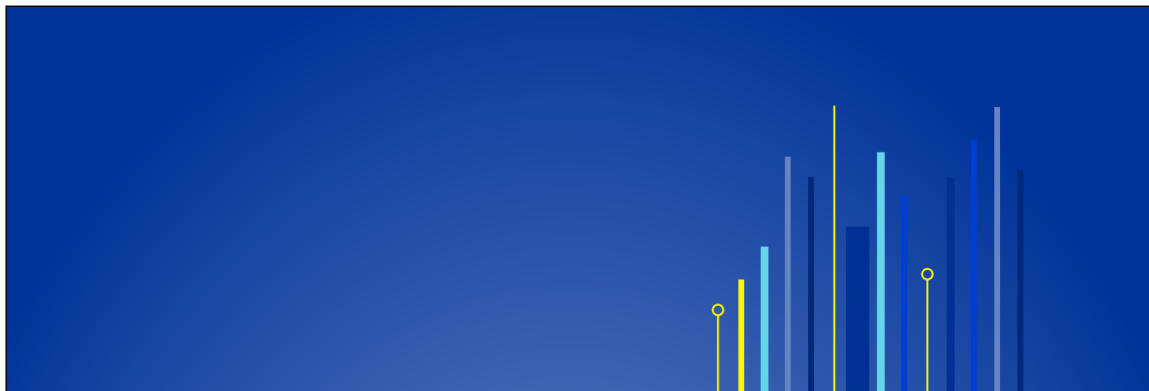
The European Union will follow a merit-based approach to accession with tangible incentives. It will support aspiring members in meeting the accession criteria through appropriate instruments and will use all possibilities to further advance gradual integration. It will also encourage reform efforts, notably with regard to the rule of law, as well as regional integration, good neighbourly relations, reconciliation and the resolution of bilateral disputes.

In parallel, the European Union will undertake the necessary internal reforms to ensure that our policies are fit for the future and financed in a sustainable manner and that the EU institutions continue to function and act effectively.

Pursuing a comprehensive approach to migration and border management

Ensuring that citizens can move freely within the EU is a fundamental achievement of the European Union and requires the proper functioning of the Schengen area. With this freedom comes the shared responsibility to fulfil and implement our common obligations and protect the EU's external borders effectively. This is a prerequisite for guaranteeing security and upholding law and order, in line with our principles and values.

Through its comprehensive partnerships approach, the European Union will continue to cooperate in a mutually beneficial way with countries of origin and transit. Together, we will address the long-term challenges of irregular migration and its root causes and work on returns. We will also explore the opportunities of migration, including through legal pathways. We will fight smuggling networks and break the business model of those who profit from this inhumane trade. We will consider new ways to prevent and counter irregular migration. We will find joint solutions to the security threat of instrumentalised migration.



A prosperous and competitive Europe

Bolstering our competitiveness

We are determined to strengthen the basis of our long-term competitiveness and improve citizens' economic and social wellbeing. We will work to increase their purchasing power, create good jobs and assure the quality of goods and services in Europe. We will reinforce our sovereignty in strategic sectors and make Europe a technological and industrial powerhouse, while promoting an open economy. We will close our growth, productivity and innovation gaps with international partners and main competitors. This requires a significant collective investment effort, mobilising both public and private funding, including through the European Investment Bank.

Our greatest asset in that endeavour is the Single Market, the long-term engine of prosperity and convergence that enables economies of scale. We will therefore deepen it further, notably in the areas of energy, finance and telecommunications. We will remove remaining barriers, particularly in relation to services and essential goods, and ensure equal access to the Single Market through improved connectivity. We will ensure a balanced and effective state aid and competition framework to preserve the integrity of the Single Market

and a level playing field. SMEs will remain central to Europe's economic and social fabric.

To unlock the necessary investment potential, we will accelerate financial integration by achieving the Capital Markets Union and completing the Banking Union. We will create truly integrated European capital markets, which are accessible and attractive to all citizens and businesses and benefit all Member States.

Learning from our experience, we will not allow the undermining of our open markets. We will strongly promote the central role of the WTO and pursue an ambitious, robust, open and sustainable trade policy that allows fair trade agreements, opens third country markets to EU companies, defends EU interests, allows resilient and reliable supply chains to develop, guarantees a true level playing field and creates reciprocal market access opportunities. We will strengthen our economic security, reduce harmful dependencies and diversify and secure strategic supply chains, including by enhancing our maritime security. We will build up our own capacity in sensitive sectors and key technologies of the future, such as defence, space, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, semiconductors, 5G/6G, health, biotechnologies, net-zero



technologies, mobility, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and advanced materials. Promoting innovation and research, as well as leveraging tools such as public procurement, is crucial in this endeavour.

Making a success of the green and digital transitions

On our path to climate neutrality by 2050, we will be pragmatic and harness the potential of the green and digital transitions to create the markets, industries and high-quality jobs of the future. We will provide a stable and predictable framework and create a more supportive environment for scaling up Europe's manufacturing capacity for net-zero technologies and products. We will invest in ample cross-border infrastructure for energy, water, transport and communications.

We will pursue a just and fair climate transition, with the aim of staying competitive globally and increasing our energy sovereignty. Accelerating the energy transition, we will build a genuine energy union, securing the supply of abundant, affordable and clean energy. This will require ambitious electrification using all net-zero- and low-carbon solutions, and investment in grids, storage and interconnections. We will develop a more circular and resource-efficient economy, driving forward the industrial development of clean technologies, reaping the full benefits of the bioeconomy, embracing clean and smart mobility with adequate network infrastructure. This will increase real income and purchasing power, thereby improving living standards for all EU citizens.

We will exploit the untapped potential of data, promote data interoperability, and encourage investment in game-changing digital technologies in Europe, advancing their application throughout the economy, while ensuring privacy and security. This will require cutting-edge digital infrastructure. Building on the EU digital identity, we will create new EU-wide high-quality e-services.

The European Union will promote a competitive, sustainable and resilient agricultural sector that continues to ensure food security. We will champion vibrant rural communities and strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain. We will continue to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems, including oceans. We will strengthen water resilience across the Union.

Promoting an innovation- and business-friendly environment

In an increasingly knowledge- and data-driven economy and a global and competitive market, Europe will accompany, nurture and grow its businesses and industry, attract and retain talent, and remain an attractive location for investment.

We will boost Europe's research and innovation capacity in emerging and enabling technologies, including for dual use. Achieving industrial strength in key sectors also requires the Union to safeguard fair competition, fight unfair practices, and ensure a level playing field both internally and globally.

To allow businesses to flourish, we will ambitiously reduce the bureaucratic and regulatory burden at all levels, and simplify, accelerate and digitise administrative procedures, including permitting, to meet the needs of a modern, dynamic and consumer-friendly investment environment. We commit to better regulation, including by making the best use of digital government and taking into account the needs of SMEs and start-ups. We will work in an integrated, coordinated and coherent way across all policy areas and put special focus on implementation and enforcement of agreed policies.



Advancing together

Economic growth needs to benefit all citizens. We will uphold the social dimension of the European Union so that everyone can seize the opportunities offered by the green and digital transitions. We will address in a comprehensive way demographic challenges and their impact on competitiveness, human capital and equality. We will ensure that the European economic model and welfare systems support a thriving longevity society. In this context, we will further strengthen health cooperation at European and international level and improve access to medicines across the Union.

We will invest in people's skills, training and education throughout their lives and encourage

talent mobility within the European Union and beyond. Recalling the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU and Member States will aim to strengthen social dialogue, uphold equal opportunities and reduce inequalities. Increasing participation in the labour market and promoting youth employment will be of key importance in the coming years.

To promote the overall harmonious development of the EU, we will enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion, aiming for continuous upward convergence, reducing disparities, increasing our resilience and competitiveness and stimulating long-term growth across the Union.

Our destiny is in our own hands. We have the talent, courage and vision to successfully shape our future. This Strategic Agenda is our joint pledge to unequivocally serve our citizens and fulfil our founding objective of peace and prosperity.

Source: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/4aldqfl2/2024_557_new-strategic-agenda.pdf

Annex C. The CV of the new Commissioner for Defence & Space



The CV of Andrius Kubilius is presented in a professional layout. At the top left is the European Commission logo, featuring the European Union flag and the text 'European Commission'. Below this is a dark blue horizontal band with a white box containing the name 'Andrius Kubilius' in large blue font and 'Lithuanian nationality' in smaller white font. To the right of this box is a portrait of Andrius Kubilius, a man with glasses wearing a suit and tie. Below the blue band is a white area containing a vertical timeline of his career. The timeline is marked by a vertical line with square icons at each point. The entries are as follows:

- Member of the European Parliament**
2019–present
- Member of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas)**
1992–2019
- Prime Minister of Lithuania**
1999–2000 and 2008–2012
- Leader of the Opposition**
2005–2006 and 2012–2016
- Deputy Speaker of the Seimas**
2006–2008
- Chairman of the Homeland Union party**
2003–2015
- First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas**
1996–1999
- Postgraduate studies, Vilnius State University (currently Vilnius University)**
1981–1984
- Diploma of Physicist, Faculty of Physics, Vilnius State University**
1974–1979

Source: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/6fced629-08e3-4175-98e9-caa1a8337f8d_en?filename=CV%20Kubilius.pdf

Annex D. The Mission Letter for the Commissioner for Defence & Space



European Commission

MISSION LETTER

Brussels, 17 September 2024

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Andrius Kubilius
Commissioner-designate for Defence and Space

Dear Andrius,

The Commission we will serve in together will be called upon to make choices that will shape our Continent and our Union for years and decades to come. In a time of great global instability and great expectations of Europeans, we must live up to that responsibility. **We must deliver and lead from the front**, working closely with the people and regions of Europe and the parliaments, governments and institutions that serve them.

This was the spirit of the Political Guidelines which I presented to the European Parliament in July 2024 – our common plan for European strength and unity. It focuses on ensuring our **security** in every sense in a more dangerous and turbulent world, on supporting people and citizens by strengthening our **prosperity**, our social market economy, green and digital transitions and sustaining our unique quality of life. We will strengthen our **democracy**, rally around our values and ensure that we are stronger at home. We will work with our partners and better assert our interests around the world.

Together, we will respond to the real and legitimate concerns and expectations that Europeans expressed at the last elections. We will be closer to people and businesses where it really matters with practical support and sustained investment. We will strive to **make Europe faster and simpler** in the way that we act – and in the way we interact with people. And we will work towards European unity at every turn, starting from within our College.

I am convinced that your experience, motivation, and European commitment will be an

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essential part of this team. This letter sets out my expectations for our collective work, as well as for your own mission.

New Commission, new approach

The priorities that I have set out in the Political Guidelines are not standalone areas of work. They are all connected and they will all impact each other. The same will be true for the work of the College as a whole and for each of its Members working together in a spirit of **collegiality**. I expect every Member of College to take **full ownership** of what is agreed.

Every Member of College is equal and every Member of College will have an equal responsibility to deliver on our priorities. With this in mind, I expect cooperation at all levels and for you to take an active role across all priorities and to facilitate access to your services where other Commissioners' responsibilities require it.

You will work with myself and the Commissioner for Budget, Anti-Fraud and Public Administration for a **simpler, more focused and responsive long-term budget** that reflects European strategic priorities and our ambition to be an **Investment Commission**.

Given the transformative nature of the next long-term budget – and in order to adapt to our modern approach and new spending priorities – **I will review the structure of the College and the missions** of each Member of College.

I would also like you all to play an active role in **supporting candidate countries to prepare for joining our Union** in your respective policy areas. I count on you when it comes to the pre-enlargement policy reviews and for our broader **ambitious reform agenda**.

I expect you to all contribute to achieving our agreed climate objectives, notably those set for 2030 and the climate neutrality goal for 2050.

As we head to 2030, each Member of College will ensure the delivery of the EU targets and objectives defined for that year, as well as of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** within their policy areas. The College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Goals.

Beyond what is listed in your individual mission below, I would like all Members of College to draw on recent or upcoming reports. This notably includes the **Draghi Report** on the future of European competitiveness, the **Niinistö Report** on how to enhance Europe's civilian and defence preparedness and readiness, the report from the **Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture**, as well as the **Letta report** on the future of the Single Market.

Working together for Europe, working closer to Europeans

To ensure trust and confidence of Europeans, I also want the College to lead when it comes to openness, transparency and representation.

First, **this Commission will strengthen its relationship with EU institutions**. I expect all Commissioners to be present in the European Parliament, both in plenary debates, in Committee meetings and in trilogues. Equally, I expect all Commissioners to engage with Member States and participate in the relevant Council formations. This is essential for ensuring accountability and better communicating our work and our planning.

I will ask you to organise a **structured dialogue** with your respective Parliamentary Committee to chart a way forward for any Article 225 Resolutions adopted by the Parliament calling for legislative proposals. This will be part of our work in ensuring **transparency and information flow** with the Parliament and Council, notably before major events and at key stages about international negotiations.

Second, this Commission will be **more present on the ground, more often and in more regions**. I would like you to visit Member States regularly. I encourage you to go local, visit places and meet Europeans from across our Union, including in cities, rural and sparsely populated areas. Our network of Representations will support you in this. You should meet with representatives from regional or local areas, notably relying on our network of EU Local Councillors, and to give **more visibility to EU projects** making a difference to people's lives on the ground. When engaging with our international partners you will also be supported by our network of EU delegations around the world.

I expect you to **actively communicate** on the Commission's actions and decisions and explain the benefits and opportunities stemming from our work. You should also help **tackle disinformation**, notably by providing clear and accurate information at all times.

Third, this Commission will start **a new era of dialogue** with citizens and stakeholders. You should organise a first edition of the **annual Youth Policy Dialogues** within the first 100 days so that young people can be heard and can help shape your work.

This will be part of our work in embedding **citizen participation** in our work. We will build on the Conference on the Future of Europe to instil a true and **lasting culture of participative democracy**. We will choose policy areas and proposals where recommendations from a European Citizens' Panel would have the greatest value and follow up on their proposals.

Fourth, every Member of College must show a **true European commitment** beyond doubt and be fully independent in their action. I expect full adherence to all applicable integrity, impartiality and ethical rules from all, starting with the **Code of Conduct**. You will ensure that the rules on transparency and meetings with interest representatives are fully respected, including for your staff and services. We will **strengthen our transparency system** by extending the requirements of the Transparency Register to all managers.

Fifth, we will ensure that the Commission becomes **more representative** of the people we serve. We have made a lot of progress in terms of gender balance across management but there is clearly more to be done. Reflecting the EU's strength in diversity, your Cabinet should ensure **gender and geographical balance**.

While the Berlaymont will remain your primary headquarters, you will also have an office within your Directorate-General and be expected to be present on a regular basis to **work closely with your staff and services**. We will collectively ensure that the Commission is an inclusive, respectful and safe workplace.

Making Europe simpler and faster

The success of this new Commission will be measured against our ability to meet the targets and objectives we set, notably as part of the **European Green Deal**.

You will be responsible for the delivery of the policy objectives and targets within your portfolio. To achieve this, you should make full use of all instruments for implementation and enforcement, including infringement proceedings.

You will ensure that existing rules are fit-for-purpose and focus on reducing administrative burdens and simplifying legislation. You must contribute to reducing reporting obligations by at least 25% – and for SMEs at least 35%. You should leverage the power of digital tools to deliver better and faster solutions. We must listen to all companies and stakeholders who work on a daily basis to comply with EU legislation. You will organise at least two **Implementation Dialogues** per year with stakeholders to align implementation with realities on the ground. You will prepare an **Annual Progress Report on Enforcement and Implementation** for your respective Parliamentary committees and Council formations.

You will also work to **stress test the EU acquis** and table proposals to eliminate any overlaps and contradictions and be fully digitally compatible, while maintaining high standards.

New legislation must ensure that our rules are simpler, more accessible to citizens and more targeted. You will ensure the principles of **proportionality, subsidiarity and Better Regulation** are respected, including through wide consultations, impact assessments, a review by the independent **Regulatory Scrutiny Board** and a new **SME and competitiveness check**. Proposals must be evidence-based and the Joint Research Centre, our internal scientific service, can support you in that work.

Your mission

I would like to entrust you with the role of Commissioner for Defence and Space.

Defending Europe is a European task, with Member States and EU institutions working closely together. The rising and complex nature of threats facing Europe have pointed to the need for Europe to take the next step on defence. We need to reflect on the future

European security architecture, and we need to invest in our own security and defence, in close cooperation with our partners and with NATO.

Member States will always be responsible for their armed forces – from doctrine to deployment. This is the absolute foundation for every European nation. But there is a lot that Europe can do to support – in terms of investment, industry, procurement, research, innovation and much more. At the heart of this work must be one simple principle: Europe must spend more, spend better, spend European.

I would like you to bring all of this work together under a true **European Defence Union**, working closely with the High Representative/Vice-President. You will also be responsible for the space portfolio, reflecting the increasingly contested nature of space and the links with our overall security and defence.

- Working with the High Representative/Vice-President, you will present the **White Paper on the Future of European Defence** in the first 100 days of the mandate. It should frame a new approach to defence and identify investment needs to deliver full-spectrum European defence capabilities based on joint investments, readying the EU and Member States for the most extreme military contingencies.
- Through this process, I want you to contribute to a **shared vision and ambition** across Council, Parliament, the public and other stakeholders. You will notably draw on the work of the **Niinistö report** on how to enhance Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness.
- I would like you to work with Member States on **strengthening military mobility**, by removing all remaining barriers. You should work with the Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism to further strengthen the **dual-use transport infrastructure corridors** across the Trans-European Network and promote a whole-of-government approach to the swift movement of military personnel and their materiel.
- I would like you to identify and **harness the EU's dual-use and civil-military potential** across all relevant domains, fully exploiting legal and regulatory margins.
- You will work on creating a true **Single Market for Defence** products and services, enhancing production capacity and fostering joint procurement of European equipment. You should propose action to lower the barriers to cross-border cooperation, reduce administrative burdens, and contribute to specialisation. You will make proposals to improve the **integration of SMEs in supply chains**.
- As proposed in the Draghi report, I would like you to work to **increase the aggregation of demand for defence assets** between groups of Member States and work with the Member States and NATO to pursue the further standardisation and harmonisation of defence equipment.
- Working with Member States and in close coordination with NATO, you will lead the work on proposing **Defence Projects of Common European Interest**. To that

end, I would like you to start working with Member States on the design and implementation of a **European Air Shield** and **cyber defence** common project, working closely with the High Representative/Vice-President.

- You will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the **European Defence Industrial Strategy**. You will support the swift conclusion of negotiations on the **European Defence Industry Programme** and then focus on its implementation, notably to promote and incentivise common procurement of European equipment.
- You will seek to reinforce of the **European Defence Fund** to further invest in high-end defence capabilities in critical areas such as naval, ground, air combat, space-based early warning and cyber.
- You will also rapidly implement the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (**EDIRPA**) and of the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (**ASAP**). You should look for ways to scale up such short-term measures to pave the way for a more ambitious future defence programme.
- You will work to **incentivise public and private investment in defence**, notably working with the European Investment Bank, other financial institutions, and private banks to help finance and de-risk common defence projects and defence innovation.
- You will contribute to the work to **address our vulnerabilities to cyberattacks and hybrid attacks** and build up our resilience and capacity to counter them more robustly and effectively.
- You will contribute to strengthening the **EU-NATO partnership**, in close cooperation with the High Representative/Vice-President. You will help to ensure that our cooperation with NATO continues to cover all threats, including those linked to cyber, hybrid or space.
- You will ensure the continuous implementation of the **EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence**, working with the High Representative/Vice-President.
- You should foster a strong and innovative **space industry**, maintaining the EU's autonomous, reliable and cost-effective access to space. You will focus on the development, deployment and use of EU space assets, including the Earth observation programme **Copernicus**, the EU's global and regional satellite navigation systems **Galileo** and EGNOS, and communication satellites GOVSATCOM and IRIS².
- In all aspects, including your cooperation with the European Space Agency, you will seek to foster cost efficiency, innovation, merits-based competition and an effective internal market for space products and services.
- You will lead the work on a future proposal for an **EU Space Law**. In this context, as proposed in the Draghi report, you will work to introduce **common EU standards and rules for space activities** and harmonise licensing requirements.

- You will also propose a **Space Data Economy Strategy** to tap into the potential of space-derived data, products, and technology.

As a rule, you will work under the guidance of the Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy. You will work closely with the High Representative/Vice-President. The Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space will support you in your work.

Way forward

The actions listed in this letter will shape your work. However, we will need to complete and adapt as we go along and I count on your ideas and expertise in this regard. In addition to College meetings and our continuous discussions, I will invite you every six months for a structured reporting meeting to discuss progress and challenges in delivering on your mission.

Reflecting the evolving nature of political priorities, the Commission must remain agile in allocating staff where most needed. I expect you to play a collegial role in this, by working with your services to identify efficiencies and contributing to corporate redeployment efforts across the Commission.

Given the scale of the challenges and the many issues in our in-tray, we must **hit the ground running on day one**. I invite you to take contact with your future services to prepare your hearing and the work ahead.

I look forward to working closely together for Europe.

Yours sincerely,

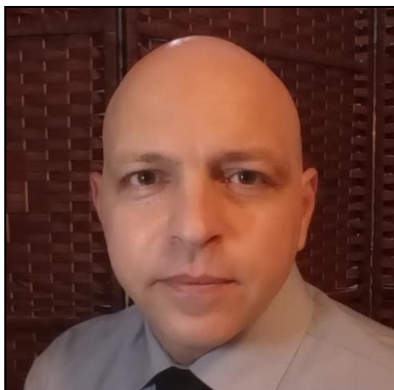


Dr. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission



Source: https://commission.europa.eu/document/1f8ec030-d018-41a2-9759-c694d4d56d6c_en

About the author



Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Georgios KOUKAKIS has graduated from the *Hellenic Military Academy* (2002), the *Hellenic Army War College* (2020) and the *Hellenic Supreme Joint War College* (2023). He retired in 2024 on his own initiative, after serving for 22 years as a Leader and Staff officer in several Special Forces and Infantry Units, and as an Instructor in the Hellenic Airborne School and the Hellenic Infantry School.

He holds a Master of Arts in ‘*Governance, Development and Security in the Mediterranean*’ from the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean (Rhodes, Greece) –having graduated 1st among his Class with his dissertation focusing on the prospects of establishing a *National Security Council* (NSC) in the Hellenic Republic (Greece)– and an Adult Instructor of the Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning Center (CE-LLC) of the University of the Aegean (Rhodes, Greece).

He is also a Senior Analyst in the *Center for International Strategic Analyses* (KEDISA), a Research Associate of *HERMES Institute of International Affairs, Security & Geoeconomy* (I.I.A.S.GE.) and a member of the *Hellenic Institute of Strategic Studies* (HEL.I.S.S.), *ALLILONnet* the Global Network of Greeks and Friends of Greece for Solidarity in the Professional Field and the *Mercury Negotiation Academy* (MNA). He has participated as a speaker in several seminars and conferences regarding international relations in the fields of foreign policy, security and defense.

Many of his articles and research papers have been published in the '*Global Security and Intelligence Notes*' (GSIN) and the 'South and South East Asia Security Research Centre' (SSEASRC) Research Notes of the Buckingham Centre of Security & Intelligence Studies (BUCSIS), the '*HAPSc Policy Briefs*' Journal of the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists, the '*NRDC-GR Herald*' Journal of NRDC-GR, the '*Military Review*' Journal of the Hellenic Army General Staff (HAGS), the '*Cultural Diplomacy Journal*' of the Hellenic Institute of Cultural Diplomacy (HICD).

In addition to his involvement in academic research regarding international relations, Georgios is a columnist in a number of foreign affairs, geopolitics and international affairs websites such as '*Foreign Affairs - The Hellenic Edition*', '*Policy Journal*', '*Geopolitics & Daily News*', '*HuffPost Greece*', '*Liberal*', '*Infognomon Politics*', '*LEP*' and '*Active News*'.

He is the co-author of the book (In Greek) '**National Security: Myths and Reality**' that was published in April 2023, and the Academic Head of the Educational Programme (in Greek) "**Security Studies in the Mediterranean (BASIC)**" of the CE-LLC of the University of the Aegean.

Email : g_k_koukakis@yahoo.gr

LinkedIn : [Georgios Koukakis](#)

Research Gate : [Georgios Koukakis](#)

Academia : [Georgios Koukakis](#)

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