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Future Trends and Scenarios

REPORT

Case study of the European Security Architecture: NATO and OSCE

DISCLAIMER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AOB	Any Other Business
ATU	Action against Terrorism Unit
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defence
CBM	Confidence and security Building Measures
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CERT/EU	EU's Computer Emergency Response Team
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIVCOM	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
CPCC	Civilian Planning on and Conduct Capability
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CYOC	Cyberspace Operations Centre
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DSG-CSDP	Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and Crisis Response
EaP	EU Eastern Partnership
EC	European Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDAP	European Defence Action Plan
EDF	European Defence Fund
EDI	European Deterrence Initiative
EDTIB	EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESA	European Security Architecture
ESCD	Emerging Security Challenges Division
ESDC	European Security and Defence College
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUAM	European Union Advisory Mission
EUFOR	European Union Force
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
EUISS	European Union Institute for Security Studies
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
EUMC	EU Military Committee
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission Georgia
EUMS	EU Military Staff
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
EUPAT	European Police Advisory Team
EUPM	European Union Police Mission
EUPOL Proxima	EU Police Mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
EUTM CAR	European Union Training Mission Central African Republic
EUTM Mali	European Union Training Mission Mali
EUTM Somalia	European Union Training Mission Somalia
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FCAST	Future Combat Aerial System
Hybrid CoE	European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization

IHEID	Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
IMS	International Military Staff
INTCEN	Intelligence and Situation Centre
ISAF	International Security and Assistance Force
ISPD	Integrated approach for Security and Peace Directorate
JISD	Joint Intelligence and Security Division
JSCC	Joint Support Coordination Cell
MBT	Main Battle Tank
MPCC	Military Planning and Conducting Capability
MRTT	Multirole tanker-transport
MS	Member States
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCIA	NATO's Communication and Information Agency
NCIRC	NATO's Computer Incident Response Capability
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
NRF	NATO's Response Force
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parallel and Coordinated Exercises
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PCC	Prague Capabilities Commitment
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PJC	Permanent Joint Council
PMG	Politico-military Group
PSC	Political Security Committee
SAP	EU's Stabilisation and Association Process
SECDEFPOL	Security and Defence Policy Directorate
SHADE-MED	Shared Awareness and De-confliction Mechanism
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SITCEN	Joint Situation Center
SMM	Special Monitoring Mission
SPMU	Strategic Police Matters Unit
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UN	United Nations
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
WEU	Western European Union
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WWI	First World War

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper is the second contribution to GLOBE's Work Package 4: Security and Migration. After the overview of the current configuration of the global governance of international peace and security offered in Deliverable 4.1, this case study concentrates on the configuration of regional security governance in Europe. Deliverable 4.2 intends to shed light on the present situation of the European security architecture (ESA), providing an overview of the purposes, challenges and interaction trends of the three main actors in this field: NATO, the OSCE and the EU. The ESA is an area of global governance which is in flux: while NATO and the OSCE were the traditional security institutions in the region, tensions within some organisations are rising, while the increasing relevance of the EU as a security and defence actor has the potential to impact the way the ESA has been structured since the end of the Cold War.

Current EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell has announced that it is time for Europeans to "adjust our mental maps to deal with the world as it is, not as we hoped it would be" (Borrell, 2020a), and von der Leyen's "geopolitical Commission" is another sign that regional security governance in Europe is likely to witness more changes in the coming years. Within this ever-shifting context, in which the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic will also have to be considered, this deliverable aims to contribute to the understanding of how the EU's approach to this security and defence may affect the future evolution of ESA. In order to do so, the following research questions are addressed in this case study: how have NATO, the OSCE and the EU evolved, shaping the European security architecture as it currently stands? How do the three organisations' membership, objectives and challenges compare and what synergies are possible between them? How does the EU approach its relationship with NATO and the OSCE in the light of the latest developments?

In section 2, an analysis of how critical events in recent history have affected the evolution of each of these organisations provides insights into the patterns still present nowadays. This paper therefore starts by analysing the historical development of the European security field from the aftermath of the Cold War to the present day, studying in parallel the evolution of the three identified actors throughout differentiated phases of history: the Cold War's immediate aftermath (1989-2001), the consequences of 9/11 (2001-2014), and the rethinking of European security leadership, with the annexation of Crimea being the inflection point (2014-2020).

Section 3 of this case study offers a clear picture of the present significance of NATO, the OSCE and the EU in terms of their contribution to European – and thus, indirectly, also global – security, through an analysis of their membership, objectives and challenges. In the case of the EU, special attention is paid to some of the most recent developments in security and defence cooperation.

In section 4, after offering a comparative analysis of the composition, objectives and challenges of the three actors, the study presents a comprehensive overview of the relations between the EU and NATO on the one hand, and the EU and the OSCE on the other hand. For both dyads, formal and informal cooperation mechanisms, the main areas of cooperation, and the chief obstacles to cooperation are considered, all while reflecting on the overlapping

memberships within the dyads. The paper concludes with final considerations for European security in section 5.

The methodology followed in this case study relies on extensive desk research, as well as semi-structured interviews. In terms of primary written sources, key agreements between actors, adopted policies and treaty provisions have been thoroughly considered, insofar as they contribute to framing the security architecture. The study has also drawn on the voluminous secondary literature in this field, consisting of a wide set of academic research as well as applied policy studies.

Desk research findings have been complemented with a set of semi-structured interviews with high-level professionals and experts to enrich the analysis of the current and future situation of European security architecture. The 12 interviewees were selected according to three principles: representation of all the international organisations studied (that is, NATO, the OSCE and the EU) as well as government representatives and independent experts, extensive knowledge and proven experience in relevant positions of a civilian or military nature, and gender representativeness.

Although gender parity was not achieved due to the availability of the selected female candidates (the final interviewees were 4 women and 8 men), the other two criteria have been fully observed. Thus, the interviewees hold (or were holding) positions at the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate of the EEAS (EU), the Service of Deputy Secretary General of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and Crisis Response of the EEAS (EU), the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) (EU), the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), the Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD) of NATO, the Research Division of the NATO Defense College, the OSCE's office of the Chairman-in-Office, the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and prestigious research and academic institutions.

Questions to our interviewees on the current state of affairs within and between the different organisations, on the highlights and main obstacles of their historical and recent evolution, and on the present challenges and ongoing developments have lent invaluable insights to this paper on realities at both the headquarters and on the ground. These insights have enriched the paper transversally. Thus, this study, whose target audiences include policymakers, academics, as well as the general public, contributes to the understanding of how the ESA stands today, while identifying its main points of contention.

Following the research questions, our findings show that, even if NATO, the OSCE and the EU have survived three decades of major changes in international relations, these organisations have yet to continue adapting to the current and forthcoming security threats, both traditional and non-traditional. Addressing some of these threats requires interorganisational cooperation, an interaction that is not always simple or smooth. As the present contribution finds, the different ways in which each actor seeks to ultimately achieve European peace and security, the internal problems often determined by the states that comprise them and, all in all, the very idiosyncrasies of each organisation, affect NATO, the OSCE and the EU in particular, as well as the synergies between them in general.

The special focus on the EU's latest developments in this paper highlights the fact that the EU's ambition for stronger security and defence cooperation is resulting in a certain functional overlap in matters traditionally handled by NATO, whose comparative advantage remains its military power. While cooperation – both formal and informal – between the EU and NATO is currently being enhanced and division of labour has been achieved on several occasions, important political limitations pose a burden on any attempt of furthering strategic cooperation.

The interaction between the EU and the OSCE is also considered, contributing to the analysis of the current configuration of the ESA. The OSCE, in addition to being blocked by the openly opposing interests of its members, sees how the EU acts in countries in the region, using such resources and political will that it often seems to relegate the OSCE to the background. Nonetheless, cooperation between these two organisations is maintained by making use of their respective comparative advantages and the broad vision of security that they share.

The multiple assets, capabilities, and resources of each of the organisations that make up the ESA make it a well-rounded system. However, major, mainly political, problems prevent this system of interlocking institutions from unleashing its full cooperative potential to address the threats of the 21st century even more effectively.

Finally, changes in the states and alliances that have historically been providers of regional and global security; the complex situation of multilateralism in general; and questions about a multipolar world in which the former hegemon appears to be withdrawing are some of the key trends in global governance that are dealt with transversally in this paper.

2 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

To gain an understanding of the current state of European security, this section highlights how historical events have influenced and shaped NATO, the OSCE and the EU, while presenting the main landmarks that have moulded their trajectories in their security and defence evolution.

Up until the fall of the Berlin Wall, the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region had been based on two military alliances: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact (officially called Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance). This situation of tension between the two superpowers of the time (the US and the USSR), which had allowed a certain stability due to the capacity to potentially destroy each other, disappeared as the bipolar system which had been in place for over forty years gave way to the emergence of a new world order (Kernic, 2006, p. 13). From that moment onwards, the evolution of the European security architecture can be structured in three phases: the aftermath of the Cold War, which spanned into the arrival of the 21st century, the consequences of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, whose effects were felt for over a decade, and the process of rethinking the leaderships in the European security field, which is currently underway and may be affected by the Coronavirus crisis.

2.1 The Cold War aftermath (1989-2001)

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, whilst US leaders called for the constitution of a new world order based on US-USSR collaboration under the legitimacy of the United Nations, it became clear to European leaders that there was a need to design a security system with a regional and global approach, taking into account the particular interests of all, so that the resulting architecture would be stable in the long run (Adler, 2008; Stewart, 2008). The aim was to avoid what had happened after WWI, and for that, a post-Cold War Europe had to reflect not only Europe's interests, but also those of the US and the Soviets (Webber et al., 2004, pp. 3–26). That new and constantly evolving world order led to the disappearance of some actors like the Warsaw Pact, the resurgence of some existing ones like the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the conversion of new ones like the European Union (instead of European Community), and the progressive transformation of some long-standing actors like NATO.

2.1.1 Fragmented system, scattered actors

In that regard, the **Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)**, which had been established in 1975 through the Helsinki Final Act (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1975) presented itself as the first natural choice for a comprehensive approach, as it involved all States in the region – including the US and the USSR – and it had succeeded in defining a broad concept of international security (Møller, 2008, p. 19; Mosser, 2015a, p. 580). The way in which security was defined – and which has come to this day with slight modifications – goes beyond a mere political-military perspective to include two more

dimensions[1]: one foreseeing economic and environmental development, and another one considering human rights protection.[2] Together with the consensus reached while defining "security" in the frame of the Conference, the fact that several member states – such as France, Germany and the USSR[3] – expressed interest for a strengthened CSCE shows that in the early 1990s this organisation[4] had a large potential which, nevertheless, was not fully realized in the following years (Fernandes, 2015, p. 92; Stewart, 2008, p. 268; Zellner, 2005, p. 391).

At that time, the CSCE was regarded by many of the Warsaw Pact states (particularly the Russian Federation) as the option that was organically destined to take the place of the security cooperation organisation *par excellence* (Ghebali, 2005, p. 375; Kramer, 2009, p. 42). Before Russia lost influence over many of the satellites it had commanded in the Soviet Bloc, the CSCE had been its preferred international channel for security issues, as the number of votes by both sides during the Cold War was balanced (Kozyrev, 2019, p. 469; Zellner, 2005, p. 393). The early 1990s are thus considered to be the only moment in which this the CSCE enjoyed some positive attention while being in the spotlight (Mosser, 2015a, p. 580). The end of bipolarity made it possible for the heads of state and government of 22 member countries of NATO and the former Warsaw Pact to sign in Paris the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) (OSCE, 1990). This paradigmatic agreement, which coincided in time, place and several actors with the signing of the **CSCE's Charter for a New Europe**[5], marked a new stage in security relations. Both agreements aimed at putting an end to the division of Europe and they were both based on the principles of mutual respect and the indivisibility of security.[6] The CFE was a milestone in cooperative security because it established limits to the

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[1] This classification stems from the "three-basket structure" in which the original decisions of the Helsinki Final Act were arranged: security (inviolability of borders, confidence building and disarmament), cooperation (economics, science and technology) and human issues (human contacts, information, culture and education). (Hopmann, 2005, p. 206; Møller, 2008, pp. 5–6)

[2] This broad approach to security is not only wide and comprehensive, but also closely linked to the so called "conflict cycle", the process followed by the CSCE during conflict and which stands out for avoiding coercive action. On this way, member states adopt early warning mechanisms, conflict prevention measures, crisis management processes and post conflict rehabilitation. All these phases make up the CSCE's conflict cycle.

[3] These and other states declared themselves in favour of a progressive transfer of NATO and the Warsaw Pact competences to the CSCE.

[4] Although it is not an international organisation in the traditional sense of the term (Steinbrück Platise & Peters, 2018, p. 2).

[5] Also called "the Charter of Paris". Adopted in 1990, it is considered to be the founding document of the new pan-European security order (CSCE, 1990).

[6] The purpose of the CFE treaty was security in Central Europe, based on the premise that the Warsaw Pact had a quantitative advantage in the event of a surprise offensive in Western Europe. The CFE limited the presence of five types of conventional weapon systems (battle tanks, armoured personnel carriers, artillery, combat helicopters and combat aircrafts), it established maximum quantitative ceilings in different regions and eliminated asymmetries (it established the reduction of such equipment to

presence of military forces in the different flanks in which the continent was divided (Ghebali, 2005, p. 379; Szubart, 2016, p. 4). Countries such as Hungary or Czechoslovakia had sought agreements with Moscow to withdraw their military troops (Kramer, 2003, p. 203), and mistakenly assumed that a transformed Warsaw Pact, as well as NATO, could be absorbed by the CSCE. However, the CSCE – despite its ambitious Charter of Paris for a New Europe and its allegedly inclusive model "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" – lacked the necessary capabilities and institutional backup to deal with the looming security crises[7] on the European continent (Mosser, 2015b, p. 10; Stewart, 2008, p. 268). It is in this context that the two other actors that this paper deals with gained traction. NATO, unlike its historical opponent, did not cease to exist after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the European Union, still known as the European Community at the time, became an actor of European security.

This was another essential change of that period: the **European Community** (EC) was **transformed** from an economic *Community* into a political *Union*, enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 (European Union, 1992). This landmark treaty established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as one of the three pillars on which the newly created Union rested – along with the so-called *Community* pillar, consistent of the European Communities upon which the Union had been founded, and the *Justice and Home Affairs* pillar. The EU's newly acquired status as a foreign policy actor was to be complemented later by a security and defence dimension (Tardy, 2018, p. 119). While the Maastricht Treaty would have been compatible with the pan-European security system set out in the CSCE's Charter of Paris,[8] the US – and by extension NATO – had a different vision of what the European security architecture of the early 1990s should look like (Adler, 2008, p. 208).

Indeed, for the US **NATO** was the channel through which they could **prolong their presence in Europe after the end of the Cold War** (Wallander, 2000, p. 723). According to the Treaty of Washington (NATO, 1949), however, this Alliance had been designed as a military organisation founded on the territorial defence of its member states, so, in the late 1980s, NATO had to reinvent itself if it wanted to justify its permanence within the European architecture (Vershbow, 2019, p. 428; Walker, 2019, p. 266). "Without a clear, convincing military danger, what rationale could there be for the complex and expensive organizations – principally NATO – which the West had maintained during the Cold War?" (Cornish, 1996, p. 751).

This meant taking on new tasks which transformed NATO from a provider of deterrence and defence to an exporter of stability (Adler, 2008, p. 208; Ringsmose, 2010, p. 326). This shift began most notably with the 1990 London Declaration, a context in which NATO assumed tasks such as political dialogue and cooperation that had hitherto been carried out by the CSCE and it aimed to specialise in crisis management operations (Møller, 2008, p. 19; Webber et al., 2004, pp. 9–14). These commitments were gathered at the 1991 Rome NATO Summit under the so-called "**New Strategic Concept**" (NATO, 1991), the official document that outlines NATO's purpose and goals and which, at the time, caused the – up until then – precise

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60,000 units), and did so by using a geographical division based on concentric circles and "flanks".
[7] Crisis wisely foreseen by neo-realists like Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 1979, pp. 161–210).
[8] The EU's pillar structure even coincided relatively well with the "three-basket structure" of the CSCE.

objectives of NATO to be replaced by a broader vision and a less specific mission (Friedman, 2017).

And so, in the face of possible Europeanist impulses (Walker, 2019, p. 263), the US – as the NATO's hegemonic power (Krahmann, 2003, p. 7) – managed to stay relevant in the old continent: they convinced France that NATO would be compatible with the ongoing transformation of the European Community into a political union, the United Kingdom that the CSCE should remain only a forum for dialogue with Eastern Europe, and Germany that it made sense to remain in the Alliance after its Reunification (Adler, 2008, p. 209; Kramer, 2009, pp. 39–61). In this way, the Europeans could still benefit from the American footprint in Europe and the US succeeded in avoiding the creation of an organisation under the auspices of the CSCE that could have centralised European collective security, as Russia wanted (Yost, 1998, p. 161; Zellner, 2005, p. 375).

Vis-à-vis its former Warsaw Pact adversaries, NATO conducted a major rapprochement with Soviet successor states under the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum created to enable dialogue and cooperation (Vershbow, 2019, p. 427).[9] In fact, the first meeting of the NACC was taking place when the Soviet Union dissolved, as recalled by Hamilton and Spohr (Hamilton & Spohr, 2019, p. xiv) and the confidence built during those political consultations paved the way for the launch of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) years later (Hamilton, 2019a, p. 341).

For the US, the USSR continued to threaten European regional stability, despite having given the brief impression of agreeing to share leadership with the Soviets. And, at the same time, it was clear that the US was also reluctant for Europeans to increase their defensive autonomy through the CFSP (C. Hill, 2011, p. 88). This was demonstrated when they pressured their European allies – and succeeded – in preventing them from integrating the Western European Union (WEU)[10] into the second pillar of the Maastricht Treaty (Salmon & Sheperd, 2003, p. 152).[11] As a sign of the US's willingness to accept a greater role for the EU in security as long

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[9] Later on, political consultation and cooperation contributed to build confidence and launch other initiatives like the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) (Van Ham, 2006, p. 33).

[10] The WEU was a multi-body organisation established by the Brussels Treaty of 1948 (and modified and completed by the Paris Agreement of 1954), by the governments of the Western Union (as well as Italy and Germany). The WEU was based on a binding commitment to mutual defence in the event of an armed attack in Europe (Article V) and while it was linked to NATO it also explicitly acknowledged the "undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO" (Van Ham, 2006, p. 9).

[11] In February 1991, the US sent what is known as the Bartholomew Memorandum to its European allies, warning them of their discontent in the face of a possible excessive strengthening of the European Community's military capabilities. Thus, the Memorandum stated that "while we understand that the logic behind political integration leads to a union that ultimately encompasses security affairs, we believe that the primary yardstick against which proposals and institutional innovations need to be measured is whether they actually enhance Alliance defensive capabilities and make Europe more secure…" (…) "Subordinating the WEU to the European Community would accentuate the separation and independence of the European

as it would not imply its complete autonomy, NATO foreign ministers agreed in 1996 to build up the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). For its part, the European allies also accepted to assume greater responsibility for security management. ESDI's aim was rebalancing roles and responsibilities between Europe and North America by improving European capabilities and making Alliance assets available for WEU-led crisis-management operations (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 15). Title V, Article J.4.2 of the Maastricht Treaty referred to the WEU as an "integral part of the development of the [European] Union", which could imply that a strong ESDI in which the WEU played a major role, would, consequently, "elevate the role of the EU" (Webber et al., 2004, p. 15). In the long run, however, this organisation, created in 1949 and dissolved in 2011, informally known as the "sleeping beauty" due to its lethargic existence[12], never led the provision of security within the framework of the EU, further channelled through the CSDP (Baqués Quesada, 2018, p. 35).

Consequently, the result of the new European security system of the early 1990s was **not a unitary system** based on shared interests and values. On the contrary, the security governance of Europe was characterised by its diffusion and increasing complexity, affecting substantive policy decisions (Hofmann, 2009, p. 50). Each organisation of this fragmented system adopted its own model – sometimes convergent, sometimes contradictory – based on the interests and priorities of certain members. The first cracks in this new architecture were revealed by the inability to avoid the crisis that hit the Balkans. This war came to demonstrate that crisis management required conflict prevention tools, coordinated use of civilian and military capabilities and means of post-conflict reconstruction.

2.1.2 The impact of the Balkan wars

When war broke out in Croatia in the summer of 1991, the three organisations studied were paralysed for several months, either because they lacked the capacity or because they were not interested in getting involved.[13] **The first to act was the CSCE**, which sent a mission of *rapporteurs* in December of that year to travel around the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Bermejo García, 2007, pp. 229–236). Since the CSCE was more of a human-rights oriented

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pillar from the Alliance, weaken the integrity of our common transatlantic security and defense which… remain crucial" (as quoted by Salmon & Sheperd, 2003, p. 152). Although France and Germany had indeed suggested the integration of the WEU into the EU, UK vetoed such a merger not to endanger "transatlantic solidarity" (Hofmann, 2011, p. 106).

[12] It did not conduct a single meeting between 1973 (the date of the UK's accession to the EU) and 1984.

[13] The US did not support any interventionist measure taken by NATO in the frame of the Balkans war until later in the conflict, taking advantage of the intention of the Europeans to take the lead. American interests, however, changed after the arrival of Bill Clinton to the Presidency.

institution than a military alliance (Wright, 2006, p. 291), it activated its mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes. However, it neither succeeded in preventing the conflict nor managed to resolve it peacefully. While it may have helped in the preparation of the subsequent CSCE Long-Duration Mission in Kosovo, Vojvodina and Zandzak (W. H. Hill, 2013, p. 3)[14], those efforts turned out to be futile, as this mission failed in 1993.

For their part, both NATO and the EC were busy rearranging their mission and vision: **NATO was working on a New Strategic Concept** (to be adopted later in the decade), and the EC was drafting the Treaty of Maastricht – the **CFSP was not in place yet**. In fact, even when it was in place, the CFSP envisaged in 1993 was almost void of content, which made NATO the only one of the three organisations with truly advanced military capabilities. This explains the growing relevance of the Atlanticist model throughout the 1990s.

The EU and its Europeanist model was deadlocked at the time, as the Treaty of Maastricht did not provide the EU with the institutional framework or the military capabilities required to act in the defence realm (Hofmann, 2011, p. 106; Howorth, 2000, p. 19). In theory, the EU – just like the CSCE – had conflict prevention tools, civil and military capabilities and post-conflict mechanisms at its disposal. In practice, however, it was very far from being able to ensure its own security, let alone that of neighbouring countries.

Meanwhile, the conflict in the Balkans was increasingly attracting the attention of other international organisations, especially the UN. On 25 September 1991, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 713, its first Resolution concerning the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which imposed an arms embargo and supported the European Communities initiatives (Wouters & Naert, 2001, pp. 547–548). Throughout the war, the UN played a very important role in the region, not only in trying to pacify the conflict,[15] but also in encouraging the efforts of regional organizations such as the European Community and its Member States (Bermejo García, 2007, p. 233).

The brutal events occurred in Bosnia in the summer of 1995 – especially the massacre in Srebrenica[16] and the bombing of the market in Sarajevo (Markale massacre)[17] – triggered the

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[14] The mandate for this missions did not include coercive action measures but rather the following tasks: "promoting dialogue between authorities concerned and representatives of the populations and communities in the three regions (Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina); collecting information on all aspects relevant to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and promote solutions to such problems; establishing contact points for solving problems that might be identified; and assisting in providing information on relevant legislation on human rights, protection of minorities, free media and democratic elections". www.osce.org/missions-long-duration-closed

[15] It continued adopting Resolutions such as 724, 757 – approving large-scale sanctions on the former Yugoslavia (United Nations Security Council, 1992) –, 787 and 820.

[16] 13th-22nd July 1995.

[17] 28th August 1995.

reaction of NATO (Hamilton, 2019b, p. 14). It initiated **Operation Deliberate Force** in response to the actions against the civilian population carried out by Serbian forces, all in the framework of the Bosnian phase of the wars in Yugoslavia (Hendrickson, 2005; Ripley, 1999). It was the first combat operation in NATO's history. Eventually, it ended the war that pitted Bosnian Serbs against Bosniaks and Croats. From August 30th to September 20th, NATO bombings on Serbian targets continued, forcing the signing of the Dayton Agreements[18] on December 14, 1995 (Merlingen, 2009, p. 162). These Agreements also created a framework in which the EU specified its own objectives in terms of post-conflict reconstruction. It **allowed the EU to position itself as a major provider of economic and humanitarian assistance**, first in the Western Balkans, and later in the world (Missiroli, 2016, p. 112)

NATO's prominence in the Balkans coincided with Bill Clinton's administration in the US, which defined the role that the United States were to play within the Alliance (Walker, 2019, p. 267). Clinton continued the efforts of his predecessor, George H.W. Bush, to support the transition to market economies of Central and Eastern European states. He also encouraged them on their road to democracy by taking part in NATO's PfP, launched in 1994 (Van Ham, 2006, p. 33). Collaboration continued with former Warsaw Pact states and in 1996 Russia sent troops to NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia, demonstrating that **NATO and Russia could work together** (Hamilton, 2019b, p. 39). In fact, through negotiations between Secretary General Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Primakov, NATO and the Russian Federation, agreed in 1997 on the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security to cooperate and draw closer together, arranging the establishment of the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) (Van Ham, 2006, p. 33). The PJC aimed at providing "a mechanism for consultations, coordination and, to the maximum extent possible, where appropriate, for joint decisions and joint action with respect to security issues of common concern" (NATO and the Russian Federation, 1997, sec. II).

However, during Clinton's time, **NATO expanded to the East**, incorporating Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as new Alliance members. All three had previously been state parties of the Warsaw Pact. This decision was met with reluctance by some NATO allies, who worried that reducing the non-aligned buffer zone between the Alliance's eastern border and Russia could upset Moscow (Dempsey, 2017, p. 13; Kramer, 2009, p. 53). Indeed, NATO's eastward expansion irked Russia,[19] which throughout the decade had increasingly been excluded from the evolution of the European security system (Kozyrev, 2019, pp. 449–458). Several Russian

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[18] Properly called: *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina with Annexes - 35 I.L.M. 75*, 1996

[19] The Soviets had considered joining NATO in several occasions throughout history. As Batoh, Spiegeleire et al. recall, from Stalin to Putin including Khruschchev, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, Russian membership "was more discussed than many currently remember" (Batoh et al., 2019, p. 19).

proposals had either failed, like the Commonwealth of Independent States[20], which proved to be "rather unsuccessful" (Loftus & Kanet, 2015, p. 37), or had been ignored, like Moscow's suggestion to launch a new "Charter for European Security" in 1995 in the frame of the OSCE. This caused Russia to turn to its neighbouring countries' issues. In the aftermath of the USSR disintegration, conflicts had begun to spark in several former Soviet republics. Unlike in the Balkans war, NATO refrained from intervening. **Conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Transnistria or Georgia's civil war** were not taken into military consideration by the Western organisations, with the exception of the CSCE, which allowed a framework for dialogue in crises like Transnistria or in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (Grevi et al., 2009, p. 140). At that time, it was the only international presence of some states in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The human dimension of the CSCE had been strengthened at the same time as its military capabilities had been limited to peacekeeping in low-threat contexts, according to the 1992 Helsinki document (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1992). In 1994 it had been renamed as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (from now on, OSCE) (Steinbrück Platise & Peters, 2018, p. 3), and throughout the decade it had undertaken extensive field work, including a high-profile presence in Chechnya (Hamilton, 2019a, p. 369).

By the end of the 1990s, the Atlanticist model had not only managed to expand East and to adopt **a New Strategic Concept** (NATO, 1999) – which included crisis management operations out of the area foreseen in the Treaty of Washington, but the Alliance also stood out significantly in the frame of the war in Kosovo. This province of Serbia had witnessed the repeated attacks by the forces of Slobodan Milošević against ethnic Albanians. The OSCE, the EU and NATO worked together to prevent a full-scale war in Kosovo: the OSCE organised the largest-ever field mission, the EU exerted diplomatic pressure, and NATO threatened to use military force against Serbia unless it stopped violence against ethnic Albanian civilians in Kosovo (Hamilton, 2019a, p. 362). Threats materialised and **NATO undertook its military campaign in 1999**. Although this intervention – Operation Allied Force – was surrounded by controversy due to the lack of authorisation by the United Nations Security Council (De La Cámara, 2009, p. 1; Vershbow, 2019, p. 437; Yost, 2007, p. 31), it placed NATO as the most relevant security organisation on European soil. It took over the military security dimension of the international civilian and security presence established by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 1244 of 10 June 1999 and deployed its KFOR operation (Grevi, 2009b, p. 354).

The experience in Kosovo also convinced the – then fifteen – EU members of the need to **move the security debate forward decisively** (Cornish & Edwards, 2001, p. 588), agreeing to grant the EU autonomous capacity to decide upon the launch and conduct of operations where NATO as a whole was not to be engaged (Van Ham, 2006, pp. 39, 44). The EU took important steps to enhance the defence part of its Common Foreign and Security Policy,

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[20] A supranational organisation of 12 members – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan – created in 1991 to enable the "civilized break-up" of the republics that had formed the USSR. A precursor to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the CIS focused on economic cooperation, defence, international relations and collective security (Molchanov, 2015, p. 135).

especially, since the launch of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, later CSDP) in the wake of the 1998 St. Malo meeting (Fiott et al., 2020, p. 40). That summit between French President Chirac and UK's Prime Minister Blair was historical, as it was the first time that France and the generally hesitant UK stated a common view on European defence by claiming that the EU would be better able to play its full role in international affairs if it had its own autonomous military resources (Hamilton, 2019a, p. 373). St. Malo had triggered a high level of political will (Howorth, 2000, p. 93) which, together with the reality check of Kosovo's events, prompted the introduction of the military component that the EU was lacking (European Council in Helsinki, 1999[21] and European Council in Nice, 2000).

This constant evolution of the EU and the previously mentioned relevance of NATO in Kosovo, had **pushed the OSCE into a comparative irrelevance**, in spite of its work in the Caucasus and its extended field presence in exclusive scenarios (Stewart, 2008, p. 267). In 1999, at the Istanbul Summit, the OSCE's security model seemed to be revived with the adoption of the Istanbul Charter for European Security (OSCE, 1999). Also referred to as the "Istanbul Document", the Charter came to strengthen the OSCE's capacity for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution, and post-war rehabilitation. During that summit, the states that had signed the CFE treaty in 1990 signed an adaptation agreement (Adapted CFE) to reflect the changes occurred in the European security scenario in the first decade after the Cold War. However, the CFE had always been a point of friction between the former Western Bloc and the former Soviet Republics. In fact, the CFE continued to be in the spotlight due to the presence of Russian troops in some areas of former USSR countries, which disregarded the limits on troop presence in each flank (Hopmann, 2005, p. 203). Among the Istanbul commitments, it was agreed that the deployment of military forces in another state party would from then on require the "consent of the host state", which meant that Russia would have to withdraw its troops from Moldova and Georgia[22] (De Salazar Serantes, 2016, p. 360). However, the apparent revitalisation of the OSCE's relevance at the Istanbul summit was short-lived. That summit did not stand up to the expectations of what it was intended to be (Cliff, 2012, p. 65), as no one quite believed the claim of forming "a **common and indivisible security space** *(which)* will advance the creation of an OSCE area free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security" (OSCE, 1999). In fact, the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia or Transnistria came to confirm the scepticism regarding the Istanbul document. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy to remind that all these crises, chronicled to the point of being referred from then on as "frozen conflicts", were only taken into consideration by the OSCE, as part of its conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation goals (Grevi et al., 2009, p. 140), and not by NATO or the EU.

Russia's internal weaknesses, due especially to the two very demanding Chechen wars[23] did not go unnoticed by NATO. The West's strong criticism against Russia for its actions in Chechnya, together with NATO's expansion towards the East, the omission of some of

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[21] The EU set the military "Headline Goals" to deploy up to 60-000 troops by 2003 for "Petersberg Tasks" and created the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the EU Military Staff.
[22] That commitment has not been respected by Russia to date, which claims that it has the approval of the authorities in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria.
[23] 1994-1996; 1999-2009

Russia's proposals (Sakwa, 2015, p. 116) and the generalised belittlement to which Moscow was exposed by those who could have become potential European and American partners, made the Russians lose their interest in the OSCE, creating trust issues among participants. This deterioration in the relations laid the foundations for the future revisionist attitude that Russia has shown in recent years (Sakwa, 2015, p. 117; Simón, 2019, pp. 2–3).

2.2 The consequences of 9/11 (2001-2014)

This section examines the evolution and interplay of the three main security providers of the ESA in the first years of the 21st century. Beginning with the September 11 terrorist attacks, which radically changed the approach to security, the section ends with the onset of the crisis in Ukraine, which has caused the actors analysed to rethink their role as providers of security in Europe.

Both the OSCE and the EU included indications – albeit somewhat superficially – of the kind of efforts they would make to prevent the eventual threat of international terrorism. The OSCE had included specific actions as one of its common challenges in the Istanbul Document (OSCE, 1999, para. 4); and both the Treaty of Amsterdam (European Union, 1999, para. K1 and K3) and the Treaty of Nice (European Union, 2001 art. 31) foresaw the progressive adoption of actions against such a threat. NATO, on the other hand, despite having adopted what was a milestone of the Atlanticist model – its New Strategic Concept – in 1999, only mentioned terrorism but did not include what the Alliance's role might be in the eventuality of the threat posed by such scenario (Bird, 2015, p. 62). In the wake of the biggest terrorist attack on American soil, new cracks[24] in the Alliance system started to be seen.

The US was very aware of the inequality of capabilities between its own military power and that of its European partners (noticed during the Kosovo campaign) (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 518). Nonetheless, the day after the attacks, on September 12 2001, **NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time** in history (Krahmann, 2003, p. 17). This article, well known as the collective defence clause that characterises the Treaty, allowed them to count on the help of their European allies in their response to 9/11 (Garey, 2020, pp. 83–115). During the Prague Summit in November 2002, the first one after calling for the mutual assistance clause, it was decided to create the NATO Response Force, to modify NATO's command structure and to put in place the "Military concept for Defence against terrorism", consisting in intelligence sharing, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence and the establishment of the Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit Strategy (Bird, 2015, p. 62). However, these attempts to reform NATO in Prague were overshadowed by the clashes that were staged among allies during the crisis that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Rupp, 2006, pp. 121–142).

Indeed, the Iraq war caused serious turbulence in the dynamics of the alliance (on NATO's military transformation after 9/11: Terriff, 2013, pp. 91–117). While there was consensus on the identification of threats – namely, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation and terrorism – member states openly diverged on how to deal with them (Garey, 2020, pp. 124–145). European allies like Belgium, France, Germany, or Greece opposed the US's proposal

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[24] On some previously perceived divergences within NATO, see Section 3.1 of this paper.

to intervene in Iraq. A similar struggle took place within the EU itself, where the UK and Spain showed their support for an intervention and other countries, including the ones mentioned above, together with Austria and Sweden, decided to not get involved in the war. The strong divergences meant that no consensus could be reached on a NATO intervention in Iraq. These discrepancies showed that the system functioning during the Cold War, by which all allies agreed on both threats and collective responses, was not fully in place anymore. Instead of considering the dismantlement of the alliance, it was agreed that NATO would devote significant resources to counterterrorism initiatives. Thus, among other measures, the naval Operation Active Endeavour was launched to detect and deter terrorist activity in the Eastern Mediterranean (later replaced by Sea Guardian) (Adler, 2008, p. 212), and it was decided that NATO would lead the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, completely "out-of-area" and beyond a simple defensive role (Garey, 2020, pp. 192–203; Rupp, 2006, pp. 153–175; Yalçinkaya, 2009, p. 73). This stabilisation mission was launched in August 2003. US interest in this mission was heightened – especially in the wake of the Taliban counteroffensive, signalling the entrance of NATO in "America's long war against terrorism" (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 521). Years later, operations on Afghan territory (ISAF and the follow-on 'non-combat mission' Operation Resolute Force) have also been a source of new controversies among allies, and the reputation of the country as a "graveyard of Empires"[25] (Yalçinkaya, 2009, p. 69) seems to be confirmed by ISAF's limited success (Berdal, 2019, pp. 526–543).

Taking advantage of the still-ongoing momentum of St. Malo, the EU started the decade establishing institutions oriented to **strengthening defence capabilities** such as the Political Security Committee (the PSC was established by the 2001 Treaty of Nice, art. 1.5), the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS)[26], which helped to pave the way for an interorganisational communication with NATO. Although the US was averse to the idea of greater autonomy for the Europeanist model because it considered this to be detrimental to NATO (Nicholas Burns quoted in Evans-Pritchard & Helm, 2003), at the same time it also called on its European partners to become more involved in maintaining a common security. This paradox of not wanting the EU to have too vigorous a policy while encouraging its further development found a half-way solution within the NATO framework, with the entry into force of the Berlin Plus agreements between the two organisations in 2003, which set the basis for a first form of integration of military structures (Reichard, 2004, pp. 37–67). Although it was around the year 2000 that the **institutional interaction between the EU and NATO** had begun, when the WEU ceased to function as a bridge between the two (Ojanen, 2011, p. 69), the set of agreements collectively known as Berlin Plus came to formalise this relationship. This group of letters established, at both political and military levels, that the EU could draw

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[25] More on the origins of this moniker: Fergusson & Hughes, 2019.
[26] The EUMS conducts the EU's operational planning and it receives operational guidance from the EUMC, which represents the highest military body within the EU (European Council, 2005). More information on this in 3.3.

on NATO capabilities, assets and command structures in EU-led military operations[27], and it even foresaw the exchange of classified information (Mosca Moschini, 2008, pp. 651–657; Touzovskaia, 2006, pp. 235–258).

NATO also brought positions closer to Russia at that time, by establishing the **NATO-Russia Council** (NRC) in 2002, which came to succeed the PJC.[28] They were mainly united by their interest in anti-terrorist cooperation (Antonov & Hoffmann, 2020, pp. 231–245). The US and Russia could have chosen the OSCE to channel such collaboration. However, it did not seem to enjoy the attention of any partner at that time, although after 9/11, the US – as a major financial contributor to OSCE – pushed it to focus more on terrorism and to create the Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) and the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU) (Hopmann, 2005, pp. 202–203). In this sense, the EU also approached Russia independently of NATO and the OSCE. Taking advantage of the fact that years earlier in Corfu the EU, its member states and Russia had signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) (European Union and the Russian Federation, 1997), in 2003, during a summit in St. Petersburg, it was decided to strengthen that strategic partnership and to constitute **Four Common Spaces**[29] on the basis of common values and shared interests (European Union and the Russian Federation, 2003). This *détente* in the face of the common threat of international Islamic terrorism, represented a hiatus in tensions between the West and Russia (Priego, 2020, p. 45).

That same year 2003 also saw several **decisive developments on the ESDP's side**: the EU launched military Operation EUFOR Concordia in North Macedonia,[30] making use of NATO's assets and capabilities for the first time thanks to the Berlin Plus agreements (more on EUFOR Concordia: Gross, 2009; Mace, 2004); it launched its first police mission in the Balkans, the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Merlingen, 2009, p. 162); it launched the first autonomous military operation to be planned and carried out by the EU outside of Europe without NATO's assets, EUFOR Democratic Republic of Congo (more on the also-known-as Operation Artemis in: Helly, 2009; Petrov, 2010); and it also was the year the EU adopted its European Security Strategy (ESS). The ESS was a historic framework document for the Union's foreign policy based on effective multilateralism and preventive involvement to bring stability and prosperity to its neighbouring countries, while recognising the need for the use of force under certain circumstances (Council of the EU, 2003b). Moreover, with the aim of strengthening the EU's regime in the field of WMD, the Council also

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[27] EU's military operation EUFOR Concordia in Northern Macedonia (then still known as fYROM) (2003) was the first time the EU used NATO's assets and capabilities. In 2004, the EU took the lead of EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2004), which originally had been a NATO's SFOR operation (more on EUFOR Althea: Usanmaz, 2018; Van Ham, 2006, paras. 26–28 and more of NATO-EU interaction in Section 4.1).
[28] More on the PJC in section 2.1
[29] The four common spaces were: common economic space, a common space of freedom, security and justice, a space of co-operation in the field of external security, as well as a space of research and education, including cultural aspects (paragraph 2, European Union and the Russian Federation, 2003).
[30] then still called Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

adopted the Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, a text whose ultimate objective was 'to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern worldwide' (Council of the EU, 2003a, p. 2).

The vigour with which some EU members were advancing the development of the ESDP, creating the European Defence Agency (EDA), agreeing on Battle Groups, launching civilian missions and military operations, and even celebrating the derisively named "Chocolate/Praline Summit"[31] to discuss the establishment of EU's planning HQ independent of NATO's SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe),[32] irritated the Americans, who saw such attempts as **decoupling and duplicating NATO** (Van Hooft & Freyberg-Inan, 2019, pp. 53–81).

The Iraq crisis had strained transatlantic relations, and NATO-EU cooperation did not escape this negative impact. After months of discussions (Duke, 2008, p. 33), the US and the three major defence actors in Europe (the UK, which acted as the broker of the negotiations, France and Germany), reached the compromise of establishing a permanent EU presence at SHAPE (apart from a 30-people EU operational planning cell as part of the EUMS), and a NATO permanent liaison team hosted at the EUMS' new cell (European Council, 2003). The existence of mutual presences was meant to foster reciprocal understanding, joint planning and coordination. However, in 2004 both NATO and the EU went through their **biggest enlargements up to this day**, with the EU going from 15 to 25 member states and NATO from 19 to 26. This made relations more difficult. The problems were mainly caused by the poor understanding between Greece, Cyprus and Turkey, where the two latter were able to hold hostage the institutions they are members of by using their veto power (Hofmann, 2009, p. 46). This caused coherence and coordination between the two organisations to be conspicuous by its absence. Precisely at the time when it would have been needed more than ever, given the high degree of overlap between their members (21 states), the lack of internal coherence and regulatory blockages was such that the Berlin Plus agreements stopped being suitable and the exchange of information and documentation between organisations was paralysed. Informal exchanges between the staff members of the liaison teams was what kept the offices up and working (Duke, 2008, p. 34).

Enlargements towards the east of Europe, especially those within NATO,[33] which involved the incorporation of nine former Warsaw Pact members, were received with **displeasure by Russia**, which felt besieged by the West. This discomfort grew after the Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003) and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004), which turned these countries into allies of the US and NATO, and was made public in Vladimir Putin's famous speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference: Russia's perception of security had changed (Putin, 2007). After having moved closer to the West in the early 2000s, Russia's distancing, which had already been noticed in Munich, became even more evident after the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, when the debate over possible Alliance membership of Georgia and Ukraine (Kramer, 2009, p. 40) led Putin to travel to Romania to "personally warn Western leaders

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[31] Participants in this now infamous summit were Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg

[32] SHAPE is the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Allied Command Operations (ACO). Since 1967 it is located in Casteau, Mons, Belgium.

[33] In 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania joined NATO.

against taking in and welcoming an 'unstable Ukraine' and a 'warring Georgia'" (Trenin, 2009, p. 143). Although both countries had declared their interest in joining the Alliance, neither was formally invited by NATO to participate at the Bucharest Summit, as were Croatia and Albania (which concluded their entry in 2009). Nevertheless, the fact that neither Georgia nor Ukraine joined NATO (Berryman, 2015, pp. 197–198) did not stop Russia from using force in 2008 in Georgia. This aggression in the context of the "frozen conflict" of South Ossetia (and the subsequent deployment of Russian troops in Abkhazia as well) should have already sounded the alarm in Europe about Russia's growing assertiveness.[34] However, it was not prevented by either the OSCE or by NATO and the EU.

In the framework of the US's War on Terror, both **NATO and the OSCE were slightly instrumentalised** according to some, especially French officials who disapproved the imposition of the American agenda (Keohane, 2006, p. 2). While in the case of NATO criticism pointed to the US for having used the Alliance's missions – including European troops – for its own strategic interests (Yost, 2007, p. 99), in the case of the OSCE the US did not hide that its aim was to "enlist" the organisation in their fight against terrorism (Jones, 2001). From the US perspective, although the OSCE was already marginalised in security terms, it could still be somewhat useful (Mosser, 2015b, p. 15). Nonetheless, as much as implementing OSCE commitments and principles in the interest of combating terrorism may have been the goal of the Bush Administration, it cannot be denied that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a security organisation such as the OSCE could not avoid investing more efforts in combating global terrorism, and the rest of its members were well aware of that (Hopmann, 2005, p. 203). OSCE's way of combating terrorism proved to be its own: strengthening security through human dimension activities such as promoting political participation, enhancing the rule of law, and promoting human and minority rights (Wright, 2006, p. 292). Regarding the fight against terrorism, the EU became increasingly active too. Building on the Action Plan on Combating Terrorism, adopted by the European Council in November 2001, the EU Counterterrorism Strategy was agreed in December 2005, after the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005) (Argomaniz et al., 2015, p. 196). In light of international terrorism, the increasing risks of biological, chemical and nuclear attacks in a globalized world called for a recast of the WMD Strategy and its Plan of Action, so "The New Lines for Action by the EU in Combatting the Proliferation of WMD and their Delivery Systems" were adopted in 2008 – not in view of replacing the Strategy, but in view of updating it, thus making the EU more operational in the fight against proliferation (Hertwig, 2014, p. 236; Sánchez Cobaleda, 2017, p. 1).

Another important novelty in the EU framework, which would be the beginning of many progressive changes in the European security architecture, was the **entry into force in 2009 of the Lisbon Treaty**, following the failed European Constitution of 2005, which incorporated many CFSP/ESDP provisions negotiated in 2003-2004, in parallel to the drafting of the ESS and to the development of ESDP structures (Grevi, 2009a, p. 59). Through the Treaty of

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[34] In fact, Georgia's interest in NATO (already shown in 2004), led Russia to suspend the CFE Treaty (Priego, 2020, p. 48), which reflected a broader trend in Moscow based on revising those agreements reached during and after the Cold War perceived as unfair. All these were signs of an increasingly assertive foreign policy (Lynch, 2009, p. 141)

Lisbon, the EU was granted the legal basis and institutional structure needed to develop security and defence policy more vigorously and autonomously (Major, 2019, p. 3). The originally called European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was replaced by the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and with it, new "powerful" instruments like the European External Action Service (EEAS) (Raube et al., 2015, p. 42), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) (art. 42.6 and 46 TEU), and other flexibility and enhanced cooperation mechanisms[35] amongst willing and able EU Member States were established (Álvarez-Verdugo, 2014, pp. 106–130). In spite of this level of ambition, the Treaty of Lisbon (Art. 42.2) clearly underlines the importance of keeping NATO as the priority forum for collective defence, being consistent with member state obligations towards the Alliance (Solana et al., 2016, p. 13). This caution, added to the economic and fiscal crisis that unfolded that year, meant that the high expectations created about European defence were not met. A new wave of capability cuts, the lack of political will, and hollowed out European armed forces caused frustration and certain criticisms (Major, 2019, p. 3). That criticism derived from not seeing the promises materialised, and from the realisation that the EU's CSDP was not even considered when France and the UK intervened militarily in Libya as part of a 'coalition of the willing' alongside acting within NATO. Indeed, the crisis in Libya revealed that the EU autonomy was stuck at the theoretical level; despite hinting it might get involved, the EU backtracked and NATO ended up taking the lead. The late decision, on April 2011, to approve a military mission to support humanitarian aid on the EU's doorstep reflected a desire to save face rather than to intervene effectively (Menon, 2011, p. 375).

In this context, it is worth mentioning the European Council of December 2013, whose conclusions were a turning point in the development of the CSDP. The illustrative statement with which the Conclusions begin, "**defence matters**", serves as a prelude to the three major objectives defined by the Heads of State and Government, which set the pace for developments in the EU since then: increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP; enhancing the development of capabilities; and strengthening the European defence industry (European Council, 2013). Moreover, the interest in a more active international presence also fostered the increasing relevance of the E3 group (Germany, France and the United Kingdom had launched this grouping in 2003 to lead talks with Iran to limit its nuclear program) which, in conjunction with the rest of permanent UNSC members, negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on nuclear issues with Iran. Through the E3/EU+3 minilateral configuration, patronaged by the High Representative, the EU sought to boost its international relevance in the security domain.

The motto "defence matters" was soon reinforced by the imminence of a new war on the EU's doorstep. Although the protests at Kyiv's Euromaidan at the end of 2013 were the definitive wake-up call, the shift in Russian foreign policy towards a more aggressive tone with both the EU, NATO states and the Alliance's external partners had been a long time coming (Berryman, 2015, p. 201; DeBardeleben, 2015, p. 180). Six years after the war in Georgia in 2008, Russia proceeded with the illegal annexation of Crimea and conducted destabilising activities in

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[35] The enhanced cooperation mechanism (art. 20.2 TEU and 326-334 TFEU), flexible financial rules for the CFSP/CSDP (art. 41 TEU), the mutual assistance clause (42.7 TEU), the solidarity clause (art. 222 TFEU), the flexibility mechanism (art. 44 TEU). Art. 42.2 also foresees the possibility of establishing of a common defence policy upon the decision of the European Council.

Eastern Ukraine, with the aim of keeping the foreign policy of both states under the influence of Moscow (Rifkind, 2019, p. 512; Valášek, 2019b, p. 3). Although Vladimir Putin is aware that Russia cannot go back to its previous boundaries, past losses of territory remain unacceptable. "His annexation of Crimea, destabilisation of eastern Ukraine and aggression towards Georgia are, in part, a consequence of his belief, and that of many Russians, that their nation's security and realisation of its destiny has been imperiled" (Rifkind, 2019, p. 502). The OSCE, which had previously handled so-called "frozen conflicts" through confidence-building measures (W. H. Hill, 2013, p. 6), could not prevent any of these crises. In fact, **its legitimacy sunk a little deeper** when the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Russia and Ukraine in 1999, recognizing that the territorial integrity of Ukraine was inviolable, proved useless in the face of Russian invasion of the Crimean peninsula (MoU signed in the context of the Istanbul Document, OSCE, 1999). Moreover, nothing was done to ensure respect for the "inviolability of borders" and "territorial integrity", both points contained in its famous Helsinki Decalogue. These events marked a return to a bloc mentality and represented the most important security crisis in Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Macfarlane & Menon, 2014, p. 55).

2.3 Rethinking the European security leadership (2014-2020)

In the framework of this third phase, the shortest of the three, several significant changes have taken place in the ESA. NATO, while maintaining the objectives acquired over the years, has returned to its origins and has once again focused its attention on Russia. Russia's assertiveness in Ukraine has given the OSCE the opportunity to regain some of the relevance lost in the last twenty years, although the lack of trust among its participants remains a major constraint on its progress. The EU, for its part, has experienced the greatest development in its history in terms of progress in security and defence instruments. Interorganisational cooperation has been on the rise, especially between NATO and the EU, but allocation of funds is likely to be under strain due to the coronavirus pandemic. The ESA is undoubtedly under pressure while new threats, instead of replacing the old ones, are simply accumulating.

Russia's actions in Europe have marked the evolution of the various ESA actors since 2014, specifically since the annexation of Crimea between February and March of that year. It has certainly not been the only factor, as the incidence of Daesh terrorism in several European states has also kept the continent on the rack (Serrano De Haro, 2019, p. 5). At the same time, the migrant crisis, the effects of the Syrian civil war and important decisions such as Brexit and changes in the leadership of several governments have also had an impact on the architecture (De Castro Ruano & Borrajo, 2019, p. 196). The latter include but are not limited to the election of President Trump in the US, the change promoted in Turkey by its president Erdogan from a parliamentary regime to a presidential one in 2014, and results favourable to nationalist populist leaders in Hungary and Poland. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects on society and the world's economy, may entail a rethinking of security, in addition to producing tragic results whose magnitude is still unknown (Torreblanca, 2020).

As far as the relationship between the West and Russia is concerned, the **events in Ukraine were a turning point**. However, after the rapprochement of the former Soviet zone of influence towards NATO (mainly Georgia and Ukraine), Russia had already began to redirect its security strategy towards a more assertive position (Freire, 2017, p. 10; Serrano De Haro,

2019, p. 5). All three organisations studied here have addressed the Ukrainian crisis in one way or another.

In the years since Russia seized Crimea, NATO has continued to emphasise its deterrence goal, in fact, this original objective of the Alliance has regained attention, as, in the words of Michael Rühle, "the Russia-Ukraine crisis hastened its resurrection" (Rühle, 2015). Such was the strength of the Russian threat that NATO deployed rotational forces in several Eastern allies in order to strengthen deterrence and defence (Papaioannou, 2019, p. 4). Though NATO leaders have continued to sit down with Russian officials under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council, these – in any case infrequent – meetings constitute an exception to the rule and their primary aim is to remind Russia of the seriousness of its actions in Ukraine (Gottemoeller, 2019, p. 2; Goździewicz et al., 2016, p. 55) This crisis caught Europeans constrained in budgetary terms after years of under-investment. Hence, and in view of the urgency, during the 2014 summit in Wales, NATO allies committed to devoting 2 per cent of their GDP to defence by 2024 – a commitment which, at that time, was only complied with by the US, the UK and Greece (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 518).

Although there may have been different views within NATO on how to strengthen its Eastern Flank, there was a **clear political consensus that the flank had to be defended** (Dempsey, 2017, pp. 3–4). The concern was so extended within the Alliance that even states with generally divergent views on Russia and World War Two's legacy such as Germany and Lithuania, smoothly agreed to take important measures to deter Russia from further escalation. The allies also agreed to double NATO's Response Force (NRF) and to establish an even faster Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) (NATO, 2014, para. 8). In the Warsaw Summit, in 2016, NATO leaders decided to establish an enhanced forward presence in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (NATO, 2016, para. 40). These troops bordering with Russia were organised in four battlegroups, each of them led by a different ally.[36] Due to past agreements between NATO and Russia, they must rotate and be periodically on the move (with the economic costs and logistic difficulties that military transport involves) (NATO, 2017). While the rotating approach does not present any problems in the context of the Baltic states mission (a reassurance mission labelled as a deterrence mission), in other scenarios involving combat or peacekeeping missions, rotation may prevent cooperation among countries and differently prepared troops from being fluid, while also slowing down interoperability (Dempsey, 2017, p.4).

The deployment of troops under NATO leadership in the territories of several allies that also happen to be EU member states implied not only the strengthening of deterrence and defence, but also an upsurge in resistance and military preparedness by these states (Papaioannou, 2019, pp. 4–5). While the war in Georgia in 2008 could have warned Brussels about Russia's intentions to regain influence in its former sphere, it was not until Russia's invasion of the Donbass region that the Union (similarly to NATO) became acutely aware of the actual situation on its periphery (Duke & Gebhard, 2017, p. 391). However, Russian assertiveness was a security concern which, like the Syrian civil war, had been ongoing for years but was not being addressed at the EU level, except for the economic mechanisms at its disposal such

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[36] Germany (in charge of the battlegroup operating in Lithuania), the US (operating in Poland), the UK (operating in Estonia), and Canada (operating in Latvia) (NATO, 2017).

as EU sanctions imposed on certain Russian individuals and entities (Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2020, p. 11). The EU also reviewed its bilateral relationship with Russia and suspended regular bilateral summits, dialogue on visa matters and negotiations on a new bilateral agreement which was meant to replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (European Parliament, 2020, p. 1). Moreover, in a display of diplomatic indirect pressure, the EUAM Ukraine,[37] an Advisory Mission of some 300 people, was also established. In order to increase the Ukrainian state's resilience against Russia and support it politically, the EU uses several channels, excluding the military one (Nováky, 2015, pp. 244–266). The fundamental support provided by the EU to Ukraine amounts to more than 14 billion EUR and has been invested since 2015 through different initiatives such as cooperation on anti-corruption, private sector, or public administration, among others (Jarábik et al., 2018, pp. 4–5).

For the **OSCE,** as explained in the next section, the conflict in eastern Ukraine meant its **reappearance, after a long absence, on the European political agenda** as a platform bridging East and West (Smolnik, 2019, p. 9). The OSCE, as the only regional security organisation where both Ukraine and Russia are participating states,[38] offers unique initiatives that allowed for advancing dialogue towards possible paths of understanding within the European framework (Steinmeier, 2018, p. 9). The central role of the OSCE in this crisis is played through the Special Monitory Mission (SMM)[39], presented as the flagship of the organisation and challenged by being caught in the crossfire (Kemp, 2018, p. 113).

In June 2014 (on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day allied landings on Normandy), the Russian, Ukrainian, German and French heads of state met for the first time to discuss the regulation of the Donbass conflict, thus establishing a series of *ad hoc* talks called the Normandy Format (Jarábik et al., 2018, p. 6; Szubart, 2016, p. 2). Meetings between these parties also took place to achieve a ceasefire in the Donetsk and Luhansk areas, leading to the signing of the **Minsk Protocol in 2015**, which consisted of a 12 points-list including, in addition to the aforementioned ceasefire, measures such as OSCE-supervised border verification, prisoner exchanges, or DDR of combatants (*Minsk Agreement*, 2015). Upon the signing of the Minsk Protocol, the Normandy Format has focused on implementing those agreements. In fact, between 2015 and 2017, Germany played an important role in bridging the OSCE with the work of the Normandy Format, as in that period, it belonged to the troika of the OSCE Secretariat[40] (Šimáková, 2016, p. 24; Szubart, 2016, pp. 1–2). However, that bridge ceased to exist in 2018 when Germany left the troika, coinciding in time with a weakening of compliance with the Minsk Agreements caused by constant violations of the ceasefire and the conduct of elections in Donetsk and Luhansk (Kemp, 2018, p. 115). This agreement has hitherto achieved very modest results, and the hybrid conflict between Russia

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[37] Information on EUAM Ukraine available at: www.euam-ukraine.eu/
[38] Both states are also members of another regional organization indirectly related to security: the Council of Europe (CoE). The fact that both states participate in the CoE, Europe's leading human rights organisation, may facilitate the improvement of certain situations through channels other than those offered by the OSCE.
[39] Established by the OSCE Permanent Council Decision 1117 of 21 March 2001 (OSCE, 2014).
[40] The OSCE Troika consists of the current, previous and next chairmanship.

and Ukraine is likely to end in a stalemate (Pintado Rodríguez, 2017). Therefore, and although with time it has indeed turned it into a lower-intensity conflict, the Minsk Protocol seems to be irrelevant (T. B. Peters & Shapkina, 2019, pp. 1–5).

To sum up, despite the relevance of the OSCE in Ukraine, the fact that this crisis is framed within a much broader and deeper geostrategic confrontation between Russia and the West[41] makes it very hard to resolve, at least in the short to medium term. Momentum seems to be lost for the OSCE's and its credibility may be in question again (Nünlist, 2017; Pontijas Calderón, 2018b, p. 8; Smolnik, 2019, p. 9).

On the **terrorism front,** the attacks on French magazine Charlie Hebdo at the start of 2015 signalled that Europe was the target of Daesh terrorists, with France being particularly affected, although in the years that followed Belgium, Spain, the UK or Germany also faced several attacks on their ground.[42] After the infamous attacks in Paris in November 2015, France invoked article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty. It was, and remains to be, the only time an EU member state has resorted to the mutual cooperation assistance clause, which triggers an obligation of conduct – rather than outcome (Rieker et al., 2016, p. 23). France gathered the unanimous promise of full aid and support of all the EU Defence Ministers (Cîrlig, 2015) and from that moment onwards, the anti-terrorist cooperation among member states started to improve (Bureš, 2016, p. 58). These attacks revealed that, despite being active in the fight against terrorism since 9/11, the EU was often a subsidiary option to address that international threat, there being a lack of EU-wide intelligence sharing up until November 2015 since purely national measures or bilateral cooperation have often been the first option of states when deciding to take action (Monar, 2015, pp. 334–335). **France's invocation of article 42.7**, despite its strong symbolism, did not imply greater dynamism on the part of the EU, although it did force it to think about its security. At that time, the exodus of people who arrived at the gates of the EU from Syria and other places, brought the EU to the brink of what became known as the "refugee crisis" (Menéndez, 2016). This prompted the Union to reach agreements with Turkey, defend itself from internal criticism and reflect on the nexus between security and migration, dealt with in Task 4 of this Work Package (Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 43).

As far as NATO is concerned, the fight against terrorism continues to be among its objectives. One of the main ways in which the Alliance has been combatting such a threat is by training

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[41] Another clear sign of this confrontation was Washington's announcement in 2018 that it would withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which was signed in 1987 by then Soviet and American presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan with the aim of eliminating intermediate-range weapons and missiles. Following the US' and Russia's withdrawal from the treaty in 2019, both states are now able to deploy in Europe various types of missiles that were banned under the INF. The collapse of this historic milestone is a symbol of the tensions, and it hampers the goal of reducing arsenals and allowing on-site inspections to verify compliance.
[42] Paris (November 13, 2015), Brussels (March 22, 2016), Nice (July 14, 2016), Berlin (December 19, 2016), Manchester (May 22, 2017), London (June 3, 2017), Barcelona (August 1-18, 2017) (Council of the EU, 2020b).

local forces and building local capacity through training missions like the one in Iraq (Stoltenberg, 2020b). The *OSCE* acts along similar lines in that it also deals with international terrorism in an indirect and preventive manner. It does so focusing on the role of civil society in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism (Holmer, 2018, pp. 10–69).

While Russia's behaviour and international terrorism have been, and continue to be, a threat to the European security architecture as a whole, the EU in particular has also had to manage the UK's decision to leave the Union after the 2016 referendum, invoking article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon for the first time in history. Not only did **Brexit** come as a shock to the EU and undermine the political coherence of the integration process, but, in terms of security, it also meant losing important military assets and capabilities (De Castro Ruano & Borrajo, 2019, pp. 193–194).[43]

The rethinking of European security leadership cannot be discussed without taking into account the state of the **transatlantic link**, which experienced a high degree of turbulence after the arrival of Donald Trump (Molina García & Benedicto Solsona, 2020, pp. 64–65). US foreign policy follows broader strategic trends that predate the outgoing President, yet decisions against effective multilateralism, and, above all, the forms and manners of the US' foreign policy from 2017 to 2020, have been genuinely his. In this context, the possibility of a weakening of the transatlantic link after his election, the loss of one of its most powerful partners in military terms (UK) and further discrepancies between US' demands and Franco-German initiatives (supported by Italy and Spain) (Calduch Cervera, 2020, p. 255), fuelled discussions on the further strengthening of the EU's capabilities as a backup plan for NATO (Brattberg & Valášek, 2019, p. 7). The adoption in June 2016 of the **EU Global Strategy** (EUGS) was a milestone that defined Mrs. Mogherini's term as EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and continues to mark the development of European security and defence (European Union, 2016). This new security strategy aimed at enhancing closer defence cooperation after the Ukraine crisis and the Brexit disappointment (Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 44).

At the end of 2016, the European Council reaffirmed the need to improve the EU's ability to react more rapidly, more effectively and more smoothly, as part of a comprehensive EU approach (Council of the EU, 2016a). Multiple institutional developments have taken place since, including the launch of the European Defence Fund in 2017 (Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2020, p. 8), as well as other security and defence initiatives such as the activation of PESCO, CARD (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence) and MPCC (Military Planning and Conducting Capability).[44] These initiatives served the double purpose of strengthening defence cooperation and increasing the EU's overall political cohesion. Furthermore, between 2013 and 2017 defence spending increased by 15 billion EUR in the EU (Fiott, 2019e, p. 1).

In the past few years **interorganisational cooperation between the EU and NATO** has been in good shape, especially since 2016. As it will be seen in the section on this subject,[45]

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[43] The implications of Brexit for the EU's security and defense are discussed in more detail in section 3.3.
[44] More on these institutional developments in Section 3.3.
[45] Section 4.1.

following the praised Joint Declaration of the Warsaw Summit in 2016, both organisations embarked on a closer and more regular relationship, centred on seven areas of cooperation and channelled through forty proposals (NATO and the EU, 2016). Two years later, in 2018, a new Joint Declaration extended the framework of cooperation to cover 74 actions. Again, this step aims to further strengthen EU-NATO cooperation at a time of unprecedented security challenges from the East and the South (NATO and the EU, 2018). This proves that the EU has acquired a stronger international "presence", as it is increasingly recognised as a cooperation partner in fields in which it was never the mainstay, like the counter-terrorism efforts (Monar, 2015, pp. 355–356).

As Natalie Tocci recalls, the disappearance in 2015 of the world in which the international liberal order seemed assured and the EU's soft power was at its peak (Haas, 2017; Mazarr et al., 2017) has given way to the risks of **hyper-connectivity and complexity** inherent in a conflictual and contested international arena (Tocci, 2016, p. 464). The world has become more interconnected and the COVID-19 pandemic is another sign of the times – showcasing the importance of globalisation, climate change and environmental damage, which are among the causes or accelerating factors for pandemics and epidemics. As the world becomes increasingly complex, global leadership risks becoming increasingly diluted and fragmented, and power is shifting from west to east while diffusing beyond state boundaries (Howorth, 2016, pp. 389–401). Against such a backdrop, it seems now as relevant as it was in 2016 for the EU to commit to "navigate this difficult, more connected, contested and complex world guided by our shared interests, principles and priorities" to become "a stronger Europe" (European Union, 2016, p. 13), entrenching the European security architecture.

3 THE STATE OF PLAY IN EUROPEAN SECURITY

This section examines the membership, objectives, and challenges of NATO, the OSCE and the EU at present. In the case of the EU, the corresponding subsection also addresses some of the most recent and relevant developments in the field of security and defence.

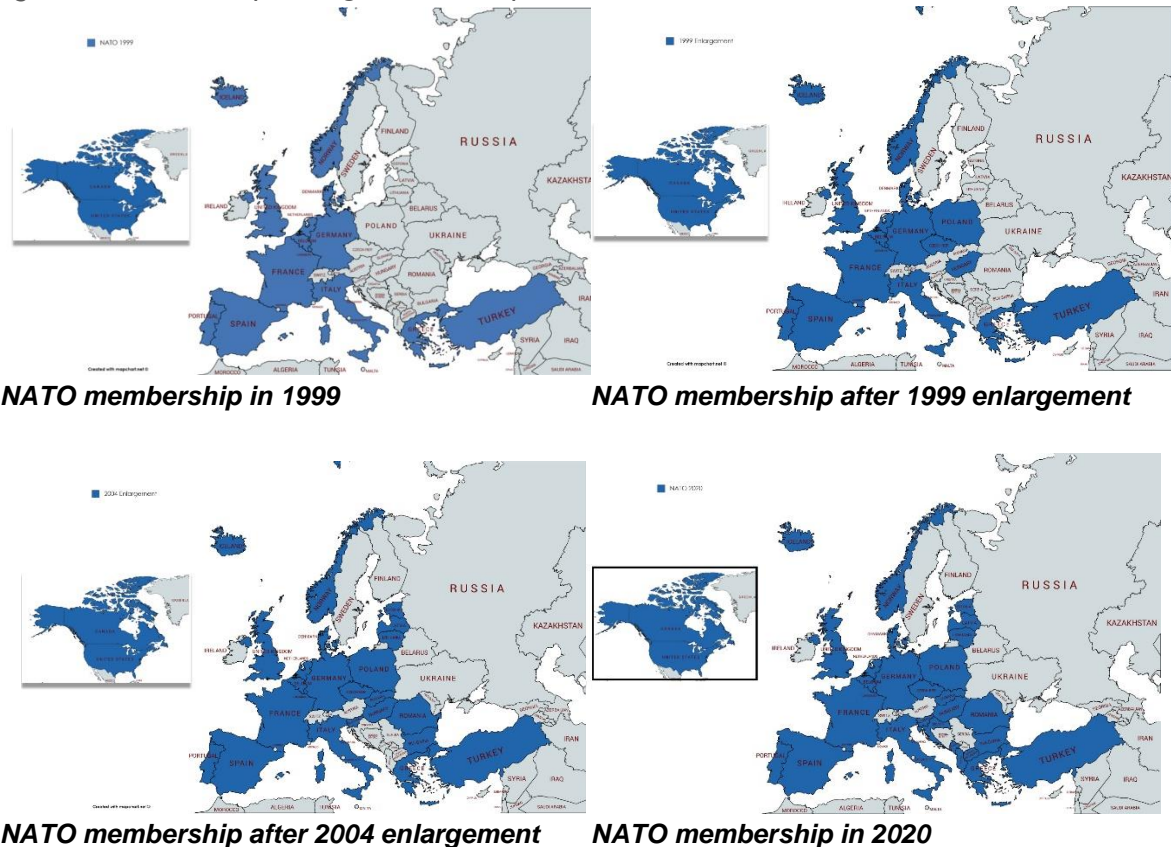## 3.1 NATO at present: membership, objectives, and challenges

3.1.1 Current membership

For as long as the Cold War lasted, NATO kept the Soviet bloc and then the Warsaw Pact at bay. However, while the latter military organisation ended up disappearing as a result of the implosion of the USSR, the North-Atlantic Alliance continues to exist and does so with the will to remain (Arteaga, 2011, p. 5; Geoană, 2019, p. 596; Walker, 2019, p. 266) regardless of the internal and external challenges it may have to face. With the aim of guaranteeing its relevance, the Alliance has not only adopted consecutive New Strategic Concepts, but it has also expanded its membership[46] for both instrumental and normative reasons (Adler, 2008, p. 214). The 60th anniversary of the organisation, in 2009, marked France's return to the integrated military command structure, after having departed in 1966. Since then, the most recent two expansions have seen the entrance of Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020)[47]. after six enlargement rounds summarised in Article 10's policy of "keeping the door open", which had focused particularly on central and eastern Europe (German, 2017, pp. 291–308). Nowadays, NATO has 30 member states, which can add up to thirty different visions of what the Alliance means for each of them (Ringsmose, 2010, p. 335).

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[46] The expansions took place in 1952 (Greece and Turkey), 1953 (Federal Republic of Germany – German Länder in East Germany became part of NATO in 1990), 1982 (Spain), 1999 (Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – the first former Warsaw Pact members to become NATO allies), 2004 (Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania), 2009 (Albania and Croatia), 2017 (Montenegro) and 2020 (North Macedonia) (www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm).
[47] Following the historic agreement between Athens and Skopje resolving the name issue, after 25 years of diplomatic negotiations, in June 2018.

Figure 1: NATO's expanding membership

NATO membership in 1999

NATO membership after 1999 enlargement

NATO membership after 2004 enlargement

NATO membership in 2020

Source: Own creation

3.1.2 Objectives

NATO has repeatedly modified its Strategic Concepts[48] in order to adapt its goals to changing international realities (Aznar Fernández-Montesinos, 2018, p. 19; Kagan, 2003, p. 79; Tardy, 2020, p. 91; Wallander, 2000, p. 723). Historically, NATO has been able to focus on only one major challenge at a time (Valášek, 2019a, p. 88). Whereas the Alliance concentrated solely on the defence of western Europe from the Soviet Union during the Cold War, during the 1990s its focus was mostly building peace in its neighbourhood, with the stabilisation of the Western Balkans as a case in point (Hendrickson, 2005; Usanmaz, 2018, p. 381). In the early 2000s, NATO's attention shifted towards the fight against terrorism, particularly shown in the operations in Afghanistan and later on, also in the Middle East (Bird, 2015, p. 66; NATO, 2010, p. 11,17). Finally, since 2014, the Alliance has clearly refocused on its original core mission: security and deterrence defence vis-à-vis a more assertive Russia. It has been argued that NATO went from being useful by "merely existing" for about 40 years without needing to be proactive, to being branded as "a solution in search of a problem"[49] that would allow it to justify its existence (Baena Soares & Medeiros Leopoldino, 2019, p. 136). Today, however, NATO seems to have found a middle ground. Its current role consists of two main dimensions that

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[48] At the 1999 Washington Summit and the 2010 Lisbon Summit. More info on the Strategic Concepts in Section 2.1.
[49] This phrase was coined in the context of Afghanistan.

cover all of the aforementioned goals: collective defence and projecting stability (NATO, 2016, paras. 81–85, 2019a; Tardy, 2020, pp. 89–94). Currently, collective defence activities cover the Alliance's actions on the Eastern flank, whereas the projecting stability dimension involves the actions undertaken in the south.

The first objective reflects NATO's core mission, that is, the so-called **deterrence and defence** agenda defined in the Washington Treaty (NATO, 1949). This "collective defence" goal was traditionally oriented towards defence against Russia and, therefore, it is targeted to the Eastern flank of the Alliance. Deterrence may be NATO's original *raison d'être*, but it is still very much alive today. Russia's re-emergence as a real threat to Europe in the wake of the aggression in Crimea and its proxy involvement in Eastern Ukraine has enabled the Alliance not only to go 'back to basics' and to update its collective defence agenda, but also to justifiably perpetuate its presence on European soil (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 78).

Having perhaps sinned from what Mearsheimer calls the "liberal delusion", and what MacFarlane and Menon refer to as "inattentiveness to risk" (Macfarlane & Menon, 2014, p. 97), NATO could have actually reacted earlier in view of Moscow's assertive behaviour in Georgia in 2008 (Jakobsen, 2018, p. 509; Ruiz González, 2010b, p. 55). Nevertheless, NATO is now strongly invested[50] in countering Russia's attempts to destabilise both, common neighbours (such as Ukraine, Moldova or Georgia) and bordering countries (like Poland, the Baltic States and those on the Black Sea) (Duke & Gebhard, 2017, p. 391; Mayer, 2017, p. 436). Therefore, the engagement of the Alliance with its Eastern Flank is seen by many as the only real opposition to Russia's destabilising efforts in that area right now (Keohane & Mölling, 2016, p. 2; Zaborowski, 2020, p. 3).

The second objective, called "**projecting stability**", results from the merger of the agendas previously known as "crisis management and military operations" and "cooperative security

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[50] In 2014 the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) was launched to reinforce NATO's collective defence, and more specifically, its rapid-response capability vis-à-vis the threats stemming from Russia. With the aim of preventing a possible invasion such as the ones that took place in Georgia or Ukraine, the RAP consists of (a) the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) – to increase the reaction capacity of the NATO Response Force (NRF) – and (b) the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), an initiative to deploy permanent NATO forces to the Baltic, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria to prevent violent insurrections promoted by foreign forces, while discouraging Russia from annexing bordering countries (Priego, 2020, p. 53). In 2016, NATO leaders, building on the RAP, approved a strengthened deterrence and defence posture, which led to the deployment of multinational Forward Presence battalions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland; in 2018, in order to guarantee that high-quality rotational forces are available at high readiness, NATO leaders adopted a Readiness Initiative; since then, it continues to bolster its responsiveness.

partnerships".[51] In this respect, NATO looks at the threats and challenges that originate in its "southern" periphery (namely, the Middle East and North African regions). NATO refers to these threats – fragile states which are vulnerable to the potential emergence of terrorist groups, structural violence, illegal migration and other systemic problems (NATO, 2019c, p. 11)) – as "pervasive instability" affecting a large part of the Alliance's surroundings (Tardy, 2020, pp. 93–94). NATO's training mission in Iraq, for instance, can be read as the organisation's interest in maintaining and expanding its presence and efforts as far as counterterrorism operations are concerned (Koehler, 2018, p. 3).

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[51] The latter task is currently less central, as there are not as many countries aspiring to join the Alliance as in previous decades. Either due to geographical reasons or because they already have in place a partnership with NATO, there are not many candidates with an appetite for the organisation.

3.1.3 Challenges

The convergence of these two dimensions (deterrence and defence and projecting stability) gives the impression that, for the first time in 70 years of history, NATO has several goals, none of which can or should be favoured to the other's detriment (Geoană, 2019, pp. 599–602; Ringsmose, 2010, p. 336). What is more, all these self-claimed tasks, be it Russia, counterterrorism or unconventional threats such as cyber-attacks or hybrid[52] operations, which remain covered by Article V (NATO, 2010, 2016, 2019a), not only need to be dealt with at the same time, but they also have to be tackled in a context of potentially scarce resources (Gottemoeller, 2019).

NATO is also facing a host of internal challenges,[53] including the state of the transatlantic link, covering the US complaints towards the European allies in budgetary terms and its apparent decreasing involvement in Europe; interoperability difficulties related to the capabilities and technological gap between the two sides of the Atlantic (Schreer, 2019, pp. 10–17; Sperling & Webber, 2020, pp. 511–526); and Turkey's foreign policy, which quite often is not necessarily aligned with that of the rest of the Alliance, and which is quite ambiguous as far as Russia is concerned (Krebs, 1999, p. 369). Additional internal challenges include: populist leadership in some of the allied countries, which could lead to problematic policy decisions that threaten to damage NATO as the value-driven institution that it is (Rosner, 2019, pp. 396–397), and other minor organisational issues (Mayer, 2014).

Regarding transatlantic relations, it is undeniable that the level of US **engagement in the Alliance** is an ever-present topic. During the last couple of years, there has been much discussion about US President Trump's grievances about burden sharing and his interest for Europe but, in reality, these topics are neither new nor true indicators of the actual level of commitment of the US to NATO. Firstly, although the rhetorical style and manners are typical of the current US President, the message regarding burden sharing is not a novelty (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 519). The complaints about NATO budget contributions converge with the relative decrease in the importance of Europe as the priority security area for the US, and it is in this context that they must be understood.

Europe has progressively shifted towards becoming a stronger partner within the alliance, and this requires **more autonomy and unity** among EU members (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 520). As Obama declared on his first presidential visit to the old continent, "We are not looking to be patrons of Europe. We are looking to be partners of Europe" (Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 2009). In order to be a stronger partner in the eyes of the US, Europe needed to increase its defence spending. In fact, shortly before leaving office, Obama declared that "free riders aggravate me", and that no ally – not even the UK with its special

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[52] More on the term "hybrid" in Missiroli, 2020, pp. 65–67.
[53] Throughout NATO's history, there have been multiple disagreements within the transatlantic realm (M. E. Smith, 2018, p. 605). These include the Suez crisis in 1956; the moment when De Gaulle decided to withdraw from NATO's military structure at the end of 1967, which caused the Alliance to leave Paris for Brussels (Pål, 2006, p. 174); the deployment of Turkish troops in Cyprus in the 1970s; and the more recent disagreements exposed during the 2003 Iraq war (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 521).

relationship – could claim any right "if they failed to meet NATO's defence spending target" (Goldberg, 2016, p. 19).

The US wants a prosperous and stable Europe, whose market remains open to American products and companies and whose military power is sufficient to act both as a counterweight to Russia and as a companion to Washington in its security endeavours (Jordán, 2018, p. 3). They are also in favour of a solid union, as already expressed by George W. Bush in 2005 when declaring that a united Europe would be of greater utility to the US (Shapiro & Witney, 2009, p. 11). But, even if they request more EU military spending and autonomy, the US does not want the EU to act against US military plans and priorities. So, **paradoxically**, the US wants a Europe that is independent enough to pay its security bills and to finance possible collaborations with the US, but not so independent as to hinder American plans and priorities (Fiott, 2019b, pp. 1–8). Thus, any European initiative with **effective capacity to interfere with those goals** (or that might merely appear to form potential competition), is presented by the US as a threat to NATO (Sperling & Webber, 2020; Van Ham, 2006, p. 27). The paradigm of these threats in the eyes of the Americans can be found in some EU initiatives (e.g. the modernisation of its arms and military industry through EDTIB (EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base) and CARD; conditions on third states for the participation in PESCO projects), as well as in the aspirations for European autonomy that some particular allies raise from time to time.

So, beyond the different ways or rhetoric used by the different tenants of the White House at different times in history, this is not about the foreign policy of one particular administration, but about a broader trend and the structural impulses that guide the grand strategy of the US (Jordán, 2018; Santopinto et al., 2013, p. ii). Nevertheless, and notwithstanding Trump's deep isolationist tendencies and his insistence on allies like Germany contributing their "fair share" (Bolton, 2020, pp. 43–60), the general opinion among experts is that a US withdrawal from NATO is unlikely (Goldgeier, 2019; Schreer, 2019; Sperling & Webber, 2020),[54] especially because protecting their allies is one of the ways in which the US continues to shape global security and project its influence (Shea, 2019, p. 19). Finally, the endorsement of its European allies serves as a form of validation for the US when facing "thorny decisions" and the featuring of the Alliance in the US's most important strategy documents is a deeply rooted practice in American tradition (Rough, 2019, p. 12).

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[54] From John Bolton's accounts, it seems clear that if President Trump had had a supportive national security advisor at the time, the collapse of the western alliance could not be discarded. However, as things turned out, the President did not weaken NATO as much as it seemed likely and, ultimately, he did not pull out of NATO (Bolton, 2020, pp. 43–60).

Secondly, limiting the analysis to the 2 per cent complaint[55] in order to measure the tone of the US relations with the rest of the allies is simplistic and inadequate[56], since, entirely contrary to Trump's demands in **burden sharing**, the US has increased long-term investment in NATO in recent years. While it is possible that this level of involvement may be unknown to the current president because of his acknowledged disregard for detail[57] (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 24), the reality is that, under the current administration, budget requests to Congress have led to significant increases in the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) as well as to a larger presence of US troops in Europe.[58]

All European allies are aware of the obvious **imbalance between their military capabilities** and those of the Americans. Already during the campaign in the Balkans and particularly in Libya in 2011, the power of the US became clear in comparison with that of the Europeans. This gap has only increased due to the enormous investments in new technologies made by the White House in its efforts to maintain military leadership in domains such as additive manufacturing, hypersonics, AI and robotics, among other emerging technologies (Batoh et al., 2019, p. 16). These differences translate into **problems of interoperability** between the various military structures – not limited to technology – which are a matter of concern for all parties (Fiott, 2017b; Shea, 2019). In the long run, this may lead to difficulties because, at some point, the operational level will just follow the political level, and if the political level is creating some tension, then the operational level will likely follow and reflect those tensions as well (Gottemoeller, 2019). Moreover, the quest for technological dominance is not only an issue of bridging the gap among allies, but also of the Alliance keeping up with advances in military technology as a whole (Sendagorta, 2020).

In any case, the doubts about the extent to which the US is willing to remain involved in European security affairs in a context where Asia, and more specifically China, is a challenge

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[55] The pledge on contributing with a 2% of the GDP to the Security and Defence budget was voluntarily agreed by NATO allies in the Wales Summit in 2014 (NATO, 2014).

[56] It is also inadequate because the 2% figure hides differences and particularities between countries on defence expenditure. For instance, according to SIPRI (Tian et al., 2019), the UK, France and Germany are the biggest defence expenders in Europe, however, Germany is the one investing the most on conventional forces, which means that the UK and France are basically investing their budget on nuclear forces. The figure also hides the differences in how each state counts that 2% (Alvargonzález, 2019).

[57] The current US President, Mr. Trump, reportedly did not read NATO 2018 Summit declaration and has shown no desire to shape such NATO documents (Sperling, Webber, p. 24)

[58] Troops dedicated to organizing exercises such as Trident Juncture in 2018, in which 20,000 US personnel participated; assistance in capacity building for allies in Bulgaria and the Baltic States; Poland (where the US army commanded a multinational battlegroup in the framework of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence); or Romania (formed the largest component of a new NATO multinational force). Nonetheless, the planned withdrawal of US troops from Germany will be an interesting issue that the new US administration will need to deal with.

– which is causing unrest among Europeans. States at the Eastern flank of NATO, like Poland or the Baltic States, listened with concern to US President Trump's 2017 speech in which he did not mention Article V. Although later on, on a different occasion, he went on to include it in his remarks, it was seen as a sign of weaker US commitments (Sperling & Webber, 2020, p. 525). This uncertainty, which Europe has learnt to live with over the past decades (Brattberg & Valášek, 2019, p. 7), is also seen as an opportunity by certain European leaders. In this regard, the idea promoted by French President Macron of a Europe that should "stand on its own feet" is not new either, as it is inheriting a trend followed by France since De Gaulle's times (Macron, 2017). While from an economic perspective, this plan would make sense due to a likely Franco-German partnership, from a military perspective it would not. The UK is one of the two most powerful countries in Europe militarily speaking, together with France, and since it is no longer in the EU, its traditional position in favour of keeping Europe's defence under NATO's umbrella, now becomes its only option. So far, there is no consensus within the literature on how its third state status will influence the kind of cooperation with the rest of the EU members and with the EU as a whole (Biscop, 2016; Cladi & Locatelli, 2020; Duke, 2019; Dunn & Webber, 2016).

Regarding **Turkey's behaviour**, there seems to be agreement in identifying its foreign policy, which is not entirely in line with that of the Alliance, as a problem. Due to its strong energy dependence on Russia[59] and to some of its particular geopolitical preferences linked to a more ambitious and independent foreign policy – like its relationship with Iran (Geoană, 2019, pp. 595–598), its approach to Syria,[60] and its ambitions to influence the determination of borders in the Caucasus,[61] the Turkish ally acts strategically in the international sphere, sometimes disturbing the balance within NATO, both militarily and politically (Yaniz Velasco, 2020, p. 61). Actions like considering the purchase of S400 surface-to-air missile system from Russia have deep implications: on the one hand, it is a military-technological issue, since it would result in Turkey flying incompatible missile defence systems (or even competitive ones) to the ones used by the rest of the Alliance, while granting Russia an entry point in the defence ballistic system of NATO; but, on the other hand, it is above all a political issue with a strong symbolic charge.

This case is a mere example but it is an illustrative one, as it symbolises Turkey's ambiguous approach to Russia in an area that matters to the security of allies, namely the Middle East, Syria and Iraq (Köstem, 2020, pp. 1–23)- In a context that touches upon the issue of terrorism and control of migration flows, this could even resort back to the aforementioned idea of NATO as a value-driven Alliance. Internally, confrontational approaches are disregarded; such challenges are handled diplomatically and with extreme delicacy, since a breach in the trust within the Alliance must always be avoided. Furthermore, the relationship between NATO and Turkey is mutually convenient. NATO can no less afford losing Turkey as an ally, than does Turkey benefit in any way from leaving the Alliance. In fact, there is strong support for NATO

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[59] Apart from gas provisions, Russia is building a nuclear plant in Turkey.
[60] Where it has sent troops to weaken the People's Protection Units (YPG), a branch of the PKK, with whom the US had been associated since 2014 to fight the ISIS (despite considering the YPG as terrorists).
[61] As seen in its involvement and collaboration with Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

in Turkey and the country can use its status as an ally to have a voice, a vote, be part of decision-making process and promote its national agenda (Dakka, 2019).

With respect to **organisational or bureaucratic challenges** within the Alliance, one of the most recurrent complaints in the specialised literature (Mayer, 2014; Noetzel & Schreer, 2009) seems to be the need to modify the decision-making system by consensus, in order to prevent the fragmentation of the alliance into a "tier-system"[62] and raise fears of possible free-riding. Nevertheless, changing the consensus rule and transitioning to a qualified majority system would imply achieving a consensus beforehand that is difficult to obtain at present (Michel, 2014, pp. 107–123). The figure and role of the Secretary General has also attracted some attention, noting that negotiating profiles capable of achieving consensus – such as Solana or Wörner – have positive effects for the joint actions of NATO (Wolff, 2014, pp. 73–95). While such a figure is important for instigating change and promoting internal reforms, as promoted by SG Rasmussen at the 2010 and 2012 Lisbon and Chicago summits, some criticise the fact that the SG still lacks significant organisational powers (Hendrickson, 2014, pp. 124–139).

Finally, NATO is confronted with the pressing task of updating its tasks in the 21st century. This need has been particularly felt by certain nations, as shown, for instance, by the highly commented interview of the French President (*Emmanuel Macron in His Own Words*, 2019) and Angela Merkel's declarations at the G7 2017 Summit (Merkel, 2017) (Brattberg & Valášek, 2019, p. 7). As a result, a "reflection group" was launched at NATO level. This Franco-German initiative has been embraced by all the allies in order to produce a paper on the future of the Alliance (due for NATO's 2021 summit). It seems that most of the issues the Alliance is likely to be confronted with in the years to come will not be exclusively of military nature, but about foreign direct investment, hybrid operations, espionage, sabotage and technology (the 5G issue) (Missiroli, 2020, pp. 69–70). Such a list would be added to NATO's current objectives, but for the time being, the Alliance is not yet well equipped to handle these forthcoming scenarios; it is, however, working and preparing for it (Iftimie, 2020, pp. 10–13; NATO, 2019c, p. 9; Stoltenberg, 2019).

3.2 The OSCE at present: membership, objectives, and challenges

3.2.1 Current membership

The OSCE is the most inclusive security organisation in Europe, with the US, Canada and as many as 55 states of the Eurasian area[63] (Bieri & Nünlist, 2018; Møller, 2008). Under its motto "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" (coined in 2009, Cliff, 2012, p. 68), it allows Russia and its European allies to discuss regional security matters in an equal playing field where the US can also be part of the conversation. After the dissolution of the USSR, between September

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[62] Between those who defend the status quo, those in favour of reforms and those who aspire to a more militaristic approach.
[63] List of participating states available here: www.osce.org/participating-states

1991 and January 1992 as many as 13 former Soviet states became members of the OSCE.[64] Since then, the three rounds of expansion have opened the door to Croatia, Georgia and Slovenia (March 1992), Serbia and Montenegro (2000), and Montenegro as an independent state in 2006. The OSCE works in favour of stability, prosperity, and democracy in a total of 57 participating states – many of which only have a voice and vote on European security matters in this regional platform. The use of this terminology – participating states – by the OSCE is not random as, in opinion of Blokker and Wessel, it does mirror the informal status of the intergovernmental cooperation that takes place voluntarily and devoid of legal obligations vis-à-vis the organisation and the rest of states (Blokker & Wessel, 2019, pp. 135–164). The OSCE does lack international legal personality and it must be recalled that, in a technical, international law sense, it appears as a highly institutionalised informal IGO (Steinbrück Platise & Peters, 2018, p. 1). This distinctive non-binding status (Nünlist & Hakkarainen, 2019, pp. 30–40), has allowed the OSCE to enable negotiations and reach consensus between opposing interests, although it has also has hampered internal decision-making processes[65] (Mosser, 2015a, p. 580). Nonetheless, since decisions are taken by consensus, the informal nature of this political forum provides flexibility and functionality while cooperating on a broad range of issues, which are connected to the wide and comprehensive approach to security characteristic to the OSCE (Nünlist & Hakkarainen, 2019, pp. 29–47).

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[64] The three Baltic states in September 1991 and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan in January 1992

[65] While flexibility favours reaching agreements, it does not favour compliance with agreements, which becomes quite lax.

Figure 2: OSCE membership in 2020
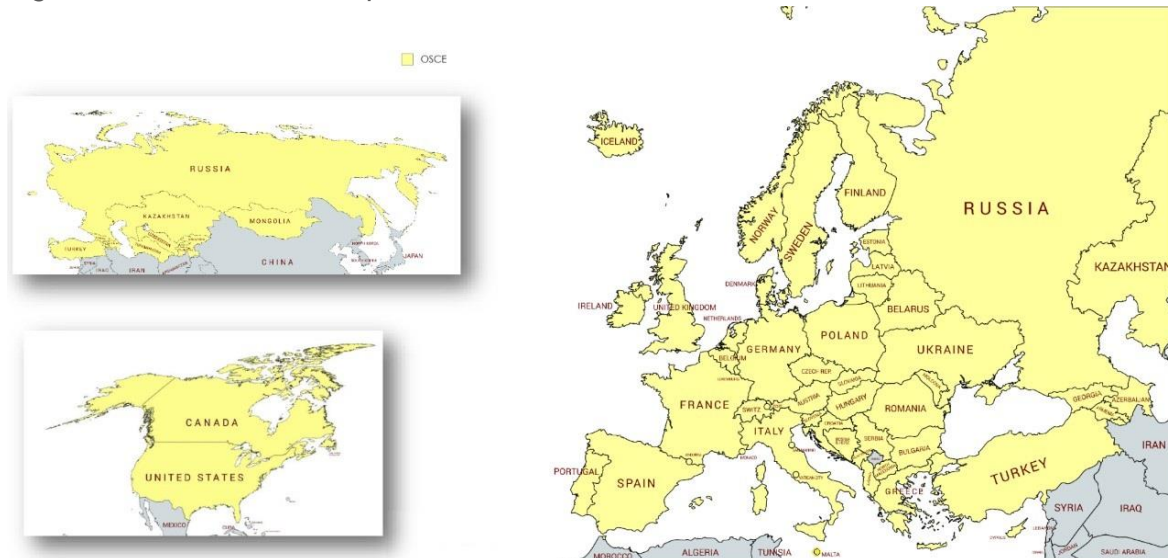
Source: Own creation

Among the 57 participating states, Switzerland particularly, but also Germany and Austria, can be identified as the main countries championing the OSCE's cause (Borchert, 2001, pp. 161–182; Nünlist, 2017, pp. 1–5; Szubart, 2016, pp. 1–6). Switzerland has been quite active in several security initiatives (like mediation tasks or hosting several summits of the Minsk Group[66]), which contrasts with the lack of interest in the organisation shown by larger or more powerful states (Mosser, 2001, pp. 64–69). Along with the disinterest shown by Russia (which had been one of the OSCE's main advocates right after the Cold War (Ghebali, 2005, pp. 375–388; Zellner, 2005, pp. 389–402)), the US, France and the UK's lack of interest has also been significant – although UK's level of involvement may be changing after Brexit. With respect to the UK, however, a greater British presence has been noted among the team leaders in the missions (Black et al., 2017, p. 144), along with a remarkable increase in Finnish personnel as well (Forsberg, 2018, pp. 97–127). In this line, the level of involvement in the provision of staff and the interest in seconding them for relevant positions is another way to measure the support of participating states to the OSCE. For instance, in the biggest Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) to Ukraine, the largest contingents are those of Germany and Canada (due, in this case, to the large number of Ukrainian descendants in the country), followed by the US (something that can be explained by the fact that it is one of the most populated participating states) and Italy.[67] Knowing the composition of the contingents or the profiles in the leading positions reveals the importance that a state places both, on a mission and on the organisation.

3.2.2 Objectives

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[66] The Minsk Group was established in the 1994 OSCE Budapest Summit to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Apart from Armenia and Azerbaijan, it has six permanent members, which work with the OSCE troika.
[67] Information on the OSCE SMM to Ukraine here: www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine

The objectives of the OSCE are maintaining the political dialogue about shared values among its participants, fostering regional agreements and arms-control mechanisms, and advancing democracy and human rights in order to guarantee stability, peace and democracy for more than a billion people. Through its broad-arching security objectives in a pursued "common and indivisible security space", the OSCE distinguishes itself from the other institutions in the ESA.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 established the CSCE as a forum for reaching agreements between the West and Russia and bridging the blocks divide during the Cold War (Fuentes Monzonís-Vilallonga, 2005; W. H. Hill, 2013). Its role as one of the few great diplomatic achievements during the Cold War earned this forum for **political dialogue** a well-deserved reputation by the end of the turbulent 20th century (Ghebali, 2005, p. 375; Kramer, 2009, p. 42). However, although the Helsinki Final Act included chapters on security and the economy, the relevance of the OSCE in those fields has been limited. These areas have been dominated by NATO and the EU respectively, since member States in those organisations have prioritised them to manage the "hard" security aspects and the economic integration process (Dominguez, 2014). For its part, the OSCE's objectives continue to be classified in the three well-known "baskets" or dimensions for security (political-military, economic and environmental and human), but the fact that the OSCE is empowered with instruments of persuasion instead of coercion, has consolidated its **broad concept of international security,** which causes the OSCE to be associated with the human approach of a "soft security for a hard world" (Møller, 2008, p. 19; Mosser, 2015a, p. 580).

The basis for the institutionalisation of the CSCE in the decade of the 1990s were set in the Paris Charter for a New Europe (1990), which aimed at enhancing regional security by calling on the conclusion of negotiations on **arms control agreements** (CSCE, 1990, pp. 8–9). In fact, throughout what Ulrich Kühn refers to as "the rise and fall of arms control in Europe", the CSCE hosted several major achievements in this area (Kühn, 2020, pp. 81–136). Therefore, its wide geographical coverage, combined with its broad conception of security and its uncommon legal status, led it to oversee such important developments as the confidence- and security-building measures (CBMs) of the Vienna Documents (Cliff, 2012; Møller, 2008) and the already mentioned Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) (OSCE, 1990).

The Vienna Documents[68] provided for measures such as the exchange of information on forces and defence planning, a mechanism for consultation in military cases, prior notification of large-scale activities and a system of visits.[69] Among other breakthroughs in the field, the OSCE also encouraged and supported the adoption of the Treaty on Open Skies (1992) even

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[68] Which inherited the Stockholm Document from the predecessor CSCE.
[69] Since 1990 and in accordance with the Vienna Document and its subsequent versions, the OSCE's participating states exchange information on their armed forces, military organisation, major weapon and equipment systems, defence planning and budgets during the year. This commitment was already part of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, but it was formalized in 1990 under the key document for CSBMs: the Vienna Document, updated several times after that moment (1990, 1992, 1994, 1999, 2004...) (OSCE, 2011).

if it was negotiated outside the OSCE's framework.[70] Thus, promoting the implementation by state parties of such **regional agreements and arms-control mechanisms** established within the framework of the OSCE constitutes a long-standing objective. Given the challenges the OSCE is currently facing (see below), this objective may need to be paid more attention (W. H. Hill, 2013, pp. 6–7; Szubart, 2016, p. 3).

Since its conversion from the CSCE to the OSCE in 1995 to respond to the various challenges originated by the emergence of the multipolar world (Dominguez, 2014, pp. 17–27), this regional arrangement has played a significant role in **promoting peace and stability**, **enhancing cooperative security** and **advancing democracy and human rights in Europe**. To pursue these objectives, the OSCE has also been particularly active in the fields of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction. This closeness to the conflict cycle, as well as its human-rights focus are some of the particularities that make the OSCE stand out among other security actors (Wright, 2006, p. 291).

To further identify the security objectives of the OSCE today, it is essential to mention the last remarkable institutional event so far: the *2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration: Towards a Security Community* (OSCE, 2010), adopted during what was the first summit of heads of State and Government in more than ten years (since the one in Istanbul). This document reaffirmed the commitment of participating States and their adherence to OSCE principles, and, among the many reinforcing statements and declarative acknowledgements, it insists on the **promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms** as a primary responsibility of the Organisation (Ruiz González, 2010a, p. 2). As part of this objective, the OSCE has been highly active as an electoral observer and it counts with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Representative on Freedom for the media and the High Commissioner on National Minorities.

While the usefulness and reliability of the OSCE's work in early warning, conflict prevention measures, human rights protection, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation are borne out by the results of its field operations and missions,[71] some of which address topics solely handled by the OSCE (like the protection of minorities) (W. H. Hill, 2013, pp. 1–4), the "spirit of Astana" has been progressively lost as events have unfolded, especially in Ukraine.

3.2.3 Challenges

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[70] It recalled its States Parties the CSCE commitments "to promoting greater openness and transparency in their military activities and to enhancing security by means of confidence- and security-building measures." (Treaty on Open Skies, 1992)

[71] Largely focused on monitoring, observation and verification of the ceasefires in place and led by unarmed military members. The closest the OSCE got to be involved in a traditional military peacekeeping mission was in Moldova, from 1992, due to the Transnistria conflict (W. H. Hill, 2013, p. 4).

Despite its brief prominence in the early 1990s and its significant daily work both on the diplomatic front and through its 16 field operations,[72] the OSCE has been, and indeed continues to be, **largely unknown** to the general public (Dominguez, 2014, pp. 17–27; Mosser, 2015a, p. 590) and lacking in credibility (Trenin, 2003, p. 11; Webber et al., 2004, p. 19). The most inclusive security organisation in Europe has been rapidly losing relevance after the enlargements of NATO and the EU, and its geographical exclusivity has been reduced to Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Its secondary role in the European security architecture implies that experts and observers **question its relevance** (Azintov, 2012, pp. 19–22; Fernandes, 2015, p. 92; Stewart, 2008, p. 268; Zellner, 2005, p. 391) especially when compared to NATO or the EU (Aybet, 2000; Møller, 2008) and particularly on relevant dates for the organisation such as 2020, which marks the 45th anniversary of its creation.

The **lack of trust** between participating states, particularly the situation of growing **tension between Russia and the other** participating states is not only and internal and political challenge for the OSCE, but also directly related to its survival. This tension, which can be felt at various levels,[73] makes collaboration and decision-making within the OSCE very difficult. Russia continues to exert great influence in the region and it has proved to be willing to use its military force against sovereign states to pursue political goals (Baqués Quesada, 2018, pp. 16–17). The climate created by the conflicts in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014 – both OSCE Member States – as well as the military developments in Crimea and the Donbass, **question the foundations laid down in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act**, and call into question the effectiveness of the CBMs set out in the Vienna Documents.

Restoring the trust among participants would also involve restoring the trust in the measures aimed at guaranteeing transparency in the OSCE's acquis that has existed in Europe for 20 years (De Salazar Serantes, 2016, p. 367). Currently, **building back trust**, re-establishing a "security community" and restoring the OSCE's original function as one of the leading forums for mutually beneficial dialogue and collective consensual decisions on European security issues (Azintov, 2012, pp. 19–22) are both objectives and challenges. Paradoxically, Ukraine's crisis, which is one of the main current difficulties for the OSCE, has also been an opportunity for the organisation to demonstrate its worth and relevance (Smolnik, 2019, p. 5; Zannier, 2018, pp. 35–36). Moreover, the conflict in Ukraine underscores the need – and difficulty – to **adapt** the arms-control regime in Europe due to the importance of military transparency like the one achieved with the CFE, the Vienna Documents or the Open Skies Treaty (Bieri & Nünlist, 2018, pp. 407–423).

However, these and other OSCE instruments become useless in the **absence of political will** on the part of one, several or all the parties involved. Being an intergovernmental forum, the weight and influence of some participants, the historical relations between states, and the lack of trust in general (worsened in the last decade) make decision-making difficult, even leading the OSCE to be somewhat paralysed in taking forceful and avant-garde decisions (Bieri &

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[72] Information on the OSCE's current field operations here: www.osce.org/where-we-are
[73] Not exclusively within the framework of the organisation, such as in agreements on arms control of international or sub-regional scope like the CFE.

Nünlist, 2018). There seems to be an excess of **tepidity**. This difficulty stems from the very nature of the institution, whose informality determines the limits of its ability to act, insofar it cannot impose itself on the will of governments, whose trust in each other is greatly weakened. Although improbable, it would be desirable for the OSCE to increase its influence on individual participating states. Political differences among OSCE's participating states, apart from constantly delaying the adoption of budgets, have also caused mistrust and the discontinuation of the organisation's work.

A paradigmatic example was the lack of an agreement on the renovation of the mandate of the OSCE's Mission in Georgia in December 2008, forcing to leave the ground of the country and making it an even more contested actor (Lynch, 2009, p. 142). The degree of tension between Russia and the EU/NATO members participating in the OSCE after the Georgia crisis was such that the OSCE launched what is known as the Corfu Process in 2009 to try and restore some of the trust (Fernandes, 2015, p. 92). These kinds of efforts to reinvigorate the OSCE have been ascending and descending periodically (Cliff, 2012, pp. 65–76). When constructive, yet challenging, discussions on the future role of the OSCE were occurring again,[74] the Ukrainian crisis provided a new opportunity for the OSCE to re-emerge on the European political agenda in a pragmatic way, taking advantage of its niche and appearing like the most important international forum for the management of that particular crisis (Nünlist, 2017, p. 1; Zannier, 2018, pp. 35–36). The OSCE SMM, in place since 2014, became the only space for discussion and the only platform to reach agreements (even armistice), albeit of short duration and at the local level (Kemp, 2018, pp. 113–123). However, the armed conflict that has been going on in Ukraine since 2014, the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the armed insurgency in Donetsk with external support make it even more difficult to find a new balance that is satisfactory for all members and, at the same time, respects the Helsinki Decalogue (i.e. the principles established in Europe since 1975).[75]

If the Eastern Ukraine conflict were to become chronic, it would come to join the list of the **"frozen conflicts"** within the OSCE area. The existence of conflicts in and between its participating states is a highly complex challenge faced by the organisation (Zannier, 2018, pp. 35–50). Conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh,[76] South Ossetia, Transnistria or Abkhazia have ratified the scepticism with which the Istanbul document was received in 1999. Attempting to mediate between the parties to a dispute when both sides are themselves members within the organisation is an arduous task that has been approached from that angle only by the OSCE (Rubio Plo, 2006, p. 3). Even if there have been mistakes or shortcomings along the way, its delicate work must be acknowledged (Ghebali, 2005; Zellner, 2005). Handling such conflicts

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[74] Within the framework of the V to V Dialogues first and within the Helsinki +40 Process later

[75] Among the efforts to address the crisis, the OSCE also has an Observer Mission at Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk (www.osce.org/observer-mission-at-russian-checkpoints-gukovo-and-donetsk/457270) and a Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (www.osce.org/project-coordinator-in-ukraine).

[76] At the time of writing this paper, tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno-Karabakh resulted in a six-week war with thousands of casualties and displaced persons, ended only by a Russian-brokered peace deal granting heavy territorial gains to Azerbaijan. Russia alone will guarantee the peace and, at least for now, no role is foreseen for the OSCE.

in a weakened cooperative atmosphere is a constant challenge. In order to remain relevant in the future and to redeem all the efforts, successes and failures of this informal organisation, it must raise real awareness of the importance of resolving disputes or disagreements within it, so as to avoid reaching the next stage of even more serious conflicts.

Lastly, on a more operational level, there seems to be a challenge related to the sustainability of the daily work of the organisation. The lack of motivation of a large part of the staff does not help either to preserve institutional memory or to promote the sustainability of all the advances and successes obtained by previous generations of staff (Shkolnikov, 2009, pp. 151–152).

3.3 The EU as a security actor at present: membership, objectives, recent developments, and challenges

3.3.1 Current membership

After the first – and so far, only – exit of a member state (the UK) from the EU on January 31st, 2020, the EU now has 27 member states. The gradual process of enlargement[77] throughout its more than sixty years of history has implied both geographical and geopolitical changes for the EU. The accession of new members, including, among others, up to 11 former Communist countries since the origin of the European Communities in 1957 (Zaborowski, 2020, pp. 1–15), has affected not only the EU's physical contours, coming to share a border with Russia, as well as with Belarus, Ukraine or the Balkans, but also the development of its security and defence ambitions throughout history (De Castro Ruano, 2015; Faleg, 2017, p. 187; Grevi et al., 2009).

Figure 3: The EU's expanding membership

EU membership in 2004   **EU membership after 2004 enlargement**

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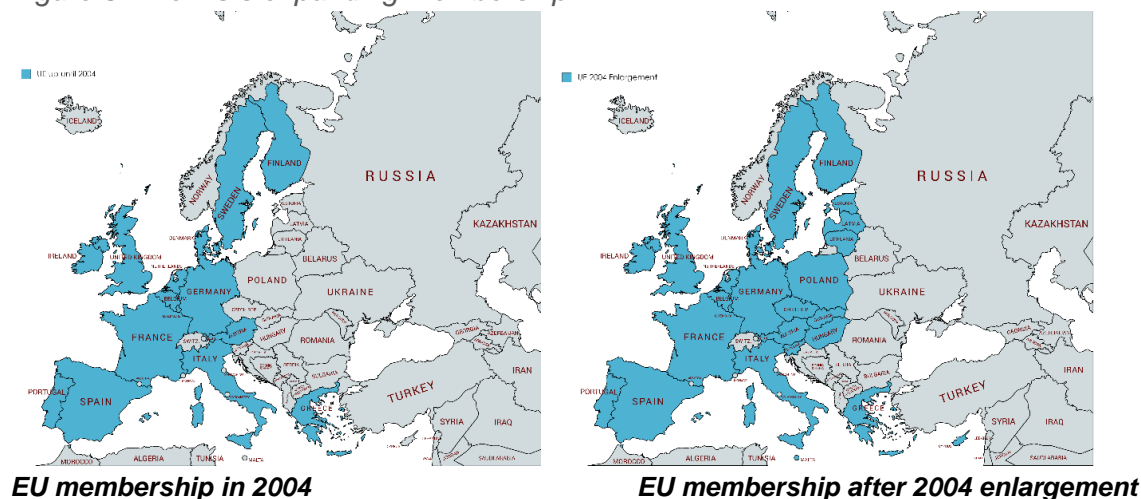
[77] After Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and The Netherlands finished the process of creation in 1958, the rounds of expansion have taken place in the following years: 1973 (Denmark, Ireland and the UK), 1981 (Greece), 1986 (Portugal and Spain), 1995 (Austria, Finland and Sweden), 2004 (Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2013 (Croatia). In 2020 the UK left. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en#tab-0-1

EU membership in 2020

Source: Own creation

Since security and defence represent the quintessence of national sovereignty, several member states are reluctant to relinquish full control over these matters (Keohane & Valášek, 2008, p. 32; Pál, 2006, p. 181). Moreover, differences in threat perception, history, geographical location, influence areas, military capabilities and other factors such as the energy dependence of the different members contribute to making the EU somewhat of aa hydra of 27 heads when it comes to security and defence (Borrell, 2020b). Deciding what kind of security actor the EU should become or pursuing a common European defence is not an easy task, as proven by unsuccessful attempts like the European Defence Community[78] and the WEU (Fiott, 2017a, p. 3; Jegen & Mérand, 2014, p. 193; Wessel, 2001, pp. 405–434). Nonetheless, this has not prevented the EU from moving forward in this field.

A significant legal machinery is in place in order to allow those member states that do not wish to assume greater responsibilities in the field of security and defence to opt out of the common actions and positions adopted by the EU (Baqués Quesada, 2002, p. 21). By permitting the feared "two speeds", that is, setting the terms for closer defence cooperation (Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 42; Solana et al., 2016, p. 24), the EU is tacitly recognising its inability to speak with one voice on security and defence matters, but at the same time it is also making progress, bypassing the blockages that could leave it paralysed. In this sense, we see how Denmark is

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[78] The well-known Pleven Declaration of 1950 led to the Treaty of Paris on the establishment of the European Defence Community (EDC). However, this project, which aimed to fully integrate the forces of Western European states into a "European army" failed in 1954 due to France's failure to ratify its founding treaty (Van Ham, 2006, p. 9). The establishment of NATO only a few years earlier, in 1949, and some concerns on the part of France about rearmament and supranational control of forces were decisive elements in the demise of the EDC just two years after the signing of the Treaty of Paris (Fiott, 2017a, p. 3)

not a member of the EDA[79], how decisions in the frame of PESCO do not require unanimity (Aldecoa & Pérez Cava, 2018, p. 18) – actually, Denmark, Malta and the UK (at the time) decided not to get involved in PESCO (Tardy, 2018, p. 127)), or how the participation in PESCO varies between projects and will always remain voluntary (Barnier, 2015, p. 7).

Regarding Brexit, which has been the biggest impact in EU membership since 2004, its effects on European defence can be read in opposing ways. The most obvious warns of the loss of one of the main contributors in financial terms as well as one of the two most capable military members (together with France), which also maintains a limited strategic deployment capacity by its own means (Besch, 2016, p. 2). While it is true that, in terms of involvement in CSDP operations, staff engagement and other strategic contributions, the role of the UK was traditionally very limited (Biscop, 2016, p. 432; Cladi & Locatelli, 2020, p. 7; Valášek, 2019b)[80], it must be acknowledged that certain critical assets for operations at the higher end of the conflict spectrum will be missed,[81] thus making it harder for the EU to fulfil its current level of military ambition (Barrie et al., 2018, pp. 3–4; Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 44). For the EU, Brexit also implies losing a permanent voice in the UN Security Council (as well as a nuclear power), the global presence and sway of the UK, the abilities and professionalism of its staff and other not easily quantifiable assets whose absence may be noticed in the long run (Pontijas Calderón, 2018a). For the UK, abandoning the EU means leaving key decision-making *fora* like the Political and Security Committee (PSC), institutional bodies like the Foreign Affairs Council, the EDA or Europol, as well as the capacity to shape high level diplomacy policies (Dijkstra, 2016, p. 2).

However, another frequent and more optimistic claim in regards to Brexit is that, given the traditionally pro-American/pro-NATO position of the British,[82] their exit will free the rest of EU member states from the constraints of the UK's refusals (Martill & Sus, 2018, p. 857). Historically, the UK has been one of the most Atlanticist states within the EU, standing against the creation of an EU defence and fearing that the creation of a "Fortress Europe" would exclude the US from providing European security and defence (Gebhard & Smith, 2015, p. 110; Grevi et al., 2009, p. 84). Therefore, Brexit also means releasing that constant opposition. In fact, such relief will be more noticeable for Paris and Berlin (Besch, 2016, pp. 6–7) but not so much for the decision-making within the EU because, as we shall see, there are quite a

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[79] Denmark has also made use of Article 31(1) TEU to refrain from contributing to the budget for operations with a military component. As a consequence of the referendum for the approval of the Maastricht Treaty, Denmark exercised the right to *opt out* of the CSDP.

[80] By the time it left the EU, the UK was the fifth contributor to military CSDP missions (after France, Italy, Germany and Spain), and the seventh in civilian CSDP operations (Aldecoa & Pérez Cava, 2018, p. 25)

[81] Operational assets of the British Armed forces, initiatives like the UK-Netherlands Battle-group, Headquarters structures, etc. (Cladi & Locatelli, 2020, p. 9; Santopinto, 2018, p. 33)

[82] In this sense, the UK's opposition to the establishment of an Operational Headquarters is one of the most characteristic blocked initiatives, while the description of ESDP in words of former UK's Shadow Secretary of State for Defence Bernard Jenkin as a "wasteful, unnecessary and disruptive competitor" to NATO serves as a good example of the British preferences at the time (quoted in Ambos, 2004, p. 187).

few EU states that prefer to not go against (or to align themselves with) Washington, even if that means a reduction in European autonomy in security and defence matters (Baqués Quesada, 2018, p. 22). Nonetheless, from this positive interpretation, London will no longer be able to block the remaining members from launching initiatives and making full profit of the Treaty provisions. Brexit seems to make possible the resumption of initiatives with a federal vocation that had been paralysed for a long time (Biscop, 2016, p. 432; Martill & Sus, 2018, p. 851), acting thus as a catalyst – together with other circumstances – for further integration (Juncker, 2017).

In any case, the UK is leaving the EU but not Europe, so the challenges and many of the interests will continue to be shared. Furthermore, many of the EU's security and defence instruments foresee the involvement of third states, apart from maybe seeing an enhanced cooperation channelled in the frame of NATO, or potentially strengthening bilateral ties between the UK and some member states, particularly France (Martill & Sus, 2018, p. 860).Therefore, close cooperation with the British seems not only desirable for both parts, but also very likely (Duke, 2019, pp. 55–72; Larik, 2018, p. 357; Serrano De Haro, 2019, p. 6).

3.3.2 Objectives

The threat of terrorism that has repeatedly hit Europe, Russia's increasing assertiveness, the instability of the transatlantic link – worsened after the arrival of President Trump into office[83] – and the loss of the assets provided by the UK, has led the EU to overcome the historical taboo of moving vigorously towards a security and defence Union, and this is reflected in its current goals (De Castro Ruano & Borrajo, 2019, p. 195; Duke, 2019, pp. 27–38; M. E. Smith, 2018, p. 614).

A traditional common objective, enshrined in the Treaties, is to contribute to security and conflict reduction in the immediate area of the EU. This **crisis management** objective is alien to the internal dimension of security and collective defence, which, also according to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) is in the hands of NATO (Art. 42.2, European Union, 2012). However, through crisis management, the EU aims to keep its neighbourhood safe and peaceful, thus promoting its development, strengthening institutions, and transmitting European values. Indirectly, this is also protecting EU citizens (Council of the EU, 2016a, para. 8). To this end, and following a comprehensive approach[84], the EU makes use of all the

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[83] Calling the EU "a foe" – in trade – during an interview in Scotland in 2018, President Trump was distancing himself from its military and political partner (CBS Evening News, 2018).

[84] The EU's "comprehensive approach" (CA) refers to a culture of coordination that combines differentiated tools such as diplomacy, defence and development, as well as coordination between civilian and military components and structures. It seeks to develop a coherent way of thinking and coordinating (Rieker et al., 2016, p. 6). On the potential of the CA to provide security: Borrajo & Castro, 2016.

instruments at its service (Rieker et al., 2016, p. 6): not only CSDP missions[85] – which are carried out on an *ad hoc* basis and must always have the consent of the host state (Tardy, 2015, p. 10), but also collaboration in economic matters, energy cooperation, development aid, and other diplomatic tools that contribute to the prevention of crisis, its management and stabilisation.[86] However, while contributing to security and reducing conflict in the surrounding regions of the EU is a common goal for all member states, agreeing on the areas they should focus on proves to be more complex.[87]

In compliance with the Treaties, the EUGS strives for **"strategic autonomy"** (European Union, 2016)**,** which "entails the ability to act and cooperate with international and regional partners wherever possible, while being able to operate autonomously when and where necessary" (Mogherini, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, the EU aspires to achieve enough sovereignty and military autonomy to perform advanced security tasks without the need to resort to NATO's capabilities, although the Alliance still "remains the foundation for the collective defence" for EU member states (Council of the EU, 2016a, para. 7.c). Although strategic autonomy is a common goal (more on this concept in Fiott, 2018), member states often differ on how to achieve it: some prefer to continue to rely on NATO for their own security, while others prefer to complement this collaboration with a gradual increase in Europe's own capabilities. In any case, apart from continuing to have a regulatory role and being the rules-based actor it already is in the context of crisis management (Larik, 2018, p. 348; Lindstrom & Tardy, 2019b, p. 9), the EU has also been debating on becoming self-reliant in defence (Howorth, 2017, p. 457).

Presently, however, it is still an ambiguous security actor in this aspect, because it has institutionalised defence without backing it up yet with real and tangible improved military capabilities (Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 44). This could change in the future. Indeed, until recently, from the two dimensions comprised by the CSDP – security and defence – , the security dimension (characterised by a broad approach closer to that used by the UN than to that used by NATO) has carried more weight than the defence dimension (Tardy, 2018, p. 120). It is important to stress that *'la défense de l'Europe n'est pas l'Europe de la Défense'* (Morel & Cameron, 2009, p. 45). While European defence is a policy of crisis management and post-conflict state reconstruction, the strategic defence of European territory – that is, the collective defence of Europe – goes beyond the mandate of the CSDP and, it must be insisted upon, remains the main responsibility of NATO (De Castro Ruano, 2015, p. 26).

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[85] Since the deployment in 2003 of its first EUPM, the EU has launched 34 civil and military missions and operations in 21 countries in different regions, that can be consulted here: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en?page=1

[86] An example of this can be found in Ukraine, where the 15 billion Euros invested there since 2014 – including grants and loans to support the reform process, a civilian mission and many other elements – helped stabilize the country (European External Action Service, 2020b).

[87] See "Challenges" in this section.

The traditional dominance of the crisis management component is explained by the fact that as, Article 4.1 and 2 of the TEU state, defence is an exclusive competence of member states,[88] which they have traditionally decided to channel either through bilateral agreements or, indeed, through NATO. This historically limited defence cooperation (Hyde-Price, 2018, pp. 392–406; Meijer & Wyss, 2019, p. 379) in the frame of the EU has also been perpetuated by the insistence of some of its members on the eastern flank, which understand that their respective national interests are best served under the umbrella of the US and NATO, still seen by many as the bedrock of the European security architecture (Keohane & Mölling, 2016, p. 2; Shapiro & Witney, 2009, p. 32; Zaborowski, 2020, p. 3).

The imbalance between security and defence, however, may be eroded as new initiatives, backed by the European Commission's presence in these matters, are fostering a **stronger defence cooperation** within the EU (Brattberg & Valášek, 2019, pp. 1–5) and activating several clauses of the Treaty of Lisbon (Bakker et al., 2014, pp. 3–8; Troszczynska-Van Genderen, 2015, pp. 17–18). Together with becoming a full-fledged military actor able to manage crisis and carry out advanced military interventions, the EUGS also reflected the EU's ambition of providing peace and security not only beyond but also within its borders (European Union, 2016, pp. 9, 19). This last part[89] – insisted upon by some members states – challenges the traditional and exclusive "crisis management" approach by suggesting that the EU should be more than a crisis management actor. In recent years, also the EDA has been emphasising that its work on capabilities should not be limited to crisis management. It stresses the importance of incorporating the capabilities needed for defence and deterrence to its frame of work, irrespective of whether these will be used directly by the EU itself or to enhance the individual capabilities of member states (Simón, 2019, p. 3).

As the next epigraph shows, defence cooperation includes multiple aspects,[90] some of them widely supported, like working towards a **common European military industry**. Member states see a clearly added value in improving a common defence market and in undertaking specific security projects that look towards the interior of the Union (as shown by the 2018 Eurobarometer survey European Commission, 2018a).

3.3.3 Developments

In the last four to six years, the EU has developed greatly in the security and defence field, which proves right those who claim that "the EU's self-stated approach to security is a reflection of the intense, highly institutionalised, multidimensional, and multilateral cooperation that occurs among EU member states themselves" (M. E. Smith, 2018, p. 610).

The CSDP (as well as CFSP) remains an area of intergovernmental governance where the pace of defence integration is set by the member states and their ability to reach consensus

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[88] Art. 4.1 TEU, "competences not conferred upon the Union in the Treaties remain with the Member States" and 4.2, "national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State".
[89] *Ibíd.*
[90] Increasing the effectiveness visibility and impact of CSDP; improving the development of the EU's capabilities; and bolstering the European defence industry (European Council, 2013).

and compromise. Art. 42.3 calls for them to gradually enhance their military capabilities and the industrial and technological base of the defence sector by resorting to the EDA. However, since Juncker's time, the Commission has also offered the communitarian channel through which progress can be made in the face of the possible blockage caused by intergovernmentalism, being particularly involved in the development and integration of defence capabilities (Serrano De Haro, 2020, pp. 29–30). The current Commission, led by Ursula von der Leyen, is expected to follow the same path (Bassot, 2020, p. 9), that is, maintaining security and defence as a top priority of a "geopolitical Commission" (Von der Leyen, 2019, p. 7). This **enhanced role of the Commission** is already a novelty, since its traditional involvement in CSDP was limited to managing the budget of CSDP civilian missions through foreign policy instruments, and now it is also fostering the development of some initiatives and instruments (Tardy, 2018, p. 128). Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether the Commission will change its priorities in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

Apart from the increased role of the Commission, multiple actors are involved during the decision-making process and throughout the implementation phase of the CSDP. Along with the main EU institutions, there are also several bodies under the responsibility of the Council as well as within the European External Action Service (EEAS) that play a significant role for the CSDP (see figure 4).

The political direction and the policy guidelines of the CSDP are set by the European Council, and the **Council of the European Union** makes sure they are implemented. The Council, through the **_Foreign Affairs Council_** (FAC) and through its preparatory bodies (like the _Political and Security Committee_, the _Political Military Group_, the _Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management_, and the _EU Military Committee_) takes the needed steps to implement the CSDP and ensure its consistency with the European Council guidelines. The FAC[91] (if not the European Council) is the one to decide if a situation should be defined as a crisis. In order to define the responses to a crisis, the FAC and its chair, the **High Representative,** are advised by the PSC,[92] one of the preparatory bodies of the Council which, in turn, is assisted by the **Politico-Military Group** (PMG), the **Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management** (CIVCOM) and the **EU Military Committee** (EUMC) (all of them intergovernmental bodies). While the PMG[93] does preparatory work for the PSC covering

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[91] The FAC is the EU's CSDP central decision-making body. Ministries of Foreign Affairs meet monthly and cover any defense issues related to its defense, development and trade configuration.

[92] The PSC is a preparatory body for the Council of the EU and it is regulated by article 38 TUE, according to which it is composed of member states Ambassadors. It meets twice a week (and, whenever deemed necessary) to keep track of the international situation, recommend on strategic approaches and political opinions to the Council, preparing a coherent EU response to crisis and helping EU Foreign Affairs Ministers to reach decisions.

[93] The PMG is chaired by a representative of the HR and carries out preparatory work for the PSC, provides it with recommendations, monitors their effective implementation and prepares Council Conclusions.

political aspects of civil-military issues, the CIVCOM[94] and the EUMC focus on providing advice on the civilian and military aspects of civilian missions, and on the civilian and military aspects of military operations, respectively.

The EUMC is the highest military body set up within the Council[95] and it directs the EUMS, which is part of the EEAS. The EEAS[96] is the diplomatic service of the EU, is led by the High Representative and it oversees the EU's foreign policy. Specifically, in the field of CSDP, the EEAS comprises specific structures under the authority of the **Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and crisis response** (DSG-CSDP) such as the Security and Defence Policy Directorate (SECDEFPOL),[97] the Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate (ISPD)[98] and the **Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability** (CPCC) – all of them under the

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[94] The CIVCOM, composed of representatives of the member states, was set up by Council Decision of 22 May 2000 (2000/354/PESC) and it provides information, recommendation and opinions to the PSC in all civilian aspects related to crisis management.

[95] The EUMC was set up by Council Decision of 22 January 2001 (2001/79/PESC) and it is composed of the Chiefs of Defense of the member states, although they are regularly represented by their permanent Military Representatives (MilReps). The EUMC advices and recommends the PSC on all military issues within the EU and during military operations, and it monitors their correct execution, which is conducted under the responsibility of the Operation Commander.

[96] The EEAS was launched in 2011, after the Treaty of Lisbon had foreseen it in 2009, and following Council Decision of 26 July 2019 (2010/427/EU). The EEAS is divided into both geographical and thematic directorates. On the geographical categories, there are five large departments: Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe and Central Asia, the Greater Middle East and the Americas. The thematical directorates include human rights, democracy support, migration, development, response to crises and administrative and financial matters. An important component of the EEAS is the CSDP planning and crisis response departments. An organisation chart of the EEAS, as it stands in 2020 is available here: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2020-01-09-eeas_2.0-orgchart.pdf

[97] SECDEFPOL is the EEAS Directorate in charge of handling the service's overall contribution to addressing any external security threats and supporting the implementation of the EUGS in the field of security. It specially contributes to the efforts aimed at developing policies and tools of the CDSDP, apart from also doing work on strategic issues such as cyber security, CBRN, maritime security, etc. SECDEFPOL's tasks are divided among its four divisions: Security and Defence policy, Partnerships and Agreements, Counter-terrorism, and Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Arms Export Control.

[98] The ISPD is the EEAS Directorate responsible for managing the EEAS overall contribution to the integrated approach identified in the EUGS. In order to do so, it combines security, development and diplomatic efforts through the cooperation with other EEAS thematic and geographic directorates and services. The ISPD has five divisions, which work with Knowledge Management and Programmes, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support; Integrated Strategic Planning for CSDP and Stabilisation; Consular Affairs; and a new one (as of May 2020) setting up the European Peace Facility. The European Peace Facility (EPF), was a proposal by the HR to establish a new fund

political control of the PSC. The latter, the CPCC, functions as the Operational Headquarters for the civilian CSDP Missions, currently adding up to ten.[99] In relation to CSDP civilian missions, it is noteworthy to mention the **Civilian CSDP Compact**, adopted in 2018 by the Council at the proposal of the High Representative (Council of the EU, 2018a). The compact obliges member states to a set of pledges oriented to the upgrading of the responsiveness of EU capabilities in the context of civilian crises (Pirozzi, 2018, pp. 1–8; Serrano De Haro, 2019, pp. 18–19).

Moreover, the mentioned EUMS is also part of the EEAS, and it provides in-house military expertise, assessment, coordination and strategic planning of military activities – with a special focus on operations and missions (both military and those requiring military support).[100] While it is directed by the EUMC, the EUMS works under the authority of the HR. The EUMS' Director General, for its part, also directs the **Military Planning and Conduct Capability** (MPCC), which works closely with its existing civilian counterpart, the just talked about Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), through a Joint Support Coordination Cell (JSCC)). In fact, the MPCC represents one of the latest developments on the path of the EU towards strategic autonomy and a stronger defence cooperation. This body was established in 2017 acts as a permanent European military headquarters in Brussels.[101] Although the scale is still modest, the MPCC is the EU's first military centre; the embryo of a potential European army (currently, there are 16 member states present in the MPCC – with Germany as the largest contributor, followed by France). It consists of establishing a military chain of command to make the response to external conflicts and crises faster and more efficient. Its scope is therefore set on CSDP military missions and operations, for which it provides a rational and simplified operational planning and conduct (European Union, 2017). Nowadays, the MPCC is responsible for the EU non-executive[102] military training missions in the Central African Republic (EUTM CAR), Mali (EUTM Mali) and Somalia (EUTM Somalia) (Council of the EU, 2019).

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outside of the EU's multi-annual budget to enable the financing of operational actions under the CFSP that have military or defence implications.

[99] The currently 10 active CSDP civilian missions are: EULEX Kosovo, EUCAP Somalia, EUAM Ukraine, EUPOL COPPS Palestine Territories, EUBAM Libya, EUAM Iraq, EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUMM Georgia and EUBAM Rafah.

[100] Other activities of the EUMS include: early warning, situation assessment, strategic planning, training, education, concept development and support of partnerships.

[101] It is accountable to the EUMS.

[102] Non-executive missions are the missions the EU deploys when the host country has given its consent. Executive missions, on the other side, are deployed without the consent of the host country but backed by a UNSC Resolution.

The EEAS also counts with the **European Security and Defence College** (ESDC). Since 2005 this network of European research and educational institutions has been the training and education instrument of the CSDP. It fosters a European security culture by providing common training and knowledge to diplomats, civil servants and military personnel from both member states and EU institutions.[103] Precisely in order to promote such a common security culture for the EU, the **European Union Institute for Security Studies** (EUISS) had previously been set up in Paris, in 2002.[104] This independent agency, which is chaired by the High Representative and counts with the political supervision of the PSC, supports the elaboration and projection of the EU's foreign policy, by analysing foreign, security and defence policy issues. It also serves as a forum of discussion and as an interface between European experts and high-level analysts and the decision-makers.[105]

Before delving deeper into newly developed instruments, the European Defence Agency (**EDA**) must be acknowledged as it plays a very important role in the implementation of such instruments by improving the EU's "defence capabilities in the field of crisis management", "sustain the CSDP" and preserve the "European defence industrial and technological base" (Council of the EU, 2011, art. 2). Since its creation in 2004,[106] the EDA has been in charge of monitoring and supporting initiatives like the following, acting as a transmission belt between them (Simón, 2019, p. 4). With its headquarters in Brussels and headed by the High Representative, the EDA supports the development of defence capabilities and military cooperation among all EU member states except Denmark.

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[103] More information on the ESDC available at https://esdc.europa.eu/
[104] It was established under the Council Joint Action 2001/554, later amended by the Council Joint Action 2007/1002.
[105] Information and all EUISS publications available at: www.iss.europa.eu/
[106] Established originally under the Joint Action of the Council of 12 July 2004 (2004/551/CFSP), which was replaced in 2011 and lastly revised by Council Decision of 12 October 2015 (2015/1835).

Figure 4: Basic organigram for security and defence in the EU, 2020
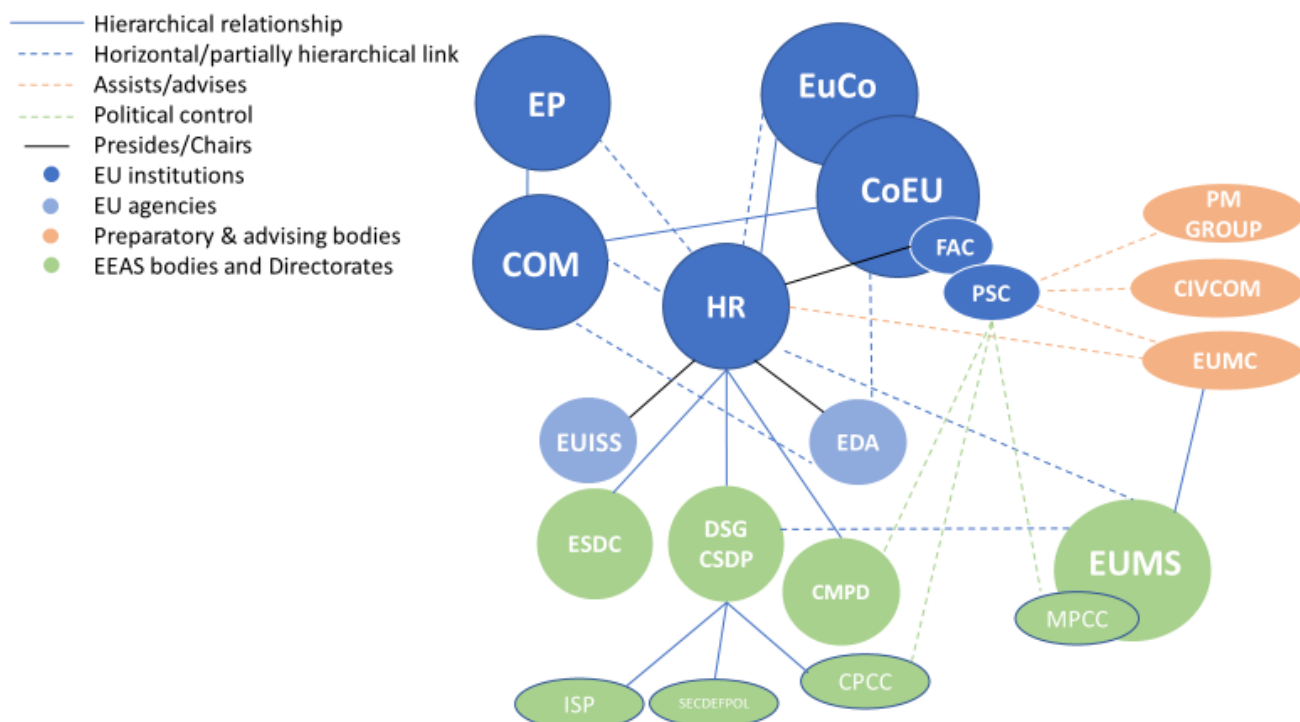
Source: Own creation

Among the series of actions that materialise and adapt the EU's common defence project to the current strategic environment, the following instruments are worth highlighting: the establishment of the Coordinated Annual Review for Defence (CARD) – which takes its references from the Capacity Development Plan (CDP), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and the European Defence Fund (EDF). Due to their current relevance and foreseeable impact in the EU's evolution, these are the main and most recent developments in the field of EU security and defence cooperation, all of which have taken place since 2016. The year should not come as a surprise as the adoption of the EUGS raised the expectations (Fiott et al., 2020, p. 51). As stressed by the former High Representative, Federica Mogherini, while informing on the implementation of the EUGS in 2019: "these are not just names or acronyms. This is real change for our common security (...) helping Member States to make their defence spending more efficient, and develop all the military capabilities that we need – from the skies to the sea, to the cyberspace" (Mogherini, 2019, p. 3).

The first of these acronyms, is the **CARD** (Coordinated Annual Review for Defence), which has the aim of gradually integrating Member States' defence systems, by identifying common challenges in the defence area, then analysing priorities for developing common capabilities and gradually synchronising defence plans. The EDA[107] acts as the "CARD Secretariat" and it oversees the gathering of all relevant and updated information on defence plans shared voluntarily by member states. This cyclical two-year process then continues with visits and bilateral consultations with member states, compilation and aggregation of data, identification of trends regarding defence spending plans and presentation of the compiled reports to the

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[107] Together with the EU Military Staff (EUMS).

Council. The ultimate goal of the CARD is identifying trends and opportunities for cooperation by way of the **CDP** (Capacity Development Plan) (Maulny, 2020, p. 132), which, for now, is the only defence priority-set mechanism in the EU (Serrano De Haro, 2020, p. 35). Although it was formally created by the Council in 2016, CARD's first formal cycle began in autumn 2019 because prior to that the EDA and the EU Military Staff had run a trial exercise from 2017 to 2018 (Major, 2019, p. 4).

Once opportunities for cooperation have been identified and priorities are set, common planning and project implementation takes place under **PESCO** (Permanent Structured Cooperation). PESCO is defined in articles 42.6 and 46 TEU (as well as in Protocol 10 of the Treaty of Lisbon), but it was not actually launched until December 2017, when the Council formally established this mechanism for differentiated integration. The delay was due to several circumstances, especially the UK's refusal to move forward on the issue and the economic crisis that exploded in 2008 (Aldecoa & Pérez Cava, 2018, p. 19). In order to develop Europe's "strategic autonomy", improve European capabilities and increasingly integrate defence plans, the Foreign Ministers of 25 member states – only those member states who sign on it[108] – legally committed to operate together, invest together and develop capabilities together (Major, 2019, pp. 5–6). Since 2018, 47 PESCO projects have been adopted in three batches.[109] They cover areas such as military mobility, land, maritime, air and cyber, as well as space and training. It is important to stress the legally binding nature of the commitments undertaken by the states participating in PESCO. Only PESCO members take part in the vote at the Council level when decisions are made regarding the overall policy direction of the cooperation. At a later phase, when the legal acts have been adopted by unanimity, each project is managed by the Member States that have decided to take part in it, always under the Council's supervision (Council of the EU, 2018b). Projects are therefore "member state driven".

The **EDF** (European Defence Fund) was an unprecedented idea announced Jean Claude Juncker in his State of the Union speech in 2016 because "for European defence to be strong, the European defence industry needs to innovate" (Juncker, 2016). He had repeatedly displayed his intention to strengthen the EU's defence including an enhanced role for the European Commission, giving it a major turn when, in 2017, launched the **EDF** (Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2020, p. 8). The EDF was introduced by the Commission in its European Defence Action Plan (EDAP), which addressed the lack of cooperation in the areas of research and development of defence and security capabilities (European Commission, 2016). The fund of 13 billion Euros[110] invests in and supports European defence research covered by the EU budget as well as projects for the joint development of defence capabilities, financed with EU money aimed at encouraging cooperation and enhancing Member States financing (these two dimensions are referred to as "windows" on the EDAP Communication, European Commission, 2016, pp. 5–11).

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[108] All 27 Member States except Denmark and Malta.
[109] All 47 PESCO projects can be consulted here: https://pesco.europa.eu/
[110] Out of the €13 billion, €4.1 billion will go toward collaborative research projects and €8.9 billion toward capability development, making the EU one of the top four defence R&D players in Europe (Brattberg & Valášek, 2019, p. 3).

As a "pilot" for the future EDF (European Parliament, 2018, p. 2), and subject to the fund, the Commission also launched the **EDTIB** (European Defence Technological and Industrial Base), a two-year programme that funds projects seeking to create new defence products and technologies (or to update existing ones in their development phase) (Maulny, 2020, pp. 24–34). The approval of the EDF depended on the European Parliament which, after negotiations, adopted the partial creation agreement on the EDF for 2021-2027 (European Parliament, 2019), causing deep unrest in the USA. Viewing that lobbying had not prevented the approval of the project, officials from the US Departments of Defense and State addressed the EU representatives sharing their concern for the EU's chosen path (Lord & Thompson, 2019).[111]

These last two instruments together, PESCO and the EDF, may enable major joint initiatives in the future (Aldecoa & Pérez Cava, 2018, p. 40), like the ones that have taken place outside of the EU frame such as the French and German-led Future Combat Aerial System (FCAST) or the plan to develop the next generation main battle tank (MBT). Both instruments, PESCO and the EDF, are in turn also connected to the EDA, which in addition to continuing with its original remits, also supervises the EDF, acts as PESCO's Secretariat[112] and supports the CARD (Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2020, p. 10). While these initiatives stemming from the EUGS are framed within the defence cooperation, they are also about the overall political cohesion of the EU: a way of showing how in crisis times like the ones that saw the publishing of the Global Strategy (Ukraine crisis, Brexit,...), the EU could still move forward its integration process (Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 44).

3.3.4 Challenges

With the exception of the **economic challenge** that security and defence may have to face following the shift in budgetary priorities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 health crisis (Erlanger, 2020; Fiott, 2020), the EU's main challenge can be summed up in one word: discrepancies. Bridging the division of opinions to agree on a common voice is precisely the main internal challenge the EU must overcome in the frame of its security (Meijer & Wyss, 2019; Santopinto et al., 2013; Tardy, 2018). The lack of unity, noticeable from diverse perspectives, added to the weak political will attached to such sensitive issues (Solana et al., 2016, p. 23) obstructs the progress towards smooth cooperation. As a result, institutionalised security policy suffers from being ambiguous and excessively declarative (Hofmann, 2011, p. 106), although "constructive ambiguity" may have been needed for progress in European integration (Jegen & Mérand, 2014, pp. 182–203).

Divergences between the attitudes of EU members become apparent in various ways. **Divergent strategic cultures** coexist within the EU (Juncos, 2020, p. 84; Troszczynska-Van Genderen, 2015, p. 10). As we have previously advanced, differences of opinion, especially among the states that look more towards Eastern Europe (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Finland), those that look more towards the south of the Mediterranean, North

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[111] Pedro Serrano's and Timo Pesonen answer is available here:
https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/1069-european-commission-reply-to-u/6cdebd319d226b532785/optimized/full.pdf
[112] Jointly with the EEAS, including the EU Military Staff (EUMS).

Africa and even the Sahel (Spain, Italy, France) and those that worry about the Middle East (Greece, Croatia, The Netherlands, Denmark), add complexity to the decision-making process. However, since unanimity can be (and has been) reached when the circumstances require member state agreement, this challenge is not insurmountable.

A rather harder challenge is bridging the **different approaches to the EU's strategic autonomy and the CSDP's level of ambition,** that is, agreeing to the kind of security provider the EU must be (Serrano De Haro, 2020, p. 36). Among the Member States (MS) that are betting on the EU assuming a greater strategic autonomy we mainly find France (who is feared to want to impose its agenda, like when it managed to include the notion of "strategic autonomy" repeatedly in the EUGS (Béraud-Sudreau & Pannier, 2020, p. 7), Belgium, Luxembourg, the non-NATO EU members, especially Austria, Cyprus and Finland (Sweden, for its part stays in the background due to its good harmony with the US), and in a less vigorous way, Italy and Spain. Some of these countries shift towards a greater strategic autonomy coincides with the deterioration of the transatlantic link and the uncertainty on the part of the Europeans about the US's long-term commitment. Although it is not realistic today to think of absolute strategic autonomy for Europe and independence from NATO – among other things because the EU is not prepared to talk either about the deployment of conventional forces in the East or about unconventional forces, namely nuclear ones, the EU has set itself the goal of strengthening its own capabilities and has taken the decisive step of building up enhanced defence cooperation, particularly after Brexit. Paradoxically, it is only after the UK's departure that the EU has been able to give a serious boost to a more self-sufficient defence policy, even if at the same time it has lost a very important country with one of the most important defence capabilities in the Union (Major, 2019, p. 7).

The avantgarde way of thinking of France finds some counterbalance in Germany,[113] which, even though it shares the French concern on the direction US policy is going – and vis-à-vis NATO too, German officials focus on "strategic patience" (Donfried, 2019, p. 1), trying to place the EU's security equilibrium between the US and the East, keeping both channels open. Together with Germany, countries like Finland or Estonia (it represents an exception among the Baltic states, as it wants to develop its capacity within NATO but also within the EU), are

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[113] Germany is increasingly convinced that the EU should not be completely dependent on the US, and France has tried to forge a partnership with Germany to advance its defence vision, but success has been limited. Between both countries' strategic cultures there is a breach that is not easily resolved: France is concerned with tackling regional security threats, while Germany sees the urgency of creating institutions and frameworks that, in the long term, will prevent the deterioration of the world order. Moreover, although Chancellor Merkel's Germany, following Macron's election, briefly collaborated with France to deepen EU defence integration (an example of this was the Meseberg Declaration, France Diplomatie, 2018), Germany still relies on the transatlantic link as a cornerstone of European security and sees the "European Army" as decades away. Nonetheless, according to the state of the transatlantic link, Germany makes a more or less expansive interpretation of strategic autonomy (More on the Franco-German relationship in Brattberg & Valášek, 2019, pp. 12–13).

opting for mediation between Europe and the US (and between the EU and NATO). This half-way position is sometimes also shared by Italy or Spain.

On the most hesitant end of the spectrum, due to fear that too much strategic autonomy will further damage transatlantic relations, we find Central and Eastern European countries, especially Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania. They meet this concept with suspicion because they see it as a "dangerous chimera" likely to hurt the transatlantic link (Mauro, 2018, p. 46). This last concern is also shared by – traditionally more Atlanticist – Denmark and the Netherlands. Some of them, however, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, are not giving up on the EU's plans for the defence market. Despite being very NATO-friendly, they want to develop their defence industry and so they are opening up towards the EU in regard to industry.

The indecisive ambivalence between both things – strategic partnership with the US but a more autonomous EU defence industry – can also be perceived in Sweden's or Italy's attitudes (Maulny, 2020, p. 125). Since, in Daniel Fiott's words "a true operational and political autonomy is not possible without industrial autonomy" (Fiott, 2018, p. 7), the situation can be conflicting in the long run. This greater industrial autonomy fostered by the aforementioned EU developments irks the US, which fears that it may be excluded from the participation in PESCO projects once an agreement has been reached on the **involvement of third states** in this cooperation (Simón, 2019, p. 4). This topic is controversial insofar the conclusion reached may also affect the transatlantic relationship (Fiott, 2019b, pp. 6–7).

A different challenge on the industrial side of things takes place among member states, not in relation to third states. The **"pooling and sharing" of defence capabilities**, which up until a few years ago had remained "essentially an empty shell" (Barnier, 2015, p. 6) is currently being further developed. However, while in the frame of PESCO, participating states assume commitments such as investing more in defence to promote jointly common interests, by bringing down costs and improving economies of scale and enhancing interoperability, in reality the consolidation between defence industries is not actually being pushed by any EU notion but rather by market realities. In other words, China is exporting a lot of equipment, the US remains a monumental exporter, Israel is trading niche capabilities, and so on.

At this point, the decision by France and Germany – and their main companies – to consolidate their industries (and that of Italy and Spain as well regarding a Joint Naval venture and the next generation fighter aircraft, respectively) by developing projects like the aforementioned FCAST or MBT, has not been influenced by EU initiatives or EU legislation. Nonetheless, if such projects do not progress successfully, it would actually indirectly impact the EU, insofar as supply chains across the EU would be affected and it would hurt the EU's ability to invest on development and further research in this field (Fiott, 2018, pp. 1–8). The two currently strongest military industries in the EU, however, must face several challenges, since their cooperation presents two main problems: traditionally, Germany and France do not agree on export policy, and neither do they agree on the military requirements a jetfighter needs. Thus, overriding their differences and deepening the consolidation between them will be an important test for the European defence industry from which the EU could benefit greatly.

As part of the a country's strategic culture, the **willingness to use military force** varies greatly within the group of 27, with countries that are very reluctant – states with a neutrality history such as Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta or Sweden (Ricci, 2014) – while others are much more

eager, such as France (Muniz, 2013, p. 14). In the absence of strong consensus on how to address a certain conflict or scenario, the result may very likely end up being ineffective and overreaching (Macfarlane & Menon, 2014, p. 100). In this context, it is also relevant to point out the **differences in how members understand the CSDP** (Santopinto et al., 2013, p. 165). While for countries such as Germany, Italy and Spain, this policy is a further step in the process of European integration, for France it has always been a tool to increase the European's capacity for autonomous external intervention, but with an intergovernmental dimension, not a supranational one (Santopinto, 2016, p. 2). Against this backdrop, it is easy to identify that most of the EU missions in the African continent have been initiated and led by France,[114] something that has been accepted by NATO collectively and the US individually.

And finally, there is a persistent mismatch in **budgets** for military resources – already under pressure since the 2008 financial crisis and currently, due to the adoption of COVID-19 measures, exacerbated by the fact that, alongside **redundant capabilities** that everyone possesses – such as infantry battalions – here are **niches of critical capabilities** not covered by any – for example, strategic transport (Maulny, 2020, p. 126).

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[114] Although in cases like Mali, a France-led operation was supported by others like the UK or US/Canadian heavy lift.

4 INTERORGANISATIONAL RELATIONS IN EUROPEAN SECURITY

Following the detailed study of each organisation in section 3, the present section opens with a comparison between the composition, objectives, and challenges of NATO, the OSCE and the EU. Thus, along with the shared membership, subsection 4.1. also explores the convergences in the objectives pursued and the main internal challenge that the three institutions have in common.

Subsequently, taking an interorganisational relations approach, subsections 4.2 and 4.3 analyse two dyads within the ESA: EU-NATO and EU-OSCE. A short account of the evolution of relations between both organisations precedes the analysis of the main formal and informal cooperation mechanisms. Thereafter, specific instances of and opportunities for cooperation are studied, followed by an overview of the most significant obstacles to cooperation in the present day.

4.1 Comparing the three actors

This section compares the objectives and challenges of NATO, the OSCE and the EU, explicitly identifying the similarities and differences between these partially overlapping and non-hierarchical institutions. As shown in the table below and in the previous three sections dedicated to each organization, the actors share a number of objectives. The challenges they face, however, are quite divergent, depending on the idiosyncrasy of each of actor. Nevertheless, the difficulty of bridging differences among member states seems to be a challenge all three organizations face.

Figure 5: Membership overlap
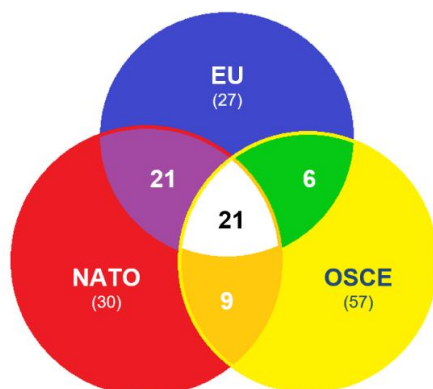
Source: Own creation

The membership of the three organisations overlaps to a large degree (figure 5), creating a relatively high degree of **geographic overlay** (figure 6)**.** The increased membership overlap, especially after NATO's and the EU's eastern expansions, has been a driver for increased interaction, but has also been the cause of several interorganizational problems.

NATO, which has a total of 30 member states, and the EU, which has 27, share 21 member states, excluding five neutral EU states (Austria, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden) as well as Cyprus, and eight NATO allies, six of which are in Europe (Albania, Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Turkey and the UK, apart from Canada and the US).

As for the OSCE, all the EU states and all NATO states are also participants in the OSCE. Thus, of the 57 participants it has, the OSCE shares 27 with the EU and 30 with NATO, leaving a total of 23 states as participants in the OSCE alone.

Figure 6: Overlapping membership map of NATO, the OSCE and the EU

Source: Own creation

NATO, the OSCE and the EU all strive to maintain peace and security in their member states. The way they work to achieve this, however, differs. While NATO has traditionally focused on direct territorial defence, the EU has pursued this goal more indirectly, carrying out missions beyond its borders to ensure stability in its neighbourhood. And it is precisely in the area of the EU's eastern neighbourhood where the OSCE is working most actively to also guarantee peace and security – in its specific way, namely through the advancement of democracy and human rights throughout the territory of its 57 participating states. Nonetheless, "maintaining peace and security" is too general an idea. Instead of condensing the objectives of these actors to such a high degree, it is useful to assess in greater detail which objectives coincide and where **functional overlap** is occurring.

Figure 7: Comparative table of NATO, the OSCE and the EU's main objectives and challenges

	MAIN OBJECTIVES	MAIN CHALLENGES
NATO	- Collective defence (East) - Projecting stability (South)	- Strength of transatlantic link - Capabilities imbalance - Interoperability - Certain Allies' behaviour/actions
OSCE	- Maintaining political dialogue - Enhancing cooperative security - Advancing democracy & human rights	- Lack of trust among participating states - Absence of political will - "Frozen conflicts"
EU	- Crisis management (external) - Strategic autonomy - Stronger defence cooperation	- Divergent strategic cultures - Pooling & sharing - Willingness to use military force

Source: Own creation

NATO defends the peace and security of its members in two ways: directly, through its **collective defence** objective (centred mainly on the eastern flank of the Alliance and consisting of the maintenance of peace and security on its eastern border), and indirectly, through the **projection of stability** in other territories (especially, but not only, in the region bordering the south of the Alliance). In the collective defence field NATO retains, for now, exclusivity. The relationship between the EU and NATO in this area is clearly defined by role specialisation and division of labour. The Alliance provides what the EU lacks insofar as NATO's *raison d'être* is collective defence and its comparative advantage remains its military power. Thus, they are "interlocking" institutions that cooperate in an architecture based on comparative advantage and effective multilateralism to address challenges both in Europe and beyond.

However, it is important to stress the transitory nature of this situation. If the EU continues to **develop its cooperation in defence** (as seems to be the case), it could well result in a functional overlap in matters of defence not seen until now. Stronger defence cooperation is indeed one of the EU's current objectives, and one that is already regarded with suspicion by some of the member states of both NATO and the EU itself. These member states do not welcome the overlap for fear of possible rivalry.[115]

Beyond pure defence objectives, both the EU and NATO are engaged in **crisis management**. It is important to subdivide this in two different dimensions, as the organizations' levels of involvement differ when it comes to (a) the **deployment of troops** to monitor an agreement or a ceasefire and (b) political and diplomatic efforts in crisis prevention or post-conflict reconstruction. In the first dimension, field-level overlap can exist, but this is not always the case, as it depends on the configuration of missions and the organisations' mandates. While the EU's legal framework establishes that territorial defence remains NATO's responsibility,

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[115] More on this under Section 4.1.

the EU's capacity to act independently from NATO's assets in external crisis management continues to grow.[116] In fact, the EU's goal of obtaining full strategic autonomy has placed the EU on a similar footing with NATO.

It is in the second, more **civilian and political dimension**, however, where the level of functional overlap is the largest. NATO's and the EU's missions and operations focus on preventive measures, training and, most of all, security sector reform in partner countries. The convergence in this area that was traditionally occupied by the EU has occurred since NATO progressively expanded its agenda to become more than just a military Alliance.

In conclusion, the trend of greater regime complexity in the field of European security has accelerated over the last decade, partly as a result of the expansion of NATO's strategic concept and, potentially soon, as a consequence of the still ongoing development of a stronger security and defence component by the EU.

The OSCE, for its part, does not have and neither does it foresee creating a defence component or a military crisis management goal. Instead, the OSCE continues its efforts to **enhance cooperative security** through arms control agreements. Through this objective, it complements the EU's efforts to maintain peace and stability in its neighbouring areas. In addition, if the OSCE achieves its goals in this area, NATO would also benefit from respect for arms control treaties and the reduction of arsenals. Thus, while the OSCE does not focus on territorial defence nor military crisis management, its cooperative security mandate can be understood within that same division of labour framework.

With regard to civilian crisis management and the politico-military conflict prevention agenda, there is some overlap between the OSCE and the EU's objectives. Both organisations, described by Javier Solana as "natural born partners" (Solana, 2002), share a comprehensive security concept and take into account the human dimension. The OSCE's goal to advance **democracy and human rights** coincides with the mandate of some of the EU's observation and monitoring missions, which has led to interactions and coordination on several occasions.

Finally, when it comes to the challenges the organizations face, these are fairly idiosyncratic, and they depend mainly on their membership composition. However, one **challenge is shared** by all three actors studied: the difficulty of bringing together positions and unifying criteria for acting decisively. Whether this is due to mistrust among OSCE participants (which prevents the organization from acting more firmly), differences in the level of capabilities and involvement in the case of NATO, or differing national priorities and strategic cultures of the many EU member states, the fact is that unbridged differences hinder progress in all these organisations. Nevertheless, as previously explained, this challenge does not affect them all with the same degree of intensity.

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[116] Over the last few years, there have even been voices in favour of establishing a European nuclear deterrence scheme – the Eurodeterrent, which would be independent of NATO's existing nuclear weapons sharing programme in Europe. This previously unthinkable idea reflects the EU's fear of a potential US withdrawal from the continent, although there are still strong voices – like Germany – that remain skeptical of such a scheme (Meier, 2020, pp. 76–84).

4.2 EU-NATO interaction

Traditionally, the institutional roles assigned to NATO and the EU were relatively unambiguous both for the Americans, who saw NATO as the sole guarantor of North Atlantic security and collective defence and considered the EU in mainly economic terms, as well as for the Europeans, who depended on NATO for security and reserved very limited aspirations for the EU in that field (Sperling, 2011, p. 33). However, as it has been seen in previous sections, a growing ambiguity, resulting from internal and external factors and from the changing security environment, appears to be blurring the security governance roles of these two actors and affecting their mutual interaction.

4.2.1 Evolution and functioning of the relationship

This section reviews the evolution of the relationship between NATO and the EU over more than 20 years. This interaction, inherited from that between NATO and the WEU, started increasing in 1999 and was initially formalised through joint meetings, declarations, and agreements. However, problems soon arose, embodied in the so-called "participation problem", leading to informal cooperation to gain in relevance. Nevertheless, since 2016, new Joint Declarations have enabled a renewed cooperative synergy, allowing the two organisations to smoothly resort to both formal and informal cooperation.

The **evolution of relations** between the two actors has been shaping up rather slowly over two decades. At first, cooperation occurred between NATO and the WEU, which was seen by the Treaty of Maastricht as the defence component of the EU (European Union, 1992 art. J.4.2). In 1996 NATO and the WEU concluded an arrangement in Berlin pursuing a double objective: to allow European countries to deploy military missions where the Alliance had no particular interest and to reduce the US financial burden in NATO (Solana et al., 2016, p. 44). However, the EU took over WEU's functions in 1999 (Álvarez-Verdugo, 2002, p. 472), after the European Council decided in Cologne to grant the EU the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities in the area of common European policy on security and defence. It was only then that the direct interorganisational relationship we know today started to form between the EU and NATO. The NATO Summit in Washington in 1999 and the European Council in Nice (2000) laid the foundations for this cooperation. Thus, in early 2001, letters were exchanged between NATO's SG and the EU's Council Presidency on consultation modalities and potential areas of cooperation.

The **first NATO-EU meeting** at foreign minister level took place in Budapest in 2001, initiating the formal mechanisms that have survived to date. The strategic partnership was formalised through the **EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP** (NATO and the EU, 2002)[117], which paved the way for the conclusion of the **Berlin Plus Agreements** less than a year later (early 2003). This framework for cooperation in crisis management –whose clauses are classified and whose roots are found in the aforementioned 1996 arrangement– included the exchange of

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[117] This Declaration included several political principles which have remained a constant in the subsequent documents and Joint Declarations adopted: effective mutual consultation, equality and due regard for the decision-making autonomy of both organisations, respect for the interests of their member states, etc.

information, the access to NATO planning capabilities for EU-led crisis management as well as the access to NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led civil-military operations, preventing risks of duplication and overlap between the two organisations.

One of the key points of the Berlin Plus framework was the Security Agreement, which covers the exchange of **classified information** between both organisations under reciprocal security protection rules. However, this agreement became useless after the membership expansion of both organisations in 2004: after this, the geopolitical differences and trust issues between Turkey (NATO ally) and Cyprus (EU Member state), entered the scene, giving origin to the so called "participation problem". According to this framework of cooperation, the Alliance can receive all EU classified information. But when it is the other way around, classified information sent by NATO can only be accessed by those EU members that either have a Security Agreement with NATO or are a member in the PfP programme,[118] that is to say, every EU member state but Cyprus. While the EU interpreted NATO's restrictions[119] on sharing classified information as applying exclusively to the information in the frame of Berlin Plus, NATO does have the right[120] not to share classified information with non-NATO (or PfP) EU member states in the Berlin Plus context as well as in matters pertaining to strategic cooperation (Duke, 2008, pp. 38–39). This interpretation, emphatically supported by Turkey, broadens the limits to include any strategic cooperation matter, thus, causing the agreement to share information to be effectively voided.

Hence, since the EU demands reciprocity and inclusiveness, the hitherto smooth cooperation stagnated at the formal level and caused **informal cooperation** mechanisms to start gaining relevance (Hofmann & Reynolds, 2007; Tardy, 2015, p. 30). As early as 2005 informal transatlantic NATO-EU ministerial dinners started to be held, mainly in New York and Brussels, since by that time there were 19 common members states and a shared interest in resolving crises and armed conflicts in Europe and the world. Success in using informal networks like the "transatlantic luncheons and dinners" was due to the common values stemming from a large overlap in membership as well as the common understanding that the threats both organisations faced were, thus, similar and need comprehensive civil-military-public cooperation (Gebhard & Smith, 2015, p. 120). The flexible nature of such meetings also helped, as no minutes were taken, no communiqués were released and no decisions were shared with the public (Graeger, 2017, pp. 341–358; Hofmann, 2009, p. 47).

Even though cooperation in the frame of the Security Agreement turned out to be sterile, other formal mechanisms were created as a way of facilitating institutionalised communication. In the EU-NATO Declaration of December 2002, both organisations had acknowledged the need to ensure arrangements that could "reinforce development of capability requirements common to the two organisations" (NATO and the EU, 2002). Therefore, since 2003 an **EU-NATO Capability Group** was created to improve NATO's capabilities (through the Prague

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[118] Partnership for peace (PfP) is a framework launched in 1994 by NATO to increase stability and build security relationships between NATO and non-member states in the Euro-Atlantic region. It is a bilateral relation for the cooperation with partners. More on: www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50349.htm?

[119] Stemming from the December 2002 EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP (NATO and the EU, 2002).

[120] Originating in the EU-NATO Declaration of December 2002 (NATO and the EU, 2002)

Capabilities Commitment, or PCC) and the EU's (through the European Capabilities Action Plan, or ECAP) (Cornish, 2006, pp. 18–19). The EU-NATO Capability Group has since then addressed common capability shortfalls while ensuring the coherence and mutual reinforcement of NATO and EU capability development efforts. Representatives of the EU Council and the European Commission have attended this Group's meetings but its interactions have been "of uneven quality" (Yost, 2007, pp. 108–109).

Building on the Agreement on Military Permanent Arrangements signed in October 2005, a NATO **Permanent Liaison Team** was established at the EU Military Staff in November and an **EU cell was** set at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in 2006[121]. This close contact has, in turn, allowed informal cooperation to strengthen at diverse levels, ranging from officers on the ground to individuals in high-rank positions (Cladi & Locatelli, 2020, p. 7; Hofmann & Reynolds, 2007).

The mutual involvement and **commitment for cooperation at the highest political level** was most clearly crystallized in 2016, a pivotal year for the relationship between NATO and the EU. The intentions reflected in the EUGS to move closer to NATO were reflected in the improvement of the relationship between the NATO SG Stoltenberg and the EU High Representative Mogherini, and ended up materializing in the **Joint Declaration** (JD) of 2016 and its subsequent Joint Declaration of 2018, whose content is analysed below. Since these JDs were adopted, representing the most relevant milestone for this interorganisational cooperation in the last decade, it is common for the High Representative to attend NATO's NAC meetings and that NATO's SG is present at Council meetings. As Jens Stoltenberg declared in Berlin in August 2020: "I think the fact that the NATO Secretary General attends the EU Defence Ministerial meeting demonstrates the close cooperation between NATO and the EU" (Stoltenberg, 2020a).

While **political** issues are debated at an Ambassadorial level – the most senior political bodies being the NAC and the PSC – there is also the **military dialogue,** where the two most senior bodies interacting are NATO's International Military Staff (IMS) and the EU Military Staff. Since 2013, the Director General of NATO's IMS and the Director General of the EUMS have been holding the DG's Conference twice a year taking turns for its organisation. In fact, contact between militaries is more automatic because the military representative at NATO is for the majority of EU member states the same as the military representative at the EU ("double hat").

All the same, we see how dialogue has thus expanded from the SG and HR downwards, including the Ambassadorial Level, allowing European Commissioners to brief the NAC and reach the **staff-to-staff level**. When it comes to informal mechanisms, there are states like the UK, for instance, which are particularly good at initiating informal meetings around summits and relevant bureaucratic moments (Hofmann & Reynolds, 2007, p. 6). Such countries invite EU and NATO member states to discuss issues like the proliferation of WMDs, Kosovo or Darfur (S. J. Smith, 2011, p. 251). Informal gatherings offer a space to try to coordinate efforts and "any other business" (AOB) meetings have helped to smooth the relationship and reach agreements in consensus-building environments.

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[121] SHAPE (NATO's strategic command for operations) is located in Mons, Belgium.

Staff officers can now directly talk to their counterparts in the other organisation, sometimes transferring between organisations or even being "double-hatted" (Gebhard & Smith, 2015, p. 120). Such success, which now is daily occurrence, facilitates the building of bridges even on a personal level, as much boils down to personalities. Indeed, at the tactical and operational levels, informal cooperation has become increasingly common (Graeger, 2017, p. 341). To sit in cross-briefings or to be able to easily organise encounters clearly facilitates the officers' work and fosters reciprocal understanding of the other security provider, even if strategic information is never shared due to the "participation problem". This "practice approach" enables a socially constructed understanding of the cooperation dialectic, reflecting what Granovetter called "the strength of weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973, pp. 1360–1380).

4.2.2 Main areas of cooperation

The strengths in the cooperative relationship are examined in this subsection, and the obstacles faced by NATO and the EU towards a smooth cooperation are discussed in the next subsection (4.1.3).

A) "Enablers" of cooperation

The far-reaching spectrum of cooperation areas agreed on the Joint Declarations of 2016 and 2018 characterises the current state of affairs between NATO and the EU. The potential competition between the two parties seems to be circumvented by the Joint Declaration's acceptance of the "EU efforts to bolster European security and defence to better protect the Union and its citizens and to contribute to peace and stability in the neighbourhood and beyond. The Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund contribute to these objectives" (NATO and the EU, 2018, para. 7). Moreover, Council Conclusions on Security and Defence never fail to acknowledge that NATO remains the foundation of the collective defence for those States which are members of it (Council of the EU, 2020a, para. 6).[122] Cooperation between the EU and NATO is based on four essential guiding principles: openness, transparency, inclusiveness and reciprocity, "without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any Member State" (Council of the EU, 2016b, para. 2). All with full respect for the decision-making autonomy of both organisations (Yaniz Velasco, 2020, p. 63).

Although the interorganisational relationship is constantly evolving, as of writing it still enjoys the renewed dynamism of 2016. Thanks to the formal and informal mechanisms, the unique level of trust stemming from the 21 shared member states and the affinity between them, NATO and the EU are currently drawing from a wide pool of different competences, both

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[122] The interest of both organisations for cooperation has been made reiteratively clear on both Joint Declarations but, nonetheless, it is important to underline the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty that insist on its compatibility with the obligations to NATO that several EU Member States may have. Both provisions 42.2 and 42.7 stress that the EU's commitments and cooperation in the area of security and defence will be consistent with the commitments undertaken in the framework of NATO as well as with the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.

civilian and military. Aware of their own **comparative advantages**, NATO's reasons for wanting to cooperate are understood from the civilian side of things, while the EU's motivations are rather framed in the military sphere.

Despite the fact that NATO has progressively equipped itself with non-military resources and extended its mandate to include political and "civilian" aspects, it remains a military organisation with more experience on deterrence and defence than in security (Yost, 2007, p. 28). Moreover, its presence is not always welcomed or easily accepted in civilian contexts (Arteaga, 2011, p. 5; Lindstrom & Tardy, 2019b, p. 8). This is a drawback not faced by the EU, which is generally well received in many regions of the world and has built up a great amount of know-how in civil-military crisis management operations in many third countries (De Castro Ruano, 2015, p. 27). Indeed, the EU insists on the virtues of its comprehensive approach, with a wide-ranging variety of resources: from economic measures (financial aid, sanctions, market advantages) to non-material forms of power (soft, normative, or civilian), including armed forces outside the military (police, gendarmerie) (Major & Mölling, 2013, pp. 46–50). Therefore, since traditionally the EU has not given primacy to the military force, it cannot currently compare to NATO's military capabilities to carry out major, long-term military operations at the highest end of the spectrum (M. E. Smith, 2018, p. 610). In sum, even if both NATO and the EU have progressively "inched away from their traditional comfort zones towards a collective security middle ground", their comparative advantages remain (S. J. Smith & Gebhard, 2017, p. 304).

Figure 8: Overlapping membership of NATO and the EU

Source: Own creation

The **highly overlapped membership** causes both organisations to generally agree on the identification of threats: both are interested in defending and deterring Russia's aggression, ensuring peace in the Balkans and promoting stability in the Middle East and North Africa as a counter-terrorism measure (Szewczyk, 2019, p. 23). At the same time, **common shared values** also stem from the membership overlap. However, seven states that only participate in one of the two organisations do play a role and contribute to the interorganisational cooperation. The nine non-EU NATO members participate in all NATO-EU meetings (Albania, Canada, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Turkey, the UK, and the US). When it comes to non-NATO EU member states, however, the same holds true: only Cyprus does not participate in such gatherings (S. J. Smith & Gebhard, 2017, p. 305). This is because the rest of EU member states outside NATO are members of NATO's PfP programme (Austria, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, and Malta). While some are very open to cooperate with the Alliance (Finland or Sweden, for instance), others like Austria have a more reluctant approach towards NATO. Nonetheless, all of them, except Cyprus, can attend cooperative meetings (Missiroli, 2016, p. 58).

B) Specific areas of cooperation

In the text of the Joint Declaration signed in **Warsaw in July 2016**, the representatives of both organisations (Juncker and Tusk on the EU side and Stoltenberg on NATO's side) established seven pillars of cooperation to further strengthen their common work in the face of unprecedented security challenges from the East and the South of Europe (NATO and the EU, 2016). These seven pillars were: countering hybrid threats (including by strategic communications and information sharing), operative cooperation (including at sea), cyber security and defence, defence capabilities development, defence industry and research, coordination on exercises, and capacity-building for partners in the East and South (NATO and the EU, 2016).

At the end of that year,[123] both the Council of the EU and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) endorsed the 42 proposals covered by the 7 areas of the Joint Declaration. A further set of 32 measures was added in December 2017, including three new areas: military mobility, information sharing in the field of counterterrorism, and women's role in peace and security. Progress in the implementation was made, particularly in the areas of strategic communications, operative cooperation (especially at sea),[124] information sharing[125] and

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[123] It is important to remember that in November 2016 the EU adopted its European Defence Action Plan (EDAP), which seeks to help Member States to spend more efficiently on joint defence capabilities, to promote a competitive and innovative industrial base and to strengthen the security of European citizens.

[124] Sea Guardian has cooperated, when needed, with EUNAVFOR Sophia, which has been replaced by EUNAVFOR MED IRINI in March 2020.

[125] Particularly from 2014 on, there has been an increasing interest in sharing intelligence between NATO and the EU, not only in the Crimean context but also in relation to the rise of ISIS. On the EU side, it is worth mentioning the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN), created in 2011 as an heir to the EU Joint Situation Center (SITCEN), which had existed in different formats since 1999. In the aftermath of 9/11, Javier Solana decided to use SITCEN to start producing classified analyses based on intelligence contributions from a number of states.

measures countering hybrid threats.[126] This cooperative spirit continued in spite of the turbulence caused by the arrival of President Trump or the EU's internal challenge of Brexit. In 2018, ahead of the NATO Summit, both organisations signed **a new Joint Declaration in Brussels** (NATO and the EU, 2018). In this follow-on declaration they agreed to work on the previously identified 74 measures, and to particularly focus their cooperation on the areas of military mobility, counterterrorism, resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks and promotion of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. All these 74 measures are constantly monitored.

Despite the fact that both organisations have their own internal problems, some of which undoubtedly affect interorganisational cooperation, NATO and the EU have made progress in creating a flexible and coherent framework for cooperation (H. Smith, 2019, p. 20). The Western Balkans saw the first steps towards this interorganisational cooperation. In March 2003 there was the transition from the NATO-led Operation Allied Harmony to the EU-led Operation Concordia, both in what is now North Macedonia. Although it was not cooperation *per se*, it was a moment of good **fluid collaboration to pass the baton**. Moreover, *Concordia* was a credibility test for the EU, so its successful conduct laid the groundwork for future military EU operations as a trustworthy partner in the eyes of NATO (Gross, 2009, p. 177). Bosnia was another good scenario where there was a smooth handing over of functions, though in this case "cooperation" would be too a stronger term (Ripley, 1999; Touzovskaia, 2006; Usanmaz, 2018). Later that same year, in November 2003, they deployed the first joint NATO-EU crisis-management exercise,[127] focused on consultation at the politico-military level in the event that a EU operation resorted to NATO's assets and capabilities (Touzovskaia, 2006, pp. 247–248).

In fact, military exercises have been one of the areas in which cooperation has been more active. Since the Joint Declaration of 2016 there have been several rounds of **Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE)** (NATO, 2019b). The expression "parallel and coordinated" was coined to avoid the term "joint" exercises, while showing the will to be as close as possible without being together. Through PACEs, the EU has been involved in NATO exercises as an

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Currently, INTCEN is an EEAS directorate in charge of monitoring events both inside and outside the EU to provide intelligence analysis, early warnings, and situational awareness to the EEAS, the High Representative, and member state representatives in the PSC. The INTCEN shares information, also specifically on hybrid threats (through the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell), with NATO. On NATO's side, the most relevant bodies in the area are the Joint Intelligence and Security Division (JISD) and the Cyberspace Operations Centre (CYOC). There remains significant scope for action and improvement in this field.

[126] The remaining seven areas are: defence industry and research, coordination on exercises, build resilience of partners.

[127] Exercise CME/CMX 03 was based on the standing "Berlin Plus" arrangements and it did not imply the deployment of troops on the ground. It was run from Brussels and national capitals and (Touzovskaia, 2006, p. 248).

external part and it has allowed them both to learn about the other in a practical way. PACEs cover a wide range of issues, some of which are in the expertise domain of NATO (like preparedness) and others among the EU's strengths (like civilian protection transport). Now, moving beyond that current degree of coordination seems unlikely due to opposition by the states involved in the "participation problem".

Capability development is an area where cooperation is essential and where there is potential for further growth. In this context, the previously mentioned NATO-EU Capability Group (established in 2003) stands out. It ensures the coherence and mutual reinforcement of the capability development efforts of both organisations. Upon the creation of the EDA (in 2004), its experts have contributed to the work of the Capability Group.[128] Currently, this Group addresses common capability shortfalls, aims to ensure transparency and complementarity between NATO's work on Smart Defence and the EU's pooling and exchange initiative. An example of effective cooperation between NATO and the EU in the delivery of critical capabilities is the work undertaken specifically by NATO, the EDA and five member states on the procurement of a European multinational fleet of multirole tanker–transport (MRTT) aircraft.[129] The project consists of an eight aircraft fleet whose delivery is scheduled for 2020-2024, which will significantly increase European capacity in air-to-air refuelling.

A particularly important change that boosted the political dynamic took place in the wake of the crisis in Ukraine and the **hybrid warfare** that Europe was facing. Hybrid threats spread across military and civilian domains and include disinformation, cyber-attacks, pressure on critical infrastructure, and so on. Therefore, they demand intersectoral, regional, and international cooperation (Marović, 2019, p. 29). Both institutions are working together on the same kind of threats and with similar objectives and methods. A good example of this is how they benefit from and contribute to the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE) in Finland.[130]

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[128] The EDA is the appropriate agency for this purpose as it is responsible for coordinating the development of EU defence capabilities, cooperation in armaments, procurement and research.

[129] These planes can be configured for air-to-air refuelling, the transport of passengers and cargo, as well as medical evacuation.

[130] The Hybrid CoE is a hub of expertise aimed at supporting the participating states' individual and collective efforts to enhance their civil-military capabilities and boost their preparedness to counter hybrid threats, specially focused on European security. Its establishment in 2017 was the result of the "Joint framework on countering hybrid threats – a European Union response" adopted by the European Commission, the High Representative to the European Parliament and the Council. The European Council and the North Atlantic Council endorsed the Hybrid CoE initiative as part of the set of proposals to implement the EU/NATO Joint Declaration of 2016. As of today, the CoE has 27 participating states and the EU and NATO are very active in its initiatives. More information available at: www.hybridcoe.fi/

The efforts in Ukraine are a good example of another front in which NATO and the EU are working closely: **supporting partner countries** to bolster their local capacities in the sectors of security and defence. An important highlight in this field has been the European Commission's 2 million EUR-contribution to the NATO Building Integrity Trust Fund agreed in December 2018.

Addressing the Ukrainian situation also contributed to develop strong cooperation in the area of **military mobility** (Fiott, 2019a, pp. 44–52). In this field, there are important talks underway and they involve the European Commission (in the lead for the regulatory dimension of it), but also the EEAS, the EUMS and member states. On NATO's side, the International Staff, the International Military Staff and SHAPE are also involved. Military Mobility cooperation is part of a PESCO project (currently led by The Netherlands). Nonetheless, NATO has provided a number of benchmarks to cooperate better, that is, to be able to move military equipment at fast speed from Western or Central Europe to the EU's eastern flanks in the event of a crisis with Russia. That is something that is in the interest of both NATO and the EU, although it is a matter of legislative harmonisation that will take time and that will also depend on what the current Commission decides.[131] Apart from the perennial problem of Cyprus/Turkey, which does not enable full exchange of information for military mobility, there seems to be another problem looming over this initiative. Although it has been held up as a main flagship project of the EU-NATO cooperation, there are concerns that military mobility might be undermined by the fact that the EU will either not continue funding it or slash the budget. The recent financial negotiations on the EU side seem to worry non-EU NATO allies. Even if the refusal to contribute is a member state-driven decision, the perception of EU institutions is also affected.

Finally, on the **cyber defence** area of cooperation, apart from the PACE conducted using cyber scenarios,[132] there is a technical arrangement signed in 2016 by the EU's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT/EU) and NATO's Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC) to exchange information on common threats (Shea, 2017, pp. 26–27). Cyber incident response teams from both organisations exchange policy updates and best practices regularly.[133] NATO's Communication and Information Agency (NCIA), and its Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence are in talks with the EU, whose EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox is used in relation to NATO cyber defence efforts. High-level EU-NATO staff talks on cyber security and defence, cross-briefings on how to enhance networks' resilience (including 5G and supply chain security) are turning the cyber sector in one of the areas where interorganisational cooperation is more active (NATO and EU Councils, 2020, p. 6).

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[131] Several decisions that need to be taken are related to the modernisation of critical infrastructure – ports, railways, or harbours, which the EU can actively finance through structural funds and regional funds. Currently, however, there is no decision in place yet, mainly due to the pandemic crisis which has halted some advances in that particular domain.

[132] Like the CYBRID, an EU hybrid exercise in Estonia, attended by NATO's SG; CMX and Cyber Coalition, NATO'S annual exercises attended by EU representatives; or the CYBERSEC 2019 forum, hosted by the NATO Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence (NATO and EU Councils, 2020, p. 6)

[133] Successfully coordinated in the face of the WannaCry and NotPeya attacks (Shea, 2017, pp. 19–29).

C) Concrete instances of cooperation on the ground

Throughout these two decades of unsteady cooperation, there have been times in which the CSDP has suffered from identity and credibility issues vis-à-vis NATO, like the turbulences caused by the 2003 Iraq War (Grevi et al., 2009, p. 116). Nonetheless, the EU has increasingly strengthened its separate identity and it has consequently enabled a good working relationship and *ad hoc* cooperation in places like Kosovo and Afghanistan (S. J. Smith, 2019, p. 58), although, overall, interaction on the ground between NATO and the EU remains limited (Larik, 2018, p. 352). There have already been cases of overlap in the field context. While it might endanger institutional effectiveness and create dysfunctionality and institutional competition, overlapping toolboxes have also proved to enable institutional flexibility in some crisis-management scenarios, providing advantages linked to the different experience, capabilities or reputation of the diverse organisations. Hence, overlap in the management of military crisis can avoid duplication and rivalry if organisations manage to work in a concerted and complementary way, although drawbacks remain hard to avoid.

Situations in which both organisations have been present at the same time in the same place have allowed for their own comparative advantages to drive the rationale behind the respective operations (Lindstrom & Tardy, 2019b, p. 8). In this sense, the division of labour in **Kosovo** was evident: NATO's KFOR was a purely military operation while EULEX Kosovo was a rule of Law mission (the EU's largest civilian mission to date, although it also has a certain military component, insofar it is in charge of the security in the Mitrovica area) (Garey, 2020, pp. 72–76; Grevi, 2009b, pp. 353–368). Analysts have found that there is a fluid collaboration between them based on coexistence (also with the UN), and no resources are wasted, as each organisation had its own mandate which does not overlap with the other's (Grevi, 2009b; Usanmaz, 2018). Kosovo is thus a good example of how officers on the ground moved forward despite any political issues that may be blocking formal cooperation in Brussels. Even in this case, however, one cannot talk of direct cooperation (Graeger, 2017).

In **Afghanistan**, the Resolute Support Mission and its predecessor International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have been led by NATO since 2015, while EUPOL is a Rule of Law mission run by the EU. Again, they had separate, non-competing mandates[134], but worked together in the field when it was necessary. The military operation was also led by NATO in **Libya**, where the Alliance deployed Operation Unified Protector (Garey, 2020, pp. 174–183)[135] while the EU involvement in the country was through EUBAM Libya, a civilian mission supporting Libyan authorities in improving the security of the country's borders (Serrano De Haro, 2020, p. 31). In **Iraq**, NATO's training and capacity building Mission cooperates closely with the EU's stabilisation support in the country, guaranteeing complementarity of efforts.

In other cases, however, if there is a competition between mandates, there may end up being a waste of resources and unnecessary controversies (Riddervold, 2014, pp. 553–554). Such was the case, up to a certain point, of the anti-piracy operations running simultaneously in the **Horn of Africa**. Although there seemed to be effective complementarity insofar as they both

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[134] In this case, the difference in magnitude also made it very hard to be competing (while ISAF had a head-count of over 100.000, the EUPOL's mandate could be executed with around 300 people).
[135] Which actually started as a French operation

addressed the fight against piracy and terrorism from their own idiosyncrasy, EU Naval Force Operation EUNAVFOR (also known as Atalanta) and NATO's Ocean Shield had *de facto* identical goals in the Gulf of Aden and this created certain debate between members on whether only one actor should have been taking the lead (Cladi & Locatelli, 2020, p. 7; Gebhard & Smith, 2015, pp. 107–127; Riddervold, 2014, p. 547). A better example of **maritime operational cooperation**, where the mandates were not identical, can be found in the central Mediterranean Sea.[136] Even if NATO's Operation Sea Guardian has had very few vessels operating with its flag alongside EUNAVFOR Sophia (now replaced by EUNAVFOR Irini)[137], the mere coexistence in the same waters has allowed for the establishment of the Shared Awareness and De-confliction Mechanism (SHADE MED), a forum for exchanging best practices (NATO and EU Councils, 2020, p. 5). Nevertheless, there is no integrated operational plan or explicit coordination and complementarity in place; tensions between Turkey and Cyprus impede to talk in a formal manner. There has also been some coordinated action in the Aegean Sea, but the EU's naval activity in the area is minimal and NATO's monitoring operation consists of half a dozen vessels.[138]

The wake-up call, however, occurred after Russia's intervention in Ukraine. It became painfully obvious to both NATO and the EU that neither of them had on its own the full range of tools to address emerging hybrid crisis. From a defence and security capacity building perspective they have coordinated a clear division of labour oriented to the implementation of Ukraine's Law on National Security, and closely related to issues such as training and the reform of the Security Service of Ukraine (NATO and EU Councils, 2018, pp. 8–9). The EU had a Delegation in Ukraine, in Kyiv – as it does in many places in the world –, and NATO also had a big liaison office, something that is not very common and that usually hampers cooperation on the ground. So, while EUAM Ukraine oversees the training of security forces, NATO's mission in Ukraine consists of air policing missions to track and identify infringements of its airspace and take appropriate action. While NATO chaired a donor coordination group for the defence and security sector under the auspices of the EU Delegation (NATO and EU Councils, 2018, p. 9), experts of the EUAM were part of the NATO-led team for the Building Integrity Peer Review process for Ukraine. And also in the frame of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, EU personnel regularly attends task-force meetings hosted by NATO (NATO and EU Councils, 2020, pp. 12–13). The coordination and mutual participation in the other's initiatives is rather evident, as are the efforts made by both organisations to ensure that their actions complement each other, especially regarding Russia (Mayer, 2017, p. 443).

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[136] The mandates of these operations differ. While NATO's Operation Sea Guardian aimed at maintaining maritime situational awareness in the Mediterranean, enhance capacity building and deter and counter terrorism, the mandate of EUNAVFOR Sophia was identifying, capturing and disposing of vessels and enabling assets used or suspected of being used by migrant smugglers or traffickers.

[137] The main task of this operation is contributing to the implementation of the United Nations arms embargo on Libya, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2292 (2016). As secondary tasks, Irini preserves Operation Sophia's tasks.

[138] In fact, cooperation in this case has been channelled from NATO to FRONTEX, which is actually a Commission Agency, and not between CSDP and NATO.

4.2.3 Main obstacles to cooperation

The suspicion with which the US looks at the strengthening of EU autonomy is often presented as a problem in the relationship between NATO and the EU. In turn, this creates a lack of trust on the part of some European states about US involvement in European security. However, that would be an internal matter for NATO, insofar as it refers to the consistency and solidity of the transatlantic link and the unity among allies (section 3.2). A different issue, therefore, is the fact that a more ambitious and internally unified EU in terms of military aspirations decides to cooperate with NATO, which also has an interest in strengthening the relationship with its long-standing European partner acting as a unique actor in its own right. As Jolyon Howorth recalls, "it is only through its relationship with NATO and not in contradistinction to it, that the EU might aspire both to achieve autonomy and to strengthen the transatlantic alliance" (Howorth, 2018, p. 524). Whereas both organisations stand out in different aspects of crisis management, these ambitions are not necessarily incompatible (as stated by Dempsey, 2015; Rühle, 2016) and, in fact, they can be beneficial to both parties (Duke, 2008, p. 28; Howorth, 2018). However, there are still obstacles which may be hard to surmount, depending on how circumstances evolve with time.

Firstly, it is true that the role of the United States in NATO can be seen as an internal matter for the Alliance. However, it cannot be denied that US capacity within NATO to promote its defence systems and technologies is also something that can – and does – affect the interorganisational relationship. Despite the overlap in membership, the fact that the **world's largest defence market** is able to use NATO to its own advantage raises some suspicions (Fiott, 2019a, pp. 45–47). Hence the EU's development of the EDTIB discussed in section 3.3. The industrial side of this relationship has the potential to destabilise interorganisational cooperation,[139] especially if it is not tackled properly in the years to come. Although the defence capabilities issue is not a new topic, technological advances moving up in the agenda may become a source of friction if NATO and the EU do not find a common policy line.[140] Questions about AI, disruptive technologies or 5G are framed within an important technological debate which is expected to continue during NATO-EU discussions. Agreeing on an action plan for this cooperation area will be tricky, as EU companies may not necessarily think the same as US firms and NATO and the EU will be forced to come to difficult agreements (Fiott, 2019c, pp. 10–11).[141]

Secondly, when discussing obstacles to cooperation, the economic factor, namely, the **defence spending issue** is also a source of friction. The availability of **capability resources** has a clear impact on the level and type of ambition of interorganisational cooperation

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[139] Section 3.1 and 3.3

[140] This is an area where the US have tried to strongly push their policy. For example, regarding discussions on 5G they have resorted to NATO as a way to impose their agenda against the Chinese 5G (Iftimie, 2020, p. 2), causing some allies and EU member states to be suspicious.

[141] Talks and workshops with staff from NATO and the EU have been recently organized to discuss on the impact of disruptive technologies (NATO and EU Councils, 2020, p. 3).

(Cornish, 2006, p. 16; Duke, 2008, p. 37). While the areas of cooperation may be common, the means available to address them may not be equivalent; resource needs are key factors for cooperation (Koops, 2017, p. 328). Moreover, the differences in the defence investment by NATO and the EU have the potential to compromise the interoperability between the two organisations.

A third major obstacle is the set of political interests of the states that make up the organisations (Shimizu & Sandler, 2010, p. 1579): **national agendas can drive and limit agreements**. As we have seen, informal EU-NATO cooperation mechanisms seek to – and sometimes succeed in – overcoming the dominant role of national interests through a pragmatic and more flexible approach. However, despite the triumphs of functionality, informality is not always infallible, as it does not always succeed in triggering change or in compensating for the lack of formal arrangements (Gebhard & Smith, 2015, p. 111). The "**participation problem**" between Cyprus and Turkey is the most glaring example of how two countries can hold two organisations hostage because of turf battles on their agenda (Hofmann, 2009, p. 47; S. J. Smith & Gebhard, 2017, pp. 305–306). Nowadays, Turkey continues to seclude Cyprus from attending to the NAC-PSC meetings or from participating in the PfP programme, and Cyprus has sometimes limited the scope of discussions in NATO-EU meetings to Berlin Plus issues, an obsolete framework which excludes common current concerns like the Ukraine crisis or the fight against terrorism (Cladi & Locatelli, 2020, p. 7). Such hostage-taking strategies impede working successfully at many levels, including the lack of a common code of conduct established and delineated by both actors when both organisations are on the ground simultaneously (Hofmann, 2009, p. 48). Cyprus is not in favour of blocking the cooperation with NATO *per se*, but it is also not in favour of being excluded. In any case, it always counts with Greece's and the EU's unconditional support, based on the inclusiveness and reciprocity principles. The ever-present Cyprus-Greece-Turkey issue is thus a historical and political obstacle, likely to remain despite the triumph of informal mechanisms in other domains of the relationship (Ojanen, 2011, p. 71).

The EU is still working to override its "split personality syndrome" (Blavoukos & Bourantanis, 2011, p. 171) and to reach a unique position on the place it wants to occupy as a security actor in the relationship with NATO in the context of **great power competition**. Hence, that fourth challenge is a key obstacle to the development of a sound EU-NATO relationship (Simón, 2019, pp. 1–6), including how to define the EU's stand and how that can be compatible with NATO. It must be borne in mind that the EU constitutes both an actor in its own right, and an arena for its member states to articulate and project their particularistic interests. In fact, there have been discrepancies between member states to EU and NATO, when prioritising which security provider should carry out a specific mission.[142]

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[142] Like when some EU members prioritized the EU to carry out military missions in the Indian Ocean (the aforementioned EUNAVFOR Somalia, also known as Atalanta) (Riddervold, 2014, p. 547) or during the Darfur crisis in 2005, when France, Germany and Greece opted to intervene under the Union's umbrella (providing airlift capacity), while Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom decided to channel their contribution through NATO (Touzovskaia, 2006, p. 252).

Differences are not only in the priorities, in investment or in capabilities, but also in the methodologies and the levels of **openness and classification**. NATO is based on the classification of information and the EU is an organisation based on transparency. That is more of an operational obstacle which may lead to coordination challenges at the military level. NATO works with all sources of intelligence – including in the cyber domain – but such sources of intelligence are classified. The EU, on the contrary, operates in a much more open way. There can be other **operational obstacles**, like the institutional mandate maximisation that occurs when both organisations exacerbate their mandates to be able to act more autonomously; potential controversies related to the primacy or hierarchy between NATO's article 5 and EU's Treaty articles 42.7[143]; or divergent strategic self-conceptions, meaning problems arisen from the credit claim for "preserving peace" or for reaching higher quotas of success (Szewczyk, 2019, p. 24). All these issues must be considered, as they have the potential to lead to a situation of rivalry. However, when compared to the previously mentioned obstacles, these challenges can be considered a residual problem of the duplication and overlap between both organisations.

Finally, to culminate this section, it can be concluded that the relationship between NATO and the EU is currently at one of its best moments. While over two decades the interaction has experienced ups and downs, including the deterioration caused by the political and strategic agendas of some of their respective members, the effectiveness of informal cooperation mechanisms has managed to overcome major obstacles. The combination of the latter and the political will on the part of both NATO and the EU has succeeded in reversing the trend line in this relationship towards the current positive situation. In any case, in today's changing scenario, even the current harmony cannot be permanently guaranteed and should therefore not be taken for granted.

4.3 EU-OSCE interaction

Despite considerable membership overlap and common goals, there is not much cooperation between the EU and the OSCE, except for the EU financially contributing to several OSCE initiatives and missions and information coordination on the ground – with variable degrees of contact depending on the missions. As discussed below, this is mainly due to the EU's lack of confidence in Russia (an OSCE participating state) and the possibility of the EU overshadowing the OSCE in its longstanding tasks.

4.3.1 Evolution and functioning of the relationship

Throughout the 1990s, cooperation between the OSCE and the EU was carried out on an *ad hoc* basis (Stewart, 2008, p. 273). Since the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy started

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[143] In practice, however such potential overlap between the mentioned articles does not occur insofar the country invoking either article is not subject to any hierarchy, but rather, decides driven by its sovereignty. Any NATO ally also member to the EU can choose to invoke NATO's article 5 path or the TEU's article 42.7 to trigger "aid and assistance by all the means".

becoming more important and effective (notably as a result of the strong development of the CSDP and the EU's crisis prevention and management capacities), cooperation between the EU and the OSCE also increased and deepened, discussing particular modalities of cooperation (Paunov, 2014, p. 240; Stewart, 2008, p. 273). Thus, with the beginning of the 21st century, and in view of the determination reflected in the Treaty of Amsterdam to contribute more actively to peace and security in Europe in the area of crisis management (J.7.2, European Union, 1999), the cooperation between both actors went from being *ad hoc*[144] to more regular as a consequence of the development of new EU policies. Due to the scope of the EU's Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP),[145] the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and its Eastern Partnership (EaP) in particular,[146] cooperation with the OSCE became prominent, as it was the only European regional security provider present in many of these states where the EU was starting to be involved (Moga & Alexeev, 2013, p. 43; Mosser, 2015b, p. 15). The new functions the EU (and also NATO) was acquiring had been under the OSCE's monopoly for years (Bicchi & Martin, 2006, pp. 189–207), which, together with the considerable membership overlap, was an important driver for a deeper interaction between them (I. Peters, 2004, p. 396).

Figure 9: Overlapping membership of the OSCE and the EU

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[144] With the European Commission being in charge of all contacts with the OSCE until then.

[145] The SAP was established in 1999 with the goal of enabling the eventual accession to the EU by states in the Western Balkans. It defines common political and economic goals with the aim of stabilizing the region and enabling the creation of a free-trade area.

[146] The EaP is a specific Eastern dimension of the ENP, involving the EU, its member states and six Eastern European Partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).

Source: Own creation

Both organisations support a comprehensive and cooperative approach to security, they share principles and values and they have also recognised the UNSC as the primary actor in matters of international peace and security (Council of the EU, 2003c, p. 9). The agendas overlapped to a quite noticeable degree, the mandates and policy fields were very similar, and several geographical places of interest to undertake work coincided. These were recognised as reasons for interaction, causing them to permanently pursue political dialogue on security and conflict prevention in Europe (Niels Van Willigen & Koops, 2015, p. 740). The growing need for enhanced cooperation had already been noticed in the context of the war in former Yugoslavia, where both had deployed missions (Stewart, 2008, p. 266; Wohlfeld & Pietrusiewicz, 2006, p. 286). However, with the adoption of the EU's security strategy in 2003, it became clear not only that the OSCE and the EU did not necessarily have to exclude each other from their tasks, but that lasting stability in the neighbourhood would require "continued effort by the EU together with (…) OSCE" (Council of the EU, 2003b, p. 25) as there was leeway for learning from each other in the field of security.

Preserving this mindset, at the end of 2003, the Council approved the Conclusions on EU-OSCE cooperation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, highlighting the importance of "avoiding duplication and identifying comparative advantages and added value, leading to effective complementarity" (Council of the EU, 2003c). From that moment onwards, formal and informal cooperation initiatives with the OSCE took off, in a whirlpool of increased institutional interaction (Niels Van Willigen & Koops, 2015, p. 740). The EU supports the continued, active and cooperative involvement of the OSCE in European security matters and, as established in article 21.2.c of the Treaty on the European Union, as amended in Lisbon, the Union shall work to "preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen

international security, (…) in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris" (European Union, 2012).

The fact that all EU members, including those from the most recent enlargements, take part in the OSCE makes the EU an active partner in the OSCE proceedings. However, there is also a basic, **formal justification for the EU's participation**. The fact that the OSCE addresses some issues whose legal competence have been transferred to the EU by EU member states, justifies the latter's engagement in the OSCE's proceedings. The EU's partaking occurs according to the Rules of Procedure of the Organisation (OSCE, 2006), which were adopted by OSCE Ministers in late 2006 and which came to formalise this participation. Before they were adopted, the involvement of the European Commission in the OSCE had been based on established practices dating to the preparatory negotiations of the Helsinki Final Act (1975). In fact, the Helsinki Final Act had been signed by Prime Minister of Italy Aldo Moro, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Communities, and the Charter of Paris (CSCE, 1990) and the Charter for European Security ("Istanbul Document", OSCE, 1999, p. 23), by Jacques Delors and Romano Prodi respectively, both Presidents of the Commission at the time (Prodi, 1999).

Despite this prominent role of the European Commission during the preparatory stages of the OSCE's (then still CSCE's) beginnings, the participation of the EU as a single entity vis-à-vis the OSCE was not formalised until 2006 (Lisiecka, 2016, p. 115). Since then, **the EU has spoken with one voice** in the framework of the OSCE through statements previously negotiated and approved by the EU Member States' delegations in Vienna. This practice has often been criticised as resulting in bland, "watered-down" statements that undermine the debate (Lööf, 2006, p. 14). For the EU, however, this procedure gives the OSCE an advantage in seeking consensus, since 27 of its participants have agreed in advance on a common position (Smolnik, 2019, p. 28; Waestfelt, 2006).

Formally, the EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna's OSCE section, established in 1979, is responsible for coordinating the actions and **day-to-day work** of the EU at the OSCE. It is also responsible for acting as the link between the two and it may speak on behalf of all EU member states (European External Action Service, 2020a). When it comes to take part in the OSCE proceedings[147], the EU's Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the OSCE does so as part of the Delegation of the OSCE-participating state that holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU, even sitting next to them in the OSCE decision-making bodies (like the Ministerial and Head of State and Government level).[148]

Moreover, there is frequent contact between EU and OSCE's high-level officers, their presidencies or Chairpersons-in-office[149], their committee structures (for instance, "cross-representation" and consultations are common at the Political and Security Committee and

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[147] When the discussion falls within the scope of the EU.

[148] The EU High Representative and the Presidents of the Council or the Commission may also intervene at the levels of Ministers or Heads of State and Government.

[149] OSCE's Chair is designated by the Ministerial Council via a decision. It is a rotating presidency of one calendar year and the Chairperson-in-Office is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the designated state.

Ambassadorial level) and between their personnel (Bailes et al., 2008, p. 77; Nils Van Willigen, 2014, p. 135). These modalities for contacts were established in the aforementioned 2003 Conclusions on EU-OSCE Cooperation (Council of the EU, 2003c), specifying the twice-yearly meetings of the Council Presidency troika and the OSCE Troikas at Ministerial and Ambassadorial levels, the presentations – also twice a year – of priorities by the EU Council Presidency to the OSCE Permanent Council, briefings and mutual visits between officials and staff level consultations.

The contact mechanisms in place undoubtedly revived in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. While the OSCE took ownership over the crisis response, the EU's representation in the OSCE has been a way for the EU to be indirectly involved in a context where it was also seen as part of the problem – due to the European aspirations of part of Ukrainians which collided with Russia's aspirations of a post-Soviet space (Šimáková, 2016, p. 10). Especially since 2014, cooperation between the two has intensified, albeit the field missions are hardly connected (the EU Advisory Mission has a very specific mandate and a very limited presence, especially in Kyiv, and the OSCE has a very extensive presence, with ten teams spread throughout the country). The EU and the OSCE **exchanged letters** at the Secretary General level[150] in which they agreed to strategically enhance their institutional interaction as well as operational cooperation in areas of common interest across the three OSCE dimensions (political-military, economic and environmental and human security). In order to follow-up on the evolution of those common areas a **framework for consultations** was established between the OSCE's Secretariat, the EEAS and the European Commission (Fiott, 2019d, p. 45). In fact, the latter's commitment to the OSCE's work is also reflected in the important economic contribution to assist the SMM mission in Ukraine after the OSCE Permanent Council extended its mandate. This European Commission's contribution – channelled through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) – was aimed at assisting the SMM with satellite imagery analysis (European Commission, 2018b). Moreover, in support of the OSCE's work towards the stabilisation and normalisation of the situation in Ukraine, the EU has repeatedly donated armoured vehicles to the SMM.[151]

At the end of 2018, representatives from both institutions took part in the **First OSCE-EU annual high-level meeting** (OSCE Newsroom, 2018). This gathering, which took place in Brussels, saw the high-level representatives' debate on how to implement an efficient framework that could enhance their cooperation. The discussions focused particularly on the relationship between the OSCE and the EEAS and on how they could address the goals of their shared security conception, namely: conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Currently, close relations are preserved via the EU-OSCE Ministerial Political Dialogue meetings with the PSC-level Political dialogues and fluid **staff-to-staff talks**.

Informality has characterised the cooperation between the OSCE and the EU on the ground, especially when compared to the formality in the relationship between the headquarters. According to practitioners in the field, while interaction between the respective missions often begins with some ambiguity, staff-to-staff relations tend to facilitate coordination. Occasionally,

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[150] OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security
[151] 24 in 2015, 20 in 2015 www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/220086

mission staff have previously been working for the other organisation, which facilitates knowledge about the functioning of the other institution. In the case of Kosovo, where the EU was present with EULEX and the OSCE with its OMIK mission, potentially problematic overlaps between mandates were avoided. The tasks of monitoring courts and tribunals and the training of police forces were carried out in parallel in a coordinated manner (Lynch, 2009, p. 143). Something similar happened in Georgia. When the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM Georgia) arrived, cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Georgia was slow to take hold, The latter, like the UN mission (United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, UNOMIG), had been on the ground for many years "seeking to promote negotiations between the conflicting parties in Georgia which are aimed at reaching a peaceful political settlement" (OSCE - Conflict Prevention Centre, 2019, pp. 50–55). Despite initial misunderstandings, the fact that the EUMM took up its HQ in a building lent by the OSCE and that there was good communication on a personal level between the staffs of each organisation (including personnel mobility between missions), allowed the relationship to become so fluid that when the OSCE Mission was not renewed, equipment, cars and materials were sold to the EU mission.

4.3.2 Main areas of cooperation

The complementary and, at times, overlapping agendas include a wide-ranging list of cooperation fields between the OSCE and the EU. This includes judicial and police reform, public administration, anti-corruption measures, borders management, democratisation and institution-building. Interestingly, the EU, independently of its Member States – which account for more than two thirds of the OSCE's main budget – contributes to the financing of several extra-budgetary projects developed by the OSCE (Paunov, 2014, p. 339). In choosing its contributions, the EU has shown a certain preference for contributing funds to the tasks of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) that aim to strengthen human rights institutions, boost crisis management and develop strong electoral instruments.

Already in the Charter of Paris did the OSCE label the EU's **comparative advantage** when recognizing "the important role of the European Community in the political and economic development of Europe" and stressing the necessity for effective co-ordination and "the need to find methods for all our States to take part in these activities" (CSCE, 1990, p. 9). Indeed, the EU enjoys **capacity of influence** based on tangible economic rewards for those observing and meeting EU political and economic standards. Thus, countries that observe the EU's political standards, whether for economic or political reasons, are contributing to stability and, indirectly, also to security. Contrarily, the OSCE, whose actions are not legally binding, lacks this kind of power and has no leverage stemming from rules and regulations (Stewart, 2008, p. 272).

The OSCE, for its part, is the only regional political forum where the key issues for European security are debated by all members of **wider Europe**, that is to say, EU member states, and non-EU members states in Europe, including Russia (Hakkarainen, 2016, p. 25; Lynch, 2009, p. 139). The EU is acutely aware of the political potential of such a partner. After the biggest enlargement of the EU in 2004[152] and the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, previously distant scenarios such as the Caucasus or Moldova became the Union's close

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[152] Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

neighbourhood. It was then clear that there were areas which remained outside its influence where the OSCE could play a bigger role (Haine, 2005, p. 3), even if the EU also tried to approach some of these countries through the ENP.[153] Through its international monitoring missions, the ODIHR draws attention to activities such as electoral observation in Armenia or hate crime prevention in Georgia that would otherwise be ignored or diminished (Mosser, 2015a, p. 591). Acknowledging the exclusive presence of the OSCE in certain regions of the continent, the EU also abides by OSCE principles and commitments as well as some instruments of its *acquis* that address challenges traditionally handled by the OSCE.[154]

The Council of the EU has acknowledged the importance of the OSCE's consensus-based working system and, when it comes to consider fieldwork, it values the role of the OSCE operations highly (Council of the EU, 2003c, p. 9). The relationship between the EU – more specifically the CSDP – and the OSCE has been key in that "other" or "wider" Europe in which states are not EU member states, especially (but not exclusively) in the Western Balkans and the Caucasus. That cooperation has proved fruitful for the EU as it contributes to its **neighbourhood stability**, as well as for the OSCE and the countries at hand, insofar it helps strengthening the legal and political structure of European security. In this sense, it is especially relevant to mention the work on the ground in which the CSDP has contributed[155] to OSCE tasks in Kosovo (Grevi et al., 2009, p. 115). North Macedonia has also witnessed the fluid cooperation between both security providers, seeing how the OSCE's Mission to Skopje performed parallelly to the two civilian missions deployed by the EU (EUPOL Proxima and EUPAT) and the military EUFOR Concordia (OSCE - Conflict Prevention Centre, 2019, p. 19).

OSCE's autonomous institutions (ODIHR, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media) are also well regarded by Brussels and they have been the addressees of EU funding several times. While there are different ways to cooperate, the **financing of projects** has been chosen several times in the last couple of years. It enables the expertise and comparative advantages of the OSCE to be implemented through EU's funding in an agreed framework with shared objectives. Such is the case, for instance, of the two-year EU-funded project on promoting democratisation and human rights in Belarus launched by the ODIHR (OSCE - ODIHR, 2018).

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[153] For example, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were all some of the states part in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

[154] Like the Pact on Stability in Europe (March 1995), which strived for the reduction of tension arising from the problems of minorities and frontiers inviolability in Central Europe.

[155] The OSCE Kosovo Mission has been supported by the EU (usually through its EULEX presence) in several projects like, for example, training Kosovo police in human rights compliant riot control (www.osce.org/kosovo/86340), combating international drug trafficking (www.osce.org/kosovo/76094), securing the elections in four northern Kosovo municipalities in line with an EU-facilitated Belgrade-Prishtinë/Priština agreement (www.osce.org/kosovo/107764; www.osce.org/sg/108433)

With reference to the ground coordination, the OSCE does not always refer to its work in the field as "Missions" but also as "programme offices" or "presence", since they carry out their tasks in participating states where they have been working for several years – with objectives related to democratisation, economic development, human rights. EU missions, by contrast, always involve leaving what might be called a "comfort zone" of sorts by going to a third state and deploying an *ad hoc* team for a specific mandate. When the two actors are present in the same scenario, complementarity occurs if the mandates are differentiated. If they are, the missions may still be indirectly linked, since the democratisation or strengthening of institutions carried out by the OSCE has an impact on the stabilisation of the country and, in turn, the EU's mission for training the security forces or a civilian observation and monitoring mission also has an impact on the objectives pursued by the OSCE. In such cases, the exchange of staff-to-staff information and the holding of informal meetings benefits the work of both organisations. In this sense, coordination between CSDP missions and OSCE field operations is a reality in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, although in Georgia and Moldova the interaction consisted merely on consultation on conflict resolution and it did not always have successful results (Lisiecka, 2016, p. 115). However, there may be some concern when the mandates are similar or the parties involved are suspicious of one or the other organisation.

4.3.3 Main obstacles to cooperation

The main complications to a fluid cooperation between the EU and the OSCE originate mainly from the current lack of trust between both institutions, which has not been overcome despite the rapprochement in the wake of the crisis in Ukraine. However, there is also another obstacle which is that the relatively wide overlap of functions could eventually end up causing the marginalisation of the OSCE in favour of a better funded EU.

Firstly, the level of mistrust in politically charged scenarios is one of the main obstacles to this cooperation. A geopolitical barrier runs through almost all cooperative initiatives between the EU and the OSCE: Moscow's distrust of Western forces entering what was once USSR territory and the EU's distrust towards Russia's behaviour. Although the OSCE Charter for European Security insists that no state "can consider any part of the OSCE area as its **sphere of influence**" (II.8, OSCE, 1999), Russian foreign policy does not seem to have renounced the concept of "area of influence" (Nünlist, 2017, p. 2; Szubart, 2016, p. 2).

The EU has not hesitated to show its discomfort at the annexation of Crimea by Russia, its OSCE partner. Considering the annexation illegal, the EU continues to condemn the act, remains committed to the policy of non-recognition and calls on Russia to comply with OSCE commitments (European External Action Service, 2020c). The OSCE matters to the EU but currently there is a serious degree of hesitation about engaging in information exchanges with all participating states, particularly with Russia (Díaz Galán, 2019, p. 21). Therefore, despite the closely related principles of both organisations, despite the inspiration that the Helsinki Final Act provided the EU as a guiding element for its external action, and despite the series of cooperative mechanisms that have been established to undertake several common projects in specific conflicts and areas of Europe (Moldova, Caucasus, Balkans, Ukraine), OSCE-EU cooperation is weakened by this significant level of mistrust. Mistrust which, incidentally, also happens the other way around, as some of the participants in the OSCE are not in favour of it

engaging too much with "Brussels" (Bailes et al., 2008, p. 74; Moga & Alexeev, 2013, pp. 48–50).

The OSCE could arguably be used as a channel to talk to other big participants like Russia. Nevertheless, this is not typically the case, firstly because larger EU states like Germany or France tend to prefer bilateral or minilateral formats of conversation with these large states, and secondly because of diverging opinions between EU member states on rapprochement with Russia (Deni, 2020, p. 1).

In fact, in spite of the preventive diplomacy mechanisms both organisations use, the confidence-building measures in which they cooperate and the early warning principles they both are based on, the EU and the OSCE have been incapable of preventing crises like the Georgian war (Acharya, 2018) or the Ukrainian conflict (Díaz Galán, 2019, pp. 1–26), which does not speak particularly well of their bilateral cooperation or of their individual efforts, for that matter. Once crises have arisen and higher levels of conflict have been reached, the performance of each of these organisations has been highly variable, depending on each specific scenario and never the only exclusive cause for the crisis to end.

Secondly, the Union often expresses in its documents the importance of OSCE values, standards and principles, but in the practical field the geographical and functional overlaps between them risks their cooperation, now limited to the minimum. Since the EU coincides with the OSCE in identifying conflict prevention as a key objective of its external action, functional crossovers are not only likely, but also potentially problematic (Steinbrück Platise & Peters, 2018, p. 7). Although they both have the aforementioned comparative advantages, a certain degree of rivalry or competition emerges in the context of their civilian crisis management missions (e.g. police missions, border monitoring, etc.), when pursuing human rights protection, in the diplomatic field or even in promoting democracy (Stewart, 2008, p. 272). Problems stem from the EU's greater resources and capacities, which allow it to become an influential global player in the security field, while disregarding the expertise of who once was "a pioneer, both in terms of the development of expertise in certain policy areas, as well as its involvement in particular regions" (Paunov, 2014, p. 352).

Through its missions and cooperation activities in third countries, the EU has increasingly introduced itself into the area of the OSCE. Although it insists on calling the latter an "indispensable actor on the stage of European security", as it did in the 14th Ministerial Council in Brussels (Erkki Tuomioja, 2006) there is a possibility that these aspirations of political and economic harmonisation on the European periphery as well as the increasing weight of the EU's security and defence component, end up marginalising the OSCE (Kamp, 2017, pp. 81–82; I. Peters, 2004, p. 384). This can result in a waste of the experience and presence that the OSCE has developed in the territories of non-EU countries. That risk is thus the source for complaints about the **EU's "encroaching" on the OSCE's territory** and potentially overtaking its functions (Bailes et al., 2008, p. 67). Additionally, some OSCE participating states like Russia also fear that an excessive overlap could also lead to an instrumentalization of the OSCE by the EU for the benefit of the latter's foreign policy interests. To prevent this from happening, treaty statements, final acts and declarations must be reflected in practice, so that cooperation – and not rivalry – is *de facto* fostered, or so that each decides to specialise in their niches in order to generate a clearer division of labour. If given the current geopolitical circumstances in the region neither the OSCE nor the EU are in fact willing to take their

cooperation further and strengthen their interaction, then the potential overlap of functions or mission mandates will remain the justification that masks the real lack of political will.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The European security architecture (ESA) is in permanent transition. It is not a static system but, rather, one in **constant evolution**. This fluctuating situation is not new, as the organisations analysed have been subject to constant adaptation over thirty years of major shifts in international relations. Their adaptability shows that NATO, the OSCE and the EU have managed to remain relevant enough to survive the changes that have taken place since the end of the Cold War. But, at the same time, the institutional robustness that has enabled them to endure for three decades is now also making it difficult for these organisations to continue adapting quickly enough to the forthcoming challenges of the 21st century. The general feeling is of concern, given that the constant evolution undergone by NATO, the OSCE and the EU may now be leading to a deterioration of the ESA. This is because, although certain positive trends continue to be detected, this architecture is **currently under strain**, being pressured from different areas: external challenges, internal problems, and complex interaction trends.

Alongside the ever-present **external security threats** that they must face – both traditional and non-traditional, all three security providers also present **internal problems**, which are generally closely related to the national agendas of some of their member states. Thus, power imbalances, unequal strategies, and divergent priorities are often a source of friction which undermines the effectiveness of these organisations. In this respect, the dominant role of the US within NATO, the way in which Turkey's strategic endeavours often deviate from the objectives of the broader Alliance, the multiplicity of security cultures within the EU, and Russia's assertive behaviour towards other OSCE participants are all cases in point. Naturally, there are also internal problems of a non-political nature, such as interoperability issues and a constant lack of resources. However, the primary issue – the divergences between member states within each organization – affects not only the performance of the organisations themselves, but also has a bearing on interorganisational relations.

At present, the **interaction** between these organisations is defined by NATO's expansion beyond the deterrence and defence agenda, the EU's ongoing quest for strategic autonomy – including greater defence cooperation, and the stagnation of the OSCE caused by the contradictory interests within it that prevent it from progressing. A further relevant point for understanding the current synergies between organisations is the **crisis in Ukraine**, which certainly was a turning point for all of them and for their interaction trends. In the wake of the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the EU and NATO realised that they needed to join forces and capabilities if they were to address the situation of tension on the eastern flank. At the same time, the EU also turned to the OSCE as the only organisation in which all the parties involved were present.

While NATO's comparative advantage continues to be its military strength in the deterrence and defence field, and that of the EU remains political-military crisis management from a comprehensive approach, the expansion of their respective agendas into each other's traditional domains may lead to a fair degree of overlap or even a certain level of competition. The steadily growing military and defence cooperation between EU members may end up falling within the sphere that has traditionally been the Alliance's responsibility, and NATO, which is increasingly interested in the civilian and political side of crisis management, may end

up presenting itself as an alternative to the EU in that area. For the time being, the EU's strategic autonomy remains far from being a reality, and NATO remains the benchmark of European defence. Moreover, the EU and NATO also reinforce each other. NATO benefits from a strong CSDP and from the regulatory power of the EU as much as the latter benefits from NATO's credible deterrence and defence posture. Division of labour has been often possible when the two organisations have coincided in scenarios and joint efforts result in cooperative advances in in fields like hybrid threats or maritime security. In short, **cooperation rather than rivalry** is the current aim of these two independent but co-dependent organisations with a significant overlap in terms of membership. After years of relegating this cooperation to sub-optimal informal channels because of the blockage caused by the "participation problem", the Joint Declarations of 2016 and 2018 have redirected communication towards formality. The commitment obtained at the highest political level is trickling down and spreading across both NATO and the EU. Nevertheless, national interests of individual states should not be underestimated since they have the potential to impact this interaction. Such is the case of the US' pivotal role within NATO – showing that Washington's policy towards the Alliance is very likely to affect the overall European security architecture – , or, mainly, the national agendas of Turkey and Cyprus. These two states continue to **hold both organisations hostage** when it comes to progress in the more strategic aspects of cooperation, thus enabling other international actors (such as the UN) to benefit from the space generated by the institutional tensions. Therefore, despite progress, informal and non-strategic nature of the current EU-NATO relationship has reached a glass ceiling and overcoming it would require a great amount of political will, unattainable at the moment, for the full potential of this cooperation to be unleashed.

Some convergence also occurs in the relationship between the EU and the OSCE. In this case, there are fewer cooperation areas and all of them address the human aspects of security: measures for promoting democracy, respect for human rights and guaranteeing fundamental freedoms, both preventively and in post-conflict situations. This cooperation gives rise to certain degree of competition which is aggravated by the fact that they are not on an equal footing: the EU is stronger in political, legal and economic terms than the OSCE. Since the EU carries out electoral observation, follow-up, and monitoring activities on the territory of third states that are also OSCE participants, this may be seen as an encroachment on the competences of the OSCE. Such seems to be the perception of Russia, which regards OSCE cooperation with the EU as an imposition by Western states on a region that had historically been under its influence. The lack of trust between OSCE participants, which was exacerbated by the conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine, is also felt in the relationship between organisations. Although the OSCE regained some prominence in the context of the Ukrainian crisis, it has again lost relevance owing to its inability to prevent the escalation of new tensions in its area, as evidenced by the confrontation between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh in the autumn of 2020. In any case, and even though the OSCE is in an **almost perpetual state of stalemate**, the EU still regards it as a key partner for security and stability in much of its neighbourhood, which is why funding or participation in joint projects, as well as initiatives in which the EU acts through the OSCE, are likely to continue though limited.

A determining element in the type of relationship the EU has with each of the other ESA actors is that, while in the relationship with the Alliance the majority of members basically share common strategic interests, in the relationship with the OSCE the interests of many of its members are clearly divergent. In the context of European security, the use of informal

cooperation mechanisms remains quite notable. Thus, 'directoires' such as the Normandy format, the E3/EU+3 in the case of the Iranian nuclear deal, and other minilateral groups and coalitions such as the Nordic Defence Cooperation, enable like-minded states to assume a more prominent role when planning or launching missions.

Given the state of affairs and considering the internal and external challenges facing both individual organisations and the ESA as a whole, it is recommended to monitor the following factors, whose evolution will be decisive in the definition of this architecture in the coming decades:

- *EU security and defence cooperation after Brexit*

In view of the potentially variable level of US involvement in Europe and after having lost one of its most militarily capable member states, the type of cooperation that the EU manages to agree on in the near future will be decisive for the configuration of the ESA as a whole. The EU is faced with a lack of internal coherence when adopting decisions on this matter, proved, for instance, by the reluctance of some member states to reinforce the CSDP. However, uncertainty about the US's willingness to remain strongly engaged in NATO and military-industry concerns are pushing even the most Atlanticist states to consider more seriously the possibility of a stronger EU in both security and defence terms. The lack of capabilities to deal with simultaneous crises in an eventual scenario without the US (and after Brexit, also without the UK) unsettles EU member states. Several core issues the EU may be confronted with, including deterrence and defence against Russia, or eventually countering a more assertive China, cannot be effectively carried out without the US (or against the US).

The EU's rethinking of its security and defence objectives is already yielding results: the EDF has been the European Commission's first-time foray into defence funding and PESCO is gaining traction due to its advanced ground-breaking legal framework. Now it is time for these and other EU developments to lead to a tangible shift in the EU's capability base and readiness for deployment. As such a shift continues to take place, the US can be expected to show concern, as it has been doing when warning Europeans not to duplicate NATO's efforts; the EU, nonetheless, should continue to increase its own contribution to European security (as requested by the Americans) and increase its internal coordination and integration. Strategic autonomy is not the autonomy from someone but rather the autonomy of doing something alone if necessary, with partners if possible (Graziano, 2020). The advisable scenario would thus be for both organisations to realise that they indeed are, in Lindstrom and Tardy's words, "essential partners" (Lindstrom & Tardy, 2019a) and that, consequently, the security of one does revert to that of the other.

- *Evolving US security and defence cooperation with Europe*

Without overlooking the uncertainty regarding US involvement in European defence, experts agree on the fact that the US remains committed to its European partners, as the Alliance is sufficiently integrated to guarantee American presence in Europe. US officials' calls for equal burden-sharing, President Trump's rhetoric on Article 5 or his claims on European responsibility have given a distorted picture by presenting NATO in purely transactional terms. This has created a *decalage* between the political narrative and the real American commitment, which in terms of funds and troops has *de facto* increased on European soil to curb the Russian threat.

Even though the American commitment itself is not in question, the level and type of that commitment should be given attention, as it will continue to decrease in the long term, despite the results of the 2020 presidential election of the US. Indeed, notwithstanding the election of Joe Biden as President-elect, the so-called "pivot to Asia" is a trend – present for decades now – that is rapidly gaining strength and that seems to signal that the US is no longer considering Europe its main priority. Unlike other mid-term concerns, this causes the most worry to Europeans. Nonetheless, China becoming the main geopolitical priority for Americans does not prevent the US from remaining committed to Europe. Although some insist on justifying US interest in NATO on strictly altruistic grounds, the Alliance is a force multiplier for the US, as well as a legitimising element of its power and influence that should not be relinquished.

Furthermore, European autonomous missions in the territory of "their neighbours" (like the missions and operations undertaken by the EU in states like CAR, DRC or Mali) have not only not been frowned upon by the Americans, but even welcomed by American president Donald Trump. He made this known to French president Emmanuel Macron, one of the most outspoken advocates of the EU's strategic autonomy. All in all, if the American axis continues turning towards China, it could become more common to find the US "leading from behind" – similarly to what happened in Libya, for instance, where the US maintained its involvement and military presence while granting more prominence to its European partners. Of course, although the pivot to Asia is a long-term trend independent of the ruling party, the narrative in Washington will likely change upon Joe Biden's appointment as President, probably enhancing the interaction between the partners and not hurting the transatlantic link.

- *Russia's attitudes in the frame of the OSCE and towards NATO and the EU*
Russia's actions in Ukraine had an impact not only on the EU's inter-institutional relations with NATO and the OSCE, but also on the EU itself, as proved by the EU Global Strategy and the interest in stronger defence cooperation. In fact, the European defence momentum is largely driven by the resurgence of great power competition, of which Russia is clearly an important part. Evidence of the country's influence and its weight in the configuration of today's ESA is that Russia has shaped the evolution of NATO and the EU over the last six years much more than it did in the previous 15 years. Regarding NATO, the *de facto* stepped-up American commitment on European soil was also partly triggered by the annexation of Crimea by Moscow, seen indeed as a return to a competition between powers.

The OSCE, for its part, took ownership over the crisis response, attempting to be a platform for different regional visions. The EU, making use of its ability to act as a unitary actor through its representation to the OSCE, also managed to be indirectly involved in a context where it was seen as part of the problem – due to the European aspirations of a part of the Ukrainian population which collided with Russia's aspirations of a post-Soviet space. The OSCE, however, was unable to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, which is not surprising considering the absolutely opposing interests of the parties involved. This reality can be extrapolated to other areas of the OSCE such as Belarus and the Caucasus. Russia's attempts to maintain its prevailing position in the areas of its former sphere of influence will undoubtedly continue to determine the work of the OSCE, as well as the actions of the EU and NATO. Nevertheless, a mutually beneficial relationship with the Russian Federation could still be possible if substantial common interests – such as the fight against terrorism – were to be seriously

considered and looked at from a geostrategic approach, an enormous difficulty given the present environment.

Finally, it is also worth paying attention to the possible alliances that may arise between historically aligned powers, whether for cultural or even religious reasons, in the context of local conflicts (often harbouring proxy wars). In connection to this, not only does Russia retain the ascendancy in much of Eastern Europe, but Turkish hegemonic aspirations in what it considers its area of influence should also be monitored.

- *Non-traditional security challenges on the European horizon*

While somewhat beyond the scope of this study, there are other trends that deserve, at the very least, careful monitoring in the medium term. The first is China's increasing role in the world, from both an economic and a military perspective. Over the past two decades, China has developed and so has so its economic presence in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and the wider Asia-Pacific region. Although, for now, in Josep Borrell's words, the China approach is still tryptic, as in 'partner, competitor and rival', the relative weight among these three aspects may continue to change. Moreover, its military presence has also risen in the East and South China Seas, as well as elsewhere, like the illustrative military base in Djibouti or the strategic holding of operational control of currently commercial ports like Gwadar, the world's deepest sea port, located in Pakistan. Given its increased assertiveness in Hong Kong, as well as with Taiwan, Japan and other neighbours who happen to be US allies, Cold War-style proxy conflicts may not be ruled out. Should they occur, and even if Europe is geographically far, its close military relationship with the US and its attachment to the value of democracy may end up entailing more European involvement in Asia than may seem apparent at first sight.

Even if President-elect Biden (at the time of writing) and President Xi manage to tone down the rhetoric and the US-China relationship becomes less tense, there are two interconnected emerging threats that Europe can simply not afford to ignore: salient cyber-security issues and the development of artificial intelligence. As the world grows automatized and critical infrastructure is increasingly controlled by computing technology, it becomes exposed to incoming hack attacks. As technology advances, this kind of threat is only bound to increase. Similarly, progress in artificial intelligence may eventually pose a threat to the EU, which, while playing close attention to regulatory aspects, lags behind the US and China on technical matters.

- *The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the three organisations*

The three organizations in the ESA are all being impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The true consequences of this tragic pandemic, which is wreaking havoc across the continent and the world, will only be measurable in due time. However, when considering Josep Borrell's statement that "big events only accelerate the pace of history" but that they do not turn it 180 degrees (Torreblanca, 2020), it can only be concluded that this crisis will reinforce already-existing trouble, as COVID-19 creates what is probably the most serious health and economic crisis in decades. At the moment, some consequences for the ESA can be preliminarily outlined: firstly, all three organisations may lose priority in the allocation of funds to the benefit of public health institutions and research centres, thus making it very difficult to meet the commitments already made, let alone new ones. And secondly, this crisis may contribute to the further expansion of the broader notion of "security" which includes the human dimension of the term, refers directly to resilience and always considers the civilian dimension. This could

grant the EU and the OSCE the possibility to gain more relevance since both are driven by that wider security conception. In any case, COVID-19 does present an opportunity for the ESA actors to unite to solve the most pressing problems that challenge the security environment.

At this point, it can be concluded that the EU's increasing ambition in security and defence has been the main cause of impact within the ESA in the past five years, affecting both its relationship with NATO and the OSCE. It remains to be seen whether this impetus from the EU – if maintained – can be harnessed to achieve greater coordination between the various inter-locking actors, prevent any possible deterioration of the ESA as a result of tensions, competition or rivalry, and strengthen this architecture in the face of important strategic dilemmas and constant external security threats.

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