# THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTIONS OF THE EU'S ENLARGEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICIES IN THE AREA OF SECURITY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the European integration project affirmed the narrative about the obsolescence of major war on the European continent, through the profound transformation of relations among European states in the second half of the 20th century. The concept of 'Europe whole, free, and at peace' (Bush, 1989) dominated much of the public and academic debate in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The idea of an expanding 'security community' promised to bridge the east-west divide and enhance the security of the whole continent. Yet, just over three decades later, the belief that war had become unthinkable as a means of resolving political differences on the continent was shaken by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, prompting the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell to warn in 2024 that '[a] high intensity, conventional war in Europe [was] no longer a fantasy' (Foy, 2024). The degree of uncertainty facing the European security order today has never been so heightened throughout the post-Cold War history of the EU.

Most studies on European security in the last decades have evolved around the changing perceptions of security risks and the subsequent policy responses centred on capability building and deepening institutional integration at EU level. This has given rise to the burgeoning literature on EU crisis management (Emerson and Gross, 2007; Blockmans, 2008; Popescu, 2011; Gross and Juncos, 2011; Juncos and Blockmans, 2018), the academic debate on resilience (Juncos, 2017; Tocci, 2019; Korosteleva, 2019) as well as to various conceptualisations of the EU's external power. In the latter vein, the EU has been seen as a civilian power (Duchêne 1972), a normative power (Manners, 2002), a market power (Damro, 2012), a liberal power (Wagner 2017) or a superpower (Moravcsik 2017). What is characteristic of these conceptualisations is their reliance on traditional notions of power related to an actors' ability to calculate risks, assign probabilities and design policy responses meant to control outcomes, i.e., they are different conceptions of control power (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018).

In the domain of security, EU policymakers have faced unpredictable security shocks in the last three decades. These uncertainties have conditioned the framework within which EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies have evolved in the aftermath. These include the Balkan wars of independence of the 1990s after the break-up of Yugoslavia, the lingering territorial conflicts in the post-Soviet space throughout the 1990s and the 2000s after the break-up of the Soviet Union as well as the 2008 Russo-Georgia war, the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The EU's security posture was also affected by the surprising election of Donald Trump to the US presidency and the departure of the United Kingdom from the EU in 2016. Both events triggered concerns about the ability of EU Member States to guarantee their own security and project security to the neighbourhood. In all these instances, the EU has been pushed by circumstances to improvise, innovate and transform itself on the spur of the moment and without much planning in advance. In so doing, it has demonstrated power best captured by the notion of protean power, or 'the effect of actors' agility as they adapt in situations of uncertainty' (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018, p. 80).

The concepts of risk and uncertainty are fundamental in understanding the complexities of global politics and the interactions among various international players. Although these terms are often used interchangeably (for a discussion on the terms, see Knight, 1921), they embody distinct characteristics that are important for scholars and policymakers to recognise. The complexities in the international environment

involve 'unknown and/or uncertain attributes' of opponents that push policy makers to operate in a foggy situation involving 'high-risk calculation' (Jarvis, 2011: p. 297). Donald Rumsfeld highlighted this policy dilemma when stating that 'there are things we know, and we know we know them – the known knowns. There are things we know that we don't know – the known unknowns. And there are unknown unknowns; the things we do not yet know that we do not know' (Rumsfeld, 2001).

The terms 'risk' and 'uncertainty' can mean different things to different people. For Knight, risk can mean 'a quantity susceptible of measurement' (Knight, 1921, pp. 19–20). Uncertainty, in contrast, has an unmeasurable quality to it (Knight, 1921, p. 20). So uncertainty can be limited to non-quantifiable cases in comparison to risk that can be more quantifiable (Knight, 1921, p. 20). Katzenstein and Seybert (2018) use the terminology of calculable versus incalculable to capture the distinction between the domain of risk characterised by calculable expectations about the future and the domain of uncertainty defined by its unforeseeable qualities (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018, p. 85).

The differentiation between risk and uncertainty has significant implications for policymakers as it influences their ability to handle foreseeable shocks versus unpredictable events. Under conditions of risks, policy makers and relevant stakeholders operate in the domain of the expected and predictable. They are aware of the consequences of certain occurrences and can attach probabilities to different eventualities. In such scenarios, they find themselves in an environment where they have adequate information that can help them estimate the risks and plan accordingly the resources at their disposal. In complex but predictable environments, policy makers act with the intention of exerting control over future outcomes, i.e. they exercise what Katzenstein and Seybert (2018) refer to as control power.

Under conditions of uncertainty, policy makers must be creative and use the tools that they have at their disposal in innovative ways to handle unpredictable scenarios. The concept of protean power has emerged as a framework to understand how individuals, organisations, and states navigate such dynamic and uncertain environments. Protean power, as conceptualised by Katzenstein and Seybert (2018) refers to 'practices of agile actors coping with uncertainty' (Katzenstein & Seybert, 2018, p. 80). Protean power stems from the ability of actors to shape their environments by leveraging a combination of resources, strategies, and networks and by innovating and improvising in situations of unexpected developments. This is reflected in flexibility, adaptability, resilience and transformation in the face of sudden shocks to the status quo. Power in such contexts is generated through the surprising actions and self-transformation of agile actors who try to steer the course of uncertainty.

Our analysis of control and protean power starts with acknowledging the distinction between risk and uncertainty in decision-making as suggested by Katzenstein and Seybert (2018). The former is connected to the realm of predicable and foreseeable occurrences whereas the latter is experienced because of the potentiality of unpredictable and unexpected change. Classifying events and situations as representing risks versus uncertainties is not easy. In retrospect, we can make relatively safe assumptions about political life as risky or uncertain, but we cannot be sure that policy makers at the time have experienced the environment as risky or uncertain in the same way as we describe it years later. We therefore try to contextualise the events and occurrences in the Western Balkans and the Eastern neighbourhood that have spurred the EU into action over the course of the last 30 years, keeping in mind 'the fluidity of real-life

situations that often oscillate between risk and uncertainty' (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018, p. 85) and providing an expert reading of predominant perceptions of risks and uncertainties at the time of the events.

Likewise, when we distinguish between the effects of control power, linked to the domain of risk, and the effects of protean power, generated in the context of radical uncertainty (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018), we are cognisant of the interplay between the two types of power and their interdependent and even reinforcing qualities, with protean power often leaning on control power capabilities and control power resources often necessary for generating protean effects. Our analysis is in this sense both guided by the main conceptual framework offered by Katzenstein and Seybert and sensitive to the complexity of the empirical contexts that we deal with.

This study examines the interaction between control and protean power in the evolution of the EU security policy in the Western Balkans (WB) and the Eastern neighbourhood (EN). It starts by outlining the security risks and uncertainties that the EU has faced in and in relation to the two regions since the fall of the Berlin Wall. It then investigates EU innovations and improvisations developed in concrete situations of uncertainty, giving rise to protean power practices as well as the control power tools employed by the EU in response to security risks in the two regions.

# 2. SECURITY RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

## 2.1. Conflicts and wars

The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War led to a major geopolitical realignment in Europe. The ensuing breakup of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Federation resulted in a new political map of Europe, with new states emerging and borders being redrawn. This created major uncertainty about the future security landscape and raised questions about potential conflicts and instabilities on the EU's periphery.

The dissolution of former Yugoslavia and the declaration of independence of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 quickly evolved into a civil war engulfing a good part of the Western Balkan region. In the early 1990s, the EU had largely followed international community reactive conflict management policies and engaged in several mediation and humanitarian efforts (Hughes, 2010). Initially, the EU had sent its troika of Foreign Ministers— composed of Jacques F. Poos, Luxembourg Foreign Minister, Hans van den Broek, Netherlands Foreign Minister, and Gianni de Michelis, Italian Foreign Minister – (later replaced by a single negotiator) on peace missions to prevent the spreading of hostilities. Following the increasing humanitarian crisis in Bosnia, the EU eventually abandoned its containment strategy and in December 1991 declared itself ready to recognise Slovenian and Croatian independence provided conditions of minority protection, peaceful settlement of border disputes and guaranteed government control of their territories were met. To that end, the EC asked an arbitration commission led by a French judge (Robert Badinter) to assess whether applicants for EC recognition fulfilled the criteria of statehood. The Badinter Commission opined that Slovenia and the Republic of Macedonia should be recognised. Germany, however, independently recognised Slovenia and Croatia in 1992. The EU followed, regardless of the two countries non-compliance, undermining its 'competence and credibility as an international actor (…) to the warring parties on the ground' (Peen Rodt and Wolff, 2012, p. 419).

It was only after the news of the genocide of more than 8 000 Bosniaks in Srebrenica that NATO engaged in the Balkans, effectively changing the military balance on the ground, and creating the conditions for negotiating a peace agreement. The Dayton Peace Agreement, signed in 1995, resolved the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the EU's special representative Carl Bildt served as one of the co-chairs of the peace conference alongside his Russian counterpart, the role of the EU in the negotiation and execution of the Agreement was at best auxiliary to that of the US. In 1998-99, a new surge of ethnic violence spiralled in Kosovo, once again displaying the EU's inability to play a decisive role in conflict management. Once again, the EU was side-lined by a US-led NATO military intervention that led to the signing of the Kumanovo Agreement ending the Kosovo War.

The Balkan wars of the 1990s were a major shock to the security on the continent. They presented an immediate security risk to the EU, threatening to spill over into the societal fabric of its own Member States via ensuing migration flows. The EU also found itself completely unprepared to respond to the violent conflicts in its vicinity, not in possession at the time of either diplomatic or military means to intervene to prevent and stop bloodshed. It was the US, the UN and NATO that led the establishment of cease-fires and the negotiations of peace settlements in 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in 1999 in Kosovo.

In parallel, similar though less bloody dynamics were unfolding in the ex-Soviet republics. In the early 1990s, tensions in the former USSR countries had been rising, and some conflicts were unleashed (and heated up or exploited by Moscow), particularly in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, leading to uncertainty about how they would be resolved and whether they would spill over into neighbouring countries. In Eurasian ex-Soviet republics, particularly Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, tensions on borders connected to Afghanistan and Iran had been shimmering.

Against these dynamics, Western leaders tried to prevent the collapse of the unified Soviet space. This was partly because collapse had been seen as a security risk linked to potential ethnic and/or territorial conflicts, and partly due to uncertainty related to the question of control over the Soviet nuclear arsenal. The famous G. Bush's 'Chicken Kiev' speech, which endorsed the new Union agreement and warned against seeking independence[1] (The New York Times, 1991), is one of the most prominent examples of such rhetoric and efforts. When it became evident that the dissolution of the USSR could not be stopped, efforts of western politicians were put into ensuring that control of the nuclear arsenal would be preserved by Russia in a single 'pair of hands'. The EU and US insisted on Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There were a series of treaties and deals regarding the transfer of conventional arsenals and weaponry to Russia from the ex-Soviet republics in 1990s – most notably, the Budapest Memorandum between Ukraine, US, UK, and Russia (Pifer, 2011). There were also separate agreements between Ukraine and France, and Ukraine and China (Vasylenko, 2009).

The dissolution of the USSR removed the longstanding bipolar structure of the global and European security order. With the Warsaw Pact dissolved, central and eastern European countries as well as the Baltic republics strived to integrate into NATO and the EU, to address potential security threats from Russia. While it might not have been explicit before the Munich speech by President Putin in 2007 (Kremlin, 2007), Russia had viewed NATO expansion in central and eastern Europe as a threat to its own interests since the late 1990s. Indeed, Russia's geopolitical ambitions to (re-)build its own sphere of influence and be one of the poles in a multipolar competition can be seen as early as 1992-1993, through interference in the Georgian–Abkhazian and Transnistria conflicts, attempts to destabilise the situation in Crimea in 1994 and the start of the war in Chechnya in December 1994.

In the subsequent years, Russia honed its hybrid (EEAS, 2022)[2] arsenal to influence, coerce or destabilise target states, posing a persistent security risk to the EU and its neighbouring countries. The potential range of hostile activities is wide. Russian hybrid operations make use of both non-military instruments such as disinformation campaigns, economic measures, giving out Russian passports (prior to 2014 this was done in Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia) and election interference, as well as military components. These measures are sometimes portrayed as a possible precursor to conventional warfare (Council of the European

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[1] President George H. W. Bush speech delivered at the session of the Supreme Soviet (Verkhovna Rada) of Ukrainian SSR on 1 August 1991.

[2] Hybrid threats are understood to be 'a mixture of coercive and subversive activities, conventional and unconventional methods, used in a coordinated manner across multiple domains' intended to 'influence and exploit vulnerabilities to incur damage below the threshold of overt aggression' (European External Action Service, 2022).

Union, 2022).3 Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 is a case in point. Russia employed non-military components of hybrid warfare to help create the conditions in which large numbers of troops – albeit in unmarked uniforms – could quietly occupy key military and civilian locations on the peninsula. The annexation marked the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Another example of Russia's use of hybrid warfare is the use of cyber instruments. The cybersphere is considered to be a military domain by defence planners across the transatlantic space. For example, NATO has included cyberspace as a domain of operations alongside air, land, and sea since 2016. Despite NATO's 2014 public acknowledgment that a cyber-attack could result in an Article 5 response, adversaries have been bolder in attacking allies and partners in the cyber domain than they have with conventional military instruments. Georgia and Ukraine provide many examples, including the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 when Russia implemented both military and cyberattacks at the same time(Markoff, 2008). Another example is the large-scale Russian attack on power grid control systems in December 2015, which left more than 200 000 consumers in the Kyiv region without power (Zetter, 2016). This at least had the knock-on effect of encouraging Ukraine to build defences that have ensured that similar attempted attacks during the full-scale war have had limited effect.

Other examples of Russia's use of military instruments in its persistent hybrid war against the west include:

- The training and financing of paramilitary groups in the Western Balkans (Kuczyński, 2019);
- Arms deals (Serbia) that stoke regional tensions and create dependencies on Moscow for military-technical support (Stojanovic, 2022);
- Militarisation, through exercises and deployments of offensive weapons, of the occupied territories in Georgia (Seskuria, 2021; Nilsson, 2021));
- Exercises, including large-scale exercises such as Zapad in which Russia rehearses attacks on European states, snap exercises that create fear and uncertainty about its intent, and maritime exercises in international waters that damage the economic and security interests of European states;
- Provocative deployments, e.g. the deployment of nuclear-capable Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad (Reuters, 2018) and the raising of readiness levels e.g., of strategic forces, to deter western action;
- Incursions of military aircraft into national airspace and vessels into territorial waters, dangerous flying (Frear, 2018);
- GPS jamming and spoofing (Angelov, 2023).

While most of these hybrid provocations constitute security risks for the EU, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to several security uncertainties. The early months of the invasion posed direct military threats and concerns in the Baltic and North Seas as well as in the Baltic countries. There have also been instances of

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[3]For example, 'Underlines that the use of military force can be an integral component of some state actors' hybrid tactics and notes their readiness to use hybrid tactics combined with or in preparation for or as a substitute for armed aggression', Council of the European Union, 2022, para. 16).

missile and drone debris falling on EU territory (in Poland and Romania), resulting in fatalities, as well as incidents of Russian intrusion into EU airspace, generating further risks.

The scale and intensity of the war in Europe, with its significant casualties and destruction, was largely unforeseen. Many in Europe believed that cooperation with Russia in various spheres could prevent escalation, even after 2014. Despite Russia conducting frequent troop exercises near the Ukrainian border since 2019 and amassing significant forces, there was widespread disbelief in many European capitals about Russia's intentions to attack, or uncertainty about the potential scale and severity of such an attack, if it occurred. Thus, the full magnitude of the Russian invasion into Ukraine was unexpected. The protracted duration of warfare due to fierce Ukrainian resistance had also not been fully expected by the EU nor, indeed, by Kremlin.

Even wargame scenarios did not consider the whole range of Russian tactics and actions that have emerged during the war. These have included attacks on grain warehouses, attempts to block grain exports from Ukraine causing a food crisis in third countries (especially developing countries), dangerous actions in the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone and at the Chornobyl and Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plants, large-scale destruction of cities and civil infrastructure, particularly targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure, and the destruction of the Kakhovka HPP dam. This resulted in unprecedented environmental damage, leading to claims of 'ecocide'.

While any warfare leads to a humanitarian crisis and refugee influx, the impact of Russia's full-scale invasion had not been fully predicted, especially timewise. Thus, the suddenness, scale, and complexity of managing displaced persons constituted another set of uncertainties. These uncertainties resulted from the extent of human rights abuses and mass atrocities perpetrated by Russians, including indiscriminate attacks on civilians, ethnic cleansing, and widespread violations of international humanitarian law, particularly crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The protracted warfare and the extensive military, financial, and human resources required had also not been predicted and still cannot be fully estimated. The consequences for the EU are twofold. For one, it is apparent that the EU and its Member States must pay even more attention to their common military security and to strengthening their military and defence production sectors. Secondly, Russia has received support from China, which, while not providing direct military assistance, has many companies supplying dual-purpose components and electronics (Garlauska et al. 2023). Russia has also intensified its military cooperation with Iran and North Korea. Iran has supplied Russia with large quantities of inexpensive uninhabited loitering munitions that have allowed it to attack, for example, Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure while preserving more sophisticated weapons for military purposes. North Korea, meanwhile, has provided Russia with artillery shells, infantry rockets and missiles, perhaps including UN-sanctioned ballistic missiles. North Korea's supply of artillery ammunition to Russia, a crucial component in a war of attrition, has reportedly outstripped Europe's supply of ammunition to Ukraine. Such cooperation opens a new another set of uncertainties for the EU and global security.

For European states, ensuring that Russia does not prevail in its war in Ukraine has both a direct security component – a Russian victory would further degrade security on the continent – and a moral component. To the Member States of a values-based Union, it is clear who is the aggressor and who is the victim, and

clear that Russia cannot be allowed to benefit from the wrongs it has committed in Ukraine. The war has highlighted, however, that this moral clarity is not necessarily shared around the world. Many states in the global south have been ambivalent, unwilling to sanction Russia let alone directly support Ukraine. Of greater concern, a handful of states motivated by their antipathy to the present international order has been ready to support Russia militarily and otherwise, demonstrating the risk that adversary states need not be directly involved in a conflict with the Union or its partners to attack its interests and advance their own.

Among the spoilers of EU's security are other external actors' policies (such as China, Turkey, Iran, etc.). These actors have added to uncertainty and raised increased risks to the EU. For example, some reports have blamed China for the breaking of a gas pipeline and a telecoms cable that connects Estonia and Finland under the Baltic sea (Systas, 2023), Turkey for gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean (Scazzieri, 2020), buying S400s, helping Russia evade sanctions on dual-use goods, and support of Azerbaijan in its conflict with Armenia (Neset et al., 2021. Al-Jazeera, 2023), and Iran and North Korea for providing weapons and drones to Russia (Yanchik, 2024).Other state actors' actions have been identified as posing a threat to the integration of candidate countries.

## 2.2.  Unpredictable alliance patterns

Over the years, the uncertainties faced by EU strategists and defence planners have not been confined to the wars and frozen conflicts springing from the dissolution of the USSR and Yugoslavia. In fact, in more recent times, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy has undergone profound transformations due to the political thrust provided in 2016, first by Brexit and then Trump's election shortly thereafter. With Brexit, there was a change in thinking at the EU level in terms of security and defence integration. This partially came due to the realisation that, without the military power the UK can bring to bear, the EU would need to step up its efforts to foster investment in defence capabilities and operational coordination. However, this would be made possible by the UK's absence as an EU Member State as the UK had regularly expressed reservations over any further EU integration in security and defence following initial enthusiasm in the late 1990s, best expressed by the UK-France joint Saint-Malo Declaration in 1998 (Whitman 2016; Heisbourg 2018; Giegerich 2019).

The election of US President Donald Trump (just months after the Brexit referendum) raised concerns regarding security and defence policies in the EU. In the context of pre-election comments that NATO was obsolete, Trump refused to endorse Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty setting out the Alliance's commitment to collective defence. This set in motion thinking in the EU that, beyond the business case for de-fragmenting the European defence technological and industrial base, there was a political logic to enhancing cooperation at the EU level as the US was (perceived to be) selectively and transactionally engaging with Europe according to a foreign policy of restraint (Besch 2016; Van Ham 2018).

Overall, the EU has faced a highly volatile security environment in its immediate neighbourhood in the last three decades. This has raised fundamental questions about its ability to anticipate, prepare for and adequately respond to the security risks and uncertainties that have threatened its Member States, its candidate countries and its partner states in the neighbourhood.

# 3. THE EU'S SECURITY RESPONSES

Classifying past events and situations as representing quantifiable risks or incalculable uncertainties is not easy. There are few objective sources that document the understanding of policy makers of the time and analysts today may, on the basis of their own experiences and studies, differ in their interpretation of events. For example, many observers in central and eastern Europe argued long before the shock of Russia's full- scale invasion of Ukraine that Russia would, at some point, pose a large-scale military threat to the continent, even if they were unable to specify the timing and location of such a threat. Furthermore, many events contain elements of both quantifiable risk unpredictability, demonstrating 'the fluidity of real-life situations that often oscillate between risk and uncertainty' (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018, p. 85).

Classifying responses to risks and uncertainties as demonstrating either control or protean power (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018) is equally problematic. The degree to which actors are successful in navigating uncertainty and the degree to which they innovate in response to them are subjective assessments, especially as innovation is often only possible by building on a foundation of previous control power responses. Just as many events contain elements of both unpredictability and quantifiable risk, the responses to them often exhibit both control and protean power.

Nonetheless, in the following chapters, we try to locate the EU's responses to events and occurrences in the Western Balkans and the eastern neighbourhood according to Katzenstein and Seybert's control-protean model. In doing so, we apply an expert reading of predominant perceptions of risks and uncertainties at the time of the events and an interpretation of the scale of the EU's action and the transformational character (or lack) thereof.

The timeline below shows the major external shocks to wider Europe in the security domain over the past 30 years that had substantial impact on EU security policies and distinguishes between the predominantly protean and/or control power responses demonstrated by the EU.
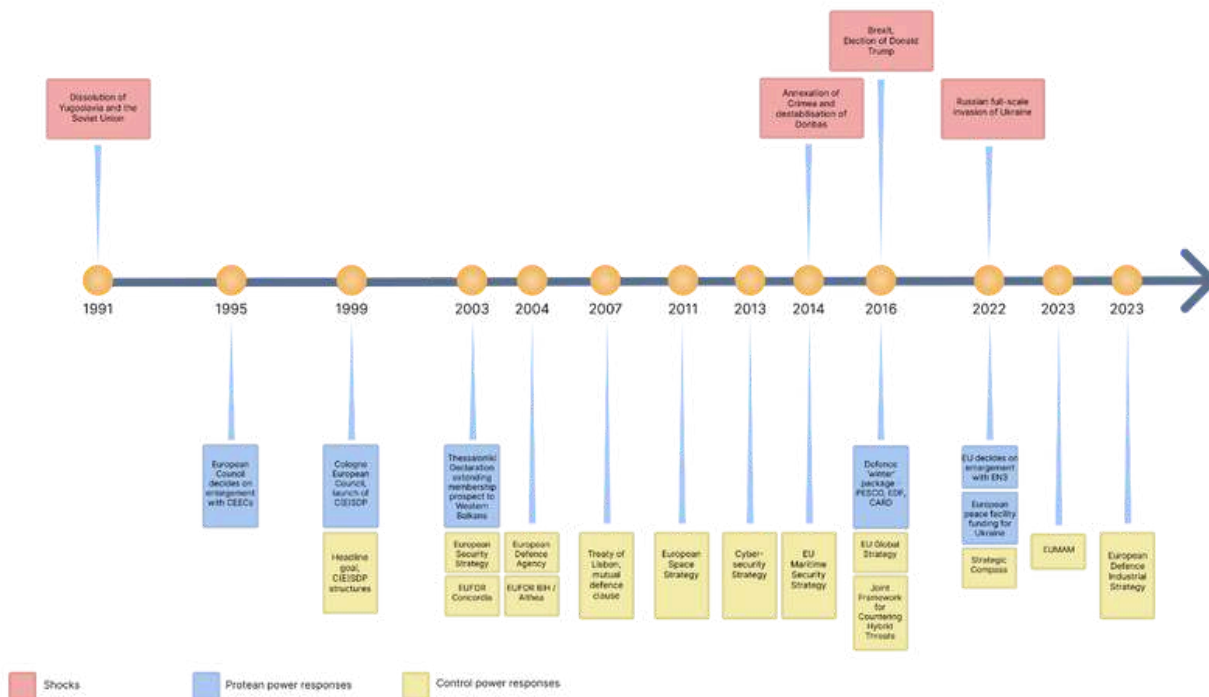
*Source: Authors' own compilation. With thanks to Marco Christian Parluhutan Panjaitan*

## 3.1. Institutional Responses

Against the background of recurring military conflicts and political crises in its neighbouring regions in the last three decades, the EU has initiated and experienced two important transformations. First, its enlargement policy has been an important part of its security building approach on the continent, and this has had significant implications for the EU's own institutional evolution. Second, the EU has progressively evolved to establish itself as a crisis manager and a crisis broker through the evolution of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). These institutional developments indicate an ability for adaptation and innovation implied in the concept of protean power.

### 3.1.1. EU Enlargement Policy

The EU's enlargement policy since the 1990s can be seen as a protean response and a reincarnation of the EU's core mission of peacebuilding. The EU has sought to extend the security community it has helped forge on the continent by extending membership prospects to the WB6 in 2003 and the EN3 in 2022. And although the EU is not a security alliance in the strict sense, it has progressively evolved into a security community offering a degree of protection to its members. The security guarantees that follow from the mutual defence clause introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (2009) are considered 'politically weaker' than the security umbrella that most EU Member States enjoy through NATO (Tidey, 2022). Yet the implications for security building on the continent are important considering the community building aspect of the EU integration project as whole.

As a peacebuilding project, the EU approach, i.e. enlargement policy, has aimed to anchor the security policies of its aspiring WB members into a common policy space, thus helping them transcend zero-sum logic and adversary dynamics. The conditional offer of membership extended to the EN3, in the heat of Russia's aggression in Ukraine, has sought to project an image of a peaceful, democratic and free eastern neighbourhood *inter alia* rejecting Russia's vision of subjugation, domination and control of the eastern European nations.

The EU's commitment to enlarge is transformational on two levels. First, it changes profoundly the political agenda of candidate members; it gives immediate direction to the state priorities of candidate countries; it changes the calculus of political, business and societal elites and invites major domestic stakeholders to position themselves with respect to the country's EU integration trajectory. This agenda-setting power progressively spreads to influence the programmes of governments, the legislative calendars of parliaments, the political manifestos of parties, the business plans of companies, the campaigns and priorities of civil society actors, etc. The promise of future accession is a powerful transformative tool to entice profound state and policy reform in candidate countries (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Vahdudova 2005).
Second, the prospect of EU enlargement obliges the EU to transform itself to prepare to accept new members. This necessity is hard for the Union to get to grips with as it imposes costs on its Member States and reloads the debate about deepening versus widening EU integration. The EU has persistently postponed the need to deal with the internal consequences of its decision to extend the membership prospect to the Western Balkans *inter alia* undermining the credibility of its accession offer. In 2023, independent experts began to delve into various options for EU institutional and policy reform, putting forward concrete recommendations to make the EU 'enlargement-ready' (Institut Delors, 2023). Overall, the EU has yet to harness the opportunity to adapt, to ensure smooth functionality were it to enlarge its membership.

### 3.1.2. EU Security and Defence Policy

The development of common security and defence policies can also be seen as a protean response to the uncertainties faced in the 1990s. Progress on security and defence policy in the European institutions has always been challenged by two pairs of competing interests. First, most Member States have regarded defence as a key element of national sovereignty and have been reluctant to cede defence competence to a supranational body. Second, many Member States have been concerned that defence arrangements at the European level might undermine the transatlantic defence arrangements, expressed through NATO, that they regard as fundamental to their security. As a result, the development of a common European defence policy, and even more its implementation, have proceeded rather slowly. Any progress has been heavily dependent on major events in the EU and neighbours such as conflicts and wars. These events mostly required an innovative (protean) response as we will see over the next few paragraphs.

The most ambitious blueprints for common European defence arrangements arose—with some prompting from the US—in the 1950s. The proposal for a European Defence Community, which would allow German rearmament in the context of an integrated European army, was defeated in the French National Assembly, largely on the grounds that defence policy should remain strictly a national competence. The parallel process that would create a supranational European Political Community (EPC) to direct defence also withered. A

successor, European Political Cooperation, was created in 1970 as a vehicle for foreign policy coordination among the European Community Member States.

At the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the potential for wider instability in eastern Europe brought security to the forefront and highlighted the need for EU reform. An intergovernmental conference on political union was convened and informed the drafting of the Maastricht Treaty, which included a pillar on foreign and security policy (the Common Foreign and Security Policy - CFSP) and, for the first time, recognised the role of the (soon to be) EU in defence. The somewhat cautious text of the Treaty allowed for 'the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence' (Official Journal of the EU, 1992, art. J.4).

Rather than build defence capacity in the Union, however, the Member States agreed that the Western European Union (WEU), which they agreed was 'an integral part of the development of the Union' would be invited 'to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications' (Official Journal of the EU, 1992, art. J.4). This both made practical sense—the WEU already existed—and was more appealing to the transatlanticist constituency as the WEU was also to be the vehicle for building a stronger European pillar of NATO (Official Journal of the EU, 1992, art. J.4). In practice, the operations that the WEU subsequently undertook on behalf of the EU, including police assistance missions in Mostar and Albania, and demining assistance missions in Croatia and Albania, were unambitious even when compared to the small operations it had previously undertaken of its own volition (e.g., mine clearance in the Straits of Hormuz and embargo enforcement in the Adriatic) (University of Luxembourg, 2024). The mission in Mostar, Bosnia was perceived as a failure while the subsequent crises in Albania further exposed the EU's inability to handle crises on its doorsteps. Throughout the 1990s, the EU largely stood by, watching the crises escalate in the Balkans with little action (Van Eekelen, 2006; Van Eekelen & Blockmans, 2008; see also Bátora at al. 2016). Ironically, 'most of the activities were carried out by police officers, except for the naval embargoes, and bore little resemblance to the "defence implications" tasked at Maastricht' (Van Eekelen, 2006, p. 8).

In the second half of the 1990s, the EU's limited role in the aftermath of the dissolution of Yugoslavia brutally exposed the inadequacies of the Union's security and defence arrangements and set in motion further reflections regarding how it might take steps towards becoming a military power. The Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) made only a few advancements in security and defence. Perhaps the most significant was the agreement to establish the post of high representative for the common foreign and security policy, although this was not filled until October 1999, when Javier Solana stepped into the role (Official Journal of the EU, 1997). Shortly after the Amsterdam Treaty entered into force, the June 1999 Cologne European Council endorsed the conclusions of the German Presidency which, echoing the text of the 1998 Franco-British St Malo Declaration, called for the Union to have

> '[…] the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO' (Cologne European Council 3-4 June 1999).

These Presidency conclusions also foresaw the disbandment of the WEU and the absorption of some of its functions into the EU. In effect, these decisions created in the EU what came to be known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Adding substance, the December 1999 Helsinki European Council

adopted a Presidency text that defined the roles of three new central structures for the ESDP—the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), and the EU Military Staff (EUMS) (European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2001, pp. 94-95). Furthermore, the text established procedures for the conduct of EU-led operations. The scope of such operations was identified by adopting the WEU's definition of the so-called Petersberg Tasks — humanitarian and rescue tasks; peacekeeping tasks; and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including 'peacemaking' (i.e. peace enforcement) — although these would now be conducted by the Union itself, rather than via the WEU.

The Treaty of Lisbon further developed the Union's role in defence matters. It created the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) from the ESDP to 'provide the Union with an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets' (Official Journal of the EU, 2007, Art 42.1). It enhanced the role of the High Representative, who would become the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, dual-hatted as one of the Commission's Vice-Presidents, and supported by a European External Action Service (Official Journal of the EU, 2007, Art17.4,27.3). It also created the prospect that Member States with military capabilities meeting higher criteria might 'establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework' (Official Journal of the EU, 2007, Art42.6). Further, the Treaty institutionalised the European Defence Agency (EDA) and expanded its role, including in participating in defining a European capabilities and armaments policy (Official Journal of the EU, 2007, Art42.4). The Agency had been established by the Council in 2004 to support defence research, acquisition and capability development (European Council, 2004, p.3). Since 2008, it had been responsible for producing the Capabilities Development Plan (CDP), a key longer-term planning document that identifies capability shortfalls and encourages the Member States to cooperate in addressing them.

Perhaps most significantly, the Treaty introduced a mutual defence clause, Article 42(7) of the Treaty on the

European Union, which states that,

> 'If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.'

This clause complements the EU's solidarity clause (Article 222 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU), which calls for joint action 'if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster' (Official Journal of the EU, 2007, Part Five - The Union's External Action, Title VII - Solidarity Clause, Article 222).

The creation of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EUMS in 2017 increased the capacity of the EU to command and control military operations at the military-strategic level. The MPCC has since taken over this function for all CSDP non-executive military missions (i.e., four EU training missions and the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine).

In June 2022, following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Denmark held a referendum on its opt-out from the CSDP. The Danish vote to opt back into CSDP structures mirrored the significant change in strategic orientation of Finland and Sweden, which decided to abandon decades-long policies of neutrality and non-

alignment to apply for NATO accession, thus creating an institutionally coherent security space in north-east Europe.

## 3.2.  EU Security Instruments and Tools

In parallel to its institutional transformation, the EU has worked on boosting its control power capabilities. In the years since the creation of the ESDP, the EU's security responses have taken several forms. It has enhanced its capacity to act in the military sphere by carrying out collective military capability planning and, in parallel, creating instruments that encourage the Member States to develop military capabilities collaboratively. It has conducted crisis management and military capacity-building operations in the land domain and crisis management operations in the maritime domain. It has also developed other instruments to support military capacity building in partner states. Furthermore, it has developed cross-sectoral strategies that provide guidance on the use of military and other instruments to address cross-sectoral challenges.

### 3.2.1. Planning and Capability Development

There have been occasional calls in this period for 'credible military forces' envisaged for the C(E)SDP to be created in some form of 'European army', conceived for example as an additional multinational force package made up of Member State troop and capability commitments (Biscop, 2020). EU Member States however have strongly preferred to retain national control over their armed forces and to place limits on their defence cooperation and integration (Major and Mölling, 2020, p. 39). Like NATO, the EU has developed few military assets of its own, relying on Member States to provide national forces for EU purposes, such as C(E)SDP operations or rapid response forces. A potential risk of this approach is that uncoordinated national defence planning may not deliver (effectively) the collective military capability needed to achieve the EU's stated level of ambition to employ military power.

Thus, the EU, like NATO, has undertaken efforts to shape national planning through various EU-level defence planning processes, focusing on long-term capability planning rather than operational planning. Member State concerns about ceding defence sovereignty to the Union and about possible duplication with NATO have meant that these processes have been introduced piecemeal over time, somewhat limiting their effectiveness (Engberg, 2021, p. 25). Nonetheless, over the course of 25 years, they have steadily become more sophisticated and intrusive.

The first example of EU-level defence planning, the Headline Goal, was adopted by the Helsinki European Council in December 1999.[4] This initiative challenged Member States to be able, by 2003, to deploy and sustain 50-60 000 ground troops with additional naval and air elements as appropriate to allow the EU to conduct the Petersberg Tasks. The Headline Goal was, however, an aspiration based on limited analytical input, its scale and scope heavily influenced by NATO's recent Implementation Force (IFOR, 1995) and Stabilisation Force (SFOR, 1996) deployments to Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a vastly ambitious target, in any

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[4]   Helsinki European Council 10-11 December 1999, Presidency Conclusions, Annex 1 to Annex IV, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21046/helsinki-european-council-presidency-conclusions.pdf.

case running ahead of consensus within the EU about the role of armed forces in security, it was perhaps inevitable that it would not be achieved (Lindley-French, 2005, p. 4).

Regardless, at the time the EU had no central command structures nor tools or structures to plan and monitor collective military capability building or employ military force. As well as establishing the PSC, EUMC and EUMS, the 1999 Helsinki European Council agreed procedures for the conduct of EU-led operations (European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2001, pp. 99-100). Importantly, the fears of several Member States that these fledgling structures might duplicate those of NATO meant that the EU would not develop an operational headquarters. Instead, it would rely on either the headquarters of certain Member States (in so-called autonomous operations), or on headquarters and other assets provided to the EU by NATO under arrangements (though largely dysfunctional) known as Berlin Plus.[5] The Union's first security strategy was published soon after in 2003 to deal with the cracks that had appeared between Member States over the US invasion of Iraq. The 2003 security strategy envisaged modernised European forces taking part in rapid, robust interventions to counter new threats (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 39-40). However, differing national interests and concerns about sovereignty increased disagreements, in particular between France and the UK over the war in Iraq and the role of the EU as a military power. This meant that the security strategy's practical impact was rather limited (Becher, 2004, pp. 347-348). These disagreements highlighted the fact that the EU's ability to formulate a coherent response, independent of NATO, is hard to achieve.

To this day, the heady aspirations of the 1999 Headline Goal have not been realised. While the Goal was not abandoned, the EU effectively replaced it with more realistic planning objectives. The first was the Headline Goal 2010 (endorsed by the European Council in June 2004), which placed more emphasis on interoperability, deployability and sustainability, including by encouraging Member States to cooperate more in defence (European Council, 2004, p. 2). In concrete terms, however, the Headline Goal 2010 effectively reduced the EU's level of ambition for rapidly deployable land forces from corps to battalion level (European Council, 2004). The main instrument for rapid reaction was to be the EU Battlegroups, multinational battalion-sized forces that have rotated through a standby roster since 2005, but are perhaps best known for never having been used. Member States have retained diverse strategic cultures and have been unwilling to bear the political and financial costs of deployment (Major and Mölling, 2011, p. 25; Reykers, 2017, p. 463). The Headline Goal 2010 also marked progress in the evolution of the EU's centralised defence planning arrangements, including through the cataloguing of available forces.

In 2016, the EU published a revised security strategy, the EU Global Strategy. Its call for an 'appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy' accelerated the debate about this contested concept whose resolution is fundamental to Member States reaching a consensus about the EU's role in defence (EEAS, 2016, p. 9). After the release of the Global Strategy however, there was a surge in support for EU defence. This was triggered in part by worries about the effects of the Trump Presidency in the US and made possible by the UK's approaching exit from the EU following the Brexit referendum. Further initiatives that would enhance the EU's ability to exercise military power were adopted in the so-called 'winter package' of defence initiatives launched on the back of the European Commission's 2016 European Defence Action Plan (Blockmans, 2016).

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[5] Based on the earlier 'Berlin' arrangements created for the WEU to similarly draw upon NATO.

This included the Council's decision to activate Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a dormant provision of the Lisbon Treaty intended to provide a framework to allow a core group of willing Member States to move forward more rapidly on defence cooperation. Following the 2022 Danish referendum to opt in the CSDP, the Danish Parliament approved membership of the EDA and PESCO on 23 March 2023 – with PESCO members confirming Danish participation as the 26th member (only Malta is not a member as it is constitutionally barred from joining the initiative).

The package also included the Commission's Preparatory Action on Defence Research and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme launched respectively in 2017 and 2019 as pre-cursors to the European Defence Fund. These funding instruments are meant to incentivise joint capabilities development on priorities agreed under the aegis of the EDA, including by providing an additional bonus when undertaken in the framework of PESCO. Both PESCO and the EDF were thus broadly aimed at encouraging Member State defence cooperation in the early phases of the acquisition cycle, thereby increasing interoperability and securing better value for money from defence spending. A third element of the package was the initiation in 2017 of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, overseen by the EDA. This was intended to promote knowledge sharing regarding the state of joint capabilities development and procurement, and the identification of opportunities to coordinate and synchronise planning. This revision to the EU capability planning process was more intrusive than previous iterations. To deal with the concerns of those Member States worried about duplication of and competition with similar processes in NATO, EU-NATO cooperation was further enhanced (Drent, et al., 2017, p. 14).

At the same time, as a basis for further defence planning, the Council raised its level of ambition for the type and number of crisis management missions the EU should be able to conduct (Council of the European Union, 2016). Detailed analysis by researchers, however, suggested that this level of ambition was unrealistic and that, based on existing Member State procurement plans, shortfalls would continue to restrict the EU's ability to employ military power as far away as 2030 (Barrie et al., 2018, p. 3). Undeterred, in its 2022 security and defence roadmap, the Strategic Compass, the Union introduced an even greater ambition to develop 'full spectrum forces' and to address certain important capability shortfalls (strategic airlift, space-based connectivity and communication assets, amphibious capabilities, medical assets, cyber defence capabilities, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and remotely piloted aircraft systems) that had so far, despite their inclusion in the CDP, largely eluded Member States (Council of the European Union, 21 March 2022, pp. 30-31). More specifically, the Strategic Compass also committed Member States to establishing a 5 000-strong EU rapid deployment capacity, presumably to replace the now semi-dormant EU Battlegroups (Council of the European Union, 21 March 2022, p. 14).

The Strategic Compass was rapidly rewritten following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The role of EU military power in protecting the Union and its citizens is more prominent than in earlier EU security strategies. Those Member States that are also NATO allies have emphasised the alliance's role as the main source of collective defence for its members. The EU's role in protecting its citizens has thus, in practical defence terms, focused of the use of legal and financial instruments to stimulate the building of military capability, both in response to the greater threat from Russia facing the Member States and to better provide Ukraine with arms and military training.

These policy responses include a proposal to coordinate joint arms procurement and investment. With the innovative use of industrial competitiveness as a legal basis, the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) aims to boost and support joint procurement by at least three EU Member States with EUR 300 million. This is to offset the complexity and risks associated with joint procurement, and to incentivise the competitiveness and efficiency of the European Defence Technical and Industrial Base (Lombaerts and Sala, 2023, pp. 2-4). In the longer term, EDIRPA will be succeeded by the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP).

There has also been an agreement to provide budgetary flexibility for defence investments under the recent EU fiscal governance reform, and EUR 175 million provided under the Defence Equity Facility to stimulate private investments (Council of the EU, 10 February 2024). Further, discussions have begun on whether European Investment Bank policies can be changed to allow it to finance projects related to weapons, ammunition, and military infrastructure, and on the possible issuance of Euro-defence bonds to provide additional funding for EU-exclusive military assets. These surely open a new realm of possibilities for EU defence innovative research and development, capabilities development, and procurement.

The EU has also taken tentative steps towards involvement in the later stages of the defence acquisition process, for example in the EDA's Collaborative Procurement of Ammunition project. This also permits partial reimbursement from the European Peace Facility. More broadly, the March 2024 European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS), the first such strategy developed by the EU, seeks to seize the defence crisis highlighted by Russia's war in Ukraine to build European military capability 'more, better, together and European' (European Commission, 5 March 2024, p. 2). The Strategy foresees, amongst other policy innovations, the development of EU military assets by 2035; the wider application of the financial incentives granted to EU Member States developing capabilities together if they also jointly agree to export rules; and the establishment of a registry of capabilities readily available for export. It also foresees a review of European Investment Bank lending policies; enhanced staff-to-staff dialogue with NATO; the inclusion of Ukraine in the EU's defence industrial programmes; and the establishment of the €1.5 billion EDIP as a stopgap measure under the present Multiannual Financial Framework to ramp up defence production and facilitate the joint procurement of defence capabilities. A key question is whether the EDIS can be funded to the level required to make a difference (Besch, 2024; Grand, 2024).

### 3.2.2. Operations in the land domain

The EU has deployed several missions beyond its borders (in Africa, the Mediterranean, WB, etc.), which may provide lessons and serve the WB6 and EN3. The EU's first military operation, EUFOR Concordia (March-December 2003), took place under the Berlin plus arrangements in the then Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, when around 400 EU-badged troops took over peacekeeping duties from a NATO operation, Allied Harmony. The PSC assumed political control of the operation while operational-level command and control remained with NATO's Allied Command Operations. EUFOR Concordia was quickly followed by a second peacekeeping operation, EUFOR Artemis (June-September 2003) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, commanded from the French Centre de Planification et de Conduite des Opérations and thus notable for being the EU's first autonomous military operation. Of the 16 military missions launched by the EU, only EUFOR Concordia and EUFOR BiH/Althea (December 2004–present) – a successor to NATO SFOR and the EU's

largest and longest duration military operation to date – have made use of the Berlin plus arrangements; the other 14 have been autonomous.

Early EU land domain operations were mainly responses to external crises, reflecting an understanding of the (C)ESDP - outlined in the EU's first security strategy - as an instrument for values-based crisis management. These operations included deployments to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUFOR RD Congo, June-November 2006), Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Tchad/RCA, January 2008-March 2009) (Palm and Crum, 2019, p. 524; Council of the EU, 2009). However, the EU's perception of military power has steadily evolved beyond this 'force for good' concept and EU military power has come to be viewed as an instrument that may be deployed to support three areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy activity, most crisply stated in the Council's conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in 2016: (a) responding to external conflicts and crises, (b) building the capacities of partners, and (c) protecting the Union and its citizens (Council of the EU, 2016, p. 4).

In line with this evolving perception, a second category of CSDP military operation aimed at capacity building with partners was initiated in 2010 with the launch of EUTM Somalia. This continues to provide training, mentoring and advice to Somalia's federal government and defence and security institutions. Similar missions have been launched in Mali (February 2013-present), the Central African Republic (February 2013-present) and Mozambique (October 2021-present), containing elements of both security sector reform and counterinsurgency by indirect means (Skeppström et al. 2015, p. 363). However, the first CSDP mission to be partially implemented on EU territory was the EUMAM Ukraine mission. EUMAM was launched in 2023, to provide training up to battalion level for Ukrainian armed forces personnel. This is a substantial step up in ambition for this type of CSDP operation both in scale and, in its training of personnel for conventional warfighting tasks, in content.

### 3.2.3. Operations in the maritime domain

Most maritime missions have been beyond the WB6 and EN3. It is worth discussing them however as they can provide lessons on mission implementation in areas such as rising threats in the North and Black seas. The EU's first employment of naval power came in 2008 with EU NAVFOR Somalia/Atalanta, a counter-piracy operation off the Horn of Africa and in the western Indian Ocean that continues to the present. EU naval operations have also been launched in the Mediterranean (EU NAVFOR Med/Sophia (2015–2020) and EU NAVFOR Med/Irini (2020-present)) and in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Gulf (EU NAVFOR Aspides (2024-present)).

Following a French-led experiment in 2019 establishing the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (AGENOR being the military track), the 2023 update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and Action Plan outlines the EU's ambitions to further reinforce the EU Member State-driven 'Coordinated Maritime Presences'. According to this concept, EU Member States who are willing and able can form coalitions and operate outside CSDP institutional structures to counter illicit activities at sea (e.g., piracy, organised crime, human trafficking, and illegal fishing) carried out in specific areas of interest (e.g., Gulf of Guinea, northwest Indian Ocean).

The strategy's update was spurred by the 2022 Strategic Compass, where language was beefed up due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and attacks against critical maritime infrastructure in the North and Black seas. Whereas previous maritime strategies were more focused on humanitarian, internal, and civilian elements (*cf*. section 3.2.5.1. below), the 2022 update is more military in nature. It calls for deepened EU- NATO cooperation, greater investments in maritime domain information sharing and high-end joint maritime capabilities development, more live maritime exercises involving civilian and military maritime actors as well as enhanced monitoring and protection of critical maritime infrastructure and vessels from physical and cyber threats.

The recent CSDP operation EUNAVFOR Aspides demonstrates a common will to defend commercial shipping routes in the Red Sea from piracy and missile attacks by Houthi rebels based in Yemen. It also shows a readiness, following the EU's foray into Coordinated Maritime Presences, to use the EU as a channel for command and control of maritime military missions. Aspides will need to coordinate its activities with Operations Atalanta and AGENOR and the Coordinated Maritime Presence in the northwestern Indian Ocean.

## 3.2.4. Capacity Building in Partner States

In 2020, the Council agreed to establish a European Peace Facility (EPF), an off-budget instrument worth EUR 5 billion for the period 2021-2027 that could be used to finance external action having military or defence implications under the CFSP (European Council, 2020). The fund was used in 2021 to support capacity building efforts in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Mali, and Mozambique. However, by far the fund's greatest impact has been in the novel fashion in which it has been used to compensate EU Member States for the equipment they have bilaterally supplied to Ukraine since 2022 (Fabbrini, 2023, pp. 53-54). While the EPF did allow for the supply of lethal weapons, it is unlikely that it was intended to be used to assist one party in an interstate conflict, or to supply weapons at the scale at which it has been used to supply Ukraine.

Even before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, western states made clear that they would not intervene directly with military means, a position they have maintained ever since. However, they have provided Ukraine with substantial volumes of financial, humanitarian and military assistance. Military assistance has taken the form of the direct transfer of weapons and equipment from national supplies, and the provision of loans on favourable terms for military purposes (mostly from the US). It has been broadly cautious and has often fallen far short of Ukraine's requirements in terms of quantity, timeliness and type of weaponry (Marsh, 2023, p. 335 & pp. 337-338). Nonetheless, it has steadily increased in volume and levels of sophistication and lethality throughout the full-scale war from smaller hand-held anti- air and anti-armour weapons, through ex-Warsaw Pact weapon systems, NATO-standard systems including air defence assets, armoured vehicles and main battle tanks, longer-range rocket artillery and cruise missiles, to (as yet undelivered) combat aircraft. This progression has been a response both to developments on the battlefield in Ukraine, and a growing confidence among western donors that their assistance will not cause Russia to escalate the conflict beyond Ukraine's borders or beyond conventional conflict into the realm of weapons of mass destruction (Marsh, 2023, pp. 336-337).

While direct transfers of weapons and military equipment have been bilateral, a certain level of coordination and peer pressure has been exercised through formats such as the International Donors Coordination Cell and the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (the Ramstein Format) as well as, less formally, within the EU and NATO. According to latest figures from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, probably the most reliable source of data on this issue, between January 2023 and January 2024, EU Member States committed a total of EUR 44 billion worth of military assistance bilaterally, and a further EUR 6 billion worth collectively (Trebesch et al., 2024). Some EUR 11.1 billion worth of military assistance has been funded through the EPF (Council of the EU, 5 April 2024).

In March 2024, EU Member States agreed to provide a further EUR 5 billion worth of military assistance to Ukraine via a Ukraine Assistance Fund. A bit of a misnomer, the Fund is simply a top-up of the EPF to fund the procurement or reimburse the value of lethal and non-lethal military materiel transferred to Ukraine. Under the fund, up to 50 % of bilateral donations to Ukraine will be discounted from Member States' due contribution and, following a transition period, only equipment jointly procured from EU-based defence technological and industrial companies will be considered for reimbursement. Furthermore, in March 2024, the European Commission and European External Action Service announced their intention to direct 90 % of interest generated since 15 February 2024 on Russian frozen financial assets held in the EU (approximately EUR 210 billion, mostly at the Belgium-based Euroclear) to the European Peace Facility as well.

The EU has also provided administrative and financial support to industrial actors producing and supplying ammunition and missiles through the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) mechanism (European Commission, 2024). This provides EUR 500 million to ensure security of supply in tandem with the EDA's collaborative procurement of ammunition project with the aim of meeting the EU's (ultimately unsuccessful) goal of providing 1 million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine between April 2023 and March 2024.

## 3.2.5. Cross-sectoral Responses

From the earliest days of the EU's search for a role of the world stage, it has claimed that a key advantage for the C(E)SDP is an ability to weave together a range of military and civilian instruments in an integrated crisis management response (Tardy, 2017, p. 1). To add substance to this claim, EU institutions have together developed comprehensive strategies for the maritime, space, cyber, and hybrid domains.

**Maritime**

The maritime domain has been the object of steadily increasing security and defence attention for the EU for quite some time. The first CSDP naval operation, EUNAVFOR Somalia (Atalanta), was launched in 2008 and the first version of the EU's Maritime Security Strategy was released in 2014 (most recently update in 2023, *cf.* section 3.2.3). Analysts have argued that the EU's maritime security focus was primarily humanitarian in nature until Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014 and the beginning of the 'poly-crisis' era, when it underwent a transformation, recognising the need for the EU to face up to challenges previously tackled at the national level (Riddervold 2018). As such, the 2014 Strategy introduces a focus on CSDP missions and operations alongside its emphasis on international law, organised crime, illicit trafficking, law enforcement, and critical maritime infrastructure.

The EU has thus increasingly taken a lead in setting the maritime security policy agenda, albeit primarily driven by external circumstances. Yet, in recent times, EU Member States have proven that the EU is not the exclusive channel for collective maritime security action. The Coordinated Maritime Presences concept and NATO exercises are also relevant in this domain.

Beyond the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept described above (*cf*. 3.2.3), several EU Member States have also taken part in broader, coordinated freedom of navigation operations, particularly in the South and East China Seas and Taiwan Strait to signal unease with Chinese military exercises and commercial activities undertaken in disregard for international law. Other priorities for the EU's action are bolstering maritime capabilities development through frameworks such as PESCO and partnerships, and maritime domain awareness-building and surveillance initiatives such as the Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific (CRIMARIO) project. These initiatives run alongside a more recent emphasis on raising awareness, and adopting measures, to safeguard critical maritime infrastructure including through enhancing civilian-military synergies and policy coordination.

### Space

Discussions about the EU's civilian and dual-use space technologies and capabilities have been ongoing for quite some time (e.g., Mazurelle, Thiebaut and Wouters 2009). The EU's consideration of space as an additional operational domain for security and defence policy was recognised in the 2011 European Space Strategy (albeit more in logistical support terms) and re-emphasised in the 2016 EU Global Strategy (preceding NATO's declaration of space as the Alliance's fifth domain of operations in 2019). The impact of this recognition, however, was not to be seen in major policy terms until the establishment of the European Commission's Directorate General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) in January 2021 to corral efforts in space defence capabilities development.

Spurred on by news in 2021 that Russia had successfully struck one of its out-of-commission satellites using a direct-ascent anti-satellite missile, the EU published the Space Strategy for Security and Defence in 2023. This strategy aims to build on the EU's competences and the value added in the civilian space sphere to give greater strategic direction to the work of DG DEFIS. In it, the Council of the EU calls for enhanced domain awareness and intelligence sharing and a new regulatory approach to protect space assets (e.g. for global positioning, Earth observation, satellite-based secure communications, and space surveillance). It also calls for the deterrence of violations of international law in space; a reinforcement of procedures to respond to space threats; the integration of space in security and defence planning, exercises, and operations; and further international cooperation on security in space.

In practical terms the first space-related EU military exercise, the Space Threat Response Architecture exercise, took place in 2024. Even following this exercise, it is unclear what type of response at the EU level would be triggered if cyberattacks or attempts of jamming/spoofing on EU assets in space (e.g., Galileo global positioning and navigation or Copernicus Earth observation) were to occur.

### Cyber

The EU has most recently sought to exploit civilian-military synergies and maximise its impact through a European Commission-led regulatory approach in the cyber realm. Building on work started in the 2013

Cybersecurity Strategy, the EU recently expanded upon its 2021 Cybersecurity Strategy with the EU Cyber Solidarity and Cybersecurity Acts. The EU began its foray into cyber defence with the 2014 EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework6 and most recently updated its approach with its 2022 Cyber Defence Policy (a deliverable of the Strategic Compass) in which the EU sets out its intention to strengthen coordination among EU Member States across the intelligence, military and civilian communities. It also aims to further standardise components in the cybersecurity domain, boost investment in cyber-related capabilities development, and reinforce cooperation with partners in the cyber domain.

The 2022 Cyber Defence Policy is built on its 2021 Military Vision and Strategy on Cyberspace as a Domain of Operations, in which EU military staff laid out the requirements for an effective EU approach to cyberspace. This included integrating cyber in all planning, building resilient cyber infrastructure, ensuring effective deterrence in the cyber domain, and fostering civil-military synergies on cyber. It also included building partnerships on cyber (including with NATO), ensuring interoperability of cyber capabilities, enhancing the cyber capabilities available to ensure that they are state of the art, and bolstering cyber defence human capital to manage these challenges (EEAS, 2021). The question here is to what extent this has been achieved at the EU level – specifically regarding cyber planning, deterrence, and operations. Additionally, it is unclear whether Art. 42(7), the EU's mutual assistance clause, would be triggered by a cyberattack and what threshold would have to be met to generate a response.

## Hybrid

Like NATO, the EU is clear that the primary responsibility for responding to hybrid threats lies with the Member States (Council of the EU, 2022). At the same time, both organisations have indicated that collective support and assistance can be offered where appropriate. The EU approach is based on two key documents: the 2016 Joint Framework on Countering Hybrid Threats and the 2018 Joint Communication on increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats (European Commission, 2016, 2018). These aim to ensure that Member States share an understanding of the hybrid challenge, that they and their partners are resilient to hybrid threats, that they have a range of tools to respond, and appropriate levels of cooperation with others.

Furthermore, the Strategic Compass created a hybrid toolbox. This essentially draws together existing expertise and capabilities to deal with hybrid threats and calls for the development of hybrid rapid response teams (Lasoen, 2022, pp. 3-4). The Council has since approved a framework for the establishment of such teams (Council of the EU, 2024). Nationally, Member States have variously emphasised the importance of intelligence, inter-agency cooperation, and comprehensive responses to deal with such threats (Wigell et al., 2021, pp. 40-44).

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6 Just four months after NATO leaders agreed that a cyberattack could result in an Article 5 response.

# 4. CONCLUSION: CONTROL AND PROTEAN POWER IN THE EU'S SECURITY RESPONSES

In its policy responses to the security risks and uncertainties in the last three decades, the EU has demonstrated a combination of control and protean power to try to 'navigat[e] the fluid environment surrounding [it]' (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018, p. 85). Most of its behaviour has been pre-determined by the capabilities that it possessed at the time when it was pushed by the circumstances to take a stance, i.e. by its control power. Nevertheless, it has also, on occasions, taken bold steps that would have been inconceivable in the absence of external shocks to the status quo, i.e. it has exercised protean power. Examples include its enlargement policy, the development of the C(E)SDP, and some aspects of its response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The EU's development of security and defence instruments and policies has mostly been an exercise in building control power, albeit one that has taken place in a changing environment that has seen several uncertainties materialise. This largely control power response to security challenges was, perhaps, to be expected, as the security — and especially defence — planning processes elaborated by the Union have built upon decades of experience and best practice in this field in military establishments across the world. Defence planning processes typically identify plausible threats and scenarios, determine what armed forces will need to achieve in such scenarios, calculate the scale and nature of the military capabilities required, and identify the gaps between what is available and what is needed (see European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2001, p. 103). Furthermore, the slow pace of development of complex military systems and their long subsequent service life requires defence planners to look further into the future — 10 years or so — than is perhaps the case in other sectors. By its nature, defence planning thus imagines potential uncertainties, captures them as risks, and designs responses to cope with as large a range of them as is feasible. It exercises control power.

In contrast, the EU enlargement, a policy response to the uncertainty that followed the end of the Cold War, both transformed the Union itself — it became larger, more diverse, and took on some of the character of a security community — and brought a degree of security to its new Member States. This is perhaps the clearest demonstration of the EU's protean power in the security field. The subsequent extension of membership prospects to countries from the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership have not (yet) had the same transformative effect on the EU itself. In fact, the EU has done its utmost to avoid the costly institutional and policy adaptations necessary to prepare for future rounds of enlargement. In this sense, it has missed an opportunity to continue the protean momentum generated by its enlargement to central and eastern Europe. This has fuelled suspicions about the real intentions behind its accession promises, with would-be members questioning the genuine interests of the current Member States in enlarging the Union. In this way, the EU has lost some of its attraction for accession aspirants, thus undermining its protean power in the WB and EN regions. The revival of EU enlargement policy in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has raised hopes about a faster accession track for some candidates from the Western Balkans, but this has not translated into a concrete enlargement timetable yet.

The development of the C(E)SDP may also be seen as a demonstration of protean power. The policy was initiated in an uncertain period that saw the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

It was against the background of the EU's foreign policy impotence in the face of the unfolding Balkan tragedy in the early 1990s that EU Member States pledged to integrate more closely in foreign and security policy. The EU subsequently developed its crisis management capabilities in the framework of CSDP, equipping itself with the necessary instruments to deploy military and civilian missions in crisis situations. It also strengthened its diplomatic capabilities through the CFSP to be able to intervene as a mediator and peace broker in situations threatening to escalate into military confrontation. The Western Balkans was subsequently the theatre where many of the CSDP and CFSP instruments were first tested. The progressive upgrade of the EU's civilian and military crisis management capabilities and capacity-building initiatives, including occasional surges such as the 2016 winter package, are prime examples of institutional adaptation in the face of uncertainty. The EU's intention to carve out a role in the world through the C(E)SDP has certainly meant that it is a transformed organisation compared to what it was at the end of the 1990s.

Much of the EU's activity in the security domain in support of Ukraine has been a control power response to the uncertainty that was Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. The training of Ukrainian armed forces personnel through EUMAM Ukraine, for example, while a substantial step up in ambition for a CSDP operation, is still based upon concepts of capacity building in partner states developed for earlier CSDP operations in Africa. Meanwhile, the lethality and quantity of weapons and equipment provided to the Ukrainian Armed Forces (strictly speaking a bilateral process between Ukraine and individual Member States) have certainly increased, but as a reaction to the progress of the war and the changing risk perceptions of the Member States. Nonetheless, the EU consensus to spend large volumes of common funds on donating lethal weapons to a state at war, and to make innovative use of an instrument (the EPF) for this purpose, have helped the Union to navigate uncertainty. It has, at least in this part of its response to Russia's war, demonstrated protean power.

The proponents of the concept of protean power insist that it cannot be harnessed consciously (Katzenstein and Seybert, 2018, p. 83). Nonetheless, what we have seen in the security domain is a conscious effort to build and expand security on the continent, capitalising on the uncertainties that have materialised to gather consensus among Member States for further integration. The times of greatest uncertainty for the EU have thus been the most transformative for the EU itself. These protean moments have served as a springboard to imagine a larger EU and an EU that is better equipped to provide for its own security. They have been a huge impetus for investing in control power resources while adapting the EU institutional and policy environment to the changing security context. Control and protean power have in this sense reinforced each other and, in combination, shaped the EU's security responses in the WB and EN.

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