

# GLOSSARY

## OF THE EUROPEAN UNION COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY (EU CSDP)

Sandro Knezović



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
Ministry of Foreign  
and European Affairs

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Hanns  
Seidel  
Stiftung



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# Foreword

*“Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises.”*

*Jean Monnet*

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), as part of the European Union foreign policy, is not only a European integration issue, but one of the key strategic mechanisms for accomplishing the national interests of the Republic of Croatia and the security of its citizens. The CSDP has particularly gained significance since the beginning of 2022, following the Russian Federation’s brutal aggression against Ukraine and, in this new geopolitical environment, the role of the EU in crises management and strengthening of international security, as well as in promoting peace, stability and common European values has become ever more important. This glossary is designed as a practical guide for citizens, students, policy makers, and experts who wish to better understand the terms, concepts, and institutions shaping the CSDP. It is also bilingual, which makes it a valuable source of relevant information for international users as well.

The CSDP allows for the European Union to take charge in crises management, conflict prevention, and strengthening of international security, as well as capacity building, both within its borders, as well as worldwide. Based on its own experience of suffering through a war of aggression and going through transition, the Republic of Croatia is deeply aware of the importance of solidarity, international cooperation and joint action. Croatia’s participation in CSDP missions and operations reflects its commitment to those principles and the common security of all European Union Member States. The Republic of Croatia is proud to contribute to a more secure and more resilient Europe.

As the significance of the security and defence policies is increasing, the Republic of Croatia is strengthening its role in European defence and contributing to the European Union’s joint efforts. Thus, it is becoming more and more important for Croatian citizens to understand the importance of the framework within which these activities are conducted. The terms in this glossary have been carefully selected with the

goal of making the often-complex language of European security and defence more familiar. The glossary will thus encourage greater transparency, prompt informed public discussion, and a closer connection between the decisions made at the European Union level, and the citizens directly affected by them. Regardless of whether one is new to this topic, or just wishes to broaden their existing knowledge, this glossary will help everyone easier navigate the complex landscape of European defence cooperation.

The importance of this glossary lies in its practical applicability, since it does not only define the terms, but speaks of values, responsibility, and the common vision of Europe based on peace, the rule of law, and security for all of its citizens.

Understanding the CSDP is not only a matter for the experts. It is part of our common European identity and cooperation in the area of defence and security, which is becoming increasingly prominent. It is with this in mind that I invite you to explore this glossary, to use it as a tool to understand, to learn and to actively participate in the shaping of the future of security

in Europe, in which the Republic of Croatia holds an important and distinct place.

**Andreja Metelko-Zgombić**

*State Secretary for Europe*

*Ministry of Foreign and European  
Affairs of the Republic of Croatia*





# Introduction

In today's increasingly unstable and interconnected world, security challenges such as armed conflicts, geopolitical tensions, cyber threats and hybrid attacks directly affect European societies. In response, the European Union has strengthened its role as a security actor through the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which supports conflict prevention, crisis management, peacebuilding and defence cooperation among Member States.

As the scope and ambition of the CSDP have grown, so has the complexity of the concepts, institutions, instruments and strategic frameworks linked to it. To help navigate this evolving landscape, the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) has developed this glossary as a clear and easily accessible resource. It is intended to support policymakers, public officials, journalists, students and interested citizens in better understanding the key elements of the EU's security and defence architecture.

Organised thematically, the glossary presents the foundations of the CSDP, the relevant EU institutions and decision-making processes, as well as the missions and operations carried out under its mandate. It

also addresses strategic documents and concepts, such as the EU Global Strategy, the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, EU Strategic Autonomy, as well as significant funding and capability initiatives, including the European Defence Fund (EDF), the European Peace Facility (EPF) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Through this publication, IRMO aims to promote clarity, informed dialogue and a stronger shared understanding of the European Union's evolving role in security and defence.



# **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU**

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union (EU) is a critical component of the EU's external action, aiming to strengthen the Union's ability to address security and defence challenges. The CSDP has evolved over several decades, shaped by changing global security dynamics and the EU's expanding role in global governance.

### **Early Foundations: From the European Defence Community to the Maastricht Treaty**

The origins of European defence cooperation can be traced back to the post-World War II era, particularly with the establishment of the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1952, which sought to create a common European defence force. However, the EDC failed to achieve ratification and was abandoned in 1954. Despite this early setback, European countries continued to cooperate in defence with NATO, but the idea of a distinct European security framework had not disappeared.

The real breakthrough for the EU's security and defence policy came with the Maastricht Treaty (1992),

which established the European Union and introduced the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as one of its pillars. Under the Maastricht framework, the EU began to integrate foreign and security policy more effectively, although defence was still largely dependent on NATO. The conditions under which military units could be deployed were already agreed by the WEU Council in 1992 but the "Petersberg Tasks" were now integrated in the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam. In addition, the post of the "High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy" was created to allow the Union to speak with 'one face and one voice' on foreign, security and defence policy matters. The Treaty of Amsterdam laid the groundwork for the EU to engage in peacekeeping, humanitarian interventions, and conflict prevention outside its borders.

### **The Post-Cold War Era: From Civilian Missions to Military Operations**

The 1990s and early 2000s were pivotal in developing the CSDP, as Europe faced the need to address the instability in the Southeast Europe and other regions. The EU's first major military operation came in 1999, with the launch of the EU-led op-

eration in Southeast Europe to maintain peace after the Kosovo War. This was a key moment in showing the EU's potential in peacekeeping, although it was primarily seen as a NATO-led operation with EU support. The 1990s also saw the EU conduct several civilian missions, such as policing and rebuilding efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, marking a growing focus on crisis management that included both civilian and military elements.

The EU's Berlin Plus Agreement with NATO in 2002 enabled EU operations to benefit from NATO's assets and capabilities, particularly in situations where the alliance itself was not directly engaged. This collaboration helped define the EU's role in military and civilian operations and represented a major step forward in EU defence integration, even as NATO remained the primary security provider for Europe.

### Timeline of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU



**1952**

Establishment of the European Defence Community (EDC) to create a common European defence force.



**1954**

Failure of EDC ratification, leading to its abandonment.



**1992**

The Maastricht Treaty establishes the European Union and introduces the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).



**1999**

The EU launches its first major military operation in Southeast Europe following the Kosovo War.



**1990s**

EU conducts civilian missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on policing and rebuilding efforts.



**2002**

Berlin Plus Agreement with NATO allows EU operations to utilise NATO assets and capabilities.



**2003**

Adoption of the European Security Strategy (ESS), outlining the EU's strategic goals.



**2004**

Creation of the European Defence Agency (EDA) to improve defence capabilities and cooperation.



**2004**

Launch of Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



**2008**

Launch of EUNAVFOR Atalanta off the Horn of Africa.



**2008**

EUFOR Chad mission in Africa.



**2010**

Creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS).



**2016**

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) emphasises the need for a more unified and capable security policy.



**2017**

Launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).



**2017**

Establishment of the European Defence Fund (EDF).



### Present and Future Challenges

The EU focuses on addressing hybrid threats, cyber security, and counterterrorism, with CSDP missions and operations expanding globally.

## **The 2000s: Institutionalizing the CSDP and Expanding Operations**

14

By the early 2000s, the EU began to institutionalize its approach to security and defence. The European Security Strategy (ESS), adopted in 2003, was a significant step in this direction, outlining the EU's strategic goals, such as promoting global peace, preventing conflicts, and addressing global security challenges like terrorism and weapons proliferation. The ESS provided the political framework for EU action under the CSDP, including civilian and military missions to manage crises and promote stability in the EU's neighbourhood and beyond.

During the 2000s, the CSDP also evolved to include the establishment of several important institutions and mechanisms for defence cooperation. The European Defence Agency (EDA), created in 2004, helped improve defence capabilities and fostered cooperation among Member States in areas like procurement, research and technology. The creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2010 brought greater coherence to the EU's foreign and security policies, ensuring that

defence and diplomacy were more closely linked.

The EU also launched a series of military and civilian operations/missions during this period, including Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2004), EUNAVFOR Atalanta off the Horn of Africa (2008), and various missions in Africa, including EUFOR Chad (2008). These operations demonstrated the EU's growing role in crisis management and conflict prevention, particularly in its immediate neighbourhood and in regions like the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA).

## **The 2010s and Beyond: Strengthening Autonomy and Strategic Direction**

The 2010s were marked by a further development of the CSDP, particularly as the EU faced new security challenges. The global security environment had deteriorated dramatically, with growing instability in the Middle East, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and increasing terrorism threats. In response, the EU and its Member States sought to develop capacity to act autonomously and more robust defence capabilities.

In 2016, the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) laid out a vision for the EU's role in the world, emphasizing the need for a more unified and capable security policy. This period also saw the launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in 2017, which allowed EU Member States to engage in deeper defence integration, focusing on joint defence projects, capability development, and operational readiness. PESCO represented a new phase in European defence cooperation, providing a platform for Member States to work together on critical defence issues and improve the EU's military capabilities.

In the same year, the European Defence Fund (EDF) was established to support joint defence projects, particularly in research, innovation and development. The EDF aims to boost Europe's technological capabilities and reduce its dependence on external defence suppliers, enhancing the EU's capacity to act independently. The EU also focused on improving defence coordination through various mechanisms like the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), which assesses national defence plans to ensure alignment with EU goals.



Source: <https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/sds-20th-anniversary-eu-enlargement-milestone-healed-scars-history-and-made-eu-stronger>



## The EU's Role in Global Security Today

The evolution of the CSDP has been shaped by the need for the EU to respond to a rapidly changing global security environment. While NATO remains a key player in European defence, the EU's growing defence capabilities under the CSDP allow it to act autonomously in many instances, particularly in areas like crisis management and peacekeeping, and humanitarian interventions. The EU's initiatives, missions and operations have expanded beyond Europe, contributing to global security, from combating piracy off the coast of Somalia to providing peacekeeping support in Central Africa.

In recent years, the EU has also increasingly focused on hybrid threats, cyber security, and counter-terrorism, reflecting a more comprehensive approach to security that goes beyond traditional military operations. The EU's CSDP now operates across a range of domains, from military operations to civilian missions, promoting security and stability in regions like the Southeast Europe, Sahel, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Looking ahead, the CSDP is expected to evolve in response to emerging global challenges. The EU's growing defence capabilities, coupled with its focus on multi-lateralism, diplomacy, and human rights, position it as an important player in shaping international security and ensuring stability in a complex global environment. The development of the CSDP reflects the EU's commitment and ambition to ensure it achieves a stronger role in global peace and security grounded in its shared values and the need for an enhanced capacity to act unanimously.



# **EU Institutions and Decision- Making in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**

The European Union (EU) plays a significant role in international security and defence, particularly through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The CSDP allows the EU to address security challenges and crisis management

in its neighbourhood and beyond, through a variety of military and civilian operations. Understanding the EU's institutions and decision-making processes is essential to grasp how the CSDP functions.

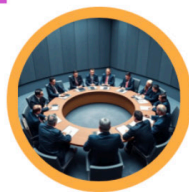


### The European Council

Composed of heads of state or government of EU Member States, it sets the overall political direction and priorities of the EU.

### The Council of the European Union

Also known as the Council of Ministers, it brings together foreign and defence ministers of EU Member States.

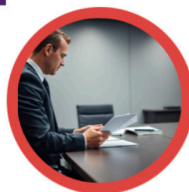


### The European Parliament

While not directly involved in operational decisions, the Parliament performs crucial oversight functions.

### The European Commission

As the EU's executive body, the Commission is responsible for proposing legislation, implementing policies, and managing the EU budget.



### The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service

The European External Action Service, led by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, functions as the EU's diplomatic service.

## Key EU CSDP Institutions and Bodies

Several EU institutions are central to the formulation, coordination and implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy. These institutions work together to develop a coherent and effective CSDP. Since CSDP is a policy area with a strong intergovernmental character, all main decisions are adopted by Member States unanimously. The primary institutions involved are the European Council and the Council of the European Union (EU Council), with a more limited role of the European Commission and the European Parliament. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS), conducts and contributes to the development of the Union's common foreign and security policy, including common security and defence policy.

### 1. The European Council

The European Council is composed of the heads of state or government of EU Member States. It plays a crucial role in setting the overall political direction and priorities of the EU, including in matters of

security and defence, including on CSDP missions and operations and EU defence capabilities. It does not directly manage operations/missions but defines the overall policy framework within which they occur.

### 2. The Council of the European Union (EU Council)

The Council of the EU, often referred to as the Council of Ministers, in its foreign affairs configuration is where EU Member States' foreign and defence ministers meet regularly. This institution is competent for development and decision-making in the CSDP area, such as crisis management (civilian and military missions/operations) or defence cooperation and defence capabilities. The Council also cooperates with other institutions, such as the European Parliament, to ensure the CSDP's coherence and effectiveness.

### 3. The European Parliament

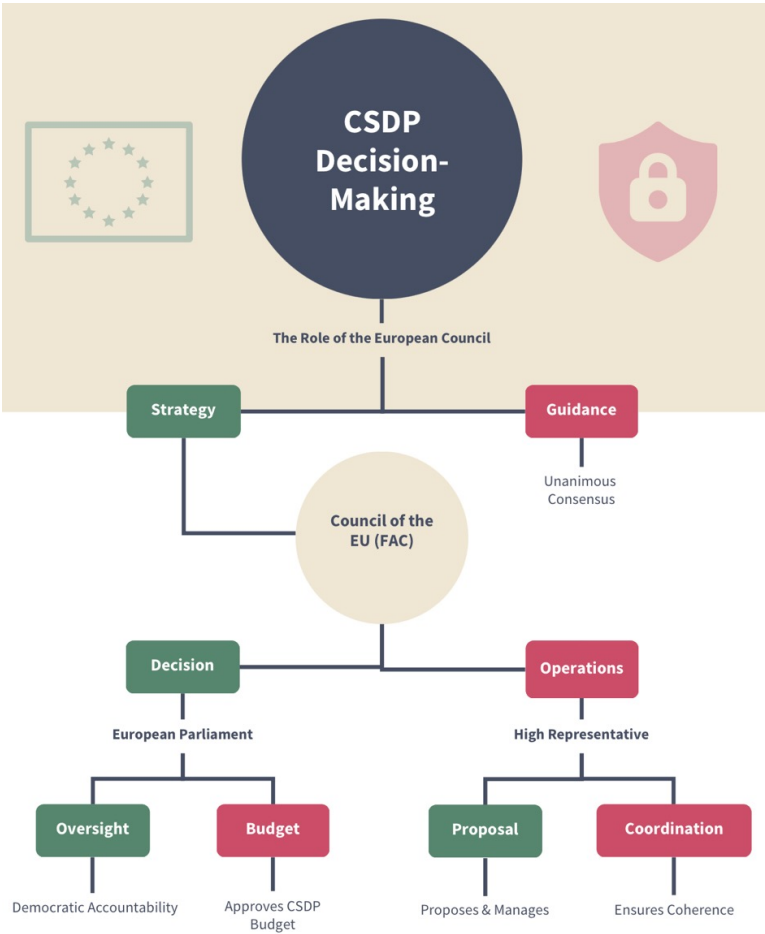
While the European Parliament does not have a direct role in operational decision-making, it plays a significant oversight function in the CSDP. It approves the EU's budget, which includes funding for civilian CSDP missions. The Parliament also moni-

tors and holds the Council and the Commission accountable for their actions related to security and defence. The Parliament's role helps ensure that CSDP responds to concerns of the EU's citizens.

#### 4. The European Commission

The European Commission is the EU's executive body, responsible for

proposing legislation, implementing policies, and managing the EU's budget. In the CSDP, its primary role is indirect through facilitating CSDP actions, such as administering of financing of civilian CSDP missions. The Commission works in coordination with other EU institutions and bodies, particularly the EEAS, to ensure a comprehensive approach to crisis management.



## **5. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service (EEAS)**

The EEAS, headed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, is the EU's diplomatic service. The EEAS plays a central role in managing the CSDP. It assists the High Representative in formulating foreign policy, implementing the EU's external relations, and overseeing CSDP missions/operations. The EEAS ensures that diplomatic, military, and civilian efforts are aligned, and it supports the EU in managing complex crises, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction.

## **CSDP Decision-Making**

Decision-making in the CSDP is characterized by a complex interinstitutional process that reflects the EU's nature as a supranational organization where Member States retain substantial authority in foreign and defence policy. CSDP decisions are made through intergovernmental cooperation, but the process involves input from both EU institutions and Member States.

## **1. The Role of the European Council**

The European Council defines the broad strategic objectives and priorities of the CSDP, often during special summits or meetings. It makes decisions based on proposals put forward by the High Representative and the European Commission. While the European Council's decisions are not legally binding, they provide the political guidance that shapes the EU's actions in security and defence.

For example, the European Council may decide to launch a military operation in response to a crisis or to focus on improving EU defence capabilities. These decisions are usually made through unanimous consensus, reflecting the consensus-based nature of EU foreign policy.

## **2. The Role of the Council of the European Union**

The Council of the EU, particularly its Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), is where the bulk of decision-making happens in practice. In the case of military or civilian missions/operations, the Council adopts decisions to launch, modify, or end operations, through unanimous decisions. Shaping the CSDP in the Council involves discussion, nego-

tiations and compromise among Member States.

### **3. The Role of the European Parliament**

Although the European Parliament does not directly decide on CSDP operations/missions, it plays an essential role in the democratic accountability of the policy. The Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee regularly debates and discusses proposals put forward by the Council and the High Representative.

Additionally, the European Parliament must approve the EU's budget, which gives it a significant role in determining the financial resources for civilian CSDP missions, for example.

### **4. The Role of the High Representative**

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is a key figure in developing and managing CSDP. The High Representative chairs meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council, participates in meetings of the European Council, proposes CSDP actions, and coordinates EU foreign and security policy. The High Representative represents the

EU on the global stage and ensures that CSDP actions align with the EU's broader foreign policy objectives. In their function as the Vice-President of the European Commission, the High Representative ensures coordination and coherence of CSDP with other important external policies of the EU (trade, development, humanitarian aid, neighbourhood policy).

## **Conclusion**

The decision-making process in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy involves a blend of supranational and intergovernmental cooperation, with key actors such as the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the High Representative/EEAS working together. The complex process ensures that CSDP decisions reflect the interests of EU Member States, while also advancing the Union's goals of peace, stability and cooperation on the global stage.



# **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Missions and Operations**



The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is an essential component of the European Union's (EU) efforts to ensure international peace, security, and stability. It is part of the broader Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and aims to enable the EU to prevent and respond to crises. Over time, CSDP missions and operations have evolved to address a variety of complex security challenges, including conflict prevention, peacekeeping, stabilization, and post-crisis recovery.

## Key Features of CSDP Missions and Operations

CSDP missions and operations are designed to address a wide array of security challenges in crisis situations, ranging from restoring peace and security, enforcing arms embargoes and ensuring maritime security, to supporting third countries in capacity building of civilian security sector. These missions/operations are based on the principles of cooperation, multilateralism, and comprehensive approaches. They typically involve the deployment of military and civilian resources. These missions/operations can be classified into two main types:

- 1. Military Missions and Operations:** These missions/operations are carried out by the EU Member States' and partners' military forces and are aimed at ensuring peace and security in conflict areas. They can involve defensive combat operations or more peaceful activities such as peacekeeping, advising and training military forces of third states.
- 2. Civilian Missions:** These missions focus on civilian aspects of crisis management, including reforms of the rule of law, civilian security sector and good governance. Civilian missions aim to assist in (re)building institutions through strategic advice and training local authorities.

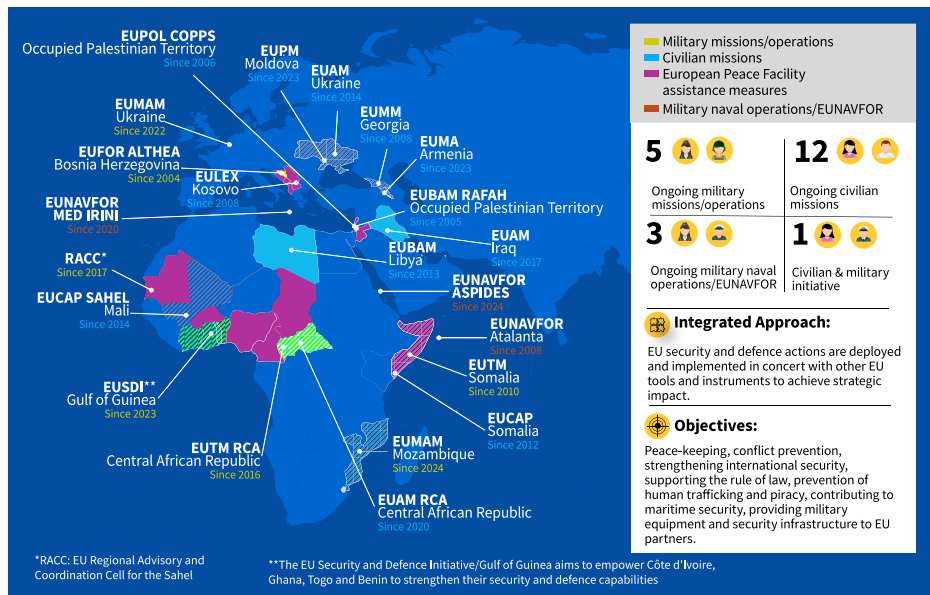
## Notable CSDP Missions and Operations

The first CSDP missions and operations were initiated in 2003. Since then, the EU has conducted 40 missions and operations, including both civilian and military missions and operations across Europe, Africa, and Asia. At present, there are 21 active CSDP initiatives, missions and operations, with 12 being civilian, 8 military and 1



# EU SECURITY AND DEFENCE ENGAGEMENT AROUND THE WORLD

November 2024  
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Source: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025/documents/EU-mission-and-operation\\_2025-05.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025/documents/EU-mission-and-operation_2025-05.pdf)

civilian-military. They aim to foster a more stable world by promoting international security, ultimately contributing to a safer Europe.

Some of the most significant missions and operations include:

## 1. EUFOR Althea (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004–present)

One of the first large-scale military operations under CSDP, EUFOR Althea aims to stabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina after the 1990s conflict. The mission

helps in ensuring security and implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the war. EUFOR Althea works alongside other international organizations to maintain peace and support local authorities in building strong governance structures.

## 2. Operation Artemis (Democratic Republic of Congo, 2003)

In 2003, the EU launched Operation Artemis to provide a rapid military

intervention in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The operation was aimed at stabilizing the region following intense violence in the city of Bunia. This was the EU's first autonomous military operation and demonstrated the EU's ability to intervene swiftly in crisis situations.

### **3. EUTM Mali (Mali, 2013–2024)**

The EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) focused on training and advising the Malian armed forces to help them combat insurgencies in the region, particularly from extremist groups. The mission aimed to restore security, promote stability, and support the Malian government in its efforts to rebuild the country after years of conflict. After coming to power, the Malian military authorities made it clear in January 2024 that they no longer needed the training and strategic advice offered by EUTM Mali.

### **4. EULEX Kosovo (Kosovo, 2008–present)**

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) is one of the EU's largest civilian missions. It focuses on supporting Kosovo in building its legal and

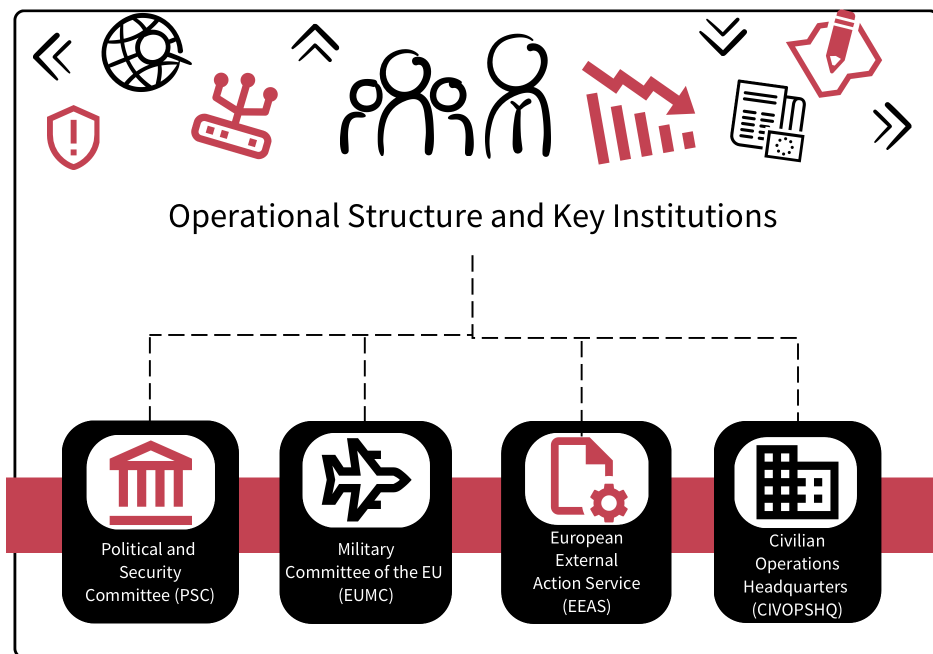
justice systems, particularly in areas such as police, judiciary, and customs. The mission also works to ensure the protection of minorities and foster inter-ethnic cooperation in Kosovo.

### **5. Operation Sophia (Mediterranean, 2015–2020)**

Operation Sophia was launched to tackle the rising issue of human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the Mediterranean. It aimed to disrupt criminal networks involved in smuggling migrants from North Africa to Europe. Although the operation faced challenges and was eventually suspended in 2020, it was a significant demonstration of the EU's commitment to addressing migration issues through external action.

### **6. EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine (Ukraine, 2014–present)**

Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the EU launched the EU Advisory Mission in Ukraine to assist the Ukrainian government in reforming and modernizing its civilian security sector (police and judiciary).



## Operational Structure and Key Institutions

CSDP missions and operations are coordinated and implemented through several EU services and Council preparatory bodies, ensuring a coherent and efficient response to crises.

- **Political and Security Committee (PSC)** provides overall political direction and control over CSDP missions. It is composed of ambassadors from the EU Member States and meets regularly to discuss ongoing and potential new missions/operations.
- **Military Committee of the European Union (EUMC)** gives military advice to the EU's High Representative (HR) and Political and Security Committee (PSC). The EUMC also oversees the European Union Military Staff (EUMS). It is composed of representatives of MS' armed forces.
- **European External Action Service (EEAS)** plays a central role in coordinating and managing EU external action, including CSDP missions/operations. It supports the High Representative in overseeing the missions and works closely with other EU bodies and external partners. EU Military

Staff (EUMS) provides strategic military expertise and planning support for EU military missions/operations. It works in close collaboration with NATO and other international organizations to ensure the success of missions.

- **Civilian Operations Headquarters (CIVOPSHQ)** is responsible for planning and conducting civilian missions.



Source: <https://armyrecognition.com/archives/archives-land-defense/land-defense-2015/croatian-armed-forces-will-participate-in-european-union-battle-group-eubg-2016>

several challenges that the EU faces in the implementation of these missions:

- **Political Consensus:** CSDP missions/operations require the unanimous approval of all EU Member States, which can be difficult due to differing national interests, especially in areas such as military intervention and defence spending.
- **Resource Constraints:** Many CSDP missions/operations are resource-intensive, requiring significant financial and human resources. The EU's ability to deploy large-scale operations may be limited by these constraints.
- **Coordination:** The EU often works in partnership with other international organisations, such as the United Nations and NATO. Effective coordination is crucial to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure a coherent approach to crisis management.

## Challenges and Future Outlook

CSDP missions and operations have been essential in shaping the EU's role as a global actor in crisis management. However, there are

Despite these challenges, the EU's CSDP has made significant strides in ensuring regional stability and supporting peace efforts globally. The future of CSDP missions/operations will likely see a continued focus on conflict prevention, post-conflict

reconstruction, and cooperation with international partners, as the EU adapts to new global security challenges, including terrorism, cyber threats, and hybrid warfare.

## Conclusion

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is a vital aspect of the EU's external action. Through its military and civilian missions and operations, the EU has contributed significantly to peacekeeping and crisis management around the world. By addressing both immediate security concerns and long-term stability, the EU's CSDP missions/operations play a crucial role in promoting global peace and reinforcing the EU's status as an important player in international security and defence.





# **EU Strategic Autonomy**



## Introduction

Strategic autonomy has become a buzzword in European Union (EU) foreign policy in recent years. It reflects the EU's aspiration to enhance its ability to make independent decisions and project power on the global stage, without being overly reliant on external actors. The concept has gained certain prominence within the EU as it seeks to address shifting global power dynamics.

need to build its own capacity to manage security challenges, diversify defence capabilities and reduce reliance on external powers. This ambition was somewhat further highlighted after the US presidential elections in 2016, which brought into focus the unpredictability of US foreign policy under its new administration that questioned NATO's relevance and burden-sharing, as well as withdrew from international agreements (such as the Paris Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal).

## The Origins of Strategic Autonomy

Strategic autonomy is not a new concept. It has evolved over time in response to changing geopolitical realities. The term gained prominence in the discourse on EU security and defence policy, particularly after the Cold War, when Europe's dependence on NATO and the US security umbrella was increasingly questioned. The notion of strategic autonomy emerged as part of the EU's broader ambition to increase its global role and assert its interests independently.

In the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS), the EU underscored the

The concept of strategic autonomy was therefore closely linked to strengthening the capacity for independent EU action in a world of increasing geopolitical competition, particularly with China and Russia. The EU sought to avoid becoming a passive player in global affairs, emphasizing the need for a more active role in maintaining peace, security and prosperity.

## Key Components of EU Strategic Autonomy

EU strategic autonomy is multidimensional, at the same time focusing on political, military, and economic aspects:



Source: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/european-strategic-autonomy-and-defence-after-ukraine/>

**1. Political Autonomy:** The EU has long sought to be a global actor in political terms, advocating for its values, such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Political autonomy entails the EU's ability to set its own foreign policy agenda, conduct diplomatic relations without external interference and manage crises independently.

**2. Military Autonomy:** Although the EU has been developing both civilian and military crisis management capabilities, it has been relying heavily on NATO for collective defence.

**3. Economic Autonomy:** The EU's economic power is central to its strategic autonomy. The EU is the world's largest economic bloc and a key player in international trade. Economic autonomy refers to the EU's ability to influence global trade rules, ensure the security of

supply chains, and reduce its dependence on external economic forces, particularly in critical sectors such as energy, technology, and raw materials.

## Goals of EU Strategic Autonomy

The EU's strategic autonomy is driven by several core goals:

- 1. Reducing Dependence on External Powers:** The primary motivation behind the push for strategic autonomy is the desire to reduce Europe's dependence on external actors. By strengthening its capabilities, the EU aims to navigate global challenges more effectively, pursue its interests independently and enhance its global standing.
- 2. Ensuring Security and Stability:** Strategic autonomy is

essential for ensuring that the security goals specific to the EU Member States are adequately addressed in a rapidly changing global environment. This includes dealing with hybrid threats (e.g., cyberattacks, disinformation), regional conflicts, terrorism and the assertiveness of geopolitical rivals like Russia and China.

### 3. Preserving European Values:

The EU's emphasis on strategic autonomy is also rooted in the need to safeguard its values, such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, in a multipolar world. In a time of increasing authoritarianism and populism globally, the EU's strategic autonomy enables it to project these values on the global stage.

### 4. Increasing Global Influence:

The EU seeks to amplify its role in global governance. By strengthening its own strategic autonomy, the EU aims to enhance its influence in international organizations (such

as the United Nations) and in global economic and political decision-making processes.

## Challenges to EU Strategic Autonomy

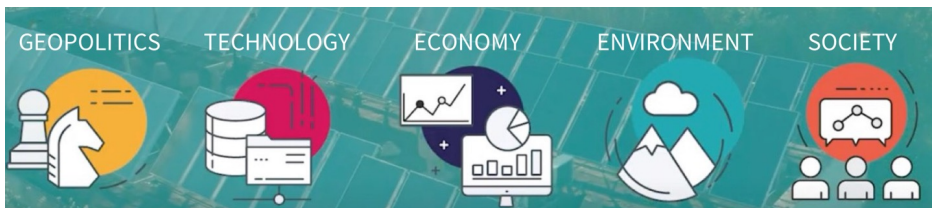
While the EU's goal of strategic autonomy is ambitious, it faces significant challenges, both internal and external:

### 1. Fragmentation within the EU:

The level of strategic autonomy depends on EU unity. The EU Member States have differing national interests, military capabilities, and foreign policy priorities. This sometimes makes it difficult to balance strategic autonomy and Member States' security and political concerns.

### 2. Dependency on NATO:

NATO remains the cornerstone of Europe's defence and security architecture. Despite efforts to develop the EU's own defence



capabilities, the EU's military autonomy is still constrained by its reliance on NATO for collective defence. The concept of strategic autonomy, therefore, cannot be fully decoupled from NATO's role, particularly in defence matters.

### 3. Financial and Technological Constraints:

Building military and technological autonomy requires substantial investments. The EU faces financial constraints that limit its ability to fund large-scale defence projects. Furthermore, in certain sectors of the defence industry, as well as domains like semiconductors and artificial intelligence, the EU remains reliant on external actors, particularly the U.S. and China. Achieving true technological and economic independence will require significant innovation, investment and collaboration among EU states.

### 4. Geopolitical Rivalries:

The rise of China and the ongoing confrontation with Russia present a complex geopolitical environment for the EU. The EU's attempts to assert its strategic autonomy may be hindered by the global competition between these powers. Relations with China,

for instance, are complicated by economic dependencies, while Russia's actions in Ukraine have highlighted Europe's vulnerability to external threats.

### 5. Global Uncertainty:

Global uncertainty, including unpredictable US foreign policy, economic volatility and the shifting power dynamics in Asia, further complicates the EU's pursuit of strategic autonomy. The international environment is fluid and the EU's ability to navigate these changes effectively will determine the success of its autonomy efforts.

## Conclusion

EU strategic autonomy is an essential and evolving concept, reflecting the Union's ambition to become a more independent and assertive global actor. It encompasses political, military and economic dimensions, with the goal of reducing reliance on external powers and safeguarding European values and security. However, the realization of this vision faces numerous challenges, including internal fragmentation, dependence on NATO, financial constraints and geopolitical

competition with other global powers.

Sustainable development of strategic autonomy of the EU is possible through EU unity and investment in critical defence capabilities, with Member States remaining in the driving seat, as well as through cooperation with like-minded partners, particularly NATO as a cornerstone of euro-atlantic security.



# **EU Global Strategy (EUGS)**

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS), introduced in June 2016, outlines the European Union's approach to foreign and security policy, aimed at strengthening its global role. As one of the EU's fundamental strategic documents, it focuses on promoting peace, security and prosperity while addressing global challenges such as climate change, migration and conflict. It builds on its predecessor, the European Security Strategy (ESS) of 2003, which was the EU's first comprehensive framework for addressing global security challenges.

### Scope and Focus

The EUGS recognises significant deterioration of the EU's strategic environment and overall deregulation of international affairs, which requires a stronger Union capable of protecting its citizens and contributing to security and resilience of its closer environment and wider international community. Considering the fact that internal and external security are more intertwined than ever, the security of Europe depends also on the peace outside of the EU's borders.

The strategy emphasizes:

1. Promoting peace and stability through conflict prevention, crisis management, and strong international partnerships.
2. Resilience, by building the capacity of states and societies to withstand crises, both within the EU and globally.
3. Global partnerships, reinforcing the EU's relationships with key players such as the United Nations, NATO and regional organizations.
4. A more united EU in global governance, with a strong focus on values like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The strategy's goal is to ensure the EU's ability to act as a coherent, influential actor on the global stage, navigating complex geopolitical shifts and enhancing security in a rapidly changing world. It highlights several strengths that position the EU as a significant global player. It emphasizes the EU's political and economic power, leveraging its status as the world's largest economic bloc to influence global policies through diplomacy, trade agreements, and sanctions. The strategy also underscores the EU's diplomatic influence, its

commitment to democratic values and human rights, its capacity in security and defence, and its resilience in maintaining internal unity, all of which enhance its global role in promoting stability, peace,

and sustainable development. By leveraging these strengths, the EU aims to shape global affairs, promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in a rapidly changing world.

## EU Global Strategy: implementation plan on security and defence

### Level of ambition



respond to external conflicts and crises

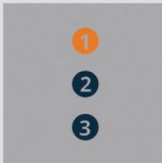


build capacities of partners

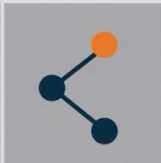


protect EU and its citizens

### Proposed actions



set capability development priorities



deepen cooperation among member states



adjust structures, tools and instruments



take forward partnership

### Examples of concrete deliverables



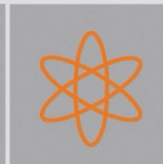
a more efficient defence spending



a better rapid response



a joint planning and conduct of non-combat missions



possibility of a new permanent structured cooperation



## Five Priorities of the EUGS

There are five priorities the EU has set under the European Union Global Strategy:

### 1. The Security of our Union

It is key to first start within the borders of the EU. The level of security and prosperity the EU has secured for its citizens needs to be preserved. Climate change, hybrid threats, terrorism, energy insecurity and economic volatility are threats to the Union we know. Therefore, the EU enhances efforts on defence, cyber, counterterrorism, energy and strategic communications. The Member States are obliged to translate their commitments to mutual assistance and solidarity into action. The EU continues, alongside its partner NATO, contributing to Europe's collective security.

### 2. State and Societal Resilience to our East and South

The EU invests in the resilience of those countries that find themselves outside of EU's borders. The current EU enlargement policy, paired with the strict conditionality policy, is key to building resilience of the countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey. Important to

mention is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), through which various countries try to build closer relations with the European Union. The appeal of the EU can spur transformation in those countries. Therefore, the EU will support numerous paths to resilience, especially for those countries with the highest governmental, economic, energy, societal and climate fragility.

### 3. An Integrated Approach to Conflicts

Every violent conflict that occurs presents a threat to the shared interests of the Union. The EU engages in a practical and principled way in peacebuilding and promotes human security. The comprehensive approach to conflict and crises is expanding through time. The EU needs to act at all stages of the conflict cycle, especially focusing on the prevention of conflict, as well as investing in stabilisation. This cannot be implemented unilaterally, but through deep regional and international partnerships that the EU supports.

### 4. Cooperative Regional Orders

The EU supports cooperative regional orders worldwide since

the regional dynamic has gained its voice. Through them, states have a possibility to better manage security concerns, collect the economic gains of globalisation and project more influence on the international stage.

## 5. Global Governance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The EU strives for a strong UN as the foundation of the multilateral rules-based order. The Union is aligned with the global order based on international law that fosters human rights, sustainable development and access to the global commons.

These five priorities will be turned into action by achieving: a credible (the EU must act consistently and

reliably, upholding its core values and delivering on its commitments to maintain trust and influence globally), a responsive (the EU must be agile and capable of reacting swiftly and effectively to emerging crises and challenges in a rapidly changing world) and a joined-up Union (the EU must ensure strong internal coordination and coherence between its policies and institutions to present a unified and impactful external presence). In practice, this means that the EU should strive towards behaviour reflecting credibility, being readily prepared for unknown circumstances that may be encountered, and that it is committed to approaching external actions in a more joined-up manner.



Source: <https://www.european-entrepreneurs.org/position-paper-smes-as-part-of-the-global-gateway-strategy/>

## Ensuring Implementation

A complementary document to the EUGS has been presented in November 2016 - The Implementation Plan on Security and Defence. This plan proposed the operationalisation of the goals of the EUGS. It outlined the strategic steps needed to be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the EUGS.

The Implementation Plan on Security and Defence focuses on strengthening the EU's defence capabilities through increased co-operation among Member States and improving joint military readiness. It aims to address capability gaps, enhance crisis management efforts, and foster collaboration in defence research and procurement. Additionally, the plan seeks to bolster the EU's capacity to act by promoting partnerships with NATO and other international actors to address evolving security challenges.



# **EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence**

## Introduction

The European Union (EU) has long sought to strengthen its collective security and foreign policy. A significant milestone in this effort came with the EU Strategic Compass for security and defence, a document aimed at guiding the EU's security and defence policy for the years to come. Officially adopted in March 2022, the Strategic Compass reflects the EU's ambition to respond to evolving global security challenges and to become a more capable and autonomous actor on the world stage.

## Background and Rationale for the EU Strategic Compass

The EU has always been committed to promoting peace, stability and democracy, both within its borders and beyond. However, recent global developments have highlighted the need for the EU to adapt its foreign and security policies to meet new challenges. These challenges include:

- Increasing geopolitical tensions, such as the rise of China and the resurgence of Russian threats like

the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, have prompted the EU to reassess its defence posture,

- Hybrid threats, including cyber-attacks, disinformation, and economic coercion, have exposed the EU's vulnerability to non-traditional warfare,
- Instability in neighbouring regions, such as the Middle East, North Africa, and the Sahel, has led to increased migration and the rise of terrorist organizations, further complicating security,
- Internally, challenges like Brexit and varying levels of defence spending and military cooperation among Member States have weakened the EU's collective security.

To address these threats, the EU recognized that it needed a strategic framework to guide its actions and strengthen its security. The EU Strategic Compass was developed as a response to this need, providing a clear vision and actionable goals for the EU's foreign and security policy.



Source: <https://safety4sea.com/towards-an-eu-integrated-approach-to-global-maritime-security/>

## What is the EU Strategic Compass?

The EU Strategic Compass is a comprehensive policy document that outlines the EU's approach to security and defence. It provides the Union with a strategic vision for its role in global security, focusing on key areas of policy development such as defence, resilience, partnerships, and crisis response. The document sets out specific actions and objectives for the EU in the next five to ten years, seeking to ensure that the EU is better prepared to face emerging threats.

The Strategic Compass is the result of a collaborative process involving all 27 EU Member States and various EU institutions, including the European Commission, the

European External Action Service (EEAS), and the European Defence Agency (EDA). It aims to transform the EU into a more capable security actor, able to take swift, coordinated action in the face of crises, while reinforcing its global partnerships.

## The Four Pillars of the EU Strategic Compass

The EU Strategic Compass is structured around four key pillars:

- 1. Act:** This pillar emphasizes the EU's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to security challenges. It calls for the EU to enhance its decision-making processes and improve its military and civilian capabilities for taking action in times of crisis, whether through crisis management operations, peace-building, or humanitarian interventions.
- 2. Secure:** This pillar focuses on building resilience within the EU to protect against a wide range of threats, especially hybrid threats like cyberattacks, disinformation, energy disruptions or foreign interference in democratic processes. It aims to ensure that the EU's critical

infrastructure, including energy, communication networks, and supply chains, can withstand and recover from crises.

- 3. Invest:** This pillar stresses the importance of increasing investments in defence capabilities and new technologies, such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and space assets. The goal is to strengthen the EU's capacity to act autonomously and reduce reliance on external powers, particularly in areas of defence and security.
- 4. Partner:** The EU recognizes that it needs to cooperate with partners to protect its security interests. This pillar focuses on enhancing multilateral and bilateral relations, ensuring a joint approach in addressing

address common security challenges.

## Key Objectives and Actions of the Strategic Compass

The EU Strategic Compass lays out several specific objectives and actions aimed at achieving its four pillars. Some of the most important objectives include:

- **Strengthening the EU's defence capabilities:** This includes increasing defence spending, particularly through cooperation among Member States and in complementarity to NATO and ensuring that the EU has the necessary military resources to protect its citizens. The Compass also



calls for enhancing military mobility within the EU, ensuring that forces can be rapidly deployed to address emerging crises.

- **Improving crisis response:** The EU aims to develop a more rapid and flexible crisis response system, which includes faster decision-making processes, streamlined procedures for deploying military and civilian missions, and improved cooperation with other international organizations.
- **Enhancing resilience:** The Compass calls for stronger efforts to build resilience in critical infrastructure, including energy systems, communications networks, and supply chains. The EU will also invest in technologies like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and space-based assets to ensure it can defend against non-traditional threats.
- **Building strategic autonomy:** One of the key goals of the Strategic Compass is to reduce the EU's reliance on external powers, for defence and security. This means investing in European defence capabilities and ensuring that the EU can act independently in times of crisis.

## Implications and Challenges

The adoption of the EU Strategic Compass marks a significant shift in the EU's approach to security and defence, but its implementation faces several challenges.

- Political divisions among EU Member States complicate the implementation of a unified approach to defence and foreign policy, as some countries prioritize military defence while others focus on diplomacy and humanitarian efforts;
- Budget constraints also present a challenge, as the EU's collective defence spending and its efficiency is significantly lower than that of major powers like the US and China, requiring substantial investment and coordination among Member States to meet the objectives outlined in the Strategic Compass;
- Coordination with NATO is essential, as the EU aims to enhance its capacity to act independently while ensuring that its efforts complement NATO rather than compete with it;
- External challenges, including Russia's aggression in Ukraine,



China's growing influence and instability in neighbouring regions such as the Middle East and Africa, will play a significant role in shaping the effectiveness of the EU Strategic Compass in the coming years.

### Conclusion

The EU Strategic Compass represents an important step in strengthening the EU's role as a global security actor. By focusing on defence, resilience, partnerships, and crisis management, the Compass aims to prepare the EU for meeting the security challenges of the 21st century. While its successful implementation will require overcoming significant challenges, the Strategic Compass offers a clear framework for the EU's security policy, enhancing both its internal cohesion and its global influence.



# **European Defence Fund (EDF)**

The European Defence Fund (EDF) is a key initiative launched by the EU to strengthen its defence industry, enhance its military capabilities, and improve its ability to respond to security challenges. The fund is designed to promote cooperation between companies, including SMEs and research actors throughout the Union, to boost defence capability development through investments, and to help EU companies develop cutting-edge and interoperable defence technologies and equipment.

Historically, defence policy within the EU has been fragmented. EU Member States have pursued their own defence strategies, leading to inefficiencies and redundancies. While NATO is playing a significant role in European defence, the EU is ambitious in building its own strategic autonomy in the face of global uncertainties. This led to the adoption of the European Defence Fund in 2017. The EDF was officially launched in 2021, with the aim of strengthening the EU's defence sector and fostering collaboration among Member States.

## Background and Origins

The establishment of the European Defence Fund is a direct response to the growing need for enhanced EU defence capabilities in an increasingly volatile world. The main guiding principle of the European Defence Fund is to further develop innovation and strengthen the competitiveness of the European Union's defence industry. It relies on collaborative cooperation modalities between European manufacturers with the aim of developing modern and applicable capabilities that could ultimately be integrated into the defence systems of the Member States.

## Objectives of the European Defence Fund

The main objectives of the European Defence Fund are to:

- 1. Support Research and Development in Defence:** One of the key goals of the EDF is to fund defence-related research and innovation. This includes supporting the development of new defence technologies and advanced systems. The fund targets both military and civilian defence applications, such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and autonomous systems. By funding col-



Source: [https://ieu-monitoring.com/editorial/european-defence-fund-more-than-e1bn-to-develop-next-generation-defence-technologies/538837?utm\\_source=ieu-portal](https://ieu-monitoring.com/editorial/european-defence-fund-more-than-e1bn-to-develop-next-generation-defence-technologies/538837?utm_source=ieu-portal)

laborative projects, the EDF encourages innovation and helps the EU keep pace with evolving security threats.

## 2. **Promote Cross-border Cooperation:**

A fundamental objective of the EDF is to encourage EU Member States to cooperate on defence projects. Traditionally, EU defence efforts have been fragmented, with individual countries developing their own military technologies and systems. The EDF aims to reduce duplication of effort, increase interoperability between different national defence systems, and foster deeper collaboration between EU defence

industries. Cross-border cooperation helps to create economies of scale and ensures that resources are used more efficiently.

## 3. **Strengthen the EU's Defence Industry:**

The EDF is designed to boost the competitiveness of Europe's defence industry. By funding collaborative defence projects, the EU encourages the development of new technologies and the production of high-quality defence equipment. This can help ensure that European defence companies remain competitive in the global market and can meet the needs of EU Member States.

The EDF also supports the creation of a more integrated European defence market, which can reduce the cost of defence procurement and make it easier for EU countries to share resources.

### Allocation of the European Defence Fund

The allocation of the European Defence Fund (EDF) is structured to support both research and the development of defence capabilities across the European Union. It is divided into two main parts: the Research Component and the Capability Window.

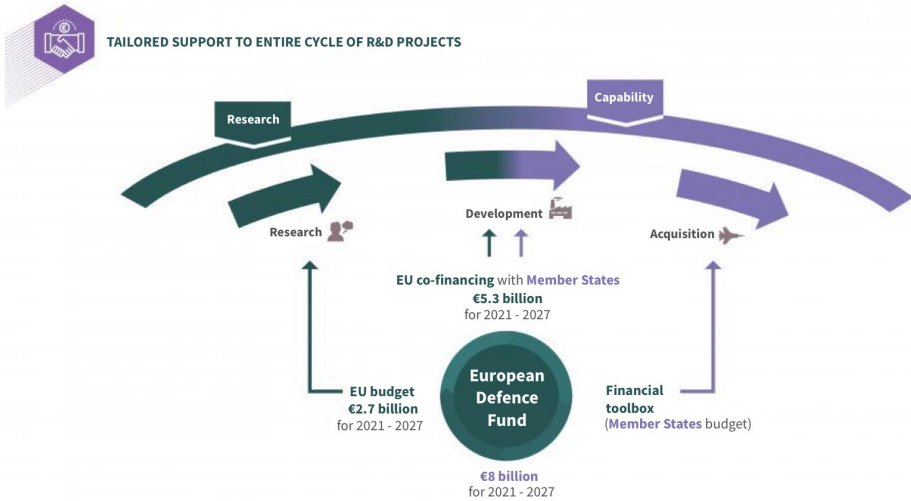
- **Research Component:** Focuses on funding collaborative research projects to develop innovative defence technologies and solutions. It supports the early stages of technology development, including feasibility studies and prototypes, with the goal of fostering technological advancements and ensuring European defence industries remain competitive.
- **Capability Window:** Allocates funding to support joint development, procurement, and acqui-

sition of defence equipment. It aims to address shared defence needs, enhance interoperability among EU armed forces, and improve Europe's overall defence capabilities by pooling resources and avoiding duplication of effort.

The EDF's budget is allocated on a multiannual basis, with the current funding period running from 2021 to 2027. The total budget for the EDF during this period is around €9.5 billion, which is an increase from previous funding levels. This funding is distributed between the two components, with a larger portion allocated to the Capability Window to ensure the development of military equipment and operational capabilities.

### Key Features and Funding Mechanism

1. **Funding for Collaborative Projects:** The EDF provides funding to collaborative defence projects that involve at least three EU Member States. These projects must focus on the development of joint defence capabilities or defence technologies. This ensures that the funding encourages cooperation between countries and



Source: <https://eufundingoverview.be/funding/european-defence-fund>

reduces the risk of duplicating defence efforts.

## 2. Financial Incentives for Innovation:

The EDF encourages the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as research institutions and universities. This helps to bring fresh ideas and innovation into the defence sector. The fund also aims to promote the use of dual-use technologies, which have both civilian and military applications, as this can make the EU's defence industry more versatile and adaptable.

## 3. Increased Integration of the European Defence Market:

The EDF is part of the broader

effort to integrate the European defence market, which has traditionally been fragmented due to national defence procurement policies. By supporting cross-border collaboration and joint procurement, the EDF aims to create a more efficient and effective European defence market, reducing costs and increasing interoperability.

## 4. Monitoring and Accountability:

The European Commission monitors the implementation of EDF-funded projects, ensuring that they meet EU standards for security and efficiency. The Commission also ensures that the projects are in line with EU defence policies and are not

used to develop technologies that could violate EU law or undermine European security.

## Conclusion

The European Defence Fund (EDF) is a vital initiative aimed at enhancing the EU's defence capabilities and improving its ability to respond to security challenges. By promoting collaboration among Member States, funding defence research and development, and boosting the competitiveness of the European defence industry, the EDF aims to strengthen the EU's capacity to act autonomously and reduce reliance on external actors. While the EDF faces challenges, its potential to foster greater integration, innovation, and efficiency in EU defence makes it a key component of the EU's future security and defence strategy.



# **European Peace Facility (EPF)**



## Introduction

The European Peace Facility (EPF) is a key tool of the EU to enhance its role in global peace and security. Established in 2021 as an off-budget funding mechanism for EU military and defence actions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the EPF enables the EU to provide financial support for peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention, and other peace-related activities outside its borders. This innovative mechanism aims to improve the EU's ability to act in crisis situations, strengthen international partnerships, and maintain regional stability, while respecting the EU's legal frameworks, such as the prohibition of using EU funds for military purposes under its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The EPF is part of the EU's broader strategy to address conflicts and crises in regions where the EU's interests are at stake, such as Africa, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe. It provides a flexible, efficient and effective way to support peace efforts and to respond to the growing complexity of global security challenges.

## Background and Creation

The creation of the EPF was a response to the evolving security landscape and the increasing need for the EU to be more proactive in addressing conflicts. Before the EPF, the EU had various tools at its disposal, such as the Athena mechanism, the African Peace Facility, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) itself. However, these mechanisms had limitations in terms of flexibility, speed and scope.

The EPF was designed to fill this gap. It provides the EU with the financial means to support military and defence-related activities that are crucial for peacebuilding but could not previously be funded directly through the EU budget. It has two financing pillars that improve the efficiency of the decision-making process.

The operations pillar is dedicated to financing the common costs of the CSDP missions and operations, while the assistance measures pillar focuses on financing the EU's support to partner countries and organisations in terms of strengthening their defence

capacities. The establishment of the EPF marked a shift towards a more strategic and coherent approach to security and peace.

## Purpose and Objectives

The facility is designed to strengthen the EU's contribution to global peace by:

### 1. Supporting Peace Operations:

The EPF finances military operations that aim to restore stability in conflict regions. This includes the deployment of peacekeeping forces, the training of military and security personnel and the provision of logistical support to peace missions.

**2. Conflict Prevention:** The EPF helps to prevent conflicts by funding early intervention measures, such as crisis management and the strengthening of local security capacities. It focuses on addressing the root causes of conflicts before they escalate.

**3. Capacity Building:** Another key objective is to strengthen the defence and security capabilities of partner countries and organizations. This can include providing training and equipment to local military forces, as

well as supporting regional security organizations.

### 4. Enhancing EU Global Influence:

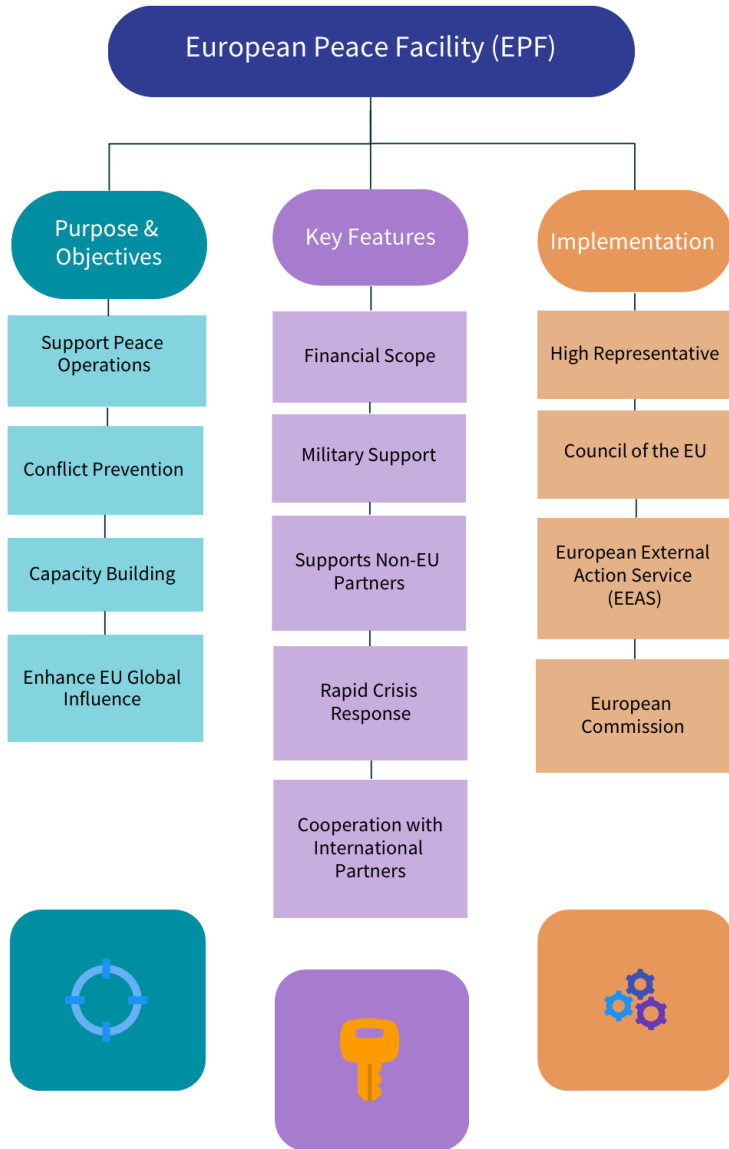
By providing targeted support to peace efforts, the EPF enhances the EU's global role as a peace actor and a partner in multilateral efforts to address global challenges, such as terrorism, organized crime and regional instability.

## Key Features of the EPF

The EPF has several important features that distinguish it from other EU financial instruments. These features are designed to ensure its effectiveness, flexibility, and ability to respond to the complexities of modern conflict situations.

### 1. Financial Scope and

**Flexibility:** The EPF provides funding of more than EUR 17 billion over a seven-year period (2021–2027). This budget allows the EU to act quickly and effectively in crisis situations, providing financial resources for a range of activities, including military training and equipment acquisition, peace operations and conflict prevention measures.



**2. Military Support:** Unlike other EU instruments, which are primarily focused on civilian measures, the EPF provides military support. This includes funding for the training of armed forces,

the supply of equipment and support for peacekeeping operations.

**3. Non-EU Partner Countries:** The EPF is designed to support

non-EU countries and international organizations. It is particularly useful in supporting the EU's partners in regions where peace and stability are threatened, such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Eastern Europe.

- 4. Crisis Response:** The EPF allows the EU to respond rapidly to emerging crises. The speed with which funds can be allocated and deployed ensures that the EU can play an effective role in stabilizing regions that face immediate threats to peace and security.
- 5. Cooperation with International Partners:** The EPF enables the EU to cooperate with a range of international actors, such as the United Nations, the African Union and NATO, in supporting peace operations and conflict resolution efforts. This multilateral approach enhances the effectiveness of the EU's peacebuilding efforts.

sion-making process for the use of EPF funds involves several key EU institutions and bodies:

- 1. Council of the European Union:** Member States collectively decide on the strategic direction of the EPF. They determine which activities should be funded.
- 2. European External Action Service (EEAS):** The EEAS, led by the High Representative, plays a key role in managing and coordinating the EU's foreign policy and security actions. It helps in the planning and implementation of EPF-funded activities and provides expertise on specific conflict zones.
- 3. European Commission:** The European Commission manages the financial aspects of the EPF, ensuring that the funds are used efficiently and in accordance with EU regulations.

## Implementation of the EPF

The European Peace Facility operates under the guidance of the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The deci-

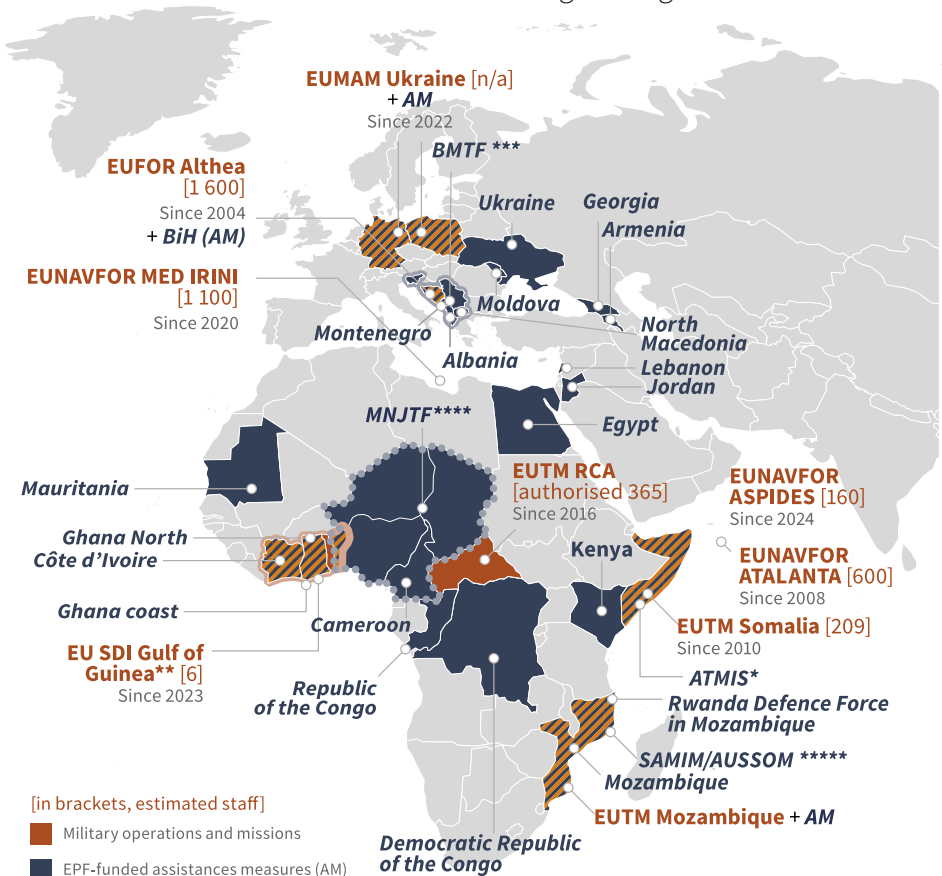
The EPF focuses on several key geographical regions and conflict situations, where EU engagement is deemed critical for maintaining peace and stability. These include:

## Key Areas of Focus

**1. Africa:** Africa remains one of the EPF's primary areas of focus, particularly regions like the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The EU supports African-led peace operations and capacity-building initiatives, working with organizations like

the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

**2. Eastern Europe:** The EU also uses the EPF to support efforts to address instability in Eastern Europe, especially in strengthening the resilience of



\*ATMIS: African Union Transition Mission in Somalia/ AUSSOM : African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia as from 1.1.2025

\*\*EU Security and Defence Initiative/Gulf of Guinea (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo & Benin)

\*\*\*BMTF : Balkan Medical Task Force: Slovenia, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia

\*\*\*\*MNJTf: Multi-National Joint Task force Against Boko Haram: Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria

\*\*\*\*\* SAMIM: Southern Africa Development Community Mission in Mozambique

countries affected by conflict or tension with Russia, such as Ukraine and Moldova.

**3. Middle East:** The EU has also directed EPF funds towards peace and security initiatives in the Middle East, focusing on conflict prevention and stabilization.

**4. Western Balkans:** Through the EPF, the EU supports armed forces of some Western Balkan countries by providing necessary equipment.


role in ensuring that the EU can respond to crises, prevent conflicts and support peacebuilding efforts around the world.

## Conclusion

The European Peace Facility represents a significant step in the EU's efforts to strengthen its global role in promoting peace and security. By providing financial support for peace operations, conflict prevention and capacity building, the EPF enables the EU to act more effectively in crisis situations. While there are challenges and criticisms associated with the facility, its flexibility and focus on military measures make it a vital component of the EU's broader foreign policy strategy.

As global security dynamics continue to evolve, the EPF is likely to play an increasingly important





# **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**



## Introduction

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is a defence initiative introduced to enhance the EU's military capabilities and improve security and defence cooperation among its Member States. Established in 2017, PESCO is a mechanism designed to foster deeper integration in defence and security matters among EU countries that are willing and able to take on more ambitious defence commitments. It aims to make the EU a stronger and more coherent security actor on the global stage by improving the coordination of defence efforts and strengthening military interoperability among EU members. By fostering a more integrated and cooperative defence framework, PESCO aims to contribute to building the EU's ability to act independently in

response to global crises and security challenges.

## Background and Origins

PESCO was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, which came into force in 2009. The treaty called for the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation, but it was not until 2017 that the EU formally activated the initiative. The idea behind PESCO is rooted in the growing need for EU Member States to strengthen their defence capabilities, particularly in light of emerging security challenges such as cyber threats, terrorism, regional instability and assertiveness of external powers. PESCO was officially launched in December 2017 and today 26 out of the 27 EU Member States are participating (Malta opts out).



Source: <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/>

## Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of PESCO is to enable EU Member States to strengthen their military capabilities through enhanced cooperation and joint initiatives. The initiative serves several key objectives:

- 1. Enhancing Defence Capabilities:** PESCO aims to improve the military capacities of EU Member States by encouraging them to meet specific defence commitments based on previously agreed priorities between Member States. These include developing advanced military technologies, improving defence procurement practices, and enhancing military interoperability across Europe.
- 2. Promoting Cooperation and Integration:** PESCO fosters closer defence cooperation between Member States. It encourages countries to work together on joint defence projects, participate in common exercises, and contribute to military missions. By enhancing integration, PESCO seeks to create a more cohesive and efficient defence structure within the EU.
- 3. Increasing Military Interoperability:** One of the challenges facing the EU in terms of
- defence is the lack of interoperability between the armed forces of different Member States. PESCO seeks to address this by promoting standardization in military equipment, training, and operational procedures, making it easier for countries to collaborate in joint missions and operations.
- 4. Enhancing the EU's Capacity to Act Autonomously:** PESCO contributes to this EU goal by improving its defence capabilities and strengthening collaboration among MS in defence matters.
- 5. EU Contributing to Global Security:** PESCO aims to make the EU a more active and credible actor in global security. By improving its defence capabilities and enhancing military cooperation, the EU can better respond to conflicts and crises around the world.

## Key Features of PESCO

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is a defence initiative designed to enhance cooperation and strengthen the military capabilities of EU Member States. While participation is voluntary, countries

that choose to join are expected to make binding commitments, such as meeting defence spending targets, contributing to joint defence projects, and following established rules. This ensures that PESCO is more than just a forum for discussion - it requires meaningful contributions from its members.

PESCO offers flexibility in participation, allowing countries to engage based on their specific capabilities and interests. Not all members contribute equally, with some focusing on projects where they have expertise, which helps to tailor contributions to each country's strengths. The initiative is structured around concrete, project-based cooperation that addresses various defence needs, including the development of advanced military technologies, improvements in training programs and infrastructure upgrades. This approach ensures that tangible outcomes are achieved.

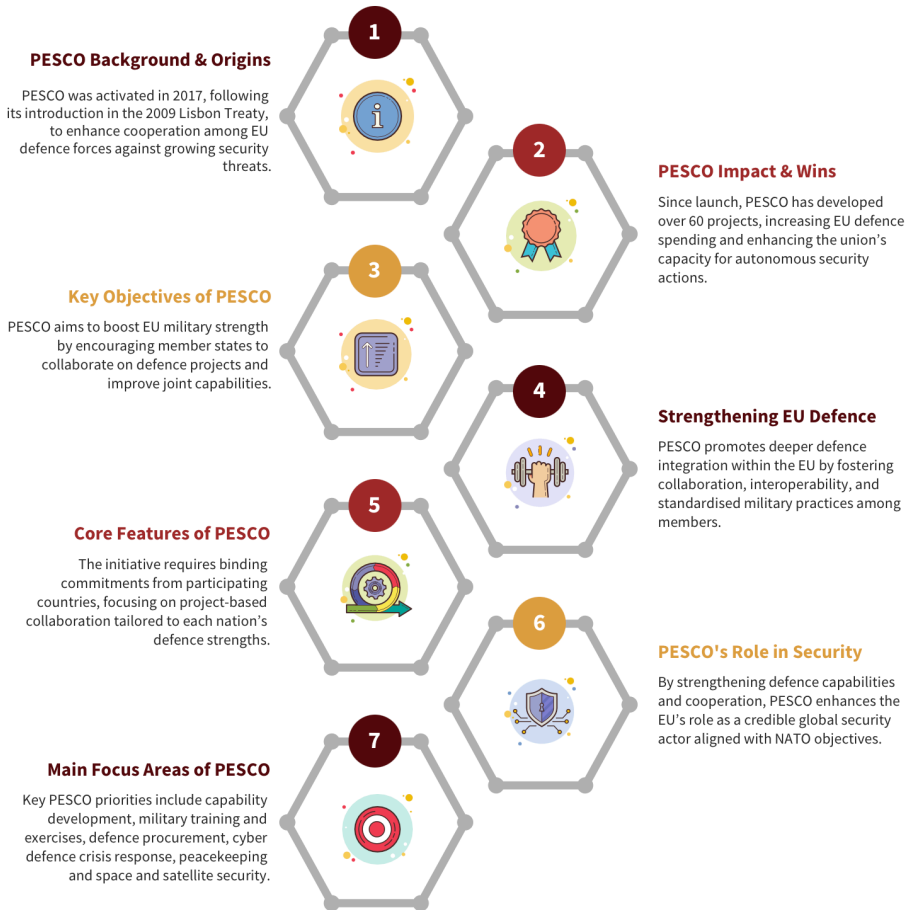
A key goal of PESCO is to improve interoperability between the armed forces of EU Member States. By promoting joint exercises and the standardization of military equipment and procedures, PESCO ensures that EU forces can work together effectively in multinational operations. Additionally, PESCO

complements NATO, aligning its projects with NATO's objectives to avoid duplication and enhance European defence within the broader framework of the transatlantic alliance.

## Key Areas of Focus

PESCO covers a broad range of defence and security issues, with an emphasis on improving military capabilities and cooperation. Some of the key areas of focus for PESCO include:

- 1. Capability Development:** Many PESCO projects are centred on developing and enhancing military capabilities. These projects include the creation of new technologies, such as drones, cyber defence systems and advanced weaponry. Other projects focus on military mobility, making it easier to deploy forces quickly in crisis situations.
- 2. Military Training and Exercises:** PESCO promotes joint military training and exercises to improve the readiness and interoperability of the EU members' armed forces. These exercises allow countries to practice working together in realistic scenarios, enhancing their ability to respond to crises.



**3. Defence Procurement:** PESCO aims to improve the efficiency of defence procurement processes within the EU. By collaborating on the development and purchase of military equipment, Member States can reduce costs and avoid duplication. Shared procurement also ensures that the EU's armed forces are equipped with compatible and standardized technologies.

**4. CyberDefence:** As cyber threats have become an increasing concern for EU security, PESCO has prioritized projects related to cyber defence. These projects focus on strengthening the EU's ability to defend against cyberattacks, protect critical infrastructure and enhance co-operation in the field of cyber-security.

**5. Crisis Response and Peacekeeping:**

PESCO supports EU-led military operations and missions, including peacekeeping and stabilization efforts in conflict zones. Through joint initiatives, PESCO helps Member States contribute to international peace and security, including humanitarian assistance and crisis management.

**6. Space and Satellite Security:**

The EU is increasingly reliant on space-based technologies for defence and security. PESCO includes projects aimed at improving the EU's space capabilities, including satellite communication and surveillance systems that support military operations.

## Achievements and Impact

Since its launch, PESCO has achieved several significant milestones in improving EU defence cooperation. It has facilitated the development of over 60 defence projects, with Member States working together on initiatives ranging from military training to the development of advanced technologies.

PESCO has also improved the EU's ability to act in times of crisis, with

enhanced cooperation leading to more effective and faster responses to global security challenges. Furthermore, PESCO has helped increase the EU's defence spending, with Member States committing to increase their defence budgets and develop more advanced military capabilities. This is a key step toward the EU's goal of capacity for autonomous actions, allowing it to take more responsibility for its own security.

## Conclusion

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is a transformative initiative that seeks to improve EU defence capabilities through deeper cooperation and integration among Member States. By focusing on concrete defence projects and enhancing military interoperability, PESCO contributes to the EU's broader goals of strategic autonomy and global security. Although challenges remain, PESCO has made important progress in strengthening Europe's defence framework and positioning the EU as a more capable and cohesive security actor on the world stage.

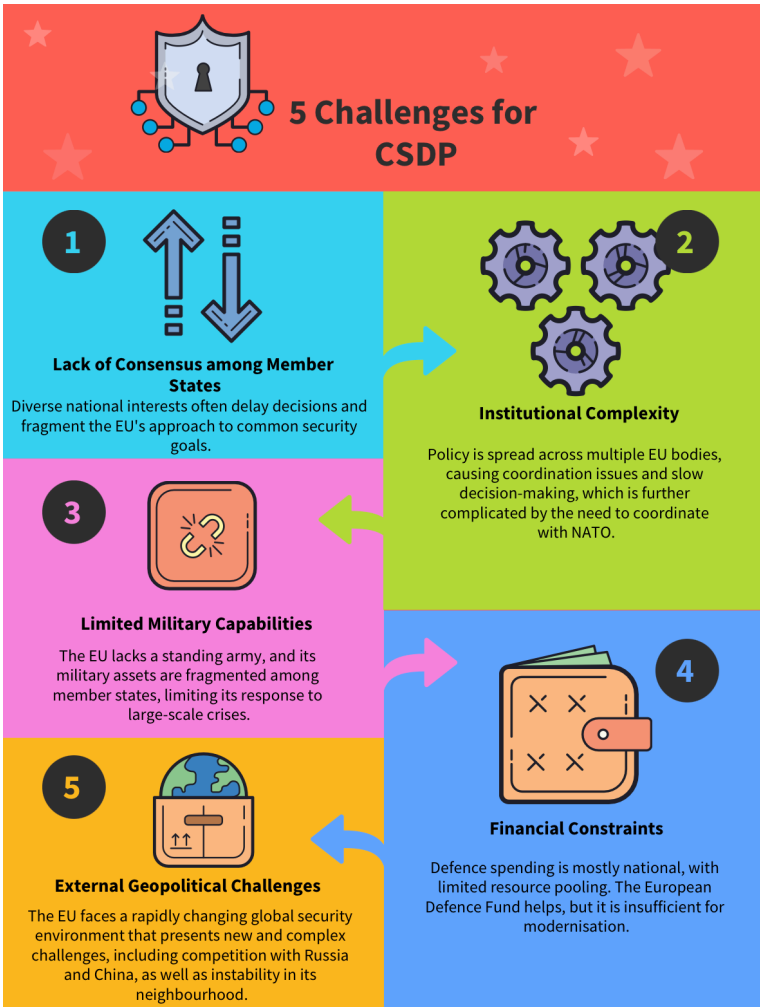


# **Fundamental Challenges of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU**

# Introduction

The European Union (EU) Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) represents a crucial element of the EU's foreign and security policy framework. It was designed to enable the EU to address security and defence challenges beyond its borders, as part of its goal to

become a more robust and autonomous global actor. However, despite its ambitions and goals, the CSDP faces significant challenges that hinder its full potential. These challenges are political, institutional, military, and financial in nature, arising from both internal divisions within the EU and external geopolitical factors.



## **1. Lack of Consensus among Member States**

CSDP is sometimes challenged by the lack of consensus among EU Member States regarding defence and security priorities. The EU is a union of 27 diverse countries, each with its own national interests, security concerns and military capabilities. This diversity sometimes leads to significant differences in how countries view the EU's role in global security, making it difficult to agree on common goals, strategies or actions.

The CSDP is based on the principle of unanimity, meaning that all Member States must agree (or at least not oppose) before a decision can be made. This unanimity requirement sometimes leads to delays and compromises in policy decisions. For example, countries with historical ties to NATO are more likely to prioritize NATO's role in defence, while other states tend to emphasize the EU's autonomy in defence matters. This divergence of priorities sometimes leads to a fragmented approach to security, as EU Member States pursue their own defence strategies, with limited coordination.

Moreover, Member States have varying levels of military capabilities,

and there is a notable disparity in defence spending. Some countries invest heavily in defence, while others rely on NATO for security. This lack of a common security and defence culture makes it difficult for the EU to present a united front in the face of external threats.

## **2. Institutional Complexity**

The complex CSDP procedures can take time and impede quick and efficient decision-making and coordination. The EU's security and defence policy machinery is spread across multiple institutions/bodies, including the European Council, the Council of the EU (with its preparatory bodies), the European Commission, the European Parliament and the High Representative/European External Action Service (EEAS). Each of these bodies has distinct roles and mandates, which can lead to coordination problems and inefficiencies.

The High Representative, supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS), for example, is responsible for implementing the EU's security and defence policy, but its role in defence matters is more limited compared to national defence ministries. The most critical decisions on security and defence are adopted in the Euro-



pean Council and the Council of the EU, but their decisions require consensus from all Member States, which sometimes slows the decision-making process.

This complexity is further complicated by the need to coordinate with NATO, particularly in crises. Although many EU Member States are also NATO allies (which in principle makes this coordination easier), certain differences in membership, priorities and procedures of both organisations sometimes hamper better coordination.

### **3. Limited Military Capabilities**

Although the EU has made significant strides in establishing the CSDP framework, its military capabilities remain limited, particularly when compared to other major global powers. The EU's military capacities are still fragmented among the Member States, with no standing EU army or common defence force. While the EU has developed a variety of civilian and military missions (such as peacekeeping and crisis management operations), its military assets are often not sufficiently integrated or well-funded to respond to large-scale crises.

While the EU has established tools such as the EU Battle Groups (EUBGs) and the European Defence Agency (EDA), these units are too small and insufficiently equipped to engage in high-intensity military operations. Member States are also reluctant to pool and share military assets, particularly in areas like air and naval forces, where national sovereignty and autonomy are seen as priorities.

To that end, the EU has been developing a Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) that would enable the EU to swiftly deploy up to 5,000 troops to respond to imminent threats and react to crisis situations outside EU territory. It can be tailored to different phases and scenarios, ranging from initial entry to reinforcement, or as a reserve force to secure an exit, depending on the mission, context or situation.

### **4. Financial Constraints**

The EU's ability to fund defence and security initiatives is another major challenge for the CSDP. The funds the EU Commission allocates for security and defence projects are significantly lower than those of many individual EU Member States.

Defence spending is largely handled at the national level, and there is limited pooling of resources among EU Member States. The European Defence Fund (EDF), established in 2017, is an important step toward addressing this issue by providing funding for collaborative defence research and development. However, the EDF's resources are still limited, and the fund cannot replace the significant investments needed for military modernization, joint procurement, and technological development across the EU.

The lack of sufficient funding also means that the EU's missions and operations are often constrained by budgetary limits, leading to a reliance on smaller, lower-cost operations that may not be able to address larger security challenges. This financial constraint is further exacerbated by the need to balance defence spending with other EU priorities.

The ReArm Europe Plan/ Readiness 2030 aims to boost defence funding by giving EU MS more financial flexibility. It aims to achieve through:

- Activating the national escape clause of the Stability and Growth

Pact, allowing Member States to increase defence spending

- Launching a EUR 150 billion loan instrument - Security Action for Europe (SAFE) - that will help countries invest in key defence areas like missile defence, drones, and cyber security
- Supporting the European Investment Bank Group in widening the scope of its lending to defence and security projects and accelerating the Savings and Investment Union to mobilise private capital so that the European defence industry is not reliant on public investment alone.

## 5. External Geopolitical Challenges

The EU faces a rapidly changing global security environment that presents new and complex challenges for the CSDP. The resurgence of great power competition, particularly with Russia and China, has put significant pressure on the EU's ability to maintain a robust defence strategy. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, for example, has exposed vulnerabilities in European defence and the EU's dependence on NATO for collective security. The EU has responded with sanctions

and diplomatic measures, but its ability to militarily intervene in crises such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict is limited due to its reliance on NATO and the absence of a strong EU military capability.

In addition to the threat posed by Russia, the EU must contend with the rising influence of China, which has expanded its presence in Europe through economic investments and strategic partnerships. China's growing global reach presents challenges for the EU's economic and security interests, as it must balance its relationship with China while addressing security concerns related to Chinese activities, particularly in the realm of hybrid and cyber threats.

The EU is also faced with instability in its neighbourhood, particularly in the Western Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa. Conflicts in Syria, Libya, and the Sahel region

continue to strain EU resources and undermine its ability to maintain stability in its vicinity.


## Conclusion

The EU Common Security and Defence Policy faces a multitude of challenges that hinder its effectiveness as a tool for managing European and global security. These challenges are rooted in different strategic culture and threat perceptions of Member States, institutional complexity, limited military capabilities, financial constraints and an increasingly complex and volatile global security environment. While the EU has made significant progress in developing its defence and security framework, it remains heavily reliant on NATO and the US for its security and it lacks the necessary capabilities and resources to be more autonomous.



To overcome these challenges, the EU must strengthen internal cohesion, invest in defence capabilities and foster deeper cooperation among Member States. Additionally, the EU should explore ways to better integrate its military and civilian capacities and ensure that its defence spending is aligned with its strategic goals. Only by addressing these fundamental challenges can the EU hope to realize its ambitions of becoming a more effective and autonomous global actor in defence and security.





# About the Author



**Sandro Knezović, PhD**, is a Research Adviser at the Institute for Development and International Relations in Zagreb, Croatia. He is an international relations scholar with more than twenty years of experience in the academic sector. His research focuses on international security and strategic studies, in particular the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU, as well as the policies of NATO and other global actors.

Dr. Knezović was the first Croatian visiting research fellow at the renowned European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) in Paris and a visiting lecturer at several universities in Japan. He has further broadened his academic and professional expertise through numerous research fellowships in the United States, Norway, Turkey, and other countries.

He has lectured at numerous programs organised by the European Security and Defence College and currently serves as a Co-Chair of the Regional Stability Study Group within the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes. He is also a member of the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium.

Dr. Knezović has published extensively on issues related to his areas of expertise and has participated in numerous international research projects and educational frameworks, ensuring that his expertise contributes to policymaking processes at the national, European and international levels.





