The **7D**s

for Sustainability

Debt
Decarbonisation
Defence   IN DEPTH
Democracy
Demography
De-risking Globalisation
Digitalisation

Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

The 7Ds for Sustainability - Defence in Depth

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April 2024

Credits

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AFET	Committee on Foreign Affairs
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AUKUS	Trilateral Security Partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States
BUDG	Committee on Budgets
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defence
CCC	Conference of Committee Chairs
CDP	Capability Development Plan
CEDE	Committe on Security and Defence
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
DIANA	Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic
DG	Directorate-General
DG DEFIS	Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDF	European Defence Fund
EDIP	European Defence Investment Programme
EDT	Emerging and Disruptive Technology
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
EP	European Parliament
ESDC	European Security and Defence College
EU	European Union
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HQ	Headquarters
HR	High-Representative
HR/VP	High Representative / Vice President
IFV	Infantry Fighting Vehicle
ING2	Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation, and the Strengthening of Integrity, Transparency and Accountability in the European Parliament
INGE	Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation
ITRE	Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
JURI	Committee on Legal Affairs
MBT	Main Battle Tank
MFF	Multi-Annual Financial Framework
MPCC	Military Planning and Conduct Capability
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDPP	NATO Defence Planning Process
OCCAR	Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation
OHQ	Operation Headquarters
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
QUAD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between Australia, India, Japan and the United States
R&I	Research and Innovation
R&T	Research and Technology
SECDEFPOL	Security and Defence Directorate
SEDE	Sub-Committee on Security and Defence
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

The Defence Pyramid: Ten Building Blocks for a Viable European Defence Union

`Klaus Welle`

When an idea like the defence community re-emerges regularly over the course of 70 years but is never realised, what does this tell us? The message is, first, that the idea is backed by a strong rationale that does not allow us simply to shelve it and move on; but also, that the preconditions for its implementation have been absent.

What is the strong rationale behind the European Defence Union?

Europe is a continent that is uniting in a slow but steady process that now involves the 27 member states of the EU and more than 440 million citizens. The Union has integrated many of its policies. Today it is unimaginable that one of its member states would be attacked by a third party without the others rallying to its support. An article in one of the EU's treaties explicitly obliges the member states to come to the others' defence. This is Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union, which is generally regarded as a stronger legal obligation than Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, on which NATO was founded.

Why then has the Defence Union not been realised yet?

The original treaty for the European defence community was made impossible by an alliance of Gaullist and Communist members of the Assemblée Nationale in France. This opened the way for the establishment of NATO as the transatlantic security pillar, and it has successfully guaranteed its members' security for nearly 70 years. The Alliance is here to stay. Thus, any new arrangement has to prove that it both adds value and does not detract from a very successful partnership.

What is the new challenge forcing us to change?

Europe and the US are now confronted with challenges stemming from Russia and China. Since 2014 at the latest, Russia has engaged in aggressive policies aimed at destabilising security on the European continent. Its annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its subjugation of the Donbas were followed by the bombing of millions of Syrian citizens. The movement of Syrian refugees that followed destabilised politics in Western and Central Europe; and this, in turn, emboldened Russia's allies on the extreme right in several member states. The Kremlin sponsors the semi-official Wagner group, using it to stabilise dictatorial regimes in Africa and further weaken Europe's influence in the South. The EU's northern member states have been forced to update their threat perception, which has led Finland and Sweden to decide to join NATO.

Russia has moved from being a challenge mainly for the EU's eastern member states to posing a threat to the Union in its entirety. Russia is trying to change Europe's borders with violence. It wants Ukraine to disappear from the map as an independent country and is seeking to bring Belarus to submission. This would effectively re-establish its empire and its dominance over Central and Eastern Europe, and would create strong pressure on both the northern and southern parts of the continent.
We have to understand that Russia's war against Ukraine is not an isolated regional event but part of a

strategy to dominate Europe as a whole. Russia is trying to re-establish on the European continent rules typical of nineteenth-century empires, including land grabbing and destroying weaker states. The EU is standing in the way.

Looking at the map, one sees that today the European continent is structured by two principles and two principles only. The first is the EU, which encompasses citizens and states in the west and the centre. Based on voluntary integration, the rule of law and democracy, it draws its neighbours closely into its orbit through contractual relations and voluntary agreements. The EU provides a home for the nation state. The second principle is Empire. It is represented by Russia in the east, which is trying to subjugate its neighbourhood by means of dependencies, pressure and violence.

And in eastern Eurasia?

Having abandoned the idea of China's 'peaceful rise', President Xi Jinping represents a new phase in the development of Communist China. Within the country, Hong Kong's special status is no longer respected; hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs have been put in 're-education' camps; and dissidents, business leaders and party activists have disappeared without a trace. Moreover, the traditional checks and balances within the Communist party have been abolished, including term limits and the representation of different factions within the leadership.

Outside China, the pressure on its neighbours is mounting. The nine-dash line is a very aggressive interpretation of Communist China's territorial claims in the South China Sea—an interpretation that leaves to its neighbours basically only their immediate coastal areas. The invasion of Taiwan by China or its blockade by sea are now considered likely options and are expected to take place in the short- or medium-term. They have started to become part of Beijing's military preparations. Moreover, the US military has started to war-game a direct confrontation with China in the scenario where Beijing would attack Taiwan.

In response, we are witnessing the build-up of newly institutionalised forms of security cooperation in Asia under American initiative and leadership. There is the quadrilateral security dialogue between the US, Japan, India and Australia (QUAD); the AUKUS cooperation between Australia, the UK and the US; and most recently, successful attempts at Camp David to get South Korea and Japan to overcome the negative sentiments of the past and enter into more structured cooperation. In addition, India shares with the West an interest in defending against China.

The context of the conflict in Asia between China and the US strongly resembles the situation before the First World War in Europe. An up-and-coming industrial power (then Germany, now China) threatens the status of the established sea power (then the UK, now the US) by building a major fleet. It is crucial that the current situation turns out differently from the former one. One sees, then, that security in Eurasia is threatened from both sides, the east and the west.

The EU complements NATO

The EU has played a decisive role in supporting and stabilising Ukraine. In a time when everything is being weaponised, it has successfully complemented the tools available to support Ukraine. It has made it easier for the member states to welcome millions of Ukrainian refugees, moved quickly to provide a connection to the European energy grid and allowed Ukraine to import food items without having to pay customs fees. Moreover, it has imposed against Russia a package of sanctions that are more severe than those levied against any other country. Importantly, the Union has brought hope to Ukrainians by offering them the prospect of membership of the EU.

The EU has also activated the European Peace Facility to acquire weapons for Ukraine and has initiated the joint procurement of armaments among member states. The Union has developed in practice into a strategic pillar for European security, a success that can be built upon for the future.

We are living and will continue to live in times of the weaponisation of everything. Russia has weaponised food by blocking Ukraine's grain exports, in this way threatening Africa with hunger and death. The Kremlin weaponised refugees by facilitating their access to the border between Belarus and Poland, the aim being to destabilise the latter. Energy was weaponised in the hope that Europeans' support for Ukraine would crumble when they were confronted by a cold winter and skyrocketing gas prices.

The EU has always needed NATO, but in a time when all things are being weaponised, NATO no longer possesses the complete toolkit needed to deal with security challenges. To provide security for the European continent today, NATO and the EU are nowadays necessarily complementary.

The security architecture of the future

Since the Second World War, the US has decreased its defence spending considerably. It is no longer able to manage two major confrontations in different parts of the world at the same time. Its main focus will have to shift increasingly to Asia, where its status as the leading global power is being challenged by China.

Isolationist tendencies inside the US have dangerously increased and are being nurtured by the impression that Europeans are not contributing enough for their own defence. Donald Trump was the first US president in living memory to seriously consider whether the US should remain a member of NATO. Important underlying arguments were the perceived and real shortcomings of European investment in defence and the perception that Europe was free-riding on security.

Europeans will have to take more responsibility for their own territorial defence within both NATO and the EU. And as Washington has repeatedly requested, they will have to close the capability gaps that currently exist between themselves and the US. Europe and the US have to establish a partnership of equals. The EU can play a decisive role in this process. It has the political, legal and financial infrastructure that is a precondition to overcoming a number of structural weaknesses in European defence. This will help to build up, over time, a European Defence Union.

The defence pyramid

I would like to propose a process for building up a European Defence Union with complete capacity. Developing this Defence Union would be based on the concept of a defence pyramid and would address weaknesses systematically in a step-by-step process. The European Defence Union has to be built from a solid base and not from the roof down. Major changes in defence take a decade or more to become effective. Thus, building the Defence Union has to start now. Ten steps for building the defence pyramid are suggested here and will be outlined in detail in the chapters that follow. These steps differ from one another in nature.
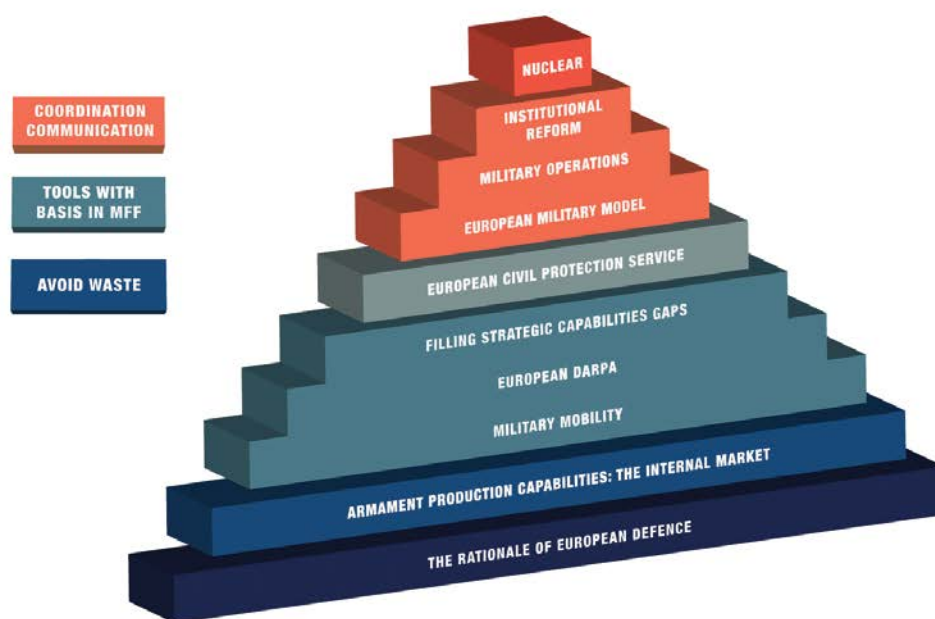
First, make the case for why a major European effort in the area of defence is necessary: the rationale (Step 1). Can we make it clear that, as explained above, we live in a situation that has fundamentally changed, where the changes will last for decades to come?

Second, carry out a number of actions that are long overdue and that arguably only the EU can achieve: cut waste through Europe-wide military procurement (Step 2), ensure that all logistical activities, including transport, can be carried out effectively across borders (Step 3) and become competitive in military-related research through a European DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) (Step 4).

At a time when the average national debt level in the EU stands at 100% of GDP, increased defence efforts will need to exploit economies of scale. The key advantage that the US enjoys over the EU in the procurement of armaments is its common market for armament products. Because of this common market, the US relies on just over 30 systems, whereas in the EU with its exemptions there are more than 170. This leads to productions being on a smaller scale in the EU, higher costs per unit and a diffusion of the means available for research and development. It is estimated that not using the current exemptions from the single market could result in overall savings of close to 30%.

Transport and logistics capabilities are critical for winning wars. If materials or personnel cannot be provided in the right place at the right time, they remain useless. This is especially true for any support needed by the Baltic countries in the face of aggression by Russia, which could very quickly cut them off from land support through the Suwałki Gap.

The EU traditionally finances transport infrastructure investments in its Multi-Annual Financial Framework. It needs to multiply its efforts in this area.

The US regularly complains that Europeans are not contributing sufficiently to the common defence. Moreover, Europe's armaments industry does not appear to be keeping up on the technological front. Some fear that a combination of these two factors could even endanger future military cooperation among NATO partners.

Third, introduce a European Civil Protection Service (Step 6) with the aim of providing, for the first time, Europe-wide protection. At the request of then Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, Michel Barnier convincingly demonstrated the usefulness and feasibility of such a Protection Service, which would provide practical solidarity in times of natural catastrophes and major accidents. It should be fully put into practice in the 2024–9 legislature.

Fourth, complete then the development of the European Defence Union, bringing it to full capability, by addressing the strategic capabilities gap (Step 5), developing a military model (7), initiating operational reform (8) and carrying out institutional reform (Step 9). The question of the EU's nuclear capability (Step 10) will also have to be addressed.

Armament Production Capabilities: The Internal Market

Christian Mölling

In response to Russia's war of aggression, the EU is showing a very high level of commitment and has been taking extraordinary measures. There is a good reason for this. The Union is facing the largest war to take place on European soil in the last 75 years. The conflict threatens to shape the security order like none other in the last decades—and not to the benefit of Europeans. Only the EU area of security and defence remains a largely unaffected island in this storm. Key guidelines of the EU in defence have not been impacted, and the EU has done little to change its industries or armed forces. At the same time, the longer-term outcomes of cooperation on EU defence show that paradigms and promises have failed to deliver.

Two decades of trying to treat defence as a market, with consolidation as a prime objective, show that things are not that simple. EU regulations, money and other incentives do not appeal to member states. The only European security actor generating economies of scale in Europe's arms sector is the US defence industry. The governments of the member states channel more resources around the EU than through it. While the number of PESCO projects is growing, the overall level of cooperation is decreasing.

The time for testing/applying abstract concepts like simple market approaches is over. War is back on European soil, and US support for Europe has been thrown into question. According to recent estimates, after the fighting in Ukraine stops, Europe has three to five years to prepare before Russia might launch another attack, perhaps on EU territory. This gives clear indications about the direction that has to be taken, the magnitude of what has to be done and timeline for completion. Military effectiveness and timeliness are top priorities. Europeans are rediscovering that tackling redundancies in industrial capacity and production is essential to fighting wars. This means that the future business model for industries must change. It is already clear that the following capability areas are priorities for collective defence: land warfare equipment, 24/7 warfare, digitalisation and electronic warfare, integrated air and missile defence, logistics (including special vehicles), long-range missiles and deep precision strike weaponry.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Declaring a decade of defence with more investment and fewer regulations	**Giving shape to the industrial base with quantity as the top priority**	**Becoming a European buyer and lender by going where no one else can go**
Project 1	Use NATO defence planning as the European level of ambition (NATO as the Gold Standard), and establish what the contribution of the EU and its member states will be. This will make it possible to tap into the member states' defence planning and will make cooperation more relevant.	Integrate Ukraine into European defence, including into the defence industrial base. Learn from their experience.	Amazon for defence: offer an electronic marketplace for defence commodities like fuel, oils etc..
Project 2	Use regulation as an enabler. The EU has to consider which regulations it could strengthen and which it could make more flexible to unleash industrial and technological potential. Such moves have to be scalable and well planned.	The new Commission has to balance innovation and short-term industrial capacity. Demand may explode in 2024–2025. To meet this demand, identify options for European regulations and minimum standards.	Enable and sustain critical infrastructure: this must be seen as a public good. Let the EU engage in making the defence infrastructure more sustainable and resilient by reviewing the priorities of the common budget.
Project 3	Rebalance economic efficiency and military effectiveness. Take the economic risk of investing heavily in sub-optimal products. Should we find ourselves in a situation where time is short, having to improve what is imperfect will be better than having to start at the beginning.	Focus on what is needed now! Leave the development of complex platforms to member states. Give priority to what is urgent. Focus on land warfare. Develop a European vehicle that meets minimum European standards, is based on existing systems for MBTs or IFVs, and carries a fixed price for all buyers.	Become both buyer and lender. The EU should buy the equipment needed for logistics, and then either operate it or rent it out.

Military Mobility (Transport and Logistics)

Mihai Chihaia

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has marked the return of full-scale conflict to the European continent. In consequence, the core of security and defence in Europe has shifted back towards territorial defence. In this new geopolitical context, military mobility is a top priority for EU, NATO and their member states. Military mobility is a multidisciplinary area that combines all activities aimed at ensuring the swift movement of armed forces and military equipment. Military mobility is also a crucial feature of a credible deterrence posture: being able to move troops quickly will deter any potential adversary from taking military action.

While the importance the EU has given to military mobility has constantly grown over the past years, the alarm bells rang after Russia invaded Ukraine. The war underlined the urgent necessity of tackling existing weaknesses. In March 2022 the EU adopted the Strategic Compass, its strategy for security and defence. The document put a premium on enhancing military mobility and set priorities, such as the development of the EU Action Plan 2.0 for military mobility, which was delivered in November 2022. A year later EU defence ministers approved the EU Capability Development Priorities, which underscores both the importance of military mobility as an essential strategic enabler and the urgency of making progress in this area within and beyond the EU. Military mobility is also a flagship project for EU–NATO cooperation, making clear the complementary nature of the two organisations.

To enhance military mobility, the EU needs to overcome various challenges. In many places the transport infrastructure is out of date and thus unsuitable for transporting military equipment. Moreover, the EU funding dedicated to enhancing military mobility (funding for dual-use transport infrastructure projects) is very low compared to the overall needs. Finally, the administrative procedures for crossing borders involve heavy bureaucratic processes that significantly slow down the movement of equipment and forces.

Addressing these challenges and enhancing military mobility is a long-term project. There is no single solution; rather, the EU and the member states need to make progress simultaneously across multiple policy areas, both civilian and military. In all of this, political will is essential. This should translate into political support for committing the resources needed to develop military mobility. It is important to recognise that many aspects of military mobility have a civilian side. Supporting this side of the matter (e.g., developing the transport infrastructure) contributes significantly to enhancing military mobility.

Funding at EU level for dual-use transport infrastructure is critical and should be increased, as should national-level funding to enhance military mobility. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder engagement platforms are required at both European and national level to create a whole-of-government approach to advancing military mobility goals. These platforms should bring together all relevant actors, including those from ministries of defence, transport and finance; from civilian organisations; and from the private sector.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Enhancing high-level political support and funding for military mobility	**Creating multi-stakeholder engagement platforms**	**Strengthening cooperation with partners**
Project 1	Keep military mobility high on the EU political agenda in view of the European elections, the EU strategic agenda for 2024–2029 and the priorities of the next European Commission.	Establish an EU–NATO centre of excellence for military mobility.	Develop a lessons-learned process aimed at helping both the EU and NATO benefit from what the war in Ukraine demonstrates in terms of military mobility.
Project 2	EU member states should commit to a new and more ambitious military mobility pledge with clear commitments.	Share best practices for enhancing military mobility in regional platforms such as Bucharest 9 and the Three Seas Initiative.	Set up exchanges on military mobility between senior leaders of the EU and NATO to assess progress made and explore ways of advancing cooperation.
Project 3	Include significant funds for military mobility in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework.	Establish a dialogue platform to explore the role and contribution of the private sector to enhancing military mobility.	Prioritise military mobility in the security and defence dialogues with partners, such as the US, the UK and Norway.

The Case for a European DARPA

Ionela Maria Ciolan

Leadership in technological innovation has become a crucial aspect of geopolitical power, with the US and China at the forefront. The EU is currently lagging behind in this area. Being part of the technological race does not just mean striving for technological and innovative superiority: it also has crucial implications for political order, economic competitiveness and national security. As we have learned from the past two years of war in Ukraine, defence innovation can play an important role on the battlefield. The integration of drones, cyberspace, satellites, data and digitisation on the battlefields of Ukraine has proved to be essential in the fight against a larger and more powerful opponent. The integration of emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) in this conflict provides a glimpse of how they will be an important element of future capabilities and warfare. Future wars will depend on technological defence as military capabilities are transformed by rapid developments and disruptive innovations. This trend will revolutionise the ability to wage war and pose significant challenges to the security and defence of the EU. Developments in human enhancement and new materials promise to increase the effectiveness and survivability of military units, while disruptive technologies such as hypersonic and directed energy weapons will bring new dynamics to a combat zone. Furthermore, advances in artificial intelligence, space technologies, quantum technologies, nanomaterials and additive manufacturing will dramatically change the whole process of planning and conducting both military missions and support components: communications, intelligence, and force and logistics capabilities.

If one compares the EU's defence innovation with that of the world's major powers, it becomes clear that Europeans have a long way to go. Recent data from the European Defence Agency shows that in 2022 its member states spent only €3.5 billion on research and technology, which is merely 1.4% of their total defence spending. By contrast, the US Department of Defense spent $34 billion on defence technology innovation in 2022, or 4% of its defence budget. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a US agency responsible for defence innovation, alone had a budget of $3.8 billion in 2022. At the EU level, however, the sums allocated to defence innovation (at EDA, DG DEFIS or other DGs) are in the range of a few hundred million euros, significantly less than other technologically advanced countries. Due to the lack of transparency in China, it is difficult to find data for that country that could be used to make comparisons. Nevertheless, military developments in China show that the country is seeking to dominate the EDT landscape, including AI, quantum technologies and hypersonic weapon systems.

The EU needs to innovate if it wants to remain competitive and reach its goal of strategic responsibility. Developing the next best thing in technology and defence will depend on making the European innovation ecosystem more flexible and agile and less averse to taking risks. It is time to have the courage to apply the American DARPA model to critical disruptive projects in the European ecosystem. The US approach has led to real changes and remarkable successes since it began responding to the Soviet Union's Sputnik in 1958. To have a real impact in the technological race, the EU will need strong political commitment, long-term vision and a culture of risk-taking. If the EU fails to foster its own defence innovation ecosystem, it will lose its ability to act on the global stage.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Focusing on governance and legislation	**Providing funding**	**Improving cooperation and oversight**
Project 1	Create a legal framework dedicated to establishing a European DARPA and to ensuring its autonomy, and more specifically, its independence from traditional bureaucratic structures within the EU. Clearly define the agency's mandate, scope and decision-making powers to improve its agility to respond to emerging challenges.	Allocate substantial budget to the European DARPA so that it can undertake ambitious research projects and attract top-tier scientists, engineers and innovators. Commit to multi-year funding to provide stability and continuity for long-term research initiatives.	Encourage open innovation: foster collaboration between universities, research institutions, industry partners and start-ups to accelerate the development and commercialisation of new technologies at European level.
Project 2	Establish a comprehensive strategic road map, outlining the goals, milestones and expected impact of the European DARPA. But ensure that it remains flexible and agile, and thus able to adapt to changing technological environments or unforeseen challenges.	Invest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education programmes to cultivate a skilled workforce capable of contributing to the European DARPA's research objectives. Implement initiatives to attract and retain top-tier talent within the European innovation ecosystem.	Develop a partnership with NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) to foster collaboration on emerging and disruptive technologies for defence and security. This collaboration would allow the European DARPA to access NATO's expertise and resources, while providing NATO with access to the European DARPA's innovation ecosystem.
Project 3	Adopt a risk-tolerant approach: encourage high-risk, high-reward research initiatives aimed at exploring disruptive ideas that may not attract traditional funding sources, especially ideas related to deep tech.	Establish a flexible funding architecture: provide adaptable funding mechanisms that can support projects at different stages of development, from early exploration to pilot testing and commercialisation.	Institute a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact and effectiveness of research projects funded by the European DARPA. Regularly review and adjust strategies based on performance metrics and lessons learned.

Filling Strategic Capability Gaps

Daniel Fiott

Russia's brutal war on Ukraine has exposed the shortcomings of Europe's defence capabilities. The need to assist Ukraine and defend Europe has made it clear that major capability shortfalls in areas such as air and missile defence and ammunition persist. The EU has a tried and tested capability development process designed to identify strategic gaps. However, the need to prioritise the most urgent strategic capabilities and to fill them quickly remains a major challenge. To ensure that the member states can collectively develop strategic capabilities, the EU has developed tools such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Moreover, it plans to introduce a European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP) to finance joint defence projects. Additionally, in early 2024 the European Council agreed to increase the EDF by €1.5 billion under the mid-term revision of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF). This brings the Fund to €9.5 billion until 2027. Furthermore, in 2024 the European Investment Bank finally agreed to invest—albeit very modestly—in defence innovation.

With a possible political shift in Washington on the horizon, EU member states need to show a renewed commitment to capability development. This means ensuring that the European defence industrial base can draw on sustainable levels of investment, labour skills, research and technology, and secure supply chains. However, filling strategic capability gaps also requires a greater focus on those capability projects that most enhance European defence. Working with NATO is paramount in this regard, but the EU should look to invest in capability areas where it is unsustainable for individual member states to do so on their own (e.g. air and missile defence, naval platforms, cyber defence and space systems). As underlined by the war on Ukraine, Europe cannot contribute to its own defence and to deterrence unless it develops strategic capabilities that would deny Russia's revisionist aims—now and over the longer term.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Making a meaningful contribution to defence and deterrence in Europe	**Increasing joint investment for EU defence capabilities**	**Ramping up defence production capacity in the EU**
Project 1	Focus the EDF, PESCO and the future EDIP on the production of air and missile defence, naval equipment, main battle tanks, and space and cyber capabilities.	Increase national defence spending to at least 2% of GDP. At least 20% of this should be invested in equipment and ideally jointly, in accordance with PESCO binding commitments.	Invest in new defence manufacturing sites and fill skills shortages in the defence labour market, using the EIB and leveraging private investment.
Project 2	Build on current EU investments in existing strategic enablers such as space, cyberdefence and military mobility.	Agree swiftly to an EDIP that is backed by substantial financial means (approximately €100 billion) under the next MFF (2028–34).	Place large and sustainable pre-orders for ammunition and defence equipment to stimulate demand and ensure production for at least the next decade.
Project 3	Continue streamlining the EU's capability development processes (CDP and CARD), providing more effective linkages to NATO (NDPP).	Experiment with existing and new EU legislation to ensure that the Union's procurement and transfer regulations aid production.	Use EU trade tools to secure strategic supplies of critical raw materials and to invest in secure supply chains with strategic partners.

Reinforcing the European Civil Protection Service

Paola Tessari

Over the years the territory of the EU has increasingly been hit by both natural and man-made disasters, ranging from floods and earthquakes to industrial accidents and intentional acts, such as terrorist attacks. The ramifications of such incidents, together with their tendency to intensify and spread beyond nations, necessitate collaboration among EU members and the possession of transboundary crisis-management capabilities.

With this in mind, the EU has implemented various initiatives to encourage collaboration among and support for member states. At the centre of the EU's action in this regard is the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which plays a complex role in coordinating the various actors and combining their actions at multiple levels (national and international). In his 2006 report For a European Civil Protection Force: Europe Aid, written against the backdrop of severe crises, Michel Barnier detailed further actions that would need to be taken to achieve a more effective EU Civil Protection Service while maintaining a decentralised approach. Significant efforts were made to establish the voluntary pooling of resources by participating member states, which then progressed into the launch of rescEU, an additional reserve of assets (medical kits, firefighting helicopters, protective equipment etc.), purchased and managed by member states, but fully funded by the EU.

However, with devasting wildfires hitting EU countries last summer, the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine, the threat landscape is evolving. Moreover, additional challenges are emerging, including events usually considered less likely. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has acted as a wake-up call about the threat of nuclear weapons and has also shed light on the risk of the deliberate dissemination of other hazardous materials in populated areas. Both elements have led to calls for dedicated civil defence measures. In addition, hybrid-warfare techniques add to the threat landscape, with a variety of actions able to exploit a state's vulnerabilities at all levels of society, including its institutions and infrastructure, with the aim of causing disruption to vital services and critical entities.

To fully address unprecedented emergencies, a more effective EU Civil Protection Service should take a comprehensive approach that prepares for evolving crisis scenarios, is strategically positioned across EU territory and is easily interoperable. Anticipated scenarios should include low-probability events since these—as the pandemic has shown—can have the highest impact on society and demand a rapid deployment of resources. As suggested in Barnier's report, the additional pooling of voluntary resources by member states could be enabled as a reinforced layer of protection. Furthermore, EU action in civil protection could benefit from existing resources, by offering dedicated follow-up on the outcomes of EU-supported projects. Coordination and alignment with other existing crisis-management initiatives could also be enhanced. A more effective system should also take a whole-of-society approach to resilience, empowering all actors, private and public, to act to ensure a state's security. This approach could be effective given that hybrid-warfare techniques have the potential to hit all elements of society and cause cascading effects. Among the measures for ensuring resilient systems and communities, clear communication strategies at the institutional level, risk and vulnerability assessments of critical entities, and information and awareness campaigns are key to empowering all actors with the tools to contribute to security.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Enhancing civil-defence preparedness	**Reinforcing the resilience of the whole society, with specific measures focusing on people and infrastructures**	**Avoiding duplication at the EU and international levels by building on existing initiatives and resources**
Project 1	Expand decision-makers' situational awareness, anticipation and coordination of 'high-impact–low-probability' events.	Establish awareness campaigns at different levels to empower individuals and the wider public with the tools to act in emergencies and to know where to find reliable information.	Launch measures to build upon the outcomes of EU-funded projects and facilitate dedicated financing to ensure that these produce sustainable solutions that serve the Union.
Project 2	Enhance threat- and risk-detection measures, especially for those threats which are not immediately visible or easy to recognise, to feed into early warning and alert systems.	Establish communication strategies, with a clear identification of roles, to inform the public during emergencies. These strategies should have two aims: (1) to ensure the correctness of information, and (2) to identify an official spokesperson to avoid misinformation and disinformation.	Establish common standards to ensure the interoperability of procedures and equipment from different member states to prepare for events which may have cross-border effects.
Project 3	Enable member states to contribute additional resources, beyond those available via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, by establishing additional pooling mechanisms.	Produce emergency plans for critical infrastructure, starting with risk assessments and the identification of vulnerabilities, including proper consideration of the interconnection and interdependency of different systems and facilities.	Improve coordination and integration with the normative frameworks and measures applicable in the field of emergency management to maximise the actions taken by all relevant organisations.

Designing a European Military Model

Michael Benhamou

Now that threats and military budgets are on the rise, Europeans are faced with a new and urgent question: what kind of defence model do they want? And on the basis of which doctrines - in other words, how do they want their defence to be conducted at the tactical, operational and strategic levels?

This European model should provide additional insights into the way European armies define their targeting procedures against adversaries; distribute tasks among willing nations before a fight; structure the chain of command between air, land and sea components; or integrate new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) into decision-making processes.

At present, it is NATO that is doing this conceptual work on defence, and rightfully so. This organisation has gained expertise from the recent Balkan and post-9/11 conflicts; it possesses a framework of lessons learned, principles, practices and procedures that allow for clear and fluid management of military units on the ground.

Yet the US has been reducing its European commitment year by year: In the 1990s, 300,000 US troops were stationed in Europe; by 2023, the number was down to 100,000. Europeans need to start thinking now about a European-style military model that can be integrated within NATO systems and later on within a European Defence Union. A European defence model is needed to shape what Europe's force posture will look like in 2030, and to prepare for all warfare scenarios that reflect the realities of both our immediate neighbourhood (Russia and the Middle East) and of internal threats (jihadism).

In Brussels, such a doctrinal ramp-up should be led by the European Union Military Staff (a part of the EEAS), which already has a department dedicated to military doctrines and concepts. This work should be carried out in coordination with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) and, of course, in close partnership with the relevant branches and members of NATO. Partnership with NATO will be essential, as there is a great need for interoperability in military matters, i.e., mutual standards and regular exercises.

Finally, the European Parliament should oversee these efforts and ensure Member State buy-in, while also involving the EU's neighbouring partners (UK, Norway, Ukraine, etc.). Coordination with the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights will also be essential to ensure that European laws converge with its future military ways.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Designing a European concept for intelligence	**Designing a European concept for operations**	**Designing a European concept for logistics**
Project 1	Establish a European Crisis Response Process tasked to detect weak signals before, if relevant, planning the launch of a military operation.	Define the coordination and capability trade-offs between air, land and naval components for all scenarios: permissive to non-permissive. That assessment should be based on Europe's current wars and threats in its East and in its South.	Establish a European concept for the use of all sources of energy (oil, gas and renewables) and modes of transportation (plane, train and truck) by European military forces and for all scenarios.
Project 2	Put in place European targeting principles to address the dilemma of tactical opportunity versus civilian casualties. This should be done in close coordination with the European Parliament, the CJEU and the ECHR.	Establish European manoeuvre guidelines (defence versus offence, attrition, centre of gravity definition, etc.) for air, navy, land, space and special forces operations, always drawing on current NATO standards.	Define a European approach to medical support in low- to high-intensity scenarios involving numerous wounded and casualties—all based on actual European medical means.
Project 3	Define European cyber and AI standards for military surveillance and influence, whether defensive or offensive. The future of human–machine teaming should be outlined here.	Establish civilian–military principles in line with Europe's values—for example, field coordination of the military with aid (DG ECHO) and development projects (DG INTPA, DG NEAR).	Develop European rear-zone principles for use during high-intensity battle. These principles should pertain to staging areas, the movement and location of HQs and units, ammunition, speed criteria and so on.

Reform of the EU's military operations

Alessandro Marrone

EU military operations have so far focused on crisis management, training and capacity building in non-hostile operational environments in Africa, the Middle East and the EU's eastern neighbourhood. As instability in these regions increases, and with NATO almost exclusively focused on collective defence against Russia and the US prioritising the Indo-Pacific, the EU will have to protect those European interests that are at stake via more effective military power projection. At the same time, reforming the EU's military operations will help strengthen the European pillar in the North Atlantic Alliance and benefit NATO–EU cooperation by improving the ability of EU militaries to use combat capabilities in high-intensity operations in hostile environments.

Operational theatres in Africa and the Middle East present a far less permissive environment than in the past, and risks are also arising in the Indo-Pacific. From Libya to Yemen, in the Sahel and the Middle East, both state and non-state actors can deploy capabilities that would challenge European militaries. In the naval domain, militias and transnational criminal organisations pose serious military challenges in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Guinea. The direct military involvement of regional powers should also be taken into account by EU operations, as a local conflict could well escalate to a regional one. And nor can the stability of a host nation government be taken for granted, as the series of coups in the Sahel has demonstrated. Such increasingly hostile environments will likely coexist alongside both security and defence capacity-building missions in more permissive theatres and the establishment of a range of military partnerships.

Reforms of EU operations should maintain the expertise developed so far while evolving to cope with increased threats on the ground, at sea and in the air. That is to say, operations should ensure a higher level of force and base protection, the freedom of manoeuvre and air superiority, actionable special forces capabilities, the use of strategic enablers, the provision of reinforcements and escalation management. EU operations will also need to be ready for rapid, large evacuations if necessary. At sea, fleets deployed by Europe will have to be fit for naval combat and escalation dominance.

Progress should be made in two ways. First, the EU needs to fully implement the commitments already made in its various frameworks, including the Strategic Compass, PESCO and the European Peace Facility. Second, further steps should be taken to make the EU's military toolbox more effective and to appeal to those member states that are willing and able to act to protect shared interests and security. This approach will involve three actions: establishing a proper EU military headquarters (HQ), providing sustainable forces and capabilities, and ensuring wider support for European military operations.

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Establishing a proper EU military HQ	**Providing sustainable forces and capabilities**	**Ensuring wider support for European military operations**
Project 1	Turn the EU Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) into a proper military HQ by providing adequate resources, including personnel, communications and IT systems (for the exchange of classified information, etc.), facilities and so on.	Widen, deepen and improve the structure of the force-generation process for Common Security and Defence Policy missions, in synergy with the new NATO Force Model. To achieve this goal, implement the Troop Rotation Cycle Register agreed in the Strategic Compass.	Restore stable European Peace Facility funding to cover the vast majority of the operational costs for EU military operations and exercises, as well as to finance, train, and equip projects with partners in Africa, the Middle East and the eastern neighbourhood.
Project 2	Move the operational command of all current Common Security and Defence Policy operations, executive and non-executive, from the national level to the EU MPCC-HQ level.	Implement the Rapid Deployable Capacity and the related enablers envisaged by the Strategic Compass.	Provide EU endorsement for actions by groups of member states (e.g., the Coordinated Maritime Presence), and ensure coordination, intelligence sharing and logistical support between EU and ad hoc European missions acting in the same region.
Project 3	Run annual major training activities and live military exercises in all domains, including jointly with NATO and partners. For these activities use both the EU HQ and the EU Battle Groups as much as possible.	Establish and deploy the European Medical Command, the Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations, and the Crisis Response Operation Core— three existing PESCO projects.	Link EU military operations better with doctrine development, the Capability Development Plan, and PESCO and European Defence Fund projects, as well as with the European Air Transport Command.

EU Institutional Reform in Defence

Steven Blockmans

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has led EU member states to update their threat perception and increase defence spending. It has made most of them realise that their security is best guaranteed by membership of both NATO and the EU, working together. Finland and Sweden have decided to join NATO. The Alliance is no fail-safe solution for common defence though. It may well fall victim to the nihilism of a second Trump presidency and/or the tactics of a 'multi-vector' strategist, such as Turkey's President Erdoğan. Denmark, already an Alliance member, has scrapped its opt-out from the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy and subscribed to larger political commitments in defence by joining PESCO capability-building projects. Battle-hardened Ukraine has embarked on its gradual integration in the EU, including in defence. For the time being, however, NATO membership remains off-limits, also for Moldova and Georgia.

While EU leaders have at set intervals reconfirmed their intention to accelerate capability generation, the reality is that the necessary dynamism is lacking. Most member states restrict defence contracting and do not invest sufficiently in innovation. In this way they are condemning themselves to buying from overseas in the long term, thereby also reducing the EU's ability to regulate its way towards the much-touted goal of strategic autonomy. It is fair to say that 'market' forces (including new wars on the EU's borders) are insufficient to lead the EU to achieve the aims laid down in the Strategic Compass. In short, Europe has a collective action problem.

Jean Monnet once said, 'Nothing is possible without men; nothing is lasting without institutions.' Without an integrated architecture, the risk is that European lethargy in defence will continue. Indeed, the EU's current institutional set-up leaves much to be desired. A cumbersome decision-making process, the absence of a harmonised defence budget and resistance to treaty change collectively undermine the EU's capacity to address emerging geopolitical threats with agility and result in fragmented efforts among member states. To be sure, institutional (re)arrangements do not in and of themselves provide a silver bullet for the EU's deep-seated collective action problem, which has political, economic and military dimensions. But they may help in making strategies and defence planning more cohesive, achieving economies of scale and stimulating specialisation.

As regards the Council, there is a disconnect between what member state leaders declare in the European Council and execution at the level of defence ministries. Defence ministerials are irregular and follow-up by the high representative, supported by the EEAS, insufficient. The intergovernmental nature of defence decision-making often sidelines the Commission and European Parliament (EP), hindering their ability to drive cohesive defence policies and boost democratic legitimacy. With the introduction of DG DEFIS, the Commission's role in defence has increased, but it is still constrained by its focus on economic matters, creating a gap in expertise and authority. This problem with authority is a matter of widespread concern, notably among the defence ministries of the larger member states. These same ministries are also concerned that a similar problem applies to the European Defence Agency in its relationship to the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation and that, as a result, the swift execution of joint defence initiatives is impeded. With its Sub-Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE), the EP lacks direct control over defence policy and budgetary decisions, limiting its influence in shaping a coherent strategy. At the level of force deployment, the lack of a real European headquarters and a military academy is hindering rapid and coordinated responses to security challenges (see Chapter 8).

	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Ensuring Foreign Affairs Council meetings of defence ministers occur monthly	**Creating the position of a European Commissioner for Defence Cooperation**	**Turning SEDE into a full EP Committee (CEDE)**
Project 1	The high representative, assisted by the EEAS, should secure member states' support for the follow-up of conclusions and decisions by the Defence Council and the European Council (cf. the PESCO model and Community methods of monitoring).	After the June 2024 EP elections, the Commission president-designate should include a Commissioner for Defence Cooperation in the design of his or her college; this portfolio currently falls under that of the Commissioner for the internal market.	As part of the new organisational plan to reduce the number of EP committees, SEDE should be upgraded to a fully fledged committee, on par with AFET, BUDG, JURI and so on. It should combine all aspects of defence, including industry (currently under ITRE) and foreign interference and disinformation (currently under INGE and ING2).
Project 2	The high representative and the EEAS should facilitate the participation of candidate countries in the Council and its working groups in stages, whereby participatory rights are expanded when higher levels of alignment are met.	The next high representative/vice-president of the European Commission should focus on Common Foreign and Security Policy and chair the Defence Council, in close cooperation with the new Commissioner. Economic security and hard security would need to be blended better, though not in a single US-style European security adviser role.	Grant the chair of CEDE the permanent right to participate in Defence Council meetings.
Project 3	Transform the MPCC into a real operational headquarters, capable of commanding operations at the highest level of intensity by unifying disparate surveillance, tracking and monitoring capacities. Establish specialised command centres for cyber, space, maritime and so on.	Within the EEAS, SECDEFPOL is the logical counterpart for the DG Defence Cooperation and would coordinate inter-service consultations, including with the EDA.	Recruit and bolster the defence, regulatory and budgetary expertise needed for CEDE to play a full part in the institutionally rebalanced EP and the European Defence Union.

Why Europe Needs a Nuclear Deterrent

Adérito Vicente

The increasingly complex and uncertain security environment in Europe today has prompted a re-evaluation of the role of nuclear weapons on the continent. Factors such as Vladimir Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, the ascent of revisionist powers such as Russia and China, and the unpredictability of US politics all underscore the urgency of the need for the EU to cultivate its own nuclear option.

Most European countries currently rely on the NATO nuclear umbrella for collective defence, primarily under the leadership of the US. A few, such as France, continue to address nuclear issues on a strictly national basis. While this arrangement has historically provided security guarantees, the changing dynamics of the current environment demand a serious discussion on Europe's imperative to establish its own nuclear deterrent. Two important events are driving this imperative. The first is Russia's war against Ukraine, which has exposed Europe's security vulnerabilities and the potential for a nuclear threat over the Black Sea region. The second is that the unpredictable nature of US politics, as witnessed in former President Trump's rhetoric, is raising doubts about the US's enduring commitment to European security.

The absence of an independent European nuclear deterrent capability renders the continent vulnerable, compromising its autonomy in critical security matters. Therefore, recognising that US security guarantees alone may prove insufficient, European decision-makers must prioritise the resolution of this issue to ensure timely and effective responses to emerging nuclear threats.

To advance a stronger European defence policy and establish a common, credible and feasible nuclear deterrent, strategic collaboration is essential. First and foremost, creating such a deterrent among the European nations demands open dialogue to address the diverse national interests and sovereignty concerns. The process will require the alignment of collective security needs and the fostering of greater political cohesion among the participating states, elements indispensable to crafting a common nuclear deterrence strategy and policy that can effectively address scenarios where the US commitment is uncertain. Second, the credibility of the deterrent force rests upon its ability to dissuade potential adversaries, particularly Russia. Third, feasibility demands that unrealistic proposals be discarded while pragmatic scenarios are pursued. This necessitates constructive dialogue and cooperation among the parties involved, including NATO and EU members, and even extending beyond the formal EU framework.

A European-led nuclear deterrent represents a path towards enhanced strategic autonomy amidst the dynamic global security landscape and underscores the importance of independent security decision-making. Such an initiative would reduce Europe's near-exclusive reliance on US and NATO nuclear extended deterrence for collective defence and security. Furthermore, it could serve as a valuable complement to NATO's deterrence efforts, contributing to the development of a stronger partnership of equals between the US and Europe. This dual role would not only fortify Europe's defence capabilities but also foster a more equitable and interconnected security architecture in the Euro-Atlantic region.

|	Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3
	Promoting political cohesion on the idea of a common European nuclear deterrent	**Establishing a credible European nuclear deterrent doctrine (strategy and policy)**	**Creating a feasible European nuclear weapons infrastructure**
Project 1	Initiate a systematic and open debate among European nations on the concept and implications of a shared European nuclear deterrent, while building a common understanding of the strategic role of nuclear deterrence in addressing contemporary geopolitical challenges and security vulnerabilities. This should be done as soon as possible.	Outline the specific threats to be deterred, the parameters of the deterrence posture and the conditions under which nuclear weapons hypothetically would be used, which encompass target selection and communication protocols.	Draw upon existing European capabilities. Establish a European-led nuclear deterrent that involves the transfer, acquisition or development of nuclear warheads and delivery systems.
Project 2	Conduct a comprehensive intergovernmental feasibility study on establishing a European nuclear deterrent. This comprehensive feasibility study should be conducted within a year.	Establish clear criteria for the size and composition of the European nuclear arsenal, with specific milestones for the development of a command-and-control system, technological advancements, nuclear warheads and the establishment of delivery systems.	Allocate a specified percentage of the member states' defence budgets to the development and implementation of a credible European nuclear command-and-control, including warheads and delivery system, with annual progress assessments.
Project 3	Foster political consensus and determine the most credible and feasible option for establishing a European nuclear deterrent among participating states by mid-2025, following a thorough consideration of the findings and recommendations outlined in the feasibility report.	Align, if possible, the European nuclear deterrent with NATO's overall collective defence strategy. Ensure that Europe's deterrent policy, including the development of cooperation mechanisms with non-NATO European states, complements and reinforces NATO's deterrence posture.	Develop a clear, swift and unambiguous decision-making procedure for the deployment of nuclear weapons, with a European final decision-maker possessing sole authority to order their use.

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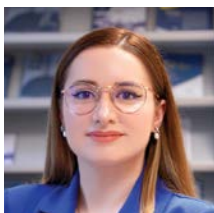
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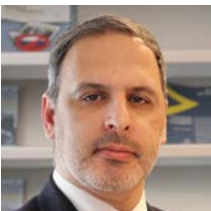
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