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Envisioning European defence

Five futures

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Disclaimer

The authors are writing in a strictly personal capacity. The views expressed in this report are our own only and do not necessarily reflect those of the EU institutions or of any other institution.

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Foreword

Recent tragic events — first in Paris and now in Brussels — have abruptly reminded Europeans of their vulnerability. And the fact that these terrorist attacks have been carried out at the heart of the EU 'homeland' has underlined the urgency — after the shocking experiences of 2014 in Ukraine — to strengthen Europe's own resilience and collective ability to prevent, deter and respond to hostile actions. While this is surely not a purely military task, it nevertheless has a tangible military dimension — and this may also change the current conversation on European 'defence'.

After a loss of momentum following the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, the debate over the scope of European defence appeared to have been relaunched — accompanied by concrete policy guidelines and objectives — at the European Council meeting held in December 2013. Since then, however, very little seems to have changed in terms of intra-EU cooperation, despite the worrying security developments both inside and to the east and south of Europe. Even the June 2015 summit deliberations appear to have lowered the previous levels of ambition. While the long-lasting decline in collective defence spending by Europeans seems to have recently come to a temporary halt (following also commitments made in the NATO framework), the lack of major cooperative projects in the defence industrial domain and the growing difficulty to agree on ambitious actions and reforms are marking an *impasse* in a policy area that, until a few years ago, was among the most promising in terms of closer integration and convergence of efforts among Europeans. And all this is happening at a time when the need for more decisive collective action — for both economic and strategic reasons — is both undeniable and pressing.

While there is broad convergence inside the EU on what a common external *security* policy (the 'S' in CSDP) should and could be like, there is much less convergence on the possible scope of a common *defence* policy (the 'D'). Treaty language reflects this, and it is arguable that the consensus that emerged in the early 2000s on the rationale for ESDP/CSDP is now less solid. In fact, CSDP is mainly limited to relatively small, short-lived and low-end crisis management missions and operations in third countries. It currently suffers from a lack of commitment and a lack of resources, with its scope shifting increasingly towards border monitoring and training activities. The treaty provisions conceived to facilitate closer defence integration and cooperation — e.g. Article 46 TEU on permanent structured cooperation (PeSCo) — have remained a dead letter. And even France's recent invocation of Article 42.7 has hardly triggered any progress (or even debate) on a common security and defence policy. At the same time, Russia's actions in the east (and beyond) have reactivated more classical concerns about territorial integrity and conventional deterrence — that is, about the 'defence of Europe' rather than 'European defence' — which have, in turn, concentrated minds on NATO's core business and EU–NATO relations. As a result, in some member states

as well as within the expert community, the call for doing much 'more' in common in this field has grown ever louder – be it to generate savings and economies of scale or maintain relevant capabilities, to increase conventional deterrence or counter national and collective operational decline.

So far, these calls have followed a familiar path. First, they have evoked the need for a new 'security strategy', updating and adjusting the approach articulated in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) in light of the changed security environment. Then, after the June 2015 strategic review was completed and the process leading to the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security policy (EUGS) launched, the focus shifted towards the need for a new military 'Headline Goal' – updating and reviewing Headline Goals (HLGs) set for 2003 and 2010 – or, possibly, even a 'White Book' or 'White Paper' on defence, reproducing at EU level the kind of exercise conducted, e.g. with the French *Livre blanc* in 2013 or, currently, with the German *Weissbuch*.[1] While these calls are not only fully understandable but also reasonable and consistent, it is legitimate to wonder whether just replicating formats and formulas that have either generated limited results (the HLGs) or are not automatically or easily transferable from the national to the EU level is the kind of game changer that Europe's current predicament demands.

In fact, these are the situations in which – as Jean Monnet famously put it – political leaders must 'change the context'. If the existing policy parameters (legal, political, operational) lead to inadequate action, they may have to be reconsidered. Just shifting the terms of the debate can help recreate fresh momentum. On the one hand, launching a specific 'defence review' process right after completion of the European Union Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) would make it possible to agree upon those measures and benchmarks that can be adopted and implemented by the EU-28 countries in order to align the 'D' not only with the 'S' in CSDP but also with the broader EU collective approach to its internal *and* external security, its overall stability and its prosperity. The fact that the European Commission will also be involved in the process with its own (and first ever) Defence Action Plan represents an indirect recognition of the urgency to join forces – literally as well as metaphorically – in order to achieve better results.

On the other hand, insofar as the current normative context is seen as insufficient or inadequate to generate the required (or desired) change, EU leaders should probably not shy away from launching fresh and bold initiatives outside – though not at odds with – the existing treaty framework. This approach already proved very effective in the case of the first Schengen agreement, 20 years ago, when a few like-minded member states outlined and implemented a new policy scheme which was later (a) embraced by a large majority of partners, and (b) incorporated into the treaty itself. A similar logic could indeed be applied to defence, and be open to all those other member states who share the same vision and objectives. As a result, a number of

1. It is worth recalling that a similar approach was already adopted as early as in May 2004, at the onset of ESDP/CSDP and shortly after the adoption of the ESS. See *European defence: A proposal for a White Paper*, Report of an independent Task Force, EUISS, Paris, 2004 (Rapporteur: Jean-Yves Haine).

reforms which are currently hard to imagine at the EU-28 level — if anything, because of the difficulty to agree in advance on (and then ratify) significant treaty changes — could be first put in place and tested in initially smaller formations. This would confer new dynamism to the entire defence review process and, if successful, could be later integrated into the treaties (including as a *de facto* PeSCo). Eventually, this could facilitate putting an integrated *defence* capacity at the disposal of a common *security* policy, enabling Europe to better protect itself against aggression, provocation and destabilisation as well as promote peace and stability beyond its borders.

This *Chaillot Paper* stems from a combination of frustration and ambition: frustration over the limited progress achieved so far at European level, and ambition to help clarify and articulate the possible outcomes that common action (or inaction) can produce a few years from now. While the report that the EUISS produced 3 years ago for the EU Military Committee (EUMC) outlined five main 'avenues' for future EU military capabilities,[2] this *Chaillot Paper* goes 'back to the future' and outlines what such capabilities will be like around 2025 and beyond — in five variations — if certain decisions are taken (or not) in the next few months. The fact that this reflection has been carried out through teamwork, regardless of specific individual preferences (or idiosyncrasies), shows not only how widespread the concern over the current state of European defence is, but also why the complexity of cooperation — to quote social scientist Robert Axelrod — cannot trump its overarching benefits for collective action.

Antonio Missiroli
Paris, March 2016

2. *Enabling the future — European military capabilities 2013-2025: Challenges and avenues*, EUISS Report no. 16. May 2013, edited by Antonio Missiroli (Rapporteurs: Andrea Gilli, James Rogers).

Introduction

'Defence matters' has become a well-established mantra in capitals across Europe. After more than two decades of 'strategic time-out' characterised by budget cuts and limited expeditionary crisis management abroad, European leaders are once again pressed to focus on how to defend their territories, citizens and open societies.

Three major developments — in the east, south and west — have pushed defence back onto the agenda in Europe. While each of these recent developments is driven by different dynamics and root causes, they combine to underline the urgent need for Europe to re-think and reorganise its defences. The Russian occupation of Crimea demonstrates that Europe is facing a revisionist state in the east prepared to use armed force and hybrid warfare to change borders; the terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and elsewhere show the deadly linkages of home-grown terrorists and chaos in Europe's southern neighbourhood. At the same time, the US 'pivot' to Asia means that Europe must assume a greater responsibility for its own regional security and defence.

However, although it spends a considerable amount of money on defence, Europe consistently underperforms in this field. In spite of the ongoing wars and terrorist threats in and around Europe, and in spite of the many decisions that European governments have taken individually and collectively in the EU and NATO, we have not yet done what it takes to significantly improve Europe's military capabilities. Despite years of complaints about the lack of deployable troops and strategic enablers such as transport aircraft, aerial tankers and helicopters, all of these categories have seen large reductions over the past decade and a half (see *Annexes*). Europe's defence capability shortfalls are as well-known as the possible solutions are — but we are simply not implementing the necessary changes.

If European governments started acting now, the future of European defence could still take the shape envisioned in past statements and decisions. For example, in the conclusions from its summit meeting in December 2013, the European Council called on EU member states to deepen defence cooperation and remained 'committed to delivering key capabilities and addressing critical shortfalls'. Most of the same European heads of state and government met a few months later at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) summit in Wales in September 2014, where they agreed to reverse the trend of declining defence budgets and reaffirmed their commitment to provide 'the resources, capabilities and political will' required to ensure that the NATO alliance remained ready to meet any challenge.

European governments could go beyond the formal agreements inked at recent summit meetings and take even further-reaching steps. Indeed, European Commission

(EC) President Jean-Claude Juncker is neither the only, nor the first, contemporary proponent of a European army, but he is certainly the most prominent. European governments could alternatively choose another course, by concentrating all of their defence cooperation in NATO. They could otherwise decide to scale down the rhetoric to match the reality of current military capabilities, focusing on peacekeeping operations instead of defence collaboration in all of its dimensions.

What is often forgotten is that, even if European governments do none of the above, this will still change the future calculus of European defence. The result of inaction will not be a standstill, but rather a further degradation of European capabilities.

On authorship, advocacy and assumptions

There are many reasons for Europe's underperformance in the military field. There is an ever-growing literature dedicated to explaining and understanding why the military dimension of European defence collaboration remains largely rhetorical. Instead of repeating previous studies, our contribution to this debate is to outline five possible futures of European defence. We do not do this in order to advocate or rule out any one in particular, but rather to illustrate that any of these could occur depending on what we do now.

The five futures outlined in this *Chaillot Paper* provide an overview of the state in which European defence might find itself sometime in the near future. They were not written with a specific date in mind, but all take place in at least one, or even two, decades from now. Each future was initially drafted by one of us, but all of us have contributed to shaping them and we stand as co-authors of all of them.

While each of us may have an individual preference for what we would like to happen and we do have individual views of what is likely to happen, the study itself does not endorse a specific future as either the most desirable or the most likely; it is not a piece of advocacy. Our aim is to develop plausible and coherent descriptions of what European defence might look like in order to point out the choices and decisions that need to be made today.

Each of the five futures presented is, by necessity, driven by a number of assumptions. We have tried to make these assumptions as visible as possible, and worked hard to avoid 'silver bullets' or 'perfect storms' which either magically solve difficult problems or force leaders into an unavoidable direction. What we ask of the reader is to accept this setting rather than contest it. Perhaps the biggest assumption that we have made is precisely that the future of European defence will be of our own making rather than the outcome of external pressures and events.

That we assume that the future is of our making is important to point out, simply because many disagree. Many believe that the US, Russia or China will dictate events (forcing a weak Europe to follow), or that multiple crises will hamper our ability to be proactive (leaving us to just simply muddle through), or that the pressures of

austerity will make it impossible to spend more on defence (as if it were not a political choice), etc. In contrast to these views of Europe, we believe that it is indeed up to us Europeans to shape our own future defence, and we hope to suggest what it could look like.

Five futures

Our first future, entitled 'Bonsai armies', illustrates the consequences for European defence in the near future if European governments continue to apply the same logic and behaviour they have since the end of the Cold War, which has led to a loss of over 20% of military capabilities between 2008 and 2014, with further losses likely. In this future, Europe's threat environment becomes more dangerous because its military weakness invites other powers to challenge and exploit it. With the EU and NATO marginalised as facilitators of cooperation, every government chooses to specialise individually in the area it can afford, or which it considers to be its national core need. However, as specialisation takes place by accident or default rather than by design, the resulting niches cannot simply be linked together into a coherent force, but instead coincidentally form limited areas of overlapping or complementary national capabilities. In this future, cooperation is seen as the only way to maintain access to deployable assets, as national capabilities in most areas are no longer large enough to be relevant. However, uncoordinated military capability cuts also reduce the scope for cooperation.

Our second future, which we call 'Defence clusters', envisions what European defence would look like if European governments had simply done what they said they would do over the past few years. In this future, European governments invest in European Defence Agency (EDA) projects to develop and acquire European strategic enablers, and pool and share capabilities in clusters. While some of this is already happening, the pace is by no means as intense as one would expect when compared to official statements and announcements. However, picking up the pace could still bring about such results. Yet because we did not live up to our own exhortations for over a decade, many opportunities have been lost. In this future, Europe has some more autonomy of action than it has today, but it would still face severe limitations that would prevent it from dealing with many likely crisis situations independently.

Our third future, named 'Peace operations', bases its premise on the fact that, over the last 15 years, operational European defence collaboration has mainly taken the form of EU CSDP operations at the lower end of the military spectrum. In many European states, this conception of defence has by and large prevailed over a more traditional warfare-oriented approach. In this future, we look at European defence collaboration as a fully developed and equipped peace operations policy that takes precedence over any other conception of defence, and that is part of an effective comprehensive approach. The EU abandons the most demanding types of defence integration and military operations; European defence and armament cooperation

only exists insofar as it relates to peace operations (logistics, medical support, strategic airlift, etc.). Territorial defence and the use of the military in kinetic operations are the responsibility of states acting individually, in *ad hoc* coalitions, or within and through NATO.

Our fourth future, called 'European NATO', depicts European defence as being firmly integrated with NATO. In this future, NATO and the transatlantic alliance with the US is the undisputed core of European defence collaboration. EU member states no longer pursue autonomous military crisis management or defence ambitions; they do, however, utilise NATO's structures and assets for autonomous European operations. The European caucus in NATO is no longer judged to be a threat to NATO's unity, but rather an enabler of European leadership. The EU's CSDP military structures are integrated in the transatlantic structures of NATO, while the EU pursues civilian crisis management activities. NATO is committed to fulfilling four core tasks, namely collective defence, military crisis management, cooperative security, and resilience building.

Our fifth future is that of a 'European army'. The idea of supranational European defence collaboration dates back to the very beginning of integration efforts in Europe after World War II. In parallel with the emerging European Coal and Steel Community, French Prime Minister René Pleven called for a European Defence Community (EDC) and the creation of a European army under a supranational authority in October 1950, to be funded by a common European defence budget. Although it was never realised, the basic ideas behind the EDC are arguably even more valid today. No single European country is able to single-handedly manage the violent conflicts, hybrid warfare challenges and sophisticated cyberattacks taking place in and around Europe. As a worsening security situation around the world is creating an international division of labour in the provision of crisis management and military security, the pressure increases on Europe to do more on defence. In this future, strained national budgets and external shocks trigger intensified military integration as the only way for Europe to play a meaningful military role in its own immediate neighbouring areas, let alone on the global stage.

Future I: Bonsai armies

In this future, we outline the consequences for European defence if EU governments continue to apply the same logic of defence capability reduction that they have since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, this process has intensified due to the fiscal crisis, leading to a loss of over 20% of capabilities between 2008 and 2014, with further losses likely as a result of recent decisions that have still to come into effect. The price to pay could be a power vacuum in the European neighbourhood in the near future, which could be filled by third parties and lead to political fragmentation within the EU and NATO. We do not assume that defence has become discretionary or that most European governments will have completely ceased their defence activities, but rather that they pursue defence either independently or bilaterally with the US, or through mini-lateral European cooperation.

In this future, Europe's threat environment becomes more dangerous because its ability to respond is diminishing. Even if threatening actors do not actively gain strength, Europe's growing weakness increases their relative power. Europe's military decline thus also invites challenges. In addition to not being able to ensure territorial defence (at national, EU or NATO levels), diminished military capabilities also translate into paralysis in response to other security challenges, including financial and economic security. Given a worsening threat environment, European governments increasingly shift towards more usable capabilities. But these changes come too late, due to the impact of decisions made a decade earlier and the long time lag between new decisions and their implementation.

Organisation: uncoordinated national contributions

In this future, the EU and NATO are marginalised as facilitators of cooperation. Thus, national priorities have an ever greater impact on the setup of military forces. Governments choose to specialise in the areas they can afford, or which they consider to be national core needs, individually. Where affordability or necessity lead to the procurement of the same equipment in several countries, small multinational 'islands' of relevant capabilities become available. Yet particularly expensive equipment such as aircraft, helicopters and satellites are less available to all. At the same time, this specialisation increases interdependence among member states. To be able to act militarily, European states are now more dependent on each other than they ever were before.

However, as specialisation takes place by accident or default, rather than by design, the resulting 'islands' and niches cannot be simply linked and integrated into a joint, coherent force. They do not systematically reflect common European capability needs, but are rather coincidental, limited areas of overlapping or complementary national capabilities.

In this future, *ad hoc* cooperation is seen as the only way to maintain access to usable capabilities, as national resources no longer exist in sufficient quantities. Nevertheless, in a vicious cycle, uncoordinated defence cuts also reduce the possibilities of cooperation, causing more collective European capability gaps to emerge. Any potential change of mind comes too late to effectively safeguard capabilities. Earlier decisions that come into effect drive European military capabilities below critical levels. Thus, the states of Europe slide into the lower tier of military powers in the world.

This future includes increasing divergences within Europe. Germany, France and the UK still have '80% spectrum' forces, but they are stretched thinly: perhaps between 100,000-150,000 troops each, requiring reinforcements by other countries after a few weeks in operation. Each national force offers different strengths and thus elements of an imperfect patchwork. France is the only European country with a nuclear deterrent. Germany offers the only permanent multinational capability framework, as it has transformed parts of its forces into a backbone for land-based mechanised and airmobile operations in cooperation with the Netherlands. The UK has turned its remaining forces into a small but globally deployable force.

Other countries offer bits and pieces of various capabilities. National contributions also vary in size from a full brigade down to single companies. In general, this increases the need for interoperability among partners and for costly enablers which no one can afford individually, yet collective procurement is minimal. Poland is the only 'Visegrad Four' country with modernised but land-focused armed forces. Greece and Italy focus on naval, coastguard and police forces; Spain integrates its military police and armed forces into a counterterrorism force. The Belgian air force links its few fighter jets with the equally small Dutch air force.

A declining percentage of European forces take part in multinational training and exercises, thus losing the ability to fight a combined-arms battle and cooperate with others. Indeed, some EU countries are no longer welcomed on the battlefield since they pose a risk to friendly forces. At the same time, the availability of forces in general is constantly challenged by the fact that these forces also support overstretched internal security forces.

European operations become militarily and politically fragile in this future. Although more cooperation among European forces is required in theory, in practice many governments add a sustainability caveat to their pledge, as they cannot ensure that their forces can stay in an operation for its entire duration. Hence, the fragility of individual contributions turns into a growing risk for an operation as a whole. A second effect is that this kind of cooperation increasingly incorporates contributions from capable non-European countries such as the United Arab Emirates or Jordan. This further undermines the political framework of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and Europe's ability to shape a common security policy.

Decision-making structure: independent national drivers

In this future, European governments make independence a primary objective of their defence policies. National capitals thus keep full control over their armed forces, defence planning and procurement; CSDP fades as an institutional framework, increasingly forgotten by many. European Defence Agency (EDA) member states receive information on other member states' developments in defence either through the press or with a delay from capitals. EU member states also keep Brussels institutions out of defence procurement. While the European Commission achieves full regulatory control over the dual-use area of the defence sector, member states no longer finance the relevant Commission activities. Moreover, the European Commission loses legitimacy as the liberal market approach to defence goods pursued since the 1990s fails to deliver.

The growing military interdependence between the countries of Europe ironically drives them apart politically. European governments are less and less able (and willing) to define and implement a common defence policy within the EU framework as a result of differing equipment, personnel, perceptions of risk and budget cuts. The increasing inability or unwillingness of some states to contribute to common operations reduces interoperability and widens capability and modernisation gaps in Europe. At the same time, contributions can only come from a shrinking group of willing and capable EU members. This creates centrifugal dynamics: those who no longer contribute do not subscribe to common policies because they cannot shape them, while those who still do contribute are not interested in giving 'free riders' a say in where and how to implement policies.

Europe's internal weakness and the intensifying global threat environment prompt the US to withdraw from Europe. The cost of providing effective protection against military threats in Europe is higher than the benefit of keeping Europe stable and safe. Consequently, Washington introduces an Annex to the North Atlantic Treaty limiting US contributions under Article 5.

Financing: spending less

After a decade or two of flat or decreasing defence budgets, it has become normal to lose capabilities. Some European countries still nominally increase their defence budgets, but procuring and operating small equipment stocks increases the costs of the remaining equipment compared to earlier generations. The EU fails to implement a concept for military burden-sharing, thus the principle of 'costs lie where they fall' prevails. Some member states use this either to free ride or to buy themselves out by financing the deployment of other forces.

Capabilities and operations: very limited

In this future, Europe is not able to conduct large, or even medium-sized, military operations independently due to limited enablers. As smaller states struggle to deploy and provide Command and Control (C2) for their units alone, they become more dependent on the few countries that can still provide the necessary operational framework. The chronic shortage of enablers such as strategic transport, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and available C2 structures — which are key to any military operation — makes it impossible for Europe as a whole to command a force larger than one or two divisions. EU countries could still use NATO C2, but have to bring their enablers with them, as the US has ceased to fill European capability gaps in NATO. C2 arrangements are further complicated by the NATO non-membership of some EU member states such as Sweden and Finland.

How to get there: maintaining the current course

This future is based on an extrapolation of two current trends. The first trend extends the effects that 'defence austerity' has had on European armed forces so far into the future. Moreover, it assumes that more capability areas reach the tipping points of military relevance. As capabilities have already reached critically low levels in several countries in 2016, the near future will see these and many other capabilities slide further, even below red lines.

The second trend is that these developments take place in a wider political context of defence not being a top priority in Europe. This trend can only be expected to continue as many European governments seem to be disinterested in European defence collaboration. Those who stay committed to defence try to maintain capabilities individually or via mini-lateral cooperation.

Future II: Defence clusters

This future illustrates the state of defence in Europe if all EU member states would simply follow through with their stated intentions over the last few years. While there currently is investment in EDA projects to develop and acquire European strategic enablers, as well as pooling and sharing of capabilities in clusters of EU member states, the pace is not nearly as intense as one would expect after reading official statements and announcements. Picking up the pace could still align reality with the rhetoric, but many opportunities have already been lost since we did not live up to our own exhortations. Starting now would thus allow Europe to have some more autonomy of action than it has today, but it would still face such severe limitations that it could not deal with many likely crisis situations alone.

Organisation: top-down coordination of clusters

In this future, the EUGS reviewed every few years, contains a clear definition of the security responsibilities that Europe must assume, operating under whichever flag, and if necessary alone. The headline goal, similarly reviewed on a regular basis, translates this ambition into military requirements which guide defence planning and capability development at all levels, from the national through the multilateral, including NATO and the EU. Following this process, the EU and NATO produce a joint list of capability priorities for the EU member states as well as European allies and partners. The aim is to create a capability mix that allows Europeans to contribute to collective defence through NATO, to undertake expeditionary operations with – but also without – non-EU allies (at least in the broader European neighbourhood), and to ensure the internal and border security of the EU. NATO becomes more 'European' regarding non-Article 5 issues, and functions primarily as an instrument that Europe can use to play the leadership role in regional security that the US is continuously pushing it to assume, while Washington seeks to 'lead from behind' (since stepping up its 'pivot' to Asia).

This complex mechanism of top-down coordination frames cooperation in capability development at two key levels. Through the EDA, member states launch the projects that require a large critical mass of a dozen participants or more in order to procure strategic enablers. In various overlapping defence clusters, member states merge all support functions, or divide tasks, so as to achieve maximum cost effectiveness. Functional defence clusters operate strategic enablers, such as the European Air Transport Command (EATC), in which all but a few member states participate, the expanded Satellite Command, created on the basis of the previous Satellite Centre, and the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Centre. Regional defence clusters can provide manoeuvre units, such as Admiral Benelux and a reinvigorated Eurocorps.

Decision-making structure: the EU as first responder

In this future, the EU is expected to act as the first responder when a crisis occurs in Europe's broader neighbourhood. The EU's situational awareness, greatly increased since the first-ever invocation of the mutual assistance clause (Article 42.7 TEU) in 2015, leads to the creation of a Community-funded European Intelligence Centre and to a greatly reinforced civilian–military planning capacity. This puts the EU in a unique position to analyse and understand events as they unfold, to decide whether European interests are at stake, to decide what should be done, to craft a comprehensive action strategy, and to forge the coalition that can carry it out.

If military action is approved, Europeans will deploy under the appropriate flag and using the C2 structure that is most suitable for the case at hand, be it CSDP, NATO, the UN or an *ad hoc* coalition. Operations can be conducted by a national operational headquarters (OHQ) according to the CSDP framework nation concept, or through NATO's command structure. A European Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), reporting to both the NATO Secretary-General and to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, grants the EU or an *ad hoc* coalition of EU member states direct access to the specific NATO command that any operation requires (thus putting to rest the debate about the need for a separate EU OHQ, though an EU Operations Centre can still conduct smaller-scale operations).

Of course, although more is expected of the EU and the structures that support decision making are greatly improved, decision making on CFSP and CSDP itself remains cumbersome. In several cases, it may well be too slow for Europe to act effectively.

Financing: the struggle continues

In this future, average EU defence spending remains at 1.5% of GDP as a result of the multiple security crises of 2014-2015, which halt downward trends. While this amounts to a substantial and probably sufficient sum if it were to be spent on a single set of armed forces, it must be divided among the armed forces of over 30 member states and candidate countries (which, as all have entered into a partnership with the EDA, participate in more capability projects). Multinational capability projects and pooling and sharing therefore remain essential in order to make the most of these relatively limited means. The Commission's broad interpretation of its role in defence, triggered by the success of the Preparatory Action for CSDP-related research, now allows it to co-fund actual capability projects as long as they are of a dual-use nature (which most enablers are). This makes it somewhat less difficult to achieve the critical mass required to ensure that big projects are economically viable, but it remains onerous.

Capabilities and operations: limited autonomy

In this future, the development and procurement of European enablers increases European autonomy to some extent. Europeans can independently undertake and sustain sizeable stabilisation operations in their broad neighbourhood (though still not at the corps level, as foreseen in the original Headline Goal). Autonomous peace enforcement operations in the broader European neighbourhood are feasible as well – up to a limit, beyond which US enablers are still required. Deployable strategic reserves remain limited, so the US continues to fulfil that function, despite its rhetorical emphasis on supporting Europe as a first responder.

Europeans have some additional capacity to contribute to UN peacekeeping across the globe and to contribute to the freedom of the global commons, but the military plays a mainly supplementary role in this area (such as engaging in 'maritime military diplomacy'). For significant operations outside the broader neighbourhood, certainly at the higher end of the spectrum, Europe remains highly dependent on the availability of American enablers and, in most cases, also troops.

The mix of strategic enablers thus does not give Europe unlimited reach, but rather some regional strategic autonomy in its own neighbourhood. As most enablers are owned and operated by multinational clusters, their availability is at least guaranteed, since these functional defence clusters, such as EATC, have the flexibility to organise themselves around the non-participation of a particular country in a particular operation.

However, it remains difficult to predict the availability of sufficient manoeuvre units for any projected operation, especially army units. Although a range of regional clusters and some individual member states can provide brigade-sized manoeuvre units, several of these are geared mainly towards territorial defence and have limited capacity for expeditionary operations. Even so, the credibility of conventional deterrence still relies on US support. There is therefore no guarantee that the willing and the able will coincide for expeditionary operations.

Furthermore, in what remains an essentially bottom-up process, even if Europe provides more top-down guidance than it does today, there is no guarantee that all member states contribute proportionately. Persistent free-riders, however, cannot impede the 'willing' from building and using their capabilities.

How to get there: hit the accelerator

Europe is already on this track. Indeed, already in 2011, member states agreed on a list of key capability priorities, notably strategic enablers, to be pursued through multinational projects under the aegis of the EDA. However, only a few of these are being translated into actual capability projects, as too many member states either prefer to invest in national projects or do not invest at all. However, if more

member states invest more money in more projects, making the fullest use of the Commission's options, very significant progress could still be made in the next two decades. This would require leadership from the big industrial players; an emerging Franco–German defence partnership could well be the engine. Furthermore, the EDA would need to be provided with a significant commonly funded budget in order to enable it to kick-start projects on its own.

Functional and regional defence clusters are currently being created and deepened, but in most cases, the actual level of integration remains low. In this future, progress would be quicker, especially in the many existing clusters. Cost effectiveness would only improve significantly if participating states merge, or divide all the functions supporting a multinational enabler or a set of national manoeuvre units among themselves. EU member states that are traditionally strong proponents of such integration could play into the Franco–German dynamic in order to stimulate initiatives.

Composed of different clusters, European defence will remain a complicated puzzle. And there is always the risk of missing a few pieces when assembling a puzzle. Authoritative and specific top-down guidance is therefore necessary to ensure that the combination of clusters constitutes a reasonable and coherent capability mix. Without such coordination, European cooperation risks being fragmented into 'islands of cooperation', each a world unto its own, where decisions about investment and disinvestment are made without regard to the puzzle as a whole.

One possibility would therefore be for a core group of countries to do multinational defence planning, as if they had a single force, and then decide what each individual country would contribute. France and Germany, the Benelux countries, plus Poland and perhaps Spain and/or Italy could form the beginning of such a core, which of course other countries could always join later.

If member states feel that this future is desirable (taking into account that it is in many ways still sub-optimal), they would have to act upon what they have already decided — and they have to act fast. As long as no action is taken, capabilities are not only stagnant: they are actually disappearing. Once gone, any capability is very difficult to restore.

Future III: Peace operations

In this future, we look at European defence as a fully developed and equipped multidimensional peace operations-oriented policy that takes precedence over any other conception of defence and that is part of an effective comprehensive approach. Such a future is certainly plausible when one considers the fact that European defence collaboration has mainly taken shape as CSDP operations over the last 15 years. This 'peace operations' conception of defence has by and large prevailed over a more combat-oriented approach in several European states, and is reflected in the kind of operations that have been carried out under various international umbrellas thus far. In this future, the EU does not exert any responsibility in 'hard-core' defence and gives up most of its ambitions in defence integration and military operations. Defence and armaments cooperation only exists insofar as it relates to peace operation scenarios (logistics, medical support, strategic airlift etc.). Territorial defence and the use of the military in kinetic operations are the responsibility of states acting individually, in coalitions, or within NATO. As a consequence, CSDP is renamed Common Security Policy (CSP).

Organisation: from CSDP to CSP

In this future, EU member states opt for multidimensional peace operations as the way in which to operationalise European defence. This comes as the result of a strategic orientation of European policy that also recognises past failed attempts to mobilise defence collaboration in the CSDP context.

While operations such as EUFOR RCA in the Central African Republic, Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina or EULEX Kosovo are examples of crisis management operations seeking to stabilise fragile states, this future entails more ambitious operations, in terms of both format and degree of integration. These multidimensional peace operations respond to a wide range of security threats, including state fragility (and its effects in terms of governance, protection of civilians, human rights, border control, etc.), transnational organised crime, cybersecurity, energy security, as well as the security consequences of terrorist attacks, humanitarian emergencies, large migratory flows or environmental degradation.

In this future, CSP is a crisis management policy in which large-scale multidimensional and fully integrated peace operations are possible. These operations are multidimensional in the sense that they embrace a wide variety of activities that go beyond the military domain, and they are integrated because they combine military

and civilian components in the same missions. They are the tools of a broader security agenda rather than those of a narrowly defined defence agenda. Integration is also to be understood as the capacity of EU operations to facilitate cooperation and synergies at the four following levels:

- Between the military and civilian components within an operation;
- Between a CSP operation and broader external action instruments (European Commission, EU Delegations, member states);
- Between external action and Freedom, Security and Justice (FSJ) instruments; and
- Between CSP operations and international partners such as NATO, the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and other sub-regional organisations.

Due to the increasingly blurry distinction between internal and external security, CSP operations are no longer exclusively deployed outside the EU. They can now also respond to crises that break out within the EU member states by implementing the solidarity clause (Article 222 TFEU).

The defence dimension of CSP does not disappear completely in this future because the military continues to play a major role in EU operations. Yet at the same time, the military's involvement in peace operations removes it from 'hard-core' defence tasks. Nevertheless, the military component of EU operations can still be quite robust, most notably to confront 'spoilers' that oppose the implementation of a peace accord, or to protect civilians. A certain level of coercion is also necessary in order to enable a swift withdrawal in case military escalation on the ground makes the operation's continued presence impossible.

However, the role of the military in peace operations is conceptually different from traditional warfighting and conventional deterrence. In essence, peace operations are about consent-based third-party intervention in which the use of force is confined to exceptional cases within broader non-coercive stabilisation mandates. UN peacekeeping operations provide examples of the specificity of coercion in peace operations as opposed to warfighting.

In peace operations, the military's main tasks relate to the security of people and places, freedom of movement, crowd control, security and defence sector reform, support to local armed and security forces, capacity building and training, etc. In many respects, these tasks require armed forces to perform police functions. This may create scenarios of sequential operations in which NATO or a coalition of EU member states would first respond with an openly coercive operation before handing longer-term post-conflict peace operations over to the EU.

Decision-making structure: civ–mil integration

In this future, CSP operations combine military and civilian activities in fully integrated missions placed under the command of a Head of Mission and under the political control and strategic direction of the Political and Security Committee (PSC). The full planning and C2 capability is established within the European External Action Service (EEAS) as an upgraded 'CSDP and Crisis Response' division. A permanent operational planning structure (OHQ) is created and the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) is reorganised so as to be able to plan truly civil–military operations. The permanent OHQ liaises with the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability Directorate (CPCC) to conduct operations.

At the strategic level, the crisis platform reaches out to FSJ instruments and liaison mechanisms are established to facilitate field cooperation. The Berlin Plus agreement is terminated and replaced by a much broader EU–NATO accord that regulates cooperation in the fields of:

- Information exchange;
- Security of field personnel;
- EU access to NATO military assets;
- NATO access to EU civilian assets;
- NATO support to EU operations and EU support to NATO operations; and
- Collective defence.

Relations between the EU and other international organisations such as the UN and the AU are also upgraded to allow for an improved, interlocking approach. For example, the EU Battlegroups (BGs) are more systematically used as bridging forces before UN peace operations take over. This is facilitated by the creation of a special UN fund that covers the expenses of the BGs whenever they are deployed as bridges to UN missions and placed under operational control of a UN Force Commander. EU involvement in stabilisation operations naturally brings the EU closer to the UN, both in policy terms and through field cooperation (with the EU being almost systematically present in parallel to UN peacekeeping operations and political missions).

Financing: CSP budget

Member states establish a special budget for CSP missions that finances the civilian component of any operation and allows for a substantial reimbursement of military expenses to troop-contributing countries. The special budget is separate from the EU budget (and is therefore not subject to the exception in Article 41.2 TEU), and is funded by member states on a GDP-based key. The Athena mechanism is dismantled. The special budget is open to third-party contributions, including by the European Commission, which also finances dual-use capabilities via the EDA.

Capabilities and operations: EU autonomy in peace operations

In this future, the EU Capability Headline Goal is revisited so as to match capability development with peace operations requirements. The Helsinki Headline Goal (60,000 troops) is abandoned and replaced by a civilian–military Headline Goal. The overall objective is for the EU to be able to deploy a large multidimensional operation counting 60,000 members (15,000 troops + 5,000 civilian personnel) that could support the implementation of a peace deal in Libya, for example, or a large-scale civilian–military operation (10,000 personnel) supporting EU neighbours (such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) in the management of refugee flows. Simultaneously, the EU is able to conduct two smaller-scale, BG-type military operations, such as a rapid reaction operation to evacuate European citizens from Tunis following a series of terrorist attacks and a *coup d'état*, or a BG deploying as a bridging operation before a larger UN peacekeeping operation takes over. In addition, the EU is able to deploy 10 other small-scale military peace operations such as training and capacity-building or security sector reform missions similar to current EU training missions in Mali or Somalia, but which combine military and civilian components.

European capabilities allow for full EU autonomy along the entire crisis management spectrum. The EDA runs several programmes under Permanent Structured Cooperation (PeSCo), as enshrined in Article 46 TEU in the fields of logistics, intelligence, medical support, satellite imagery and strategic airlift. Drawing on the EATC model, member states' logistics and engineering units are coordinated at the European level. Some logistical and medical assets are also EU-owned and operated.

The BG standby system is maintained and standby arrangements are extended to a wide range of other capabilities to include dual-use assets for disaster relief, civil protection, and the type of missions covered by the solidarity clause. Gendarmerie and police forces across Europe also develop their own capabilities for multidimensional peace operations, and international training programmes bring all security forces together. Alongside the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF), a 'federalised' EU Gendarmerie Brigade brings together 1,500 personnel (10 companies) dedicated to peace operations.

How to get there: division of labour

Many of the elements of this scenario already exist as the result of the visions set out at the Franco–British Summit of Saint-Malo in 1998. The 2003 and 2010 Headline Goals were also defining scenarios for ambitious military operations in which warfare was not prominent (if even contemplated). At the political level, two sets of issues need to be taken into account. One is the extent to which EU member states can

openly give up on their 'defence integration' commitment within the EU; the other is whether they are ready not only to seriously strengthen their crisis management capacity, but also whether they are collectively willing to engage in long-term peace operations.

Most importantly, this future can only become reality if it is compatible with national defence capabilities (which will depend on how they are maintained) and attitudes outside the EU. If this scenario would lead to a clearer division of tasks between the EU (conducting peace operations) and NATO (focusing on collective defence) or other types of hard power arrangements, all countries involved would need to be able to ensure compatibility between the two levels of commitments (be it in terms of military assets or in terms of actual engagement). Incidentally, this leads to the question of whether peace operations require a degree of specialisation that is different from the skills needed in combat operations, in which case the former could develop at the expense of the latter.

Future IV: European NATO

In this future, NATO and the transatlantic alliance with the US is the undisputed centre of European defence collaboration, as envisioned already in the 1990s. Indeed, before CSDP was born, European countries actively pursued a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO, which was endorsed at NATO's 1994 Brussels Summit and reaffirmed at the Madrid Summit in 1997. At the time, a number of EU member states were of the opinion that Europe's contribution to international security would best be organised as a strengthened European pillar within NATO. Several US administrations had voiced similar ideas while at the same time being worried about a European caucus within the transatlantic alliance.

Globally, the relationship between the US and China is the most important bilateral nexus, with these countries benchmarking military capabilities against each other. In this future, countering Chinese advances in anti-access/area denial (A2AD) technologies has become the key driver of US capability development, particularly in the air, space and naval domains. In order to remain militarily relevant in a world in which great power rivalries are more pronounced, Europe decided to commit to NATO as the sole framework for defence cooperation.

Organisation: NATO-based

In this future, EU member states no longer pursue an autonomous military crisis management or defence ambition; they do, however, utilise NATO's structures and assets for autonomous European operations. The European caucus in NATO is no longer judged to be a threat to NATO unity, but rather an enabler of European leadership. CSDP military structures are integrated into the transatlantic structures of NATO, while the EU pursues civilian crisis management activities. NATO's core tasks have evolved and expanded further with the alliance now committed to collective defence, military crisis management, cooperative security and resilience building.

Decision-making structure: back to the NAC

Given that the EU's military structures created to run CSDP were by and large modelled on NATO structures, they are disbanded after helping to manage the transition. By successfully integrating the military aspects of CSDP into NATO, they become redundant. However, not all decision-making structures are streamlined. An unintended consequence of organising European defence within NATO is the need to set up and staff elaborate liaison teams on both the EU and NATO sides in order to handle many civilian–military issues related to coordination and C2 during the complex crisis management operations that have become the norm. Integrating

parts of CSDP into NATO does away with the greatest theoretical promise of CSDP: comprehensive crisis management from within one organisation. Integrated civ–mil decision making only takes place at the national level, but has no institutional 'home' at the multinational level and is driven by situation-specific demands.

In this future, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the principal decision making body. On the military side, NATO Allied Command Operations (ACO) plans and executes all joint operations, supported by smaller permanent headquarters, while SACEUR assumes the overall command of operations at the strategic level. Due to Europe's enhanced role in NATO, SACEUR alternates between a US and a European officer with Deputy SACEUR appointed from the respective other side of the Atlantic.

The Berlin Plus arrangement is brought into NATO for a transition period, explicitly enabling SACEUR and DSACEUR to run European-only operations and manage operational activities inherited from the EU. As cooperation turns into integration, a separate political–military arrangement to govern the release, monitoring, and return of NATO assets and capabilities for autonomous European operations is no longer necessary and Berlin Plus is abandoned. Its place is taken by a mechanism previously discussed under the label 'Berlin Plus reversed', which enables NATO to have guaranteed access to civilian crisis management assets and personnel organised in an EU framework.

The integration of military CSDP into NATO leads to a further round of NATO enlargement with Ireland, Austria, Finland and Sweden deciding to join the Alliance after protracted domestic debates. Cyprus and Malta, for their own specific reasons, instead opt for an 'everything-but-membership approach' which is an enhanced operational partner status in practice. These countries participate in NATO decision making when and if they significantly contribute to NATO operations, and otherwise have observer status in NAC deliberations while contributing to NATO's common funding arrangements.

Financing: DIP and DAP

NATO decides to expand the remit of its common funding arrangements so that training and exercise activities are now included. On the occasion of the Alliance's 70th anniversary in 2019, the European members of NATO decide to make good on the defence investment pledge (DIP) agreed at the 2014 Wales summit and undertake a €100 billion commitment to raise defence spending in Europe and to bring European spending closer to NATO's 2% of GDP goal. After the successful conclusion of the EU's Preparatory Action for Defence Research, the European Commission decides to match funding available in the NATO Security Investment Programme in order to support the development of military capabilities. A framework programme dedicated to dual-use research is initiated in 2023 and the EU further decides that its funding mechanisms can in principle be used to support the development of 'defence infrastructure' in EU member states for NATO use. At NATO's 75th anniversary in 2024, European NATO members pledge to abide by two simple rules when it comes

to defence capability acquisition: to only buy what they can afford and to freeze requirements once they have been set. This defence acquisition pledge (DAP) leads to more harmonised defence planning in Europe over time, thus generating efficiency savings and smarter defence spending.

Capabilities and operations: full spectrum

In terms of transatlantic burden-sharing, Europeans finally accept that the US has no choice but to turn into a 'swing' provider of security. Washington's multi-regional ambitions prove financially unsustainable in the long run, and a domestic political preference for a light operational footprint adds to the constraints. Nevertheless, this development also removes a long-standing tension in US policy, namely to call for more European commitment but only when it does not represent a challenge to US leadership. The US decision to do less in Europe in order to be able to do more in the world ultimately forces Europe's hand and generates the 50/50 capability division the US has long desired.

In this future, the Alliance is able to conduct the full spectrum of military operations, including collective defence. With US engagement and enablers, crisis management operations conducted by NATO have global reach. Operations conducted without or with minimal US participation focus on Europe's broader neighbourhood. NATO's overall level of ambition to be able to conduct two major joint forces operations and six small operations, or one large collective defence operation, remains unchanged. However, a significant shift to strengthen conventional deterrence is undertaken. Based on decisions taken at the 2016 Warsaw summit, NATO expands its immediate response capability from brigade strength to corps level, a process that takes several years to achieve. Forward-positioning of capable conventional ground forces to NATO's eastern member states, in the form of multinational formations, is undertaken to make sure that deterrence is not solely based on the assumption that NATO will be able to surge and reinforce unopposed. Plans to reinforce rapid response forces include heavy forces, air and naval support, indirect fire, as well as air and missile defence. In retrospect, exercise Trident Juncture, celebrated as NATO's largest exercise in a decade in 2015, appears small, with exercises reaching levels not seen since the Return of Forces to Germany (Reforger) exercises of the late 1980s.

The credibility of this future stands and falls with a strong US role, even though it is less prominent than it was in the past. The ability to reduce its exposure in the European theatre paradoxically leads to renewed US commitment because it supports the US in its role as a global swing security provider and therefore enables enlightened leadership from behind. As a consequence of shifting geopolitical and geo-economic priorities, and because of domestic changes in the US, Europe enjoys less attention in Washington. Europeans understand that the only way to counter this impulse is to prove time and again that they remain the most capable and most reliable partner the US can find in the realm of security and defence which is willing to lead in its own neighbourhood.

How to get there: more money, more guts

This future is very demanding for European governments. It cannot be implemented without significant spending increases and harmonisation of defence planning processes. It also demands the courage to lead without the US, even if under limited circumstances. In addition, it is a future that is more attuned to the military aspects of international security and defence. Efforts to build a comprehensive security policy are likely to be complicated should the EU abandon its CSDP as we currently know it. On the other hand, it provides a viable basis for strengthening the transatlantic bond and for shaping international order and stability together with the US.

Given the significant overlap between EU and NATO membership and given that this future presents an alternative vision that has, in many ways, always been desirable for several countries within these organisations, it is possible that it may yet materialise through a mix of unintended consequences and institutional engineering in order to achieve meaningful European defence capacity. For some, this will represent NATO as it was meant to be. For others, it will give Europe the ability to satisfy its long-standing ambition to be a leading international security and defence actor, namely to make a contribution in line with its political and economic weight.

Current political disinterest in stimulating the defence aspects of CSDP, along with US attitudes resulting from simultaneous security challenges in multiple regions, might trigger a chain of events that leads to the integration of military CSDP into NATO. First, European countries with significant military capabilities that are disillusioned with progress in CSDP could decide to abandon the project. A UK exit from the European Union, if it were to happen, could actually accelerate such a dynamic. Without Europe's major military powers driving the 'D' in CSDP, others will lose interest in the project as well. Furthermore, European perceptions of conventional military threats will increase if Russian military modernisation and aggressive behaviour continue to directly challenge the values and norms of the Euro–Atlantic security order. National defence policies might thus shift further towards collective defence and away from crisis management, a process that has arguably already begun. NATO presents a much more logical framework than the EU to anchor such a reorientation of European defence in a multinational setting.

Future V: European army

This future is based on the concept of supranational European defence collaboration that dates back to the very beginning of European integration efforts after World War II. In October 1950, French Prime Minister René Pleven called for a European Defence Community (EDC) parallel to the emerging European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the creation of a European army under a supranational authority, funded by a common European budget. This European army, supported by a common European armaments and equipment programme, was to be placed under the authority of a European defence minister who would answer to a European Defence Council. Although it never materialised in the 1950s, the basic ideas underpinning the EDC are arguably even more valid today.

No single European country is able to manage the violent conflicts, hybrid warfare challenges and sophisticated cyberattacks now taking place in and around Europe on its own. The world's deteriorating security environment is pushing states towards an international division of labour in the provision of crisis management and military security. As a result, the pressure increases on Europe to do more on defence. With national budgets under strain, it is increasingly accepted that intensified military integration is the only way forward if Europe is to play a meaningful military role in its own immediate neighbourhood, let alone on the global stage.

Organisation: one for all and all for one

In this future, a number of European governments agree that a supranational organisation of defence is the most rational and economic utilisation of their limited defence resources. Similar to the decision of several EU member states to form a permanent European Monetary Union (EMU) with a common currency, several European governments come together to form a European Defence Union (EDU) and integrate their defence personnel and equipment into a common European defence force.

The European Defence Force (EDF) is the military component of the EDU, and consists of the European army, European navy and European air force. The EDF is composed of national contingents placed at the disposal of the EDU in a single chain of command supported by a common budget and a common armaments programme. EDF troops wear a common uniform and are recruited according to common recruitment practices, service terms as well as a standard code of conduct.

Basic units up to battalion size are based in and recruited by member states. BGs, brigade and higher level units, logistical and support units, as well as higher unit headquarters can be member state-based or composed of basic units of different national origins and located across Europe. The EDF follows common doctrine and standardised training methods. All military schools are integrated into a single European military education system.

Decision-making structure: Enter the HiCED

The EDU is based on an *ad hoc* legal arrangement among the participating member states, which is separate from the EU and NATO treaties, but compatible with both. Political control is exercised by a civilian High Commissioner for European Defence (HiCED) appointed for a period of three years, who operates under the control of a European Defence Council composed of the participating member states' defence ministers. The HiCED meets at the level of defence ministers and chairs European Defence Council meetings.

The highest ranking military officer in the EDF is the Supreme Commander, a general nominated by EDU member states for a three-year period who is supported by a joint and combined HQ and dedicated staff. The EDF Supreme Commander has a deputy in each of the participating EDU member states who is responsible for relations with that particular government.

Following approval by the European Defence Council, the EDF could act on the basis of a mandate or request from the EU, NATO or the UN, or as a part of a coalition of the willing. Once an EDU is formed, the participating member states would be expected to coordinate and support joint positions on relevant subjects in other multilateral defence organisations, such as NATO and the EDA.

Financing: dedicated budget

In this future, an integrated EDU is financed by a common budget based on a gross national income (GNI) formula. A joint European defence budget generates major savings by eliminating national duplication and realising economies of scale. An integrated EDU is also able to use European Commission funding for defence research, first introduced in the multiannual financial framework (2021-2027), as well as European Investment Bank (EIB) funds for capability investments. The EDF is also supported by a joint European armaments and equipment programme. Given that more than 80% of all equipment procurement in Europe has traditionally taken place at the national level, the significant savings resulting from supranational collaboration's economies of scale are used for much needed capital investment and operations in the field. Moreover, the current lack of interoperability between some 30 national defence forces, which have diminished Europe's collective military capabilities to date, is largely eliminated.

Capabilities and operations: full spectrum

In this future, Europe's combined defence resources are second only to the US in the world. These resources provide Europe with considerable strategic autonomy across the full spectrum of defence, including territorial defence, expeditionary warfare, global crisis management and disaster relief.

An integrated European army is not only a serious fighting force, but also provides NATO with the 'European leg' to NATO that has long been called for. By uniting their armed forces, Europe's capability contributions to NATO are significantly enhanced.

How to get there: political will and hard realities

Many argue that an EDU is an impossible dream (or even a nightmare), despite the commitment made by EU member states in the Lisbon Treaty to the 'progressive framing of a common defence policy that will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides' (Article 42.2 TEU). However, European integration in areas such as trade, monetary policy (euro, European Central Bank) and border control (Schengen, Frontex) already demonstrates that common European solutions are possible to achieve even in areas long considered to be central to national sovereignty. This line of reasoning was most recently promoted by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in March 2015.

While this future may seem unlikely today, external developments, such as a US military withdrawal from Europe and/or sustained Russian aggression in eastern Europe, could lead European governments to overcome their hesitation. A major contributing factor to any integration efforts will also be the ever-increasing costs of defence and defence technology.

Importantly, not all states in Europe must agree to form an EDU. A core group of European countries could initiate it with new members joining later. Such a core group would arguably have to include France and Germany, and perhaps also Italy and Poland. Interestingly enough, these four countries, together with Belgium and the Netherlands, are already among the most active participants in the many ongoing bilateral and multilateral defence collaboration projects in Europe today. Moreover, an EDU may also provide the UK, if it were to join, with a leadership role in Europe, regardless of whether it remains in the EU or not.

Organising the EDU outside of the current EU treaty framework would not be unprecedented, and indeed similar to the original Schengen agreement on the abolition of internal borders between five EU member states (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) in 1985. This mini-lateral intergovernmental cooperation was later incorporated into the EU framework following the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999. By that time, the Schengen area had gradually expanded to include nearly every EU member state.

European governments can make use of several existing building blocks if they wish to pursue an EDU. In fact, many structures suitable for a European army are already in place, such as the EU Military Staff and the European Defence Agency (EDA). Both could be the 'embryos' of more comprehensive administrative structures. Military structures also exist. Perhaps the most prominent currently existing land forces structure is the European Corps (Eurocorps) based in Strasbourg, France. Tracing its origins from the Franco–German brigade established in 1987, the Eurocorps is now a permanent multinational corps HQ capable of commanding a land force of up to 65,000 troops. The key command posts are divided and rotated between the five framework nations (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France and Luxembourg) while five associate member states (Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania and Turkey) send staff representatives to the HQ.[3]

The Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE) based in Szczecin, Poland, is another European multinational army corps HQ. Established by Denmark, Germany and Poland as 'Framework Nations' in 1998, the MNC NE currently includes representatives from 18 European countries and the US. Senior leadership posts in the MNC NE Command Group rotate between the three Framework Nations, but all other positions may be held by nationals from other participating member states.[4]

Meanwhile, at lower organisational levels, the BG concept demonstrates that smaller units from various European countries can be successfully integrated into functioning joint BGs of some 1,500 soldiers. While the core manoeuvre battalion of a BG is from one country, combat support and combat service support units are often drawn from several other countries and then integrated into a battlegroup force package. Moreover, both the multinational Nordic Battlegroup (NBG) and the Visegrad Battlegroup (V4BG) are currently under consideration for permanent organisation and maintenance by their participating member states.

If establishing a European army within a decade or two appears too ambitious, perhaps a European air force would be more realistic. Indeed, European military integration is arguably most advanced among air forces. The EATC is a major driver of this integration, as it pools major aspects of air transport and air-to-air refuelling of seven European countries under joint operational control from an operations centre in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. It was originally set up in September 2010 by Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands, and now also includes Spain, Italy and Luxembourg.[5]

3. Apart from the permanently assigned Franco–German brigade, the five framework nations (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France and Luxembourg) assign nationally based units to its command. Poland will join as a framework nation of Eurocorps in 2016.

4. Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States

5. Another example of a European-wide approach to defence collaboration is the multinational Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW) based at Papa airbase in Hungary. Without the resources to acquire heavy transport aircraft on their own, 11 European countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden) joined the United States in September 2008 to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to jointly procure and operate a fleet of C-17 strategic, long-range transport aircraft for a period of at least 30 years.

The EATC now manages missions involving almost 200 aircraft across Europe. By being able to combine the operational capabilities of the participating air forces' transport and tanker fleets, the EATC improves the overall effectiveness and efficiency in conducting air transport, air-to-air refuelling and aeromedical evacuation missions. More countries could certainly join in. Indeed, the European Council has encouraged EU member states to explore ways in which to replicate the EATC model in other areas.

Conclusion

The choices we make today have consequences for tomorrow. This *Chaillot Paper* envisions these consequences by presenting five possible European defence 'futures' based on different political choices. Our goal as authors of this publication is not to argue that one future is better than another, but rather that there *will* be one and that we have the power to shape that future. We have tried to cover a broad variety of possible future outcomes, but, of course, the five presented are not the only options and some of them can be combined.

However, in whichever plausible future we can imagine, defence cooperation — which could take shape in many different ways — is necessary if Europe is to be a global security actor in its own right. In addition, the role of the US is destined to remain important, both as a reference point for Europe's ambition and also because Europeans are more likely than not to remain partially dependent on capabilities and leadership from across the Atlantic. In fact, the five futures presented here could be categorised according to two dimensions: the degree of European capacity for action and the degree of security policy autonomy.

Just as in the past two decades, the next two decades of European defence will likely focus on capabilities and autonomy. In our conclusion, we wish to draw attention to four questions that we believe must be addressed by decision-makers in any future European defence arrangement:

Capabilities: What purpose do military instruments serve in the context of European defence and what capabilities are necessary to fulfil that purpose? European military capabilities have fallen dramatically since the end of the Cold War (see *Annexes*), and will remain limited for quite some time. Moreover, the full impact of defence spending cuts over the past several years has yet to be felt.

Resources: How much is enough and how should it be spent? The degree of improvement and the effectiveness of European defence will depend on what European governments decide regarding resources. Some European countries are indeed increasing their defence budgets, but the key is not defence spending *per se*, but rather the effective translation of resources into capabilities.

Cooperation: Which framework to aim for? The countries of Europe cannot defend themselves individually; all alternative futures presented above therefore envisage some form of cooperation. A key question is whether European governments are willing to make cooperation a core design feature of European defence or if they will continue to use cooperation mainly as a reactive alternative to compensate for capabilities already lost.

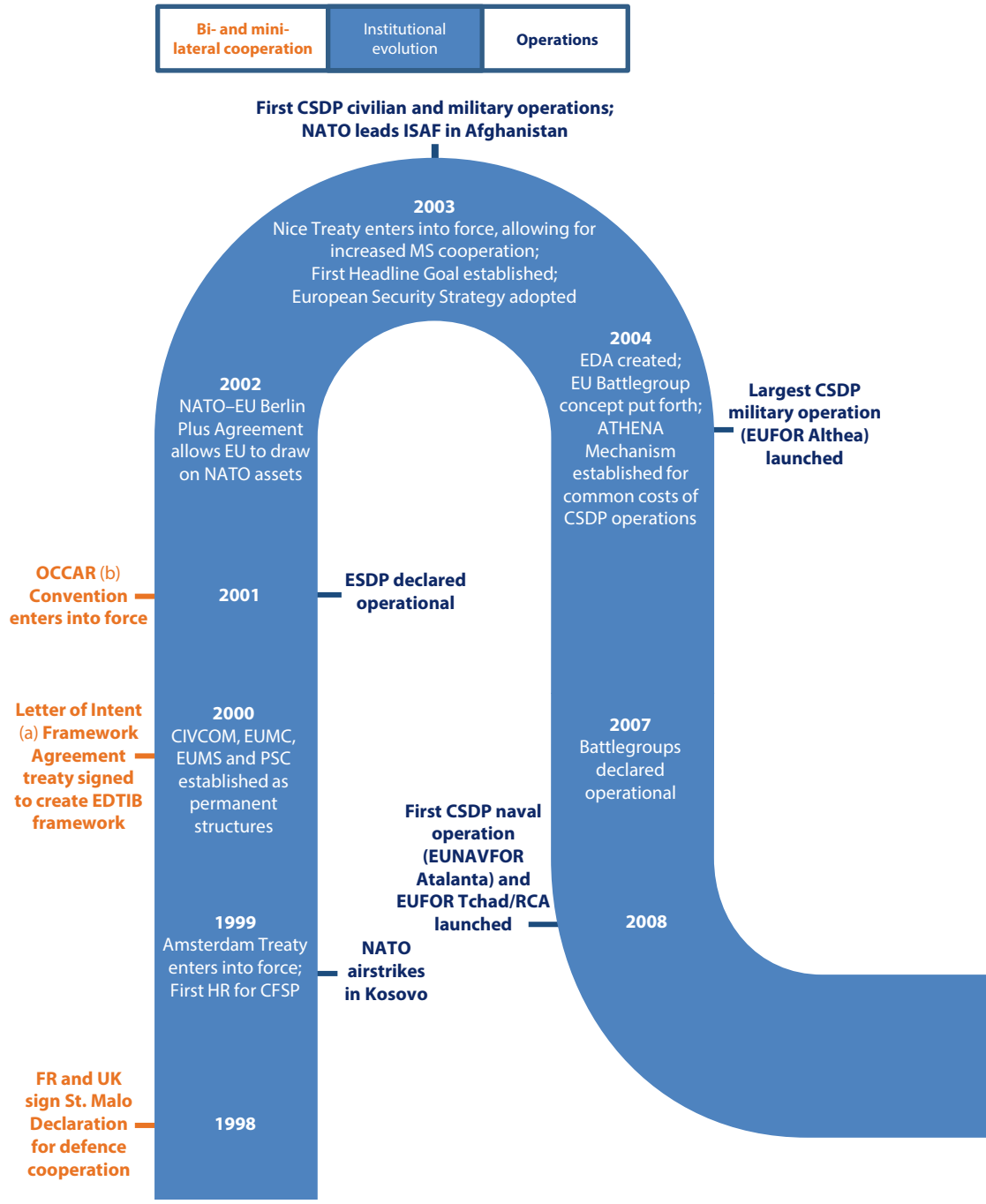
Coherence: How important is European coherence in contrast to national influence? A capable European defence framework depends on individual countries aligning with others. However, this requires a trade-off between European coherence and national influence. European governments must therefore decide on how much defence they need and how much national influence they want.

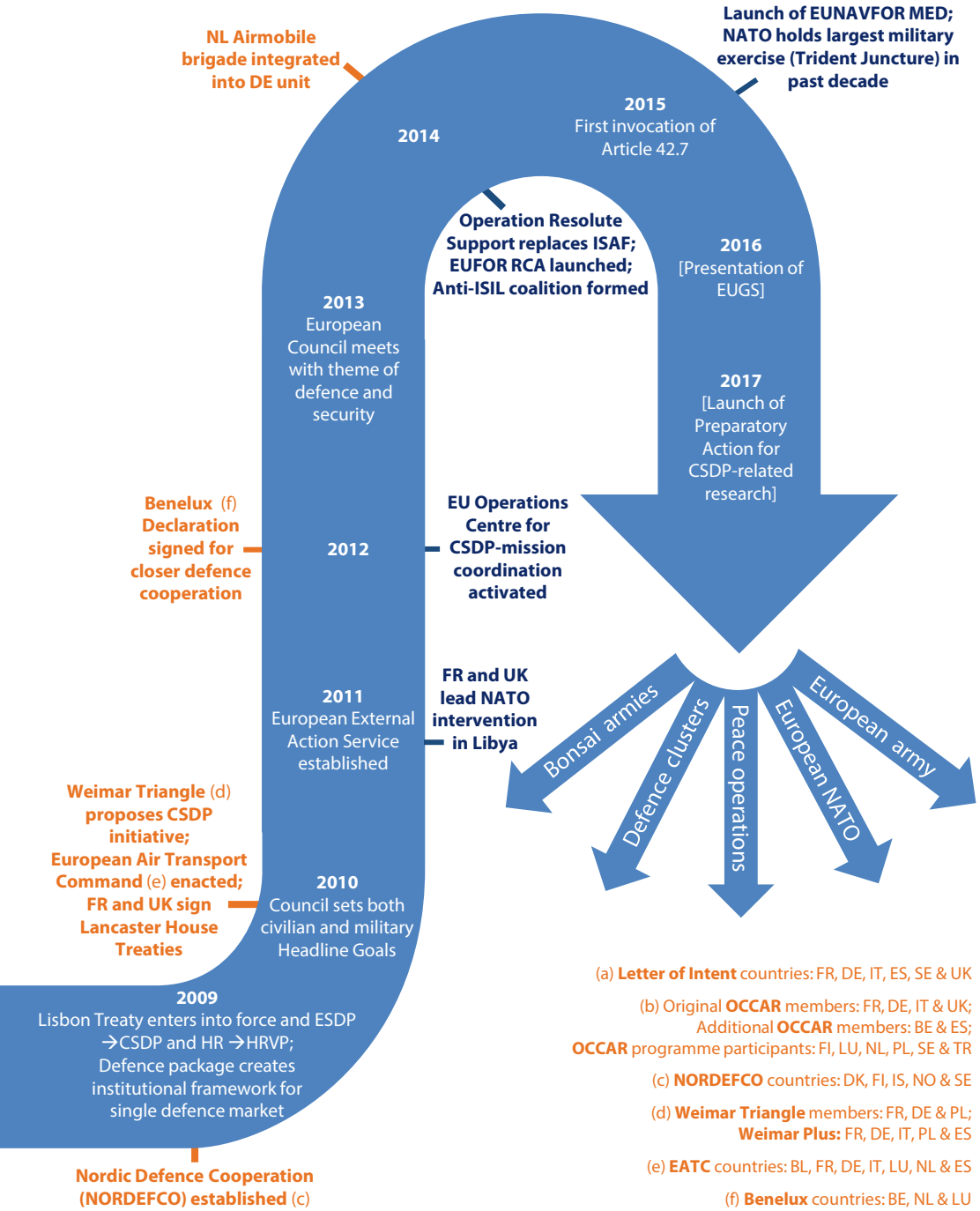
After more than two decades of 'strategic time-out' and budget cuts, 'defence matters' must be more than a mantra in Europe. Facing a rapidly deteriorating security environment in and around the continent, it is hard to imagine a more urgent time than now for the citizens and leaders of Europe to start envisioning the future of European defence.

Annexes

List of figures

Timeline of European Defence





(a) **Letter of Intent** countries: FR, DE, IT, ES, SE & UK

(b) Original **OCCAR** members: FR, DE, IT & UK; Additional **OCCAR** members: BE & ES; **OCCAR** programme participants: FI, LU, NL, PL, SE & TR

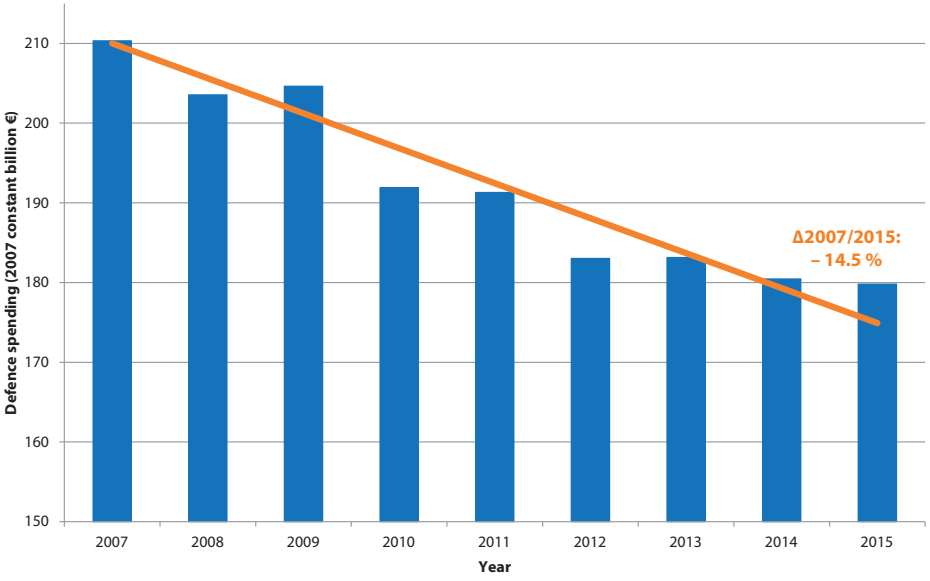
(c) **NORDEFCO** countries: DK, FI, IS, NO & SE

(d) **Weimar Triangle** members: FR, DE & PL; **Weimar Plus:** FR, DE, IT, PL & ES

(e) **EATC** countries: BL, FR, DE, IT, LU, NL & ES

(f) **Benelux** countries: BE, NL & LU

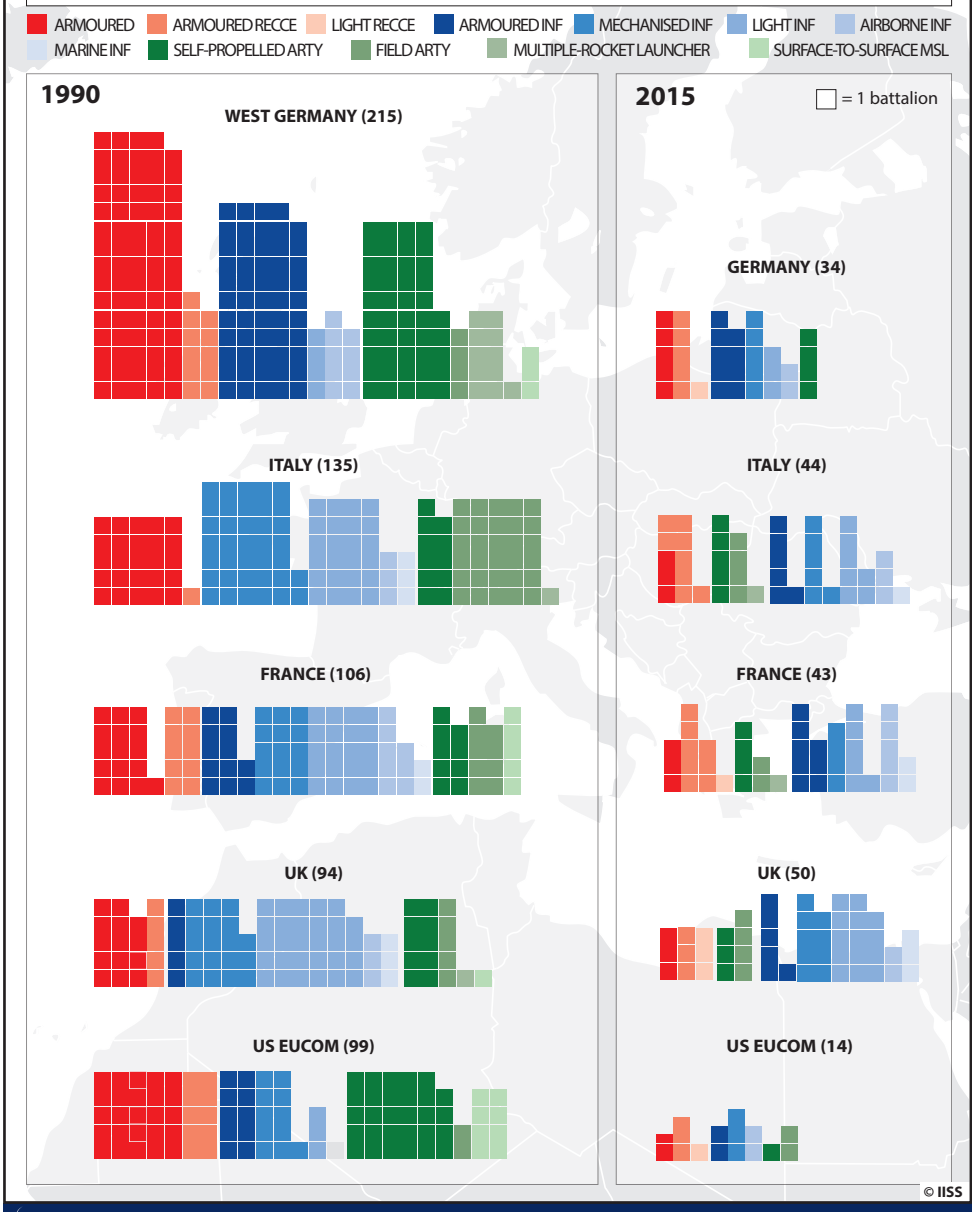
EU-28 defence spending (2007-2015)
(2007 constant billion €)



Source: IISS, *Military Balance* 2009-2016

Changes in Western European combat battalions (1990-2015)

Between 1990 and 2015, a range of factors — including economic challenges, changing threat perceptions and the end of conscription — contributed to a dramatic decline in the number of active combat battalions in service with the major western European powers and United States European Command (EUCOM). In the states assessed here, numbers fell from a total of 649 in 1990 to 185 in 2015. Presently, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and EUCOM together have a smaller number of regular combat battalions than West Germany alone in 1990.



IISS The Military Balance

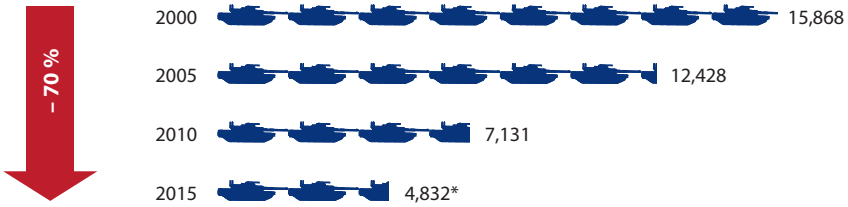
Changes in EU-28 key military equipment (2000-2015)

Equipment type	2000	2005	2010	2015	Δ2000/2015
Armoured vehicles					
Main battle tanks	15,868	12,428	7,131	4,832*	**– 70 %**
Armoured infantry fighting vehicles	8,644	9,193	7,379	6,211	– 28 %
Aircraft					
Combat aircraft	2,949	2,609	2,296	1,870	**– 37 %**
Transport aircraft	773	984	802	642	– 17 %
Tanker aircraft (including tanker/transport)	77	67	66	64	– 17 %
Helicopters					
Attack helicopters	283	338	360	343	**21 %**
Multi-role and transport helicopters	3,370	2,980	2,531	2,097	– 38 %
Maritime equipment					
Principal surface combatants	172	191	146	129	**– 25 %**
Submarines	86	79	66	68	– 21 %
Patrol and coastal combatants	430	407	302	197	– 54 %
UAVs					
Unmanned aerial vehicles	22	110	127	140	**536 %**

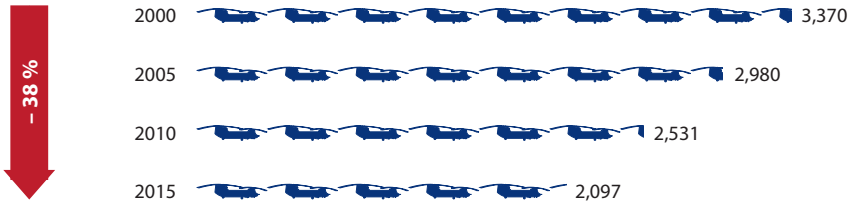
* 2 762 of the main battle tanks are held by Greece, Poland and Romania, the majority of which are older models, such as the T-55, M-48 and M-60.

Changes in EU-28 key military equipment (2000-2015)

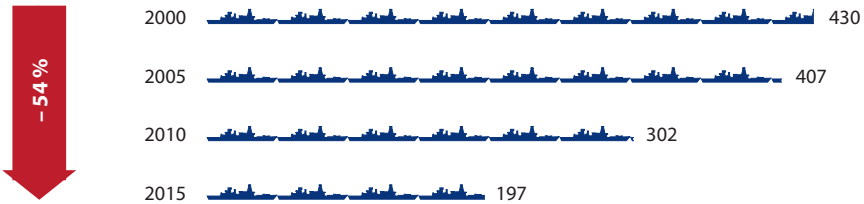
Main battle tanks
(2,000 per unit)



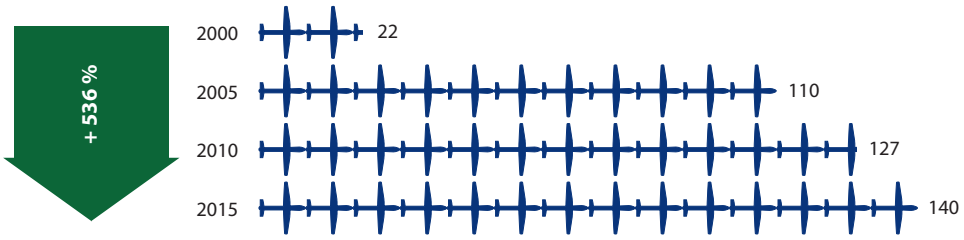
Multi-role and transport helicopters
(400 per unit)



Patrol and coastal combatants
(50 per unit)



Unmanned aerial vehicles
(10 per unit)



* 2,762 of the main battle tanks are held by Greece, Poland and Romania, the majority of which are older models, such as the T-55, M-48 and M-60.

EU-28 strength in national, multinational, NATO, UN and EU operations

(as of the end of 2015)

Operation name	Location	Launch year	Strength of operation		
			EU-28	Total	% EU-28
National operations					
Operation Barkhane (FR)	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger	2014	3,500	3,500	100 %
Operation Orbital (UK)	Ukraine	2015	75	75	
Operation Sangaris (FR)	Central African Republic	2013	900	900	
Subtotal of national operation deployments:			**4,475**	**4,475**	**100 %**
Coalition against ISIL[a]					
Operations Chammal (FR), Inherent Resolve (US-led) and Shader (UK)	Iraq, Jordan	2014	1,244	6,277	20 %
NATO operations					
Kosovo Force	Kosovo[b]	1999	3,236	4,665	69 %
Operation Resolute Support	Afghanistan	2014	3,990	12,778	31 %
Subtotal of NATO deployments:			**7,226**	**17,443**	**41 %**
UN peacekeeping operations[b]					
MINURSO	Western Sahara	1991	33	210	16 %
MINUSCA	Central African Republic	2014	29	10,806	< 1 %
MINUSMA	Mali	2013	915	10,207	9 %
MINUSTAH	Haiti	2004	54	4,577	1 %
MONUSCO	DR Congo	1999	67	19,784	< 1 %
UNAMID (AU/UN)	Sudan	2007	12	17,754	< 1 %
UNDOF	Syria	1974	144	789	18 %
UNFICYP	Cyprus	1964	534	920	58 %
UNIFIL	Lebanon	1978	3,432	10,410	33 %
UNMIK	Kosovo	1999	9	16	56 %
UNMIL	Liberia	2003	32	5,934	1 %
UNMISS	South Sudan	2011	77	12,523	1 %
UNMOGIP	India and Pakistan	1949	20	43	47 %
UNOCI	Côte d'Ivoire	2004	22	6,913	< 1 %
UNTSO	Israel	1948	75	142	53 %
Subtotal of UN deployments:			**5,455**	**101,028**	**5 %**
CSDP military operations					
EUFOR Althea	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004	529	818	65 %
EUMAM RCA	Central African Republic	2015	60	70	86 %
EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia	Mediterranean Sea (naval)	2015	1,408	1,408	100 %
EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta	Gulf of Aden (naval)	2010	669	674	99 %
EUTM Mali	Mali	2014	536	539	99 %
EUTM Somalia	Somalia	2010	171	187	91 %
Subtotal of CSDP military deployments:			**3,373**	**3,696[c]**	**91 %**
Subtotal of military deployments			**21,773**	**132,919**	**16 %**
CSDP civilian missions					
EULEX Kosovo	Kosovo	2008	675	1,455	46 %
EUAM Ukraine	Ukraine	2014	77	153	50 %
EUMM Georgia	Georgia	2008	203	310	65 %
EUBAM Rafah	Palestinian Territories	2005	3	9	33 %
EUPOL COPPS	Palestinian Territories	2006	53	95	56 %
EUPOL Afghanistan	Afghanistan	2007	164	321	51 %
EUCAP Nestor	Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Seychelles	2012	48	51	94 %
EUCAP Sahel Niger	Niger	2012	47	78	60 %
EUBAM Libya	Libya	2013	3	5	60 %
EUCAP Sahel Mali	Mali	2014	71	100	71 %
EUSEC RD Congo	DR Congo	2005	10	10	100 %
Subtotal of CSDP civilian deployments:			**1,354**	**2,587[c]**	**52 %**
Total deployments			**23,127**	**135,506**	**17 %**

Notes:

[a] The total strength indicated here includes forces from 13 coalition countries, including some non-EU personnel deployed to Kuwait (Operation Impact) and the United Arab Emirates (Operation Okra), and does not account for contributions from Turkey and Gulf countries.

[b] This designation, applicable here and thereafter, is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with the UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ opinion on Kosovo's declaration of independence.

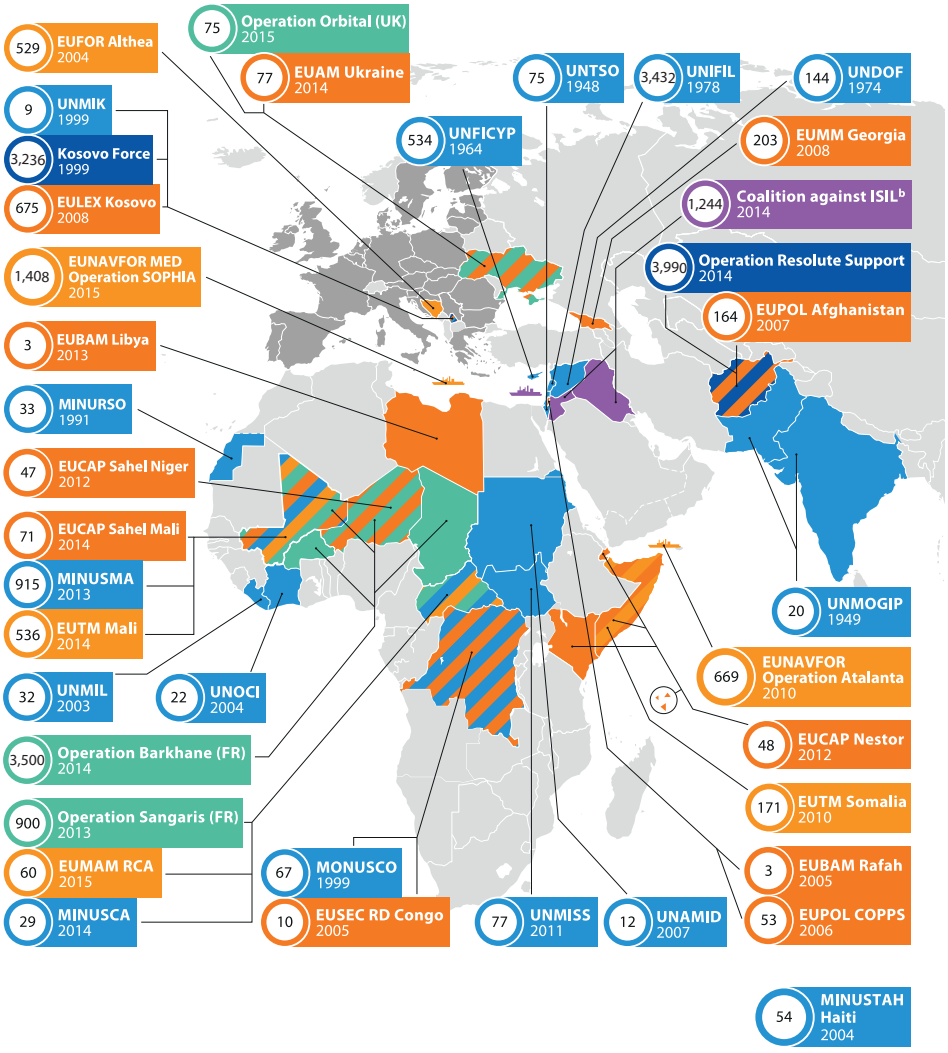
[c] Total strength for CSDP military operations and civilian missions include third states and local participation.

Sources:

National operations, coalition against ISIL and NATO operations: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance* 2016;
UN peacekeeping operations: International Peace Institute, *IPI Peacekeeping Database*, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations;
CSDP: European External Action Service.

EU-28 strength in national, multinational, NATO, UN and EU operations

(as of the end of 2015)



Notes:

[a] Operations do not necessarily span across the entire territory of the highlighted nations.

[b] The total strength indicated here includes forces from 13 coalition countries, including some non-EU personnel deployed to Kuwait (Operation Impact) and the United Arab Emirates (Operation Okra), and does not account for contributions from Turkey and Gulf countries.

Abbreviations

A2AD	Anti-access/area denial
ACO	Allied Command Operations
BG	Battlegroup
C2	Command and Control
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CMPD	Crisis Management Planning Directorate
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability Directorate
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSP	Common Security Policy
DAP	Defence acquisition pledge
DIP	Defence investment pledge
DSACEUR	Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe
EATC	European Air Transport Command
EC	European Commission
ECB	European Central Bank
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDC	European Defence Community
EDF	European Defence Forces
EDU	European Defence Union
EEAS	European External Action Service
EGF	European Gendarmerie Force
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMU	European Monetary Union

ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
EU	European Union
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy
FSJ	Freedom, Security and Justice
GNI	Gross national income
HiCED	High Commissioner for European Defence
HR/VP	High Representative/Vice President
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
MNC NE	Multinational Corps Northeast
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NBG	Nordic Battlegroup
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OHQ	Operational headquarters
PeSCo	Permanent structured cooperation
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicles
UN	United Nations
US	United States
V4BG	Visegrad Battlegroup

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