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# The European Union's role in the XXIst century's international system

How strong is the European Union  
in the security and defence sector?



AN EXPERTISE FORUM CONTRIBUTING TO EUROPEAN  
ARMIES INTEROPERABILITY SINCE 1953

This paper was drawn up by Nour Engueleguele under the supervision and guidance of Mr Mario Blokken, Director of the Permanent Secretariat.

This Food for Thought paper is a document that gives an initial reflection on the theme. The content is not reflecting the positions of the member states but consists of elements that can initiate and feed the discussions and analyses in the domain of the theme. All our studies are available on [www.finabel.org](http://www.finabel.org)

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the 2000s, globalisation has been the driving force of the international system and the relationship between countries. The concept of globalisation refers to increased movements of people, goods and services, capital, technology etc; as well as an acceleration of the interaction between different regions and populations across the world. All these new dynamics inside the international system have created new challenges and new security and defence issues. The multiplication of exchanges, and freedom of movement have rendered borders porous and consequently led to increased intrastate conflicts, massive population displacements and increased threats of terrorism.

Due to this constant instability, the Cold War's arms race never actually ended as countries are always looking for strong and powerful weapons to dissuade others during negotiations. Despite economic and health-related setbacks, defence budgets are still prioritised: in 2019, the United States' military budget was around 685 billion USD, and China's was around 181 billion USD. Meanwhile, Russia concerned its neighbours with the continuous rise of its defence spending; Sergueï Shoigou, the Russian Defence Minister, spent 24 billion dollars on defence (Trends Tendances, 2020). EU Member States are represented individually in world ranking; however, under NATO's budget, 1.395 billion euros were approved for 2019 (NATO News, 2018).

The European Union is surrounded by powerful countries that are boosting their military strength, threatening each other, and making the international system more unstable. The EU finds itself in a delicate

position where the United States want to disengage from NATO. China is considerably increasing its military power, and Russia impinges on Eastern countries' European neighbourhood policy. Moreover, at internal borders, Europe is facing new security issues. Eastern countries targeted by the European policy of enlargement are also a coveted objective for Russia, which wants to stop the spread of western influence. In the south, Member States deal with massive refugee movements without enough financial, material and human resources available. The EU needs to reinforce its position by strengthening its voice in face of new challenges and impose its vision of the new globalised world. To do so, it needs to enhance its political cooperation and operational coordination in the security and defence areas. By reinforcing the integration of its military forces, the EU will improve its credibility on the international scene and consolidate the legitimacy of its territory both from a regional and an international point of view.

Why should the EU reaffirm its strength on the international scene? What is the European security and defence potential, and how can it be improved? What next steps could the EU hypothetically take after taking a stand in the international system?

This paper will focus on the European Union's current place on the international scene in the defence and security field. Due to the nature of international relations, the global order is constantly changing, and the balance of power needs to be re-equilibrated. The security issues that the European Union is facing are not new. Several political, civilian, and military initiatives have been

launched and implemented but are yet to become active. Through this analysis, some recommendations for the EU to become more effective in terms of security and growth of its defence sector will be put forward. In addition, some suggestions for larger and

deeper reforms will be expressed, which may progressively lead to the initial idea of Robert Schuman: the “European United States”, focusing on the defence and security area.

## THE STATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

### The theory of Transnationalism

Since the emergence of globalisation, international relations have been led by the theory of Transnationalism. Three factors characterise this theoretical movement: first, increased connectivity between international actors through economic exchanges, expansion of the global market, simplification of mobility (goods, services and people), erasing of borders; secondly, powerful and structured non-state actors have gained increased predominance, making them unique stakeholders during negotiations. Thirdly, the movement is about coordination, cooperation, and dependency between all actors in the international system.

The *Réseau de Recherche sur les Opérations de la Paix* (Gnanguenon, 2008) elaborated some profiles describing the typologies of transnational actors:

- Transnational firms, financial operators and companies that use specific strategies to integrate into the global trade.
- Non-governmental organisations, social movements and public opinion created by states to serve common interests.
- Religious actors can be recognised or not by states and own international networks involved in the relationship between

states by different means.

- “Identity entrepreneurs” represent all groups and structures that refer to a religious, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural community.
- Informal actors that refer to those groups with no legal relationship with the state.

Connectivity has become a key concept in international relations. To respond to global issues, states and non-state actors need to cooperate and coordinate their actions, especially when facing new security and defence challenges.

### New security issues in the current world

The phenomenon of border porosity that participates in the spread of insecurity and threats of illegal non-state actors will be the focus of the next section. Borders are man-made, they are the outer envelope of a territory that forms a state and on which the state exercises its duty and its sovereignty. These delimitations, which have become more concrete over time, result from the evolution of community construction and adaptation to political, social, and economic changes at different local, regional, national, and

transnational levels. However, the twenty-first century, marked by globalisation, revealed a certain porosity and a blurring of borders deriving from the extension of trade and free trade areas, but also from the expansion of transnational actors who make all parts of the world accessible.

Globalisation has forced the world to tackle new security challenges caused by many interrelated crises linked to politics, economics, ecology, society, identity, migration and recently, health. Facing this international instability, states act unilaterally to protect their territory, national integrity, and population's interests; to this end, they have increased their national military and defence capability and stepped up their position on the international scene as well as their technological innovation. They seem to have forgotten about cooperation and solidarity of action in international relations. Another reason for the increase in defence investment is the growing presence of structured informal non-state actors. Their substantial financial, material, and human resources make them worthy of consideration, especially since many have the military resources to threaten the integrity of a whole country or region.

Global Firepower provided a ranking to determine a nation's power index score based on military, finance, and logistical capability. In this ranking, over 50 individual factors are considered. A perfect power index score is 0.000. Among the 50 individual factors, the main indicators are weapons availability, nuclear capacity, economic growth, geographical position of the country, military logistical capacity, natural resources, human

resources, membership of a specific alliance, financial stability of the state and diplomatic influence on other countries. The three most militarily powerful countries are the United States (0.0606 power index), Russia (0.0681 power index) and China (0.0691 power index) (Global Firepower, n.d.). The EU finds itself trailing behind these three powerful countries, with no concrete security and defence capabilities except through NATO and with new security challenges at the borders that need to be handled with one voice. In this situation, the EU must find its place on the new international stage (Fondation Robert Schuman, 2019).

Since the end of WWII, the world has mutated, the dynamics of international relations have evolved, and the global order has constantly been changing. We are currently in a multipolar world characterised by a new redistribution of power and a multiplication of actors. Complexity and instability are common in international relations in the XXIst century. Outside NATO, the European Union needs to adapt and impose itself in terms of security and defence capabilities, to keep a voice in the race to shape the global order.



## THE EU'S WORLD POSITION IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE AREA

### The EU as a REIO on the international scene

With its 27 Member States, the European Union is the oldest and most developed Regional Economic Integration Organisation (REIO). This organisation enables Member States to improve and develop their economy by engaging in common agreements. From an external perspective, the EU can be seen as a party with particular rights in international organisations (CIESIN, n.d.). However, since the European Union cannot be considered a country, being accepted into international organisations (IO) as a full member can sometimes be difficult. Most of the time, the EU's status in an IO depends on the international fora and ranges from full member to observer. The EU is a full member of certain IOs such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Hague Conference on Private International Law etc. However, some IOs only allow single states to be members -like the United Nations (UN)- so the EU participates as an observer, meaning it can participate in the meetings and sign international agreements but does not have veto rights in the Security Council. The European Union also obtains visibility through the "Gx system", which is less formal and takes non-binding decisions. Indeed, the EU plays a major role thanks to the substantive contribution of its knowledge, its financial resources and to the special relations some of the Member States have with third countries (Keukeleire, Delreux, 2014). Since the EU is not a state, having

a stronger influence in the international system is difficult, especially when it comes to security and defence decisions. To counter its disadvantage, the European Union has implemented a Common Security and Defence Policy that does not depend on NATO, but does not oppose NATO's decisions.

### The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

#### *The creation of the CSDP*

The creation of the Common Defence and Security Policy (CSDP) has been a gradual process. In 1948, the Western Union (WU) was created, bringing together France, Benelux, and the United Kingdom. The WU represented economic, social, and cultural cooperation but mainly focused on collective defence. Under article 5 of the Brussels Treaty, it provided automatic military assistance between the five members in case of aggression. Faced with a desire to enlarge, the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community was signed by the Benelux countries, France, Italy, and West Germany in 1952, to create a European army



and supranational institutions under NATO's supervision. However, France never ratified the treaty, causing the failure of the project.

Nevertheless, the determination to prove to the US that Europe could protect itself from communism was strong. Therefore, the WU transformed itself into the Western European Union (WEU). This led to the creation of an institutional framework to regulate trade in security and defence matters, to promote cooperation between members and to strengthen the European defence identity. At the end of the Cold War, "the Petersburg tasks" were defined. The WEU changed its role and concentrated its action on humanitarian missions, national evacuation, and peacekeeping forces and actions (CVCE, n.d.). After the Yugoslav wars in the 90s, the status of European security was re-evaluated. In 1998, at the Saint Malo Summit, the EU agreed to have "an autonomous capability to act, backed by credible military forces", giving new impetus to the European defence policy, allowing the creation of political and military structures and clarifying the relationship with NATO (Hautala, 2000). The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was launched and became the Common Security and Defence Policy after the 2008 Lisbon Treaty (Keukeleire, Delreux, 2014, chap 8).

Article 42 (2) of the Treaty on European Union introduces the CSDP as a policy that "shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides. It shall, in that case, recommend to the Member States the adoption of such a decision in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements" (Treaty on European Union, 2008).

The Council established the Permanent

Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in 2017 through the Treaty on European Union. This structure is a key framework for European defence. It provides permanent cooperation between Member States to increase and deepen the defence process with those capable and willing to do so.

Through Article 42 (1) of the TEU, PESCO was defined as a policy that "shall provide the Union with an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets. The Union may use them on missions outside the Union for peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The performance of these tasks shall be undertaken using capabilities provided by the Member States".

According to former High Representative Federica Mogherini, PESCO is a "historic moment in the European defence" making the EU ready to move towards self-sufficiency in defence matters and progressively distance itself from NATO (Deutsche Welle, 2017).

### *The military dimension*

The CSDP does not involve common instruments, troops, or headquarters to fulfil military missions. All means provided for a mission depend on the will of Member States and their ability to deploy troops, materials, and financial resources. In 2004, Battlegroups were created to make the military forces more efficient and provide a rapid military response by one state or a group of states, including non-EU members. In addition, to make the military dimension operational, institutions are needed. Three possible headquarters are available (Keukeleire; Delreux, 2014):

- The Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) under the Berlin



Plus arrangements. SHAPE is NATO's operational headquarter located in Belgium.

- The Operational Headquarters provided by France, UK, Germany, Italy or Greece that are multi-nationalised for the Commander.
- The EU Operations Centre located within the EU Military Staff in Brussels.
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### *The civilian dimension*

The civilian dimension of the CSDP involves the deployment of non-military actors who contribute to the security of police officers and of civil judges. It complements the military dimension by strengthening civilian capabilities such as policing, rule of law and civil administration. These ensure civil protection and aid the development of monitoring capabilities. These missions can be confronted with a governments' reluctance to participate or engage themselves abroad due to the lack of information on the political situation and the situation on the ground. To overcome these difficulties, the EU has implemented some political and operational structures:

- The Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management located in the European Union External Action Service, which works at the political level. It provides information, gives advice and ensures a follow-up regarding civilian crisis management capabilities and missions.
- The Civilian Planning and Conduct capability plans which deploys and conducts civilian missions under the CSDP.

### *The EU's achievements under the CSDP*

Since 2013, eight EU military operations, and eighteen civilian missions have been launched. Usually, missions are deployed in low-intensity crises and low-risk situations. In 2020, there were six ongoing military operations, and eleven ongoing civilian missions, all in different regions of the world: Africa, Western Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East, and Asia (The European Union External Action Service, 2019). However, they are uneven in terms of time, geographical location, and available capabilities. A new form of direct participation in conflict situations has been elaborated: Battlegroups, the EU's training missions of third countries' military forces, aiming at making national armed forces able to defend countries and the civil society during a conflict (Keukeleire; Delreux, 2014). Several training missions have been deployed: in Mali since 2013; in Somalia since 2010 or in the Central African Republic since 2016.

Unfortunately, the Member States' ability to act under the EU flag is limited by quantitative and qualitative shortfalls and inappropriate equipment, leading to a fragmented and insufficient use of the CSDP and of the defence budget in general. Individually, Member States do not have the budget to invest in defence technology, research, equipment, infrastructures etc., and in addition, the EU struggles to gather common funds. For most military missions, European countries prefer to act through NATO or the UN because of their well-established operational expertise and military capabilities. European Member States are reluctant to act collectively due to political reasons depending on the missions and the actors involved in the conflict.

The European Union possesses viable political instruments in terms of defence and



security, but they are not developed enough to be fully accepted and used by Member States. Considering China, the U.S., and Russia's growing influence and power, the EU will have to rely on these instruments implemented a few years ago. Currently,

the European Union is mainly involved in civilian missions and does not want to be directly involved in armed conflicts. Before acting on international matters, some internal issues need to be resolved to achieve further cooperation and coordination of action.

## **THE MAIN INTERNAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE EU TO IMPROVE COORDINATION IN SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

### **The challenge of the European identity**

The EU is simultaneously facing multiple crises that are deeply intertwined. The Union's identity crisis is rooted in terrorist threats and the refugee crisis, enabling extremist and populist parties to become more visible and relevant. Because of their success, these parties have spread Euroscepticism amongst EU citizens (Chopin, 2018). Examples are Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National in France, Norbert Hofer's Freedom Party in Austria and Matteo Salvini's Northern League in Italy.

The lack of a common identity causes Member States to coordinate actions and cooperate with difficulty. Each country has its history, culture, language, society that differs according to the region. Moreover, threats across the EU's borders make national states worry about their territory and integrity first. Several events undermined the stability of the European identity such as terrorist attacks, the refugee crisis, the eurozone crisis, financial instability, rise of Russian political power, Brexit etc. and the consequences are still unpredictable today. Building a common identity would create a feeling of belonging among European citizens and the EU nations.

It would also improve the EU's cohesion in defence matters (EUExperts - Bruxelles, 2019). The European Union is not yet perceived as a whole, capable of ensuring its people's security, which weakens any defence strategy.

### **The reinforcement of the European solidarity**

#### *The European Defence Fund*

The European Defence Fund was proposed for the first time in 2016 by the European Commission. This project is a step toward elaborating a Europe of defence and the reinforcement of the strategic autonomy of European Member States. Through this fund, Member States can invest more in defence research and common military operability development. The main purpose is to homogenise military capabilities among Member States and remedy the shortcomings in terms of European security and defence effectiveness, enabling the EU to improve its industrial cooperation and autonomy in acting nationally or multilaterally. This project was mainly supported by the European heads of State and Prime Ministers (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, 2020).

For the period 2019-2020, the defence fund budget was set at 500 million euros, mainly focused on satellite communication, early warning systems, artificial intelligence, cyber defence, and maritime surveillance (European Commission, 2019). Before the health crisis, the EU defence and security had reached a new level of ambition. For the period 2021-2027, the Commission requested the allocation of a financial envelope of 13 billion euros; however, the European Council agreed on the sum of 7 billion euros (Toute l'Europe, 2020). This cut was due to the unprecedented, unknown, and unpredictable effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in favour of the Recovery Plan. For certain countries, the defence budget is not a priority anymore, despite its present capital importance. The defence sector has been instrumental in mobilising medical staff and medical supplies, transferring patients and more. Coordination and cooperation in action were essential to “establish safe transport corridors, organise repatriation flights and bring our civilian and military staff safely home” as Tomislav Ivic, Croatian State Secretary for Defence, pointed out (European Defence Agency, 2020). Despite the uncertain consequences of this health crisis, the defence budget should remain the focus for the design of future actions (European Defence Agency, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic struck the EU and challenged Europe's Armed Forces' coordination, which proved to be up to the task.

## Securing the eastern and southern neighbourhood

Europe is currently facing more instability than ever caused by terrorism, Brexit, Euroscepticism, populism, and extreme right

parties, an assertive Russia and the rise of the Islamic State. These issues are destabilising the south and the east of the EU. At the eastern borders, the Balkans are destabilised by conflicts that reflect the Russian interference in the European enlargement policy. The European Union wants to avoid Russian intervention in countries that were once part of Russia's sphere of influence. Russia, however, wants to keep its influence in countries that once have been part of the USSR. Due to intrastate conflict in North Africa and the Middle East, southern European Member States are dealing with massive arrivals of refugees, amongst which the Islamic State claims to hide terrorists (Samadashvili, 2016). The European Union needs to react and safeguard its interests in the long term and needs to secure its borders to maintain its external and internal security. In European strategy, security goes hand in hand with democracy. Through its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU wants to participate in the development of stability and prosperity in those countries that have struggled to build strong institutions that apply the rule of law (Samadashvili, 2016). EU Commissioner for External Relations and ENP Benita Ferrero-Waldner describes the ENP as a “modern smart policy embracing



security, stability and prosperity” by bringing the EU and its neighbours closer while being beneficial for all parties. Launched in 2004, the ENP was signed with 16 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. The main goal is to promote democratic institutions and economic growth in the hope of seeing an improvement in security (EU Neighbours; n.d.).

However, the Union needs to adapt its policy to respond to these new challenges. After WWII, the United States were strongly involved in guaranteeing the EU’s security and pushing for the early admission of Central and Eastern European countries to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Admission makes the implementation of democracy easier, ensures the respect of the rule of law, strengthens institutions, and prevents ethnic conflicts. Due to external factors, such as history or the relationship with other non-European states, admission

was not a viable option for some countries (for example Ukraine). With the progressive withdrawal of the US, the EU implemented the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy in 2016. This new plan paved the way for upgrading the strategy, means and capabilities of the EU defence policy reshaping association agreements with its neighbours. The main challenge for the EU is to understand how to build stability and security at its borders and make improvements in this specific domain (Samadashvili, 2016). By achieving the identity, solidarity and security objectives, the European Union will reinforce and reaffirm its position on European territory first, then on the international scene. While most of the time ignored, or put aside, these new challenges have hindered the EU’s evolution in terms of visibility and credibility. For a stronger, more consistent, and more credible Europe in the international system, European Member States need to strengthen their cooperation and coordination in terms of defence, security policies and operability.

## GOING FURTHER

### **A seat at the UNSC for the European Union?**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is responsible for maintaining peace and security across the world. It was created by the five winning countries of WWII: France, United Kingdom, China, Russia and the United States. They are the permanent members and hold veto rights, while the General Assembly chooses ten

further members every two years. The UNSC has never been reformed since its creation, and as a result, it does not reflect the present reality of the global order. Some developing regions and countries such as India, Germany, Brazil, the African Union etc. are asking for a permanent seat due to their growing influence in international relations.

Reforming the Security Council is not a new idea, but not all Member States are keen on it, especially the permanent members. One

of the reforms that will be described in the present paper involves a regional division of the world, which would give the EU a permanent seat and veto rights. The EU having a permanent seat at the UNSC could be an important impetus to build a stronger and more coherent defence policy, as EU Member States will speak with a single voice. The EU is already an observer at the UNSC, supporting its decisions and implementing them when needed. Obtaining a permanent seat would allow the majority of the EU Member States to get more visibility on the international stage (Simon, 2012).

However, the reluctance to enlarge the UNSC is strong for multiple reasons. From a technical point of view, permanent members do not want to lose their veto rights. In addition, Article 24 of the UN Charter states that it is supposed to “ensure prompt and effective action” (Charter of the United Nations, 1945); having more members with veto rights would make the Security Council more idle than it currently is. Finally, the Security Council follows the principle of unanimity: interests in the EU regarding China, Russia, or the United States are diverse and not finding a consensus inside the EU would mean having no voice. The Union has been silent or undecided for too long and obtaining a seat at the UNSC would represent an opportunity to impose itself (Pacreau, 2019). From a political point of view, one could argue that Europe is over-represented since both France and the United Kingdom are permanent members. Nevertheless, they are not willing to leave their power for a common representation. Interviewed by the French magazine *Le Parisien*, political scientist Dominique Moïsi said “Being a permanent member gives prestige, it’s a symbol of power. The idea is to be part of a club that others

cannot access.” [translated] (Berrod, 2019). Currently, Germany is the only country pushing for an EU seat at the UNSC. On 28 September 2018, during a speech in Berlin about the future of the EU, German Vice-Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared: “If the European Union wants to be taken seriously, it should speak with a single voice at the United Nations Security Council” [translated] (Toute l’Europe, 2018). In 2019 this idea was followed by Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, chief of the German conservative party, who suggested to share the seat with France. France quickly reacted stating: “We will not share our seat of permanent member at the United Nations Security Council neither with Germany nor with any other state” [translated] (Berrod, 2019).

Regional representation at the UNSC could be an opportunity for the EU to impose itself on the international scene on security and defence matters. However, this reform is unlikely to be approved by the permanent members. What about a local reform that can push Europe to better coordinate its action?

## A European Army instead of NATO

In 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron expressed his wish to see a European military project for the first time. In 2018, German Chancellor Angela Merkel conveyed her support during her speech at the European Parliament saying that Europe should “work [together] to create a real European army” [translated] (L’Express AFP, 2018). During the signing of the Franco-German Treaty in Aachen in 2019, Merkel and Macron reiterated the idea of a common European army instead of 27 national armies. This idea would potentially include much more than a set of soldiers, but also everything

that will enable them to act: a substantial budget, clear political guidelines, a competent military command, adequate training, high-performance equipment, and an industrial and technological organisation capable of producing it (Europe 1, 2019). According to a survey on security and defence published in 2017 by the Eurobarometer, 75% of European citizens are in favour of a common security and defence policy and 55% are in favour of the creation of a European army. More recently, a Eurobarometer survey published in 2018 revealed that 68% of Europeans want the EU to do more in terms of defence (European Parliament, 2019).

The *Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques* (IRIS) suggested three reasons why European Member States should cooperate through a European army to protect their interests and maintain peace. Firstly, they are no longer able to defend themselves alone and to build up capability for action on land, sea, air, space and cyber. Indeed, globalisation has contributed to an increase in security and defence issues caused by new players that threaten the integrity of nations: terrorism, exploitation of cyberspace, proliferation of remotely piloted vehicles and prototype autonomous weapons. Unfortunately, European nations

are no longer financially capable of renewing military equipment and training structures. Nowadays, the more sophisticated weapons are, the higher the costs to maintain them. As a result, armies' size has been considerably reduced, and equipment continues to be used despite its obsolescence. In addition, under-investment in research and technology leads to the loss of skills and autonomy.

Secondly, the function of NATO has changed over time. During the Cold War, NATO served as an exclusive asset for Europeans, shielding them from an expanding communist ideology in central Europe. Developed by the Americans, NATO brought together all the western European states that wished to remain in the alliance after the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Americans, thereafter, taught Europeans how to wage war, largely providing them with equipment and logistics. However, the U.S. government keeps reiterating its wish to move past NATO. It threatens to withdraw its military guarantee, while not hesitating to monetise its protection in exchange for trade benefits. Thirdly, gaining independence from a strategic, security and defence point of view is important. The European Union can no longer remain neutral in this new globalised international relations dynamic and has to safeguard itself. Despite the increase in the



number of programs, projects, funds, and institutions without infringing Member States' sovereignty, 22 years after the Saint Malo Summit, the EU still cannot defend itself by itself. The lack of integration in the defence and security field has led to a loss of 26.4 billion euros every year because of duplication, overcapacity, and obstacles to procurement (Mauro, Jehin, 2019).

### **Defence: do more with less Exploiting the potential for further European integration [translated]**

Collectively, European Member States are the second-largest buyer of defence equipment in the world after the United States. Yet, there is still a significant amount of financial loss, estimated around 24,6 billion euros due to jobs duplication, overcapacity and barriers to purchase. As a result, the EU uses six times more defence systems than the U.S. (European Parliament, 2019). As shown in the image above, in 2014 the EU spent 1.3% of its GDP on defence, compared to the U.S.'s 4%. The EU spent 52% of its defence budget on personnel, 23% on operations, 19% on equipment purchases and R&D (€23829 per soldier). The US spent 33% on personnel, 31% on operations, 29% on R&D and purchase of equipment (€102264 per soldier).

Additionally, the European Union had 17160 vehicles available for troop transportation, while the US had 27528. The EU owned 42 aerial refuelling crafts and 1703 combat aircrafts; the U.S. owned respectively 550 and 2779. Owning shared infantry vehicles would save the EU 600 million euros per year, while a common munitions system would save 500 million euros.

European defence is a fruitful, but uncertain

concept due to several divergences between EU Member States regarding the type of threats, security level, level of investment, the level of states' capabilities, and sovereignty issues. Nevertheless, this challenging project would enable the EU to assert itself more strongly on the international stage. The establishment of a single European voice in international affairs must be considered, despite its controversial nature. Most European countries are not willing to abandon their sovereignty in the defence and security area.

### **Recommendations**

The European Union must take a stand on the international stage and in international disputes. It should manifest the political will to engage itself in an approach that allows it to measure the challenges it faces, define realistic priorities, and mobilise its far from negligible assets. Here are some recommendations:

1. The EU has to increase its influential role in unstable regions to maintain security inside its territory and at its borders by becoming a geopolitical actor with strong and real responsibilities.
2. Due to this geopolitical role, the burden on the EU's shoulders becomes heavier. The priority in its global strategy is to stabilise the situation in its neighbourhood by pushing the implementation of democracy, stable institutions, and rule of law.
3. To implement its plan, the EU should use a bottom-up approach, rather than a top-down one, creating a link with European citizens to build closer ties.
4. The EU must ensure its security by adding to the EDF new legislation that provides common troops, common material, and logistical resources. By broadening the

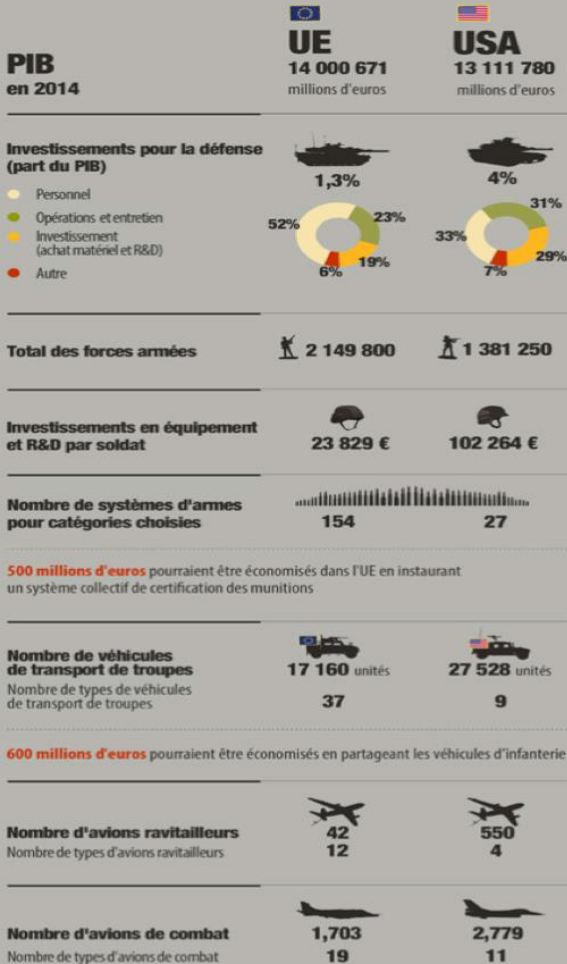


# DÉFENSE : FAIRE PLUS AVEC MOINS

Exploiter le potentiel d'une intégration européenne plus poussée

**26,4**  
milliards d'euros  
par an

le coût de la non-Europe en matière de défense et de sécurité en raison des doubles emplois, de la surcapacité et des entraves imposées aux acquisitions militaires



Sources :  
Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques  
Commission européenne  
OTAN  
Banque mondiale

europarl.europa.eu



- scope and enhancing the binding nature of the CSDP and gradually emancipating from NATO, the EU should build a strong and competent European defence.
5. Taking a step forward towards creating a European identity is necessary to make citizens believe in the European project and in the EU's ability to protect them.
  6. The EU has to take a consistent stand against Russian influence on the eastern border to show its ability to safeguard its citizens and prove its ability to counter an assertive country acting in its region.
  7. The EU must improve Dublin III Regulations and support those countries in the south of Europe that are overwhelmed by massive arrivals of refugees. Security at the borders needs to be enhanced, and the refugee redistribution mechanism has to be re-evaluated. Italy, Greece, Spain, and others have taken a step back in terms of cooperation, and the feeling of insecurity among these countries is growing together with Euroscepticism.
  8. ) External actions of the EU in terms of security and defence have to be coordinated between all Member States. The enhancement of multilateralism enables this coordination.
  9. In the long run, a European army will increase its capabilities and strengthen the EU's position on the international stage while reducing single Members' investment in the defence budget.
  10. The European Union needs to progressively think about being more independent from NATO by integrating Member States' security institutions and strengths. The first step would be to improve interoperability between armies in terms of equipment, soldiers, and structure.

## CONCLUSION

In this multipolar world, the nature of international relations has changed. The international system has become more complex and unstable due to new security, health, economic, financial, and humanitarian challenges. Faced with an anarchic, disrupted, and unpredictable global system each region of the world is trying to impose itself by increasing and improving its defence and security capabilities. Surrounded by growing great powers such as China, the United States and Russia, the EU must take a role as a strong, credible, and coherent regional organisation with sufficient security and defence capabilities to take a clear stand

on the international scene. A defence of Europe, by Europe and for Europe, created through cooperation, coordination of action and alliances is the only solution. European Member States should go beyond national divisions and have a long-term vision for the EU. Thanks to its economic power, the European Union can constitute a powerful military force and be part of the new global order. This project's success will depend on the goodwill of Member States and the re-establishment of their trust in the Union. To this end, the EU should take its responsibilities, promote its values and its future projects to re-create a sense of belonging to a European

community. Room for manoeuvre is available in the political system, yet it is up to the EU to define the priorities and use all these instruments to obtain concrete results. The cohesion between European armies during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis showed that interoperability is possible. However, this

cohesion must remain strong also in non-crisis times to show how powerful the Union is. Due to their strong will to make the EU a powerful actor, France and Germany are the countries that will mostly invest in the security and defence project and promote the EU's visibility and credibility.

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Created in 1953, the Finabel committee is the oldest military organisation for cooperation between European Armies: it was conceived as a forum for reflections, exchange studies, and proposals on common interest topics for the future of its members. Finabel, the only organisation at this level, strives at:

- Promoting interoperability and cooperation of armies, while seeking to bring together concepts, doctrines and procedures;
- Contributing to a common European understanding of land defence issues. Finabel focuses on doctrines, trainings, and the joint environment.

Finabel aims to be a multinational-, independent-, and apolitical actor for the European Armies of the EU Member States. The Finabel informal forum is based on consensus and equality of member states. Finabel favours fruitful contact among member states' officers and Chiefs of Staff in a spirit of open and mutual understanding via annual meetings.

Finabel contributes to reinforce interoperability among its member states in the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the EU, and *ad hoc* coalition; Finabel neither competes nor duplicates NATO or EU military structures but contributes to these organisations in its unique way. Initially focused on cooperation in armament's programmes, Finabel quickly shifted to the harmonisation of land doctrines. Consequently, before hoping to reach a shared capability approach and common equipment, a shared vision of force-engagement on the terrain should be obtained.

In the current setting, Finabel allows its member states to form Expert Task Groups for situations that require short-term solutions. In addition, Finabel is also a think tank that elaborates on current events concerning the operations of the land forces and provides comments by creating "Food for Thought papers" to address the topics. Finabel studies and Food for Thoughts are recommendations freely applied by its member, whose aim is to facilitate interoperability and improve the daily tasks of preparation, training, exercises, and engagement.



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