

#yourvoicetomorrowskey



EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Discussing the Freedom of Countries Within the
EU to Make Military Decisions

EFFLMUN'25

EUROPEAN COUNCIL

STUDY GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Letters from the Secretariat**
- 2. Letters from the Academic Team**
- 3. Letters from the Chairboard**
- 4. Introduction**
 - 4.1 Introduction to the Council
 - 4.2 Introduction to the Agenda Item
- 5. Historical Background Prior to the Committee**
 - 5.1 European Country's Military Decisions
 - 5.1.1 World War 1
 - 5.1.2 World War 2
- 6. Current External Threats**
 - 6.1 Threats to the Union
 - 6.2 Threats to the Individual Members
- 7. Unions and Nations Interests**
- 8. Military Policies Endorsed by EU**
 - 8.1 The Common Security and Defense Policies (CSDP)
- 9. Idea of a European Army**
 - 9.1 Prior Discussions
 - 9.2 Current Situation
- 10. International Agreements and Relations to Consider**
 - 10.1 Within European Union
 - 10.2 Outside of the Union
- 11. Questions to Ponder**
- 12. Bibliography**

1. Letters from the Secretariat

Dear delegates,

A warm welcome to EFFLMUN'25. We are truly delighted that you have chosen to spend your time with us, and we aim to make this decision one you'll look back on with absolute satisfaction.

This conference has been crafted with careful thought and unwavering dedication. I feel incredibly fortunate to have a role in shaping this event and to work alongside such talented individuals. The process demanded commitment, yet every step was rewarding because we always believed in the value of what we were building.

EFFLMUN'25 represents so much determination, passion, patience, and countless moments of collaboration that cannot be summed up easily. Above all, it was created to leave you with lasting, meaningful memories.

With great enthusiasm, we come together once more to celebrate dialogue, leadership, and the spirit of democracy. We cannot wait to offer you an exceptional and inspiring experience.

Güneş Uzun

Secretary-General

gunesuzn@gmail.com

Dear Delegates,

We made the EFFLMUN'25 with you in our hearts. We are happy that you joined us. Much thought and energy went into creating this gathering — but most importantly, it started with one idea: talking deeply always links people in unique manners. You picked to stay these days by our side; thus for every bit of time spent getting ready, it is valuable.

EFFLMUN'25 is far greater than the timetable of committees and sessions. It is a space where ideas converge, perspectives widen, and acquaintances happen to strike up. We wish that you are able to muster up enough confidence to speak out your thoughts, interest to look around, and ease just having fun being here.

As this conference kicks off, we want you to feel welcomed and supported as well as encouraged to take hold of any opportunity that comes your way. We are eager to see your drive, your leadership, and the individual marks each of you will make.

Ahmet Furkan Elden

Director General

afurkaneld@gmail.com

2. Letters from the Academic Team

Dear Delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the conference. As the Academic Team, we have worked with great care to research, write and organise every topic you will see throughout this event. Our goal was to create material that is clear, reliable, informative, and inspires you to debate with confidence.

We believe MUN is at its best when delegates feel prepared, supported and their visions expanded. That's why we focused on building committees that not only tackle global issues but also spark curiosity and encourage deeper thinking. We hope our work helps you dive into your roles, challenge ideas, and enjoy the experience fully. If you have any questions before or during the conference, our team will be glad to assist you. We wish you meaningful discussions, bold diplomacy, and an unforgettable MUN experience.

The Academic Team

3.Letter From the Chairboard

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to EFFLMUN'25! As both your President Chair for the European Council and an Under-Secretary-General (USG) for this conference, I am incredibly honored and thrilled to be here with you!

It makes this experience even more special that this conference is being organized by friends whose commitment and vision for MUN I've trusted and shared throughout my journey. I am certain that, through their efforts and my academic experience, we will collectively have an unforgettable conference.

To make a brief introduction of myself, my name is Umay, I'm a 11th grader, and I have been attending Model United Nations conferences since 2023, that's my 12th Model United Nations conference and 7th as a chairboard/academic team member. I am also serving as the Secretary-General of EGIMUN'26.

We will be debating the future of Europe. Our agenda item is:"The Freedom Of Strategically Critical Countries Within the European Union to Make and Implement Military Decisions."

For the next three days, we will navigate the delicate balance between national sovereignty and integrity. We must learn from past errors and embrace diverse perspectives to generate strong, lasting solutions that will truly bolster Europe's strategic autonomy.

I expect you all to defend your nation's interests with conviction and to be fully prepared on the agenda to ensure our debates are continuous and productive.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in person. I wish you an unforgettable and enjoyable conference experience. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Umay Erva Dirier - President Chair & USG

umayervadirier@gmail.com

4.Introduction

4.1 Introduction to the Council

The European Council is the actual body of heads of state and government and must be strictly distinguished from the Council of the European Union. It is not a legislative body, but rather sets out the general political problems and priorities of the EU. The European Council brings together EU leaders to set and debate the EU's political agenda. That Council represents the highest level of political cooperation between EU countries.



The institution includes the Heads of State or Government of the Member States, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. When matters relating to foreign affairs and security policy are discussed, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy also participates in these meetings.

Although it was officially recognized as an EU institution with the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the European Council has continued to exist, persisted, and developed as a high-level political coordination forum since 1974. Over time, it has become the central body

responsible for shaping the Union's responses to important political, economic, and security issues.

Decisions within the Council of Europe are generally taken by unanimous vote, emphasizing the equality and sovereignty of all member states. The Council President, elected for a renewable two-and-a-half-year term, ensures continuity and important arrangements, and represents the Union externally at the level of heads of state or government.

In the field of defense and strategic autonomy, the European Council plays a critical role in guiding collective initiatives such as the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and the Strategic Compass. Through these frameworks, it aims to enhance the Union's capacity for coordinated action while preserving each member state's sovereign authority in the military decision-making process.

4.2 Introduction to the Agenda Item

The question of how strategically critical countries within the European Union can exercise autonomy in making and implementing military decisions lies at the heart of the Union's broader debate on strategic sovereignty and defense integration. As the EU seeks to strengthen its role as a global actor, tensions often arise between the pursuit of collective defense coordination and the preservation of national sovereignty in security matters.

Strategically critical Member States such as France, Germany, Poland, and others with significant military capacities or geopolitical influence play a crucial role in shaping the EU's defense posture. Their freedom to act independently, however, is increasingly influenced by frameworks such as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the Strategic Compass, and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). These mechanisms aim to foster a more unified defense strategy across the Union while maintaining respect for the constitutional and political limits of each Member State.

The agenda therefore explores the delicate balance between collective responsibility and national independence in security and defense decision-making. On one hand, deeper cooperation can enhance the EU's ability to respond to external threats, reduce dependence on external actors such as NATO or the United States, and promote strategic autonomy. On the other hand, excessive centralization risks constraining Member States' ability to address their unique security concerns or fulfill their bilateral defense commitments.

Ultimately, this topic calls for a nuanced discussion on how the European Union can strengthen its common defense identity without undermining the sovereign decision-making capacity of its strategically vital members. The challenge lies in designing a framework that harmonizes unity with autonomy, a task that will define the future of Europe's security architecture.



5. Historical Background Prior to the Committee

5.1 European Country's Military Decisions

Understanding European countries' historical military decisions provides essential context for contemporary strategic autonomy and collective defence within the European Union. These decisions can be drawn from the two World Wars, which shaped both national and multinational approaches to military planning. The First and Second World Wars illustrate the complex interplay between national sovereignty, alliance obligations, and the need for coordinated action.



5.1.1 World War 1

World War I (1914–1918) constituted a seminal episode in European military and political history, revealing both the capabilities and limitations of early



twentieth-century alliance systems. The war's outbreak was precipitated by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, yet it was the pre-existing web of military alliances—principally the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance—that transformed a regional crisis into a continent-wide conflagration. European powers predominantly relied upon rigid, centralized national command structures, and strategic decisions were largely oriented toward national objectives, with minimal consultation across allied states.

Germany's implementation of the Schlieffen Plan exemplified the inflexibility inherent in such centralized national strategies. The plan aimed to rapidly incapacitate France prior to confronting Russia, yet its execution underscored the risks associated with rigid adherence to pre-established military doctrines. Similarly, coordination between Britain and France during the initial stages of the conflict was limited, reflecting the broader systemic problem of fragmented strategic alignment. The war's protracted nature, characterized by trench warfare and attritional tactics, exposed the inadequacy of traditional military thinking when confronted with industrial-scale mobilization.

The human and material toll of the conflict was unprecedented, resulting in the disintegration of empires and the redrawing of national boundaries. Beyond immediate devastation, the war highlighted the consequences of uncoordinated national decision-making: the prioritization of sovereignty and national prestige over collective strategic foresight precipitated large-scale human suffering and political instability. These lessons remain salient in contemporary deliberations over the balance between national autonomy and coordinated European defense initiatives.

World War I was, unfortunately, an inevitable consequence of the complex military decisions made by European powers at the beginning of the 20th century, creating a deep and traumatic shock that formed the basis for the founding philosophy of today's Council of Europe. The outbreak of the war was characterized by a chain of mobilization decisions that transformed a regional crisis into a global conflict. Austria-Hungary's military stance, far from conciliatory in its response to the Sarajevo assassination, instantly brought tension and stress on the continent to a peak, and Russia's decision to fully mobilize on the basis of Slavic solidarity ensured that this dangerous crisis reached an irreversible dimension. Germany's militarist leadership, hoping to quickly win the war on two fronts, decided to implement the Schlieffen Plan. This decision involved a very significant military move that disregarded international law, such as violating Belgium's neutrality, and this aggressive stance, together with the United Kingdom's decision to fulfill its guarantee obligations, also involved England in the conflict. Underlying these initial military decisions were national pride, imperial ambitions, and miscalculations of risk.

As the war progressed, the military decisions of Europe's great powers became locked in the stalemate of trench warfare. France's initial military strategy was based on the doctrine of the "spirit of attack"; however, this meant that decisions to launch frontal assaults, in the face of the destruction wrought by modern weaponry—such as machine guns and artillery fire—resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Military commanders on both sides persisted in their determination to continue with repeatedly failed frontal assaults, particularly in battles such as the Somme and Verdun; this demonstrated a lack of strategic flexibility on the part of military leadership. Italy's decision to join the Allied Powers in 1915 was determined by diplomatic bargaining and focused on fulfilling national territorial claims; this

military decision opened a new front in the Alps, thereby increasing the burden of the war.

The turning point of the war was Germany's decision to launch unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917. This strategic military decision forced the United States to officially enter the war and is considered one of the greatest strategic blunders that fundamentally altered the balance against the Allies. Russia's military and political collapse on the Eastern Front gave Germany the opportunity to launch a final major offensive in the West in 1918 (the Spring Offensive). This last military push collapsed in the face of Allied counterattacks supported by the United States, hastening the end of the war. Ultimately, the devastating consequences of World War I shaped Europe's future security policies and reinforced the belief that absolute national military supremacy leads to catastrophe; this became one of the most important historical military lessons, giving rise to the need for supranational cooperation (which formed the basis of the Council of Europe).

WORLD WAR I

THE ONSET OF WAR

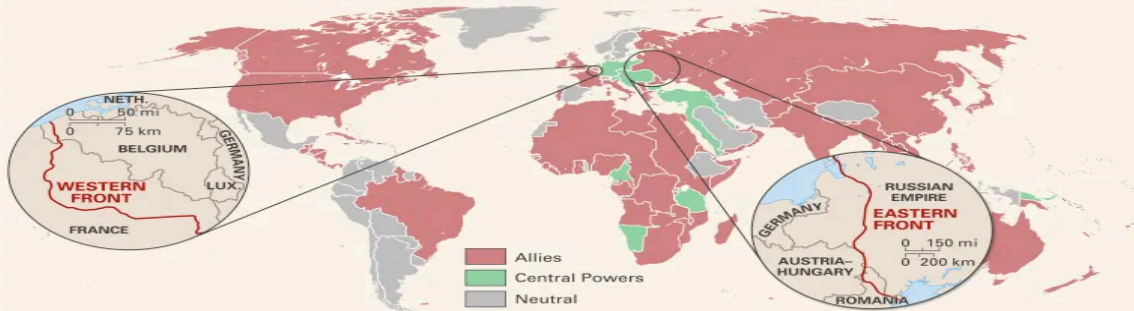
On June 28, 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary was assassinated in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb nationalist.



WAR FIRSTS

- chemical warfare
- gas masks
- flamethrowers
- steel helmets
- tank battles
- aerial warfare
- aircraft carrier
- IQ tests
- guide dogs
- a blood bank
- women enlisted
- filmed propaganda
- military use of X-rays
- wireless communication

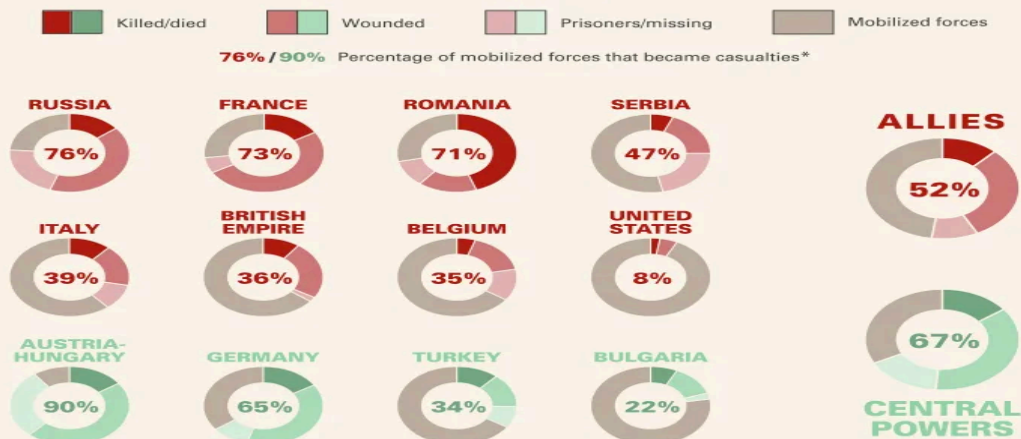
THE WAR TO END ALL WARS



TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS



CASUALTIES OF MAJOR COUNTRIES INVOLVED



*Total casualties = killed/died + wounded + prisoners/missing.

EUROPE IN 1914



EUROPE BEFORE/AFTER

EUROPE IN 1919



Sources: War Firsts, History Channel; casualty data, U.S. War Department.

© Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

5.1.2 World War 2

World War II (1939–1945) further illustrated the complexities inherent in European military decision-making, particularly the interaction between national imperatives and emergent forms of allied coordination. The conflict arose from the failures of the post-World War I settlement and the inability of interwar institutions to enforce collective security. Germany's rearmament and aggressive territorial expansion exposed the limitations of unilateral national deterrence, compelling European states to confront the consequences of delayed and fragmented responses.

During the early years of the war, Allied decision-making was characterized by disparate command structures and a lack of synchronized strategy, contributing to rapid German advances in Western Europe. The eventual coordination of Allied operations through mechanisms such as the Combined Chiefs of Staff demonstrated the efficacy of institutionalized multinational strategic planning. Germany's military strategy, typified by the doctrine of *Blitzkrieg*, relied upon centralized command and rapid mechanized maneuvers. However, as the war progressed, centralized decision-making under Hitler's direct influence proved detrimental, exemplified by operational failures on the Eastern Front.

The war's outcome precipitated profound geopolitical and institutional transformations. The creation of NATO in 1949 and subsequent European defense frameworks sought to institutionalize mechanisms for collective security, addressing the historical deficiencies revealed during the conflict while simultaneously respecting the sovereign prerogatives of member states. These developments underscored the necessity of harmonizing national autonomy with cooperative strategic planning a dual imperative that continues to shape deliberations within the European Council regarding the freedom of strategically critical member states to make and implement military decisions.

Collectively, the experiences of the First and Second World Wars demonstrate that European military history is defined by the tension between independence and integration. The ability of states to act autonomously in matters of defense remains vital, yet effective security outcomes are contingent upon carefully coordinated collective action. This historical legacy informs contemporary EU policy, shaping both institutional design and the strategic considerations underpinning European defense and security initiatives.

World War II is seen as a direct result of the fragile peace created by World War I and, in particular, Germany's revisionist and aggressive military decisions. Adolf Hitler's decision in the 1930s to violate the Treaty of Versailles by rearming and reintroducing

conscription was the first major military move that reinforced the inevitability of war. The pre-war policies of France and the United Kingdom focused on a strategy of appeasement rather than countering Germany's military activities; this political decision paved the way for delays in military preparations and enabled Hitler to gain a strategic advantage. The war began with Germany's decision to invade Poland, and the "Blitzkrieg" (Lightning War) doctrine fundamentally changed Europeans' speed of military decision-making and use of technology; the coordination of air power and armored units rendered traditional static defenses ineffective.

In 1940, France's military defense decisions were overly reliant on past experience; relying on the Maginot Line and underestimating the potential of armored units led to the rapid collapse of the defense against Germany's unexpected military operation through the Ardennes. The military decisions taken by the United Kingdom under Churchill, on the other hand, focused on defending the island. The decision to evacuate military forces from Dunkirk was a vital retreat that preserved the ability to continue the war. The subsequent decision to successfully secure air superiority during the Battle of Britain caused Hitler to postpone his plans to invade England.

The strategic depth of the war increased due to Italy's poorly planned military moves in the Mediterranean and North Africa, and especially Germany's decision to invade the Soviet Union in 1941 (Operation Barbarossa). This was the most devastating strategic military decision that led Hitler to make the mistake of fighting on two fronts. After overcoming the initial shock, the Soviet Union's military leadership demonstrated a determined defense through the relocation of industry to the east and total mobilization decisions. With the United States entering the war, joint military decision-making mechanisms were established between the United Kingdom and the US. The alliance's most significant military decision was the D-Day (Operation Overlord) invasion in 1944, aimed at liberating Western Europe; this operation was undertaken with the strategy of dividing Germany's resources between the East and West and accelerating its ultimate defeat.

Towards the end of the war, the Allies' coordinated military advance and strategic bombing decisions completely exhausted Germany's military capacity. The horrors of World War II clearly demonstrated the cost of leaving national security in Europe solely to military decisions. This experience led to the fundamental political and military decision that Europe's future prosperity and security could be achieved through economic and political cooperation (the path to the Council of Europe) rather than military competition.

6. Current External Threats

6.1 Threats to the Union

The European Union faces multidimensional threats in today's geopolitical environment and competition. These threats are not only military in nature but also manifest themselves in economic, energy, cyber, and social security dimensions. Russia, in particular, is seriously affecting the Union due to its aggressive foreign policies in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. This situation necessitates not only border security but also strategic coordination across Europe. Energy dependence, particularly on fossil fuel sources, limits the decision-making scope of some member states and emerges as a critical factor affecting the Union's collective security strategies.

Cyber threats, particularly targeting Europe's modern infrastructure and communication networks, threaten not only military operations but also the civil security of citizens and the public. Cyber attacks are not only directed at state institutions but also at critical energy and transportation systems. Such threats necessitate the European Union to develop common defense mechanisms for its digital infrastructure with particular care and diligence.

Among current threats, terrorism and radicalization also hold a prominent place. Across the continent, organizations with different ideologies significantly impact both internal security and cross-border operations. This situation forces member states to constantly seek a balance and middle ground between their independent military and police decision-making and collective security requirements.

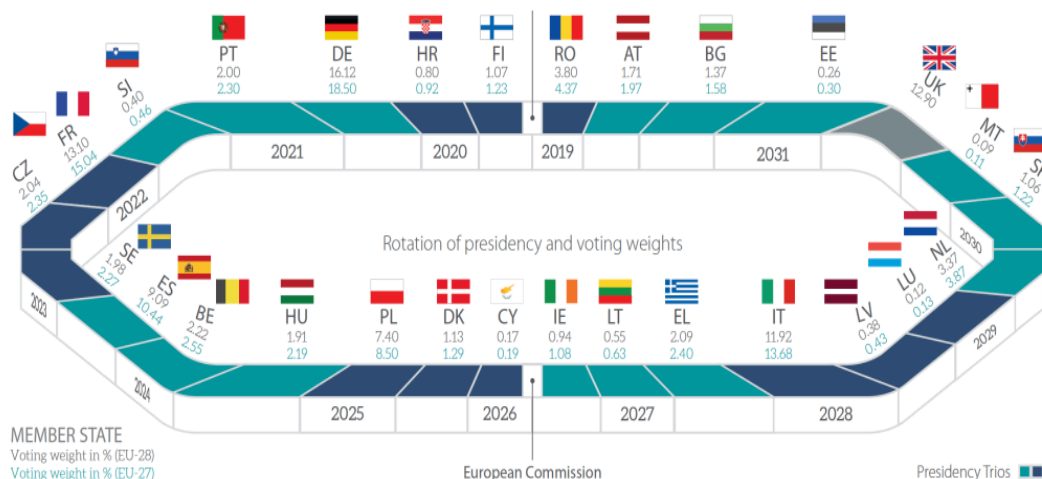
In addition, regional crises outside the European Union also shape the Union's security strategies. Political instability in the Middle East and North Africa triggers migration flows, affecting border security and military planning. In this context, the European Union must deal not only with continental threats but also with global dynamics.

These multidimensional threats require the European Union's defense capabilities to be based not only on military power but also on diplomacy, intelligence, and strategic planning capabilities. In this context, delegates' discussions should focus on balancing both the member states' right to preserve their strategic autonomy and the collective security of the Union.

6.2 Threats to Individual Members

Each member state's perception of threats varies according to its geographical location, historical experience, alliances, mutual interests, and security priorities. The situation is not much different for individual members. For example, while Poland and the Baltic countries prioritize military threats originating from Russia, their defense and military decisions, despite being coordinated with NATO, are still largely shaped by national interests. This situation is proof that national strategic autonomy can sometimes conflict with collective security policies.

Southern European countries, on the other hand, focus more on political instability, migration flows, and the threat of terrorism, especially in the Mediterranean region. The military decisions of France, Spain, and Italy can be said to be directly related to the capacity to respond to crises in this region of the continent. When determining their own security strategies, these countries must exercise careful coordination and process management to prevent cross-border operations from creating a risk across Europe.



When discussing Greece and Cyprus specifically, maritime jurisdiction areas and regional stability are the fundamental determinants of military decisions. These countries must take into account both NATO and European Union mechanisms and rules when formulating their national security strategies. This context creates a constant tension between military autonomy and collective responsibility, which can sometimes lead to tense situations.

Italy and Malta face regional security threats related to migration and human trafficking. These threats have a greater impact on social and border security dimensions than on military planning, thereby broadening the scope of national military decisions. This situation also demonstrates how national diversity can be an advantage or disadvantage in the European Union's strategic decision-making processes.

In conclusion, the European Union's current threat environment requires a complex balance and understanding at both the continental and national levels.

7. Unions and Nations Interests

The Council of Europe, as a Union, has set its fundamental objective in the field of defense as deepening integration and strengthening strategic autonomy. The primary aim is for the EU to gain the ability to act swiftly and independently in times of crisis, without remaining structurally dependent on NATO to protect its own interests. This vision has been concretized in the Strategic Compass document. The Union considers it imperative to overcome the slow decision-making processes imposed by the consensus principle and to be able to rapidly deploy new instruments, such as the EU Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC). Furthermore, it is vital to coordinate national defense spending through the European Defense Fund (EDF) and PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) and to create cost efficiency by preventing unnecessary duplication.

However, this quest for integration faces significant challenges. The reluctance of Critical Countries to relinquish their national veto rights has the potential to paralyze CSDP decisions. Furthermore, strengthening the EU's own structure risks creating a defense divide within the Union, particularly as some members, such as Poland and the Baltic states, view NATO as their primary security guarantee. The Union must manage these contradictions to ensure that all members contribute fairly to defense.

"Strategically Critical Countries" are the members that most significantly influence the EU's defense policy due to their geographical location, military capability, and geopolitical influence. The positions of these countries reflect a complex balance between their desire to preserve national sovereignty and the imperative to lead the EU toward deeper integration.

France positions itself as the EU's leading military power and is the biggest advocate for strategic autonomy. While aiming to maintain the freedom to manage its own nuclear deterrence and military operations independently of the EU, it simultaneously wants the Union to increase its defense capacity. Consequently, France might be open to discussing the relaxation of the veto right in crises, but it stipulates that command authority in CSDP missions and the flow of EDF funds to the French industry must remain under its control.

Germany, on the other hand, acts as the economic and financial leader. While historically cautious about military action, it aims to coordinate the cost and joint capability procurement of the CSDP. Germany emphasizes that NATO remains the primary defense framework, preferring the EU's role to focus on civil and military crisis management. This position necessitates that military intervention decisions adhere to legally transparent and consensus-based processes, ensuring the preservation of parliamentary oversight.

Countries like Italy and Spain focus primarily on threats from the Southern Flank (migration crisis, terrorism, and instability in North Africa) due to their geographic locations. These countries seek to maintain the freedom to deploy their naval and air forces in response to

these specific threats and demand that CSDP funds be substantially allocated to Southern Missions. They defend the absolute preservation of the national veto power, particularly over decisions concerning national immigration and border security.

Finally, Poland and the Baltic States centralize the existential threat posed by Russia. Since these countries view the US and NATO as their primary security guarantee, they insist that the EU's defense efforts must complement NATO, never undermine it. These delegates continue to safeguard their national interests in defense procurement while leaning towards unifying joint military planning specifically against Russia.

8. Military Policies Endorsed by EU

8.1 The Common Security and Defense Policies (CSDP)

The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is a vital framework that enables the European Union to act as a player in crisis management on the international stage, integrating military and civilian instruments. This policy forms the operational arm of the Union's fundamental foreign policy (CFSP) and determines the EU's capacity to carry out missions to preserve peace, prevent conflict, and strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and in line with its own values and interests. The CSDP represents the most complex military-political structure that complements the EU's soft power but comes up against the wall of national sovereignty.

The legal basis for the CSDP is firmly established in the Treaty of Lisbon. This Treaty gives the EU the authority to undertake a range of tasks, known as the “Petersberg Tasks,” including humanitarian aid, evacuation, peacekeeping, and crisis management. However, the decision to launch these missions, whether military or civilian, must always be taken at the level of the European Council, by unanimous agreement among the heads of state and government. This unanimity requirement is the CSDP's biggest political obstacle, as the national interest or concern of a single member state has the power to render the Union's decision to intervene in an urgent crisis ineffective.

One of the most concrete tools of the military dimension of the policy is the EU Battlegroups. These groups are multinational, rotational military units consisting of approximately 1,500 soldiers, established by volunteer member states and ready to respond quickly. Theoretically, these groups are designed to intervene in urgent humanitarian or military crises within 5 to 10 days. However, since their establishment in 2007, the Battlegroups have never been deployed due to disagreements within the political decision-making mechanism. This situation is the most striking evidence that, despite the technical availability of CSDP's military capabilities, they cannot be activated due to a lack of political will and consensus.

Despite these operational constraints, the EU has decided in recent years to deepen the CSDP in line with its goal of strategic autonomy. The main component of this deepening is the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) mechanism in the field of defense. PESCO enables member states willing to pursue closer integration in the field of defense to come together voluntarily and develop joint defense capability projects. These projects (e.g., European unmanned aerial vehicles or cyber security capabilities) aim to increase cooperation between national defense industries and reduce the fragmentation of the EU's military capabilities. PESCO forms the structural integration pillar of the CSDP and seeks to align national defense investments with EU strategic objectives.

Chart: PESCO projects per domain



© European Defence Agency

The capacity-building dimension of the CSDP is complemented by the European Defense Fund (EDF). The EDF provides financial support from the EU budget for the first time directly to defense research, prototype development, and joint procurement projects. This fund aims to reduce member states' procurement of equipment from the US or other third countries and to reduce technological dependency by creating an internal market for the European defense industry. When determining

the EDF's priorities, the European Council is obliged to continuously review which military capabilities (air, cyber, naval) meet the Union's urgent strategic needs.

The new security environment triggered by the war in Ukraine has led to a new turning point in the history of the CSDP. The Strategic Compass document, approved by the European Council in 2022, is the most ambitious roadmap for the CSDP. This document envisions a more active role for the EU in developing military capabilities, in defense and countering capabilities in the cyber domain, and in new areas such as space. Its most concrete objective is the creation of a 5,000-strong modular EU Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC), which aims to enhance the Union's rapid response capability by overcoming the political and operational constraints of the former Battle Groups.

On the other hand, CSDP is not limited to military operations; the EU's civilian missions (such as training and advisory missions in Ukraine, Georgia, or Africa) are also conducted under the CSDP umbrella. These civilian missions aim to strengthen the rule of law, reform the local security sector, and support civilian infrastructure. This comprehensive approach is the most important feature that distinguishes the EU's security policy from other international actors.

Ultimately, CSDP can be seen as a “political will project” representing the EU's ability to make and implement its own security and defense decisions. For the European Council, CSDP is a complex balancing mechanism that, on the one hand, maintains cooperation with NATO and, on the other hand, enables the EU to intervene effectively in global crises and deepens defense cooperation among member states. The future success of this policy will largely depend on the political determination of member states to put the Union's common security objectives ahead of their national interests.

9. Idea of a European Army

9.1 Prior Discussions

The historical journey of the idea of a European Army is the most striking example of the unresolved tension between national sovereignty and continental unity at the heart of European integration. These debates demonstrate how deeply rooted the Union's quest to take charge of its own defense is and how serious the political obstacles it faces are.

A. The European Defense Community (EDC) Fiasco (1950–1954)

The most concrete and ambitious manifestation of the European Army vision was the European Defense Community (EDC) project proposed in 1950 by French Foreign Minister René Pleven. This initiative aimed to establish a fully federalist defense structure, going beyond simple military cooperation, and essentially responded to two urgent geopolitical needs of the Cold War:

-Germany's Rearmament: For the West to be able to counter the growing military threat from the Soviet Union, the rearmament of West Germany was inevitable. However, many European countries, led by France, were deeply concerned about the reestablishment of a German national army, which had led to two world wars.

-Federal Control: The Pleven Plan proposed that German military power be designed not as a national army, but as part of a single, supranational army composed of soldiers from all member states (France, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries). The authority at the head of this army would be a European Defense Minister, who would be accountable not to a single national government but to the EDC's Executive Board. This meant the complete transfer of national control over armies.

Although the EDC Treaty was signed in 1952, the ratification process sparked a deep national debate, particularly in France. French politicians and the public considered the national army to be the most sacred symbol of French sovereignty and historical identity. The idea of transferring the army to a supranational authority was seen as an attack on national honor and independence. Consequently, on August 30, 1954, the French National Assembly rejected the treaty, putting an end to the EDC project. This fiasco is remembered in the history of European integration as a “lost opportunity” and demonstrated that the defense sector, unlike the economic sphere, carried a deep political and emotional barrier.

B. The Western European Union (WEU) Period and Alternative Solutions

Immediately following the failure of the EDC, Germany's need for rearmament remained. This situation led to the creation of a new mechanism called the Western European Union (WEU) to fill the gap in the defense sector.

-Integration into NATO: The WEU expanded in 1955 with the participation of Germany and Italy, and shortly thereafter the WEU's collective defense clause was integrated into Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. This signified a clear political choice that European defense would be addressed under the umbrella of a transatlantic alliance (NATO) rather than a supranational European structure.

-Minimalist Role: Throughout the Cold War, the WEU mostly played a symbolic role. Its military operational power was limited, and decisions on key security issues were always taken by NATO or the national governments of member states. During this period, the idea of a European Army was effectively shelved, and Europe's military identity became dependent on the US-led NATO umbrella.

C. Post-Cold War Revival

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s and, in particular, the outbreak of the Yugoslav Wars, which Europe was unable to effectively intervene in, led to a revival of the idea of a European Army.

-Maastricht Treaty (1992): This treaty indirectly paved the way for the vision of a European Army by establishing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and laying the legal groundwork for the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).

The CSDP aimed to pool military capabilities and grant the EU authority for peacekeeping missions.

-Saint Malo Initiative (1998): France and the UK issued a landmark declaration stating that the EU needed to have “its own capacity for action.” This was the first serious political commitment to developing the CSDP's military tools.

-Helsinki Goals: In 1999, the EU set the Helsinki Goals, aiming to gain the ability to deploy a 60,000-strong force within 60 days for crisis management. These goals were later transformed into the EU Battlegroups. The Battlegroups were a practical, but still far from supranational command, part of the European Army concept.

However, as past debates have shown, the military instruments of the CSDP, particularly the Battle Groups, have never been used effectively. The main reason for this was that decisions on military intervention still required unanimity in the European Council. This political constraint has consistently demonstrated that the full implementation of the European Army stems not only from a lack of military capabilities, but also from a lack of political will and speed. This historical background is vital to understanding how deep and difficult to resolve the political issues underlying today's discussions on “strategic autonomy” are.

ReArm Europe: The EU's €800-Billion Defense Plan

Components of the EU's “ReArm Europe” defense plan

Allow member states to increase defense spending without triggering the Excessive Deficit Procedure of the Stability and Growth Pact.

€650 billion in additional fiscal space over four years*

€150 billion of EU loans to member states for defense investments



Up to **€800 billion** in additional defense-related investments



Use the EU budget to direct more funds towards defense-related investments. Create incentives for member states

Mobilize private capital by **accelerating the Savings and Investment Union**

Mobilize private capital by **utilizing the European Investment Bank**

* Assuming an average increase of 1.5% of GDP per member state
Source: European Commission



9.2 Current Situation

The idea of a European Army has moved from a historical debate to a pragmatic institutional development phase in recent years, amid growing geopolitical realities and uncertainty surrounding the United States' transatlantic security commitments. In this changing environment, the European Council has taken concrete steps aimed at enhancing the Union's ability and resilience to intervene in crises on its own, rather than establishing a fully federal army. This is a process shaped by the decisions taken by the European Council and advancing within the framework of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).

A. Strategic Compass

The most decisive progress in European defense cooperation is the Strategic Compass document approved by the European Council in 2022. The outbreak of war in Ukraine created strong political momentum, ensuring that this document is not merely a declaration of intent but also proof that the EU takes its security seriously. The Strategic Compass sets out four main objectives that the EU must achieve by 2030: Act, Secure, Invest, and Partner. This vision envisions the EU moving away from traditional peacekeeping (Petersberg Tasks) to becoming a security provider capable of managing geopolitical risks.

B. Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC)

The most concrete military outcome of the Strategic Compass's "Move" pillar is the decision to establish the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC). This is designed as the operational core of the European Army vision.

-Purpose and Structure: The RDC is a modular force consisting of up to 5,000 troops, which is expected to be fully operational by 2025. This force was designed to overcome the political inertia of the previous initiative, the EU Battlegroups. Although technically ready, the Battlegroups were never deployed due to the requirement for unanimous agreement.

-Area of Operation: The RDC will cover high-risk tasks such as rapid response to crises, evacuation, initial entry, and stabilization of conflicts. This aims to give the EU the ability to act independently in crisis areas where NATO does not or cannot intervene, without violating international law.

C. Capability Development and Financial Instruments

Under the “Investing” column, the Council of Europe has deepened three critical mechanisms to ensure military capability integration:

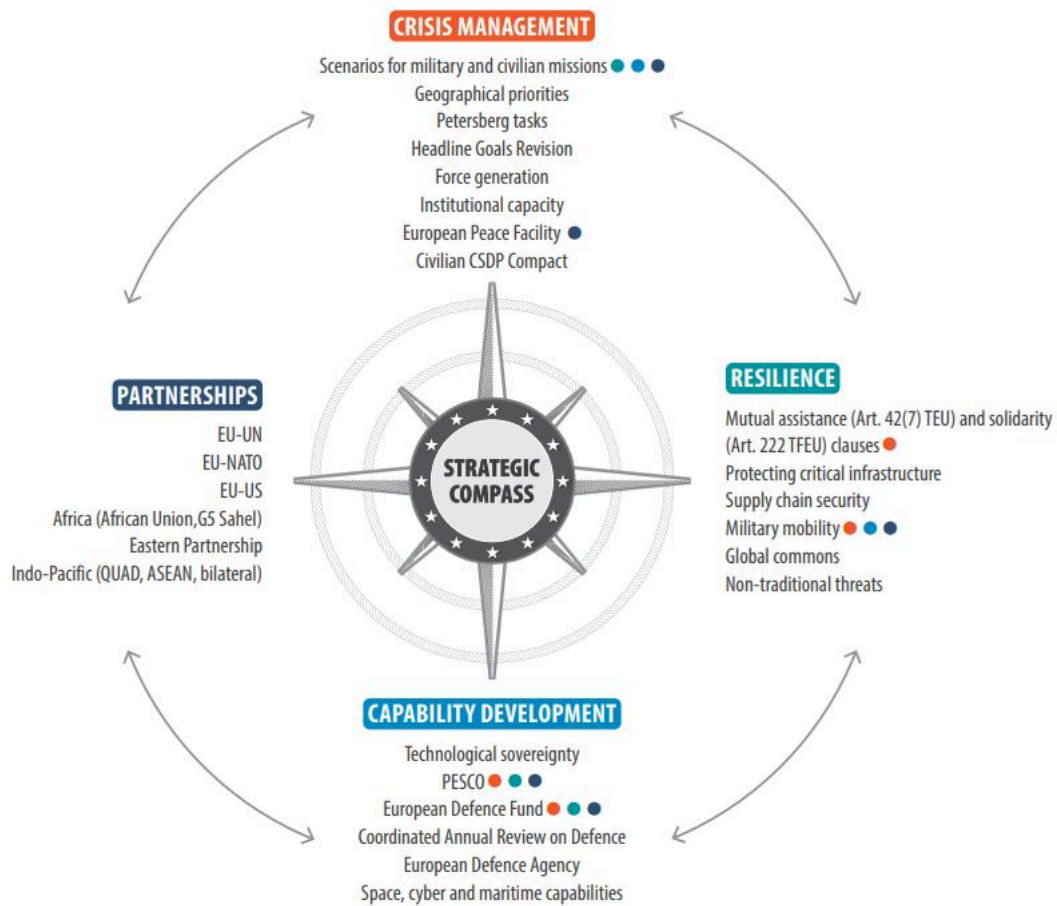
-PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation): PESCO is a legal framework under which member states (currently 26) voluntarily commit to closer defense cooperation. Participating countries agree to launch joint military capability projects (e.g., European unmanned aerial vehicle programs, cyber security capabilities) and coordinate national defense spending in line with these common objectives. While preserving national sovereignty, PESCO represents gradual steps towards a fully federal army by creating deeper integration within the union.

-European Defense Fund (EDF): The EDF is the first financing instrument directly allocated from the EU budget to defense research and joint procurement projects. The main objective of this fund is to end the fragmented and scattered national procurement policies of member states, creating a common market and technological superiority for the European defense industry. The EDF aims to reduce dependence on the US for military equipment purchases and strengthen the EU's defense industrial base (EDTIB).

-Budget and Commitments: Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, many member states (particularly Germany, Poland, and the Baltic states) have taken strong national decisions to increase defense spending to 2% or more of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This increase in spending is critical to providing the sufficient financial resources necessary for the European Army vision to become operational.

D. Political Will and Constraints

Despite the current situation, the biggest obstacle to a fully-fledged European Army remains political sovereignty. Units participating in RDC or CSDP operations are still subject to their own national chains of command. The decision to launch a military operation still requires unanimity in the European Council. This means that the European Army cannot go beyond its theoretical capabilities as long as the highest level of political will is not secured. However, the current political momentum has irreversibly set the Union's approach to defense cooperation on a path toward deeper integration and strategic autonomy.



10. International Agreements and Relations to Consider

10.1 Within European Union

The security and defense decisions of the Council of Europe are based on legal guarantees whereby member states voluntarily transfer or share their national sovereignty. These internal agreements define both the limits and obligations of solidarity within the Union and the collective security commitment.

Mutual Defense Clause: Legal Guarantee (TEU Article 42(7))

Paragraph 7 of Article 42, one of the most important security provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, establishes a collective defense commitment among member states. This provision stipulates that in the event of an armed attack against the territory of a member state, other member states are obliged to provide assistance and support. The details and interpretation of this article are of critical importance to delegates:

-Legal Distinction: This commitment is legally independent of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. While Article 5 of NATO requires the “use of armed force,” Article 42(7) requires “assistance and support within their capabilities.” This means that the nature of the assistance (military, logistical, humanitarian, financial) is left to the national decision-making mechanisms and resources of each member state.

-Relationship with NATO: Article 42(7) also explicitly states that it does not affect the NATO commitments of states that are both EU and NATO members. This means that NATO's military deterrence will remain primary in practice, and Article 42(7) will function more as a declaration of political solidarity and a secondary guarantee mechanism.

-Neutral Countries: This article also applies to the EU's neutral countries (Ireland, Austria, Malta). Although these countries are not subject to the obligation to provide military assistance, as EU members they are required to provide “aid and assistance” to other member states, but this assistance must be consistent with their constitutional principles of neutrality.

B. Solidarity Clause: Internal Security and Crisis Management (TFEU Article 222)

Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) forms the basis of the EU's internal security and crisis management capacity.

-Scope: This article imposes an obligation on the entire Union to act collectively when a member state requests assistance in the event of a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or man-made disaster. Unlike Article 42(7), Article 222 focuses on internal security and civil protection.

-Coordination: This provision requires the mobilization of all EU instruments (including civil protection, Frontex, Europol, and military logistical/technical support). This defines the limits of the EU's integrated political response in times of crisis and gives the EU Council the authority to activate EU mechanisms at the request of member states.

C. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the Defense Sector

PESCO is a voluntary but legally binding mechanism involving member states that wish to accelerate EU defense integration.

-Commitments: States participating in PESCO undertake, among other commitments, to:

-Regularly increase their defense budgets.

-Provide forces that can be deployed more quickly to EU missions.

-Adapt their national defense plans and procurement to joint projects.

-Legal Dynamics: While based on the EU Treaties, PESCO represents a “core Europe” structure that allows for “deepening among the willing” rather than being a full-fledged EU policy. This is the most concrete example of differentiated integration among member states and demonstrates how differences in political will are managed as a tool ahead of a full European Army.

These internal agreements form the legal and political basis for every strategic decision taken by the European Council; while ensuring internal solidarity within the union, they also preserve the power of national sovereignties to veto or restrict EU decisions.

10.2 Outside of the Union

The security and defense of the European Union rely not only on its internal agreements but also on a complex and vital network of external relations with the global security architecture. The effectiveness of the European Council's foreign policy decisions depends on its alignment with these external agreements and the depth of its partnerships.

A. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

The undisputed cornerstone of the EU's external security architecture is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Twenty-three EU member states are also

NATO members, and the EU's security policies are shaped by its relationship with this alliance.

-Collective Defense Role: NATO is the primary deterrent and guarantor of collective defense against conventional threats for the EU (Article 5). The European Council always acknowledges this fact when deciding to develop the EU's military capabilities and consistently emphasizes that the EU has no intention of replacing NATO.

-Berlin Plus Arrangements: These agreements allow the EU to use NATO's command structure, planning capabilities, and military assets for its own CSDP operations. This means that the EU is not militarily independent, but it does have the capacity to act autonomously. EU missions typically focus on crisis management areas where NATO prefers not to deploy or does not deploy.

-No-Duplication Principle: The EU and NATO commit to avoiding double spending in the development of joint defense capabilities. This requires that the EU's investments in PESCO projects and the European Defense Fund (EDF) be aligned with NATO's capability goals and that the Union focus only on areas where NATO has gaps.

B. United States of America

Transatlantic relations with the US are critical for EU defense policies beyond the NATO.

-Technological and Intelligence Dependency: European armies remain heavily dependent on US technology and operational support in areas such as advanced surveillance, intelligence, air refueling, and precision strike capabilities. The European Council's strategic autonomy decisions aim to reduce this structural dependency, but currently, the US remains the ultimate military guarantor of European security.

-Political Relations: Political changes in the US directly affect the EU's defense decisions. In particular, the US's recent shift towards a “America First” policy has pushed EU leaders to be more determined to increase their own defense burden and revive the idea of a European Army.

C. The United Nations (UN) and International Law

Respect for international law forms the basis of the EU's foreign policy and security decisions, and close cooperation with the UN is fundamental.

-Legal Legitimacy: CSDP missions are generally conducted under the authority of the UN Security Council or on a basis recognized by international law. This gives the EU's military actions global legitimacy.

-Global Governance: The EU actively cooperates with the UN on the implementation of sanctions, the protection of human rights, and the provision of personnel and financial contributions to peacekeeping operations.

D. Regional Partnerships and Third Countries

The EU has agreements with numerous regional organizations and third countries in line with its neighborhood policy and global interests:

-African Union and Sahel: The EU maintains critical partnerships with organizations such as the African Union and ECOWAS on counterterrorism and regional stability through CSDP training missions and financial support. This cooperation is central to the EU's strategy of managing migration and terrorist threats at their source along its southern border.

-Turkiye: Despite being an EU candidate and a vital NATO ally, tensions with Turkiye over issues such as the Mediterranean and Cyprus represent a complex relationship that constantly influences the EU's foreign policy and maritime security decisions. This relationship demonstrates the necessity for the EU to manage internal conflicts within the alliance when making external security decisions.

These external agreements provide the Council of Europe with the legal and political framework that allows it to align the EU's collective defense with its primary partner (NATO) while also giving it the flexibility to defend its own interests as a global actor.

11. Questions to Ponder

1. How can European Union member states ensure collective security while preserving their freedom to make military decisions?
2. How does the power imbalance between strategically critical countries and smaller member states affect the EU's common security policies?
3. Can integrated defense initiatives such as a European army overcome concerns about national sovereignty, and what would be their impact?
4. Are mechanisms such as CSDP and PESCO sufficient to reduce dependence on NATO?
5. How are modern threats such as energy security, cyber threats, and regional crises reshaping the EU's military strategies?
6. What opportunities and risks do the EU's relations with external actors (Russia, China, the US) present in terms of strategic autonomy?

12. Bibliography

1. European Union External Action (EEAS), *Common Security and Defence Policy Overview*, 2023.
2. European Defence Fund, *EDF Funding and Projects 2021-2027*, European Commission, 2023.
3. PESCO, *Permanent Structured Cooperation Projects Overview*, EU Official Site, 2024.
4. NATO, *NATO and EU Cooperation*, NATO Official Publications, 2022.
5. Keohane, Robert O., *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, 2005.

6. Smith, Michael E., *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, 2021.
7. European Union, *Lisbon Treaty Text*, Official Journal of the European Union, 2009.
8. Glaser, Charles L., *The Security Dilemma Revisited*, 2020.
9. European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), *European Defence: Challenges and Opportunities*, 2022.
10. Kissinger, Henry, *World Order*, 2014.

