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Review article

THE EU STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SECURITY

Abstract:

Over the past three decades, the EU has undertaken a wide range of activities aimed at its proliferation as a serious and respected security actor. Namely, in 1993 the Union adopted the Common Foreign and Security Policy, then, in 1998, it laid the foundations of the European Security and Defense Policy, while in 2003 it adopted the first security strategy, by which practically began the development process of its strategic approach to security. Starting from the significance that strategic aspects have in security approaches designing (at national, regional and international levels), the paper attention is directed to the analysis of the strategic approach of the European Union in this regard. To this end, the focus is specifically placed on the research of the three strategic documents to date (2003, 2016 and 2022), with which the Union designs its own strategic approach and response to the dynamic and challenging security environment. Hence, the intention is aimed at providing a clear perception and a more detailed understand of the evolutionary character of the EU's strategic approach to security, with particular reference to the main challenges and perspectives in this context.

Keywords: European Union, strategy, security, defense, threats

Introduction

What is today a widely accepted conventional position of science and the profession regarding the conceptual meaning of strategy is that it represents a development plan, through which intentions are realized by directing the engagements of individuals, institutions and organizations. Or more specifically, a strategy is an action plan for development in order to achieve a goal, by applying a wide range of measures and activities and through specific direction of forces (Nacev, Petreski, 2013).

It turns out that at its core lies the idea of virtual or real directing of the power of the state or alliance for the protection and realization of the highest national and collective values and for the achievement of projected goals in peace and war. However, in its broadest context strategy reflects future endeavors based on sound assumptions, through the recognition and acceptance of future challenges, current knowledge, and past experience. Therefore, the strategy positions present basic norms for practical action and management of future events and challenges. Still, it should not be accepted as a dogma, but rather an idea whose implementation will be continuously monitored, and the knowledge gained during that process should be the basis for possible correction of some of the initial positions and solutions.

The new perceptions about European security clearly indicate the existence of profound changes on the global political-security scene, including the very nature of security threats and risks. The essence of the problem in this regard is that all threats and risks are not always perceived and experienced equally by the Member States of the Union.

Such situation raises additional challenges for the unity of the Union in terms of both the possible and offered responses and instruments for managing specific crises. Concrete confirmation of this is, among other things, the different approaches of the member states in terms of the EU's response to the migrant crisis, as well as, to the current Russian aggression against Ukraine.

However, within this paper framework, the focus is placed on the analysis of the EU's adopted major strategic documents in the security sphere. Actually, the paper specifically explores the EU security strategies, adopted in 2003, 2016 and 2022, with particular attention to the security environment characteristics, the security assessments and projections, as well as the established guidelines and instruments for the Union's action in this regard.

A Safer Europe in a Better World

The end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century are characterized by three key aspects regarding the EU's security identity and role development. Specifically, in 1991, in Maastricht, the Member States created the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as the intergovernmental second pillar of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). Moreover, since 1998 they have been devel-

oping the security aspect of this policy into a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), within the framework of which the first plan for the establishment of an indigenous European Rapid Reaction Force was created (Helsinki, 1999), that has been followed by the development of the necessary institutional structures for supporting its implementation began. In December 2003, the member states adopted the first EU Security Strategy, entitled: "A More Secure Europe in a Better World", which gave an additional impetus and significance regarding to the initiated approach about EU's security role conceptualizing.

In fact, such Strategy adoption is perceived as the beginning of the foundations strengthening about further development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and therefore as the beginning of the process for overcoming the previous perceptions of EU, primarily as a "civilian actor" (Aggestam, 2008). In that context, the Strategy emphasizes that: "... Europe should be ready to share in responsibility for global security and in building for a better world ...", specifically through its more active engagement based on: "... the full range of available instruments for crisis management and conflict prevention, including political, diplomatic, military and civilian, trade and development activities. ... " (European Security Strategy (ESS), 2003).

Such strategic projection, clearly notes the tendency about EU position as a global actor, or actor that will be prepared to produce an appropriate contribution to global security, and at the same time, as an actor capable for overcoming some of the dilemmas it has faced in this regard previously. Specifically, it is about the necessity of the EU reposition, especially after the terrorist attacks and the new security environment emerging after September 11, then, regarding the gap overcoming that has emerged between EU members and the US, in terms of the intention to formulate a separate European defense identity and policy, as well as, in terms of the need for strategic fragmentation overcoming that has emerged within the EU itself, especially during the Iraq crisis. (Van Ham, 2004)

In addition, what made such EU security strategy even more relevant, was perception that it finally represented a common response by the member states to assess current security risks and ways to deal with them. Actually, through the prism of three parts, such EU Strategy covers the following: 1) Analysis of the current security environment; 2) Identification of the Union's strategic objectives, and 3) Analysis of the political implications for the Union.

In terms of the security environment, the Strategy recognizes both, the positive as well as, the negative aspects of the globalization process. Namely, the development of trade, investment and technology, as well the democracy spreading, have a positive impact on freedom, progress and development for many people. On the other hand, according to the Strategy, there are also negative perceptions about the globalization process, primarily as the main cause of disappointment and injustice. In this regard, the poverty increasing, the emergence of diseases, the competition for limited resources and global warming are particularly highlighted as factors that have a serious impact on the security of member states and EU itself.

Such indicated processes and dynamics, are directly increasing the interdependence of the member states, at the same time initiating an increasing vulnerability of interconnected structures primarily in transport, energy, and information. Namely, according to the Strategy since 1990, almost 4 million people, 90% of whom were civilians, have died in wars. Over 18 million people have fled their homes as a result of conflicts (ESS, 2003)

Regarding the energy security issue, it is indicated that energy dependence on oil and natural gas, from the current 50%, will increase up to 70% by 2030. On the other hand, the Strategy clearly recognizes the problems that developing countries primarily face, such as poverty and diseases, the emergence of new pandemics, which can grow into a global threat. Probably, the emergence of the COVID pandemic in 2020, is the best confirmation about the accurate Strategy assessment regarding the indicated issue.

By assuming that a large-scale aggression against any of the EU members is not possible in that period, the Strategy points to the changed characteristics of threats, which are becoming: more complex, less recognizable, and more difficult for prediction. However, five key security threats have been identified by this Strategy.

Terrorism is recognised as a growing strategic threat to the entire Europe. Such threat is driven by a number of complex factors, including the pressures of modernisation, cultural, social and political crises, and the marginalisation of young people living in different societies (ESS, 2003). Therefore, the Strategy recognises that European countries are both, targets and bases for terrorism and hence a joint European action against terrorism is necessary.

A weapons of mass destruction, represent the greatest potential threat to the Union's security. An assessment in this regard is that the possibility of access to and use of such weapons by terrorist groups would be the worst-case scenario. The Union's activity towards such threat is additionally regulated by the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (2003). It envisages two levels: first, strengthening multilateral non-proliferation agreements and strengthening control and verification regimes, resolving tensions and disputes arising from this area through political solutions and regional agreements on arms control and disarmament, and secondly, only if such mentioned measures are unsuccessful, coercive measures may be used, in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter and international law (Georgieva, 2010).

Regional conflicts in the international community (Kashmir, the Great Lakes Region, the Korean Peninsula), as well as those in the EU's neighborhood, are both, directly or indirectly affect European interests. In addition to causing human suffering, destruction of social and physical infrastructure, violation of fundamental freedoms, human and minority rights, they are also recognized as a source of extremism and terrorism, which lead to the disintegration of states.

State collapse as a next threat, is a consequence of poor governance and corruption, the abuse of force, inefficient and weak institutions, lack of account-

ability and civil conflicts, which erode states from within, while organized crime as the fifth threat, is perceived as an internal threat to the stability of EU members, with clear external dimensions: cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants and weapons.

Based on the security environment assessments and identified threats, within the third part, the Strategy establishes three strategic objectives: 1) addressing threats; 2) building a secure neighborhood; and 3) establishing an international order based on effective multilateralism. Regarding to the first strategic goal, strategical focus is on the initiatives that the Union has undertaken since the beginning of the 21st century, i.e. towards:

- the adoption of measures regarding the fight against the financing of terrorism, as well as mutual legal assistance with the USA, following the terrorist attacks of September 11;

- the establishment of a program to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency and support for an improved and effective international control regime;

- the Union undertaken interventions for dealing with regional conflicts in the Balkans, Afghanistan and the DR Congo (Georgieva, 2015).

As mentioned above, it is recognized that, unlike the large and visible threats during the Cold War, the security environment of the early 21st century is characterized by threats that are not predominantly military, nor they could be responded to exclusively by military means. Therefore, the Union assumes that the traditional concept of self-defense, which is focused on the threat of aggression, in relation to complex threats, moves the first line of defense beyond the borders of the EU.

Regarding the second strategic goal, the need of creation and developing a circle of democratically governed countries to the East and the Mediterranean is clearly highlighted. In doing so, the issue of stability in the Balkans, the South Caucasus, and the Israeli-Arab conflict, are specific part of the Union's broader focus.

The last strategic goal, is aimed at establishing an efficient multilateral system, stronger international community, and functional international institutions through fully respect of international law. In fact, it is the UN Charter that is pointed out as the fundamental framework for international relations development, as well as the UN Security Council as an actor with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The EU's cooperation with NATO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, as well as with other international organizations, is identified as key factor in efficient multilateralism creating.

Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe

The 2016 Global Strategy (EUGS), entitled: "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe", is the new strategic framework guiding the EU's foreign and security policy. Actually, it replaced the 2003 European Security

Strategy. In terms of the dynamics and environment that have initiated a necessity of such Strategy adoption, the following are highlighted: the increasingly pronounced uncertainty and instability in the wider European region, global pressures, security tensions in Asia and the Middle East, the direct impact of existing crises on the European citizens lives, the challenges following the British referendum, and climate change as well (A Global Strategy (GS), 2016). Starting from the assessment that none of the existing EU member states has the strength nor resources for the independently addressing of such indicated challenges, the Strategy focus is placed on a new common vision and collective response in this regard. This is even more so, from the perspective of the EU's obligation to assume clear collective responsibility for its global role. The term "Global" in this sense, is not just intended in a geographical sense, but it also refers to the wide array of policies and instruments the Strategy promotes. Moreover, it focuses on military capabilities and anti-terrorism as much as on job opportunities, inclusive societies and human rights. It also deals with peace-building and the resilience of states and societies, within and around Europe. As a result of such approach, the Union directly confirms its strategic commitment about continuing of its so-called soft power development and application. However, at the same time, the Strategy clearly emphasizes that the new evolutionary reality inevitably imposes the need for a comprehensive response based equally on both, soft and hard power. It is among other, confirmed by the 17 active military and civilian operations undertaken by the EU at the time of this Strategy adoption.

Within this strategy, as it is a case within the 2003 Strategy, the EU recognizes the crucial importance of effective multilateralism and cooperation with the UN, NATO and OSCE. However, in parallel, the new Strategy additionally emphasizes the ambition for greater strategic autonomy of the Union. It is particularly necessary, especially in order for further promotion of common interests, principles and values. In this regard, the Strategy clearly recognizes that such priorities are best achieved within an international system based on rules and effective multilateralism.

It is significant that all key CFSP and CSDP documents since 2016, draw on the Global Strategy and the five priorities it outlines for the EU's external action. These priorities are: (1) the security of the EU; (2) state and societal resilience to the EU's East and South; (3) an integrated approach to conflicts and crises (4); stronger cooperative regional orders; (5) and a global governance for the 21st century (GS, 2016).

Regarding to the first priority, the most serious security challenges to the values and principles of the Union's territory, have been identified as: terrorism, hybrid threats, economic instability, climate change and energy insecurity. Hence, developing and possessing an appropriate level of strategic autonomy is important for the Union's ability to promote peace and security, both within and beyond its borders. The strategic focus of this plan is placed on improving activities and capacities in defense, cybersecurity, the fight against terrorism, energy and strategic communications. In addition, the importance of promoting mutual

assistance and solidarity between Member States, as well as, strengthening the EU's contribution to the collective security of Europe, while closely cooperating with international partners, primarily NATO, has been emphasized.

The second priority, addresses the Union identified strategic need for investment in resilience building of the states and societies eastwards to Central Asia and southwards to Central Africa. In addition, the Strategy confirms the importance of the established strict and fair approach about the Western Balkans and Turkey accession to the Union, inter alia, as an instrument for enhancing their resilience. Within the framework of this priority, the need for developing more effective migration policies for both, the Union itself and its partners, is also highlighted.

Based on the understanding that violent conflicts pose a serious threat to the common vital interests of the Union, the third priority identifies the strategic need for a more active, practical and principled EU engagement in peace-building processes, as well as, in promoting human security through an integrated approach. In this context, the importance of applying a comprehensive approach to conflicts and crises, through the coherent use of all available Union policies, is particularly highlighted. Such indicated comprehensive approach implies, among other things, the need for improving the Union's capacities to act effectively at all stages of the conflict cycle, i.e., rapid action for prevention, responsible and decisive response to crises and investment in stabilisation and post-conflict reconstruction.

In terms of the fourth priority, the Strategy recognises that in a world caught between global challenges and local resistances, regional dynamics are inevitably coming to the fore. In particular, voluntary forms of regional governance offer opportunities for states and peoples, about better security concerns management, as well as, for more effectively harness of the globalization economic benefits, and more fully expression of their cultures and identities, and projection of their influence on a global scale. Hence, the strategic need about the Union engagement in supporting regional cooperation worldwide, necessarily appears.

Regarding the last priority, the strategic projection is that the EU should be fully committed in building and developing an order based on international law, which ensures respect for human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to common global goods. In this context, the focus is on full EU support for the UN as the foundation of the multilateral rules-based order and as a basis for developing coordinated global responses, with involving international and regional organisations, states and credible non-state actors in this regard.

In relation to the question about transforming such indicated strategic vision into reality, i.e. into concrete action. Hence, the Strategy first of all emphasizes the need for collective investment in a credible, responsible and united Union, which would further strengthen its credibility. In fact, it is clearly emphasized that the credibility of the Union is directly determined by its unity, by its

numerous so far achievements, as well as, by the effectiveness and consistency of its policies and adherence to the identified values.

The next one, is the strategic need for investments in all foreign policy dimensions, with a special emphasis on investments in security and defense area. In this regard, the need for improving the defense capacities of the Union is clearly emphasized, as an instrument for responding to external crises, the need for developing the capacities of its partners and as a guarantor of the security of Europe as well. In addition, the Strategy confirms that Member States retain sovereignty in their defence decisions, but that action is still needed in ensuring the normative character of defence cooperation. Here, the strategic focus is on creating a robust European defence industry, a process that would further enhance the Union's indigenous security and defence approach, both, regionally and internationally. In addition, the Strategy also highlights a necessity of greater coherence in external policies, both among Member States, as well as, within the Union institutions themselves.

A Strategic Compass for Security and Defense

Almost 20 years after the adoption of the first Security Strategy (2003), and 6 years after the adoption of the Global Strategy (2016), the EU has adopted the latest document in this field - "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defense", in March 2022. Designed as a new strategic framework for the Union's foreign and security policy, at the core of such strategic document lies the vision about a capable and efficient EU for the protection of its citizens, values and interests, as well as for its significant contribution to international peace and security (A strategic Compass for Security and Defense (SCSD), 2022). Compared to the previous two strategies, a certain shift is noticeable in terms of the perception about the existing challenges and security threats and risks, that characterize the current security dynamics, both on a European and global level.

In fact, current Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, as well as the existing geopolitical changes, have directly challenged the Union's capacities for a common vision promotion and common interest protection as well. In addition, despite the identified negative aspects of the globalization process within the 2003 Strategic document, relations between states are increasingly influenced by intense strategic competition and complex security threats, today. Actually, despite the predictions from the beginning of the 21st century about the reduction or even complete elimination of the classical military threat to the European continent, we are witnessing that after the two World wars during the 20th century, today the European continent is once again experiencing massive military devastation, which, among other, directly initiates severe humanitarian suffering and consequences. Moreover, as a result of such dynamics, the issues of economic and energy coercion are becoming more and more relevant.

In parallel with the above, the relevance of hybrid threats is increasing, both in frequency and impact. Interdependence is becoming more sensitive and

conflictual, and confirmation of such, among other, is the issues of vaccines, technological standards, etc., which are becoming instruments of political competition.

Such above outlined dynamic and hostile security environment, directly initiates a need of enhancing Union's action capacity and strengthen its resilience on the one hand, as well as, for ensuring solidarity and mutual assistance on the other hand. In this regard, a new Strategy highlights the need of increasing the presence, effectiveness and visibility of the Union, both, in the neighborhood and on the global stage, mainly through joint efforts and investments. In fact, it clearly states that the Union must act as a strong and coherent political entity in support of established democratic values and principles, as well as for its greater responsibility for the security of Europe and its citizens, and in support of international peace and security as well. (SCSD, 2022)

Therefore, the new strategic document focus is on unity and commitment to the protection and defense of the European security order. In doing so, the Union's position is that sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of internationally recognized borders should be fully respected. In fact, the Strategy clearly highlights the EU's strong support for Ukraine in confronting Russian military aggression, as well as, its determination for peace restoring in Europe, as a process that will be implemented in cooperation with the partners. It also confirms that NATO continues to represent the basis for the collective defense of European member states, while the UN constitutes the core for the international order respecting and promoting.

The Strategic Compass' focus on security and defense, is specifically based on the following four objectives:

Providing a shared assessment of EU's strategic environment, and for the threats and challenges and their implications for the EU;

Bringing greater coherence and a common sense of purpose to actions in the area of security and defense that are already underway;

Setting out new ways and means for improving EU's collective ability for defending the security of its citizens and whole Union as well;

Specifying clear targets and milestones to measure progress. (SCSD, 2022).

Regarding the Union's response to current security threats and risks, a need is recognized within the Strategy about swift and robust action (alone or commonly with partners) whenever a crisis arises. In this sense, the focus is on strengthening civilian and military CFSP missions and operations, then, on promoting a rapid and more flexible decision-making process, as well as, on ensuring greater financial solidarity. In addition, projections are also aimed at developing a rapid deployment capacity, which will allow for the rapid deployment of up to 5000 troops into non-permissive environments for different types of crises.

About the issue of ability improving for threat prediction and citizen protection, it is emphasized the importance of improving intelligence capacities,

situational awareness and strategic foresight, further, of creating an efficient EU hybrid response by unifying different instruments for detecting and responding to a wide range of hybrid threats, as well as, the need for further developing the cyber defense policy and the development of an EU Space Strategy for security and defense.

Regarding the issue of investments, the Strategy highlights the need for greater and better investments in capacity building and innovative technologies, in order to fill the existing strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependencies. One of the solutions in such direction, is the proposal about establishing a new Center for defense innovation within the framework of the European Defense Agency.

An awareness about the multilateralism importance and cooperation with partners, is also an integral part of this Strategy. Therefore, a need for strengthening the Union's cooperation with partners in order to effectively addressing common threats and challenges, is clearly emphasized. In particular, a determination for strengthening strategic partnerships with NATO and the UN is noted, through more structured political dialogues and through improved operational cooperation. In addition, the importance of improving cooperation with regional partners is also noted, including primarily with: OSCE, AU and ASEAN (SCSD, 2022).

In terms of the above mentioned complex and dynamic security environment, the Strategic Compass identifies several key security threats.

Terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms, are still recognized as a serious threat to peace and security, both in Europe and globally. In particular, the main potential risks associated with such threat, arise from home-grown terrorists, foreign fighter returnees, external attacks, i.e. attacks directed, instigated or inspired from abroad, as well as the propagation of ideologies and beliefs that lead to radicalization and violent extremism.

A proliferation of the mass destruction weapons and their means of delivery, continues to be perceived as a serious threat within the new Security Strategy, as well. Contrary to the 2003 Strategy, the current Strategic Compass specifically highlights concern about the North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs development, as well as, about the development and delivery of new advanced ballistic, cruise and hypersonic missiles. Additional concerns in this regard are also being raised by the further Russia's and China's nuclear potential expansion and their development of new weapons systems (SCSD, 2022).

The following security concerns are connected to the hybrid strategies, cyber threats, disinformation campaigns, as well as, to the direct interference in the electoral processes and policies of the Union, economic coercion and irregular migration flows. This is a wide range of activities that are, and that could be undertaken by both, state and non-state actors. In this regard, it is specifically highlighted the risk of using new and disruptive technologies by the Union's competitors, with primarily aim of securing appropriate strategic advantages. Moreover, in a time of growing dependence on digital technologies, cyberspace

is becoming an increasingly relevant field for strategic competition, which also includes more sophisticated cyber-attacks. Therefore, an efforts and focus should be directed towards maintaining an open, free, but at the same time and stable and secure cyberspace as well.

The latest security threat is linked to climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters, which are estimated to have a strong impact on the security landscape in the coming decades and which will be serious drivers of instability and conflicts all around the world. Specific examples in this regard are the competitions for natural resources (especially for agricultural land and water), as well as, the exploitation of energy resources for political purposes. In addition, it is estimated that global health crises can also impose significant burdens and consequences on societies and economies, with far-reaching geopolitical implications. Indeed, the example of the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated the challenges of international rivalry and shown that disruptions to key trade routes can initiate serious risks to critical supply chains and economic security.

Given that all of the above mentioned threats and risks are multifaceted and often interconnected, the EU is faced with the need for enhancing and redoubling the joint efforts of all Member States in order to achieve the implementation of a common integrated security approach. In this regard, *inter alia*, the importance of diplomatic and economic instruments is additionally emphasized, as well as, their combination in managing current and preventing further security dynamics, risks and threats.

Conclusion

The paper analysis leads to several key conclusions. As first, there is no doubt that developing process of the EU's security role, which began in the 1990s, primarily with the establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (1993, CFSP), and then with the European Security and Defense Policy (1998, ESDP), was significantly advanced with the adoption of the first EU Security Strategy in 2003. In fact, its adoption is assessed as the beginning of strengthening the foundations for the further development of the CFSP and for overcoming the previous perceptions of the EU, as a primarily civilian force.

In this regard, the Strategy initiated an additional positive contribution to the process of institutionalizing the EU's decision-making procedures in the field of security and defense, as well as, in determining relations and cooperation with other security actors. Among other, it is directly confirmed by the analyzed strategic objectives, which for the first time clearly identify and emphasize the significance of the activities that the EU will undertake in relation to: dealing with threats, building a secure neighborhood and establishing an international order based on effective multilateralism. As the analysis itself shows, within the such Strategy framework, a two-dimensional strategic approach of the EU is envisaged, especially in relation to the first two objectives. Specifically, the first dimen-

sion refers to the so-called soft security approach or action aimed at promoting and fully respecting international agreements in the security sphere, as well as, towards a political resolution of tensions and disputes arising from this sphere, while the second dimension envisages the use of coercive measures and activities (in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter and in accordance with international law), if the activities within the first dimension are not successful.

The next important aspect arises from the fact that the Strategy represents a significant step forward in the Union's intention for increasing its own security potential and influence, both regionally and internationally. In addition, after 2003, the EU began to manifest a continuous and active strategic approach within the security sphere, and confirmation of such is, among others: The Implementation Report on the European Security Strategy: Ensuring Security in a Changing World (2007), A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (2016), EU Security Union Strategy: connecting the dots in a new security ecosystem (2020-2025), and A Strategic Compass for Security and Defense (2022).

Moreover, unlike 20 years ago, today the EU manifests more decisive responsibility and capacities for strategic design and positioning in relation to the current dynamic security environment, which is also confirmed by the aforementioned Strategic Compass for Security and Defense, adopted in complex and challenging security landscape for European security.

In fact, the EU must once again be prepared for a large-scale military conflict and ready to act to protect European security, values and principles. In this regard, an idea and a need for indigenous European armed forces, as well as for restarting military industry investments, are becoming increasingly pronounced. This is due to the fact that the new security environment has revealed serious weaknesses in European collective defense capabilities, and hence the consequences of continued inaction could be catastrophic.

However, it is not only about the possibility of an eventual current military actions expansion, but and the very principles on which international relations are built, are also become questionable. There is no doubt that the EU has undertaken a series of activities in this regard, such as: economic and political sanctions on Russia, massive support for Ukraine, including (for the first time so far) financing the delivery of military equipment to a country (Ukraine) under attack, and building a broad international coalition to support Ukraine and restore international legality. Such, the so-called geopolitical awakening of the Union, needs to be transformed into a more permanent and sustained strategic stance and projection, which, as the analysis in the paper shows, is outlined in the latest Security Strategy from 2022. However, the set goal of the Strategic Compass is to guide the necessary development of the Union's security and defense agenda until 2030. Hence, the next five years will present whether this latest Security Strategy will succeed in effectively connecting of all the necessary aspects for building a truly indigenous European security system, resilient to the new environment security threats and risks.

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