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The war in Ukraine and the (Non-)Development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy

Wojna w Ukrainie a (nie)rozwój Wspólnej Polityki Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony UE

Abstract: This article addresses the research problem of analysing the development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. It examines the extent to which Russia's military actions against Ukraine, particularly those starting in 2022, have influenced EU and Member State decisions regarding the CSDP. To provide a more comprehensive analysis, this study also explores the evolution of the CSDP, focusing on its foundations and conditions both prior to the full-scale conflict and following Russia's 2014 aggression in Crimea and Donbas. This broader perspective enables a thorough assessment of the scale and scope of CSDP reforms over time. The objective of this article is to examine the dependencies and impacts of the war in Ukraine on the development and evolution of the CSDP.

Keywords: Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), European security, defence policy, foreign and security policies of the EU, European Union, war in Ukraine, NATO, United States (US)

Streszczenie: Problemem badawczym niniejszego artykułu jest analiza rozwoju Wspólnej Polityki Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony UE w kontekście trwającej na Ukrainie wojny. Ukazanie, w jakim stopniu rozpoczęte w 2022 r. działania wojenne Rosji wobec Ukrainy wpływają na podejmowane przez UE (i jej państwa członkowskie) decyzje odnośnie do WPBiO. Dla pełniejszej i całościowej analizy scharakteryzowano ewolucję WPBiO, jej przesłanki i uwarunkowania przed wybuchem pełnoskalowej wojny, a po rosyjskiej agresji na Krym i Donbas w 2014 r. Taka perspektywa pozwala w pełni ocenić skalę i zakres reform WPBiO. Celem badawczym artykułu jest więc próba zbadania zależności i wpływu, jaki ma wojna w Ukrainie na rozwój i ewolucję WPBiO.

Słowa kluczowe: Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony UE, bezpieczeństwo europejskie, polityka obronna, polityka zagraniczna i bezpieczeństwa UE, Unia Europejska, wojna w Ukrainie, NATO, Stany Zjednoczone (USA)

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The full-scale war in Ukraine that began in 2022, its progression, and its eventual outcome – or the potential for a frozen conflict – are key factors shaping the future of international relations, including the foreign and security policies of the EU and its Member States. This article addresses the research problem of analysing the development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. It examines the extent to which Russia's military actions against Ukraine, particularly those starting in 2022, have influenced EU and Member State decisions regarding the CSDP. To provide a more comprehensive analysis, this study also explores the evolution of the CSDP, focusing on its foundations and conditions both prior to the full-scale conflict and following Russia's 2014 aggression in Crimea and Donbas. This broader perspective enables a thorough assessment of the scale and scope of CSDP reforms over time. The objective of this article is to examine the dependencies and impacts of the war in Ukraine on the development and evolution of the CSDP. The choice of this case study is well-justified, as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine represents a significant turning point in international relations (see Chapter 1). The post-1989 international order has been fundamentally challenged, which, in turn, affects the behaviour of key global actors, including the European Union.

Given this context, the research objective is to address the following key questions:

- To what extent has the war in Ukraine influenced the current international order?
- What were the key premises and conditions that shaped the development of the CSDP prior to the outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine?
- Was the 2022 war in Ukraine a sufficient “exogenous shock” or “critical juncture” (for definitions, see footnotes 88 and 91) to prompt European decision-makers to reform the CSDP and deepen integration in this area within the EU?
- What is the role and place of NATO and the United States in the European security architecture after 2022?
- Has the war in Ukraine helped to overcome the weaknesses and shortcomings in the EU's security policy?

Based on the research questions outlined, the following hypotheses were formulated: Hypothesis 1: The war in Ukraine does not represent

a “watershed moment” – as termed by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen – nor, using Giovanni Grevi’s terminology, a “quantum leap” in EU security policy. While the European Union has undertaken joint projects and initiatives related to the CSDP and imposed sanctions on Russia, along with aligning Member States’ positions on the threats posed by Russia’s neo-imperial ambitions, these actions do not signify deep structural changes or a transformation of the CSDP. The fundamental structural and systemic weaknesses within the CSDP remain unresolved, and the war in Ukraine has, in fact, highlighted these issues. Moreover, the EU’s actions within the scope of the CSDP should be understood as one among several instruments within the broader spectrum of its international strategies and actions.

Hypothesis 2: The war in Ukraine unequivocally confirmed the primacy of NATO (and the United States) in guaranteeing European security. It reinforced NATO’s and the US’s central role within transatlantic relations. Moreover, the conflict demonstrated the necessity for closer cooperation between the EU (the CSDP) and NATO (the US) in addressing European security challenges.

The article employs several research methods to analyse the development of the CSDP. The factorial method was applied to identify the factors influencing the evolution of the CSDP from the annexation of Crimea up to the outbreak of the full-scale war in 2022, and to highlight the weaknesses and shortcomings of EU security policy. The systems method was then used to examine the components of the CSDP system, their interconnections, and the resulting implications for the functioning of EU security policy. Additionally, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were utilised to assess the effectiveness of EU security policy. Finally, the scenario method was employed to outline potential future developments in the CSDP.

1. The war in Ukraine – a geostategic shift in international relations

The full-scale war in Ukraine, as many observers rightly emphasise, represents a significant turning point in international relations. This assertion is neither an exaggeration nor an empty slogan. The initiation of hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in late February 2022 has already had, and will continue to have, profound impli-

cations for the international order, particularly in Europe. As Serena Giusti notes, “the international system is now under reconfiguration. (...) it is thus unstable and fluid”¹.

From a European perspective, the war in Ukraine has fundamentally challenged the security order and architecture established on the continent after 1989. It has also cast doubt on the long-standing belief held by European leaders, as well as the assumptions underlying the foreign policies of most European nations, that the possibility of a conventional war erupting on European soil—especially on the scale seen since February 2022 – was inconceivable. “The Russian invasion of Ukraine was a shock for European security, bringing back almost forgotten features of power politics in the continent: inter-state conflict and war of conquest”². This conflict has not only undermined confidence in Europe’s security framework but also raised questions about the basic mechanisms for conducting political dialogue and resolving international disputes through diplomatic means – principles that are central to the functioning of democratic states, including the European Union.

The outbreak of full-scale war in Ukraine has had far-reaching global consequences, both economically—exemplified by crises in energy, grain, and food supplies—and geostrategically. It has marked a clearer division of the world into two opposing blocs: the West, grounded in democratic principles, and the non-Western sphere, led by Russia, China, and Iran. Additionally, the war has significantly impacted the West’s relations with countries of the Global South, many of which have adopted a neutral stance or tacitly supported Russia’s actions. Meanwhile, Moscow and Beijing, much as they did during the pandemic, are actively shaping an anti-Western narrative in the Global South, leveraging anti-colonial sentiments and economic inequalities. They have portrayed the West, particularly NATO, as being responsible for instigating the conflict, accusing Western nations of provoking Russia through NATO’s eastward expansion.

- 1 S. Giusti, *EU Security and Defence Policy in a Volatile Context*, [in:] idem, G. Grevi (eds.), *Facing War: Rethinking Europe’s Security and Defence*, The Institute for International Political Studies (Istituto per gli Studi di PoliticalInternazionale, ISPI), Milan 2022, p. 13.
- 2 F. Coticchia, *A Watershed Moment? European Defence and the War in Ukraine*, [in:] S. Giusti, G. Grevi (eds.), op. cit., p. 24.

The war in Ukraine marks yet another phase in the ongoing transformation of the international order that has been unfolding over the past decade. Much like the COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict has sharply exposed underlying phenomena and processes that were already at play. As Serena Giusti observes, “the war in Ukraine has accelerated processes that were already in place”³. The events of 2014, particularly the annexation of Crimea, demonstrated that military power (geostrategy) is as significant as economic strength (geoeconomics), with military capabilities and potential becoming increasingly vital in a world marked by growing instability. Since the second decade of the 21st century, we have witnessed increasingly assertive policies from both China, under Xi Jinping, and Russia, particularly following Vladimir Putin’s return to the presidency in 2012. International relations have become marked by a shift towards bilateral relations, often at the expense of multilateral frameworks and international institutions, which have been significantly weakened. The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 war in Ukraine have further reinforced the dominance of “power politics”. Additionally, not only has the economic role of the West faced growing skepticism since the 2008 financial crisis, but its political influence and leadership, especially that of the United States, have also come under question in the current global landscape.

A crucial issue for the future trajectory of international relations is the so-called “Thucydides Trap”, referring to the potential for escalating tensions between the United States and China. The political and economic confrontation initiated during Donald Trump’s presidency has continued under the Biden administration and is likely to intensify under the next US administration elected in November 2024. Several factors point to this intensification, including the tariff war, the emerging competition over new technologies, and the rivalry for influence in Africa and the Global South⁴. Furthermore, both countries’ stances on the war in Ukraine offer insight into their mutual relationship and their differing perceptions of international relations.

3 S. Giusti, op. cit., p. 13.

4 K. Zajączkowski, *Stosunki międzynarodowe Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej z państwami Afryki w erze Xi Jipinga – dynamika, istota, trendy*, “Politeja” 2024, vol. 21, no. 2(89), pp. 159–186.

In conclusion, the war in Ukraine underscores the dilemmas and challenges faced not only by EU Member States and the European Union as a whole but also serves as a significant factor shaping international relations. It brings to light ongoing processes and shifts that have been unfolding in the global order for some time. In this context, it is reasonable to assert that the war in Ukraine represents a pivotal turning point in the evolution of international relations.

2. CSDP after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and prior to the full-scale war

Conditions and prerequisites

Russia's attack on Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014 represented an unprecedented violation of international law and fundamental international obligations. Initially, the European Union's response was unequivocal; it condemned the annexation of Crimea and the unlawful aggression against Ukrainian territory, offering financial support and signing an association agreement with Ukraine. However, the EU's policy towards Russia during this period can be characterised as ambivalent, a pattern evident in previous years. While EU leaders expressed outrage and condemnation, there was a noticeable lack of decisive action. Although the EU eventually implemented joint sanctions against Russia, this occurred only after the tragic downing of a Malaysian passenger plane by Russian separatists in July 2014, several months after the annexation of Crimea. Moreover, the scope of these sanctions was limited, reflecting insufficient support among Member States for a more robust sanctions regime. A striking example that illustrates the EU's position toward Russia is the issue of energy cooperation. Rather than being severed or suspended, this collaboration continued unabated. EU Member States engaged in energy projects with Russia, such as Germany and Austria, demonstrated no intention of interrupting this cooperation⁵.

5 In June 2014, Austria's energy company OMV and Russia's Gazprom formed a joint venture to construct the final section of the South Stream gas pipeline, despite opposition from the European Commission. The project proceeded in defiance of the Commission's concerns, highlighting tensions between national energy interests and EU energy policy. M. Koška, *SouthStream w cieniu*

The war in Donbas and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 did not prompt an increase in defense spending among individual EU countries, which had already seen significant cuts following the eurozone crisis. In 2011, European NATO members collectively reduced their defense budgets by over 45 billion USD. During his European tour in the spring of 2014, President Barack Obama cautioned EU leaders against excessive reductions in military spending; however, the prevailing trend continued. Only those countries directly bordering Russia, such as Poland and Latvia, increased their military budgets during that period⁶.

The EU's distance from establishing a cohesive foreign policy strategy is underscored by the fact that, at the European Council summit in December 2013, over 90% of the discussions focused on internal issues, particularly efforts to stabilise the eurozone and mechanisms related to the functioning of the banking union.

Since the second half of the 2010s, several conditions have highlighted the increasing significance of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in discussions regarding the EU's future, thereby prompting attempts at reform. These conditions include the election of a new European Commission for the 2014–2019 term, the migration crisis, and the unstable situations in the Balkans and Sub-Saharan Africa which have negatively impacted European security. Additionally, the increasingly assertive (and often hostile) policies of countries such as Russia and China, along with the implications of Brexit and Donald Trump's presidency, have played crucial roles. During the tenure of the first High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy⁷, Catherine Ashton (2010–2014), EU diplomacy was notably subdued, trailing behind the influence of Washington, Lon-

sankcji, Obserwatorfinansowy.pl, 9 July 2014, <http://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/forma/rotator/south-stream-w-cieniu-sankcji/?k=analizy> [15.07.2024].

6 R. Pear, T. Shanker, *Health Care and Military Spending Bear the Brunt of Proposed Cuts*, "New York Times", 10 April 2013; *Defense cuts 'hollowing out' European armies: U.S. envoy*, Reuters, 17 June 2013; *European Defense Trends 2012. Budgets, regulatory frameworks, and the industrial base*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, December 2012.

7 This position merges two existing roles: the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Commissioner for External Relations.

don, and Paris. Some commentators even questioned the relevance of the High Representative's position at that time.

A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, adopted by the European Council in June 2016, delineated the Union's objectives and aspirations in foreign and security policy. The 2016 Strategy opens with a stark acknowledgment that the world in the second decade of the 21st century is characterised by perpetual crisis. In contrast to the 2003 Strategy⁸, it adopts a much more pessimistic tone regarding both the international landscape and the state of the EU itself. The authors of the Strategy explicitly stated, "in today's unstable world, soft power is not enough; we must strengthen our credibility in the field of security and defense". At the same time, while the Strategy envisioned the strengthening of the CSDP, it operated on the premise that "the European Union's actions should only complement NATO's activities within the Euro-Atlantic framework and should not aim to replace NATO as the guarantor of European security".

These conditions facilitated a revival of German-French cooperation within the EU regarding the further development of the CSDP. Just days after the British vote to leave the EU, the foreign ministers of Germany and France published a document titled *A Strong Europe in a World of Uncertainties*, highlighting security policy as one of three key areas for deepening integration in the EU. In September 2016, the defense ministers of both countries refined these proposals, which subsequently gained the support of Italy and Spain.

On 26 September 2017, two days after the German parliamentary elections, French President Emmanuel Macron presented his vision for the future of the European Union in a speech at the Sorbonne in Paris. In this address, Macron expressed optimism that France and Germany would continue to be the driving force behind efforts to deepen defense cooperation among EU Member States. He advo-

8 The European Security Strategy of 2003 was formulated in a markedly different international context, characterised by the apex of Western power – including that of the EU – in the post-Cold War era, as well as a period of prosperity for Europe and the West. As one study observed, "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure, nor so free". D. Fiott, *Executive summary*, [in:] idem (ed.), *The CSDP in 2020. The EU's legacy and ambition in security and defence*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), Paris 2020, p. 3.

cated for the further development of European military capabilities in alignment with NATO principles while emphasising the necessity for greater military autonomy.

MPCC, PADR, EDIDP, EDF, PESCO, and EFP

The aforementioned conditions led to the adoption of initiatives aimed at developing the CSDP by the EU between 2017 and 2021. The first three initiatives were implemented in 2017 and included the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) within the EU Military Staff, the creation of the European Defence Fund (EDF) financed by the EU budget, and the activation of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) mechanism in December 2017⁹.

The establishment of a separate command structure for the European Union to oversee EU military operations has been a contentious issue for years, primarily due to opposition from the United Kingdom. Typically, the EU utilises a provisional command for military operations situated in one of five countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, or the United Kingdom¹⁰. As Marek Brylonek notes, “this approach only partially addresses the issue and is fraught with several deficiencies”¹¹. Although the MPCC will initially oversee only non-executive military training missions, it is intended to serve as the foundation for more extensive EU command structures in the future¹².

On 7 June 2017, the European Commission published documents outlining the establishment and functioning of the EDF. Based on this framework, two pilot programs were launched: the Preparatory Action for Defence Research (PADR) for the years 2017–2019, and

- 9 This instrument was incorporated into the *acquis communautaire* through the Lisbon Treaty. However, it has yet to be utilised.
- 10 Such a headquarters is established on an *ad hoc* basis for specific operations and is subsequently disbanded upon the completion of the mission. These headquarters are formed using personnel from national military staffs. The Operations Commander (OpCmr) oversees the Operations Headquarters (OHQ), which serves as the provisional command for EU military operations.
- 11 M. Brylonek, *Bieżące trendy we wspólnej polityce bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej*, “Przegląd Europejski” 2014, no. 1, p. 89; K. Zajączkowski, *EU Military Operations as a Tool in the EU's Foreign Policy Toolbox – The Main Trends and Limitations*, “Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs” 2021, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 7–34.
- 12 In accordance with the assumptions of the Strategic Compass: “By 2025, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability will be able to plan and conduct all non-executive military missions and two small-scale or one medium-scale executive operation/s, as well as live exercises”. *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*, Brussels 2022, p. 17.

the European Defence Industry Development Programme (EDIDP) for 2019–2020. The PADR allocated funds to finance joint research projects aimed at developing technologies within the EU defence sector, with a total of 90 million EUR granted from the EU budget. In contrast, the EDIDP provided support for projects enhancing the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the defence industry. This program was co-financed through contributions from Member States and the EU's general budget, which allocated a total of 500 million EUR for its initiatives¹³.

On 1 January 2021, a regulation enacted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union established the EDF for the period of 2021–2027. The primary objective of the EDF is to enhance the competitiveness, efficiency, and innovation of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) across the EU. The Fund is allocated a total budget of 7.953 billion EUR, with 2.651 billion EUR earmarked for research activities and 5.302 billion EUR designated for development initiatives¹⁴.

On 11 December 2017, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted a decision to establish PESCO among 25 Member States, excluding the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Malta. PESCO aims to facilitate deeper cooperation in the field of the CSDP among willing Member States, provided they meet certain conditions. By the end of 2021, a total of 60 military and technical projects had been adopted by the participating Member States under PESCO. These projects encompassed various domains, including ground, sea, and air systems and formations, as well as space, cybersecurity, training, facilities, and joint support initiatives, such as troop mobility.

On 22 March 2021, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted a decision to establish a new extra-budgetary fund known as the European Peace Facility (EPF). The budget for the EPF for the period of 2021–2027 is set at 5.692 billion EUR. The EPF was created to replace two previous funds: the ATHENA mechanism and the African Peace Fa-

13 J.J. Węc, *Perspektywy reformy Wspólnej Polityki Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony Unii Europejskiej do 2025 roku. Autonomia strategiczna UE?*, "Politeja" 2022, vol. 19, no. 3(78), pp. 216–218.

14 The EDF funds are designated exclusively for research and development projects undertaken by legal entities organised in consortia, with a minimum requirement of three legal entities from at least three Member States, or two Member States and Norway. *Ibid.*, pp. 218–219.

cility. However, “its expenditures not only cover the costs of military missions and operations previously funded by the ATHENA mechanism and co-financing for peace support operations in Africa but also introduce a significant innovation in the EU’s activities – provisions for strengthening the military capabilities of third countries and international organisations by co-financing their infrastructure and supplying equipment, arms, and ammunition”¹⁵.

Since 2016, there has been an intensification of activities and initiatives aimed at reforming the CSDP. However, these developments should not be considered groundbreaking, but rather as incremental steps in the ongoing evolution of the CSDP. In the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in 2022, the reforms initiated by the EU in the preceding years became the foundation for further actions in this area. As Beata Przybylska-Maszner notes, “it is important to recognise that earlier decisions and initiatives in the realm of security and defence laid the groundwork for the new initiatives launched in 2022”¹⁶.

3. CSDP and the war in Ukraine 2022

3.1. Rhetorical, narrative and perceptual dimensions

a) The European Union’s response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was notably quick and decisive, especially when compared to its actions during previous crises, including the first Ukrainian conflict¹⁷. As observed, “the EU’s response to Russia’s invasion was exceptional; it came swiftly, and it remained strong and balanced throughout the first months”¹⁸. In this context, the EU demonstrated remarkable cohesion, as evidenced by the adoption of successive sanction packages. However, this does not imply that these measures were universally

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁶ B. Przybylska-Maszner, *Wpływ wojny w Ukrainie na rozwój polityki bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej*, “Politeja” 2024, vol. 21, no. 1(88/1), p. 207.

¹⁷ For instance, “it took Eurozone countries months, and often even years, to agree on a number of common tools to lower the risk of repeating another debt crisis. During the worst phases of the Covid-19 pandemic, it took EU countries months of negotiations to agree on a common fund to support post-pandemic recovery”. P. Magri, *Introduction*, [in:] S. Giusti, G. Grevi (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

accepted within the EU, particularly after the initial phase of the war, post-2023. Moreover, the sanctions imposed in 2022 were far more severe in their impact than those introduced following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

b) As Paolo Magri notes, "the war has shaken Europeans out of the complacency that had long surrounded and stifled their approach to European security and defense"¹⁹. In response to Russia's aggression, nearly all EU Member States – excluding Hungary – began to perceive Russia and its policies as a genuine threat to their national security, a view reflected both in government actions and public opinion. Prior to the 2022 invasion, the level of concern regarding Moscow was not uniformly shared across the EU, with the Baltic and Central European states being more alarmed than others. Regardless of how the war concludes – whether through a ceasefire or a decisive victory by one side – "the very fact that President Putin decided to invade Ukraine has had a profound and lasting impact on how European governments now perceive their own security"²⁰. This shift is best exemplified by the growing prioritisation of defense issues across the EU, accompanied by significant increases in defense spending. For instance, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the creation of a special 100-billion-euro defense fund aimed at modernising Germany's military capabilities. Similarly, Denmark made a historic decision to abandon its long-standing opt-out from EU defense policy, a stance it had maintained since 1993. Following a referendum on 1 June 2022, in which 66.9% voted for the motion, Denmark formally joined the CSDP.

c) Attention must also be drawn to the significant shift in the EU's narrative and language concerning security issues. Fabrizio Coticchia highlights that "the open calls for 'rearmament' and support for a 'military victory on the ground by Ukraine' reflect a narrative that is far removed from decades of discourses on the EU as a 'civilian power'"²¹. Even prior to the war in Ukraine, amidst global changes, High Representative Josep Borrell had emphasised the need for the EU to adopt

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²¹ F. Coticchia, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

the “language of power”. However, his initial efforts in this direction, as seen during his visit to see Putin in December 2021, were largely ineffective. It was only after Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine that the EU was compelled to adopt this more assertive narrative of the “language of power”. As Coticchia notes, “it seems that the EU has definitively embraced a foreign policy language that fully includes the military component, which had been disregarded by Brussels for decades”²². Similarly, Nicole Koenig observes, “Putin’s ruthless military invasion shows that the EU needs to learn the language of power sooner rather than later”²³.

3.2. A Strategic Compass for Security and Defense

The Strategic Compass for Security and Defense (SC) has been described as “the most concrete and realistic roadmap for the EU as a security provider that we have seen in the bloc’s history”²⁴. This 46-page document outlines the primary objective of strengthening the CSDP by 2030. It includes over 80 specific actions, each with clearly defined implementation timelines, with more than 50 set to be completed by the end of 2025.

The development of the Strategic Compass was initiated during the German presidency in the second half of 2020, which is why it is important to note that “the Strategic Compass is not an answer to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and it was never going to”²⁵. Nevertheless, the onset of a full-scale war in Ukraine “has decisively prompted Brussels to sharpen its hard edges”²⁶, including its approach to the Strategic Compass. Unlike the initial version of the Compass, presented in November 2021, the final iteration adopted by the European Council on 24 March 2022 “reflects a clear sense of urgency

22 Ibid., p. 25.

23 N. Koenig, *Putin’s war and the Strategic Compass. A quantum leap for the EU’s security and defence policy?*, Policy Brief, 29 April 2022, Hertie School, Jacques Delors School, p. 6.

24 Ibid., p. 1.

25 Ibid., p. 2.

26 A. Korniychuk, *Geopolitical crossroads: the strategic landscape after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine*, [in:] G. Grevi (ed.), *Forging Europe’s leadership. Global trends, Russian aggression and the risk of a regressive world*, Brussels 2023, p. 10.

to respond to renewed large-scale war in Europe and its far-reaching transnational consequences”²⁷.

According to Nicole Koenig, the war in Ukraine “changed the Compass in three ways: it sharpened the focus, it triggered a leap in European defense spending, and it enhanced the sense of urgency regarding implementation”²⁸. She explains that “while the initial draft suggested selective engagement with Moscow including cooperation on shared priorities such as combating climate change, the final document firmly condemns Russia’s military aggression and commits the Member States to defending the European security order”²⁹. As a result, the threat assessment and the perceptions, language, and narrative regarding Russia shifted dramatically (see section 3.1). The final version places greater emphasis on regional threats, rather than focusing on shaping the EU’s role as a global player, including in the Indo-Pacific. As N. Koenig notes, “the final version puts the return of war in Europe at its center”³⁰ and “also reflects growing fears of a spill over from the war in Ukraine to the wider region”³¹.

Danuta Adamiec, in alignment with N. Koenig, highlights that the final version of the Strategic Compass places increased emphasis on three key areas: enhancing defence spending and its overall effectiveness, promoting joint procurement and investment in the defence sector, and improving military mobility³².

The Strategic Compass reaffirms the position outlined in the EU’s 2016 Security Strategy, emphasising that diplomatic efforts and the EU’s soft power must be complemented by military actions. As Serena Giusti points out, “this conception derives from a realistic and pessimistic analysis of the nature of the threats”³³. In this context, Sven Biscop aptly captures the essence of the Strategic Compass, noting that: “on the one hand, the Compass obviously focuses on the competences

27 A. Kornijchuk, op. cit., p. 11.

28 N. Koenig, op. cit., p. 2.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 D. Adamiec, *Koncepcja autonomii strategicznej UE w kontekście rosyjskiej inwazji na Ukrainę*, [in:] Sz.Bachrynowski, L. Graniszewski (eds.), *Nowa architektura bezpieczeństwa europejskiego w okresie dynamicznych zmian*, Warszawa 2023, p. 10.

33 S. Giusti, op. cit., p. 18.

of the EU, i.e., not on collective defence and military deterrence, on which the war has the most direct impact, but which the Europeans continue to organise through NATO. On the other hand, the issues on which the Compass does focus – notably crisis management, hybrid threats and capability development – have not become any less relevant because of the war – quite the opposite, in fact³⁴.

The core of the Strategic Compass was formulated before February 2022, but its final version, as noted earlier, was significantly influenced by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As the previously quoted author points out, "the member states should thus take the Compass as a starting point and go beyond it to equip the EU with the geopolitical edge that the coming decade will undoubtedly require"³⁵. Achieving this, however, will be neither simple nor easy, considering the numerous weaknesses and challenges facing the development of the CSDP, as outlined in Chapter 4.

3.3. Operational

Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 served as a crucial test for the European Union's newly established instrument, the European Peace Facility (EPF). This test was passed extraordinarily well. N. Koenig notes, "The speed and scale with which the EU deployed this new instrument was staggering"³⁶. This assertion is supported by data: just four days after the Russian invasion, the Council agreed to provide 500 million EUR for the supply of lethal (450 million EUR) and non-lethal (50 million EUR) materials to Ukraine. Subsequently, on 23 March and 13 April 2022, the Council approved two additional packages of 500 million EUR each, thereby tripling the Instrument's initial ceiling for 2022. By mid-August 2024, four tranches of financial assistance had been agreed upon under the EPF, totaling 2.5 billion EUR.

The EPF was designed with an awareness of the increasingly perilous global landscape surrounding the EU, aimed at addressing the myriad challenges associated with it. However, the creators of this instrument

34 S. Biscop, *The EU's Role in Security and Defence: Still Indispensable*, [in:] S. Giusti, G. Grevi (eds.), op. cit., p. 47.

35 N. Koenig, op. cit., p. 8.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

could not have anticipated a full-scale war in Europe. Nevertheless, the EPF has proven to be instrumental in this context, emerging as one of the EU's most significant tools.

The EPF has enabled the EU to provide substantial military aid to Ukraine. Importantly, it is not the EU itself that formally supplies weapons to Ukraine; rather, it is individual Member States that carry out these deliveries. The financial assistance from the EPF includes reimbursement for the costs incurred by these Member States in supplying weapons and military equipment to Ukraine. This reimbursement mechanism has been a crucial aspect of the EPF, facilitating its acceptance by EU countries and enhancing its overall effectiveness.

The EPF has proven to be a crucial instrument in supporting Ukraine's efforts to "defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty"³⁷. It has enabled the EU to play a significant role in providing military aid to Ukraine, even amidst the skepticism of several Member States regarding this initiative. Notably, countries like Germany, Finland, and Sweden reassessed their positions in light of the war in Ukraine, shifting from their initial reluctance to support military assistance. Additionally, as Janusz J. Węc points out, "the fact that the Union collectively agreed to finance supplies to Ukraine—despite individual decisions from some countries, such as Hungary and Bulgaria, opposing the dispatch of weapons—was of considerable significance"³⁸. N. Koenig, although perhaps being overly optimistic, notes that this marks "a significant step towards a more unified EU strategic culture"³⁹.

In conclusion, the EPF appears poised to become a significant instrument within the EU's foreign and security policy framework. While it does not formally supply weapons to conflict zones, the EPF enables the EU to play a crucial role in facilitating military support and assistance.

3.4. Transatlantic dimension

The war in Ukraine has unequivocally reaffirmed NATO's pivotal role in safeguarding European security and its significance for the stabil-

37 N. Koenig, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

38 J.J. Węc, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

39 N. Koenig, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

ity of the international order on the continent, “putting ideas about the Alliance’s obsolescence to rest”⁴⁰. As Fabrizio Coticchia notes: “After some difficult years for the Atlantic Alliance – with Trump’s criticisms and Macron’s strong words on the ‘brain death’ of NATO – the Russian invasion renewed its strategic centrality”⁴¹.

The following three facts underscore NATO’s critical importance for European security: “NATO remains the key provider of hard security in Europe, mainly because of the US’ military might”⁴²; “the centrality of NATO as the primary framework for organising deterrence and collective defense in Europe”⁴³; and NATO and the US are “the only ones retaining the knowledge, capabilities, and stockpiles to fight a conventional high-intensity war”⁴⁴. The accession of Finland and Sweden to the North Atlantic Alliance after years of maintaining a neutral stance serves as compelling evidence of NATO’s effectiveness and strength in Europe.

Researchers suggest that the war in Ukraine may present an opportunity to re-strengthen transatlantic relations. On the one hand, as previously noted, the conflict has underscored the primacy of NATO and the United States in ensuring European security while simultaneously exposing the structural weaknesses of the European Union’s foreign and security policy (see below). On the other hand, “Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in 2022 significantly challenged the ambitions of certain European Union Member States, particularly France (...), to establish the Union’s strategic autonomy, which was conceived as a means to bolster the EU’s international standing in relation to NATO”⁴⁵. As Fabrizio Coticchia notes, “the perception of EU strategic autonomy as an asset within the broader Transatlantic Alliance, rather than a trajectory of greater European independence in defense and security (as mainly advocated by France), has been reinforced by the dramatic events that occurred after late February 2022”⁴⁶.

40 P. Magri, op. cit., p. 10.

41 F. Coticchia, op. cit., p. 32.

42 N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, *The EU-Nato Partnership*, [in:] S. Giusti, G. Grevi (eds.), op. cit., p. 66.

43 G. Grevi, *Conclusions. European Defence: Quantum Leap or Limbo?*, [in:] S. Giusti, G. Grevi (eds.), op. cit., p. 106.

44 N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, op. cit., p. 66.

45 J.J. Węć, op. cit., p. 224.

46 F. Coticchia, op. cit., p. 32.

In transatlantic relations concerning European security cooperation, researchers identify two mutually exclusive tendencies. On one hand, some EU countries are entering into bilateral military cooperation agreements with the United States, thereby obtaining guarantees of security. However, this approach poses challenges as it circumvents the formal structures of NATO and the EU regarding security matters, potentially leading to fragmentation within transatlantic relations. On the other hand, other EU nations, notably France, are advocating for the development of EU military structures and resources that are autonomous and independent of NATO. This EU-centered approach to European security may, in turn, result in disengagement from NATO and the United States, as well as lead to duplication of efforts and long-term competition between the two security frameworks. Therefore, “neither the bi-lateralisation of European security nor its exclusive re-focusing on the EU appear as optimal courses of action. A more credible, efficient, and concrete way to bolster Europe’s security lies in the parallel strengthening of the EU and NATO”⁴⁷. Janusz Węc shares a similar viewpoint, asserting that “each project (aimed at developing the CSDP) should prioritise the enhancement of the EU’s international position (...), but this should be pursued only in collaboration with NATO. Such autonomy should serve to bolster the Euro-Atlantic security system rather than foster competition with the Treaty”⁴⁸.

Even prior to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, declarations from NATO summits in 2016 and 2018, held in Warsaw and Brussels respectively, reaffirmed the existing division of international roles between NATO and the EU. According to this framework, the European Union is responsible for crisis management, while NATO oversees military operations and provides the nuclear umbrella for the EU. The war in Ukraine has further validated this division of responsibilities. Most analysts agree that the EU should enhance its military and defense capabilities, which would serve as a “European pillar” within NATO. Concurrently, it has been emphasised that “the EU can specialise in select non-military security tasks (energy security and countering disinformation), in areas in which the EU has far greater

47 N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

48 J.J. Węc, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

potential than NATO”⁴⁹. Sven Biscop argues that “the EU should focus on a number of goals included in its Strategic Compass, and that are not NATO’s ‘core business’: crisis management, hybrid threats, and capability development”⁵⁰. Andriy Korniychuk also highlights the areas in which the EU has “distinct experience and resources, such as conflict prevention, mediation, post-conflict peace-building, and resilience-building cybersecurity and energy security”⁵¹. These areas of focus are not only complementary to NATO’s activities but also enhance the overall security landscape. The mutual complementarity and interdependence of efforts within the transatlantic partnership have been evident, particularly in the assistance provided to Ukraine during its struggle. Nicolò Fasola, Sonia Lucarelli note that “the EU has managed to carve out a space of its own by managing the war’s consequences for itself and Ukraine”⁵².

The war in Ukraine has significantly influenced US involvement in Europe, including military engagement. However, this increased, American presence on the continent does not indicate a fundamental shift in the priorities of US foreign policy which continues to focus primarily on Asia, particularly the Indo-Pacific region, and the challenges posed by the rising power of China. The “Pivot to Asia” remains a consistent trend in US foreign policy. At the same time, “making the Indo-Pacific the area of maximum strategic investment for the US does not mean that Washington will neglect other important theaters”⁵³. However, this focus will compel the US to expect greater engagement from its allies, particularly the EU, in developing the CSDP. CSDP’s strengthening “would help the EU silence Washington’s standing criticism about Europe’s lack of contribution to its own (military) security, thereby demonstrating reliability as a partner”⁵⁴. This aspect is particularly crucial, given that the US position on European security is likely to remain ambivalent, regardless of the next presiden-

49 N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, op. cit., p. 69.

50 P. Magri, op. cit., p. 9.

51 A. Korniychuk, *Geopolitical crossroads: the strategic landscape after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine*, [in:] G. Grevi (ed.), *Forging Europe’s leadership. Global trends, Russian aggression and the risk of a regressive world*, Brussels 2023, p. 23.

52 N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, op. cit., p. 61.

53 G. Grevi, *Conclusions...*, p. 106.

54 N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, op. cit., p. 68.

cy. As Niklas Helwig and Ville Sinkkonen note, “the US’s approach to Europe will, in the future, most likely oscillate between ‘primacist’ tendencies driving for sustained US leadership, especially in defense matters, and a ‘benign neglect’ of Europe in an age marked by strategic competition with China”⁵⁵.

4. Challenges and weaknesses in the development of CSDP

- “Alphabet soup” in the CSDP. As previously noted, the EU has been engaged in the development of various projects related to the CSDP for several years. However, these initiatives are characterised by their limited scope and impact. “What we are witnessing is rather the emergence of a number of initiatives which are not necessarily going in the direction of further integration”⁵⁶. Daniel Fiott aptly observes that, “While it is certainly true that there is nothing comparable in the history of EU security and defense to the hyperactivity that has been observed in this domain since 2016, the reality today is that the ‘alphabet soup’ of EU security and defense – CSDP, PESCO, EDF, CARD, CDP, MPCC, NIPs, EPE, etc. – has not yet led to any tangible shift in the Union’s capability base or readiness for deployment”⁵⁷. At the same time, the simultaneous implementation of numerous CSDP projects may yield unintended consequences. Serena Giusti highlights this concern, stating, “the result is a constellation of forms of cooperation and action that might undermine the coherence and effectiveness of the strategic approach that circumstances require”⁵⁸.
- “Strategic cacophony” in the CSDP. The war in Ukraine has, on one hand, led to “a significant convergence among the strategic cultures across the EU”⁵⁹. A prominent example of this shift is the unified stance of EU Member States towards Russia. Pri-

55 N. Helwig, V. Sinkkonen, *Strategic Autonomy and the EU as a Global Actor: The Evolution, Debate and Theory of a Contested Term*, “European Foreign Affairs Review” 2022, vol. 27, Special Issue, p. 16.

56 S. Giusti, op. cit., p. 15.

57 D. Fiott, op. cit., p. 3.

58 S. Giusti, op. cit., p. 15.

59 G. Grevi, *Conclusions...*, p. 101. G. Grevi characterises the convergence of the strategic cultures of EU Member States as “a shift from strategic ‘cacophony’ to a more homogeneous assessment

or to the war, while Russia was regarded as a potential threat, a problematic neighbor, or a transactional partner – especially concerning energy supplies – some EU capitals favored cooperation with Russia on certain issues, as evidenced by the initial version of the Strategic Compass and the post-2014 EU-Russia relations. However, the war has transformed this perception and “Russia is today considered by all Member States a critical threat to Europe’s security”⁶⁰. On the other hand, this convergence does not imply that differences among Member States regarding strategic cultures, particularly in relation to Russia, have been eradicated. The EU Member States remain diverse in their strategic outlooks. Divergent threat perceptions and national strategic priorities persist among them, and it is unlikely that the war in Ukraine will fundamentally alter these differences. G. Grevi notes that “if Russia is currently regarded as a threat by all Member States, the latter do not necessarily share the same views on how to cope with this threat, as demonstrated by different attitudes to delivering military support to Ukraine”⁶¹. F. Coticchia highlights the defense strategy adopted by Italy following the Russian aggression in 2022. For Italy, an ‘enlarged Mediterranean’ continues to be the priority theatre of operations in its national defense planning, rather than a focus on Russia⁶².

- The existing gaps in European military capabilities and the lack of interoperability. These deficiencies extend from the availability of tanks and troop transport vehicles to more advanced military technologies. They also encompass critical areas such as “air refuelling, the suppression of enemy air defenses, and C4ISR – command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities”⁶³. As G. Grevi notes, “military capability shortfalls have long hampered Eu-

of the threats facing Europe, the means by which to respond to them, and of the role of the military instrument within Europe’s toolbox”. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Ibid.*

63 F. Coticchia, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

rope's capacity to act and undermined the aspiration"⁶⁴. Additionally, "since the end of the Cold War and, even more seriously, in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (...), by some estimates, over the last two decades Europeans have lost over a third of their capabilities"⁶⁵. This gap is further exacerbated by the lack of interoperability and coordination in military efforts among EU Member States. "The combined effect of these features resulted in a long-lamented list of duplications, waste and capability gaps (...)"⁶⁶. A clear illustration of these challenges is the lack of harmonisation of weapon systems among EU Member States⁶⁷. The war in Ukraine has exposed these weaknesses, particularly in terms of military capabilities and interoperability, bringing them into sharp focus. Although the EU has taken steps to address these issues, one must agree with F. Coticchia, who points out two important realities. Firstly, "on the whole, addressing such gaps requires significant time and resources"⁶⁸; and secondly, "it seems that (self-reinforcing) traditional obstacles along the EU defense path have maintained their enduring relevance"⁶⁹.

- The fragmented European defense industry and market, "where states implement procurement policies largely unilaterally, and

64 G. Grevi, *Conclusions...*, p. 102.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 102. "Based on data from the European Defence Agency, aggregated underinvestment over the 2009–18 period, compared to 2008 spending levels, stands at a staggering €160 billion. Defence spending by EU countries bottomed in 2014, rising to about €200 bn in 2020 – only a modest increase in real terms compared to 2008". *Ibid.*, p. 103. The scale of underfunding within the EU becomes particularly evident when compared to the defense spending of other nations. Between 1999 and 2021, the EU's cumulative defense spending saw an increase of only 20%. In contrast, the United States experienced a 66% increase, Russia's defense spending grew by 292%, and China's surged by an astounding 592%. *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, Defence Investment Gap Analysis and Next Steps*, 18/05/2022, JOIN/2022/24.

66 A. Locatelli, *EU Defence: Joint Capability Development*, [in:] S. Giusti, G. Grevi (eds.), op. cit., p. 37. For instance, "compared to the US, EU states procure six times the number of weapons systems – with slightly more than one third of the American defense budget". *Ibid.*

67 As Janusz J. Węc highlights, "EU Member States' armed forces utilise 178 different weapon systems, compared to just 30 systems used by the US military. Additionally, European NATO countries currently operate 17 different types of tanks, 26 types of howitzers, 29 types of warships, and 20 models of combat aircraft. In contrast, the US military uses only 1 type of tank, 2 types of howitzers, 4 types of warships, and 6 models of combat aircraft". J.J. Węc, op. cit., p. 222.

68 F. Coticchia, op. cit., p. 29.

69 *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

firms compete unevenly due to barriers and restrictions to free competition”⁷⁰. All of these factors “have severely affected the output of European defense investment, weakening the European Defense Technology and Industrial Base (EDTIB)”⁷¹. Both the Strategic Compass and the Versailles Declaration have called on EU Member States to increase and improve investments in defense capabilities, innovative technologies, military R&D, and collaborative procurement, all aimed at strengthening the EDTIB. However, despite these initiatives, Europe continues to face a fragmented defense industry and market. This issue should be analysed across four dimensions, the first of which being the perspective of the Member States. “Members States have systematically favoured national production or off-the-shelf purchase (i.e., military material already available on the market) over intra-European cooperation”⁷². The 2020 strategic review of PESCO projects revealed that “only a few EU Member States considered multilateral cooperation in the area of military capability development as an important aspect of developing their armed forces, while most pursued their own national interests first”⁷³. The second dimension involves cooperation at the European level. While France, Germany, and Spain are collaborating on an ambitious so-called Future Combat Air System (FCAS), the UK, Italy, and Sweden are simultaneously working on a nearly-identical project called Tempest. Both projects aim for completion by 2040. As Andrea Locatelli points out, “working on two parallel projects is a missed opportunity to promote defense integration”⁷⁴. A similar example concerns air defense. In October 2022, Germany and 13 other countries announced the “European Sky Shield Initiative”, a joint project to construct an air and missile defense shield incorporating German, American, and potentially Israeli systems. However, France, which opted out of the initiative, is instead developing its own

70 A. Locatelli, op. cit., p. 36.

71 G. Grevi, *Conclusions...*, p. 103.

72 F. Coticchia, op. cit., p. 29.

73 J.J. Węc, op. cit., p. 222.

74 A. Locatelli, op. cit., p. 45.

air defense shield in partnership with Italy. The third dimension relates to joint procurement and joint R&D in the military sector. In recent years, EU Member States' willingness to engage in collaborative investments in defense has been declining. As noted, "collaborative procurement and joint Research and Development have represented only a tiny fraction of total defence equipment procurement: in 2020 collaborative procurement reached its lowest level at 11%, and collaborative R&D was only 6%"⁷⁵. In response to these trends, the European Commission has put forward several proposals aimed at reversing this decline and encouraging Member States to increase collaboration in defense⁷⁶. The fourth dimension concerns cooperation with the United Kingdom. British defense companies account for 38% of the European defense sector's turnover. "Players like BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, and others are too big to be left out of the EDTIB"⁷⁷. However, a significant challenge remains; there is currently no established procedure to allow British companies to apply for EDF funds.

- More money does not mean better spending. The issue of insufficient defense spending among EU Member States poses a significant challenge to advancing integration within the sphere of EU defense and foreign policy. However, simply increasing defense budgets, as many Member States did after February 2022⁷⁸, does not automatically address the problem of the EU's military capabilities and combat readiness. In 2022, N. Gnesotto noted that "the allocation of these funds is often irrational, outdated, and implemented at the national level without any prior coordination among Member States"⁷⁹. F. Coticchia

75 Ibid., p. 36.

76 The European Commission has announced its intention to "work on a proposal aimed at bolstering joint procurement and cooperation within the EU. This proposal includes several key elements: a VAT exemption to incentivise collaborative defense efforts, the development of new financing solutions, and potential amendments to the Regulation on the European Defence Fund to enhance the bonus system for Member States that commit to jointly acquiring or owning defense capabilities during the development phase". D. Adamiec, op. cit., p. 10.

77 A. Locatelli, op. cit., p. 45.

78 Between February and March 2022, twelve EU countries announced increases in their defense budgets, with more expected to follow. N. Koenig, op. cit., p. 3.

79 N. Gnesotto, *Przyszłość Europy strategicznej*, Warszawa 2012, p. 76.

further highlighted that “boosting national defense spending (in the context of the war in Ukraine in 2022) – without proper coordination at the EU level – could paradoxically exacerbate intra-European divisions, with individual states following diverging trajectories (with some investing in territorial defense capabilities while others invest in crisis management, for example)”⁸⁰. A. Locatelli also emphasised “that increased defense budgets do not necessarily mean better allocation”⁸¹. G. Grevi echoed these concerns, pointing out that “while increasing defence spending is necessary, the key to achieving a quantum leap in capability development will be the quality of such spending and whether that will result in closer cooperation among EU countries”⁸². Similarly, N. Koenig warned of the risk of what she termed the “reverse post-2008 scenario”⁸³, i.e., “moving from the uncoordinated spending cuts of 2008 to equally disjointed increases in defense expenditure today”⁸⁴, focused on national priorities, leading to unnecessary duplication. Thus, it is crucial to improve interoperability, leverage economies of scale, and promote joint investments in strategic defense capabilities across the EU.

- CSDP – the domain of member states and their political will. S. Giusti observes that “security and defense are at the core of any country’s sovereignty, as direct emanations of what countries tend to define as their national interests”⁸⁵. Consequently, the temporary agreements and actions within the EU do not yet signal deeper integration in the field of security and defense. As Giusti rightly notes, these matters are “therefore not easily transferable to an entity such as the EU, even when there is an extraordinary and alarming external threat”⁸⁶. To illustrate this, she draws a comparison to the EU’s response to the pandemic and health policy. She aptly states that “the pandemic did not

80 F. Coticchia, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

81 A. Locatelli, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

82 G. Grevi, *Conclusions...*, p. 103.

83 N. Koenig, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

84 G. Grevi, *Conclusions...*, p. 104.

85 S. Giusti, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

become a critical junction in terms of boosting further integration in health policies, which are still settled at national level⁸⁷. The case of the war in Ukraine will also not be an exception in this regard. The CSDP, much like health policies, remains (and will continue to remain) at national level.

- Internal conditions and strong political polarisation. According to functionalist and intergovernmentalist theories, domestic conditions – particularly public sentiment and opinion polls – play a significant role in shaping politicians’ foreign policy decisions. In many EU Member States, there is also considerable political and social polarisation. This polarisation “restricts governments’ room to manoeuvre, making them less inclined to relinquish sovereignty⁸⁸, including in matters of foreign policy. Such conditions are not conducive to the further development of the CSDP.

Conclusions

- The war in Ukraine, which broke out in 2022, has been described as a “moment of opportunity to foster cooperation on security and defense issues within the EU⁸⁹. However, it also exposed the structural weaknesses inherently and permanently embedded in the EU’s mechanisms and institutions that address external relations.
- The reasons and weaknesses of the EU’s security policy, specifically the CSDP, highlighted in the text, clearly suggest that the war in Ukraine should not be “considered a critical juncture⁹⁰, capable of producing deep structural changes and transforming the nature of security and defense policy of the EU⁹¹. Thus, hypothesis no. 1 was positively verified.

87 Ibid., p. 15.

88 Ibid., p. 14; see also: K. Zajączkowski, *Misje cywilne i operacje wojskowe w perspektywie wybranych teorii stosunków międzynarodowych i integracji europejskiej*, Warszawa 2019.

89 P. Magri, op. cit., p. 11.

90 In the International Relations literature, “a critical juncture refers to a way of altering a (foreign or defence) policy in which an external shock can cause a drastic transformation in this policy, radically changing its course”. F. Coticchia, op. cit., p. 24.

91 S. Giusti, op. cit., p. 21.

- Despite numerous initiatives undertaken within the EU to strengthen the CSDP, including the adoption of common positions on the situation in Ukraine and the imposition of sanctions, the war in Ukraine has not led to a breakthrough in the development of a cohesive EU defense policy. As noted, the conflict has not enabled the European Union or its Member States to “overcome the historical obstacles to the development of an EU defence policy”⁹². The war, therefore, did not constitute a sufficient “exogenous shock”⁹³ capable of fostering a real paradigm shift in European defense policy”⁹⁴.
- Moreover, the war in Ukraine has not resolved the issue of the aforementioned “strategic cacophony”, while simultaneously highlighting the never-ending problem of military capabilities. The challenges identified in this analysis will neither disappear quickly nor be resolved in the near future.
- A specific test for the further development of CSDP will be the implementation of the Strategic Compass over the coming months and years, including the deployment of an EU rapid reaction force (up to 5,000 soldiers) by 2025, known as Rapid Deployment Capacity⁹⁵. It is the degree of implementation of the provisions of the SC that will offer decisive evidence of actual progress, or of the lack of it.
- Hypothesis no. 2 stated in the introduction was also positively verified. The war in Ukraine has clearly underscored NATO’s primacy in the realm of collective defense, effectively sidelining the French concept of developing EU strategic autonomy independent of NATO. The remarks of the German Minister of National Defense, although made in 2020 before the war escalated, perfectly capture the current state of affairs, stating that “illusions of European strategic autonomy must come to an

92 F. Coticchia, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

93 According to N. Taleb, P. Krugman, and R. Dornbusch, “an exogenous shock refers to unexpected and significant changes in external factors that interact with and influence internal factors”. J. Plichta, A. Sagan, G. Plichta, *Szoki egzogeniczne a kształtowanie relacji na rynku pracy B2C z perspektywy struktury wartości konsumentów*, Kraków 2022, p. 10.

94 F. Coticchia, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

95 Ł. Maślanka, *The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity: political priorities and real needs*, “OSW Commentary” 2024, no. 567, 24 January, Centre for Eastern Studies.

end⁹⁶. However, this does not suggest abandoning the development of the CSDP. On the contrary, there is an increasing need to strengthen the CSDP, but within a broader and deeper synergy between the EU and NATO, avoiding the pursuit of “distancing from NATO to chase the naive idea of a full ‘strategic autonomy’ for the EU”⁹⁷. The war in Ukraine also signalled the end of what might be termed the “primacy of Atlantic comfort” (to paraphrase an Italian researcher), reflecting a more sober recognition of Europe’s security needs⁹⁸. F. Zakaria similarly noted at the start of the war in 2022 that it marked “the end of the era of free security for the EU”. Most researchers agree that common European military forces will not be able to conduct large-scale operations independently for a long time to come. Roman Kuźniar’s words from over two decades ago remain remarkably relevant; the true strength of the CSDP would likely stem from either the evolution of NATO or a reduction in US involvement in Europe, rather than from the EU’s independent efforts and political will⁹⁹.

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⁹⁶ N. Helwig, V. Sinkkonen, op. cit., p. 6.

⁹⁷ N. Fasola, S. Lucarelli, op. cit., p. 72. Even before the outbreak of war in 2022, J. Borrell emphasised the need to strengthen relations with NATO. He advocated a shift from the concept of “strategic autonomy” to one of “collaborative autonomy”, indicating that both the capacity and the inclination to distance Europe from the United States were limited.

⁹⁸ N. Gnesotto, op. cit., p. 88.

⁹⁹ R. Kuźniar, *Międzynarodowa tożsamość Europy (UE)*, [in:] E. Halizak, S. Parzymies (eds.), *Unia Europejska. Nowy typ wspólnoty międzynarodowej*, Warszawa 2002, s. 40.

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