LUISS

Corso di laurea in Policies and Governance in Europe

Cattedra The Integration of Europe

The European Union in 2024: A Comprehensive Analysis of a Constrained In-becoming Actor

Prof. Maria Elena Cavallaro

RELATORE

Prof. Thomas Christiansen

CORRELATORE

Matr.
652772

CANDIDATO

Anno Accademico 2023/2024

Table of content

Abstract

The European Union’s role in defence and security policy has grown due to recent global shifts. In light of these shifts this dissertation strives to examine whether the EU, as of 2024, can be considered an actor in this field and how this actorness is expressed. Using a qualitative methodology, including analysis of EU documents and case studies on its responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the research finds that the EU has improved its strategic coherence and capabilities. While the EU demonstrates significant actorness, its role remains distinct from that of traditional states, limited by its intergovernmental decision-making and NATO’s continued dominance. The dissertation concludes that, while the EU is confirmed as a significant actor in security and defence policy, its role is likely to continue evolving, with future developments contingent on internal cohesion and external geopolitical dynamics. The dissertation suggests that the EU's trajectory towards greater actorness is ongoing, with potential for further consolidation in the coming years.

Introduction

The European Union's (EU) role in defence and security policy has gained increasing attention in political and academic circles, driven by recent disruptions in the international system. These shifts necessitate a reassessment of previous assumptions about EU actorness, which were based on a more stable global environment (Howorth, 2019).
Particularly as the transition from a US-led unipolar world to a more multipolar power distribution, marked currently by China's rise and Russia's aggressiveness, has significantly impacted Europe's strategic outlook and its reliance on the rules-based liberal international order. Concurrently, the United States has reduced its involvement in Europe, starting with Obama's pivot to Asia and escalating under Trump's isolationist stance, heightening European fears of abandonment, albeit tamed under Biden's current term. This concern is particularly acute given Europe's reliance on US security guarantees, especially as most European militaries remain underprepared and underfunded (Costa & Barbé, 2023). The potential reduction of US presence, coupled with a deteriorating security environment, has made it increasingly urgent for Europe to enhance its defence capabilities, a necessity underscored by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which shattered European peace and shifted security priorities towards territorial defence (*ibid.*).

These crises and the EU's responses to them may represent a pivotal moment in the evolution of European actorness. Particularly as the EU and its Member States (MS) have responded to these challenges through various measures to strengthen defence and security policy. At the national level, countries have increased defence spending and enhanced military capabilities, whilst at the supranational one, there is a push for greater EU cooperation. Additionally, EU leadership has been striving to develop an EU strategic autonomy to reduce external dependency. Including initiatives to reform the continent's defence arrangements and capabilities, which many view as crucial for the EU to assert itself as a significant global actor in defence and security.

This dissertation seeks to answer two research questions:

In 2024 can the EU be considered an actor in security and defence policy?

If the EU can be considered an actor in security and defence policy, to what extent does it express this actorness?

These questions are particularly relevant today, as understanding the EU's developing role in defence could significantly help understand new and evolving global dynamics. Given the rapid changes and shocks affecting the world, reassessing the EU's role is essential, particularly as EU institutions have been pivotal in supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression. This support is even more remarkable as EU actions in the sphere of security or defence has been historically ineffective. Previous European's initiatives have been marked with disunity and fraught with infighting, with incapacity to act effectively or unitarily in situations as varied as Yugoslavia, Iraq, Syria, Libya and even Russia in 2014, rendering the cohesiveness demonstrated now against the Invasion an historic benchmark.
Moreover, currently defence has become increasingly prominent in EU political discourse, especially under European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Important financial resources are being now leveraged and increasingly the connection between industrial and defence policy is emerging as paramount. While debates on how to interpret these developments may continue, their importance and urgency are clear.

The dissertation is structured as follows: It begins with a literature review of academic debates on EU actorness, focusing on its relevance as a global actor and security provider. It continues with the methodology section, which outlines the qualitative methods used in the analysis. The first part of the analysis examines EU institutional documents and declarations by key officials to trace the evolution of ideational actorness, correlating these with significant shifts in threat perceptions across Europe. The second part of the analysis explores recent EU defence instruments and capabilities, assessing their impact on the Union's material actorness. The conclusion synthesises these findings, offering insights into the criteria for assessing EU actorness.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 European Union: Global Actor

Nowadays, the European Union (EU) has gradually but steadily assumed more competencies and capabilities. Allowing it, for most of the literature, to operate with some degree of actorness on the global stage (Rhinard & Sjöstedt, 2019). Nevertheless, what kind of actor the EU is remains a hotly contested debate in academia, partly deriving from the fact that it eludes established conceptualisations of what usually actors in the international system are. The Union transcends traditional definitions of an international organisation (IO), having its powers and capabilities far outpaced what commonly defines them; however, these also stop short of having the fully-fledged characteristics of a state (Härtel, 2023). This puzzles scholars as to whether the Union should be assessed by the benchmark of a state an IO or if it constitutes something *sui generis* (Hlvac, 2010). In this regard, Chebakova (2008) presents a good argument that *"it might be better to abandon the notion that the Union is something and to consider it always in the process of becoming. The EU's presence should not be judged against the existing patterns, because there are simply no such patterns"* (Chebakova, 2008, p.6).

Complicating further the issue, the Union does not possess the same amount of authority, capabilities, and autonomy in all the fields it covers. The Treaty of Lisbon (2009) divides EU legislative powers and instruments into three distinct levels of competencies: Exclusive to the EU, shared with Members State (MS), and supporting ones. This stratification of primacies leads Brussels to have differing degrees of global actorness in different fields. Thus, academia has commonly tended to identify the EU as an actor defined primarily by its strongest exclusive competencies, giving rise to various conceptualisations of power that were deeply related to the disparate abilities of the Union to effect change. Some authors, like Damro (2012), have defined it as a market power; others, such as Manners (2002), have theorised the conception of a normative or, as described by Bradford (2012), a regulatory power.

More rarely, the EU has been characterised as a military power, which, particularly by realist literature (Bull, 1982), classically constitutes the true recognisable core that defines a global power. The reasons for this are multifaceted; the Union's limitations are currently hardwired

in the European constitutional structure. Being defence and security affairs a shared competence under Lisbon, that requires unanimity in the council, constraining the ability of Brussels to act swiftly and effectively (Wessels & Bopp 2008). Moreover, the EU was born as a peace endeavour from the ravages of the Second World War, engraining into some MS an interincisal scepticism and refrain from military solutions. More so as efforts to include defence in the early construction of the European project were squashed at the onset in the 1950s, when the *Assemblée National* rejected the treaty of Paris establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) (Hoffmann, 1966). This setback limited and relegated the European project in its various forms primarily to a civilian character for much of its history, leading scholars like Duchêne (1972) to define the EU as a civilian power.

This state of affairs persisted for most of the 20th century. With the Cold War and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) primacy in providing for the continent's territorial security, strongly confining the space the EU could retaliate in defence and, more broadly, foreign policy. Changes came following the debacle of European countries to effectively intervene during the Yugoslav wars (Howorth, 2001). This failure to act drove for the first time European leaders to lay out in 1998 within the Saint-Malo declaration a role for the EU in the field of foreign and defence policy. Setting out for the first time the intention and the possibility of the EU becoming a serious security player.

1.2 European Union: Defence Actor

The choices made at Saint-Malo kickstarted the debate around the EU as a possible defence actor. Following the criteria established in 1998, new capabilities were developed in the form of the Common Security and Foreign Policy (CSFP) and later the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). These policies, as aforementioned, are codified as an Intergovernmental shared competency. Under this institutional arrangement, various tools have been created to allow Brussels and the MS to operate in an expeditionary capacity, with multiple instruments and even some missions deployed throughout the globe.

Nonetheless, these new capabilities have seldom concretised into effective and decisive actions. Most missions have been national in character, with one of the participant's MS usually utilising the label for its interests and taking the brunt of the burden, with the EU and other MS playing a limited auxiliary role (Akbaba, 2009). Other instruments, such as the

European battlegroups, have never even been used. Furthermore, the intergovernmental nature and the necessity to have unanimity greatly hampered the ability of EU policymakers to have a swift and cohesive decision-making process in this field, with often the threat of a veto looming large due to dissenting MS (*ibid.*).

The capacity of Brussels to operate on the global stage as a security provider suffered heavily from this arrangement; hence, its actorness has been largely perceived in academic discourse as underperforming and limited. This notion has been theoretically solidified by Christopher Hill (1993), who described the action of the Union in its international role as one characterised by a *"Capability-Expectation Gap"*. This concept of a gap quite effectively highlights how, for many, what the EU and its MS could achieve, given their vast potential resources and influence, compared to what they have managed to do, is underwhelming. Thus, this strengthens the arguments that posit the EU as a primarily, if not strictly, civilian power that can't effectively act as a security provider. Views such as this are expressed in traditional international relations (IR) theories, particularly realist theorists like Bull (1982), that tend to see states as the only possible global actors in the international arena. Even more flexible conceptualisations, as expressed by Hoffmann (1966), tend to differentiate between matters of *"low politics"*, such as trade, and *"high politics"*, primarily defence. The argument posits that whilst in low politics, international organisations like the EU can demonstrate agency, high politics involves core state functions, too closely tied to state sovereignty, which governments are too reluctant to delegate to other entities, even though cooperation or integration. Consequently, this distinction created the view of Union's actorness in security and defence as highly unlikely if not impossible (Rieker & Giske, 2024).

1.3 Analysing EU Actorness

Nevertheless, regardless of what many considered unlikely or even outright impossible, the EU has, to some degree, played a role in defence in the last decades, however limited and constrained it might have at times been. Therefore, the question that needs addressing is not if the Union can operate in the fields of high politics but rather if the actions taken and how they have been taken are enough to be characterised as actorness.

For Rieke and Giske (2024), two broad preconditions must be met to be an actor: *"the capacity to formulate clear objectives and to make decisions according to these objectives;*

and the existence of necessary administrative and operational capabilities to implement these decisions" (*ibid,* p.43).

Given the highlighted issues and the complexity of defining the EU's character, assessing these conditions for actorness through relevant criteria is more effective than comparing the EU to established actors like states and international organisations. Various scholars have proposed slightly different theorisations on actorness (Latif & Ecvan, 2022), so it is beneficial to incorporate multiple perspectives for a comprehensive analysis. Prominent academics and their analysis in this field include as criteria: Sjöstedt and Rhinard (2019), who emphasises internal cohesion and capabilities. Bretherton and Vogler (2005) identify opportunities, coherence, and presence as fundamental aspects. Jupille and Caporaso (1998) focuses on autonomy in decision-making, authority, and recognition by others.

This dissertation groups these criteria into two broad camps; ideational and material. The ideational criteria relate to the first precondition, meaning a conceptual aspect of actorness: the internal capacity to think and understand alike. Internal cohesion, coherence, presence, autonomy in decision-making, and authority are all related to the ability of an actor to have a common understanding of its objectives and a common willingness to pursue them. On the other hand, material criteria are a logical consequence of ideational ones, which relates to the second precondition. Capabilities and recognition by others fall in this category as they depend on the concrete ability to affect physical change through tools in response to common objectives. Hence, for this dissertation, an actor must be able to decide what actions to take and must possess the means to carry out those actions to fully express its actorness.

Therefore, to be considered an actor in the field of defence, the EU's actions must respect the preconditions and align with these criteria to some degree. Furthermore, they should be now applied in any analysis to the most recent and relevant global events, with particular attention to issues like the war in Ukraine as moments of incredible disruption, so much so that it has been described as a *"game-changer"* (Nieder, 2023, p. 57). The situation possibly is somewhat analogous to how the shock of failure in Yugoslavia initially spurred the development of an EU role in defence. Understanding how the Union has adapted and coped with these situations can provide deeper insights into its role in continental security. Moreover, the new reality importantly modifies what are the priorities and long-term objectives of the EU and its MS. Scholars like Howorth (2004) and Biscop (2009) stress how

a form of European Grand Strategy, enshrining precisely common priorities and objectives is fundamental to developing capabilities and lastly actorness. As far as the MS have differing views of their interests and threats to those interests, it's difficult for the Union to coalesce into swift and effective action.

It must also be considered that, to some degree, the prerequisites of actorness laid out by Rieke and Giske (2024) can somewhat be juxtaposed with the concept of strategy. In a now common definition, US Army Colonel Arthur F. Lykke describes how: *Strategy equals ends (objectives toward which one strives) plus ways (courses of action) plus means (instruments by which some end can be achieved)"* (Lykke, 1989, p. 3). Contrary to Howorth (2004) and Biscop (2009), however, other scholars see the concept of commonality of strategy or priorities at an EU level as fundamentally unlikely. Cottey (2020) stresses how "*the EU lacks an agreed assessment of its external environment and finds it difficult to prioritize competing foreign and security policy objectives because its member states are divided"* (*ibid.*, p.276). For this strain of thought, the divisions between the MS are simply too profound and ingrained, deriving from different interests, geographies, and histories, for a form of strategic coherence to emerge. Cottey (2020) goes as far as to define the EU as an *"astrategic actor"*, posing another conundrum that needs to be addressed: whether an actor can be such without a clear, unified strategy.

This dissertation seeks to address this issue by proposing that, while it may be true that *"EU policy-making processes and institutions have only a limited impact in producing convergence on questions of strategy"* (Cottey, 2020, p.287). Mi (2023), in her quantitative study, conversely demonstrates that the threat perceptions among various MS have notably shifted in recent years. Using computer-based content analysis to determine whether European strategic priorities are trending towards convergence or divergence, Mi (2023) finds that while some significant divergences remain at the national level, the strategic outlook of MS has been progressively converging on certain key issues. Moreover, this is corroborated by both Giegerich's (2006) and Meyer's (2006) studies that also identify factors contributing to ideational convergence. This trend might indeed gradually form the necessary ideational and normative framework for developing a European strategic culture. Therefore, it can be concluded that, although the EU is still far from achieving a comprehensive European grand strategy, the Union and its Member States now share a set of strategic priorities that are necessary but insufficient to express actorness. Coincidentally, various

programmatic documents have been conceived over the years with the precise aim of achieving this sort of strategic clarity and coherence in priorities at a supranational level; primary examples include the 2003 European Union Security Strategy (EUSS) and the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS).

1.4 Assessing EU Actorness

The documents produced by EU institutions, particularly the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), are fundamental ideational instruments. To better assess the value of these ideas in shaping EU actorness, it is most useful to utilise the analytical value of IR schools. With constructivism possibly being the most adept and useful of these schools for evaluating ideational change.

Constructivist studies, like those conducted by Howorth (2004) and Biscop (2009), emphasise the relevance of EU members' strategic cultures and foreign policy traditions, positing that differences do not impede defence cooperation, and that common ideas come before common actions. Authors like James Rogers (2009) even stress that the EU has gradually adopted a global power approach, arguing that this represents a paradigm shift from the earlier definitions of civilian or normative power to a more comprehensive power. However, the notion that ideas must precede capabilities, does not align well with reality. Mayer and Strickmann (2011) offer a nuanced critique of this sequencing, arguing that material factors significantly influence the redefinition of existing concepts and ideas. With this interconnection between ideational and material elements closely resembling Bretherton & Vogler's (2005) criteria of opportunities.

However, Mayer and Strickmann (2011) do not rely solely on constructivist theory; to strengthen and increase the nuance of their analysis, they also utilise material elements stemming from the IR school of realism. In this regard, a constructivist-realist perspective seems particularly well-suited for enquiring about the chronological evolution of EU actorness, especially when focusing on the dynamic interplay between ideas and material capabilities.

Nonetheless, a notable research gap regarding the unique nature of the European Union (EU) requires attention. The EU stands apart from other international actors due to its distinct political and bureaucratic policy formulation and implementation processes, which differ from those of a state or international organisation. While EU elites and euro-strategists may develop common objectives and priorities in response to evolving circumstances and global events, the Union's legal and political structures and deliberating processes must be analysed from a unique perspective. Moreover, as Härtel highlights, *"the Union is not a classic security organization, and its resources and experience as a conflict manager or mediator have only been developed recently."* (Härtel, 2023, p.274). Rendering the need to enquire how these factors are being formulated and adopted is even more pressing.

This distinctiveness necessitates a separate analysis of the EU's material instruments. While constructivism helps us understand how decision-making coherence is pursued, and realism explains responses to what material opportunities, the translation of these factors into capabilities requires further exploration. To address this gap, it is necessary to utilise theories of integration, with possibly neofunctionalism and its concept of spillover offering the most valuable insights. Neofunctionalist theory posits that integration can occur when an EU institution gains new competencies that spill from other fields where it is already present. Strengthening the argument neofunctionalism can work alongside constructivism, as demonstrated by Håkansson (2023) and neofunctionalism's founder, Haas (2004). Haas (2004) even suggested that neo-functionalism could *"become part of a respectable constructivism"*. Thus, with this integrated approach of realist-constructivism and neo-functionalist spillover, the recent evolution of EU defence and security actorness could be assessed.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

2.1 Theoretical framework

As highlighted in the Literature review, this dissertation takes a unique approach by combining different theories and academic discourses. It integrates IR theory of realist-constructivism formulated by Mayer and Strickmann (2011) with the integrationist logic of neo-functionalist spillovers, as categorised by Håkansson (2023). The aim is to assess how the Union's ideas and actions measure up against relevant criteria of actorness recognised by academia and laid out by Rhinard and Sjöstedt (2009), Bretherton and Vogler (2005), Jupille, and Caporaso (1998).

Realist-Constructivism is a combination of elements of two distinct IR theories. The main theoretical component is constructivism, but its analytical power is strengthened by utilising realist elements. Mayer and Strickmann (2011), in their own words, present it as a:

"A modernist constructivist perspective which holds that though material factors exist independently from the social world, they are given meaning only through ideas, beliefs and norms that are reproduced through social interaction. It seeks to advance recent attempts by constructivist writers to appropriate some key insights from realist strands of theorizing about the relevance of capabilities, their distribution among state actors and the role of threat perceptions" (Mayer & Strickmann, 2011, p.62).

The theoretical framework will be practically applied to relevant documents by EU institutions and statements made by key policymakers. The goal is to track the evolution of discourse and ideas in these records, thereby tracing changes in conversations and objectives over the years. The timeframe considered will be from the origins in 1998 till 2024, with a specific focus on the period from the start of Ukraine's Invasion on the 24th of February 2022.

The framework is particularly useful for this dissertation as it helps us understand and track how material changes in the international scenario and the modification of threats due to them

have impacted EU discourses. Moreover, it strives to trace how these change in discourse, related to material changes, have modified the ideational drive for EU presence in the defence field and impacted ideational arguments for Union's actorness.

As already stated, constructivism and neo-functionalism can work together; the neo-functionalist element of the analysis will be based on Harkåsson (2023) works on neo-functionalism and will include differentiation of spillovers in subtypes. Particularly relevant to the scope of this dissertation are the subcategories of cultivated and exogenous spillovers. In brief, the two types can be described as such:

- Cultivated spillover describes how supranational institutions, particularly the European Commission and European Parliament, actively promote integration to enhance their influence. They do so by acting as policy entrepreneurs, addressing functional interdependencies, and formulating issues cross-sectionally. The Commission can especially leverage its authority and central position within the EU political system to initiate actions and expand its influence (Harkåsson, 2023a, p. 40).

- Exogenous spillover is primarily derived from external factors and their role in the integration process. These factors often are shocks or threats that incentivise further regional integration, as MS perceive common solutions as a better safeguard against unfavourable or uncertain developments. Indicators of this spillover effect depend on decision-makers perceptions of gravity and pressure to increase integration (Harkåsson, 2023a, p. 40).

Analysing spillover effects involves understanding key concepts such as policy stream, which refers to the set of *"acceptable policy initiatives"* (Engl & Evrard 2020, p. 919) that shape decision-making processes. Policy entrepreneurs, typically elected officials, lobbyists, or civil servants, are also crucial, as these individuals are *"willing to invest their resources in return for future policies they favour"* (Kingdon, 2014, p. 204). Moreover, particularly significant is the concept of the policy window, which refers to moments of change that present openings for policy shifts (*ibid.*). These windows can be predictable, such as elections, or unexpected, such as emergencies, and they align with the criteria for opportunities for actorness as

outlined by Bretherton and Vogler (2005). Crisis-driven policy windows are of utmost importance for this dissertation, as they aim to trace neo-functionalist spillovers in European architecture following moments of rupture. These crises can drive the Union to advance and expand its prerogatives through a *"failing forward"* process, as theorised by Wessels and Bopp (2008). The dissertation will utilise neofunctionalist spillovers in their subtypes to analyse material changes in EU tools and instruments after the start of the war in Ukraine. It will seek to demonstrate how these changes came to be, pushed by whom or in response to what, and what they strive to achieve relating to actorness.

2.2 Methodology

This dissertation adopts a qualitative research methodology to explore the research questions posed. It primarily relies on official documents from European organisations and statements by key officials as foundational sources. Secondary sources will also be considered to enhance the analysis. Analytical techniques such as Discourse Analysis and Case Studies will be employed to enrich and contextualise the findings. The core methods employed are summarised as follows:

- Discourse Analysis (DA) explores language in use through various approaches, as described by Dunn and Neumann (2016) *"discourse analysts tend to interrogate the ways in which specific systems of meaning-production have been generated, circulated, internalized, and/or resisted. Often attention is focused on continuity, change, or rupture within specific discourses, either within a specific historical moment or comparatively"* (*ibid,* p 4). This dissertation adopts a socio-political approach to DA, specifically employing the subtype of Critical Discourse Analysis via the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA). DHA, renowned for its emphasis on identity construction, has been instrumental in studies of national and European identities, particularly in the context of European integration (Düzgit, 2014, p.358). With this method European identity construction and the narratives impacting EU foreign policy will be explored; will a focus on the evolution and framing of European actorness in defence policy and by paying special attention to the dynamics of *"continuity, change, or rupture"* within these discourses.

- Case Study, as defined by Yin (1994), is *"an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"* (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The case studies in this dissertation will examine spillover subtypes, cultivated and exogenous, through the tools employed by the EU in response to the invasion of Ukraine, focusing on a defined timeframe corresponding to the duration of the conflict.

This dissertation employs a comprehensive analytical framework to elucidate the evolution of the EU's defence policy, focusing on how discourse reflects and drives these changes within the broader context of European defence integration. The study clarifies the interplay between policy development and discursive practices, emphasising their impact on the EU's strategic defence dimensions. The first chapter traces the evolution of European actorness as conceptualised in EU discourses from its inception to the present, using a chronological approach and applying DHA. It examines the construction of actorness through a realist-constructivist lens while also considering neo-functionalist elements, though these are not the primary focus. The second chapter analyses the capabilities employed in response to Russia's invasion, using case studies and the neo-functionalist concept of spillover.

Chapter 3: Constructing Actorness

3.1 Origins of EU Defence and Security Dimension

This dissertation chapter will focus on assessing the first preconditions of actorness set out by Rieke and Giske (2024): *"The capacity to formulate clear objectives and to make decisions according to these objectives*" (*ibid,* p.43). This chapter will assess how this capacity has evolved over the years. It will furthermore focus on the role of the Commission as a pivotal player in fostering shift and change by enhancing ideals of actorness. This role will be assessed through top-level agenda-setting documents by two Commission figures, the President of the EU Commission and the High Representative/Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP).

As already mentioned, the evolution of the EU's role in defence and security affairs is rooted in the Saint-Malo declaration, and therefore, any comprehensive analysis must start from there. The declaration constituted a pivotal moment not initiated by EU institutions but by national leaders, specifically Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair (Bailes & Messervy-Whiting, 2011). On this occasion, it can be said they acted as policy entrepreneurs modifying the policy stream during a policy window that emerged due to two main factors. Firstly, European failures during the Yugoslav wars, where the inability to prevent ethnic cleansing highlighted the need for stronger European defence capabilities, particularly as the situation only improved with US involvement through the Dayton agreement and NATO intervention (*ibid.*). Secondly, the election of Blair's New Labour softened the UK's previously strong opposition to EU defence integration and enabled a new consensus for change.

"At the Franco–British Summit held in St. Malo on 3 and 4 December 1998, the Heads of State or Government of the United Kingdom and France agree on the need to give the European Union (EU) the capacity for autonomous decision-making and action, backed up by credible military forces, in order to respond to international crises when the Atlantic Alliance is not involved" (Saint-Malo Declaration, 1998, p.1).

Many elements can be deduced in this declaration section that help to understand how the EU's role, or lack thereof, had been intended at its inception and in relation to what material factors. Firstly, it lays out what the EU should be able to do and how it should do it. *"Autonomous"* stands for the need for Europe not to be too reliant on the USA, and *"credible"* highlights the need to enhance its military standing, both of which are related to the Balkan experience. Moreover, *"International crisis"* refers to the expectation that EU action primarily concerns expeditionary capabilities. Outlook further reinforced by the stated subordination of the EU's action to NATO, whose role as the prominent security provider for the continent is underlined in the declaration *"when the Atlantic Alliance is not involved".* This formulation of EU actorness importantly will be the bedrock of EU actions and policies going forward, with both the CSDP and CSFP being structured in line with it.

Another important document that needs to be considered when discussing the early formulation of the EU role is the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS). Written under HR/VP Javier Solana in the ESS: "*For the first time, the EU agreed on a joint threat assessment and set clear objectives for advancing its security interests, based on our core values"* (ESS, 2003, p.3). However, from the Strategy , it is possible to discern that this period was largely perceived as one not characterised by dangers as it states that *"Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free"* (*Ibid.*, p.27). Regardless, key strategic threats were, for the first time, identified at a supranational level, following the *zeitgeist* of the time. Chiefly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, terrorism, and the broader ongoing war on terror, with a focus on WMDs, other highlighted key issues including organised crime, state failure, climate change and regional conflicts (ESS, 2003, p. 11-15). However, this type of priority reflects just the common minimum denominator and does not lend well to a cohesiveness of action. This was exemplified when, in 2003, MS divided on whether to assist in the US invasion of Iraq or not (Bailes & Messervy-Whiting, 2011), regardless of the importance given to WMDs in the ESS, giving credence to sceptics.

Interestingly, the perception that the Union was not a global power and suffered from a mismatch between its recourses and capabilities was not limited to critics or academics like Hill. In the first-ever State of The Union Address or State of The European Union (SOTEU) in 2010, Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, remarked: *"I am impatient to see the Union play the role in global affairs that matches its economic weight…I called for Europe to be a global player"* (Barroso, 2010, p.8). The relevance of the SOTEUs is that they

have been intended precisely as a high-level public way for the Commission to set forth its priorities and elaborate its understanding of how the Union should progress. It is also possible to discern which policy windows shifted the ideational framing of EU actorness and might even highlight the greatest public debates surrounding it. For example, in 2011, Barroso publicly addresses one of the key concerns of Atlanticist-oriented MS and policymakers, who perceive how a possible enhanced EU actorness in defence might weaken NATO. Stating that: *"Long gone is the time when people could oppose the idea of European defence for fear that it might harm the Transatlantic relationship…today it is the Americans themselves who are asking us to do more as Europeans"* (Barroso, 2011, p.10). Furthermore, this new understanding had been substantiated by the Berlin Plus agreement, which allowed the EU to utilise NATO assets in 2002 (NATO, 2024).

3.2 EU in times of crisis

The role played by the president of the Commission as a political entrepreneur can be even more clearly seen in the successor of Barroso, Jean-Claude Juncker, who described its tenure as one characterised by *"a very political Commission"* (Juncker, 2015, p.5). In his first-ever SOTEU (2015), the president stressed: *"Our European foreign policy must be more assertive. We can no longer afford to be ignorant or disunited"* (*ibid.* p.10). A shift from Barroso's *"impatient"* to Junckers' *"we can no longer afford"* must be noted, signalling a qualitative change and a much more assertive drive. Drive that can also be observed in statements surrounding defence policy, which was largely ignored by Barroso, as in 2016 the president remarked: *"Soft power is not enough in our increasingly dangerous neighbourhood …Europe needs to toughen up. Nowhere is this truer than in our defence policy"* (Juncker, 2016, p. 18). The change can, without a doubt, be linked to various events like the Arab Spring. However, it's chiefly related to the 2014 Russian seizure of Crimea, which opened another policy window allowing for a partial shift. The connection is traceable in the first SOTEU given after the invasion: *"The security and the borders of EU Member States are untouchable. I want this to be understood very clearly in Moscow"* (Juncker, 2015, p.59). This a clear departure from the 2003 ESS: *"We should continue to work for closer relations with Russia"* (ESS, 2003, p. 42). Also, for the first time, it is signalling a focus on territorial security, previously strictly NATO business, rather than expeditionary capacities and, more importantly, a common assessment of a substantial external threat.

The second published European strategic document renders the view of a changed and more dangerous neighbourhood even more identifiable. Redacted under HR/VP Federica Mogherini in 2016, the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) stated at the beginning: *"We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat"* (EUGS, 2016, p.7). Undoubtedly, it is a far cry from how the 2003 ESS described its situation, making it obvious how an important change in the international environment had occurred. The document also importantly developed Saint-Malo's autonomous character of EU action, stating that *"strategic autonomy is important"* (*ibid.*, p.19) and introducing this very influential concept in EU discourses for the first time. Strategic Autonomy (SA) essentially conceptualises that Brussels must be able to act when its interests diverge from those of its allies or when Washington chooses not to intervene, something the Union again failed to do effectively in Libya in 2011 (Akamo et al, 2023). As the EUGS reads*: "European security and defence efforts should enable the EU to act autonomously while also contributing to and undertaking actions in cooperation with NATO"* (EUGS, 2016, p.20) a different conceptualisation of the role from Saint-Malo's *"is not involved"* (1998, p.1). Another leap in actorness construction was made in discourses on common EU defence policy as described*: "Investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency…Member States remain sovereign in their defence decisions: nevertheless, to acquire and maintain many of these capabilities, defence cooperation must become the norm"* (EUGS, 2016, p.11). With this statement, the Commission is clearly trying to push for enhanced cooperation at an EU level, positing through a functional logic that this would be more efficient. The goal is to build upon its existing industrial regulatory prerogative and *"strive to create a solid European defence industry"* (*ibid.*). Importantly, this was not a declaration but rather a concrete plan clearly laid out and with achievable objectives: *"Gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices...Union funds to support defence research and technologies and multinational cooperation, and full use of the European Defence Agency's potential"* (EUGS, 2016, p.21). Following this blueprint, many instruments and policies were indeed implemented, such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

Regardless, the material situation remained fast changing. SA was particularly brandished in responses to fears of US withdrawal sprung by the Trump presidency. With many in Europe

seeing it as a hedge to prepare for such an eventuality, and others even actively pushing it to the forefront. To the point that in 2019, one of its greatest advocates, French President Emmanuelle Macron, declared that NATO was to be considered *"Braindead"*, with SA constituting the future (Marcus, 2019). Nor was the entrepreneurship on the Commission's part exhausted. Juncker, in his tenure, went so far as to coin a new term, *"weltpolitikfähig"*, suggesting at the Munich security conference a previously unthinkable change in EU defence actorness that would fundamentally alter its nature: *"We need to simplify our decision-making processes so that the European Union can also reach positions by qualified majority voting"* (Juncker, 2018, p. 1).

Junker's successor, Ursula Von Der Leyen, after having been Germany's defence minister and calling for a *"Geopolitical Commission"* (Koenig, 2019), had her first two years squarely focused on the COVID-19 Pandemic. Due to this, her 2020 and 2021 addresses gave limited attention to foreign and defence policy; however, substantial points can still be observed. For example, China was now described as a *"systemic rival"* (Von Der Leyen, 2020, p. 15). Moreover, the issues highlighted in Munich by Junker were still present and the 2021 address remarked*, "What has held us back until now is not just a shortfall of capacity – it is the lack of political will"* (Von Der Leyen, 2021, p.12). In the same address, it also states that a new strategic document focused on security and defence policy was being prepared by the EEAS under Josep Borrell called the Strategic Compass (ibid., p.13). However, tremendous change will impact the continent and drastically alter not only the Compass's progress but the Union's foundation as a whole.

3.3 EU in times of war

On the 24th of February 2022, Russian troops were given the order to invade Ukraine, starting the first conventional war in Europe since the Second World War. The relevance of it for European actorness construction can be immediately understood as President Von Der Leyen remarked in 2022: *"Never before has this Parliament debated the State of our Union with war raging on European soil"* (Von Der Leyen, 2022, p.2). More importantly, during this policy window, the EU was able to play a significant role as an actor responding to the invasion: *"Our Union as a whole has risen to the occasion…Europe has stood at Ukraine's side. with funds. With hospitality for refugees. And with the toughest sanctions the world has*

ever seen" (*ibid*.). Indeed, Brussels responded quite steadfastly to support the beleaguered country with an impressive variety of tools. And it did so in strict coordination with its partner and allies on an international and NATO level.

Moreover, the Strategic Compass (2022), initiated before the invasion, had been rapidly revised to take stock of the mutated situation. The document was intended broadly:

"To guide the necessary development of the EU security and defence agenda for the next ten years…Providing a shared assessment of our strategic environment …Setting out new ways and means to improve our collective ability to defend…Bringing greater coherence and a common sense of purpose… Specifying clear targets and milestones to measure progress" (Strategic Compass, 2022, p.5).

Written similarly to a national defence strategy importantly, the Compass uniquely proposed not only just a common view of external issues but also a programmatic roadmap to strengthen EU defence through *"concrete actions with clear deadlines to measure progress"* (ibid., p.7), something remarked as different from the ESS and EUGS. Furthermore, in the compass, the transatlantic relation can be seen as relevantly altered from the origins as it was no longer one of subordination, but now EU action was being described as *"complementary to NATO"* (Strategic Compass, 2022, p. 10); Something also discernible by the 2023 Joint NATO-EU declaration (NATO, 2023). Interestingly, the focus on expeditionary capabilities had not disappeared but had shifted from the 60000 of Petersberg tasks to a less numerous but more actable EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5000 troops (Strategic Compass, 2023, p.6). Ultimately, the Compass highlights quite well what the intentions and aspirations of the Union should be: *"EU and its Member States must invest more in their security and defence to be a stronger political and security actor"* (*ibid*., p.15).

Considering all these developments in the 2023 SOTEU, Von Der Leyen remarked that *"We have seen the birth of a geopolitical Union—supporting Ukraine, standing up to Russia's aggression, responding to an assertive China and investing in partnerships"* (Von Der Leyen, 2023, p.2). However, whether this statement holds up to scrutiny remains to be assessed.

Undoubtedly, the conceptualisation of the Union's role in security and defence policy has clearly evolved from its origins to today; by reading the selected documents, it can be seen that this shift is attributable to two main factors: the evolution of the international environment through material changes and the construction of a progressively more supranational and coherent strategic vision of these changes and the role the EU should play. Moreover, this is not limited to the upper echelons of EU institutions but, as Brøgger reports, *"an emerging common understanding in and between EU member-states of an 'idea of Europe' as a hard power, also involving the development of 'European' military capability"* (2024, p. 12).

This common understanding can also be seen in the informal meeting of EU Heads of State or Government held in Versailles in March 2022 , which issued a declaration committing to *"take greater responsibility"* (Caranta, 202, p. 1047) for Europe's security and pledging to take *"further decisive steps toward strengthening European sovereignty, reducing dependencies, and developing a new growth and investment model for 2030"* (*ibid.*) with a particular focus given to the enhancement of EU defence-industrial capacities.

These developments are compounded by the work of Mader *et al* (2024), which underlines the findings mentioned above by MI (2023) well; by combining the two studies, it is possible to observe how not only MS government are progressively more coherent in their threat perceptions but as Mader *et al.* (2024) demonstrates, this increase in external threat perception is correlated with an increase of favourable views on EU integration in the field of security and defence by the public, interestingly by both Europhobes and Europhiles.

At the beginning of this chapter, the precondition was outlined as *"the capacity to formulate clear objectives and to make decisions according to these objectives"* (Rieke & Giske, 2024, p.43). Although this capacity may not yet be evident in every situation, the Union has progressively met this precondition over the years. It is particularly apparent in the establishment of common objectives and strategies, especially concerning the war in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Union has increasingly exhibited internal cohesion, coherence, presence, autonomy in decision-making, and authority, key aspects of the ideational criteria. Consequently, it can be concluded that the EU now demonstrates significant actorness in security and defence, at least on an ideational level.

Chapter 4: Capabilities of an Actor

4.1 Relevance of capabilities

While the EU may have achieved the necessary criteria for actorness on an ideational level, Rieke and Giske however identify a crucial second precondition: *"The existence of necessary administrative and operational capabilities to implement these decisions"* (2024, p, 43). This chapter addresses this aspect, as the EU cannot be considered a true actor if it can only formulate objectives without the means to pursue them. Without such instruments, even with strategic coherence, Hill's gap would remain unresolved.

In response to the Commission's policy activism and a shifting external environment, the conceptualisation of the Union's role has not only evolved ideationally but has also been accompanied in concomitance by the development of increasingly ambitious tools (Brøgger 2024). As Brussels' prerogatives expanded beyond the supporting role envisaged at Saint-Malo, EU policymakers' stove to capitalised particularly on the economic pull of the Union and the market-defence nexus (Wolff, 2024). The Commission has actively promoted this shift, particularly through calls for a European defence industry in documents such as the EUSGS and, even more so, the Strategic Compass and the Versailles Declaration. This resulted in a wide array of instruments within this sphere, which are too numerous for comprehensive coverage in this dissertation. Brøgger (2024) highlights integrative commitments, especially in policies such as PESCO, CARD, and the EDF, which have significantly strengthened the Commission's prerogatives. The EDF, in particular, is cited by both Håkansson (2021) and Haroche (2020) as an important example of supranational integration, observable through a neo-functionalist lens.

However, as stated multiple times during this dissertation, the war in Ukraine has importantly altered the foundation of EU action. As European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen remarked in February 2022, *"European security and defence has evolved more in the last six days than in the last two decades"* (EU Council, 2022, p.2) This shift has led to the implementation of new and previously unimaginable instruments. Therefore, it is valuable to build upon Håkansson and Haroche's analysis and, using neo-functionalist logic, assess the new instruments employed in response to Russian aggression.

This assessment will be conducted through case studies, each corresponding to the selected subtypes of spillover identified by Håkansson (2023). The first part will focus on the EU's financial support to Ukraine, analysing the capabilities criteria and how these efforts relate to the criteria of recognition by others. The second part will examine the capabilities developed in the aftermath of the war but geared towards more structurally enchaining the role of EU institutions. The objective is to determine whether the EU meets both the preconditions and the criteria outlined in this framework.

4.2 Case study: Exogenous Spillovers – Financial Assistance

The financial assistance given by the EU to Ukraine can be categorised as an exogenous spillovers triggered by the invasion. EU institutions managed to exert a role in security and defence policy from their established financial prerogatives and organisational capacities, due to a sudden and abrupt external change. Although primarily intended to address the immediate challenge, rather than reform the EU's structure and role, the measures taken may have lasting effects on the Union, not least as they have normalised EU action in this policy stream. The instruments adopted were either pre-existing but expanded their scope in response to the crisis or were created *ex novo* as a response to it. Despite their roots in established EU economic competencies, these initiatives significantly enhance EU capacities, increasing EU's capabilities and international recognition. Moreover, multiple factors can demonstrate the criteria of recognition by others: Ukraine's receipt of support, both economic and military; NATO and other international partners' close coordination with EU institutions to deliver this support; and the impact of this aid on Russia's war effort and society.

The EU has leveraged its substantial economic influence on aiding Ukraine indirectly through extensive sanctions on Russia, coordinated with international allies, and directly through financial aid. As of the 27th of March 2024, EU financial assistance to Ukraine totalled €81 billion (CRS, 2024). Two key instruments included in this total are the European Peace Facility (EPF) and the Ukraine Facility (UF) and they represent also perfect case studies. These financial instruments importantly underscore the EU's ability to leverage its economic prerogatives to expand or create capabilities in response to a new challenge, much like during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are indeed many similarities between the responses adopted

to the medical crisis and the ones employed to the geopolitical one. The EU promptly replicated, albeit on a smaller scale, the novelties adopted in 2020; with the Next Generation EU (NGEU) and the European instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risk in an Emergency (SURE) providing useful templates (Fabbrini, 2023). The EPF and the UF have been chosen as they not only represent the bulk of the funding and coordinating instruments adopted, but also as they constitute two distinct form of EU governance, being the EPF intergovernmental with strong MS' prerogatives while the UF is instead more supranational, with the Commission playing a central role (*ibid.*).

The EPF represents a significant evolution in the EU's military policy, shifting how the EU engages in external conflicts. Initially established in 2021 as an off-budget mechanism to support partner countries, it supplanted both the Athena mechanism, and the Africa Peace facility. It was intended as a way for the EU to establish capacity-building initiatives more easily for the armed forces of third countries. In its first two years, it has been used in regions like the Western Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa, funding military training and monitoring missions (Bosica, 2024). However, the EPF's mandate expanded greatly from these previous iterations during the conflict in Ukraine to include for the first time the direct funding of lethal military aid (Trebesch et al., 2023). Although the EPF does not directly finance Ukraine, it reimburses the Member States for deliveries of weapons systems and repairs of such systems, positioning the Commission at the centre of EU military support coordination. The EPF budget, initially limited to €500 million, in response to the rapid increase of activity demanded by conflict has grown to €17 billion, with €11.1 billion allocated to Ukraine. Including Member States' bilateral contributions and €1.5 billion from seized Russian assets, total EU military aid to Ukraine reaches €39 billion, a sizable contribution, albeit less than the over $100 billion provided by the US (*ibid.*). Moreover, trough EPF funding to the tone of € 255 million (EEAS, 2024) the EU launched in 2022 the first CSDP mission on EU soil, the Military Assistance Mission in Support of Ukraine (EUMAM UA) (Ostanina, 2023). It Includes 24 Member States plus Norway and is conducted in close collaboration with NATO partners. To date, over 52,000 Ukrainian military personnel have been trained (EEAS, 2024). Another imitative financed through the EPF with €2 billion (EEAS, 2024) is the European Defence Agency (EDA) Joint Procurement of Ammunition (Caranta, 2023). Constituting one of three tracks, MS decided to coordinate for the first time with an EU institution to sign contracts for the common purchase of lethal weapons, in this case, 155mm ammunition for four types of European artillery systems (France's Caesar, Poland's Krab, Germany's

Panzerhaubitze 2000 and Slovakia's Zuzana) to replenish stock or to be sent to Ukraine (*ibid.*). The instrument was implemented due to the need to increase the dwindling provision of shells to the frontlines and constitutes the first instance of EU common procurement (Caranta, 2023).

As stated, the EPF mandate is quite a constrained one, as an intergovernmental logic it's still the foundation of its functioning. As an example, three members states (Austria, Malta, Ireland) constructively abstained due to their strategic culture of neutrality in the early hours after the invasion (Bosica, 2024). Moreover, the off-budget nature of the instrument restricts its effectiveness, as any replenishment of funds requires intergovernmental negotiations. Since each nation controls its own contributions, member approval is needed for the allocation of funds, which can delay or even stall the process (Fabbrini, 2023). Although the unity in opposing Russia has so far minimized this issue, it remains a potential weakness that could easily escalate.

Nonetheless the EPF represents an important novelty for the evolution of the CSDP and the role played by the Union as an actor. The EU's coordinated actions have reinforced confidence in its continued support for Ukraine, presenting a unified stance to both Ukrainian and Russian observers, as well as NATO and other international partners. This collective approach mitigates potential Russian countermeasures and highlights the importance of joint action over fragmented efforts by individual MS (Karjalainen & Mustasilta, 2023). Through the EPF, the EU has also eased MS' reluctance to provide military aid, addressing concerns related to strategic, cultural, political, or historical factors. By transferring some of the risks associated with escalation or weapon misuse to the EU level, this mechanism has reduced domestic anxieties, facilitating s quicker response and enabling the delivery of urgent aid to Ukraine (*ibid.*). Additionally, the EPF has bolstered Europe's ownership of military support, complementing, but not relying solely on, U.S. leadership marking a significant evolution in crisis response from past experiences. Showcasing the EU's growing influence in shaping Ukraine's support and laying the groundwork for a long-term European strategy or at least strengthening common strategic priorities. In doing so the EPF has not only deepened EU involvement in Ukraine but has also expanded its global role. By breaking the taboo of providing lethal aid to partners, the EU has been positioning itself as a more comprehensive geopolitical and security actor, moving beyond its traditional focus on civilian, political, and economic power. This shift raises expectations among global partners, suggesting the EU

may increasingly extend military aid in future security challenges (Karjalainen & Mustasilta, 2023). The spillover effect presented by the exogenous event is thus clear, the Union not only enhanced substantially its role in security and defence policy, establishing itself as a useful coordinating element between MS, but also it expanded massively its perception exteriorly in a way previously unimagined. Moreover, the EPF marks a crucial step toward establishing a defense union, as it obliges member states that are not directly involved in an operation under this mechanism to still contribute financially (Bosica, 2024).

The Ukraine Facility, established in 2024, is not primarily a military instrument like the EPF, but it is significant within the broader security policy of the Union. Its origins lay in 2022 where the Commission in order to address the shortcoming of the EPF decided to establish €18 billion in loans with the Macro-Financial Assistance Instrument (MFA+) to help Ukraine. The founding importantly where not to be collected through MS contributions but rather common EU debt only guaranteed by MS', quite a supranational feature and a marked departure from the EPF, resembling more the NGEU (Fabbrini, 2023). However, the MFA+ had an important structural limit as it was intended to operate only in 2023; to continue supporting Ukraine past this date the Commission proposed to establish for the time span of 2024-2027 the UF. The facility Includes conditions that align with the key requirements from the MFA+ framework, such as macro-financial stability, fiscal oversight, and public financial management. What sets the UF apart is its focus on linking fund allocation to the execution of sectoral and structural reforms, along with investments. This approach provides importantly a cohesive, medium-term roadmap for Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction, and modernisation, closely tied to its EU accession path (Puzikova, 2024).

The support package aims to bolster the resilience and reconstruction of the Ukrainian state with €50 billion over the next four years. Comprising €33 billion in guaranteed loans and €17 billion in grants financed through the 2021-27 European Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) or additionally seized Russian assets (Maillard & Rij, 2024). The UF is structured in three pillars; the first focuses on direct financial support with €33 billion in loans and €5.27 billion in grants that come from the EU budget through a new special instrument called the "Ukraine Reserve". These funds are provided to cover Ukraine's financial needs and support reforms, with at least 20% allocated for climate change mitigation, environmental protection, and the green transition (EPRS, 2024). The second pillar supports investment through grants and guarantees, with €6.97 billion in grants allocated to de-risk public and private

investments. The expectation is to stimulate investments worth up to €40 billion primarily in small to medium sized enterprises (*ibid.*). The third pillar focuses accession assistance to help Ukraine integrate into the EU, supporting Ukraine's bid for membership by strengthening its institutions and promoting necessary reforms (EPRS, 2024).

The UF is crucial in enabling the Ukrainian state to function under the stress of conflict and aiding its reconstruction while ensuring alignment with the EU. Moreover, the UF was approved despite strenuous opposition from Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, that threatened to veto the assistance, using this possibility to bargain for the resume of suspended NGEU's funds (Karjalainen & Mustasilta, 2023). Hungary's tried many times to stall EU assistance, however ultimately its inability to succeed signifies increased coherence among Member States and greater difficulty in wielding veto power as before the invasion, even if negotiations and deal are still needed. Nonetheless, the UF presents other shortcomings, primarily as alone it cannot hope to fund the total reconstruction of Ukraine, as damage inflicted by the war far surpass €50 billion, with estimates of needed for reconstruction at war not yet terminated in the range of €411 billion (Puzikova, 2024). Regardless of how impactful these stimuli might be a more concerted effort by the international coalition in support of Ukraine would be required to effectively finance the country's reconstruction. Another issue lays in the primary form of financing for the UF, loans; even if at very low rates, and to be repaid after a maximum of 35 years, these loans will increase even more the foreign debt of the country if not spent properly (ibid). To stem this problem, the EU necessarily needs to maintain in the long period the comprehensive framework for reforms and necessitate a strict monitoring of the implementation thereof. Particular attention must be given to reforms in the identified fields of public administration, public financial management, judicial system and perhaps most importantly given the history of the country anti-corruption (Puzikova, 2024). The risk in not doing so is that the support not only would get squandered, but it could make the economic situation of Ukraine even more dire.

Nonetheless the UF represents an important milestone in EU actorness, particularly as it might form a very useful template for common EU geoeconomical and geopolitical action. In the context of the war of Ukraine it stabilises the economic situation of the beset country for the time being, allowing its state function to continue operating even under the massive financial and material threats of a war. Even if it might not be sufficient for the total reconstruction of Ukraine, and it risks being derailed if not supervised properly, the UF sets

an important precedent that might be build upon, more importantly it lays the groundwork for a European future for the country. Consequently, the UF has assumed a primary role in defining the EU as a truly security providing actor for the country.

4.3 Case study: Cultivated Spillovers – Defence Industrial

The financial instruments analysed in the previous section are focused on helping Ukraine and MS cope with the war, they were not intended to structurally reshape the architecture of the EU's security and defence policy. Thus, while remaining important to pursue foreign security objectives and relevantly increasing the EU's role, they might have limited impact in assessing how EU actorness might develop after the conflict. However, the EU institutions, chiefly the Commission, by acting as policy entrepreneurs (Håkansson, 2023), have now developed further tools on the same industrial-defence nexus that the EDF or EDA Joint Procurement Program covers. Russia's invasion is undoubtedly the policy window that enabled the modification of the policy stream on EU industrial-defence policy, allowing these new capabilities to be implemented (*ibid.*). However, this dissertation posits that the newly established instruments constitute something different from an exogenous spillover. As demonstrated in previous parts, the Commission has cultivated this field for a long time. Therefore, two other case studies can be observed in two joint initiatives:
On the short term the new joint initiatives European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) and the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) programs. On the long term the new European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) and Defence Industrial Programme (EDIP). Both joint initiatives should be considered as cultivated spillovers towards a European Defence Union and an European defence industrial policy.

Established in July 2023, ASAP is a regulation that builds on the EDA Joint Procurement, constituting the next more ambitious track. While EDA's approach emphasises immediate strategic needs, ASAP is more oriented towards long-term procurement efficiency and cooperation, however still in the scope of the Ukraine conflict for the time being. Furthermore, as Fabbrini states: *"ASAP goes beyond the purely intergovernmental mechanisms experimented within the framework of the EDA by providing a truly supranational solution to the defence industrial challenges posed by the war in Ukraine"* (2024, p.80). For this reason, the dissertation will treat EDA joint procurement and ASAP

separately, even if they seek to address similar concerns. The Commission states that "*the objectives of the ASAP instrument are to support EU's defence industry to ramp up its manufacturing capacities to match increased demand for ammunition and missiles; secure supply and availability of critical inputs such as raw materials and components; facilitate access to finance for EU defence companies and mobilise private funding and address bottlenecks in production to enable faster delivery rates"* (EU Commission, 2024a). ASAP, however, is far from the standard set by similar legislations like the US Defence Production Act, being furthermore limited by a relatively meagre budget of €500 million and for the time being to a timeframe of two years (Fabbrini, 2024). Nevertheless, it constitutes an important step in establishing a Defence Union and enhances EU strategic autonomy by reducing external dependencies.

Closely intertwined to ASAP, EDIRPA is another instrument established in the aftermath of Versailles, and it follows a similar logic but from the demand rather than supply side. Again, in the words of the Commission: *"EDIRPA aims at incentivising Member States to commonly procure defence products for which there is an urgent and critical need…also aims at strengthening the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), and by providing predictability, to increase its manufacturing capacity and face the increase in demand of defence equipment. It will also lead to increased interoperability between the armed forces of the Member States"* (EU Commission, 2024b). In order to advance the EU's collective military capabilities through EDIRPA, the EU will be providing funds to member states for acquiring new material and upgrading their military resources, encouraging, in the meantime, joint development of systems, greatly enhancing its role in national defence policy and military-industrial developments (Brøgger, 2024). However, again, the instrument is severely limited by a limited budget of only €500 million and again a limit of two years (Caranta, 2023). While EDIRPA is an instrument designed for the short term, it nonetheless signals a willingness from EU institutions to increase the EU's presence in weapons procurement and industrial defence policy. Both these instruments combined are effective tools to rump up ammunition production in the short term by tackling both demand and supply. ASAP and EDIRPA remains emergency measures, nonetheless they are easily repeatable, should the need arise in the future, and more importantly they establish EU presence in this very delectate field. In doing so Brussels has managed to achieve an important and long sought-after outcome, playing an important role in coordinating MS arms manufacturing, something eager to expand further.

Whereas ASAP and EDIRPA primarily address short-term challenges arising from the war in Ukraine, in contrast, EDIS and EDIP are the long-term initiatives and evolutions introduced by the EU to bolster the continent's defence industrial base. EDIS aims to substantially increase defence procurement within Europe, reducing reliance on non-EU suppliers and promoting collaboration across the Union. The Strategy's primary objective is to equip the EU with the means to organise its intervention mechanisms, enabling both immediate crisis response "emergency response" like Ukraine and the development of the EU's strategic capabilities for medium-term "EU Defence readiness" (Faure & Zurstrassen, 2024). Member states are encouraged to allocate at least 50% of their procurement budgets to the EDTIB, with 40% of equipment sourced through cooperative efforts, and to raise intra-EU defence trade to 35% of the total European market by 2030 (Bergmann *et al.*, 2024). In order to do so EDIS provides for the establishment of a Defence Industrial Readiness Board (DIRB), comprising representatives from member states, the HR/VP, and the Commission, it aims to assist member states in procurement planning and offer strategic guidance. Additionally, a European Defence Industry Group (EDIG) will foster cooperation between governments and industry. The board's primary role is to identify joint Projects of Common Interest using EU tools such as the Capability Development Plan, CARD, and Permanent PESCO. By 2035, the EU aims to develop specialised projects focused on European needs in air and missile defence, as well as in space and cyber domains (Koukakis, 2024).

Complementing EDIS, EDIP aims to incentivise joint weapons production and increase cooperation among European defence manufacturers. This initiative seeks to enhance EU defence production capacity, reduce dependency on external providers, and improve collective operational capability, thereby strengthening the Union's overall defence readiness (Bergmann *et al.*, 2024). EDIP designed as both a budgetary and regulatory tool, the programme allocates €1.5 billion from the EU budget for 2025–2027, extending the financial provisions of the ASAP and EDIRPA regulations. It also supports the Fund for the Acceleration of the Transformation of the Defence Supply Chain (FAST), which was introduced by the Strategy. FAST aims to provide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with easier access to debt and equity financing (Faure & Zurstrassen, 2024). On the regulatory side EDIP introduces various regulatory instruments. The Structure for European Armament Programme (SEAP) promotes defence cooperation among MS, offering benefits like increased funding and VAT exemptions. The European Military Sales Mechanism

(EMSM) ensures the availability of EU defence equipment, with a pilot project to test it. DIRB furthermore will oversee joint programming, procurement, and monitor the programme's implementation. Lastly, the programme will launch identified defence projects of common interest, concentrating EU efforts and linking them to existing initiatives like CARD and PESCO (*ibid.*)

The need to reinforce the EDTIB arises from unpredictable demand levels, which has prevented European suppliers from achieving economies of scale, making them reliant on exports for profitability. This shortfall has left them unable to meet the surge in demand driven by the conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, between February 2022 and June 2023, 78% of the €240 billion spent on defence acquisitions by EU member states came from outside the EU, with 63% going to the US (Luisari, 2024), with the majority sourced from US off-the-shelf systems (Fiott, 2023). This fragmentation in the European defence industry significantly contributes to the economic rationale for integration. The European Commission highlighted the high costs of this fragmentation, noting the EU's 178 primary weapons systems compared to just 30 in the USA (European Commission, 2021). Making things worse, except for some common projects, particularly in the aeronautic sector, around 80% of EU defence procurement occurs at the national level, leading to costly duplication of weapon platforms (Bergmann *et al.*, 2024).

EDIS and EDIP are, without a doubt, very ambitious initiatives that have the potential to drastically restructure the nature of the continents' military-industrial complex.
However, once again, many issues could unravel the extent of EDIP and EDIS, limiting their impact. First and foremost, funding is an issue, as €1.5 billion is a tiny budget given the scale of the industry. In truth When the Strategy and Programme were being drafted, Thierry Breton, the Commissioner for the Internal Market, Defence Industry, and Space, proposed a €100 billion fund, but neither EDIS nor EDIP includes this. Instead, the €1.5 billion budget was announced for implementing the EDIP. This budget, covering 2025-2027, aims to support the financial sustainability of ASAP and EDIRPA, but the EU's overall defence funding has remained largely unchanged since the war in Ukraine (Faure & Zurstrassen, 2024). As such if these initiatives do not get the necessary financial support in the coming years their impact is bound to be limited. Moreover, compliance from MS is not assured as the proposal lacks an enforcement mechanism. The strict relation to the US may compound MS's reticence, as the security guarantees it provides might be damaged by the prospect that Europeans stray from the acquisition of US systems through a *"buy European approach"*

(Fiott, 2024). Additionally, MS lacking major defence suppliers, might be uninclined to acquire European hardware while cheaper and readily available options exist from international partners, as exemplified by Poland's acquisition of Korean K2 and US Abrams tanks instead of EU alternatives (Fiott, 2023). It must also be noted that EDIS document emphasises multiple times NATO's crucial role in European defence, indicating the EU's intent to strengthen its defence capacity without undermining NATO's position in the European defence structure. Furthermore, it also highlights that defence and citizen protection remain the national responsibilities of member states, ensuring that their sovereignty is not compromised by EDIS provisions (Koukakis, 2024).

Nevertheless, even while taking stock of the important limits EDIS and EDIP are fundamental instruments and represents quite clear cultivated spillovers that established more strongly the EU's role in the defence industry. They fall squarely on the EU/NATO consensus on the need to reverse the deterioration of the European defence industry and the related military abilities (Fiott, 2024). Furthermore, The Strategy appears focused more on the 2028-2035 MFF more than now (Velimirovic, 2024). To prompt action before then, the Commission introduced EDIP with the aims to shift from short-term emergency measures like ASAP and EDIRPA, but this was done to strengthen the EU's defence industrial readiness and bridging the gap until the long-term changes anticipated under the next MFF (*Ibid.*) In the case the Commission's efforts are to be successful and EDIP is enhanced after 2027, we might be witnessing the start of a process resampling a supranational defence union. Clearly both ASAP/EDIRPA and even more so EDIS/EDIP are clear steps towards a European defence-industrial sphere and constitutes important long cultivated spillovers.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this dissertation seeks to answer the research questions set at the start:

In 2024 can the EU be considered an actor in security and defence policy?

If the EU can be considered an actor in security and defence policy, to what extent does it express this actorness?

The analysis has demonstrated that the EU's security and defence policy role has significantly evolved since its inception. The first empirical chapter, which examines statements and documents from the European Commission and its Presidents and HR/VPs, reveals a gradual convergence towards a shared understanding of the EU's role and growing expectations. By 2024, catalysed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Union and its Member States achieved unprecedented strategic coherence, despite persisting national differences. Furthermore, EU institutions and national leaders appear to have reached a broad consensus to enhance the Union's actorness, although some Member States and policymakers remain reticent. This reticent however has so far not been able to obstruct and undermine EU action, signalling a decrease in feasibility of applying a Veto. The EU Commission moreover has and will continue for the foreseeable future to drive and push for deeper cooperation and supranational solutions, fostering the necessary ideational convergence. It is imaginable that further strategic document like the ESS, EUGS and Strategic Compass will be published to continuously foster this change. The second chapter evaluates the instruments used to counter the Russian invasion by supporting Ukraine. The Union effectively leveraged its organisational resources and competencies to develop various capabilities and instruments, expanding its role in European defence and security policy. This expansion includes establishing a significant presence in the defence-industrial nexus.

In conclusion, this dissertation confirms that the EU meets the criteria established by Rieke and Giske (2024), as it has successfully formulated objectives, made decisions on them, and implemented them through appropriate capabilities. Furthermore, the EU's actions align with both ideational and material criteria set by scholars. Therefore, in 2024, the EU can indeed be considered a significant actor in security and defence.

The second question is more difficult to answer due to the in-between character of the EU. Whilst the Union does reach the preconditions and criteria of an actor, it remains very unlikely in the future, if ever, that it will express its actorness in the same way states do. Particularly as MS prerogatives in security and defence policy remain stringent, limiting the scope and resources of EU action. Something especially relevant as the objective set by Juncker to surpass Unanimity in voting is nowhere near to be achieve, leaving security and defence intergovernmental. Moreover, while the primacy of NATO as the primary security-providing organisation of the continent remains stable,having even been reinforced by the war with the entrance of Finland and Sweden, it's however still dependent on the US stance, which might drastically change with a new Trump presidency. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that if the curse of the events were to alter the current (constrained) consensus, the Union might face once again strategic incoherence, loss of decision-making capacity and spillbacks, as the EU is *"always in the process of becoming"* (Chebakova, 2008, p.6) it could possibly become less.

Nonetheless, the EU could play an important role as an actor in the security and defence policy of the continent, covering an important middle ground by leveraging its other competencies. Something likely if the Union builds on the actions taken and the instruments developed, particularly if EDIS and EDIP are successful and expanded. EU leaders seem eager to continue developing on this and reaching a comprehensive defence union. Moreover, while NATO is likely to remain central the EU's regulatory capabilities and budget are increasingly seen as essential for enhancing the continent's defence capacity, in complementarity to the transatlantic alliance (Velimirovic, 2024). Particularly as EU actorness is nowadays being formulated as one of complementarity to NATO, rather than substitution or duplication, with even the possibility that the EU could play a part in a possible Europeanisation of NATO (Fiott, 2024). This drive is exemplified especially by the Commission as President Von Der Leyen made EU defence a top priority in her re-election campaign, promising to establish a separate Commissioner for Defence (Gozzi, 2024). In conclusion, we can't really quantify the extent to which the Union is an actor; besides that, it is less than a state and more than an IO. However, it can be observed that the trend of its actorness is now geared toward an increase; if the current momentum continues, the Union might be set to become an actor to an even greater extent than it is now.

Bibliography

Akamo, J. O., Bedin, C., & Cristiani, D. (2023). *The Vicious Circle of Fragmentation: The EU and the Limits of Its Approach to Libya*. JOINT Research Papers, (15).

Akbaba, S. (2009). *Measuring EU actorness through CFSP and ESDP: civilian power EU*. Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi. *8*(2), 1-28.

Bailes, A. J. K., & Messervy-Whiting, G. (2011). *The EU Takeover: Origins and Process*. In *Death of an institution: The end for Western European Union, a future for European defence?* Egmont Institute. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06710.7

Barroso, J. M. (2010). *State of the Union Address 2010.* European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_10_411

Barroso, J. M. (2011). *State of the Union Address 2011.* European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_11_607

Bergmann, M. & Droin, M. & Martinez, S. & Svendsen, O. (2024). *The European Union Charts its Own Path for European Rearmament.* CSIS. Available at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/european-union-charts-its-own-path-european-rearmament

Biscop, S. (2009). *The value of power, the power of values: A call for an EU grand strategy*. Egmont Paper 33. Brussels: Egmont Institute.

Bosica, J. M. (2024, January 15). *European Peace Facility*. Finabel. Available at: https://finabel.org/european-peace-facility/

Bradford, A. (2012). *Exporting standards: The externalization of the EU's regulatory power via markets. International Review of Law and Economics, 42*, 158-173.

Bradford, A. (2012). *The Brussels effect*. Northwestern University Law Review, 107(1), 1-68.

Bretherton, C., & Vogler, J. (2005). *The European Union as a Global Actor*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203022672

Brøgger, T. E. (2024). *A 'Europe of defence'? The establishment of binding commitments and supranational governance in European security and defence*. Journal of European Integration, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2024.2379421

Bull, H. (1982). *Civilian power Europe: A contradiction in terms?* Journal of Common Market Studies, 21(1), 149-170. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1982.tb00866.x

Caranta, R. (2023). *The EU's Role in Ammunition Procurement.* European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration, *2023*(3), 1047-1056.

Chebakova, A. (2008). Theorizing the EU as a global actor: A constructivist approach. *Academia.edu*. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/1282770/Theorizing_the_EU_as_a_global_actor_a_constructivist_approach

Costa, O. & Barbé, E. (2023). *A moving target. EU actorness and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.* Journal of European Integration. *45*(3), 431–446. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2023.2183394

Cottey, A. (2019). *Astrategic Europe*. Journal of Common Market Studies, *57*(6), 1357-1373. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12902

Damro, C. (2012). *Market power Europe*. Journal of European Public Policy, 19 (5), 682–699. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2011.646779

Duchêne, F. (1972). Europe's role in world peace. In R. Mayne (Ed.), Europe tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans look ahead (pp. 32-47). Fontana/Collins.

Dunn, K. C., & Neumann, I. B. (2016). *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.7106945

Düzgit, A. S. (2014). *Critical discourse analysis in analysing European Union foreign policy: Prospects and challenges*. Cooperation and Conflict, 49(3), 354–367. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45084264

EDA, (2023). Available at: https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2023/03/20/eda-brings-together-18-countries-for-common-procurement-of-ammunition#:~:text=EDA%20has%20been%20working%20since,identify%20their%20most%20critical%20shortfalls.

European External Action Service. (2024). *European Peace Facility – Factsheet*. European Union. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-peace-facility-factsheet_en

Engl, A., & Evrard, E. (2020). *Agenda-setting dynamics in the post-2020 cohesion policy reform: The pathway towards the European cross-border mechanism as possible policy change*. Journal of European Integration, 42 (7), 917–935. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2019.1689969

ESS (2003). *European Security Strategy: A secure Europe in a better world (*ISBN 978-92-824-2421-6). Publications Office of the European Union. https://doi.org/10.2860/1402

EU Council. (2024). Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/eu-solidarity-ukraine/#military

EUGS (2016). *Shared vision, common action: A stronger Europe. A global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy*. https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/shared-vision-common-action-stronger-europe

European Commission (a). (2024). *ASAP: Boosting defence production.* European Defence Industry. Available at: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/asap-boosting-defence-production_en

European Commission (b). (2024). *EDIRPA: Procuring together for defence capabilities.* European Defence Industry. Available at: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edirpa-procuring-together-defence-capabilities_en

European Commission. (2021). *European Defence Fund (EDF) factsheet. European Defence Industry.* Available at: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-04/20210429%20-%20EDF%20Factsheet.pdf

European Commission. (2022). *Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the Russian aggression against Ukraine.* Brussels. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_22_1483

European Commission. (2022). *Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the Russian aggression against Ukraine*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_22_1483

European Council. (2022). *Informal meeting of the heads of state or government – Versailles Declaration.* Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf

European External Action Service. (2024). *EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine).* European Union. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eumam-ukraine_en?s=410260

Fabbrini, F. (2024). *European Defence Union ASAP: The Act in Support of Ammunition Production and the development of EU defence capabilities in response to the war in Ukraine*. European Foreign Affairs Review, 29(1), 67–84.

Fabbrini, F. (2023). *Funding the war in Ukraine: The European Peace Facility, the Macro-Financial Assistance Instrument, and the slow rise of an EU fiscal capacity*. Politics and Governance, 11(4). https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i4.7174

Faure, S. B. H., & Zurstrassen, D. (2024). *The EU defence industrial strategy: The "Colbertist revolution" will have to wait*. LUHNIP Working Paper Series, 1/2024. Available at: https://leap.luiss.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/LUHNIP-WP1.24-EU-Defence-Industrial-Strategy-.pdf

Fiott, D. (2023). *Strategic competition: Toward a genuine step-change for Europe's defense industry?.* The Economics of Peace and Security Journal, 18(1). https://doi.org/10.15355/epsj.18.1.7

Fiott, D. (2024). *Beyond strategy? Industrial strategy and the future of European defence*. Elcano Royal Institute. https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/beyond-strategy-industrial-strategy-and-the-future-of-european-defence/
from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon

Giegerich, B., Pushkina, D., & Mount, A. (2006). *Towards a strategic partnership? The US and Russian response to the European security and defence policy*. Security Dialogue, 37(3), 385-407. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010606069181

Gozzi, B. (2024). *EU's von der Leyen vows security focus before vote on top job*. BBC News. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2q0g5dr901o

Haas, E. B. (2004). *The uniting of Europe* (3rd ed.). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Håkansson, C. (2021). *The European Commission's new role in EU security and defence cooperation: the case of the European Defence* Fund. European Security, *30*(4), 589–608. https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2021.1906229

Håkansson, C. (2023). *The new role of the European Commission in the EU's security and defence architecture: Entrepreneurship, crisis and integration* (Doctoral dissertation, Malmö University). Malmö University Press. https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1807190/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Håkansson, C. (2024) *The Ukraine war and the emergence of the European commission as a geopolitical actor*. Journal of European Integration. 46:1, 25-45, DOI:10.1080/07036337.2023.2239998

Haroche, P. (2023). *A 'Geopolitical Commission': Supranationalism meets global power competition.* JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, *61*(4), 970-987. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13440

Härtel, A. (2023). *EU Actorness in the Conflict in Ukraine: Between 'Comprehensive' Ambitions and the Contradictory Realities of an Enlarged 'Technical' Role*. Ethnopolitics. *22*(3), 271–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2022.2028421

Hill, C. (1993). *The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role.* JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies. 31: 305-328. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1993.tb00466.x

Hoffmann, S. (1966). *Obstinate or obsolete? The fate of the nation-state and the case of Western Europe.* Daedalus, 95(3), 862-915.

Howorth, J. (2001). *European defence and the changing politics of the European Union: Hanging together or hanging separately?* Journal of Common Market Studies, *39*(4), 765-789.

Howorth, J. (2004). *Discourse, ideas and epistemic communities in European security and defence policy*. West European Politics, 27 (2), 211–234.
Howorth, J. (2019). *Differentiation in security and defence policy*. Comparative European Politics. 17, 261–277. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-019-00161-w

Juncker, J. C. (2018). *Speech at the 54th Munich Security Conference.* In European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2018-09/soteu2018-factsheet-qmv_en.pdf

Juncker, J.-C. (2015). *State of the Union Address 2015*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_15_5614

Juncker, J.-C. (2016). *State of the Union Address 2016*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_16_3043

Jupille and Caporaso (1998) Jupille, J. &. Caporaso. J.A. (1998*). States, Agency and Rules: The European Union in Global Environmental Politics.* In The European Union in the World Community. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner. 213–229.

Karjalainen, T., & Mustasilta, K. (2023). *European peace facility: From a conflict prevention tool to a defender of security and geopolitical interests* (TEPSA Briefs 05/2023). Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Available at: https://tepsa.eu/analysis/european-peace-facility-from-a-conflict-prevention-tool-to-a-defender-of-security-and-geopolitical-interests/

Kingdon, J. W. (2014). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies (Updated edition, with an epilogue on health care* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Koenig, N. (2019). *The 'geopolitical' European Commission and its pitfalls.* Jacques Delors Institut - Berlin. https://www.hertie-school.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Brief_Nicole_geopolitical_commission.pdf

Koukakis, G. (2024). *The first ever 2024 European defence industrial strategy: Background, challenges and future considerations regarding the European security and defense*. ResearchGate. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.27247.44961

Latif, D. & Evcan, N. S. (2022). *Reconsidering 'EU Actorness' in Changing Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean Region*. Insight Turkey.24(4), 123–144. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48706292

Luisari. T. (2024). *The new European defence industrial strategy: A political matter*. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/new-european-defence-industrial-strategy-political-matter

Lykke, A. F. (1989). *Defining military strategy*. Military Review, 69(5), 2-8. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/MR-75th-Anniversary/75th-Lykke/

Mader, M., Gavras, K., Hofmann, S. C., Reifler, J., Schoen, H., & Thomson, C. (2024). *International threats and support for European security and defence integration: Evidence from 25 countries.* European Journal of Political Research, 63(2), 433-454.

Maillard, A., & Rij, V. (2024). *Is EU support for Ukraine back on track?* Chatham House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/02/eu-support-ukraine-back-track

Manners, I. (2002). *Normative power Europe: A contradiction in terms*? JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 40 (2), 235-258. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353

Marcus, J. (2019). *Nato alliance experiencing brain death, says Macron.* BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50335257

Meyer, C. O. (2005). *Convergence towards a European strategic culture? A constructivist framework for explaining changing norms.* European Journal of International Relations, *11*(4), 523-549. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066105057899

Meyer, C. O., & Strickmann, E. (2011). *Solidifying Constructivism: How Material and Ideational Factors Interact in European Defence.* Journal of Common Market Studies, *49*(1), 61-81. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02129.x

Mi, X. (2022). *Strategic cultures between the EU member states: convergence or divergence?* European Security, *32*(4), 558–582. https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2022.2159384

NATO (2024). *NATO-EU: A strategic partnership*. NATO. Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49217.htm

NATO. (2023). *Vilnius summit communique issued by the heads of state and government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Vilnius 11 July 2023.* Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm

NATO. (2023). *Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation.* Available at:

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_210549.htm?selectedLocale=en

Nieder, A. (2023). *The EU actorness nexus and the wars in Ukraine 2014-2023*. Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Available at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://ntnuopen.ntnu.no/ntnu-xmlui/handle/11250/3073737&ved=2ahUKEwi3iNnltOuFAxVSRUEAHfoBDegQFnoECBAQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1CpXVXV_ThGN7I1t_kC5-z

Ostanina, S. (2023). *The EU Military Assistance Mission for Ukraine*. Jacques Delors Centre. https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/the-eu-military-assistance-mission-for-ukraine

Puzikova, V. (2024). *The new EU financial facility for Ukraine: Opportunities and controversial issues*. Leibniz University Hannover, Institute of Economic Policy. Available at: https://diskussionspapiere.wiwi.uni-hannover.de/pdf_bib/dp-720.pdf

Rhinard, M. & Sjöstedt, G. (2019). *The EU as a global actor: A new conceptualisation four decades after "actorness,". UI*. 6. Available at: https://www.ui.se/globalassets/ui.se-eng/publications/ui-publications/2019/ui-paper-no.-6-2019.pdf

Rieker, P. & Giske, T. E. M. (2024). *European Actorness in a shifting Geopolitical Order*. The European Union in International Affairs. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-44546-0.

Rogers, J. (2009). *From "civilian power" to "global power": Explicating the European Union's "grand strategy" through the articulation of discourse theory*. Journal of Common Market Studies, 47 (4), 831–862.

Saint-Malo Declaration (1998). Available at: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf

Strategic Compass (2022). *A strategic compass for security and defence: For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace*

and security. Publications Office of the European Union. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/2024-progress-report-implementation-strategic-compass-security-and-defence_en

The Treaty of Lisbon. (2009) Available at: from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon

Trebesch, C., Antezza, A., Bushnell, K., Dyussimbinov, Y., Frank, A., Frank, P., Franz, L., Kharitonov, I., Kumar, B., Rebinskaya, E., Schramm, S., Schade, C., & Weiser, L. (2023). *The Ukraine support tracker: Which countries help Ukraine and how?* Kiel Institute for the World Economy. https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/the-ukraine-support-tracker-which-countries-help-ukraine-and-how-20852/

Velimirovic, K. (2023). *The European Army Interoperability Centre: Info Flash*. Finabel – The European Army Interoperability Centre. Available at: https://finabel.org/tag/edis/

Von Der Leyen, U. (2020). *State of the Union Address 2020*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1655

Von Der Leyen, U. (2021). *State of the Union Address 2021*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_21_4701

Von Der Leyen, U. (2022). *State of the Union Address 2022*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_22_5493

Von Der Leyen, U. (2023). *State of the Union Address 2023*. European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_23_4412

Wessels, W., & Bopp, F. (2008). *The institutional architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty – Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead?* Research Paper No. 10, Research Institute for European Affairs, 1-22. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/57235/CP010%20The%20Institutional%20Architecture.pdf

Wolff, G. (2023*). The European defence industrial strategy: Important, but raising many questions.* Bruegel. https://www.bruegel.org/analysis/european-defence-industrial-strategy-important-raising-many-questions

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Discovering the future of the case study method in evaluation research.* Evaluation Practice, *15*(3), 283-290. https://doi.org/10.1177/109821409401500309

Zielonka, J. (2011). *'The EU as an International Actor: Unique or Ordinary?'.* European Foreign Affairs Review. Issue 3, pp. 281-301, https://kluwerlawonline.com/journalarticle/European+Foreign+Affairs+Review/16.3/EERR2011021#