

Symposium introduction: European defense from the perspective of the Ukraine war

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From ancient Greek philosophers to Chinese military leaders and American presidents, the Roman adage *Si vis pacem, para bellum* has been a source of inspiration. The underlying reasoning is that you can only strive for peace if you are prepared for war in order to deter aggression. After the cold war however, European countries have completely disregarded this old wisdom and significantly decreased military spending. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 hence constituted a wake-up call as Clausewitzian war made its comeback on European soil, even if not directly on EU territory, Europe was not prepared. As demonstrated by the EU's *Strategic Compass*, adopted last year but having been in preparation since 2020. European states had been aware of rising international tensions for about a decade but lacked a sense of urgency and expected to have time to adapt their military capacities. The conflict in Ukraine was a reminder that conflicts tend to occur faster than expected, with armed forces usually surprised by a rapid intensification of international tensions.

While European countries are not directly involved in the Russian-Ukrainian war with boots on the ground, they support Ukrainian forces in all other possible ways. As supply of weapons is not always possible due to national capacity constraints, the conflict seems to reveal a low level of preparedness of European armed forces with regard to the possibility of high-intensity conflict to keep such threat at bay. NATO statements had suggested concerns that military strength needed to be restored, but it was not considered urgent. The Ukraine war has reintroduced a sense of urgency and necessitates an objective assessment of the true abilities of European armed forces. In the wake of the Russian invasion, European countries have felt that they might have underinvested in their international security. However, building up a relevant military tool, whether to increase forces or to acquire equipment, takes time. This is not only a question of military spending but also of the ability to set up an effective military tool that is able to deliver expected outcomes, that is, deter potential aggressors from testing Europeans' ability to counter such threat. Returning to the Latin adage *Si vis pacem...*, there is no means to secure peace without a credible military force, which requires resiliency and thoroughness.

Individual national decisions can contribute to improve the military strength of European countries and since February 2022, a whole range of European countries have announced major changes. These changes range from significant increases of military spending, e.g., the EUR 100bn special fund set up in Germany, to long-term planning to secure the effectiveness and sustainability of armed forces, e.g., the forthcoming Defence Programme Law in France or the refresh of the Integrated Review in the United Kingdom. While these decisions appear necessary to strengthen national capacities, they are not sufficient to address the challenges posed by the evolution of international relations and rising risks of Clausewitzian wars in Europe. Collective action would seem essential to deliver the expected outcomes in terms of international security.

NATO has introduced new initiatives to assist collective action and coordinate efforts, namely the NATO Innovation Fund and DIANA (Defence innovation accelerator of the North Atlantic), but still face difficulties, as highlighted by the decades-long debate about burden sharing between member states. The recent changes result mainly from the change in external threat and have had limited success in common capability projects. Individual countries own most of capabilities on which the Atlantic Alliance relies.

This all makes the lack of defense integration in Europe a concern. EU defense policy has been repeatedly kept out of European Union control since the Treaty of Rome in 1957, when its predecessor, the European Economic Community was created. At the EU Versailles Summit in March 2022, member states requested that the European Commission proposed ways to achieve intergovernmental cooperation. This represents a major change in the defense landscape in Europe and could be the first step to a collective European Union and possibly European defense policy. While analysts and academics have written extensively on how the European stakeholders might act in a sustained manner, it is only now that effective implementation of such transformations are taking place. A key issue is whether cooperation and integration will succeed given the specificities of the European defense market on both demand and supply sides.

This symposium considers this issue, the situation of European defense and how it could evolve in the wake of the Ukraine war and other rising international tensions. In “Strategic competition: Toward a genuine step-change for Europe’s defense industry?”, Daniel Fiott considers the institutional evolution of the EU as it adapts to today’s challenges but also the more profound transformation of relations between states and the European Commission in the field of defense. This evolution has consequences for the defense market and the way states organise it. Two articles explore this. Josselin Droff and Julien Malizard in “50 shades of procurement: The European defense trilemma in defense procurement strategies” consider procurement policy and Laurens Vandercruysse *et al.* focus on industrial policy in “Governing defense procurement: strengthening the E.U.’s defense technological and industrial base”. Most of the literature deals with Western European countries and little is known about the evolution of the post-communist countries’ Eastern European defense industries and in light of the Ukraine conflict this does seem an oversight. As Bohuslav Pernica *et al.* in “Defense industrial bases (DIB) in six small NATO post-communist countries”, provide an analysis of developments in Czechia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and find considerable changes have taken place, with Czechia and Hungary the main players, focusing upon expansion of the defense industry, but with governance concerns. While the Ukraine war has a major influence on decision-making in the short term, it is also necessary to understand the long-term evolutions that could influence European defense. Keith Hartley in “The future of the European defense firm” considers the changing nature of the firms and Renaud Bellais in “The future of cooperative programs in Europe, paradox of a hybrid market” questions the functioning of European armament markets.