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Peace and Security in 2020

Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

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This is the third Peace and Security Outlook produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The series is designed to analyse and explain the contribution of the European Union to the promotion of peace and security internationally, through its various external policies.

The study provides an overview of the issues and current state of play. It looks first at the concept of peace and the changing nature of the geopolitical environment, in light of global shifts of power and of the impact of the coronavirus crisis. It then follows the logic of the annual series, by focusing on the promotion of peace and security in the EU's external action. Linking the study to the Normandy Index, which measures threats to peace and democracy worldwide based on the EU Global Strategy, each chapter of the study analyses a specific threat to peace and presents an overview of EU action to counter the related risks. The areas discussed include violent conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, cyber-attacks, disinformation, and terrorism, among others. The EU's pursuit of peace is understood as a goal embodied in several EU policies, including development, democracy support, humanitarian assistance, security, and defence. The study concludes with an outlook for the future.

A parallel study, published separately, focuses specifically on EU peace-building efforts in the Sahel. The studies have been drafted as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum in October 2020.

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Executive summary

The promotion of global peace and security is a fundamental goal and central pillar of European Union (EU) external action, following the model of its own peace project. Both within and beyond the EU, there is a widespread expectation among citizens that the Union will deliver results in this crucial area. Nevertheless, the deteriorating security environment of the past decade has posed significant challenges. Following the release of its Global Strategy in 2016, and in line with the wording and spirit of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has been intensifying its work in pursuit of peace and security in a number of key policy areas.

According to the Global Peace Index, the state of peace in the world deteriorated in 2019, reflecting the instability that characterises the geopolitical environment. In addition, multilateralism, a core element in the EU's foreign policy and identity, and a cornerstone of its approach to peace and security, is under increasing pressure from alternative value systems and ideologies, not least due to the effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The coronavirus crisis has accelerated pre-existing trends, which were signalling the advent of a more competitive international geopolitical environment, characterised by great power rivalries and the weakening of multilateral security guarantees. In response to these trends, the new European Commission under President Ursula von de Leyen inaugurated in 2019, with the support of the new European Parliament elected in the same year, has committed to empowering the EU's external action. Its fundamental goals remain those stipulated by the founding Treaties, including the achievement of peace.

The over-arching values and objectives of the EU guide all facets of its external action, including common foreign and security policy (CFSP); democracy support; development cooperation; economic, financial and technical cooperation; humanitarian aid; trade; and neighbourhood policy. As envisaged by the Lisbon Treaty, the 2016 Global Strategy introduced several elements to refine and improve the EU's efforts, including the promotion of resilience and capacity-building in the world. While the promotion of peace remains the objective of EU foreign policy, achieving it is also linked to understanding peace and its components. Thus, measuring peace and the threats that challenge it is becoming an increasingly relevant exercise. In that context, the Normandy Index attempts to measure threats to peace based on variables identified in the EU Global Strategy. The European External Action Service (EEAS) itself is conducting a comprehensive threat analysis in 2020, as part of the plans to develop an EU Strategic Compass.

The EU's contribution to countering threats to peace, security and democracy globally has been growing significantly through legislation, financing and the creation of new structures and initiatives. A significant share of EU aid goes to fragile states and to issues related to securing peace. The EU's 'new consensus on development' emphasises the role of development cooperation in preventing violent conflicts, mitigating their consequences and aiding recovery from them. The new consensus clearly focuses on fragile and conflict-affected countries, which are the main victims of humanitarian crises. On the ground, the EU has been able to strengthen the nexus between security, development and humanitarian aid through the implementation of comprehensive strategies, for example in the Horn of Africa and in the Sahel. Through the CSDP, the EU runs 17 missions and operations, making it one of the United Nation's main partners in peacekeeping.

In 2019, the EU advanced its work on countering new threats to peace, such as disinformation, cyber-attacks and climate change. New elements strengthening EU security and defence capabilities, launched under the previous European Commission and European Parliament legislature, are being implemented with the aim of boosting EU strategic autonomy, including its capacity to work for peace and security. These elements of 'hard power', together with the EU's long-

standing experience in the practice of soft power, form the backbone of its action for peace and security.

The EU also continues to work multilaterally on the global and regional levels to counter global threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and global health crises, including the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic across the world. A consistent focus in the EU's work is on its neighbourhood, with the aim of building resilience and upholding peace and democracy, both challenged by the implications of the health crisis.

Looking to the future, the global environment is expected to grow in complexity, not least because of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. New threats, such as cyber-attacks, disinformation and foreign influence campaigns, demand new types of multifaceted responses. While the EU has made significant progress in furthering its aim of strengthening its presence and efficiency in the area of peace and security, more remains to be done. The proposals for the post-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF), which focus on streamlining the EU's various programmes and instruments, would allow for sufficient flexibility to respond to unforeseen threats, while also implementing innovative financial instruments. Underlying the quest for flexibility, efficiency and innovation is the strategic goal of empowering the EU in its global role as a promoter of peace and security, while adapting to the new realities of the international order and the rapid technological, environmental and societal changes of our times. Strategic autonomy and foresight capabilities will be invaluable tools in achieving this objective.

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List of main acronyms used

ATT:	Arms Trade Treaty
CARD:	coordinated annual review
CBRN:	chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CFSP:	common foreign and security policy
CSDP:	common security and defence policy
EWS:	early warning system
DCI:	Development Cooperation Instrument
DEVCO:	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
ECHO:	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EDA:	European Defence Agency
EDAP:	European Defence Action Plan
EDF:	European Development Fund
EDTIB:	European defence technological and industrial base
EDU:	European defence union
EEAS:	European External Action Service
EEC:	European Economic Community
EFI:	External financing instrument
EFSD:	European Fund for Sustainable Development
EFTA:	European Free Trade Association
EIB:	European Investment Bank
EIDHR:	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ELM:	external lending mandate
ENI:	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ESS:	European security strategy
EUCAP:	EU Capacity-Building Mission
EUGS:	Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy
EUNAVFOR:	EU Naval Force
EUTM:	EU training mission
GDP:	gross domestic product
GFEA:	Guarantee Fund for External Action

IAEA:	International Atomic Energy Agency
IcSP:	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IEP:	Institute for Economics and Peace
IDPs:	internally displaced persons
IfG:	Instrument for Greenland
IfS:	Instrument for Stability
IGAD:	(East African) Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INF:	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
INSC:	Instrument for Nuclear Safety Co-operation
IPA:	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
JCPOA:	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran
MERCOSUR:	Mercado Común del Sur
MFF:	Multiannual financial framework
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT:	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
ODA:	official development aid
PCIA:	peace and conflict impact assessment methodology
PCD:	policy coherence for development
PESCO:	permanent structured cooperation
PI:	Partnership Instrument
PKO:	peacekeeping operations
RBPA:	recovery and peacebuilding assessment methodology
SDGs:	UN sustainable development goals
SHARE:	EU initiative for supporting the Horn of Africa's resilience
TEU:	Treaty on European Union
UN:	United Nations
UNGA:	United Nations General Assembly
WMDs:	weapons of mass destruction

1. Introduction

While the Covid-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis, its implications are much more far-reaching. The pandemic also poses a significant threat to the maintenance of international peace and security – potentially leading to an increase in social unrest and violence that would greatly undermine our ability to fight the disease.

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, April 2020.

1.1. Peace and security in the face of coronavirus

The first half of 2020 has been marked by what is with little doubt the most severe and multifaceted crisis of the 21st century so far. The Covid-19 outbreak, the subsequent global lockdown and its implications on people, the economy, societies, ideas and identities has spurred a rethinking and reconsideration of notions that had become part of the policy community's glossary. Globalisation, freedom of movement and individual liberties have had new nuances attached to them. Peace and security are no different.

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the global understanding of peace and security more than ever before, arguably since the end of World War II. It has exposed a key weakness in policies for the pursuit of peace, security and prosperity: the unexpected. Preparedness to counter non-traditional threats – globally and in the EU – has been tested, and found, if not inadequate, then lacking. As some of the major strategic documents of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and Germany illustrate, the understanding of health as a peace and security problem had been evolving in previous years, whereas policy responses had been divergent, in the process of development and – for the most part – untested at this scale (see Figure 1). In the words of the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell (HR/VP), in his address to the UNSC in May 2020: 'the coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the fragilities of a hyper-globalised and interdependent world. We must learn the lesson and take seriously how human and planetary health are linked, and how inequalities make us more vulnerable'.[1]

The coronavirus pandemic: global picture

Different forms of viral pandemics have threatened the world in recent years, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in the early 2000s, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2015, and Ebola in 2018. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, which erupted in mid-November 2019 in mainland China and spread around the globe, presents a global health crisis unprecedented in scale in recent times. As of July 2020, Covid-19 has infected over 12.5 million people in 188 countries around the world, with over 0.5 million deaths recorded, and over 3 billion people placed in lockdown due to the coronavirus. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global economy will shrink by 4.9 % in 2020, the worst contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In the wake of the pandemic, leaders and experts worldwide have acknowledged that threats to peace and security can be caused by sources and events that are not associated with traditional understandings of security threats, such as viruses and extreme weather events. Similarly, the links and impact of Covid-19 on the economy, disinformation, cybersecurity, democracy, state fragility, energy insecurity, violent conflict, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction, illustrate the scale of the challenges to the promotion of peace and security, one of the main goals of the EU and its foreign policy. In a world already marked by heightened geopolitical tensions and declining security guarantees, the coronavirus adds an additional major challenge in achieving this objective.

[1] EU High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell, United Nations Security Council: Opening remarks, May 2020.

Figure 1 – Pandemics in strategic documents of the P5+1

Source: EPRS based on documents in text.

1.2. A geopolitical EU in a volatile security environment

It is no longer a novelty to say that the world is leaving a period of relative stability to enter a time of profound transformation of the global order. The past decade has been characterised by volatility and disruption, leading to continual adaptation and transformation at local, regional and global levels alike. For some analysts, global instability is 'the new normal',[2] where disorder and tension have gradually replaced two decades of relative stability across the world. Since 2012, conflicts have been on the rise, with the number of civil wars and attacks perpetrated by states and armed groups increasing for the first time in a decade. Violent extremism, terrorism and hybrid threats have grown to constitute new sources of major risks to security, peace and stability around the world.

An understanding of the current global risks landscape necessitates concepts and knowledge going far beyond the traditional interpretations of war and peace. This is why the EU is taking stock of mega-trends and catalysts in regular exercises such as the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) mechanism,[3] which covers a large number of international and intra-national variables. The 2019 ESPAS report 'Global Trends to 2030' addressed conventional threats, such as military build-up and international instability, as well as climate change, demography, urbanism, energy, migrations and robotics.[4] Similarly, in 2019, a survey by the World Economic Forum ranked environmental threats, such as extreme weather events, failure of climate change mitigation and natural disasters among the top three global risks in terms of likelihood and impact, together with weapons of mass destruction, data fraud and cyber-attacks.[5]

The multidimensional nature of the emerging threats necessitates new approaches to peace and security, merging conventional notions of power with new scientific methods, including foresight, to assess the impact of variables such as natural resources, demographics and technology in the formulation of policy. In the words of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), 'we live in a world of predictable unpredictability' (see Figure 2). Already in 2019, before the outbreak of Covid-19, the ESPAS report suggested that the EU is facing a moment of choice between strategic action and strategic inaction. Only a year ago, the trends brought about by Brexit, a shift in United States (US) foreign policy, the rise of China, population movements, technology, and climate change, were already outlining a scenario for even more concrete and targeted EU external action.

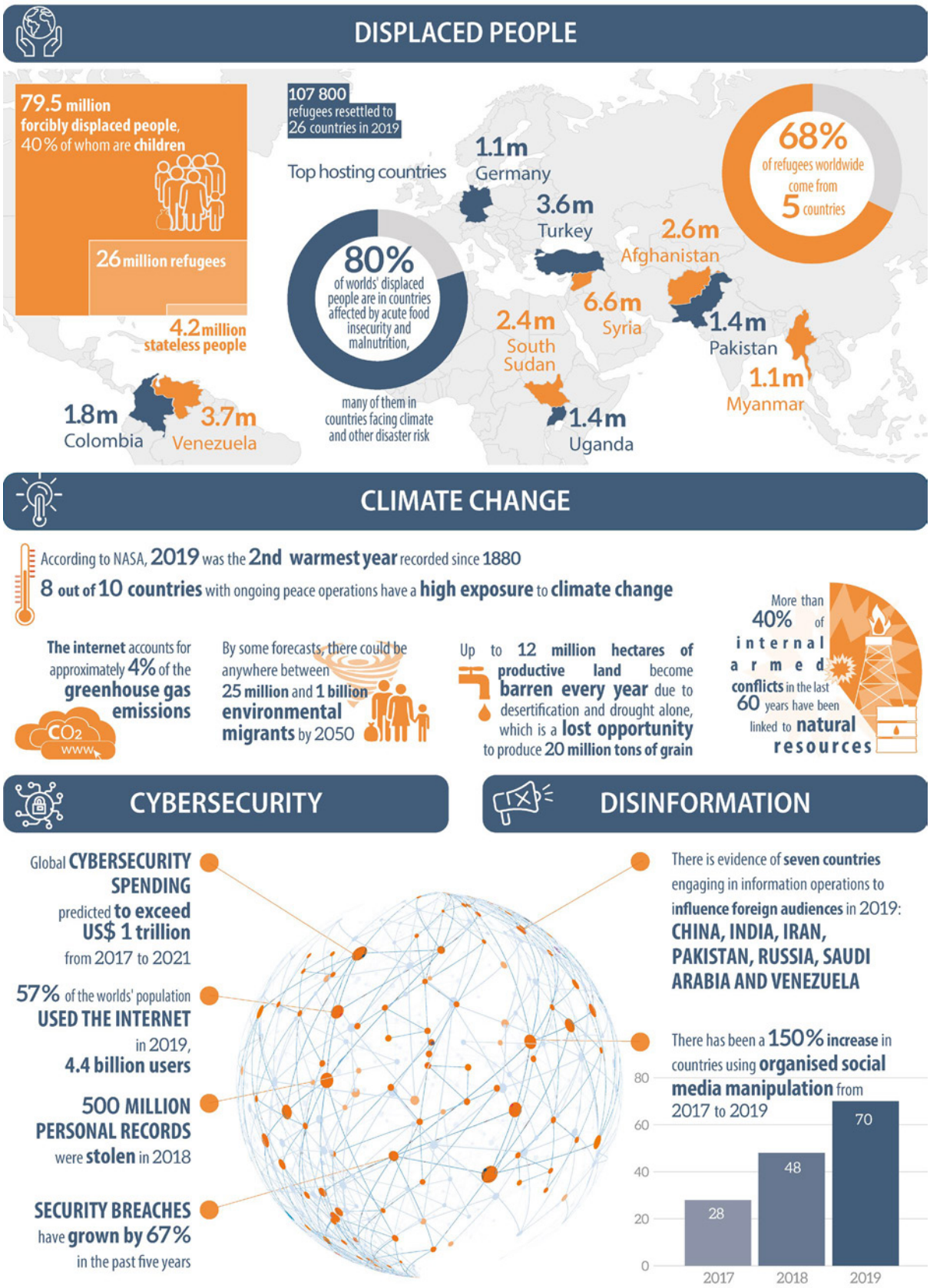
[2] R. Muggah, The UN has a plan to restore international peace and security - will it work?, World Economic Forum, 2016.

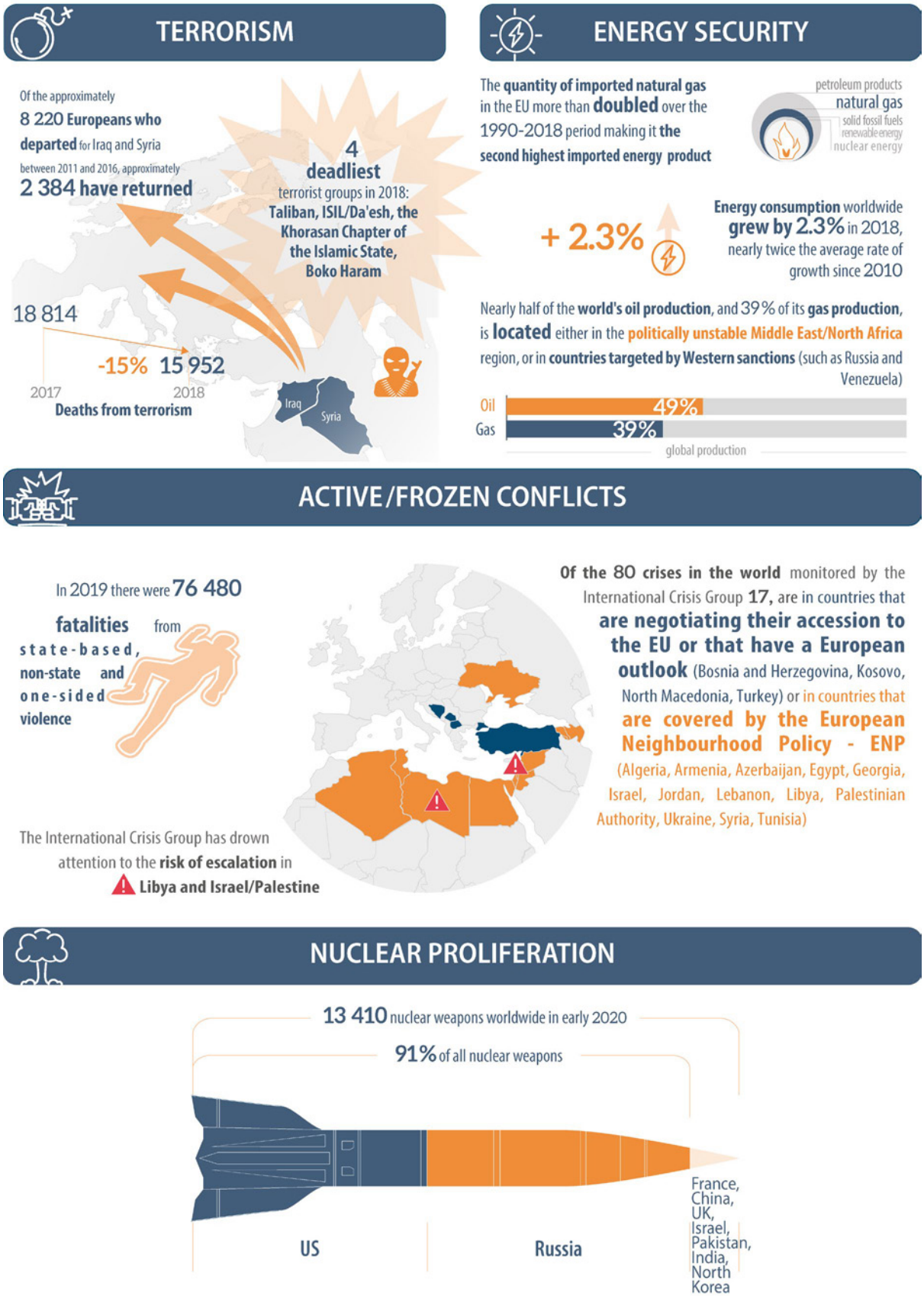
[3] ESPAS (the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System) provides a framework for cooperation and consultation at administrative level, on a voluntary basis, to work together on medium and long-term trends facing or relating to the European Union.

[4] ESPAS report, Global Trends to 2030, 2019.

[5] World Economic Forum, Global Risk Report, 2019.

Figure 2 – Threats to peace and security in the current global environment





Sources: UNHCR, Global Terrorism Index 2019, CDN Networks, Cyber Security Ventures, Global Energy & CO2 Status Report 2019, Security magazine, Federation of American Scientists, NATO, UN SDG, The Atlantic, EUISS, SIPRI, International Crisis Group, Oxford Internet Institute, NASA, Accenture, UNEP, Forbes, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, BP Statistical Review of World Energy, UNCCD, EPRS.

In this environment, actors – of various sizes – around the globe find themselves in a process of reconsidering and adapting their strategies with regard to security and the preservation of stability. The recognition of new threats to peace and security is reflected in the national security strategies (or equivalent strategic documents) of all the UNSC members, the EU and other G20 states, some of which are summarised below (see Figure 3).

The EU Global Strategy, presented in 2016, echoes concern about the state of the world, labelling the current times as 'times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union'. The violation of the European security order in the east; the rise of terrorism and violence in North Africa and the Middle East, as well as within Europe itself; lagging economic growth in parts of Africa; mounting security tensions in Asia; disruptions caused by climate change; and the exertion of foreign influence through the spread of disinformation, are all threats documented in the strategy.

Figure 3 – Threats to peace and security recognised in strategic documents

EU Global Strategy	UN Security Council					Other G20 countries			
	China	France	Russia	UK	USA	Brazil	Germany	Japan	Australia
Terrorism	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hybrid threats									
Economic crisis		X	X					X	X
Climate change		X		X			X		X
Energy insecurity		X	X	X	X		X		X
Violent conflicts	X	X	X	X			X		
Cybersecurity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Disinformation / Information warfare		X			X	X	X		
Fragile state		X		X	X	X			X
Trans-border crimes		X	X	X	X	X			X
WMDs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

EU Member States Other G20 countries

Source: EU Global Strategy; China's Military Strategy; Livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale (France); Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation; National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: annual report 2016 (UK); National Security Strategy of the United States of America; Livro Branco (Brazil); Weißbuch 2016 zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr; National Security Strategy (Japan); Strong and Secure: A Strategy for Australia's National Security.

In response to the challenging security environment, emerging or re-emerging global actors, such as Russia, China and India, have been boosting their defence spending (see Figure 4) and upgrading their military capabilities. A growing number of experts maintain that the world has entered a new era of great power competition. This new arms race in an unstable multipolar world is itself great cause of concern, especially when traditional limitation mechanisms such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) are under attack.[6] The 2018 US national defence strategy signalled a shift in the global geopolitical environment towards the re-emergence of long-term inter-state strategic competition. It listed revisionist powers (Russia and China) and 'rogue regimes' (North Korea and Iran) as primary competitive threats for the destabilisation of prosperity and security.[7]

At the same time, and largely owing to the effects of the economic and financial crisis, defence spending in the EU had been falling for almost a decade and only began to rise again – by 2.3 % – in

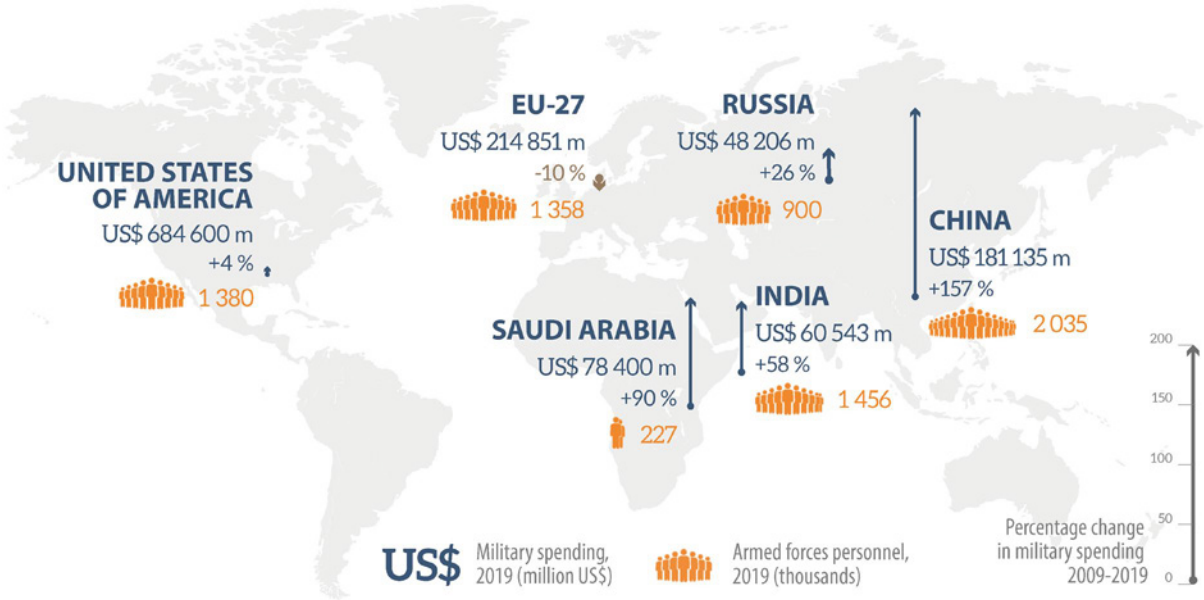
[6] B. Immenkamp, The end of the INF Treaty? A pillar of European security architecture at risk, EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

[7] J. Mattis, Summary of the National Defence Strategy of The United States of America, US Department of Defense, 2018.

2014.[8] The response to the need for a stronger and more capable EU in security and defence matters was initiated by the Juncker Commission and is being taken forward by the Von der Leyen Commission, which for the first time established a Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DEFIS).[9]

Unsurprisingly, given global developments, global military expenditure grew by 3.6 % in 2019, marking the largest annual growth in spending since 2010.[10] Defence spending in Europe reached levels not seen since before the financial crisis, increasing by 4.2 % when compared with 2018. Nevertheless, compared to other major military actors, the EU-27 remains the only one with relatively lower military spending, compared to a decade ago (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Change in major global actors' military spending in the past decade



Source: IISS Military Balance 2020 and 2011.

The Global Peace Index, an annual report produced by an Australian think-tank, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), confirms that 2019 was marked by a decrease in peacefulness, for the ninth time in the last twelve years.[11] The report also notes that, in 2019, violence cost the global economy US$14.5 trillion in purchasing power parity terms – equivalent to 10.6 % of the world's GDP. War alone cost the global economy US$521 billion, a reduction compared to previous years. The same report estimates that climate change currently costs the global economy approximately US$200 billion per year, up 400 % compared to the 1980s. In this context, the EU's holistic approach to the promotion of peace, is particularly relevant, not only to fighting the causes of the disruption of peace, but also to reducing the cost of 'non-peace' in favour of investment in development and peace.

[8] National Breakdown of Defence Data, European Defence Agency, 2016.

[9] E. Bassot and W. Hiller, The Juncker Commission's Ten Priorities, EPRS, European Parliament, 2018; E. Bassot, The von der Leyen Commission's priorities for 2019-2024, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[10] Global military expenditure sees largest annual increase in a decade—says SIPRI—reaching $1917 billion in 2019, SIPRI, 2020.

[11] Global Peace Index, Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020.

1.3. The EU and the pursuit of peace and security

In 2012, the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.[12] The Norwegian Nobel Committee based its decision on the 'stabilising role the EU has played in transforming most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace'. Indeed, the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the initial step towards European integration, came after two world wars with devastating consequences for European states, and aimed to secure lasting peace on the continent.[13] Six decades later, the achievement of peace in the part of the continent that constitutes the EU is hailed as one of the Union's major achievements, and is enshrined in its Treaty as one of its main aims (Article 3 TEU).[14]

At the same time, the promotion of peace globally, following its own 'success story', has become one of the fundamental pillars of the EU's external action. Article 3(5) TEU includes the contribution to peace first among the objectives of the EU's relations with the wider world, alongside security, sustainable development, the protection of human rights and others.[15] These objectives guide the EU in all facets of its external action, including EU common foreign and security policy (CFSP);[16] development cooperation;[17] economic, financial and technical cooperation;[18] humanitarian aid;[19] common commercial policy;[20] and neighbourhood policy.[21] It follows that the promotion of peace goes hand in hand with any type of EU engagement with the world. This has led academics to argue that it is a characteristic of the EU's identity as a global actor. The Union's pursuit of the diffusion of its own values and norms, including

The EU model of regional integration

As the earliest and only project of regional cooperation to attain such a high level of supra-nationalism, the European project that led to the creation of the European Union in the early 1990s has been used as the central empirical object in the study of states' capacity to move from intergovernmental cooperation to fully fledged integration, guiding the conceptualisation of regionalism across a number of regions. So far, in the study of regional integration, no entity figures as prominently as the EU. In the main literature on the subject, the European integration project is often used as the key example for the building and testing of theories explaining why states choose to integrate, to build supranational institutions, share competencies and pool sovereignty. While common markets, common currencies and customs unions also exist elsewhere, the EU has evolved from that level into a political community with its own institutions, legal system, policies, values and principles. In spite of the impact of the multiple crises of the past decade (the economic crisis, the migration crisis and the rise of populism), this 'EU model' of integration, coupled with the levels of prosperity attained, has been at the heart of the EU's 'soft power' of attraction in other regions such as Latin America, Africa and Asia. The coronavirus crisis has reinforced the EU's ability to react collectively to large scale threats to the security and prosperity of its citizens.

[12] European Union receives Nobel Peace Prize 2012, European Union, Brussels, 2012.

[13] A peaceful Europe – the beginnings of cooperation, European Union, Brussels, 2012.

[14] Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Union, 2016.

[15] Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, Official Journal of the European Union, 2016.

[16] Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), European External Action Service.

[17] International Cooperation and Development – DG DEVCO, European Commission.

[18] Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Part Five, Title III, Chapter 2: Economic, Financial and Technical cooperation with third countries, Official Journal of the European Union.

[19] EU legislation: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, EUR-Lex.

[20] EU legislation: Common commercial policy, EUR-Lex.

[21] European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), European External Action Service.

peace, in its external engagement has led to its designation as a 'normative power'.[22] In that sense, the EU's foreign policy derives directly from the very nature of the EU itself and its ambition to achieve long-lasting peace through integration. This inherent principle places particular emphasis on multilateral cooperation, the primacy of diplomacy (as opposed to coercion), the use of mediation to resolve conflicts and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.[23]

Since the creation of the CFSP with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, it has become increasingly clear that, in order to pursue the aims of its external relations effectively, the Union needs to be able to speak with one voice and take common – or coordinated – action.[24] The first issue was addressed by the Treaty of Lisbon, which created the position of the 'High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy' (HR/VP).[25] Appointed for a five-year term, the HR/VP steers EU foreign policy, represents the EU in diplomatic negotiations and international fora, including the UN, coordinates the EU's foreign policy tools (development assistance, trade, humanitarian aid and crisis response) and helps build consensus between the 27 EU Member States. The High Representative, currently Josep Borrell, is assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Union's diplomatic service, also created by the Treaty of Lisbon.[26] On the substantive level, the first major effort to strengthen the EU's presence as a global actor, by defining specific principles, aims and tools, was the elaboration in 2003 of the European Security Strategy and, more recently, the 2016 EU Global Strategy.[27]

Beyond the CFSP, the EU's pursuit of global peace and security is carried out through a number of its policies analysed further in this study. The promotion of peace is also the goal of the EU's active participation in mediation (see box) and diplomacy, including through the UN.[28] The Middle East Peace Process (Israel/Palestine),[29] Ukraine[30] and Colombia[31] are some examples of the wide-ranging involvement of the EU in diplomatic talks for peace.

With the establishment of the common security and defence policy (CSDP),[32] the EU also began to engage in crisis-management activities outside its territory, aimed at 'peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security' (Article 42(1) TEU),[33] in line with the UN Charter. Today, the EU is a major actor in peacekeeping, through its own peacekeeping operations (PKO), but also together with the UN, with which it has been cooperating systematically at strategic and operational levels, with consultation and coordination mechanisms now well established.[34] The UN recognises the EU as one of its most important regional partners in peacekeeping, both for its operational capacity but also due to the broad convergence of norms and values. Moreover, the EU

[22] I. Manners, *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?*, Blackwell, 2002.

[23] S. Keukeleire and T. Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

[24] Common Foreign and Security Policy, EUR-Lex.

[25] High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2016.

[26] European External Action Service, 2016.

[27] P. Pawlak, A Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy for the EU, EPRS, European Parliament, 2016.

[28] Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), European External Action Service.

[29] Middle East Peace Process, European External Action Service.

[30] Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, European External Action Service.

[31] EU will support Peace Process in Colombia with Special Envoy Eamon Gilmore, EEAS, November 2015.

[32] The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), European External Action Service.

[33] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union: Section 2: Provisions on the common security and defence policy – Article 42 (ex Article 17 TEU), Official Journal of the European Union.

[34] C. Cirlig, EU-UN cooperation in peacekeeping and crisis management, EPRS, European Parliament, 2015.

and its Member States contribute around 33 % of the funding for UN peacekeeping.[35] Sanctions are also an important part of the EU foreign policy toolbox (see box on sanctions).

The commitment to multilateralism is one of the cornerstones of the EU's action for peace and security. Multilateralism lies at the core of the EU's identity, and of its strategy to promote its values and defend its interests. The Treaty on European Union (Article 20.1), the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), and the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS), as well as Commission President von der Leyen's political guidelines, reiterate the EU's dedication to the promotion and upholding of the rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core. At the same time, the EUGS itself emphasises that 'the format to deliver effective global governance may vary from case to case'. Where multilateral processes already exist it envisions strengthening them, and at the same time expanding fledgling international regimes in areas such as disarmament and international criminal law.[36]

[35] The European Union at the United Nations, factsheet, European External Action Service.

[36] E. Lazarou, The future of multilateralism: Crisis or opportunity?, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

Figure 5 – EU sanctions

Sanctions or restrictive measures are one of the **EU's tools to promote the objectives of the CFSP: peace, democracy and the respect for the rule of law, human rights and international law**. Sanctions are an instrument of a diplomatic or economic nature, which seek to bring about a change in activities or policies, such as violations of international law or human rights, or policies that do not respect the rule of law or democratic principles.

There are **three** different **major categories** of **EU sanctions.**

The EU implements **1 mandatory UN sanctions** adopted by the UN Security Council.

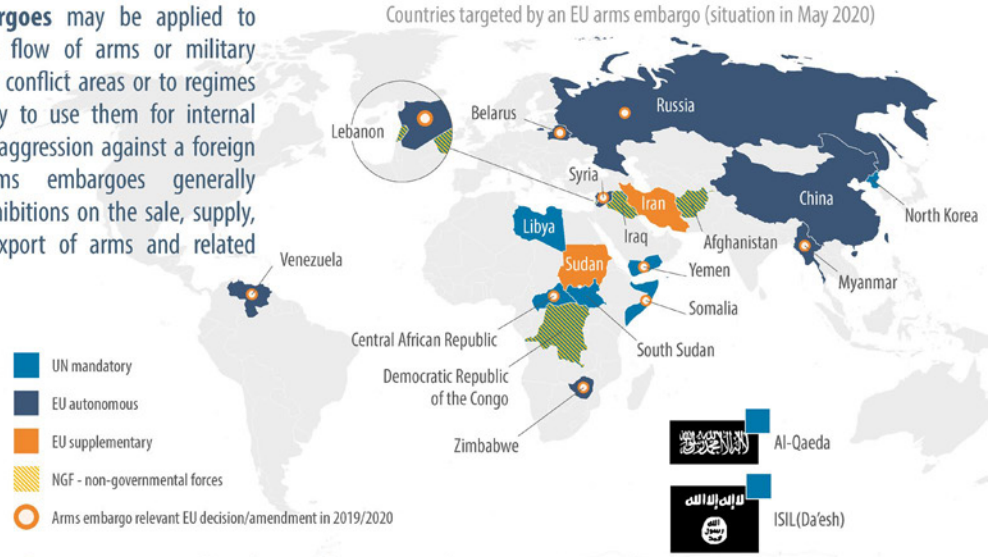
The EU can also adopt autonomous sanctions that go beyond UN sanctions. These are referred to as **2 supplementary measures.**

Finally, the EU can adopt **3 autonomous EU sanctions** applied in the absence of UN sanctions. These can be used in situations where the UNSC cannot reach a common position.

EU sanctions are always targeted and form part of a comprehensive approach, including political dialogue, incentives, conditionality and, as a last resort, coercive measures. Autonomous sanctions are often implemented in cooperation with other states or regional organisations.

Restrictive measures imposed by the EU may target governments of third countries, or non-state entities and individuals (such as terrorist groups and terrorists). There are different types of sanctions, including **diplomatic sanctions** (expulsion of diplomats, severing of diplomatic ties, and suspension of official visits); **suspension of cooperation**; **trade sanctions** (general or specific trade sanctions, arms embargoes); **financial sanctions** (freezing of funds or economic resources, prohibition of financial transactions, restrictions on export credits or investment); **flight bans**; **boycotts of sports or cultural events**, and **restrictions on admission**.

Arms embargoes may be applied to interrupt the flow of arms or military equipment to conflict areas or to regimes that are likely to use them for internal repression or aggression against a foreign country. Arms embargoes generally comprise prohibitions on the sale, supply, transfer or export of arms and related material.



EU arms embargoes – in the form of UN mandatory, EU supplementary or EU autonomous sanctions – **are currently in place against 19 states or non-governmental forces operating within a specific country.** Moreover, arms embargoes are in place against two terrorist organisations – al-Qaeda and ISIL/Da'esh – and associated entities. EU sanctions are reviewed at regular intervals. The Council of the EU decides whether sanctions should be renewed, amended or lifted. The European Parliament does not have a formal role in the adoption of CFSP sanctions, but it has the right to be informed.

Data source: EU Sanctions Map, May 2020.

1.4. From the Global Strategy to the geopolitical Commission

The EU Global Strategy, presented in 2016 by former HR/VP Federica Mogherini, guides the EU's action in all areas of external relations encompassing its work on peace. The strategy is based on an assessment of the global environment as:

- a more **connected** world, in which a surge in global connectivity and human mobility challenges traditional approaches to migration, citizenship, development and health, while simultaneously facilitating crime, terrorism and trafficking;
- a more **contested** world, in which fragile states and ungoverned spaces are expanding, due to instability and violence triggered by poverty, lawlessness, corruption and conflict-ridden electoral politics;
- a more **complex** world, where power is shifting towards other regional players in the developing world and is increasingly shared between state and non-state actors.

In this environment, the strategy maintains, 'an appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy is important for Europe's ability to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders'. Furthermore, it recognises the intrinsic link between internal and external security, as well as internal and external peace: 'our security at home depends on peace beyond our borders'.[37] Based on this realisation and committed to the notion of 'principled pragmatism', the Global Strategy prioritises five broad areas: the security of the Union; state and societal resilience in the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood; an integrated approach to conflict and crises; cooperative regional orders; and global governance.

Mediation

Mediation is part of the EU's preventive diplomacy, and is an important tool used within the context of conflict prevention and peacekeeping. The EU has developed its own mediation support capacity based on the 2009 Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities and its definition of mediation as a way of assisting negotiations between conflict parties and transforming conflicts with the help of an acceptable third party. 'The general goal of mediation is to enable parties in conflict to reach agreements they find satisfactory and are willing to implement'.

The EU carries out its mediation efforts through a variety of actors, including EU Special Representatives, EU Delegations and CSDP missions. Mediation efforts include direct mediation or facilitation by the EU; financing mediation efforts at different levels; leveraging mediation through political support; promoting mediation and good practice in peace processes and supporting the mediation efforts of others, for example those of the UN, or regional organisations. In recent years, the EU has engaged in mediation activities in a number of conflict countries, including Mali, Myanmar, Lebanon, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Ukraine. A number of mediation initiatives are undertaken by Members of the European Parliament.

The Strategy emphasises the need for more EU action and for Europeans to take greater responsibility for their security (i.e. in respect of terrorism, hybrid threats, climate change, economic volatility or energy insecurity). It calls for stronger security and defence cooperation in full compliance with human rights and the rule of law. This translates into concrete actions in the field of defence policy; counter-terrorism; strategic communications; energy security; and cybersecurity. Secondly, recognising that fragility beyond EU borders threatens its interests, it states that the EU will promote resilience in third countries and their societies as a means to ensure their growth and stability, including through a 'credible enlargement policy' based on strict and fair conditionality, elements of resilience in the European Neighbourhood Policy, and development policy. To address the root causes of migration and associated phenomena, such as trans-border crime, the EU will work towards a more efficient deployment of development instruments, through trust funds, preventive diplomacy and mediation.

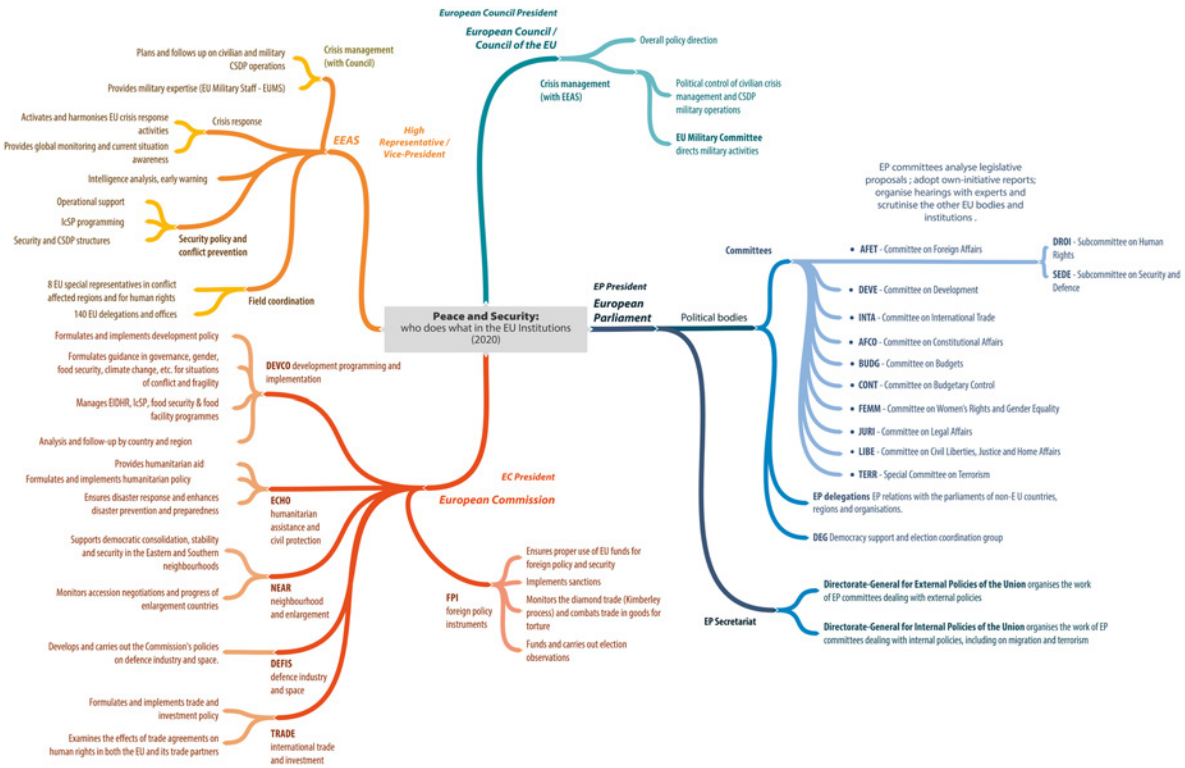
[37] Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe/A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, European External Action Service, June 2016.

With regard to conflict prevention and resolution, the strategy recognises the importance of an 'integrated approach' and of 'pre-emptive peace' – monitoring root causes, such as human rights violations, inequality, resource stress, and climate change – as a means to prevent conflicts from breaking out. Finally, it acknowledges the importance of promoting and supporting cooperative regional orders and of a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, as the basis for ensuring peace, security, human rights and sustainable development.[38]

As the study illustrates, and in accordance to the third annual implementation report of the EUGS, several of the strategy's proposals have been translated into concrete initiatives.[39]

In the spirit of the strategy, the EU is mobilising all tools at its disposal in a coherent and coordinated way, by investing in a credible, responsive and joined-up Union. This calls for a strengthening of all dimensions of foreign policy by improving the effectiveness and consistency of the EU's other policies in accordance with its values. The European Council's strategic agenda specifies that the CFSP and CSDP must 'be better linked to the other strands of external relations'. To achieve the objectives of the strategy, the mobilisation and cooperation of all relevant EU institutions, actors and instruments is a prerequisite for peace and security (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 – Peace and Security: Who does what in the EU institutions?



Source: European Commission, 2015 with updates from relevant EU websites; EP organisation chart, 2018; EUISS, 2017.

Coordination and coherence in external action is a key priority in the von der Leyen 'geopolitical Commission'. In the new Commission, external policy is thus systematically discussed and decided upon by the College. A specific Group for External Coordination (EXCO) has been created to prepare the external aspects of College meetings on a weekly basis and to enhance coordination between

[38] P. Pawlak, A global strategy on foreign and security policy for the EU, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

[39] The European Union's Global Strategy Report 2019, EEAS, 2019.

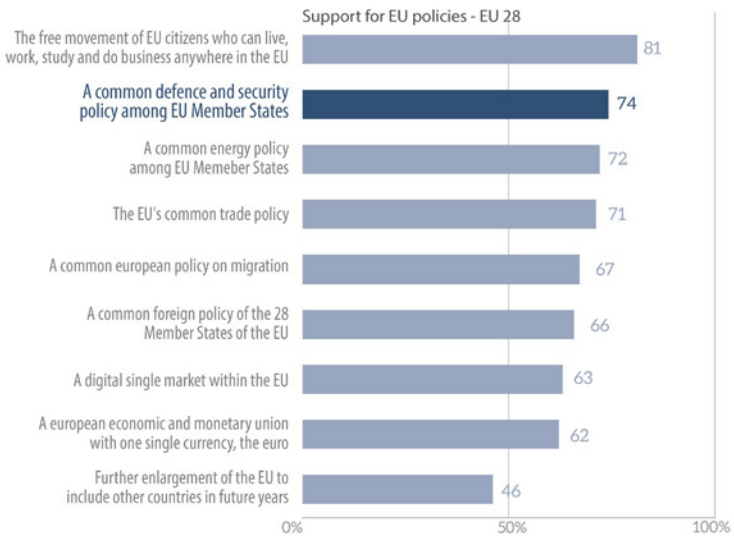
the Commission and the EEAS.[40] In her political priorities, President von der Leyen drew a link between peace and power: 'Europe has always gained its power through peace, and its peace through power' and pledged to strengthen the EU's global action through financing, institutional reform (a move to more qualified majority voting in the CFSP) and policy. HR/VP Borrell has committed to initiating work towards a Strategic Compass to guide the EU's foreign and security policy, initially with the presentation of an intelligence-led threat analysis by the end of 2020.

In January 2020, the European Parliament gave its full support to the Commission President's ambition to transform the EU's executive branch into a 'geopolitical Commission', and to the call for an integrated and comprehensive approach to security and defence.

1.4.1. EU action on peace and security in times of the health crisis: What do Europeans think and expect?

Polls carried out ahead of the 2019 EU elections indicate high public backing for a common security and defence policy among EU Member States.[41] Common EU action in the field of security and defence was supported by 74 % of the respondents, only surpassed by support for the free movement of people (81 % support).

Figure 7 – Support for EU policies



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 91.

Although citizen support does not necessarily translate directly into a strong desire for EU budget spending, in 2018, security and defence was in sixth place in citizens' ranking of the most important spending priorities, a significant change compared to the tenth place it occupied in 2011.[42] According to the same survey, citizens wrongly perceive defence and security as the policy area with the third largest share of the EU budget and therefore, many of them consider it to be already sufficiently prioritised within the EU budget.

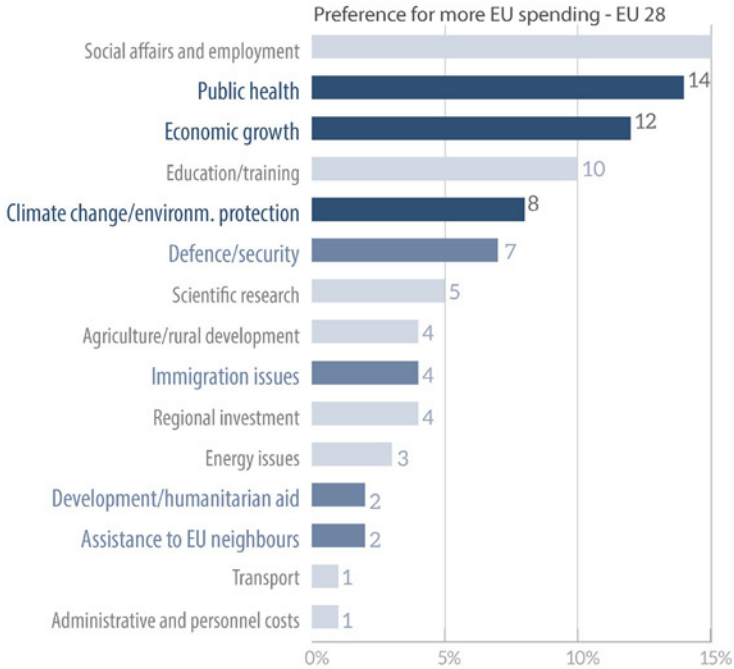
The development, humanitarian aid and assistance to EU neighbours fields, which are a direct part of the EU external action, are not a preferred spending priority for EU citizens. In addition, climate change and economic growth – areas also linked to peace and security according to the Normandy Index – are a much more significant spending priority.

[40] E. Bassot, The von der Leyen Commission's priorities for 2019-2024, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[41] Standard Eurobarometer 91, European Commission, Brussels, 2019.

[42] Standard Eurobarometer 89, European Commission, Brussels, 2018.

Figure 8 – Preference for more EU spending in different policy areas

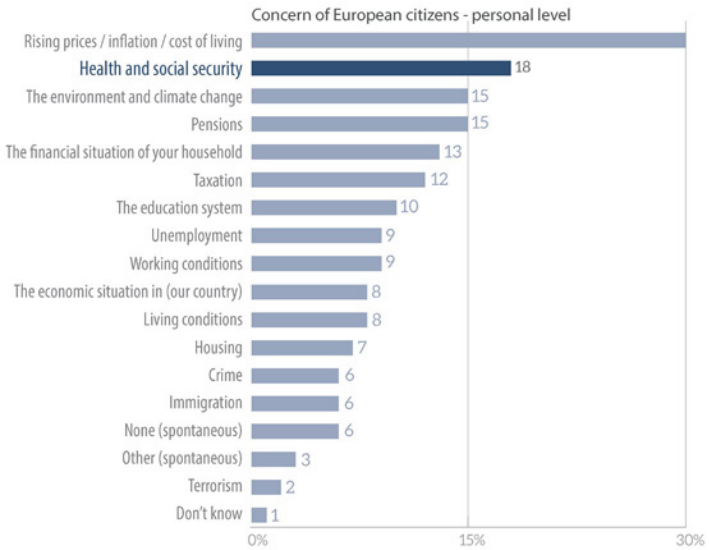


Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 89, 2018.

Despite the lack of EU competences in that area, European citizens position public health as their second most important EU budget priority preference. This preference was already indicated back in 2018, long before the start of the Covid-19 crisis. Also before the start of the coronavirus pandemic, in autumn 2019, health and social security were perceived by EU citizens as the second most important personal and first most important national problem.[43] The perceived importance and acuteness of health and social security problems had been steadily rising over the last few years and is expected to climb in the context of the current crisis.

In the absence to date of representative surveys covering the current development of the Covid-19 crisis across the EU, we see indications from different Member States that healthcare and prevention of cross border spread of the virus have become a topic with increasing EU relevance, despite the lack of clear direct EU competencies in the healthcare sector.[44] As far as national governments are concerned, they are judged on their ability to provide security and the perception of security, as the crisis creates a feeling of insecurity – for citizens' lives, prosperity and predictability of the future. Unlike politicians, experts become increasingly trusted by citizens and are expected to have increasing influence on public opinion in the future.

Figure 9 – European citizens' concerns



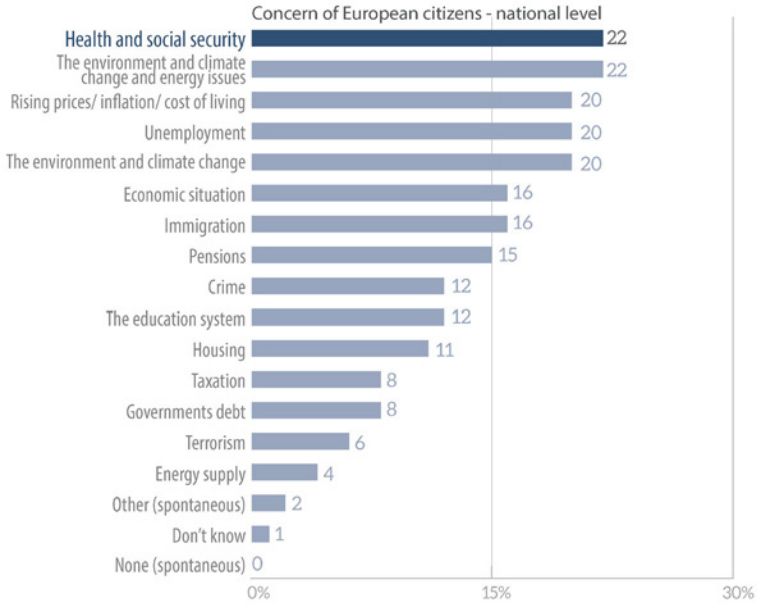
Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92.

[43] Standard Eurobarometer 92, European Commission, Brussels, 2019.

[44] Public opinion monitoring at a glance, European Parliament, Brussels, 3 April 2020.

A review of Eurobarometer surveys over the years indicates that new threats to security, for example terrorism, quickly turn into a leading preference for increased EU action and EU spending, in a crisis. The Covid-19 crisis has a significant impact on all aspects of people's lives and thus on citizens' perception of the world around them and overall security. Although solutions and help are expected on the EU as well as the national level, citizens in some EU countries surveyed (France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom) demonstrate increasing preference for border closures in relation to the pandemic.[45] This trend could influence political discourse and the overall approach to security policy. Further polls indicate that there is a general perception in several EU Member States that the EU's response has been 'too little, too late'.[46] Although expectations across countries differ significantly, countries expected EU involvement, especially in coordinating exit strategies across Europe, in spite of health falling primarily within Member State competence in this area. Perceptions of insufficient EU action, even in fields with limited EU competence can be exploited by malign actors, in the context of misinformation, to undermine security in the EU.

Figure 10 – European citizens' concerns



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92.

1.4.2. Financing EU action for peace and security.

The EU promotes peace and security through its external financing instruments in EU policy areas such as development, democracy support, security and defence. Together with Member States, the EU is a leading provider of official development assistance, the biggest humanitarian aid donor, and a main trading partner and foreign investor[47] for many countries.

1.4.3. EU external financing under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF)

Around 6 % of the 2014-2020 MFF's[48] total allocation of €1 082 billion (2018 prices) can be spent under Heading 'Global Europe', dedicated to external policy. It comprises most external financing instruments (EFIs), but some relevant funds are to be found outside the budget, and smaller allocations for external activities are available under EU internal policies headings. The main EFIs have a geographical and thematic focus, and their own connection to the peace and security agenda as regards the established link between conflict, security and development. Some share

[45] Public opinion monitoring at a glance, European Parliament, 20-27 March 2020.

[46] Russack, S. and Blockmans, S. How is EU cooperation on the Covid-19 crisis perceived in member states?, CEPS, 21 April 2020.

[47] EU budget for the future. Volume 20, Factsheets, European Commission, 2018.

[48] Visualising the proposed Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020. In the graphics, 2014-2020 MFF reference figures are EU-27 estimates, adjusted to exclude the UK and to include the EDF in view of its 'budgetisation'.

common implementing rules under Regulation (EU) No 236/2014, including the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, which focuses on stability and peacebuilding.

Other instruments under the heading have specific objectives and own legal bases, such as the Humanitarian Aid Instrument, the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, the Common Foreign and Security Policy; and the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation. The largest off-budget fund, the European Development Fund, draws resources from EU Member States' voluntary donations (a €30.5 billion budget), and focuses on African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

Special instruments, relevant to financing external policies, provided for by the EU budget but outside the MFF ceilings, include the Emergency Aid Reserve and the Flexibility Instrument.[49] The current MFF has had a major flexibility challenge. Unanticipated crises in the EU's neighbourhood have quickly exhausted available funding under the relevant headings, and led to the creation of emergency, ad hoc instruments, not planned for under a long-term vision. On one hand, the EU has increasingly used existing innovative financial instruments, such as the blending facilities to meet investment needs in developing countries. On the other hand, starting in 2014, the EU has set up four new trust funds (TFs),[50] joint initiatives funded by the EU budget, the EDF, Member States and other donors, which aim to enable faster decision-making, and link humanitarian and development aid. The TFs were created to alleviate the effects of ongoing conflicts and crises and to build peace in a post-conflict context. In 2016, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey[51] was set up as part of the overall response to the migration crisis. It is a coordination mechanism within the EU budget, with €6 billion allocated in two tranches. The EU's external investment architecture has also changed, with the launch of an External Investment Plan[52] and the European Fund for Sustainable Development.[53]

1.4.4. Main instruments focusing on peace and security

The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP),[54] the Common Foreign and Security policy (CFSP),[55] Humanitarian Aid[56] and the External Investment Plan are the most relevant EU budget instruments supporting security initiatives and peacebuilding activities in partner countries. The financial planning for the 2014-2020 period is as shown in Figure 11 below.

[49] Flexibility and special instruments, European Commission, 2020.

[50] V. Lilyanova, Implementation of the EU trust funds and the Facility for Refugees in Turkey - Overview, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[51] The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, European Commission, 2020.

[52] What is the EU's External Investment Plan, European Commission, 2020.

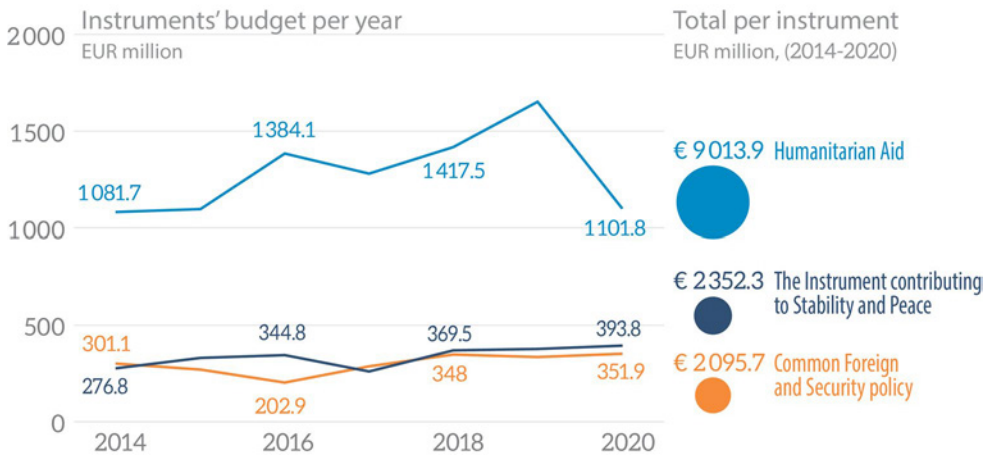
[53] M. Svasek, How the EU budget is spent: European Fund for Sustainable Development, EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

[54] A. Dobreva with P. Wegner, Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

[55] A. Dobreva and C. Cirlig, Common Foreign and Security Policy, EPRS, European Parliament, 2016.

[56] A. Dobreva with A. Heinmaa, Humanitarian Aid, EPRS, European Parliament, 2015.

Figure 11 – Financial planning 2014-2020



Source: Programmes' Performance Overview, European Commission, 2019.

So far, operational expenditure with military/defence implications (which cannot be funded from the EU budget), has been covered by the Athena[57] mechanism and the African Peace Facility[58].

1.4.5. Mid-term review of the external financing instruments

In 2017, the Commission published a coherence report[59] and a mid-term review report[60] on the EFIs, acknowledging a general need for more flexibility. As a result, 'Global Europe' was increased, and special measures outside the regular programming were used to meet new needs. In particular the mid-term revision[61] envisaged more funds for addressing the 2015-2016 migration crisis. For the years 2017-2020, €2.55 billion was allocated for security and stronger external border control, and €1.39 billion for tackling the root causes of migration. Measures also included the use of special instruments (the Flexibility Instrument and Emergency Aid Reserve), setting up instruments such as the Facility for Refugees in Turkey and the trust funds. The setting up of the European Border and Coast Guard (2016), reinforcing Europol and the European Asylum Support Office, the creation of the Instrument for Emergency Support and the EFSD all have additional budgetary implications.

1.4.6. Financing under internal policies headings in the current MFF

Security and defence have also been high on the Juncker Commission's agenda. With the 2016 Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, four major initiatives[62] were launched: 1) the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) which allows Member States to work jointly on defence capability projects; 2) the European Defence Fund (EFD), launched to promote defence-related research and development of joint European military capabilities;[63] 3) the European Defence Agency's Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, aimed at monitoring national defence spending

[57] Financing of military operations: the ATHENA mechanism, European Parliament, 2014.

[58] African Peace Facility, European Commission, 2020.

[59] Coherence Report – Final Report, European Commission, 2017.

[60] Mid-term review report of the External Financing Instruments, European Commission, 2017.

[61] A. D'Alfonso, 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF): Mid-term revision, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

[62] European Security 2030: The Results of the Dahrendorf Foresight Project, LSE Ideas, 2019.

[63] As an EPRS Cost of non-Europe report identified, a more integrated EU security and defence policy would generate efficiency gains of at least €26 billion annually, W. Hiller, Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2014-19 - Fourth edition, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

and optimising resources; and 4) the Military Planning and Conduct Capability, as the permanent military headquarters for missions and operations.

As regards migration and border management, as mentioned above, the MFF revision envisaged gradually increasing funds for the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex),[64] reflecting new security challenges and the understanding that cooperation in the migration management is key for efficiency. Frontex's future development, along with the related Border Management Fund and Asylum and Migration Fund, is a priority in the next MFF proposal. The much higher proposed funding for Frontex (for other decentralised agencies as well), would allow the creation of a standing corps of around 10 000 border guards by 2027.

Cybersecurity is another new challenge to peace and security. The establishment of a European Cybersecurity Agency would respond to that demand, building on the existing European Agency for Network and Information Security.[65] In budgetary terms, this would mean a gradual raise of the agency's annual budget from €11 million in 2018 to €23 million in 2022.

Progress has also been made in EU-NATO cooperation in countering hybrid warfare. The EU has set up the East StratCom Task Force to counter disinformation campaigns by Russia, financed within the existing budget for EU Strategic Communication.

1.4.7. EU budget for 2020

The 2020 EU budget[66] was set at €168.7 billion, an increase of 1.5 % from 2019 values. The key aspect is an increased focus on climate, but migration and security challenges are among the spending priorities. 'Global Europe' (see Figure 11) counts with €10 261.6 million in commitment appropriations, split mainly between development cooperation (73.2 %) and humanitarian aid (14.6 %). It suffered the largest cut compared with 2019 (-9.34 %). This is explained by the budgetary implication of the end of the second tranche of the Facility for Refugees, which significantly increased last year's allocation to humanitarian aid under this heading. The 2020 budget takes into account the budgetary consequences of the new pledges made to support humanitarian action, development and resilience in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, as well as to combat the root causes of migration via North Africa. A total contribution of €560 million will be taken from the heading's margin for the following programmes: humanitarian aid, ENI, IcSP and the DCI. As in 2018 and 2019, the pre-accession funds for Turkey have been cut by €85 million due to continuing deterioration of democracy, rule of law and human rights in that country. The budgetary authority has kept the margin of €248.4 million to allow for unexpected needs in the course of the 2020, most of which has already been used in the context of the coronavirus crisis (see box below).

Migration, border management and security continue to be financing priorities in the 2020 budget. Heading 3 'Security and citizenship', with an allocation of €3 729.1 million in 2020 is the smallest in the MFF, but finances EU actions of growing importance in areas such as border control, migration and asylum mainly under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF). An important and growing share of funds is allocated to the EU decentralised agencies. The level of the support will be maintained at a level similar to 2019. More financial support goes to Frontex (+30 %) and the European Agency for Asylum (+15 %).

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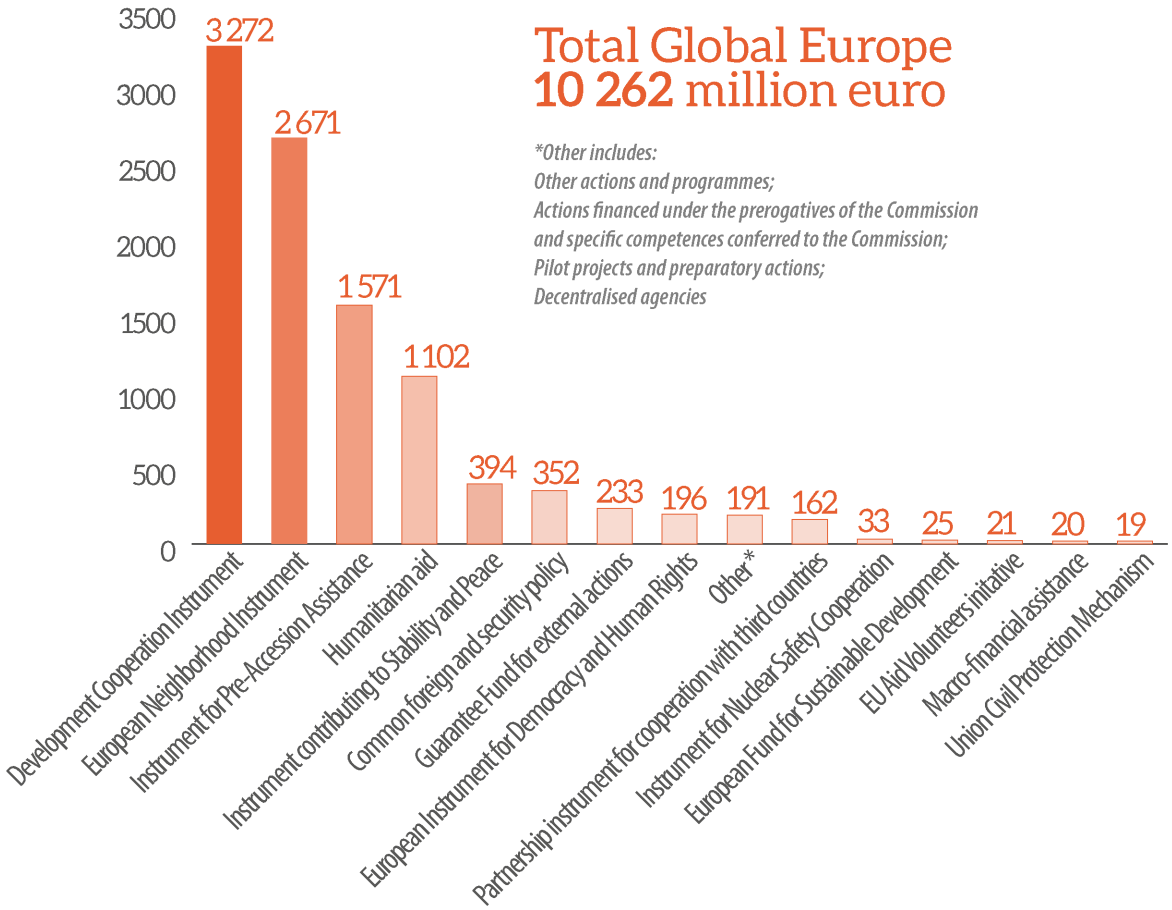
[64] A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020, European Commission, February 2018.

[65] State of the Union 2017 - Cybersecurity: Commission scales up EU's response to cyber-attacks, European Commission, 2017.

[66] Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the European Union 2020, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

Figure 12 – 'Global Europe' budget heading, 2020 (in million euros)



Data source: EPRS, Economic and Budgetary outlook for the European Union, 2020.

EU global measures to tackle the coronavirus outbreak

To address the pandemic's impact, the EU has adopted a series of budgetary measures, with mainly internal EU focus. Externally, an initial aid package of €232 million was dedicated to supporting the World Health Organization, for health emergency preparedness and response; to assist the Institute Pasteur de Dakar (Senegal) with rapid diagnosis and epidemiological surveillance; reinforce urgent research, and co-finance repatriation flights for EU citizens in Wuhan, China.

In March 2020, the Commission proposed a first draft amending budget to the EU's 2020 budget, DAB 1/2020, with an extra €567.4 million in commitments and €77.4 million in payments. This includes financing for migration-related expenditure (€423.3 million under Heading 3 'Security and citizenship'), which requires mobilisation of the Global Margin for commitments for €350 million, and the Flexibility Instrument, for €73.3 million. Expenditure under Heading 4 (€145 million) will be financed from the unallocated margin available under this heading (€248.4 million). In April, a second DAB 2/2020 for €3 billion in commitments and €1.53 billion in payments was proposed, to cover expenditure related to activating the emergency support instrument (ESI) in the EU and rescEU's reinforcement. Both instruments are under Heading 3, increasing its expenditure by 42 %.

The EU adopted a package of over €15.6 billion in support of partner countries, by reorienting existing funds under 'Global Europe' to tackle the pandemic. Beyond the EU budget contribution, it includes €5.2 billion in loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and a substantial contribution from the European Development Fund. Of the €15.6 billion, €502 million go to short-term emergency responses; €2.9 billion to supporting research, health and water systems and €12.3 billion to addressing the socio-economic consequences. The proposed package will cover direct bilateral support to countries, as well as funding for the WHO and other UN agencies. Resources will involve budgetary guarantees to mobilise additional private resources. In addition, Parliament approved a €3 billion macro-financial assistance package (loans) for ten neighbouring countries facing recession. The Commission has also proposed to allocate a further €1 billion with the EU 2020 budget for the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) to finance the immediate response to the crisis.

1.4.8. Future financing of EU policies on peace and security

Developments in the course of the current MFF have led the EU to examine its approach to peace, security and defence closely, both internally and in its external dimension. While the main objectives of EU external action remain the same, the EU is expected to have a bigger say on all of the issues above.

Outlook for the MFF for 2021-2027

Establishing the next MFF offers a major opportunity for the EU to step up its potential as an effective global peace actor. For the next period, apart from climate, a key new priority is the 'geopolitical' Europe. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, the process of preparing and adopting the next MFF has proven to be complex and lengthy.

The Commission adopted its original overall proposal for the post-2020 MFF[67] on 2 May 2018, followed by proposals for the individual programmes. The overall approach[68] is to fund and do 'more with less', and put more emphasis on performance and spending efficiency. Increased flexibility is a trend expected to be strengthened, particularly with regard to the peace and security area. Security and military cooperation, and management of migration flows into the EU are outlined as priorities.

[67] EU budget: Commission proposes a modern budget for a Union that protects, empowers and defends, Commission press release, 2 May 2018.

[68] A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020, European Commission, February 2018.

In the MFF proposal,[69] peace and security related funding can be found in Heading 6 'Neighbourhood and the World', Heading 5 'Security and Defence'[70] (a separate heading with a major increase in spending on internal security and defence), and partially Heading 4 'Migration and border management'.[71] In the latter, the Commission seeks greater complementarity with external funding instruments through a stronger external dimension of the Asylum and Migration Fund and of the Integrated Border Management Fund borders and visa instrument that supports cooperation with and in third countries.

Two years later, amidst the pandemic, on 27 May 2020, the Commission adopted a renewed reinforced EU budget for recovery, including a revised MFF proposal, and a new recovery instrument to respond to challenges both internally as well as externally. Relevant changes include renaming the Heading 5 to '**Resilience**, Security and Defence', cutting funding for programmes such as the European Defence Fund, Military mobility, and the CFSP as compared to its original proposal. Other areas, like the Heading on external action, the **Asylum and Migration Fund** and the **Integrated Border Management Fund** have been reinforced, both above the initial Commission proposal and Parliament's position.

Proposal for Heading 6 'Neighbourhood and the World' in the 2021-2027 MFF

The initially (in 2018) proposed €108.9 billion budget[72] in 2018 prices for the new external action heading[73] (see Figure 13), with a simplified structure and more flexibility, represented a 13 % increase, indicating that external action is increasingly recognised as a key area of EU added value. With the May 2020 adjustments, the overall budget for Heading 6 has been further increased to a total of €118.2 billion. This includes a core €102.7 billion under the MFF, and €15.5 billion to be channelled under a new 'Next Generation EU' recovery instrument.

As proposed, Heading 6 attempts to factor in anticipated challenges, and combine continuity and modernisation. It reflects the need to focus on strategic priorities, both geographical (the Neighbourhood and Africa) and thematic (security, migration, climate and human rights).

[69] Parry, M. and Sapala, M. 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and new own resources, ERPS, European Parliament, 2018.

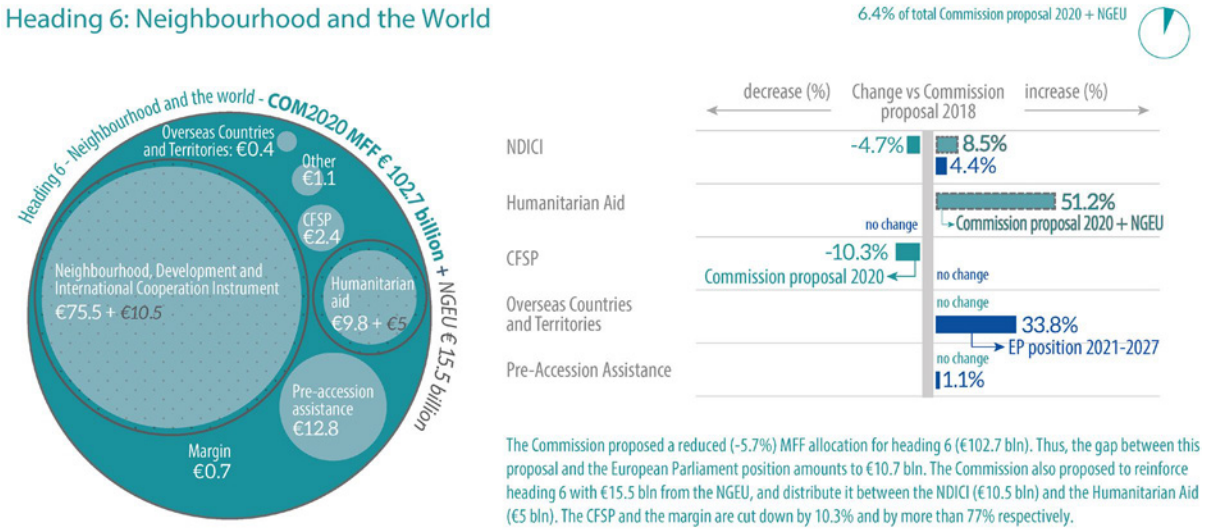
[70] S. Mazur, Financing EU security and defence: Heading 5 of the 2021-2027 MFF, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[71] A. D'Alfonso, Migration and border management. Heading 4 of the 2021-2027 MFF, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[72] A. D'Alfonso, Multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027. The future of EU finances, EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

[73] V. Lilyanova, Financing EU external action in the MFF 2021-2027. Heading 6 'Neighbourhood and the World', EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

Figure 13 – Heading 6, MFF 2021-2027 (Commission Proposal, May 2020).



Source: EPRS, 2020.

The key change consists of merging most EFIs in a single instrument, and including in it (and thus in the EU budget) the EDF. The proposal also includes a streamlined investment framework[74] for external action. A new European Peace Facility outside the EU budget was proposed for funding CFSP operational actions with military/defence implications. As humanitarian crises grow, the initially envisaged stable budget for humanitarian aid was increased in May 2020, with €5 billion assigned under the Next Generation EU instrument. Outside Heading 6 and the MFF ceilings, the Commission proposes to use the additional flexibility of the Emergency Aid Reserve, its special instrument for addressing emergencies outside the EU, and to include internal EU operations in its scope.

- Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI): €86 billion in 2018 prices, of which €10.5 billion from the Next Generation EU

The broad financing instrument[75] includes a core geographical pillar, a thematic and a 'rapid response' pillar, as well as a 'flexibility reserve'. Both geographical and thematic programmes are to address security, stability and peace issues. Rapid response actions would contribute to conflict prevention in urgent situations. Under the thematic programmes, the funds for stability and peace in particular have increased. As the IcSP is integrated herein, civil society peacebuilding actors stress the importance of keeping up the specific objectives to build peace and prevent conflict.

- The European Peace Facility (EPF): €9.2 billion (2018 prices) proposed in 2018, as compared to up to €8 billion in the latest proposal by the President of the European Council

[74] The proposed NDICI instrument for the MFF 2021-2027 integrates the existing model of the External Investment Plan and offers a broader EFSD+, comprising a single worldwide blending facility and a new External Action Guarantee with a ceiling for guaranteeing operations of up to €130 billion in current prices after the May 2020 adjustments (as compared to €60 billion in the 2018 proposal). The new framework integrates the existing provisions for the EFSD, the ELM to the EIB, and the GFEA.

[75] B. Immenkamp, A new neighbourhood, development and international cooperation instrument, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

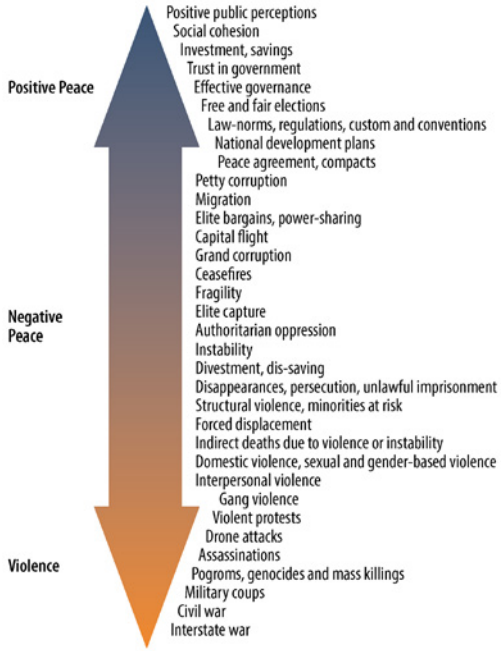
The off-budget EPF[76] is set up to fund CFSP operations with military and defence implications during the next MFF, partly replacing the Athena mechanism and the African Peace Facility, but also building upon them with a wider scope and new types of assistance available on a permanent basis. It would be financed by Member States based on a GNI distribution key. While the 2018 proposed budget represented a significant increase compared to the amounts disbursed in the past, negotiations between Member States in the Council are ongoing and the budget is bound to change, as seen in the latest proposal by the President of the European Council. The Peace Facility should make it possible to provide equipment to partner countries, particularly in Africa, where the Sahel remains a long-term priority for the EU according to High Representative Josep Borrell.[77]

The coronavirus crisis has further changed the perspective on the MFF and led to significant changes in the original proposal, shaping a more ambitious future long-term budget to make the EU stronger. At the time of writing, the MFF negotiations are still underway. The outcome will reflect on how the EU will engage with the rest of the world in the years to come.

1.5. Measuring threats to peace: The Normandy Index

The modern definition of peace refers not only to 'an absence of war', but also includes elements of wellbeing: we demand more from peace. This positive dimension of peace is difficult to measure, as it is a continuum between inter-state war and positive public perceptions. As demonstrated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (see Figure 14), this continuum includes international (i.e. wars, hybrid conflicts) and intra-national violence (i.e. gang or police violence, forced displacements). Therefore, any measure of peace has to take numerous dimensions into account. For example, the IEP 'Positive Peace Index' (PPI) takes 24 indicators into account, ranging from ongoing conflict, to the acceptance of the rights of others and societal safety.[78] It thus tries to go beyond a negative conception of peace as non-war, to show that qualitative peace includes a broad number of dimensions.

Figure 14 – 'A Violence-peace spectrum and manifestations of violence and peace'



Data source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2016.

The Normandy Index (NI), developed by the European Parliament together with the IEP, adopts an approach tailored by and to the action of the European Union, assessing the overall state of 'conflictuality' of a given entity as a product of factors linked to the main threats identified by the EU in its external action strategy. As described above, the EU Global Strategy identifies the following 11 threats as the main current challenges to peace and security.

[76] MFF - The European Peace Facility, Legislative train, EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

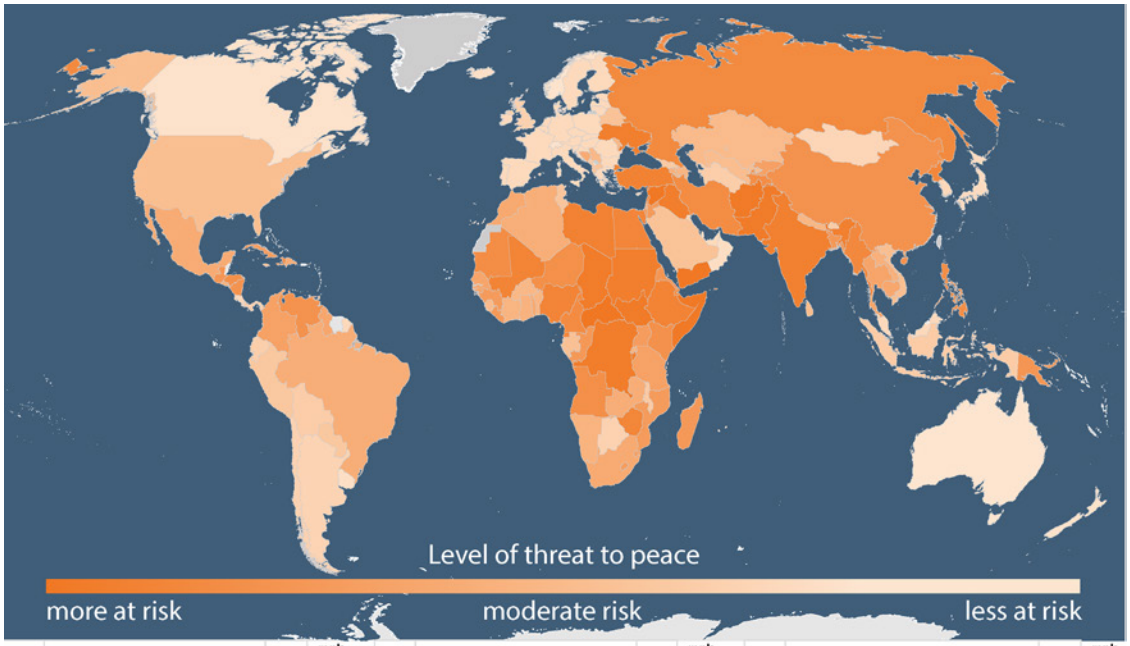
[77] HR/VP Josep Borrell at an extraordinary meeting of Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE), 26 May 2020.

[78] Global Peace Index, Institute for Economics and Peace, 2017; Methodology: p. 114.

terrorism	hybrid threats	economic crises	climate change
energy insecurity	violent conflicts	cybersecurity	disinformation
fragile states	trans-border crime	weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)	

The index uses nine of these eleven threats as factors assigned equal weight in the final result for 137 UN countries (with the EU-27 being counted as one). The NI adds to the 10 above-mentioned factors the quality of the democratic process, as democracy support is a core dimension of EU external action. In addition, as analysed in following sections, there is a strong correlation between weak democratic processes and threats to peace and security. The Normandy Index is therefore a tool to be used by EU policy-makers to assess countries most at risk in the world according to the EU's Global Strategy and target EU action. It is not a ranking of countries according to their peacefulness but a ranking of specific threats to peace per country (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 – Normandy Index, 2020.



Rank	Country	NI	rank change
1	Norway	9.20	0
2	Australia	8.88	0
3	Switzerland	8.73	0
4	New Zealand	8.54	0
5	Canada	8.33	0
6	Iceland	8.28	0
7	Uruguay	7.82	0
8	Oman	7.74	0
9	Singapore	7.68	0
10	Mauritius	7.51	1
11	Qatar	7.48	4
12	Japan	7.47	0
13	United Arab Emirates	7.39	0
14	EU27	7.38	0
15	South Korea	7.34	-5
15	Malaysia	7.34	0
17	Mongolia	7.26	0
18	Costa Rica	7.14	0
19	Argentina	7.08	0
20	Kuwait	7.02	0
21	Chile	6.93	0
22	Botswana	6.84	2
23	United Kingdom	6.83	0
24	Trinidad and Tobago	6.82	-2
24	Ecuador	6.82	1
26	Panama	6.79	0
27	Turkmenistan	6.65	0
28	Bolivia	6.59	1
29	Indonesia	6.53	4
30	Bhutan	6.52	-2
31	Montenegro	6.46	-1
32	Malawi	6.45	-2
33	Georgia	6.43	1
34	Paraguay	6.41	-2
34	Peru	6.41	2
36	The Gambia	6.40	4
37	Albania	6.39	0
38	Tunisia	6.36	-4
39	North Macedonia	6.34	-1
40	Saudi Arabia	6.29	-1
41	Belarus	6.27	-1
42	Jamaica	6.23	1
43	Timor-Leste	6.22	-1
43	Gabon	6.22	1
45	United States	6.21	0
46	Vietnam	6.12	2
47	Uzbekistan	6.09	0
48	Sierra Leone	6.04	2
48	Sri Lanka	6.04	3
50	Kazakhstan	6.02	-1
51	Serbia	5.99	3
52	Burkina Faso	5.98	-6
53	Moldova	5.93	-2
54	Nepal	5.91	5
55	Azerbaijan	5.89	-2
55	Cote d'Ivoire	5.89	0
55	Benin	5.89	0
55	Namibia	5.89	2
59	Rwanda	5.88	-2
60	Ghana	5.85	4
61	Armenia	5.81	0
61	Laos	5.81	0
61	El Salvador	5.81	2
64	Algeria	5.74	1
65	Zambia	5.71	1
66	Brazil	5.70	-7
	World average	**5.68**	0
67	Dominican Republic	5.68	2
68	Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.65	0
69	Mexico	5.62	1
70	Togo	5.61	-3
70	South Africa	5.61	0
72	Morocco	5.58	1
72	Cambodia	5.58	3
74	Guyana	5.55	-1
75	Bahrain	5.54	1
76	Senegal	5.53	-6
76	Palestine	5.53	2
78	Tanzania	5.51	-1
78	Thailand	5.51	1
78	Guinea-Bissau	5.51	2
81	Colombia	5.48	0
82	Eswatini	5.46	1
82	Kyrgyzstan	5.46	2
84	Cuba	5.43	-3
85	Lesotho	5.41	-1
86	Uganda	5.38	0
87	Israel	5.37	1
88	Mozambique	5.33	0
89	Jordan	5.31	3
90	Liberia	5.29	1
91	Madagascar	5.26	-1
92	Bangladesh	5.12	3
92	Congo	5.12	5
94	Guatemala	5.11	-1
95	Papua New Guinea	5.1	-2
96	Eritrea	5.09	2
97	Guinea	5.07	-1
98	Nicaragua	5.02	-11
99	Venezuela	5.01	0
100	China	4.99	4
101	Kenya	4.98	1
102	Honduras	4.97	-2
103	Angola	4.91	-2
103	Niger	4.91	4
105	Philippines	4.89	-2
106	Tajikistan	4.87	7
107	Mauritania	4.86	1
108	Djibouti	4.81	-3
109	Haiti	4.8	-1
110	Iran	4.79	-5
110	Cameroon	4.79	2
112	Russia	4.71	3
113	Myanmar	4.68	-5
114	Equatorial Guinea	4.67	0
115	North Korea	4.65	1
116	Zimbabwe	4.54	-5
117	Egypt	4.5	8
118	Nigeria	4.38	0
119	Mali	4.36	-2
120	Ethiopia	4.31	-1
121	Lebanon	4.29	0
122	Turkey	4.15	-2
123	Libya	4.11	0
124	Burundi	4.1	-2
125	India	4.06	-1
126	Ukraine	4.05	0
127	Sudan	3.91	2
128	Iraq	3.83	-1
129	Democratic Republic of the Congo	3.47	-1
130	Chad	3.4	0
131	Pakistan	3.18	0
132	South Sudan	3.05	2
133	Afghanistan	2.96	-1
134	Somalia	2.76	1
135	Yemen	2.74	-2
136	Syria	2.24	1
137	Central African Republic	1.98	-1

Data Source: EPRS and IEP, 2020.

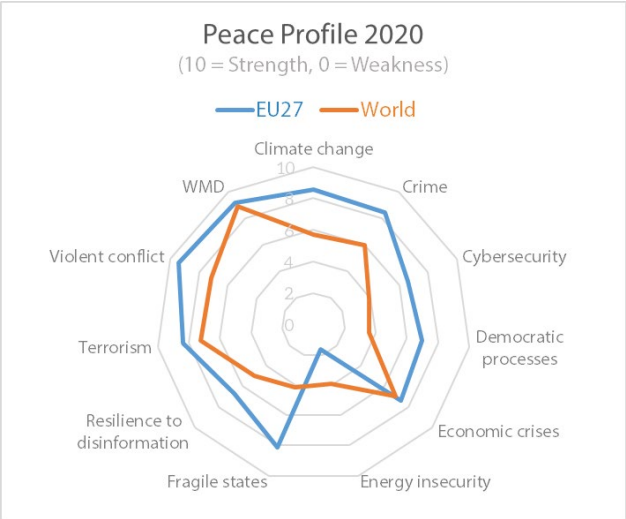
1.6. How peaceful is the EU?

Europe consistently ranks as the most peaceful region in the world.[79] In terms of positive peace, all 27 EU Member States rank within the top 45 states on the list, scoring 'very high' or 'high' in the level of positive peace.[80]

By all accounts, the level of threats to peace in the EU remains very low compared to other regions and countries in the world. In the 2020 Normandy Index rankings, the EU-27 rank as the fourteenth least threatened area of the world. Energy security is the only dimension where Europe is more at risk than the world at large (see Figure 16).

In addition, the EU's neighbourhood continues to be subject to a number of ongoing conflicts. Out of over 80 crises in the world monitored by the International Crisis Group (ICG) Crisiswatch global conflict tracker, 21 are either in the EU (Cyprus), closely linked to the EU following membership (Northern Ireland), in countries negotiating their accession to the EU, or with a European perspective (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,[81] North Macedonia, Turkey) or in countries covered by the European Neighbourhood policy – ENP (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Palestine, Ukraine, Syria, Tunisia). According to the Normandy Index, Western Balkan countries, as well as Georgia, are less at risk than neighbourhood countries, while many European neighbours such as Turkey, Egypt and Lebanon are at serious risk. This means that the EU needs to continue its support for these countries in a decisive manner, as rising threats for one country tend to spread to neighbouring regions.

Figure 16 – EU-27 Peace Profile



Source: Normandy Index, 2020.

As the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated, threats to peace and security are trans-border, multidimensional and largely unforeseen. Many predict that the pandemic's economic and social impact will transform the way some countries function, affecting institutions, structures, attitudes and possibly norms.[82] In that context, the pandemic demonstrates that peace and security is not to be taken for granted and that the analysis and assessment of peace should be a continuous exercise with the aim of boosting preparedness, as well as aid and building capacity in those most vulnerable. For the EU, the geopolitical consequences of the coronavirus present a challenge and an opportunity to further reinforce its role as a global actor in peace and security.[83]

[79] These are the world's most peaceful regions in 2020, World Economic Forum, 2020.

[80] Positive Peace Index, Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018.

[81] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[82] COVID-19 and Peace, Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020.

[83] E. Lazarou, Foreign policy consequences of coronavirus, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

2. EU Action to counter threats to peace and security

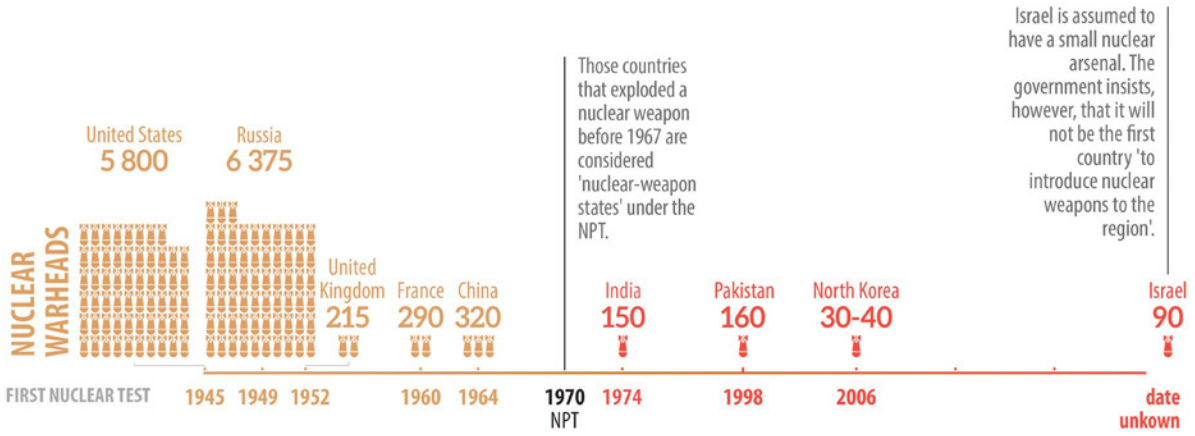
2.1. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Weapons of mass destruction are outlined as the second most important risk in terms of impact by the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020

The number of nuclear weapons worldwide has been declining since the mid-1980s, when they had reached an all-time peak of nearly 70 000 nuclear warheads. The decline has been due primarily to cuts made in the Russian and United States' nuclear forces as a result of three arms limitation treaties agreed since 1991, as well as unilateral force reductions. Nevertheless, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), there are still approximately 13 865 nuclear weapons worldwide; of these 3 750 are deployed with operational forces and nearly 2 000 of these are kept in state of high operational alert. Between them, the United States of America (USA) and Russia still possess some 12 175 nuclear warheads. Moreover, the pace of the reductions in nuclear arsenals is slowing. Neither Russia nor the USA – which together hold about 91 % of nuclear weapons in the world (see Figure 17) – has so far signalled any intention to make further reductions in its strategic nuclear forces beyond the cuts mandated by the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). New START will expire in 2021 unless both parties agree on an extension. The signs of that happening currently do not look promising (see below).

Figure 17 – Nuclear weapons worldwide in 2020



Data source: SIPRI, June 2020.

At the same time, all nuclear weapon-possessing states continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals. Both Russia and the USA have launched extensive and expensive programmes to replace and modernise their nuclear warheads, missile and aircraft delivery systems, and nuclear weapons production facilities. Russia announced in 2011 that it would spend up to US$70 billion until 2020 on modernising its strategic nuclear forces.[84] According to 2017 estimates, nuclear weapons spending plans in the USA were expected to cost up to US$1.2 trillion in inflation-adjusted dollars between fiscal years 2017 and 2046, equal to approximately 6 % of all national defence

[84] NTI, Russia - Nuclear, October 2018.

spending.[85]The Trump administration has introduced new plans for nuclear weapons capabilities that are expected to push up spending on nuclear weapons to at least 6.4 % of the national defence budget, rising to 8 % in the late 2020s.[86] Even though the nuclear arsenals of the other nuclear-armed states are much smaller, all are either developing or deploying new weapon systems or planning to do so. China, India and Pakistan are also increasing the size of their nuclear arsenals.[87]

2.1.1. The Non-Proliferation Treaty under threat

The cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime is the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, as the parties to the NPT prepare to celebrate its 50th anniversary, the Treaty has come under pressure from various quarters. The 2015 review conference of the NPT ended without a substantive final declaration, mainly due to lack of agreement over the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.[88] In June 2019, the Council of the EU made available almost €3 million to support the process of confidence-building measures that are intended to lead to the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.[89] However, no real progress has been made to resolve the issue, which dates back to 1995.[90] The Treaty has also come under pressure from supporters of the 'humanitarian initiative' launched in 2013 to reframe the nuclear disarmament debate by emphasising the devastating effects of a nuclear detonation on citizens all over the world. The initiative led to the adoption, on 7 July 2017, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the Ban Treaty), the first multilateral, legally binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years.[91] However, opponents of the Ban Treaty, which include many EU Member States, argue that the conditions for disarmament do not currently exist, and point to the danger of undermining the NPT. Entrenched disagreements between supporters and opponents of the treaty are likely to impact on future negotiations under the NPT and may derail the next NPT review conference, potentially further weakening the existing non-proliferation and disarmament

Nuclear disarmament

Global nuclear disarmament is one of the United Nations' most long-standing objectives. The 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The NPT is built on three pillars – nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy – and aims to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, promote cooperation among states parties on civilian nuclear energy, and ultimately achieve complete nuclear disarmament. It grants the five nuclear-weapon states recognised by the NPT – China, France, Russia, the UK and the USA – exclusive rights to possess nuclear arsenals, but also obliges them 'to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race ... and to nuclear disarmament' (NPT, Article VI). Moreover, the NPT enshrines the right of non-nuclear weapon states parties to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

[85] Kingston Reif, U.S. nuclear modernization programs, Arms Control Association, August 2018.

[86] The US administration has requested a total of US$44.5 billion in fiscal year 2021 for the Pentagon (US$28.9 billion) and the Energy Department (US$15.6 billion) to maintain and modernise US nuclear delivery systems and warheads and their supporting infrastructure, an increase of about US$7.3 billion, or 19 per cent, from the 2020 fiscal year. Source: Kingston Reif, US nuclear budget skyrockets, Arms Control Association, March 2020.

[87] SIPRI, Yearbook 2019, Modernization of world nuclear forces continues despite overall decrease in number of warheads, 17 June 2019.

[88] W. Wan, Why the 2015 NPT Review Conference Fell Apart, United Nations University, 28 May 2015.

[89] Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/938 of 6 June 2019.

[90] K. Davenport, WMD-Free Middle East proposal at a glance, Arms Control Association, consulted 9 April 2020.

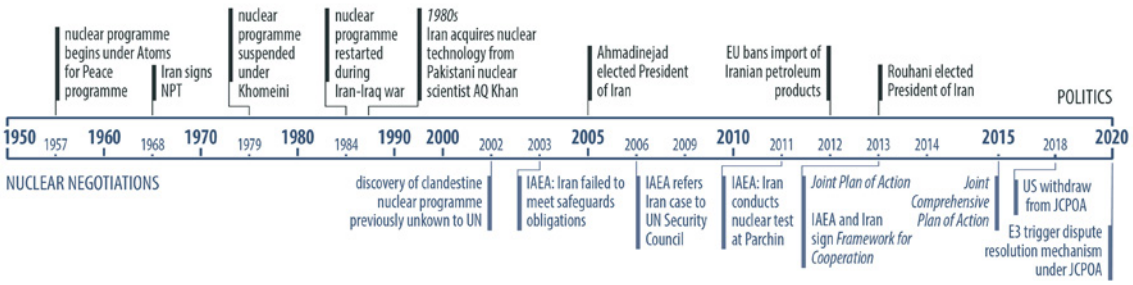
[91] B. Immenkamp, Treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons – the 'Ban Treaty', EPRS, European Parliament, January 2018.

regime.[92] The Ban Treaty currently has 81 signatories and 37 state parties. Among EU Member States, only Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Sweden voted in favour of the Ban Treaty and while Ireland has signed it, so far, only Austria has ratified it.

2.1.2. Nuclear proliferation concerns over Iran and North-Korea

When the NPT opened for signature in 1968, five countries – the USA, Russia, China, France, and the UK – possessed nuclear weapons. The NPT was intended to prevent new countries from developing nuclear weapons, and confine the arms race to these five nuclear weapons countries. Today, with 191 States Parties, the NPT is nearly universal. However, Israel, Pakistan, and India have refused to sign the treaty and have built substantial nuclear arsenals. North Korea initially signed but left the treaty in 2003 and tested its first nuclear weapon in 2006. Recently, nuclear proliferation concerns have grown in relation to Iran's commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPAO)[93] and to the country's obligations under the 1974 bilateral NPT safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[94] Following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018,[95] Iran in 2019 resumed uranium enrichment to levels prohibited under the agreement. This has led other parties to the JCPOA to invoke the agreement's dispute resolution mechanism, a move which might ultimately lead to the re-imposition of UN Security Council sanctions on Iran.[96] At the same time, concerns have been raised that Iran may not be complying with its safeguards obligations under the NPT. Iran's NPT obligations are separate and legally independent from Iran's commitments under the JCPOA. Over recent months, Iran has refused to provide information to dispel fears that the country's declaration of its nuclear materials and activities may be incomplete.[97] In addition to concerns about Iran's non-compliance with the JCPOA and the NPT safeguards agreement, fears are growing that Iran may follow the example of North Korea and leave the NPT, altogether.[98]

Figure 18 – Iran nuclear programme: Timeline



Source: EPRS.

[92] The next NTP review conference was scheduled to take place in New York from 27 April to 22 May 2020. In light of the situation related to the global coronavirus pandemic, States Parties have decided to postpone the 2020 Review Conference to a later date, as soon as the circumstances permit, but no later than April 2021.

[93] C. Dietrich, P. Pawlak, The nuclear agreement with Iran, EPRS, European Parliament, January 2016.

[94] Safeguards agreements under the NPT ensure that all nuclear activity a state undertakes is for peaceful purposes and that a state is not engaging in illicit nuclear activities.

[95] B. Immenkamp with contributions from F. Garces de Los Fayos Tournan, Future of the Iran nuclear deal. How much can US pressure isolate Iran?, EPRS, European Parliament, May 2018.

[96] E. Geranmayeh, Europe's new gamble: Dispute resolution and the Iran nuclear deal, European Council on Foreign Relations, 15 January 2020.

[97] M. Hibbs, Iran and the NPT: Safeguards at stake, 6 March 2020.

[98] M. Rouhi, Will Iran follow North Korea's path and ditch the NPT?, Bourse & Bazzar, 29 March 2020.

2.1.3. Demise of the INF Treaty

Of particular concern to European security is the recent demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. In February 2019, the USA and Russia announced the suspension of their obligations under the landmark nuclear arms control treaty, which they signed in 1987. The INF Treaty eliminated and prohibited ground-launched intermediate ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5 500 km. The signing of the INF Treaty in 1987 led to the removal and destruction of nearly 3 000 US and Soviet short-, medium- and intermediate-range nuclear-capable missiles stationed in or aimed at Europe.[99] When the two parties failed to reconcile, the INF Treaty ended on 2 August 2019, taking down a cornerstone of the European security order. Any redeployment of intermediate-range missiles will once more put Europe in the line of fire of strategic nuclear weapons. Europeans may be faced with stark choices, all carrying inherent security risks, including engaging in a deployment race with Russia, or refusing re-deployment of US missiles on European soil, potentially leaving European countries exposed to Russian intimidation. In February 2019, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the future of the INF Treaty and the impact on the European Union, in which it called on Russia and the USA to engage in constructive dialogue and to ensure that the – at the time – uncertain future of the INF Treaty did not put other arms control agreements in jeopardy.[100]

2.1.4. Changes in nuclear policies of major nuclear weapon States

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) report[101] of the US Government marks a definitive move away from the ambition to reduce the country's nuclear arsenal, which has guided US nuclear weapons policy since the early nineties.[102] Experts consider that the NPR is worrying because it broadens the scenarios in which nuclear weapons may be used.[103] For one, the NPR introduces 'low yield nuclear weapons', to expand 'flexible US nuclear options' that allow for 'precisely tailored nuclear attacks well short of mutual assured destruction levels'. Secondly, the NPR revises the circumstances that would call for use of nuclear weapons, broadening the definition to include non-nuclear strategic

The role of nuclear weapons in European security

Following Brexit, France remains the only EU Member State that possesses nuclear weapons. In his 7 February 2020 speech on nuclear deterrence, French President Emmanuel Macron called on interested European countries to engage in a strategic dialogue on the role of France's nuclear arsenal in European security. He also called on European partners to jointly present an international agenda on arms control, designed and promoted by Europeans, to counter the collapse of bi- and multilateral arms control treaties that could have a direct impact on Europe. President Macron stated explicitly that any debate about arms control affecting Europe should involve Europeans, and should not be left to the USA, Russia and China. It remains to be seen how other EU Member States will react to the proposal to give French nuclear weapons a place at the centre of a more coordinated EU defence strategy. Twenty EU Member States are NATO members and have signed up to NATO's commitment to nuclear deterrence. These include four hosts to US tactical nuclear weapons (Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands).

[99] B. Immenkamp, The end of the INF Treaty? A pillar of European security architecture at risk, EPRS, European Parliament, February 2019.

[100] European Parliament resolution of 14 February 2019 on the future of the INF Treaty and the impact on the European Union (2019/2574(RSP)).

[101] United States Department of Defense, Nuclear Posture Review, February 2018.

[102] M. Kaczmarek, E. Lazarou, United States' nuclear weapons policy: New priorities, new challenges, EPRS, European Parliament, December 2017.

[103] European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Security and Defence, Public Hearing on The future of nuclear arms control regimes and the security implications for the EU, 18 February 2020.

attacks on the USA, its allies or partners' or a strike against 'any state, terrorist group, or other non-state actor that supports or enables terrorist efforts to obtain or employ nuclear device'.

For its part, Russia[104] has placed greater emphasis on nuclear weapons in its military and national security strategy over the past decade. President Vladimir Putin announced in 2018 that Russia would build five new nuclear-capable, strategic weapons systems, including a new heavy intercontinental ballistic missile, a nuclear-armed hypersonic glide vehicle, a nuclear-armed, air-launched hypersonic missile, a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile and a nuclear-armed submarine drone. Experts are divided whether these new systems are intended to achieve a measure of superiority over the USA, or whether they represent Russia's response to concerns about developments in US capabilities.[105] For their part, European countries are particularly concerned about the deployment of Russian nuclear-capable weapon systems on European soil, including at the heart of NATO territory.[106]

2.1.5. Multilateral arms control under threat

The past three years have been marked by the waning commitment of major countries to multilateralism, an issue which is of great concern to the EU.[107] Some experts have gone as far as declaring 'arms control (almost) dead'.[108] The New START may turn out to be another victim of this trend. New START, a bilateral treaty between the USA and the Russian Federation, came into force on 5 February 2011. It sets limits on strategic arms that the two parties had to meet – and met – by 5 February 2018. New START replaced and superseded earlier arms reduction treaties between the US and Russia, and thus continued the process of reducing their strategic nuclear arsenals that began in 1994. New START imposes limits on nuclear warheads and its delivery systems (missiles, bombers and launchers). The Treaty will lapse in February 2021, unless it is superseded by a new agreement. It can be extended by up to five years, until 2026.[109] The USA has set the goal of including China in the negotiations on the extension or renewal of New START and to reach a trilateral agreement with both Russia and China. President Trump also indicated that China should join negotiations on a follow-up treaty to the INF Treaty.[110] China has reportedly declined so far to participate in trilateral talks.[111]

New START is the only nuclear arms control treaty left between the USA and Russia, and the only bilateral nuclear arms control treaty currently in force. Its end would mark the end of any limits on the size and composition of the nuclear arsenals of these two leading nuclear weapon states. However, while this is problematic, any threat to peace and security emanating from the USA and Russia lies, not only, in the size of their nuclear arsenals. Experts point, in particular, to a new presumption of 'controllable nuclear exchanges', 'which will 'reduce the calculations of risk and increase the likelihood of conflicts escalating to nuclear war.'[112] Some consider the risk of nuclear

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[104] A. F. Woolf, Russia's Nuclear Weapons: Doctrine, Forces, and Modernization, Congressional Research Service, 2 January 2020.

[105] Congressional Research Service, Russia's Nuclear Weapons: Doctrine, Forces, and Modernization, January 2020.

[106] R. Gottemoeller, Russia is Updating their Nuclear Weapons: What Does That Mean for the Rest of Us? Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 29 January 2020.

[107] J. Linn, Recent Threats to Multilateralism, 2018.

[108] U. Kühn, Why Arms Control Is (Almost) Dead, 5 March 2020.

[109] Arms Control Association, New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, consulted on 11 March 2020.

[110] U. Kühn, ed., Trilateral Arms Control, Perspectives from Washington, Moscow and Beijing, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg, March 2020.

[111] A. Mehtra, Arms control decisions by Trump administration could be "imminent". Will China be involved? DefenseNews, 26 February 2020.

[112] S. Brown (2018), The Trump Administration's Nuclear Posture Review (2018): In Historical Perspective, Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, 1:2, 268-280.

war between the USA and Russia to be as great now as it was in 'the most dangerous periods of the Cold War'.[113]

2.1.6. EU action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Participation in the work of the United Nations

Since its creation, the UN has pursued two parallel and mutually reinforcing goals: the elimination of weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical and nuclear) and the regulation of conventional arms (in particular the illicit trade in small arms).[114] The EU is committed to pursuing these goals through its status in the UN and through the participation of its Member States in the various UN bodies responsible for disarmament and non-proliferation (see box). Within the UN and its related bodies, a number of important disarmament treaties have been formulated, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Moreover, there are voluntary and informal measures on missile arms control, including the Missile Technology Control Regime and the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. In order to regulate the trade in conventional arms, the UNGA approved the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2013. As regards the trade in small arms and light weapons, two UN instruments were agreed in 2001. Under the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, countries adopted a Firearms Protocol. Governments that ratify the text commit to adopt a series of crime-control measures and implement three sets of provisions on firearms, namely (a) a licensing system relating to manufacture and trade, (b) the establishment of criminal offences on illegal manufacture and trade, and (c) provisions on the marking and tracing of firearms. In the same year, countries agreed on a programme of action focusing on preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime, which also comprises the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), five treaties establishing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, UNSC Resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and a number of informal and/or voluntary initiatives.

Guiding principles

Based on the EU Global Strategy, the EU strategy against the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems[115] and the new lines for action,[116] the guiding principles of the EU in the fight against the proliferation of WMD continue to be that the EU is committed to effective multilateralism, including safeguarding the centrality and the promotion of the universality of global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, through diplomatic action and financial assistance to third countries and international organisations.

The EU also pursues close cooperation with countries to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. Close partners in this regard have historically included the USA, Canada and Japan, but an increasing number of the EU's bilateral relationships include a non-proliferation

[113] M. Kroenig, M. Massa and C. Trotti, Russia's Exotic Nuclear Weapons and Implications for the United States and NATO, Atlantic Council, March 2020.

[114] M. Gillis, Disarmament - A Basic Guide, Office for Disarmament Affairs, New York, 2017.

[115] Council of the EU, EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, 10 December 2003.

[116] Council of the EU, Council Conclusions and New Lines for Action by the European Union in Combating the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems, 17 December 2008.

component. Some 27 agreements between the EU and third countries now contain a WMD non-proliferation commitment.[117] Negotiations continue on a WMD clause for new agreements with Azerbaijan, Chile and Kyrgizstan.[118] Moreover, the EU addresses non-proliferation issues in the EU's bilateral political and non-proliferation dialogue meetings and in more informal contacts. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) are the main instruments and resources through which these efforts are funded.

The INSC has been used to promote the highest standards and practices in nuclear safety, applied in the EU, in third countries. It is also used to promote alignment with EU policies and priorities in the field of nuclear safety in non-EU countries.[119] The INSC had a budget of €524 million for 2007-2013 and €225 million for 2014-2020.[120]Under the new multiannual financial framework, the INSC will be replaced by the Instrument for Nuclear Safety, with a proposed allocation of €300 million for 2021-2027.[121] According to the Commission, the INSC has brought unique added value to 'nuclear safety cooperation with third countries, well beyond the capacities of Member States and other donors'. It has allowed the Commission 'to act at a global level on nuclear safety cooperation', including through consultations with G7/8 partners. 'It allows the EU to assume the role of world leader in nuclear safety and engage in policy dialogue with partner countries.'[122]

To strengthen regional cooperation against proliferation of WMD, the EU launched the EU Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE) in 2010. The initiative aims to enhance the institutional capacity of countries outside the EU to mitigate risks emanating from the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances. The CBRN CoE network comprises 61 partner countries in eight regions, each assisted by a regional secretariat. The network also draws on local experts and collaborating partners, and receives the support of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and other international organisations. It is funded through the IcSP and represents the EU's largest civilian external security programme. The EU is a strong supporter of the IAEA, which it sees as essential to peace and security worldwide. The EU contributes to the implementation of the 2018-2021 IAEA Nuclear Security Plan,[123] which funds IAEA activities towards the universalisation of international non-proliferation and nuclear security instruments, and other priorities.

EU dual-use export control

Certain goods and technologies have legitimate civilian applications but can also be used for military purposes; so-called 'dual-use' goods are subject to the European Union's export control regime. The EU controls the export, transit and brokering of dual-use items, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). EU export controls reflect commitments agreed upon in key multilateral export control regimes such as the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. The regime is now being revised, mainly to take account of significant technological developments and to create a more level playing field among EU Member States.[124]

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[117] EEAS, Inventory of Agreements containing the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Clause, retrieved on 20 April 2020.

[118] Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the European Union Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (2018), 14 June 2019.

[119] M. Parry, Instrument for nuclear safety cooperation, EPRS, European Parliament, July 2017.

[120] Council Regulation (Euratom) No. 237/2014 establishing an Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, December 2013

[121] B. Immenkamp, Nuclear safety outside the EU, EPRS, European Parliament, February 2019.

[122] European Commission, Impact Assessment, SWD(2018) 337 final,14 June 2018.

[123] Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2383 of 21 December 2016.

[124] B. Immenkamp, Review of dual-use export controls, EPRS, European Parliament, November 2019.

2.2. Democracy support for fragile states

75% of Europeans agree the EU should strengthen its partnership with and increase financial investment in Africa to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Strong democratic institutions are a warrant of both external and internal peace and stability. Many states afflicted today by chronic conflict and instability are caught in a spiral of breakdown of state authority combined with internal and external threats. Classical wars between states have been replaced by more subtle but more intrusive and difficult to fight external and internal threats, consisting of a vicious combination of trans-border criminal activities, borderless fundamentalist movements, local insurgencies fuelled by various external actors, including foreign governments, against a background of state incapacity to govern locally in restive provinces and provide public goods and services, fuelling popular discontent.

2.2.1. Factors of risk for fragile democracies

There is a wide scholarly consensus that, based on existing historic evidence, strong democracies tend to avoid war with each other, are more peaceful in their relations with undemocratic states,[125] and are internally more stable and peaceful. Imperfect democracies however can be more aggressive externally and also more prone to conflict and instability internally. According to a recent report commissioned by the Community of Democracies 'states at intermediate stages of democratisation – hybrid regimes with mixed features of democracy and autocracy, elite-driven patronage systems, and/or weak institutions – are generally the most vulnerable to insecurity, whether from violent crime, terrorism, or entrenched poverty'. Poor democracies can also be more prone to violent changes of power, but this hypothesis remains disputed among academics.[126] Moreover, transitions to democracy are a risk factor for instability. Recent experience from states where democratisation was attempted, such as in North Africa, or Iraq and Afghanistan, indeed suggests that the potential for instability in such situations is considerable. The character of the democratic transitions also matters: peaceful transitions to democracy are more likely to reduce conflict than violent transitions.[127] On the other hand, internal conflicts rarely end with building strong democratic structures. Despite the efforts of the international community to support political settlements based on democratic mechanisms (such as holding free and fair elections) as an effective way of terminating civil conflicts, most civil wars end with decisive military victories either by the government or by the rebels, with only about a quarter ending through negotiated settlements.[128] Even in such cases, the resulting democratic structures may remain fragile and require continued support, as for example in Bosnia.

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[125] D. Reiter, 'Is Democracy a Cause of Peace?', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedias*, January 2017.

[126] Collier and Rohner (*Democracy, Development, and Conflict*, Wiley Blackwell, 2008), argued that democracy makes rebellion easier, but this effect only appears in poorer democratic countries. Wealthy democracies are made safer by democracy. Gleditsch and Ruggery (Political opportunity structures, democracy, and civil war, *Journal of Peace Research*, 2007), found that democracy in itself does not increase the risk of civil conflict onset. The risk of civil war depends on other factors, such as state weakness as assessed by irregular changes of political leader.

[127] U. Sunde and M. Cervellati, Democratising for peace, 2014.

[128] B. F. Walter, The Four Things We Know About How Civil Wars End, October 2013.

According to the classification established by researchers working on the Varieties of Democracy project,[129] the vast majority of the world's most fragile states (classified at the highest-alert level by the Fragile State Index) are not genuinely democratic. With some exceptions (namely those classified as closed autocracies) these states organise regular elections, some leading to changes of power such as in Nigeria. However, such elections are not considered competitive enough, being marred by widespread irregularities, and the institutional balance is not sufficient to ensure the accountability of the chief executive. Lacking strong democratic institutions, such states are at high risk of instability and civil conflict, as explained above.

An example as to how a successful emerging democracy can be put under enormous pressure by internal and cross-border security threats is Burkina Faso. After being one of Africa's most successful stories of transition to democracy in recent years, the country is today crippled[130] by the pressure of jihadist groups operating mainly from Mali, combined with a loss of local population confidence in the central government. Another transition in Africa is similarly threatened by internal instability and ethnic conflict: Ethiopia. The significant political opening of its authoritarian model of government, initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018, was intended to quell ethnic tensions but it has not so far managed to achieve this aim. According to some critics, it has even exacerbated them.[131]

Coronavirus pandemic impact on political institutions in fragile countries

Besides the direct impact, the coronavirus pandemic has already impacted and will continue to impact political systems in severe and lasting ways:

- the restrictions put in place by governments to fight the pandemic such as restrictions on freedom of expression or on freedom of assembly could have an even more corrosive impact in fragile states, which lack strong institutions and vibrant civil societies;
- a further risk is posed by widespread social unrest in response to the severe economic consequences of the crisis and possibly to food shortages. This could debilitate already weak governments to the point of completely delegitimising them;
- the crisis risk empowering fundamentalist movements (such as al-Qaeda, the Islamic State in the Sahel, or Boko Haram in Nigeria), by providing them with a pretext for propaganda and disinformation and by driving young people affected by the economic hardship into their ranks;
- the crisis can stretch security forces and weaken international cooperation on peacekeeping .

2.2.2. Pervasive societal insecurity and organised crime

Societal insecurity takes in certain societies such pervasive forms that can be almost as deleterious to individual wellbeing and human development and to social cohesion as armed conflict. The rate of intentional homicides[132] particularly in connection with organised crime (e.g. in Central America)

[129] V-DEM Institute, Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows, Democracy Report 2020, March 2020. The Regimes of the World measure 'builds on the regime-classification by Lührmann et al., 2018. While using V-DEM's data, this measure is not officially endorsed by the Steering Committee of V-DEM (only the main V-DEM democracy indices have such an endorsement'. See A. Lührmann, M. Tannenberg, and S. I. Lindberg, Regimes of the World (RoW): Opening New Avenues for the Comparative Study of Political Regimes, *Politics and Governance*, 6(1),2018.: 'RoW classification is more conservative, classifying regimes with electoral manipulation and infringements of the political freedoms more frequently as electoral autocracies.'

[130] International Crisis Group, Burkina Faso : sortir de la spirale des violences, 24 February 2020.

[131] Foreign Policy, Ethiopia will explode if Abiy Ahmed doesn't move beyond ethnic based politics, November 2019.

[132] See World Bank data on the issue.

can be at levels similar to those witnessed in civil conflicts. According to research on the topic,[133] 'New forms of violence that are distinct from those associated with traditional armed conflict have emerged as a major global concern in recent years'. Another researcher[134] finds that 'chronic violence is most prevalent in countries or regions with long-term state fragility and/or relative state absence, and among people lacking the power to change these conditions in the short or medium term'.

Organised crime, thriving on various illegal activities, such as trafficking in drugs, precious minerals, or human beings across borders, has a particularly destabilising impact in fragile countries. It undermines state authority and leads to the capture of state and economic institutions, sometimes contributing along other factors to the complete breakdown of state control over parts of its territory, such as for example in northern Mali.[135] In 2012, Mali, a poor but functioning multiparty democracy since 1992, lost control of half of its territory to jihadist and separatist groups after 'apparent political connections with organised crime [had] brought the democratic system into disrepute among the general public, and most acutely among certain dissident ethnic groups'.[136] Despite strong efforts by the international community to stabilise the situation through UN peacekeeping, international mediation efforts leading to the signature of a peace agreement with rebel groups in 2015, as well numerous development aid initiatives, the state has been unable to reassert full control.

Other countries lose or cede territorial control tacitly to organised criminal groups. Mexico, an economically developed country, an OECD member, and an established electoral democracy, with several changes in power since 2000, suffers, according to Freedom House,[137] from 'severe rule of law deficits' limiting political rights and civil liberties, violence perpetrated by organised criminal groups, government corruption, human rights abuses by both state and non-state actors, and 'rampant impunity'. The state has been so much weakened by violence from drug cartels and by its own incapacity to respond with respect for the rule of law and human rights, that drug cartels have effectively asserted control over certain local communities.[138]

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[133] T. M. Adams, Chronic violence and non-conventional armed actors, Clingendael, 16 September 2014.

[134] T. M. Adams, How Chronic Violence Affects Human Development, Social Relations, and the Practice of Citizenship: A Systemic Framework for Action, Wilson Centre, 2017.

[135] International Crisis Group, Report 267/Africa, 13 December 2018, Drug Trafficking, Violence and Politics in Northern Mali: 'Since the 2000s, drug trafficking has played a role in the development of unprecedented forms and levels of violence. As the central state weakens and armed insurrections – including jihadists – rise, drug trafficking has become both a central stake and an essential resource for the struggles that are redefining political power relations in the country's north.'

[136] I. Briscoe and D. Goff, Protecting Politics Deterring the Influence of Organized Crime on Political Parties, IDEA and Clingendael Institute, 2016.

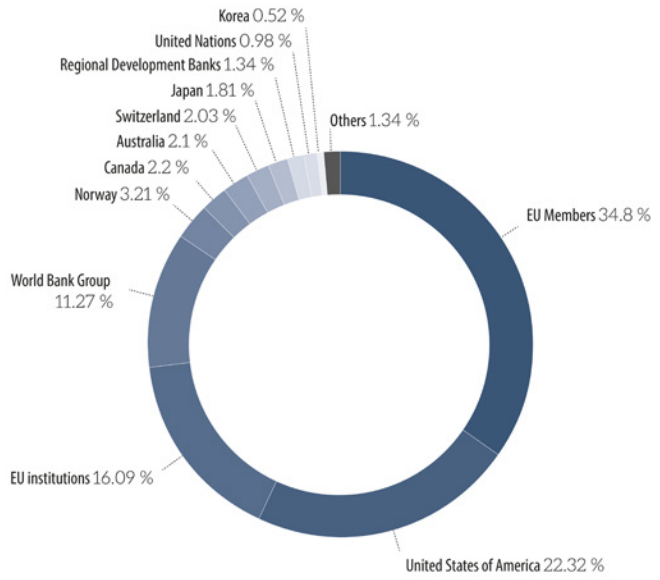
[137] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020, Mexico.

[138] Gobierno cede control a cárteles en muchas partes de México, *Voice of America News*, October 2019.

2.2.3. EU support to democracy and its link to peace

Support for democracy is an overarching priority of EU external action. In October 2019, the EU Council adopted new conclusions on democracy, in which it recommends 'creating the conditions for sustainable peace and security and preventing violent conflicts through participation and accountability, responsiveness to grievances and the political mediation of disagreements'. The proposed new EU action plan on human rights and democracy, published on 25 March 2020 (still to be adopted by the Council), sets priorities that are essential for creating strong democracies able to resist to security threats: promoting fundamental freedoms and strengthening civic and political space; supporting the rule of law; fighting impunity; building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies, including through a human rights and a participative approach to conflict prevention and crisis resolution. The strong link between democracy and peace has also come to the fore in the EU Global Strategy. The strategy describes democracy as an indispensable aspect of 'resilient societies'. The integrated approach to conflicts and crises advocated by this strategy focuses on the use of all available policies and instruments aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution. With regard to resilience, it acknowledges that the connection between democracy and peace is a bidirectional one, with democracy and peace presupposing and reinforcing each other.

Figure 19 – Official development assistance worldwide for government and civil society in 2018



Data source: OECD, CRS data, commitments.

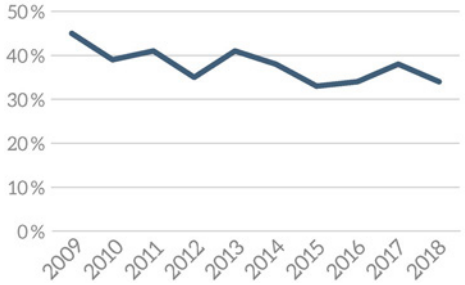
In line with the obligations enshrined in the Treaties, the EU has developed a wide array of tools for supporting democracy in third countries. These range from political and human rights dialogues, to support for civil society and human rights defenders, to development aid for good governance and the rule of law, and to the conditionality enshrined in its bilateral trade and cooperation agreements and in its unilateral trade preferences. In many of these fields, EU efforts in favour of democracy have a more or less direct impact on peace and stability. Conceptually, the EU takes a comprehensive approach to democracy ('deep democracy'),[139] emphasising a multiplicity of aspects that it supports.

At global level, the EU, together with its Member States, is an important provider of official development aid (ODA) specifically targeted at government and civil society. Together, their share represented more than 50 % of ODA disbursed in the world for this sector in 2017 (see Figure 20).

[139] A commitment to 'deep democracy' was included in the revised European Neighbourhood policy (ENP) following the 'Arab Spring' in 2011. Deep democracy includes free and fair elections, freedom of association, expression and assembly, rule of law, fight against corruption, security and law enforcement reform, democratic control over armed and security forces, civil society, gender equality and anti-discrimination.

EU development aid in the field of government and civil society funds a wide range of measures that have the potential to strengthen the resilience of societies to conflict. EU support for measures to improve the accountability and transparency of public administration, to fight corruption, to reform and strengthen judiciaries, to reform the security apparatus, including through training in human rights, increases the legitimacy of state institutions and reduces the potential for civil conflict. As can be seen in Figure 19, an important share of EU development aid for government and civil society is granted to states in situations of fragility.[140] This share has represented between 30 % and 40 % of total EU development aid for government and civil society since 2008.

Figure 20 – Share of EU and Member States ODA for government and civil society committed to fragile states



Data source: OECD, CRS data, commitments.

Recognising the need to strengthen state capacity in fragile countries, for the next MFF, the EU envisages the creation of an extra budgetary instrument – a European Peace facility[141] – an off-budget mechanism financed by Member States contributions, to provide support for partners' military peace support operations and to support the armed forces of partner countries with infrastructure, equipment or military assistance, and capacity-building.

The democracy conditionality enshrined in EU trade and cooperation agreements is another important tool for supporting democracy in the world, and can play a decisive role in conflict prevention and resolution.[142] In the more than 20 cases in which the EU has suspended its development aid, it has mostly done so in response to *coups d'état* or flawed elections, i.e. clear breaches of democratic principles with a big potential to lead to internal conflict. Development aid was reinstated after partner countries complied with EU recommendations. In response to coups in particular, EU sanctions have generally been considered effective in helping to restore constitutional order.[143] EU's unilateral trade preferences provided under the Generalised System of Preferences are also conditional on respect of human rights and democratic principles. In February 2020, the EU decided to withdraw a part of the trade preferences granted to Cambodia under the 'Everything But Arms' scheme, due, among other things, to the serious and systematic violations of the human rights principles enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The withdrawal will take effect in August 2020.

Undoubtedly, a central instrument of democracy support is represented by the EU's electoral observation missions (EOMs). For more than two decades, the EU has sent EOMs to many regions of the world. The effectiveness of these missions in building trust among opposing groups in society,

[140] As the data about the sectorial amount of EU development aid come from OECD, the classification of fragile states for the purpose of the statistical calculations is done by the OECD, taking data from other multilateral financial institutions and the Fund for Peace Fragility Index into account. For more information, see the OECD list of states of fragility.

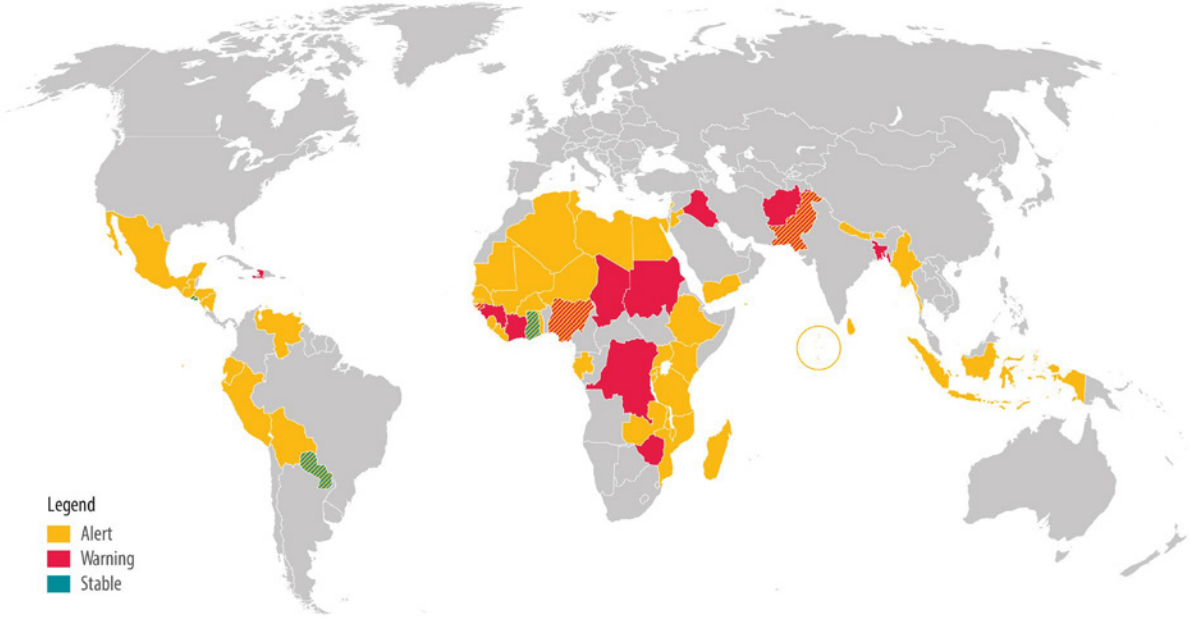
[141] Proposal of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, with the support of the Commission, to the Council for a Council Decision establishing a European Peace Facility, June 2018.

[142] The recently concluded Strategic Partnership Agreement with Canada contains the most explicit description – linking democracy and peace – of the circumstances under which the suspension or termination of the agreement can take place. The gravity and nature of such a violation 'would have to be of an exceptional sort such as a *coup d'état* or grave crimes that threaten the peace, security and wellbeing of the international community'. In practice, the clause is very unlikely to be applied as both Canada and the EU are deeply committed to democracy and human rights.

[143] See G. Crawford and S. Kacarska, 'Aid sanctions and political conditionality: Continuity and change', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 22(1), Palgrave Macmillan, March 2019.

and therefore in preventing conflicts, has been documented.[144] The EU's contribution to electoral reform over the electoral cycle also contributes to internal stability. Based on the annual state fragility scores by the Fund for Peace,[145] EU EOMs since 2006 have mostly taken place in countries with some level of fragility, at either warning or alert level (see Figure 21).[146]

Figure 21 – EU EOMs between 2006 and 2019 in fragile countries[147]



Data source: Database of EU election observation missions, Fund for Peace for fragility scores.

The European Parliament has established its own measures to support parliamentary democracy in third countries identified as priority partners for democracy assistance. Some of these measures aim specifically at building trust and facilitating dialogue and consensus-building on legislative issues among conflicting political forces, in parliamentary environments characterised by a lack of political trust, such as in Ukraine.

[144] Particip GmbH & GOPA Consultants, Evaluation of EU Election Observation Activities July 2016 – January 2017, European External Action Service.

[145] Fund for Peace.

[146] Excluding the countries/territories for which the Fund does not provide data: Fiji, Kosovo and Palestine.

[147] The following countries/territories have also received EOMs, but the Fund for Peace does not provide fragility data for them: Fiji (2006), Kosovo (2017, 2014, 2013), Palestinian Territory (2006). They do not therefore appear on the map. The map also includes the two Election Assessment Teams sent to Iraq in 2010,and Libya in 2012, although they were greatly reduced than normal EOMs because of the security situation. In half of the countries shown on the map, the EU went twice or several times to observe elections. The EU does not send electoral observation missions to the regions covered by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (encompassing Europe, Central Asia and North America), where this organisation observes elections itself using a similar methodology. A European Parliament delegation is, however, often involved in the International Electoral Observation Missions (IEOM) organised by the ODIHR – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights – of the OSCE. Note that Figure 21 does not include such missions, including those in which the European Parliament participated.

2.3. Preventing violent conflicts: Security and development.

Three quarters of Europeans agree that providing financial assistance for developing countries contributes to a more peaceful and fairer world. Respondents consider the most pressing challenges for the future of developing countries to be peace and security, and education (both 33%).

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Coronavirus measures will reshape aid priorities

The coronavirus outbreak further aggravates situations of fragility. Precautionary measures, such as social distancing or regular hand washing are nearly impossible to observe in overpopulated neighbourhoods and areas where clean water and sanitation are barely accessible. Lockdown and closure of borders also complicates humanitarian access and food delivery. In fragile states, enforcing such measures is more than often beyond the capacity of governmental or armed groups' security forces. The growth of serious cases has added to the burden of health and aid infrastructures already on the brink. Containment measures have undermined the economy, particularly the informal sector, affecting the livelihood of many. The coronavirus crisis has emphasised fragile states' incapacity to protect their citizens.

In the beginning of April 2020, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) had provisionally estimated the needs for the Covid-19 global humanitarian response plan at US$2.01 billion, a fraction of global Covid-19 related funding. On 8 April 2020, the EU launched a €20 billion 'Team Europe' package mainly aimed at assisting vulnerable people and countries. This package is the reorientation of uncommitted funds or of funds committed for projects delayed due to the pandemic, from the EU budget and the EDF (€11 billion), the EIB and EBRD (€5 billion) and Member States (€4 billion). Some €502 million has financed the emergency response; of which €2.8 billion goes to support health and sanitation systems; and the bulk of the EU package, €12.8 billion, is meant to address the economic and social consequences of the outbreak. Part of the package will be used to help strengthen social services, police and justice, to address escalating violence against populations at risk. Lockdown measures have indeed led to a doubling in cases of violence against women in some countries, increased abuse of boys and girls, and unleashed hate speech against LGBTI, foreign or local communities.

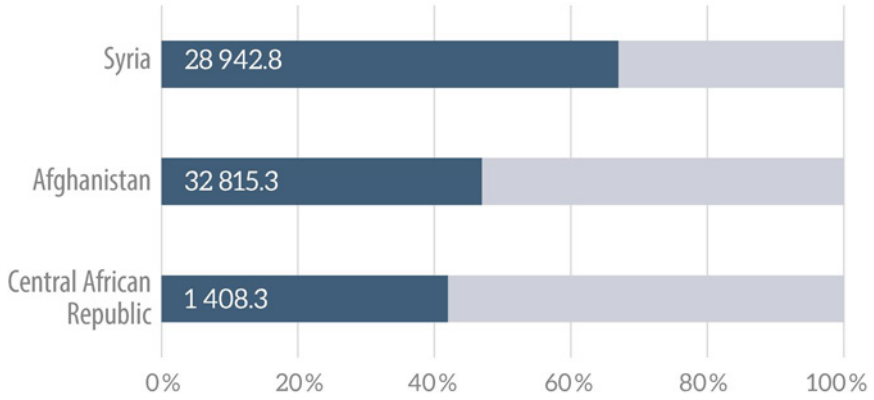
The need to fight the pandemic and its consequences at a global level is a clear reason to support multilateralism. The EU global action against Covid-19 needs to be coordinated with other international initiatives, to avoid competing with actions in the Member States. The challenge is to avoid superseding current EU development cooperation priorities with Covid-19 related measures. In this context, the EU and international partners have an essential role, not only in helping to tackle the pandemic, but also in reinforcing dialogue with civil society and credible political groups to mitigate the impacts of disinformation and despair and to better predict future political changes.

There is a strong correlation between development issues and conflict-affected situations.[148] Half of the world's poor live in fragile or conflict-affected states. In conflict-affected areas, youth unemployment, lack of economic opportunities and difficult access to resources fuel violent armed groups, drug trafficking, social or ethnic conflict. Conversely, conflict hinders development: in the ten countries where the economic cost of violence is the highest, it ranges from 22 % to 67 %, with an average of one third of their GDP. This cost accounts for more than 40 % GDP in three of the least peaceful countries.[149]

[148] See: M. Latek, Interdépendance entre sécurité et développement: l'approche de l'UE, EPRS, European Parliament, 2016.

[149] Institute for Economics and peace, Global Peace Index 2019, June 2019.

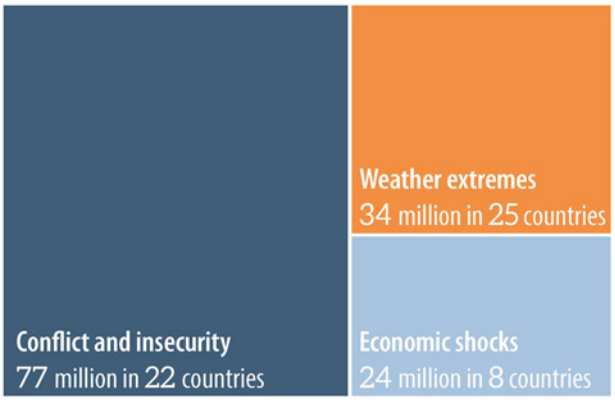
Figure 22 – The economic cost of violence is beyond 40% of GDP in three countries



Cost of violence in US$ million (2018 PPP) and as % of GDP, Data source: Global peace index 2019.

Conflict situations also compound humanitarian crises linked to climate change and food insecurity, resulting in a higher number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in 2019, than was forecast by UNOCHA. Civilians, including children, are widely afflicted by conflict, which take a heavy toll on their lives, livelihoods, and physical or mental health. In 2019, conflict and insecurity were the primary driver for food crises in 22 countries, hitting 77 million people (out of the 135 million acutely food-insecure people in 55 countries – the highest figure for at least four years).[150] Yemen (15.9 million), the Democratic Republic of Congo (15.6 million), and Afghanistan (11.3 million) are the most severely hit.

Figure 23 – Numbers of acutely food-insecure people by key drivers (2019)



Data source: Global report on food crises 2020.

In fragile states, coupled with climate change, rapid demographic growth and unsustainable agriculture, conflicts put more pressure on the availability of a nutritious diet for all, as they intensify population displacement and land grabs. Health and sanitation services are also affected or destroyed, so that food insecurity is often combined with epidemics (Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and other conflict-affected countries have been hit by severe cholera outbreaks; the toll taken by Covid-19 is not accounted for in the reports available at the time of writing). More generally, food insecurity decreases resistance to illness, which in turn aggravates malnutrition.

Widespread violations of international humanitarian law prevent humanitarian access to certain areas and lead to a rise of attacks on health and aid workers. Consequently, millions of people are deprived of basic care.[151] Every day, 37 000 persons are forcibly displaced because of conflicts and

[150] Food Security Information Network, 2020. This report deals with the most severe food insecurity issues: *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3), *Emergency* (IPC Phase 4) and *Catastrophe/Famine* (IPC Phase 5) – IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, it assesses the situation in 55 countries.

[151] UNOCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, December 2019.

persecutions, and most of the world's refugees originate from conflict zones (57 % of refugees under UNHCR mandate come from Syria, Afghanistan and South Sudan).[152]

Development cooperation and humanitarian aid are long-standing EU commitments, enshrined in the Treaties.[153] In conflict-affected areas, humanitarian and development interventions are confronted with multiple challenges. Conflict-prone 'fragile states' all suffer from weak legitimacy, a limited capacity to deliver services to the population, and security issues. Each fragility or conflict situation involves a complex matrix of deficits in those areas. The EU, which is committed to aid effectiveness frameworks and has also endorsed the new deal for engagement with fragile states,[154] endeavours to take this complexity into account when planning and implementing aid programmes, so as to avoid any possible negative impacts.

2.3.1. Conflict sensitivity and EU aid

Research challenges the intuitive notion that aid and relief necessarily appease tensions. Princeton's Empirical Studies of Conflict (ESOC)[155] show, for example, that in the Philippines, increases in employment led to further violence, possibly because better living conditions empower citizens to resist. Investments in infrastructure are supposed to be beneficial, in bringing more jobs to the population and greater tax income to the authorities. However, some projects were correlated with further violence, from insurgents who attempted to seize or sabotage the projects, and from the governmental forces in protecting key construction sites.

Development programmes, if they focus only on certain social groups (e.g. religious minorities, women) or geographic areas, risk aggravating dissent and rejection by the rest of the population. In addition, the presence of cooperation or humanitarian staff can itself contribute to economic distortion. This has been evidenced in the Central African Republic.[156] For example, the housing needs for international staff caused an increase in rents, further weakening the local population; better job opportunities and wages offered by aid agencies attracted local civil servants – often unpaid for months –hindering EU efforts to support better governance. In-kind or financial aid may also be diverted by the government and/or armed groups, reinforcing their grip over populations

In contrast, other findings show that aid can be efficient in reducing the level of violence when it is informed by a good knowledge of the social context that led to conflict, for example, sectarian divisions. Small-scale assistance, carefully targeted and implemented, such as conditional cash transfer, has proved efficient in Iraq and the Philippines. However, research also shows that similar conclusions cannot be drawn for all conflict zones: avoiding negative impacts requires an understanding of the context of each conflict in its historic, political and socio-economic dimensions, and an analysis of the potential impact of every planned intervention ('conflict sensitivity').

The conflict sensitivity approach is applied by EU staff in fragile and conflict-affected countries, clearly targeted by the 2017 'new European consensus on development'.[157] This approach is

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[152] See: UNHCR, Figures at a glance, accessed 5 April 2020.

[153] Treaty on European Union, Article 21; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, Article 4(4) and Title III.

[154] See E. Pichon, Understanding development effectiveness, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020; G. Grieger, The 'New Deal' for engagement in fragile states, EP Library, 2013 (This 'New Deal' focuses on five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals: employment and access to social services being placed on an equal footing with inclusive politics, justice and security).

[155] See the Empirical Studies of Conflict project website. See also: 'Aid for Peace: Does Money Buy Hearts and Minds?' Foreign Affairs, 21 January 2015.

[156] See: T. Vircoulon and C. Arnaud, Penser et anticiper les impacts socio-économiques de l'intervention humanitaire en République centrafricaine, IFRI note, June 2015; Warlord Business CAR's Violent Armed Groups and their Criminal Operations for Profit and Power, Enough Project, June 2015.

[157] The new European consensus on development, Council press release, 7 June 2017.

supported by appropriate expertise and tools,[158] based on a large set of lessons learned.[159] The sharing of expertise with other multilateral actors, in particular the World Bank, has also help develop tools and methods better adapted to conflict situations.

Conflict prevention: Early warning for better efficiency. The Treaty on European Union identifies conflict prevention as a key mission of the EU's external action. Addressing the root causes of a potential violent conflict before it erupts is indeed vital, since emerging from an entrenched conflict is a long and costly process: conflicts that ended in 2014 and 2015 had lasted on average respectively 26 and 14.5 years.[160] The deployment of a conflict early warning system (EWS)[161] has been a way to fulfil the Treaty's commitment. The EWS involves all concerned actors across the relevant Member States' and EU services, both centrally (EEAS, DEVCO, ECHO) and in the field (EU delegations, ECHO field offices, EU Special Representatives, Member States' embassies). Every year, based on statistical risk information and input from the field, EU staff establish priorities for EU action, based on EU interests and benefit. For each priority country, a conflict prevention report proposes relevant actions, which are monitored and revised during the following yearly EWS iteration. This makes it possible for interventions to target inequalities, weak governance and security issues where they are most urgently needed and most likely to be efficient.[162]

Ongoing conflict: Challenges of the comprehensive approach. At the heart of conflicts, the peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA)[163] methodology provides for a two-way assessment of the possible impacts of a conflict on external intervention, as well as the possible impacts of an intervention on the dynamics of the conflict. Other methodologies focus on the peacebuilding relevance of development interventions (aid for peace), or on the gender aspects of conflicts and interventions (gender and conflict sensitivity). When a conflict is ongoing, streamlining interventions is vital to ensure that there is no gap between urgent interventions and predictable aid. Most stakeholders acknowledge that better coordination would foster the complementarity of short-term humanitarian interventions and longer-term development programmes (the 'humanitarian-development nexus'). However, due to the EU manifold role, tensions between its various mandates are unavoidable: development actors insist that addressing the root causes of migration is not the same as tackling illegal migration;[164] the humanitarian response endeavours to limit the effects of armed conflicts but does not seek to address the parties' responsibilities, while development projects aimed, for example at setting up transitional justice, do.

Post-conflict interventions: Making recovery possible. In areas emerging from conflict, the recovery and peacebuilding assessment methodology (RPBA)[165] is designed to analyse the drivers of the conflict and to assess its impacts, in order to draw up a roadmap for the implementation of recovery measures. Rather than a set of tools, RPBA is a process. The EU and other international

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[158] Although 'do no harm' originally refers to a specific framework, the expression now often encompasses all conflict-sensitivity approaches, see for example Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus, Council conclusions, 19 May 2017.

[159] Resilience and Fragility – Analytical tools, European Commission, International Cooperation and Development.

[160] Source: World Bank Group, United Nations, Pathways for peace, 2018.

[161] Council conclusions on conflict prevention, 20 June 2011 – EU Conflict Early Warning System … SWD (2016) 3 final, High Representative/European Commission, 14 January 2016. According to the EEAS factsheet, 'The EWS also directly responds to the European Parliament's calls for the EU to move away from predominantly reactive responses to crises towards earlier conflict prevention and to present a sound basis for decision-making on complex conflict situations.'

[162] A comparative analysis on EWS was published in 2017, with recommendations for the EU EWS: J. Berglund and D. Bruckert, Report on Technological Shortcomings in Early Warning and Conflict Analysis, EU-CIVCAP, 2017.

[163] See GSDRC Topic guide, 2014.

[164] See, for example, interview with Maria-Manuela Cabral, Head of Unit for Fragility and Resilience, DG DEVCO, European Commission, in Voice Out Loud, Issue 26, November 2017, p. 14.

[165] See A. Wee, Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments: a tool to prevent conflict and promote peace, World Bank, 27 January 2020.

organisations play a crucial role in this process: they coordinate their actions to create the conditions for effective recovery under the ownership of a legitimate government. Conducted under the Joint EU-World Bank-United Nations Declaration on Post-Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning, RPBA was used in 2015, for example, at the request of the Nigerian government, to stabilise the north-east of the country, after the region was recaptured from a Boko Haram insurgency. The 2017 Central African Republic's recovery and peacebuilding plan is the outcome of a RPBA conducted with support from the EU, UN and World Bank Group. This plan informed the political agreement for peace and reconciliation signed in Bangui in February 2019.[166]

The EU comprehensive approach

Joint analyses are already performed within the EU services, and the Council has advocated 'new approaches in policies and legal frameworks'. This has in part materialised in comprehensive strategies, as is the case for the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. These strategies aim to combine development cooperation with a view to tackling the root causes of migration, humanitarian interventions and support for the security sector.

In fragile states, the EU response to food crises links relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD). For example, in line with the EU strategic framework for the Horn of Africa, the EU Commission's Directorates-General for Development (DEVCO) and for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) have launched a common programme: 'Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience' (SHARE). SHARE targets food crises by linking short-term humanitarian aid and longer-term development policy.

A comprehensive approach also includes forging partnerships beyond EU stakeholders. For example, in the framework of its strategy for security and development in the Sahel, the EU is involved in the coordination of Sahel strategies at UN level and in the global alliance for resilience initiative in the Sahel and West Africa (AGIR), a set of initiatives aimed at combating food insecurity. In the Gulf of Guinea, the EU and several EU Member States are part of the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FOGG), which coordinates surveillance and the fight against piracy.

However, despite the comprehensive approach, the EU funding remains 'siloed', so that strategies still have to be financed through a mix of EU budgetary resources, European Development Fund money (mostly through the African Peace Facility), and trust funds combining public and private contributions. The proposed reshuffle of the 2021-2027 EU budget, which would bring together most external policy's budgetary instruments – except the Humanitarian aid instrument – is meant to help mobilise funds where they are most needed.

The comprehensive approach is high on the von der Leyen Commission work programme. In March 2020, it already translated as a joint proposal from the High Representative and the European Commission to devise a **comprehensive strategy together with the African Union**. This proposed strategy reflects the EU's conviction that security and sustainable development feed each other. The commitment to better support African peace efforts in countries where tensions are the highest involves a pledge to a strengthened linkage between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and support to the security sector.

[166] See: J. Karhilo, E. Pichon, The EU and multilateral conflict management: the case of the Central African Republic, EPRS, European Parliament, June 2020.

2.3.2. Crisis management: CSDP missions and operations

Through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) the EU has developed a broad crisis management agenda which includes conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and post-conflict stabilisation, in accordance with the principles of the UN. The UN has recognised the EU as one of its most important regional partners in peacekeeping. Currently, the EU has 17 CSDP missions and military operations on three continents, with a wide range of mandates (e.g. military training, capacity-building, counter-piracy, rule of law and security sector reform, border assistance, etc.) and deploying over 5 000 civilian and military personnel (see Figure 24). EU civilian missions carry out tasks consistent with the Global Strategy's commitment to strengthening the resilience and stabilisation of partner countries recovering from or threatened by conflict and instability. Military missions are currently focused on areas such as countering terrorism, irregular migration, piracy and capacity-building of armed forces.

In 2018, EU civilian missions conducted around 830 training events for almost 12 000 people (of whom at least 2 127 were women) on topics such as combating arms and people trafficking, forensic techniques, crime scene management, human resource management, legislative drafting, policing, combating corruption, identifying document fraud, the application of local laws on irregular migration, civil registration, integrated border management, maritime security, human rights and gender. CSDP missions supplied almost €6 million worth of equipment to local partners and local NGOs.[167]

Executive and non-executive[168] military missions and operations held short-term and long-term training events for around 6 500 people on topics such as infantry skills, force organisation, sniper skills, mortar firing, leadership, engineering, logistics, tactical air control and intelligence gathering. Other activities included mentoring senior military officials on security sector reform (SSR); supporting SSR and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration activities; delivering mine awareness training to 16 488 citizens and helping to dispose of approximately 3 000 tonnes of unsafe ammunition and complex weapon systems.

Women in CSDP

As a signatory of the UNSC Resolution UNSCR 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (WPS), the EU has undertaken to increase the number of women dealing with crisis management and peace negotiations. The Global Strategy emphasises the intention to involve more women in the EU's foreign and security policy and the EEAS has adopted a Gender and Equal Opportunities Strategy for 2018-2023. In 2018, the Council welcomed the new EU strategic approach to WPS and the commitment to the systematic integration of a gender perspective into all fields and activities in the domain of peace and security. The European Parliament has called for the EU to lead the efforts for the implementation of resolution 1325 and to incorporate its principles at all stages of EU conflict prevention and mediation activities; for full gender equality and participation of women across the conflict cycle; and for gender sensitivity in training and intervention. The Civilian CSDP Compact (CCC) commits to actively promote the representation of women in the EU's missions. According to SIPRI, the share of women personnel in civilian missions increased from 14 % to 24 % between 2009 and 2015. Since 2016, it has been around 22–23 %.

Research shows that women's participation in peace and security processes can play a significant role in determining the success and sustainability of peace agreements, as well as the durability and quality of peace. Women deployed abroad also help to challenge gender stereotypes.

The majority of CSDP missions and operations have been in Africa and, in many cases, they have operated in parallel with UN Peacekeeping Operations or African Union (AU) missions. Since 2017, the EU has strengthened the coordination of its security efforts in the Sahel, by creating a regional coordination dimension for its CSDP operations in the region. It established a regional coordination cell based within EUCAP Sahel Mali in 2017. The regional coordination cell includes internal security

[167] European Union External Action Service, Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union: Missions and Operations Annual Report 2018 (latest report available).

[168] Non-executive are those operations which support the host nation with an advisory role only.

and defence experts in G5 Sahel countries, deployed in Mali but also in EU delegations in other G5 Sahel countries, namely Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. This reinforced regional approach in the EU work in the region aims to support cross-border cooperation in the Sahel and regional cooperation structures, and to enhance national capacities of the G5 Sahel countries. In 2019, the regional coordination cell was renamed regional advisory and coordination cell (RACC) and was reinforced with an enlarged network experts, embedded within EU delegations in the G5. The objective of the RACC will be 'to strengthen the G5 Sahel regional and, where appropriate, national capacities, in particular to support the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel joint force military and police components, with the aim of facilitating and improving regional cross-border cooperation in the field of security and defence'.[169]

In 2018, the EU adopted the Civilian CSDP Compact (CCC).[170] The compact is designed to enhance mission capabilities in terms both of response time and access to relevant training. It aims to boost responsiveness and flexibility and to reduce military mobilisation reaction time. Moreover, it aims to increase integration among Member States, whether via programming, implementation or information sharing.[171] Full delivery of the CCC is expected at the latest by summer 2023. The first annual review of the CCC identified several points on the way forward, including: increasing jointly the number of seconded experts in the missions; ensuring a more modular, scalable and flexible civilian CSDP on the ground including by strengthening responsiveness tools; exploring the possible modalities of evaluating the operational impact of the missions; and promoting more joined-up action. The Council has emphasised the need to enhance and streamline Member States' engagement in conflict management and stabilisation.[172]

The CSDP missions and operations cooperate with over 150 national counterparts (local ministries of the interior, security, justice, and foreign affairs, and law enforcement associations such as judicial councils and policing boards, as well as local civil society organisations) and almost 180 international partners (e.g. EU delegations, EU agencies such as Frontex and Europol, the UN, OSCE, Interpol, the African Union, NGOs and several development agencies).

The European Parliament is a longstanding advocate of a more effective CSDP. In January 2020, it called for a forward-looking approach to capability planning and development, as well as early anticipation of needs for crisis response. The EP has urged the Council to work for harmonisation and standardisation of European armed forces, to facilitate cooperation among EU military personnel.

2.3.3. CSDP missions and operations and the fight against coronavirus

In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU's CSDP missions and operations continue to deliver on their security mandate and are exploring ways to support their host countries. While ongoing missions and operations do not have a humanitarian aid mandate, within their existing mandates, means and capabilities, civilian missions are providing specific advice and sharing information with international and national partners helping to address the pandemic (see Figure 24). Several missions are donating medical and protective equipment. The actions of the CSDP missions are in full coherence with the wider actions undertaken in the 'Team Europe' global response to the

[169] I. Ioannides, Peace and security in 2020: Evaluating the EU approach to tackling the Sahel conflicts, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

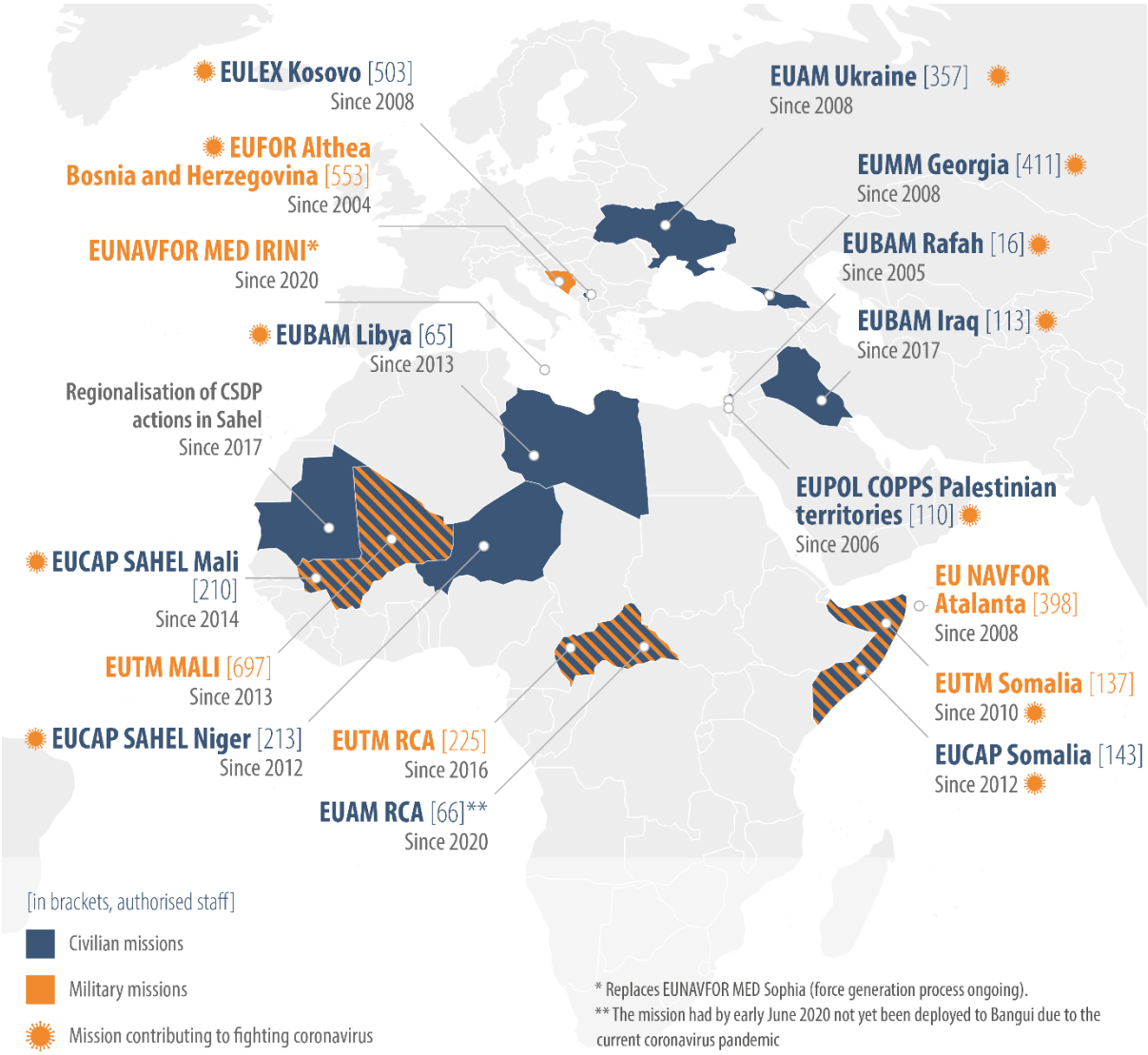
[170] T. Latici, The Civilian CSDP Compact, EPRS, European Parliament, 2018.

[171] One such example of this partnership is a potential collaboration with the European Peace Facility (EPF), a proposed off-budget fund for the 2021-2027 MFF that would create increased access and opportunity to promote peacebuilding in third countries. Currently support for military operations not led by the EU is possible only through the EDF's African Peace Facility, for operations led by African regional organisations, see: B. Immenkamp, MFF- European Peace Facility, Legislative Train Schedule, European Parliament, updated monthly.

[172] Council of the EU, Conclusions on the implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact, 2019.

coronavirus addressing the humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences of the crisis. Within the limits of their resources and mandate, military missions are also offering support.[173]

Figure 24 – CSDP missions and operations



Source: EPRS.

[173] Information provided by the EEAS.

CSDP naval operations

In 2019, two CSDP naval operations, one in the Mediterranean (EU NAVFOR MED – Operation Sophia) and one in the Western Indian Ocean (EU NAVFOR Somalia – Operation Atalanta), were operational, with a total fleet of around 30 ships and helicopters intervening to counter piracy and to combat human trafficking and smuggling. In 2020, the mandate of operation EU NAVFOR MED – Operation Sophia was terminated. In 2018, Operation Sophia had apprehended and handed over 20 suspected smugglers and decommissioned 22 smuggler vessels. The operation also rescued 2 290 people in distress at sea in 2018. A new military operation in the Mediterranean, EU NAVFOR MED – Operation IRINI was launched in 2020. The operation's core task will be the implementation of the UN arms embargo in Libya through the use of aerial, satellite and maritime assets. It will be able to carry out inspections of vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya suspected to be carrying arms or related material to and from Libya in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2292 (2016). It will also monitor and gather information on illicit exports of petroleum and related products; contribute to the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in law enforcement tasks at sea; and contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks through information gathering and patrolling by planes. The operation's headquarters will be in Rome, Italy, and its initial mandate will last until 31 March 2021. The Force Commander will be assigned to Italy and Greece every six months alternatively.

2.4. Addressing cyber (in)security and disruptive technology

Just over three quarters (76%) of Europeans believe that the risk of becoming a victim of cybercrime are increasing. However far fewer (52%) think they can protect themselves sufficiently against it.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Societies' dependency on the internet is increasing proportionally with vulnerabilities to cyber threats. The transformational benefits brought by the internet and associated technological innovations are countless, but as it is estimated that roughly one million additional people per day are joining the internet,[174] cyber threats are growing in sophistication and impact. Malicious cyber actors can range from lone wolves to professional criminals, to state and non-state actors, as they are exploiting the anonymity and affordability provided in cyberspace.

The umbrella of cyber threats is steadily increasing in breadth, as it now includes anything from outright cyber-conflict or warfare, to cyber sabotage, espionage, targeting of critical infrastructure, and to severely challenging democratic systems' resilience. Cyber instruments are key components in the mix of subversive tactics constituting hybrid warfare. Coordinated launches of cyber-attacks alongside economic pressure, disinformation and armed warfare are straining the resilience of democratic states and institutions, including the EU. Peace and security in the EU are therefore directly targeted. Such subversive malicious actions aim at the long-term erosion of citizens' trust in institutions, politicians, the state, media and democracy. Risks from the digital realm can also destabilise governments and political systems, to sow societal divisions and increase the risk of internal and external conflict.

Virus threats: Coronavirus and cyber

The coronavirus outbreak at the beginning of 2020, besides seeing unprecedented health security measures around the globe, has also seen a spike in cyber-attacks, riding the wave of the virus in the information sphere. It was reported that perpetrators are taking advantage of the millions of people working from unprotected wifi connections, but also of public fear to attract them to click malicious links. One company estimated a 30 000 % increase in coronavirus-related cyber-attacks.

Attackers are thus capitalising on the confusion and panic surrounding the outbreak. For example, a scheme used an interactive map created by Johns Hopkins University to spread password-stealing malware. Cybercriminals have been found to disseminate fake emails impersonating national authorities and the World Health Organization. Other examples include attacks on Prague airport and on several Czech hospitals aimed at severely damaging victims' computers.

European Commission President von der Leyen warned citizens about the increase in cybercrime since the outbreak. Meanwhile, hospitals were also warned to take precautions, given they increasingly represent cyber targets. The peak of the coronavirus in Europe demonstrated that for both the Covid-19 and the cyber threat, the best response is solidarity. Paralysing malware can spread even faster than the virus and wreak havoc in European societies. Through solidarity, information-sharing and mutual assistance, European countries stand the best chance at defending against both threats to its security. All EU institutions have actively spread awareness of these risks while also debunking false narratives circulating across cyberspace.

[174] World Economic Forum, The Global Risks Report 2020, January 2020.

2.4.1. The landscape

The EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) paints a gloomy picture of ransomware, cryptocurrency and phishing attacks as dominating the cyber threat landscape in Europe.[175] Appropriately the World Economic Forum (WEF) places cyber-attacks in their top 10 global risks for 2020 in terms of likelihood and in terms of impact, respectively.[176] Some estimates place the cost of cybercrime at around 0.8 % of global GDP or US$600 billion in 2017.[177] Others note that security breaches have grown by 67 % in the last five years and predict a risk of approximately US$5.2 trillion in losses due to cyber-attacks.[178] Though the nature of cyber threats can vary across countries, attacks targeting Europe show no sign of slowing down. In 2018 alone, multiple attacks suspected to originate from China, Iran, Pakistan or Russia occurred alongside those by other anonymous perpetrators.[179] As the internet boom is swiftly taking over the African continent, so are cyber threats. Africa is not only becoming an increasing target of cyber-attacks but also a source. A report finds that the African continent could be seen as a more 'permissive environment for cyber criminals due to a lack of security capabilities', strong legislation and lack of awareness. There is a growing trend of targeting strategic sectors and critical infrastructure, which are vital for the functioning of a society. These include hospitals, government systems, energy grids, oil refineries, but also nuclear facilities. Cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure can have disastrous, potentially catastrophic effects. They can also result in civil unrest, government distrust and heating geopolitical tensions if state-sponsorship is suspected. Such attacks can risk paralysing a country, as illustrated in the 2015 attack on Ukraine's power grid right before Christmas Eve. The WEF rated cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure in particular as the fifth top global risk in 2020.[180]

Cyber-powered hybrid tactics are a serious menace to state institutions, electoral processes and citizens' respective trust in them. In February 2020, Georgia reported falling victim to a large-scale cyber-attack which compromised around 15 000 websites of government institutions (including the Georgian President's), newspapers, TV broadcasters and private businesses.[181] Georgian authorities in cooperation with international partners attributed the attack to Russia's military intelligence units.

Other examples include disruptions during the 2016 US Presidential election or during then-presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron's electoral campaign.

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[175] ENISA, Threat Landscape Report 2018, January 2019.

[176] World Economic Forum, The Global Risks Report 2020, January 2020.

[177] Center for Strategic and International Studies and McAffee, The Economic Impact of Cybercrime - No Slowing Down, February 2018.

[178] World Economic Forum, This is the crippling cost of cybercrime on corporations, November 2019.

[179] D. Fiott, Yearbook of European Security 2019, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2019.

[180] World Economic Forum, The Global Risks Report 2020, January 2020.

[181] G. Gotev, Georgia reports massive cyber-attack 'carried out by Russia', Euractiv, February 2020.

Cyber: Attack, security, deterrence, defence, and diplomacy

'Cyber' has been used as a prefix before several nouns such as attacks, crime, war, conflict, security, deterrence and defence. There are numerous definitions of cyber terms. **Cyber-attacks** constitute deliberate actions to disrupt or destroy online systems and property, from defacing websites to targeting elections.

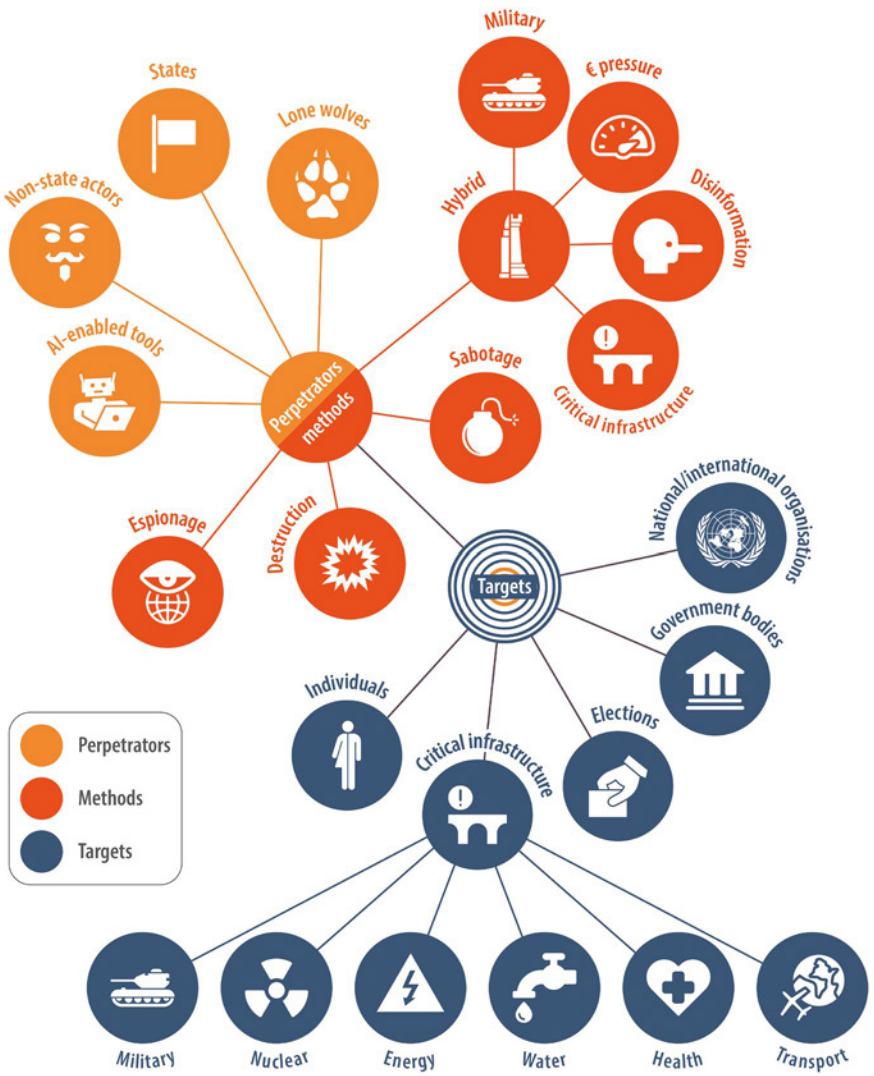
Though often used interchangeably, cybersecurity and cyber-defence signify different activities. **Cybersecurity** refers to activities regarding information and communication security, operational technology and the IT platforms required for digital assets. **Cyber defence** involves threat analyses, strategies and measures to protect against and counter cyber threats, usually undertaken by the military and defence sectors. In the EU institutions, cybersecurity mainly refers to civilian activities, while cyber defence refers to the military sphere.

Cyber-deterrence refers to measures taken to dissuade potential perpetrators, including through robust systems and sanctioning mechanisms.

Cyber diplomacy aims to secure multilateral agreements on cyber norms, responsible state and non-state behaviour in cyberspace, anchored in international law, and more effective global digital governance. The end-goal is to create an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace through alliances between like-minded countries, organisations, the private sector, civil society and experts.

What the specialised literature often documents as a push for 'cyber sovereignty' can easily escalate from resistance to international regulation into geopolitical tensions. The WEF argues that global interconnectivity, cooperation and interoperability are at stake. Cyber sovereignty or a digital arms race, could compromise the fragile progress on global cyber norms and even risk resulting into offensive deployments of disruptive technologies in order to 'win the race' (see more in Figure 25). The politicised discussions about 5G deployments since 2018 demonstrate this trend of geopolitical technological competition.

Figure 25 – Cyberspace landscape



Source: EPRS, 2020.

Lastly, the remaining legal ambiguities in cyberspace could also constitute a threat to peace and security particularly when malicious operations fall below the threshold of armed conflict. Although the UN Group of Governmental Experts and Open Ended Working Group are essential for 'advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace', globally-agreed international agreements or binding guidelines on rules of engagement are still lacking.[182] Countries still disagree on the applicability of international law when it comes to self-defence and counter-measures in cyberspace.[183]

[182] Microsoft, Protecting people in cyberspace: The Vital Role of the United Nations in 2020, 2019.

[183] F. Delerue et al. The application of international law in cyberspace: is there a European way?, EU CyberDirect, April 2019.

2.4.2. EU cybersecurity action

Europeans increasingly feel at risk of becoming victims of cybercrime. However, in 2020 the number of Europeans who feel more able to protect themselves is also increasing[184]. In 2017, over eight in ten (87 %) saw cybercrime as an important challenge.[185]

Cyberspace is now considered the fifth domain of warfare alongside the traditional sea, land, air and space domains. The EU Global Strategy itself begins by saying that 'our union is under threat'. This includes cyber threats.[186] The strategy pledges the EU to be a 'forward-looking cyber player' and explicitly seeks to support responsible state behaviour in cyberspace based on existing international law. Although since 2013 it has not formulated a cyber-specific strategy, in 2017 the EU undertook a wide array of cyber measures, comprised in the cybersecurity package. They include a permanent mandate for ENISA (the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, an EU cybersecurity certification framework, guidelines for fully implementing the Directive on the Security of Network and Information Systems, a blueprint for rapid emergency response, an EU-wide cyber research network and overall improvements in the responses and deterrence across the EU, among others.[187]

> **Cybersecurity of critical infrastructure: The case of energy**
>
> As energy systems become increasingly digitalised they also become more vulnerable to cyber-attacks. At the same time, as societies become more connected themselves, dependency on the electricity grid increases. Thus, modern societies depend on secure energy systems, making them a particularly attractive target for malicious actors, as the attack on Ukraine's electricity grids demonstrates. In this context the Commission has recommended providing guidelines for Member States to become more cyber resilient in the energy sector.

The EU's cyber landscape spreads across bodies such as ENISA, Europol – especially its Cyber Crime Centre – the EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Computer Emergency Response Team and the Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN). The EEAS and the EDA also play important roles, most notably on cyber defence, as regards cyber-related projects in PESCO and the EDF. Since 2017, the EU has crafted a 'cyber diplomacy toolbox'[188] establishing a framework for a joint diplomatic responses to malicious cyber activities. All EU Members currently have national cyber strategies and some also have subordinate ones on cyber defence.[189]

2.4.3. Cyber diplomacy: A European response to a global problem

Diplomacy has always been the preferred European response to security matters and disputes, now including cyber threats. The EU's cyber diplomacy toolbox equips it to both react to cyber incidents and to engage in capacity and capability building at home and abroad to ensure cyber resilience. Besides the aim to streamline cyber diplomacy across policies and engagements, the EU has more structured cyber cooperation[190] with its 10 strategic partners.[191] The EU also has cyber engagements with the African Union and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as

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[184] European Commission, Europeans' attitudes towards cyber security, Eurobarometer 499, January 2020.

[185] European Commission, Europeans' attitudes towards cybersecurity, 2017.

[186] European Union Global Strategy, 2016.

[187] European Commission, Joint Communication: Resilience, Deterrence and Defence: Building strong cybersecurity for the EU, 2017.

[188] Council of the EU, Framework for a Joint EU Diplomatic Response to Malicious Cyber Activities, 2017.

[189] ENISA, National Cyber Security Strategies, 2020.

[190] T. Renard, EU cyber partnerships: Assessing the EU strategic partnerships with third countries in the cyber domain, European Politics and Society, January 2018.

[191] Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States.

throughout the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods.[192] Since 2016, cyber has become a key area for EU-NATO cooperation.[193] This translates into cyber crisis management cooperation, but also in joint participation in cyber exercises such as the Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE) or Cyber Coalition 2019. The EU's Security and Defence College also opened its cyber training sessions to NATO staff in March 2019.[194] The von der Leyen Commission has made cybersecurity a top priority.[195] Although a cross-policy area par excellence, cyber is a key responsibility of the Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age, Margrethe Vestager.[196] The Commission's 2020 communication on 'Shaping Europe's digital future' outlines ways in which to increase Europe's cyber resilience while embracing digitalisation.[197]

The EU encourages and participates in multiple governmental alliances, public-private partnerships, academic consortia and mixed expert commissions to promote a safe and responsible cyberspace. Examples include the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace[198] – focused on cyber norms and responsible cyberspace behaviour; Microsoft's proposed Digital Geneva Convention[199] – proposing a cross-sector legally binding agreement; Siemens' and the Munich Security Conference's Charter of Trust initiative;[200] or French President Emmanuel Macron's Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace.[201] Despite the fragmented plethora of initiatives (see Figure 26), there is optimism about multi-stakeholder commitments to develop and uphold an open, safe and principled cyberspace.[202] The EU and its Member States actively promote several of these initiatives in different forms. For example, the EU's cybersecurity act includes a commitment to protecting the 'public core' of the internet, a norm developed by the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace.[203]

[192] EU CyberDirect, Cyber diplomacy in the EU, 2019.

[193] European External Action Service, EU-NATO cooperation, 2018.

[194] Fourth progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017, June 2019.

[195] European Commission, Speech by President-elect von der Leyen in the European Parliament Plenary on the occasion of the presentation of her College of Commissioners and their programme, November 2019.

[196] M. Scott, Margrethe Vestager's vast new powers, POLITICO, October 2019.

[197] European Commission, Shaping Europe's digital future, Communication, February 2020.

[198] Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace (GCSC).

[199] A Digital Geneva Convention to protect cyberspace, Microsoft, 2017.

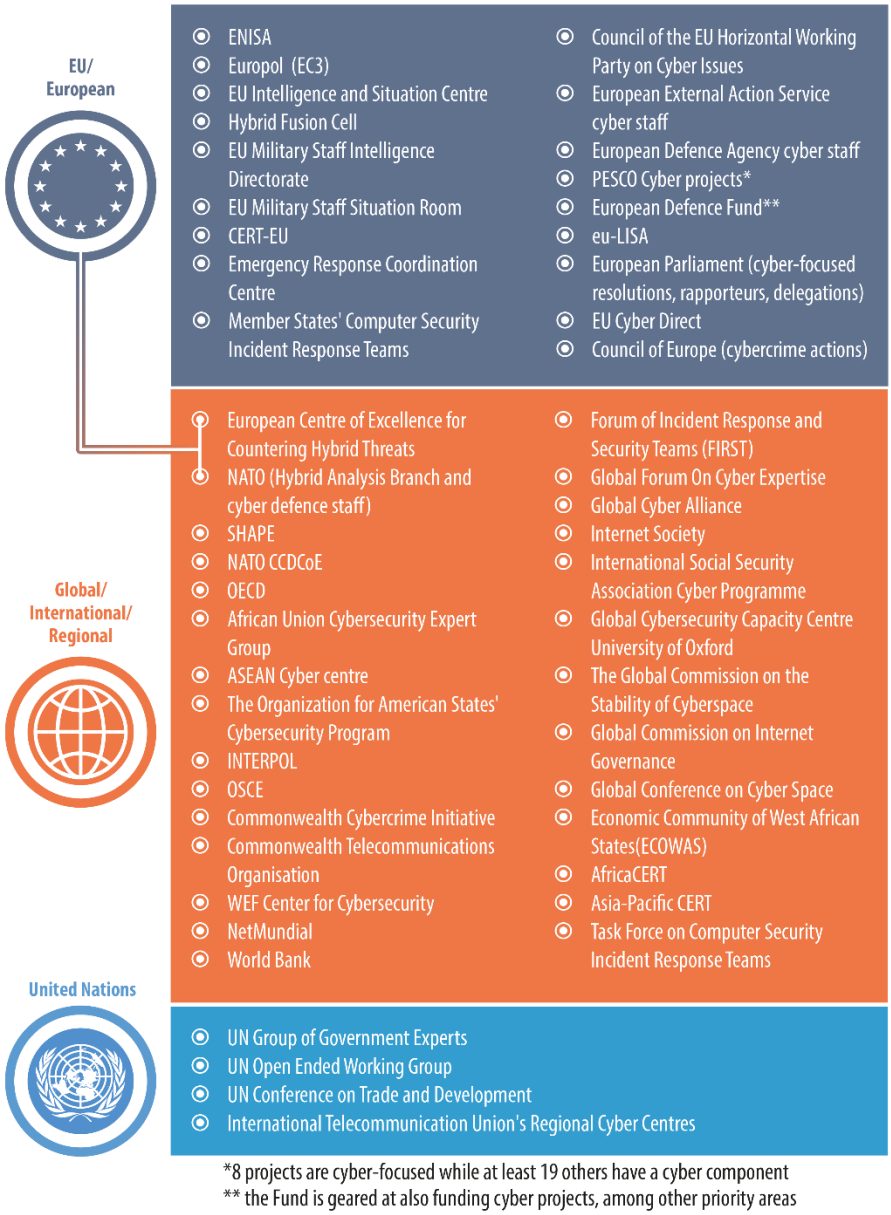
[200] Time for Action: Building a Consensus for Cybersecurity, Siemens, 2019.

[201] Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, 2018.

[202] C. Ruhl et al, Cyberspace and Geopolitics: Assessing Global Cybersecurity Norm Processes at a Crossroads, Carnegie Endowment, February 2020.

[203] European Union Embeds Protection of the public core of the internet in new EU cybersecurity act, GCSC, May 2019.

Figure 26 – Non-exhaustive mapping of cyber stakeholders



Source: EPRS, 2020.

Cyber diplomacy is also considered a tool of de-escalation. While allowing a response to a provocation or even attack, cyber measures may be used to avoid potentially escalatory military engagements.[204] Moreover, cyber tools also put pressure on export control regimes, as they are notoriously difficult to regulate – commercial IT tools can be easily weaponised and used for malicious purposes should they fall in the wrong hands. For its part, the EU is considering

[204] B. Jensen and B. Valeriano, What do we know about cyber escalation?, Atlantic Council, November 2019.

introducing cyber-surveillance technologies in its dual-use export control regime.[205] Cyber defence aspects in particular hold implications for the EU's solidarity and mutual assistance clauses, as well as for the functioning and protection of CSDP missions and operations.

The European Parliament has advocated robust EU measures in the cyber realm. In a June 2018 resolution focused on cyber defence, Parliament confirmed its commitment to an open, free and secure cyberspace, in respect of EU values. In March 2019, Parliament approved the Cybersecurity Act, establishing the first EU cyber-certification scheme and giving ENISA a permanent mandate. In January 2020, it called for increased EU efforts to confront cyber threats, deeming the active cooperation between the EU and NATO as vital. Lastly, it recalled that cyber-attacks 'could constitute sufficient ground for a Member State to invoke the EU Solidarity Clause (Article 222 of the TFEU)'.

[205] B. Immenkamp, Review of dual-use export controls, EPRS, European Parliament, November 2019.

2.5. Countering disinformation and foreign interference

79% of Europeans agree that the existence of news and information that misrepresents reality or is even false is a problem for democracy in general.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

The visibility of disinformation – defined by the European Commission as 'verifiably false or misleading information created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public' – has increased significantly in recent years. Following Russia's disinformation campaigns against Ukraine as part of Moscow's hybrid war against the country – including the illegal annexation of Crimea and activities in eastern Ukraine – it gained notoriety as a global challenge during the UK referendum on EU membership as well as the United States presidential election campaign in 2016. New waves of disinformation campaigns in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic signify that disinformation campaigns are not limited to democratic processes. Disinformation campaigns sow distrust, fear and confusion among audiences; manipulate public opinion; and undermine public trust in official information (including about health, as could be observed during the Covid-19 pandemic), democratic institutions and media. It can pit different groups in society against one another, stoke tension, spark fear and amplify underlying divisions.

2.5.1. Disinformation as a part of the authoritarian hybrid toolbox

Disinformation can be, and is being, combined with other instruments in an increasingly diverse, hybrid 'toolbox' that authoritarian state actors have at their disposal to impact political decision-making beyond their own political sphere. Autocracies generally struggle to project soft power – public diplomacy and dialogue on values, cultures and ideas, which is seen as most successful when it corresponds with the actor's behaviour abroad – and instead often turn to disruptive or destructive ('sharp') means. They see a means of reaching their goals by making democratic actors, systems and values appear less attractive and targeting perceived competitors' weaknesses through a number of overt and covert tools. In addition to information influence such as disinformation, hybrid threats include election interference, cyber threats, energy coercion and terrorism.[206]

Disinformation techniques are constantly evolving. Today, social media combines the oral tradition with new electronic means of dissemination, enabling (potentially disruptive) messages to spread instantaneously. In Europe, Russia's attacks against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine as of 2014 are among the clearest examples of hybrid warfare. Other cases of disinformation campaigns include the orchestrated spread of conspiracy theories in the wake of the March 2017 poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in the English town of Salisbury by two GRU-linked Russian assassins.[207] Moreover, as detailed in the box below, the Covid-19 pandemic was accompanied by significant waves of mis- and disinformation, which the World Health Organization (WHO) dubbed an 'infodemic'[208] – an over-abundance of information, some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it'.

[206] Countering hybrid threats, The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, accessed on 5 April 2020.

[207] G. Ramsay and S. Robertshaw, Weaponising news - RT, Sputnik and targeted disinformation, King's College London, March 2019.

[208] Novel Coronavirus(2019-nVoV) Situation report - 13, World Health Organization, 2 February 2020.

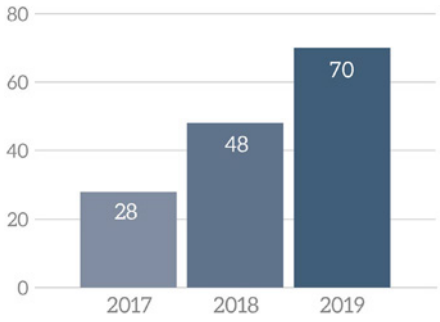
2.5.2. Growing evidence of online disinformation across the world

The Oxford Internet Institute (OII) has found increasing social media manipulation by governments and political parties across the world. According to OII, Facebook and Twitter found evidence of seven states engaging in information operations to influence foreign audiences in 2019: China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. However, 10 times as many countries are using such techniques to influence domestic audiences: In 2019, the institute found evidence of organised social media manipulation in 70 countries, compared to 48 countries in 2018 and 28 countries in 2017.[209]

At the same time, the use of algorithms, automation and big data to shape public life – 'computational propaganda' – was, according to the OII, used by 26 countries domestically to control information to suppress fundamental human rights, discredit political opponents and overpower dissent.

Russia is a well-known player in the field of hybrid warfare, disinformation and influence operations, and its techniques and narratives are well-documented.[210] As already mentioned, an increasing number of state actors are utilising and sophisticating such tools. Perhaps most prominently, China's use of social media to influence audiences abroad has evolved significantly over recent years. Whereas the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for years seemed to focus mainly on domestic platforms for computational propaganda, Beijing appears to have boosted its global media influence campaigns since 2017, increasing its activities across the world.[211] During the Hong Kong protests, the CCP began using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to control the narrative about the events.

Figure 27 – Evidence of a 150 % increase in countries using organised social media manipulation from 2017 to 2019



Data source: Oxford Internet Institute.

Whereas encrypted messaging services (such as the Facebook subsidiary WhatsApp) play an increasingly important role in spreading mis- and disinformation (for example, in recent elections in Brazil[212] and India[213]), Facebook remains the platform of choice for social media manipulation across the world, partly due to its global market dominance. With 2.5 billion users worldwide, Facebook is by far the most popular social network, followed by YouTube (2 billion users), WhatsApp (1.6 billion), WeChat (1.2 billion), Instagram (1 billion) and TikTok (800 million). Twitter has 340 million users.[214]

[209] In each of these countries, researchers found that there was at least one political party or government agency involved in using social media to influence public opinion.

[210] See for example the External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force.

[211] Beijing's global megaphone – the expansion of Chinese Communist Party media influence since 2017, Special Report, Freedom House, January 2020.

[212] What 100,000 WhatsApp messages reveal about misinformation in Brazil, First Draft, 27 June 2019.

[213] India had its first 'WhatsApp election'. We have a million messages from it, Columbia Journalism Review, 16 October 2019.

[214] Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2020, by number of active users, Statista, January 2020.

2.5.3. The EU's response to online disinformation

Liberal democratic governments are facing the dilemma of finding an efficient response to disinformation without undermining core democratic values such as freedom of expression. Rights groups are voicing increasing concern that the global fight against disinformation and 'fake news' is being used – primarily by authoritarian state actors – to pass draconian laws aiming to silence political dissent and limit freedom of speech and expression.

The coronavirus pandemic unleashes a 'battle of narratives'

The global health crisis sparked by the Covid-19 pandemic – hitting EU Member States Italy and Spain particularly hard – has raised considerable concern that a combination of disinformation and heavily promoted health diplomacy, echoed by local proxies in Europe, could potentially pave the way for wider influence in other sectors in the wake of the crisis. The prevalence of false information regarding health issues threatens to undermine trust in official health advice and institutions responsible for countering threats to public health, potentially posing a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of individuals. Mis- and disinformation in this area is nothing new - anti-vaccination movements have been spreading false information for many years. Russian bots and trolls have amplified both anti-vaccination and pro-vaccination groups online, thus increasing already existing divisions. The threats of health-relating messaging have been exacerbated by the current Covid-19 pandemic, during which conspiracy narratives have been a key part of the state-sponsored online disinformation campaigns accompanying the pandemic.

Both Moscow and Beijing seem to be driving parallel information campaigns, conveying the overall message that democratic state actors are failing and that European citizens cannot trust their health systems, whereas their authoritarian systems can save the world. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the CCP has made use of a string of official Twitter accounts – created for prominent CCP officials despite the platform being banned in China – to push conspiracy theories about the origins of Covid-19, in an attempt to shift the blame from China to abroad and to project the image of China as the world's health leader. Moreover, tens of thousands of suspected false Twitter accounts have been traced back to the CCP.

Responding to these influence campaigns, the EU's High Representative/Vice President, Josep Borrell, acknowledged the geopolitical components in what he called the 'politics of generosity'. He added that, in 'the battle of narratives, we have also seen attempts to discredit the EU as such and some instances where Europeans have been stigmatised as if all were carriers of the virus'. Major global tech companies – whose responsibility for the public debate has become particularly visible during the Covid-19 crisis – have demonstrated a significant willingness to cooperate with public health authorities and governments during the crisis. They have prioritised content from authoritative sources, offered free advertising to health authorities and made efforts to counter Covid-19 related scams.

In recent years, the EU has stepped up efforts to counter disinformation. In September 2015, the EEAS East StratCom Task Force (ESTF) was set up under the EEAS in response to the March 2015 European Council, which stressed the need to counter 'Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns'. The European Parliament has consistently pushed for proper staffing and 'adequate resources' for the StratCom Task Force and used all its tools, including resolutions and its budgetary powers, to this end.[215]

The European Commission included an initiative against fake online information in its 2018 work programme.[216] A March 2018 Eurobarometer survey indicated widespread public concern about the issue: 85 % of respondents saw 'fake news' as a problem in their country; 83 % saw it as a problem

[215] L. Amand-Eeckhout (ed.), The power of the European Parliament: Examples of EP impact during the 2014-19 legislative term, EPRS, European Parliament, April 2019.

[216] 2018 Commission work programme, European Commission, 24 October 2017.

for democracy.[217] Some 71 % of respondents to a Eurobarometer survey published in March 2020 said that they encounter fake news several times a month or more often. At least two thirds say they come across fake news at least once a week in Malta (73 %), France and Spain (both 66 %).[218] The Commission's April 2018 communication on 'Tackling online disinformation: a European approach' proposed creation of an independent network of fact-checkers, more media literacy to help citizens spot online disinformation, and boosted support for quality journalism. It also proposed an EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation with key online platforms, social networks and the advertisement industry. Published in September 2018, it aimed to reduce online disinformation by addressing five key areas:

- Better scrutiny of advert placements to demonetise the spreading of disinformation;
- Transparency of political/issue-based advertising, helping users identify promoted content;
- Closing fake accounts and increasing transparency about signal bot-driven interactions;
- Making it easier for users to discover and access trustworthy and diverse news sources;
- Empowering the research community by encouraging efforts to monitor online disinformation and supporting research on disinformation and political advertising.[219]

Moreover, EU institutions and Member States launched a Rapid Alert System in March 2019, to share information about disinformation.[220] In addition, a European cooperation network for elections was set up. To increase awareness and societal resilience, an observatory for social media analysis (SOMA) was created, and a European Media Literacy Week was launched.

The action plan also envisaged an increase of resources allocated to counter-disinformation efforts, notably the Strategic Communication Task Forces[221] and the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell in the EEAS. The budget for the former was increased from €1.9 million in 2018 to €5 million in 2019. In addition to the EEAS's East StratCom Task Force – which communicates the EU's policies in the Eastern Neighbourhood and identifies, compiles, and exposes disinformation cases originating in pro-Kremlin media and spread across the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries – the EEAS' monitoring and analytical capabilities also cover disinformation spread in the Western Balkans and the EU's southern neighbourhood. Moreover, the team has added disinformation operations originating in China as topic of interest in its overall work.[222]

[217] Final results of the Eurobarometer on fake news and online disinformation, 12 March 2018.

[218] Eurobarometer 503, Attitudes towards the impact of digitalisation on daily lives, March 2020.

[219] The signatories have submitted regular reports and a self-assessment of their progress ahead of the European elections. The Commission's final assessment of their conduct is expected in early 2020.

[220] European Parliament, Legislative train, Online platforms, the digital single market and disinformation.

[221] EUvsDisinfo.eu is the flagship project of the East StratCom Task Force, containing more than 6 500 samples of pro-Kremlin disinformation.

[222] The story of EUvsDisinfo, 22 April 2020.

Figure 28 – Overview of EU joint and coordinated action against disinformation.

Source: European Commission.

In the 14 June 2019 joint communication on the implementation of the action plan against disinformation, the Commission and the HR/VP concluded that, despite some progress made by the online platforms, more remains to be done: all online platforms need to provide more detailed information to facilitate the identification of malign actors and targeted Member States; intensify their cooperation with fact checkers and empower users to better detect disinformation; and give the research community meaningful access to data, in line with personal data protection rules.

In June 2019, European leaders called for sustained efforts to raise awareness, increase preparedness and strengthen the resilience of our democracies to disinformation. In her mission letter to Věra Jourová, President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, tasked the new Vice-President for Values and Transparency with 'building the resilience of our democratic systems', including working with all relevant Commissioners on 'countering disinformation and fake information, while preserving freedom of expression, freedom of the press and media pluralism'.[223]

The European Commission aims to launch a European democracy action plan in late 2020, to help improve the resilience of democracies and combat foreign interference in European elections. The strategy will aim at countering disinformation and at adapting to evolving threats and manipulations, as well as at supporting free and independent media. The EU action plan on human rights across the world plans support for independent and pluralistic media, access to information and the fight against disinformation, as well as promoting efforts to raise public awareness and stimulate public debate around actions to counter disinformation. Moreover, it envisages building on the EU's own efforts in this regard, including the action plan against disinformation, the Commission's electoral package, the code of practice on disinformation and the upcoming European democracy action plan.[224]

[223] Ursula von der Leyen, Mission letter to Věra Jourová, 1 December 2019.

[224] EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, Annex, 25 March 2020.

2.6. Combating terrorism

Counter-terrorism is seen as the most important aspect of cooperation with the UK after Brexit. Despite the frequency of terrorist attacks in the recent past, EU citizens do not perceive terrorism as an increasing threat.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Measured in terms of deaths, the fight against terrorism has recorded significant successes over the past few years. According to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index (GTI), between 2014 and 2018, deaths from terrorism decreased by 52 %, from 33 555 to 15 952 people.[225] The largest falls occurred in Iraq and Somalia and can be attributed to the defeat of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq, in which several EU Member States participated, and US-led airstrikes on Al-Shabaab. At the level of individual countries, the 98 countries' terrorism score improved, while 40 deteriorated. This is the highest number of countries to record a year-on-year improvement since 2004. However, terrorism is still widespread and is in fact spreading further, with 71 countries suffering from at least one death from terrorism in 2018. According to the GTI, this is the second highest number since 2000.

Over 95 % of deaths from terrorism are recorded in countries that already experience conflict. The 10 countries with the highest number of deaths from terrorism are all engaged in armed conflict. In 2018, Afghanistan replaced Iraq as the country most affected by terrorism, with deaths from terrorism more than doubling to 7 379 people. The Taliban, who were responsible for the vast majority of death from terrorism in Afghanistan in 2018, replaced ISIL/Da'esh as the deadliest terrorist group in the world. The other three countries to record a significant increase in deaths from terrorism are Nigeria, Mali and Mozambique. Due to the increase in deaths in Afghanistan, South Asia is the region most affected by terrorism, followed by sub-Saharan Africa. By contrast, Europe and the MENA region saw the biggest improvements concerning the impact of terrorism.

As deaths from religious-inspired terrorism have decreased, deaths from far-right political terrorism have seen a steep rise. In North America, Oceania and Western Europe far-right attacks increased by 320 % between 2014 and 2018. This trend has continued into 2019.

The threat of a terrorist attack comprising chemical, biological, radiological and/or nuclear (CBRN) elements has become a realistic scenario.[226] Repeated chemical attacks by both State and non-state actors in the Syrian conflict, the Novichok attack in Salisbury (UK), and foiled terror plots in France, Germany and Italy that involved chemical or biological agents have sharpened the EU's resolve to tackle the growing CBRN threat.[227] Moreover, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, even though it is believed to have occurred naturally, provides a real-life example of the potential for large-scale disruption of certain biological agents[228] and how a 'bio-terrorist attack might unfold in the world.'[229]

2.6.1. Terrorism in Europe

For Europe, the terrorist threat has grown significantly over the past two decades. Groups with an explicitly anti-Western and anti-European ideology, such as al-Qaeda and ISIL/Da'esh, have

[225] Institute for Economics and Peace, Global Terrorism Index 2019, November 2019.

[226] B. Immenkamp, ISIL/Da'esh and non-conventional weapons of terror, EPRS, European Parliament, May 2016.

[227] Europol, European Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019.

[228] Ellen Laipson, After the pandemic: COVID-19 exposes threat of biological warfare, Euractiv, 30 March 2020.

[229] COVID-19 pandemic provides "window" into how bio-terrorist attack might unfold in world: Guterres, The Economic Times, 10 April 2020.

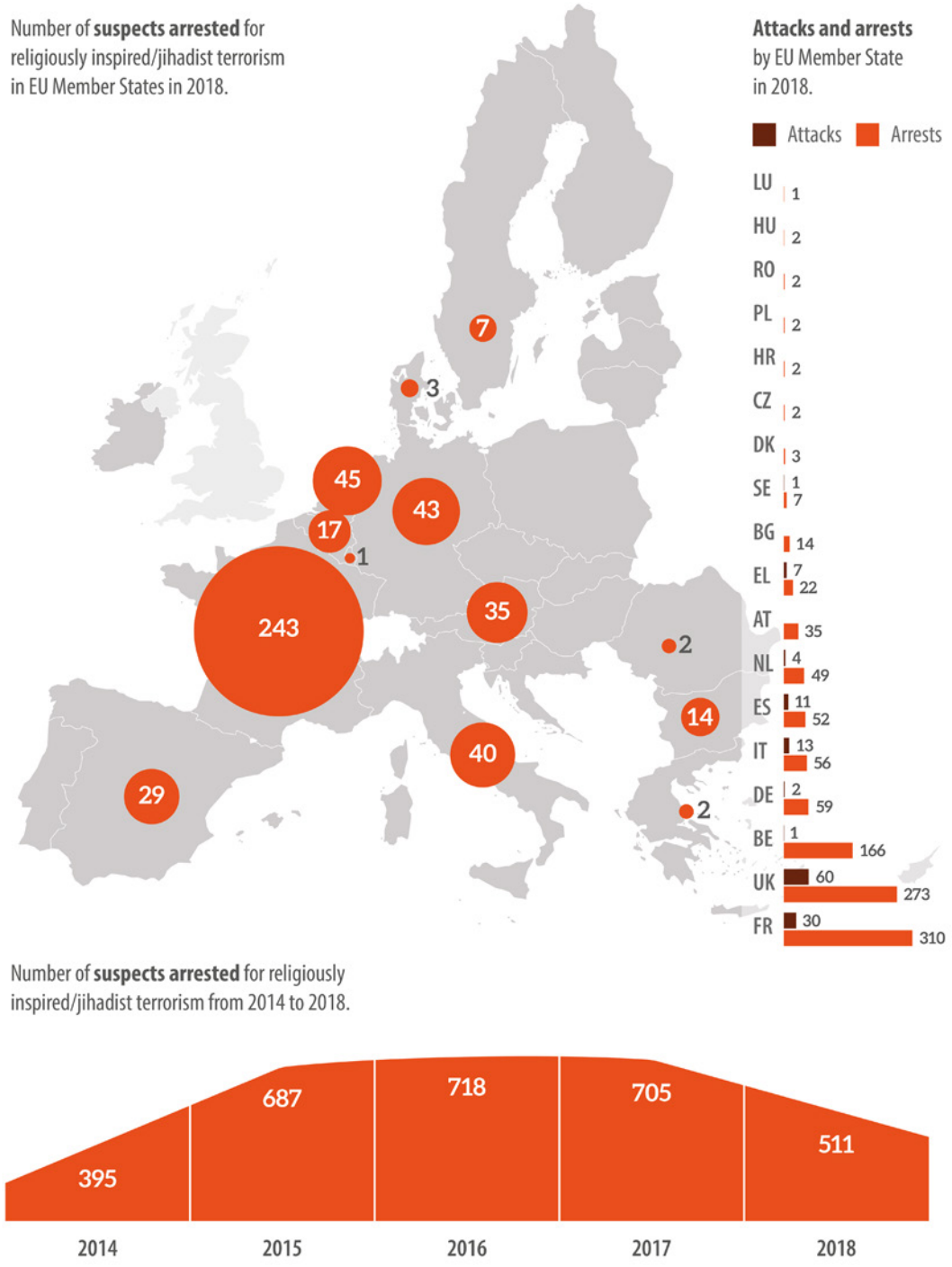
expanded in size and importance. Nevertheless, the number of deaths from terrorism fell for the second successive year, from over 200 people in 2017 to 62 in 2018. In the EU, deaths from terrorism fell to 13 people in 2018, with all fatalities the result of jihadist attacks. However, it is noticeable that arrests and attacks linked to right-wing terrorism have increased consistently over the same period (see Figure 29).

Virtually all terrorist acts that Europe has witnessed since 2004 have been perpetrated by individuals either directly linked to or inspired by extremist groups with centres outside Europe's borders. The realisation that there is a connection between internal and external security has come to shape EU action. The EU has therefore addressed the terrorist threat both within the EU and beyond its borders.

Primary responsibility for combating crime and ensuring security within the EU lies with the Member States. However, the EU provides tools to assist with cooperation, coordination and (to some extent) harmonisation between Member States. It also provides financial support to address this borderless phenomenon. EU spending in the area of counter-terrorism has increased over the years to provide for better cooperation between national law enforcement authorities and enhanced support from the EU bodies in charge of security. The many new rules and instruments that have been adopted since 2014 range from harmonising definitions of terrorist offences and sanctions, and sharing information and data, facilitating cooperation to prevent radicalisation, to protecting borders, countering terrorist financing and regulating firearms. Attention has also been devoted to the victims of terrorism, with the strengthening of legislation and the creation of new coordination mechanisms at EU level.

The EU has also stepped up cooperation with third countries to combat the terrorist threat, including through funding. There has been a marked increase in the exchange of information with third countries, and a counter-terrorism dialogue is now held with several countries, including in the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans and Turkey. Moreover, the EU provides certain countries with technical assistance and training to fight terrorism and has helped to set up a joint force in the Sahel region to fight terrorist and organised crime groups. Funds for these initiatives have come both from the EU budget and from individual Member States. Of particular relevance are the Union trust funds – multi-donor trust funds for emergency, post-emergency or thematic action that the Commission is entitled to launch and administer in the field of external action. The Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, set up in 2015, covers counter-terrorism-related expenses and helps partner countries improve their capacity to fight terrorism and organised crime.

Figure 29 – Terrorist Attacks and arrests, EU Member States (EU-28), 2018.



Data Source: Europol, 2019.

2.6.2. EU policy developments

The roots of EU counter-terrorism policy can be traced back to the TREVI group (*Terrorisme, Radicalisme, Extrémisme et Violence internationale*), an intergovernmental network of representatives of justice and home affairs ministries set up in 1976. Its subsequent development was however hugely influenced by the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA, which triggered the

perception of the terrorist threat as global and borderless. In the aftermath of 9/11, the EU adopted its first action plan and, in June 2002, a fundamental piece of legislation: the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism,[230] providing a common EU-wide definition of terrorist offences across Europe.

In 2005, following the Madrid and London attacks of 2004 and 2005, the EU adopted an overarching counter-terrorism strategy based on four pillars: prevention, protection, pursuit and response.[231] The strategy emphasised the importance of cooperating with non-EU countries and international institutions. In 2004, the EU appointed a counter-terrorism coordinator to monitor the strategy's implementation and support cooperation between Member States and with international partners. The strategy was last updated in 2014. The fight against terrorism is a main priority in broader strategic documents, such as the EU's internal security strategy,[232] adopted in 2010 and renewed in 2015.[233] It is also part of the EU Global Strategy adopted in 2016 with the aim of joining up internal and external policies.

The von der Leyen Commission will continue to focus on terrorism as a major threat. Following on from the priorities of the 2014-2019 Juncker Commission, the 2020 Commission work programme includes a new EU Security Union strategy aiming at setting out the areas where the Union can bring added value to support Member States in ensuring security. This new strategy will focus on combating terrorism, alongside other major threats such as organised crime, hybrid threats, cyber-attacks and attacks on critical infrastructure.[234] Achieving a 'genuine European Security Union' is one of the main tasks assigned to Margaritis Schinas, Commission Vice-President responsible for promoting the European way of life. His responsibilities also include ensuring coherence between the internal and external dimensions of security. In her political guidelines, Commission President von der Leyen underlined the need to improve cross-border cooperation to tackle gaps in the fight against serious crime and terrorism, including by reinforcing the powers of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) to allow investigation and prosecution of cross-border terrorism. She also pointed to new risks of money laundering and terrorist financing linked to the complexity of our financial system and called for better supervision. In her address to the Parliament in November 2019, von der Leyen focused on the need to ensure that law enforcement cooperation can deal with emerging threats. She asked the two Commissioners responsible to investigate whether Europol's current mandate is fit for purpose. During her hearing, Commissioner Ylva Johansson, responsible for home affairs, mentioned improving police cooperation, including with Europol, among her priorities, alongside fighting radicalisation and effectively implementing the laws already in place. Vice-President Schinas, for his part, committed to protecting Europeans online, with the adoption of the terrorist content online proposal.[235]

[230] Council Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism, 2002.

[231] Counter-terrorism strategy, 2005.

[232] EU internal security strategy, 2015.

[233] European agenda on security, 2015.

[234] Commission Work Programme 2020 - A Union that strives for more, 29 January 2020.

[235] E. Bassot, The von der Leyen Commission's priorities for 2019-2024, EPRS, European Parliament, January 2020.

2.6.3. International cooperation

Support for victims of terrorism

Protecting and supporting victims of terrorism has been an essential part of the measures the Commission has put in place to address all aspects of the terrorist threat. Several strategic documents, including the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the European Agenda on Security, highlighted the importance of solidarity, assistance and compensation for victims, regardless of where in the EU a terrorist attack has taken place. The legal framework has been strengthened through a series of directives. Victim of terrorism have the right to immediate access to medical and psychological support as well as information on legal, practical and financial measures.

The Commission has established a European Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism (NAVT) aimed at fostering cross-border cooperation between associations of victims of terrorist attacks in the Member States, and at enhancing the defence of victims' rights at European level. Moreover, in January 2020, the Commission set up the EU Centre of Expertise for Victims of Terrorism. The EU Centre will help to ensure that the EU rules on victims of terrorism are correctly applied. The idea behind the two-year pilot project is to promote exchanges of best practices and sharing of expertise among practitioners and specialists throughout the EU. The Centre will not provide direct help and assistance to particular victims of terrorism, but it will help to ensure that national structures offer professional assistance and support to victims of terrorism in every EU country.

In the fight against terrorism, the EU cooperates with international organisations and bodies including the United Nations (UN), the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Global Coalition against Da'esh, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Council of Europe. The EU is actively implementing the UN's global counter-terrorism strategy[236]adopted in 2006, and relevant UN Security Council resolutions and sanctions regimes for suspected terrorists (individuals or groups). The EU has acceded to the 19 UN conventions dealing with terrorism that have been issued since 1963. The UN has set standards on preventing and combating terrorism, including criminal law measures and tools to address terrorist financing, as well as foreign terrorist fighters. The EU and seven individual Member States belong to the Global Counterterrorism Forum, an informal, multilateral counter-terrorism platform launched in 2011 to promote a strategic long-term approach to counter terrorism and the violent extremist ideologies that underpin it. The EU and 27 individual Member States are members of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, set up in 2014 to counter the group's spread and ensure its defeat. In addition to military campaigns in Iraq and Syria, the coalition seeks to tackle Da'esh's financing infrastructure, counter its propaganda and stem the flow of foreign fighters. The EU strategy for Syria[237] adopted in 2017 (and re-endorsed in 2018) and the EU strategy for Iraq,[238] adopted in 2018, are also part of the EU's efforts to combat Da'esh. The FATF issues anti-money laundering (AML) recommendations that also cover terrorist financing and that are recognised and implemented by many countries around the world. The EU has implemented the FATF's recommendations through successive AML directives. The Council of Europe (CoE) has adopted several major conventions setting legal standards on law enforcement and human rights in the area of counterterrorism. In 2018, the EU ratified the CoE Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, as well as its Additional Protocol. The convention aims at strengthening the fight against terrorism, while reaffirming that all measures taken to prevent or suppress terrorist offences must uphold the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU cooperates bilaterally with third countries in the field of counterterrorism. Since 2001, the EU has included

[236] UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, United Nations, 2006.

[237] EU Strategy for Syria, 2017.

[238] EU Strategy for Iraq, 2018.

counter-terrorism clauses in bilateral and multilateral agreements, such as the partnership and cooperation agreements, association agreements, and stabilisation and association agreements with the Western Balkans countries. The scope of the agreements differ, but the provisions on countering terrorism are phrased similarly and include references to the relevant UN resolutions and to the sharing of information and best practices. The EU has also concluded sectoral agreements with non-EU countries (on police and judicial cooperation). These include counter-terrorism objectives: mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements, passenger name record (PNR) agreements, and Europol and Eurojust cooperation agreements. In 2010, the EU concluded the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) Agreement[239] with the USA on the exchange of financial information to allow law enforcement agencies access to financial transaction data. Specific counterterrorism action plans[240] are meanwhile in place with Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel and Tunisia, and the Western Balkans.

2.6.4. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence

The EU's long-term response to the CBRN threat has three elements: legal, political and operational. EU Member States are signatories to the international treaty regime of non-proliferation conventions concerning nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. In addition, the EU actively promotes the universalisation of these conventions.

At the political level, the EU has been part of several global initiatives, including the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which establishes legally binding obligations on all UN Member States to have and enforce appropriate and effective measures against the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and the setting up of The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), the G7 Non-Proliferation Directors' Group and Global Partnership, and the Nuclear Security Summit. At the operational level, in 2009-2010, the EU launched the Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE), and adopted a five-year EU CBRN action plan and the EU policy on enhancing the security of explosives. There are eight CBRN centres of excellence around the world, seeking to strengthen the institutional capacity of countries outside the European Union to mitigate CBRN risks.

Following the successful implementation of the first CBRN action plan, the European Commission published a second CBRN action plan in October 2017.[241] The plan provides the policy framework for strengthening security against CBRN risks and threats throughout the EU. It proposes 23 practical actions and measures aimed at better protection citizens and infrastructures against CBRN-threats, including through closer cooperation between the EU and its Member States, as well as with the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The Salisbury attack in the UK, in particular, gave impetus to the EU's resolve to counter the growing CBRN threat. In March 2018, the European Council called for strengthening the EU's resilience to CBRN-related risks, including through closer cooperation between the EU and its Member States, as well as NATO. In June 2018, the Commission followed up with a joint communication on increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats, setting out additional measures to address the 'developing and evolving' CBRN threat.[242] In October 2018, the European Council committed to further strengthen the EU's deterrence and its resilience against CBRN threats.[243]

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[239] EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) Agreement, 2013.

[240] EU actions to counter Da'esh, 2018.

[241] European Commission, Action Plan to enhance preparedness against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security risks, 18 October 2017.

[242] European Commission, Joint Communication on increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats, 13 June 2016.

[243] European Council conclusions, Internal security, 18 October 2018.

Moreover, on 15 October 2018, the Council adopted a horizontal sanctions regime to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.[244] This allows the EU to impose sanctions on persons and entities involved in the development and use of chemical weapons anywhere, regardless of their nationality and location.

The Council made use of this new measure for the first time on 21 January 2019, when it imposed sanctions on nine persons and one entity. Those designated include the Russian officials responsible for possession, transport and use in Salisbury of a toxic nerve agent on the weekend of 4 March 2018. Sanctions were also imposed on the Syrian entity responsible for the development and production of chemical weapons, the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), as well as five Syrian officials directly involved in the SSRC's activities. The SSRC was already listed under the Syria sanctions regime.[245]The 2017 EU Directive on Combating Terrorism, for which the European Parliament was the co-legislator, includes for the first time provisions on all strands of CBRN terrorism.

In 2017, the European Parliament convened a Special Committee on Terrorism (TERR). In its final report, TERR highlighted the threat of terrorist use of CBRN materials and called for the uniform use of certain standardised naming conventions in the online sale of chemical substances.[246] In November 2018, Parliament's Security and Defence Committee (SEDE) convened a workshop on EU preparedness against CBRN weapons.[247]

The EU has created the Union Civil Protection Mechanism as a common instrument to tackle the consequences of a natural disaster or a man-made crisis, including a terrorist attack, in one or several EU Member States. Since its first inception in 1985, the mechanism has evolved; today, its main role is described as 'facilitating cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies'. However, experts have questioned the mechanism's effectiveness in tackling the consequences of a major terrorist attack involving CBRN or a CBRN offensive by a state actor.[248]

[244] Council of the EU, Chemical weapons: the Council adopts a new sanctions regime, 15 October 2018; The sanctions regime was renewed on 14 October 2019 and extended until 16 October 2020.

[245] Council of the EU, Chemical weapons: the EU places nine persons and one entity under new sanctions regime, 21 January 2019.

[246] European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2018 on findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on Terrorism.

[247] Security and Defence Subcommittee, EU preparedness against CBRN weapons, 29 January 2019.

[248] Ch. Kaunert, S. Leonard, I. Yakubov, EU Civil Protection responding to CBRN Incidents and Attacks, European Parliament, April 2018.

Legislation and Agreements in the past five years

Harmonising criminal law: in March 2017, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Directive on Combating Terrorism to update the 2002 framework and to implement new international standards. Among other things, the directive adds new provisions on the rights and needs of victims of terrorist attacks.

Combating terrorism financing: the Fifth Anti-Money-Laundering Directive complements the existing EU framework for combating money laundering and terrorist financing. Several other pieces of legislation harmonise or update existing rules: a Directive on countering money laundering by criminal law, a Directive on facilitating the use of financial and other information, a Regulation on controls on cash entering or leaving the Union and a Regulation on the mutual recognition of freezing and confiscation orders.

Regulating weapons: a Directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons and a Regulation on deactivation standards to ensure that deactivated firearms are rendered irreversibly inoperable, prevent terrorists from easily acquiring firearms or reactivating de-activated ones.

Fighting the misuse of chemicals: to make it more difficult for terrorists to obtain access to chemical substances that can be used for the production of home-made explosives, the co-legislators updated a regulation on the marketing and use of explosive precursors.

Protecting EU borders: to prevent terrorists from circulating freely within the EU, several countries have introduced temporary controls at their borders, and the Commission has proposed new rules on the possibility to adopt such temporary measures.

Exchanging information: data is an important tool in the fight against terrorism, but it is crucial that law enforcement authorities in different EU countries share information. Several steps have been taken to enhance the collection and exchange of data. These include the EU Passenger Name Record Directive of April 2016, which established an EU system to collect flight passenger data in order to detect suspicious travel and counter the foreign fighters' phenomenon.

Enhancing cybersecurity: EU legislators have taken important steps to increase the Union's resilience to cyber-attacks (see relevant chapter).

Exchange of information with third countries: Europol has concluded operational agreements with non-EU countries, allowing for the exchange of information. Since 2015, new agreements have been concluded with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Georgia and Ukraine. Europol also reached strategic agreements with Brazil, China and the United Arab Emirates. In 2018, the Council authorised the opening of negotiations for agreements with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. The Commission has added New Zealand to the list of priority countries and introduced a proposal to open negotiations for an agreement on the exchange of personal data.

Support for joint forces in the Sahel: the G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad – are increasingly threatened by terrorists and organised crime groups involving trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings. To help address the situation, the EU contributed nearly €150 million to help set up a Joint Force of the countries concerned, comprising 5 000 troops. The EU has also deployed two civilian capacity building missions and one military training mission to Niger and Mali.

EU counter-terrorism dialogues are held with a number of countries; since 2015, the focus has been on counter-terrorism cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, the Balkans and Turkey.

Counter-terrorism capacity building: the EU provides certain countries with technical assistance and training, including support for counter-terrorism capacity building efforts and CVE (countering violent extremism) initiatives.

EU-US cooperation: the USA is the EU's main partner in the field of counter-terrorism. There is substantial political dialogue on justice and home affairs issues, including counter-terrorism, with regular meetings at ministerial and senior official level.

2.7. Tackling energy insecurity

Almost nine in ten Europeans (88%) agree it is necessary to reinforce EU cooperation across borders and solidarity between Member States in the event of energy crises to ensure access to secure energy.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Energy security, defined by the International Energy Agency as 'reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources',[249] is often taken for granted by consumers and businesses. However, even a partial disruption to supplies can have a devastating impact. In 1973, Arab oil producers imposed an embargo on western countries supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur war, causing oil prices to quadruple. The economic effects included galloping inflation, a stock market crash and global recession. In the UK, energy shortages led to strikes and the fall of the government. For energy-importing countries, the crisis highlighted their vulnerability to pressure from suppliers. With a large share of the world's hydrocarbon reserves located in volatile regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, energy supplies also risk being disrupted by political instability.

2.7.1. Energy security in a globalised world

Fortunately, energy embargoes are extremely rare in peacetime, and the 1970s oil crisis has never been repeated. Energy exporters, such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, are just as dependent as importers, such as EU countries and China, on continued trade; given that hydrocarbons generate over half of Russian exports, and three-quarters of Saudi Arabia's,[250] the economies of these two countries would very quickly collapse were they to stop selling oil and gas.

Globalised markets mean that oil, like most other commodities, can be flexibly transported and traded across the world. Given that practically any oil producer can export to any market, imposing an effective embargo has become practically impossible, even on a country like North Korea that is subject to international sanctions.[251] As the world's reserves showing no signs of running out, oil remains cheap and plentiful. Although supplies from some of the world's leading producers – such as Iran, Iraq and Venezuela – have been disrupted by regional instability and international tensions, importers still have plenty of alternatives to choose from. Even the recent escalating confrontation between the USA and Iran, or the September 2019 drone attack on Saudi oil facilities, had only a limited and short-lived impact on global oil prices.

However, not all fuel markets are as flexible as this. Natural gas is usually transported through pipelines, which are expensive and take years to build. Gas is often supplied on the basis of long-term contracts, ensuring that exporters can recuperate pipeline construction costs. Moreover, pipelines are only economically viable up to a certain distance, which in practice limits suppliers to neighbours or near neighbours. For these reasons, gas importers have only a limited choice of suppliers, and cannot flexibly switch from one to another. Whereas most countries' oil imports are fairly diversified, it is not unusual to be almost completely dependent on a single gas supplier; in 2018, Serbia, Latvia, Armenia and Mongolia were among several countries importing 80 % or more of their gas from Russia.

[249] Energy Security, International Energy Agency.

[250] Data from UN Comtrade.

[251] Is a full oil embargo against North Korea even possible? South China Morning Post, January 2018.

Despite being major importers of natural gas, India, Japan and Korea are not connected to pipelines. Instead, they rely on liquefied natural gas (LNG), which as its name suggests, is created by compressing natural gas into a liquid. Gas in this form can be transported by ship regardless of distance, opening the door to imports from countries such as Qatar, the United States and even Australia. This has also become an option for countries mainly reliant on pipeline gas, but wanting to diversify their suppliers: in Europe, Lithuania started importing LNG in 2014, and Poland in 2016.

However, LNG is not always an ideal solution. Expensive purpose-built LNG carrier ships are needed, as is land-based infrastructure in the form of terminals where the fuel can be unloaded and reconverted to gaseous form before feeding into the importer country's distribution pipelines. As a result, it tends to be more expensive than pipeline gas, although plentiful global supplies (not least due to the development of US shale gas) have helped to narrow the gap. It is also more polluting, as shipping and liquefaction generate additional emissions. For these reasons, LNG still only represents a minority share of gas imports by countries with pipeline connections – around 12 % in the EU.[252]

From an energy security perspective, nuclear energy offers several advantages. Like oil, uranium is abundant and can be traded flexibly, making it easy to diversify supplies. Moreover, fuel can easily be stockpiled; in 2018, the Euratom supply agency calculated that EU nuclear power stations had enough uranium to last an average three years.[253] However, the problem of disposing of nuclear waste and post-Fukushima safety concerns deter wider use of nuclear energy.

Many countries are investing heavily in energy efficiency and renewable sources. Apart from their environmental benefits, both help to cut reliance on energy imports – energy efficiency because it reduces overall energy consumption, and renewable energy because it can be produced locally. However, renewable energy requires high initial investment. In addition, electricity production from wind and solar power inevitably depends on weather conditions. Batteries and other technologies can store surplus electricity so that it is available for periods of low output, but are still very expensive. In the longer term, technological advances should help to solve this problem by bringing the cost of electricity storage down to a viable level.

2.7.2. Energy security as a challenge for the EU

Although Europe has some energy resources of its own, these are far from being enough to meet demand. In 2017, the EU had to import over half (55 %) of its total energy consumption (see Figure 30).[254] The share of imports rises to 87 % for crude oil and 70 % for natural gas, which are the two biggest components of the energy mix. Since 1990, when only 40 % of energy was imported, energy dependence has increased. On the one hand, the EU's total energy consumption is declining (thanks to more efficient energy use), and the contribution from renewable energy is growing. On the other, many EU countries are moving away from nuclear energy and polluting coal, and renewable energy – which still only accounts for one-seventh of total EU energy consumption – is not yet ready to take up the slack (see Figure 31). Therefore, gas consumption is rising, at the same time as the EU's own production of gas, for example in the North Sea, is in steep decline. The result is a sharp rise in gas imports, and with it, continued high overall energy dependence.

[252] Imports - gas - monthly data (measured by gross calorific value, Eurostat (2019 data).

[253] EURATOM Supply Agency Annual Report 2018.

[254] From where do we import energy and how dependent are we?, Eurostat.

Figure 30 – EU energy dependence

% of EU energy consumption covered by imports

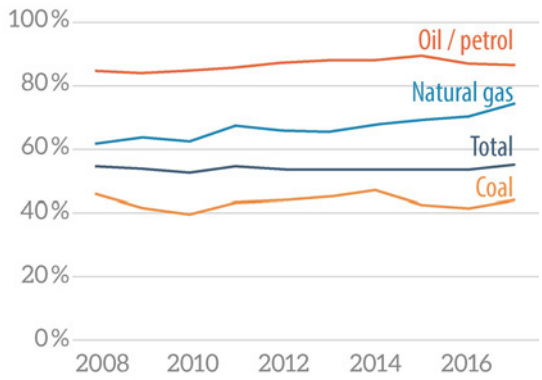
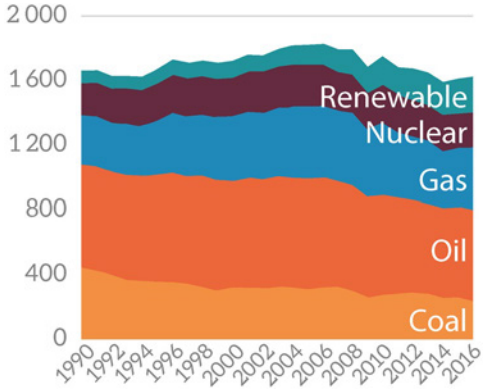


Figure 31 – EU energy consumption

Million tonnes oil equivalent



Data source: Eurostat (energy dependence; energy mix).

The EU imports nearly all of its oil, most of its gas, and slightly over half of its total energy needs. The share of renewable sources in the energy mix is rising, but fossil fuels are still dominant. Coal and oil are in decline, but gas consumption is rising.

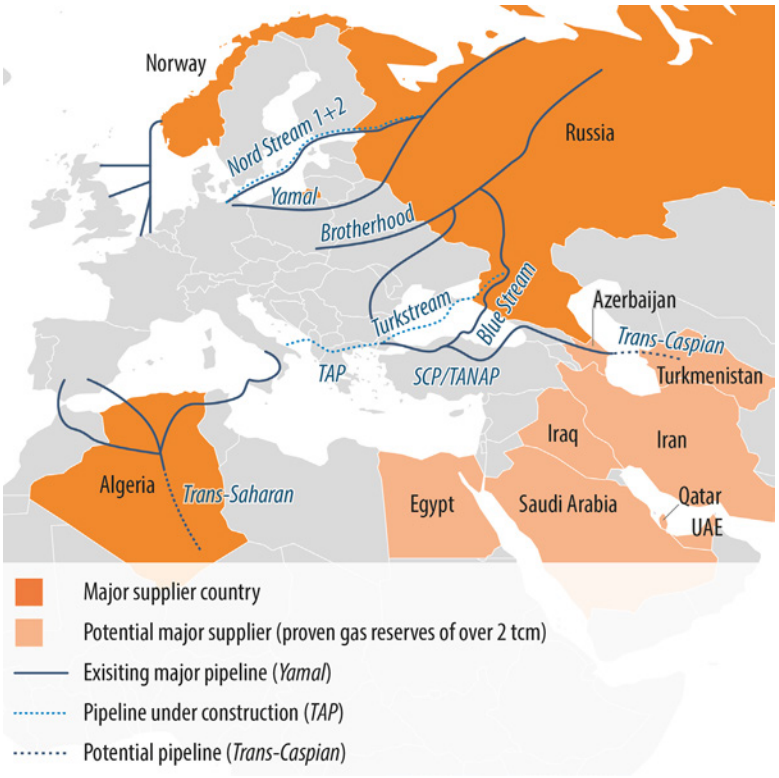
The EU's need for imported gas is a cause for concern. As explained in the previous section, diversifying gas supplies is often difficult due to the need for pipelines; in the EU's case, over two-thirds of gas imports come from just two countries, Russia (39 %) and Norway (30 %). Five EU countries (Finland, Bulgaria, and the Baltic States) import over 90 % of their gas from Russia.

Russia's gas exports are particularly vulnerable to disruption due to its problematic relations with Ukraine, the main transit country for Russian gas delivered to Europe. In 2008, the two countries were unable to agree on the price at which gas was to be sold to Ukraine, which had problems paying for its imports. As a result, in January 2009, Russian gas exporter Gazprom closed the taps on all its pipelines entering Ukraine, leaving Ukrainian purchasers and many in downstream countries such as Hungary and Bulgaria without gas for several days in the middle of winter. This short-lived but acute crisis highlighted the dangers of reliance on a single supplier. Such concerns have become even more pressing since 2014, with Moscow's annexation of Crimea leading to a sharp deterioration in its relations with both Kyiv and Brussels. So far EU supplies have not been affected.

Since the 1990s, Russia has diverted some of its European gas exports away from the Ukrainian route to new pipelines such as Yamal (via Belarus and Poland) and Nord Stream, which started operating in 2011 and connects Germany and Russia directly under the Baltic Sea. Following a similar route, Nord Stream 2 is at an advanced stage of construction, while the new TurkStream pipeline linking Russia to Turkey is expected to also supply south-eastern Europe, when completed.

The implication of the new pipelines for EU energy security is that most Russian gas will no longer need to pass through Ukraine, hence importers will not have to worry about recurrent disputes between Kyiv and Moscow disrupting supplies. Russia's massive investments in pipeline projects reflects the extent to which its gas sector needs to export to Europe; notwithstanding tensions, the prospect that Russia could hold Europe to ransom by withholding gas is a very remote one. However, there are at least two scenarios which could make EU gas imports even less diversified than at present. In the first, additional pipeline capacity could enable Gazprom to flood European markets with cheap gas, squeezing out other suppliers. In the second, Gazprom could decide to downgrade the Ukraine route or even abandon it altogether, leaving most EU imports concentrated on a single supply route, via the Nord Stream pipelines.

Figure 32 – The EU's main gas supplier countries and supply routes



Source: EPRS. Existing major pipelines based on ENTSOG Transparency Platform.

Gazprom's new pipelines also have important geopolitical implications, strengthening Russia at the expense of the EU and its allies. For Ukraine, they mean the potential loss of billions of dollars in gas transit fees – a serious blow to its ailing economy. Transatlantic relations have also suffered, following US sanctions adopted in December 2019 against companies laying the Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream pipelines. These measures have come too late to affect TurkStream, which is already complete, but have delayed Nord Stream 2. Although it has not been enthusiastic about Nord Stream 2, the European Commission criticised the US sanctions, as did the German government, which sees them as unjustified interference in European internal affairs.[255]

Transatlantic critics in particular argue that the EU's reliance on Russian gas imports makes it a less united and principled actor vis-à-vis its main supplier than it could otherwise be. The US Department of Energy has even described American LNG exports to Europe as 'freedom gas', liberating the continent from its dependence on Moscow.[256] For such observers, the EU's decision in 2014 (unlike the United States) to exempt the Russian gas sector from economic sanctions, and its disunity over Nord Stream 2, are signs of weakness.

Not all European observers would agree with this point of view: after all, though narrower in scope than US measures, EU sanctions have had a considerable impact on Russia's economy. However, the controversy around Nord Stream 2 highlights the extent to which the EU, an economic giant dependent on multiple energy suppliers, remains a 'Gulliver in chains', as the European Commission put it in 2000.[257] Energy

Coronavirus and EU energy supplies

In the short term, demand for energy has slumped in Europe and elsewhere, as a result of the coronavirus lockdown measures. Markets are now over-supplied with oil and gas, and energy prices have collapsed.

The longer term impact is harder to predict. On the one hand, a severe economic downturn will mean that energy consumption remains low. On the other, cheap and plentiful hydrocarbons reduce the incentive for EU efforts to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, thus perpetuating dependence on imported fossil fuels.

[255] European Commission President Criticizes U.S. Nord Stream Sanctions, RFE/RL, December 2019

[256] The LNG moment: How US production could change more than just markets, Atlantic Council, 2019.

[257] Green Paper - Towards a European strategy for the security of energy supply, European Commission, 2000.

insecurity has been identified by the Global Strategy[258] and by the Normandy Index as one of the EU's main external vulnerabilities.[259]

2.7.3. EU action to counter energy insecurity

The EU is a global leader in promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency. In 2007, European leaders agreed to ambitious targets in both areas, and efforts are likely to be further intensified following the European Commission's December 2019 Green Deal, which sets the goal of the EU becoming carbon-neutral by 2050. Already, 14 % of energy consumed in the EU comes from mostly European renewable sources, and total energy consumption is declining.[260] In the longer term, these two trends should make the EU less dependent on imports.

However, constraints on renewable energy storage will mean continued reliance on fossil fuels for the short and medium term. The EU has therefore also taken action to secure oil and gas supplies, using the legal basis provided by the Lisbon Treaty, which gives the EU a role in promoting European energy security. Spurred by the 2009 gas crisis, the EU adopted new legislation, such as the 2017 Security of Gas Supply Regulation,[261] which among other things creates mechanisms for sharing gas between Member States in the event of a crisis.[262] Regulatory measures are flanked by the construction of physical infrastructure, such as reverse flow and interconnector pipelines allowing gas to be transported more flexibly from one country to another. In 2014-2020, the EU allocated €5.35 billion from its Connecting European Facility to support energy investments such as new pipelines and electricity cables linking EU countries and their neighbours, gas storage facilities and LNG terminals.[263]

Energy security in the EU's neighbourhood

Like the EU itself, most of its European neighbours rely on imported fossil fuels, including natural gas from Russia. Three Eastern European and six Western Balkan countries have joined the EU's Energy Community, which helps them to become more energy secure by encouraging them to adopt EU energy rules and integrate into EU energy markets. EU funding also finances energy infrastructure such as new interconnecting electricity cables and gas pipelines.

The EU has energy dialogues with countries such as Algeria, an important gas supplier. European loans and grants helped to develop the TANAP pipeline, part of the Southern Gas Corridor, which is due to start bringing Azeri gas to south-eastern Europe, starting in 2020. Energy clauses also feature in EU political and economic agreements, such as the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which includes a commitment to maintain continuity of supply.

The EU plays a leading role in managing relations with external energy suppliers. Although a 2014 proposal by then Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk for joint European gas purchases never got off the ground, the EU has been active in enforcing compliance with single market rules. An investigation launched by the European Commission in 2012 found evidence that Gazprom had abused its dominant position on European gas markets, with the result that five countries were paying unjustifiably high prices.[264] Threatened with a heavy fine for violating EU competition law, Gazprom promised to mend its ways in 2018. The EU also insists that Nord Stream 2, once it starts

[258] European Union Global Strategy, 2016.

[259] E. Lazarou and P. Perchoc, Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Introduction to the Normandy Index, EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

[260] Where does our energy come from? Eurostat.

[261] Securing Europe's gas supply: new Regulation comes into force, European Commission, 2017.

[262] Sharing gas to ensure gas for all, European Parliament, 2017.

[263] CEF Energy, European Commission.

[264] Antitrust: Commission sends Statement of Objections to Gazprom for alleged abuse of dominance on Central and Eastern European gas supply markets, European Commission, 2015.

operating, will have to respect EU rules which prohibit Gazprom from owning the pipeline and simultaneously supplying gas through it.

2.7.4. Prospects for European energy security

In its 2014 European energy security strategy, the European Commission points to the fact that there has been no lasting disruption of supplies since the 1970s as evidence that energy security measures have succeeded.[265] Nevertheless, energy security remains a concern, while there are both positive and negative trends. In the longer term, renewable energy gives the EU an opportunity to develop its own sources of clean energy, but until that happens, it will continue to import most of its energy.

The EU is continuing efforts to diversify its energy imports. However, Russia is likely to remain the EU's main supplier of energy, and gas in particular. As LNG is too expensive, Algeria and Azerbaijan do not have the capacity to cover more than a small share of EU demand, Iran remains off-limits, while a trans-Caspian pipeline connecting to Turkmenistan's huge reserves is only a distant prospect due to legal and financial obstacles, many European countries remain heavily dependent on Russian gas. However, most of them are now better prepared to cope with potential supply disruptions than they were in 2009; for example, Lithuania has built an LNG terminal, while Latvia has expanded its gas coverage capacity. EU gas markets have become more integrated: according to one report, as much as 75 % of gas in the EU is consumed in a competitive and well-functioning market, in which gas can be flexibly routed to countries and regions where the need is greatest.[266]

Russia's energy clout gives it political leverage over EU countries. Because of Member States' divergent energy interests, forging a coherent EU position is often difficult. However, the EU's dealings with powerful companies such as Gazprom demonstrate that, in energy as in other aspects of external policy, the EU is stronger when it speaks with one voice.

[265] European Energy Security Strategy, European Commission Communication COM/2014/0330 final

[266] P. Zeniewski, A long-term view of natural gas security in the European Union, IEA, 2019.

2.8. Mitigating the security impact of climate change

93% of Europeans think climate change is a serious problem and 60% think climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world. Climate change has overtaken international terrorism as the second most serious problem after poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

The EU Global Strategy states that 'Climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate potential conflict, in light of their impact on desertification, land degradation, and water and food scarcity'. The Strategy considers climate change to be 'a threat multiplier that catalyses water and food scarcity, pandemics and displacement'. Empirical evidence and the voice of the scientific community are continuously alerting the world to the catastrophic effects of climate change, confirming the assertions of the Global Strategy.

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, issued an alarming special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C. The report, which was echoed by organisations such as the World Economic Forum, concluded that the risks of global warming exceeding 1.5°C to natural and human systems would be major and asymmetric. For example, at 2°C of global warming, greater proportions of people would be exposed and susceptible to poverty in Africa and Asia. Among many others, the report also highlighted risks across energy, food, and water sectors, which could create 'new – and exacerbating current – hazards, exposures, and vulnerabilities that could affect increasing numbers of people and regions'. It emphasised that small island states and economically disadvantaged populations are particularly vulnerable. It also drew numerous causal links between the deterioration of environmental factors at land, sea or air and impacts on socioeconomic life, such as the further deterioration of food insecurity in coastal areas due to ocean warming and acidification. This latter is one of countless ways in which climate and human wellbeing are fundamentally connected.

The implications for peace and security are undeniable, if not evident. The 2020 World Climate and Security Report produced by the International Military Council on Climate and Security, identifies at least five key risks security professionals predict under current circumstances:

1. Water insecurity exacerbated by climate change.
2. Increased likelihood of conflict in fragile regions affected by climate change.
3. Effects of climate change on military infrastructure and military operations
4. The potential second-order negative effects of climate mitigation strategies – such as geoengineering – on global security, if not implemented carefully.
5. The risk of the rise of authoritarianism, protectionism and nationalism to address the security risks brought about by climate change.

The report also assesses that all the climate security risks assessed today, are likely to increase by 2040. In short, climate change as a risk to global security is here to stay.[267].

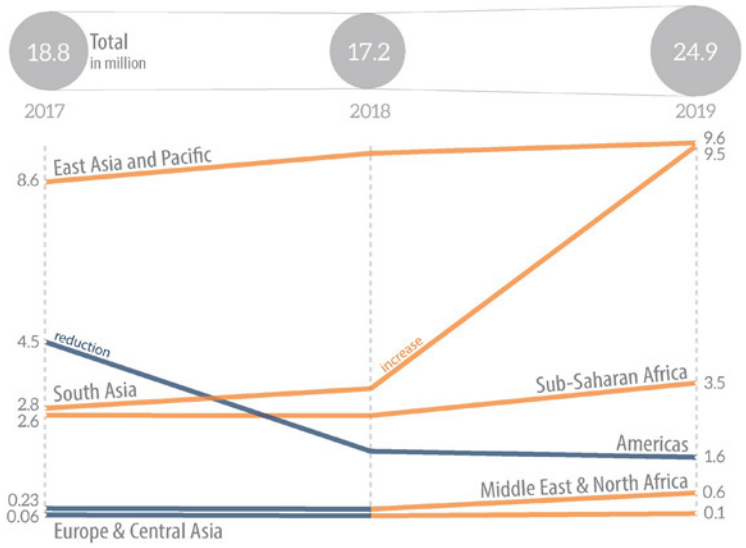
The security risks linked to the changes in weather and climate conditions, are existing risks that are exacerbated by the consequences of phenomena such as droughts, floods, deforestation, desertification and environmental degradation. Since 2008, events referred to as natural hazards –

[267] 2020 World Climate and Security Report; See also https://www.clingendael.org/publication/military-responses-climate-change.

many of them linked to climate change – have forcibly displaced approximately 265 million people, amounting to more than three times as many forced movements as those caused by conflict and violence (see Figure 33).

Climate change can increase extreme weather events and fuel further instability through their consequences, such as food and water scarcity, competition over decreasing natural resources, disaster-related displacement and the disruption of production and supply chains. Fragility, conflict dynamics and economic vulnerabilities are in turn severely aggravated, threatening peace and security across the world, often with an emphasis on the most vulnerable populations, posing major humanitarian challenges. Threats to energy and economic infrastructure are also increasingly linked to extreme weather phenomena.

Figure 33 – Internal displacement of persons due to natural disasters, 2019



Data source: Global Report on Internal Displacement.

The forecast for Europe is also alarming. A report by E3G, an environmental think tank, predicts that annual damages from coastal floods in Europe 'could be as high as €1 trillion per year affecting over 3.5 million people, drought-hit cropland could increase seven-fold, agricultural yields could decline by up to 20 %, land burnt by forest fires could double and almost one in two Europeans could be affected by water scarcity'.[268]

2.8.1. EU action for climate-related security risks

Recent years have signalled an unprecedented prioritisation of climate action by the EU, despite the acknowledged need for even greater action. Perhaps the biggest manifestation of this priority is the European Green Deal (EGD), presented by the von der Leyen Commission in December 2019, which aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Beyond its extensive programme for EU-internal action, the EGD aims to make the EU a global leader in fighting climate change by:

- Leading by example, through the European Green Deal.
- Setting standards for sustainable growth across global value chains.
- Using diplomacy, trade and development cooperation to advance climate goals.

The Communication on the EGD recognises the link between global environmental challenges and security, acknowledging that climate change is a significant threat multiplier and source of instability. It asserts that 'the ecological transition will reshape geopolitics, including global economic, trade and security interests. This will create challenges for a number of states and societies'. Consequently, the EU commits to 'work with all partners to increase climate and environmental resilience to prevent these challenges from becoming sources of conflict, food

[268] Managing climate risk for a safer future. A new resilience agenda for the European Union, E3G, 2019.

insecurity, population displacement and forced migration, and support a just transition globally. Through the EGD, the commitment to make climate policy implications an integral part of EU external action – including in security and defence – is consolidated.

Externally, climate security is addressed by a mix of instruments and actions, carried out by the European External Action Service and the Commission, particularly Directorates-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and Climate Action (CLIMA). These Directorates-General implement several types of risk assessment (including conflict and fragility) incorporating climate change effects and incorporate the results into planning for humanitarian aid, development, missions and agreements. Some of the ways in which the EU supports third countries affected by the security implications of climate change are illustrated below.

2.8.2. Support in conflicts and crises

As early as 2013, the EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises identified climate change as an essential factor to consider in all stages of the conflict cycle and as a global issue 'where the external aspects of internal EU policies have a growing foreign and security policy dimension'. Since then, there is an ongoing effort to integrate climate security concerns in areas ranging from early warning and preparedness, to conflict prevention, crisis response and management to early recovery, stabilisation and peace-building.

Following the report by the IPCC in 2019, the Foreign Affairs Council reaffirmed the threat posed by climate change to peace and security and recognised climate change as an existential threat. The Council emphasises that conflict prevention tools like the EU Conflict Early Warning System should take the security challenges linked to adverse effects of climate change and environmental risk factors into account and strengthen the link between early warning and early action across policy areas. In September 2019, the defence ministers of EU Member States discussed the ways in which threats posed by climate change could be further integrated into the EU's evolving CSDP, focusing on two issues: ensuring that the militaries contribute to addressing climate change issues; and incorporating the effects of climate change on conflicts, or on crisis areas, in planning military operations and in foresight. An additional tool for preparedness, the Copernicus Climate Change Service, part of the EU's Earth Observation programme, provides global data on climate change which can be used to pre-empt and mitigate its effects, for example in food production (crop yields) and desertification, which are key drivers of mass population movements due to climate change.

In light of the Covid-19 crisis, renewed attention has been given to the link between climate change and pandemics, given the proven association between climate conditions and infectious diseases. As early as the 1990s, the WHO was reporting widely on the ways in which climate change can affect human health, either directly by enhancing vector breeding (e.g. insects) across the world and by reducing the maturation period for certain pathogens, or indirectly, by causing a deterioration in socioeconomic conditions, food and water scarcity, and water contamination. Research also suggests that higher temperatures could favour pathogens that are more difficult for human bodies to fight. Scientists also examine whether the accelerating melting of ice reservoirs (for example in the Arctic) may release viral pathogens that could have implications for human health.

The current pandemic is exacerbating food insecurity, a key threat posed by climate change among other factors. The World Food Programme estimates that Covid-19 could double the number of people in low and middle-income countries facing acute food insecurity by the end of 2020.

Figure 34 – The 15 countries most vulnerable to climate change

South Sudan
Somalia
Central African Republic
Yemen
Afghanistan
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Syria
Iraq
Chad
Sudan
Niger
Nigeria
Ethiopia
Myanmar
Mali

Data source: Normandy Index 2020.

Conflict prevention is one of the main goals of EU foreign policy. The Conflict Early Warning System (EWS) is a key tool in this context. It uses a wide range of inputs from multiple sources to assess potential risks and enable the identification of long-term risks for violent conflict in a given country or region. The system is intended to help the EU pursue early preventive actions and coherent responses. The conflict index produced by the EWS includes indicators such as water stress and food insecurity that are relevant for climate security, thus integrating climate security thinking into policy planning. Experts highlight that the EWS's challenge is to ensure its ability to identify successfully the evolving climate security risks and to make sure that those working on climate security make use of it.[269]

In practice, some of the countries most vulnerable to climate change are situated in regions of conflict and fragility (see Figure 34). It follows that CSDP missions and operations are often deployed in countries that are negatively affected by climate change. Currently CSDP missions are active in Mali, Niger, Somalia, Iraq and the Central African Republic, which are among the 15 countries most vulnerable to climate change (see Figure 34). It follows that the instability and crises they are addressing are directly or indirectly results of factors 'multiplied' by climate change. Operation Atalanta, for example, protects food aid shipments from the World Food Programme for the Somalian population; the food and nutrition crisis in Somalia is in itself a result of floods and droughts combined with other factors. A key EU security partner, NATO has also acknowledged the effects of climate change on Allied security. The NATO Strategic Concept includes climate change – alongside health, water scarcity and energy needs – as one of the key environmental factors which will impact on the future security environment, on defence strategy and military operations.

2.8.3. Development

The EU, with the support of the European Investment Bank, is the biggest global contributor of public climate finance for developing countries. More than 40 % of the world's public climate finance comes from the EU. To use these funds efficiently, the EU and its Member States cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally on adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts with others, including the most vulnerable small island developing states (SIDS) and least-developed countries.

The Directorate-General for Development (DG DEVCO) works with the least developed (and least resilient) countries via the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA+) and supports a variety of activities dealing with adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and desertification. It also contributed to the New Climate for Peace project commissioned by the G7 to identify compound climate-fragility risks that pose serious threats to the stability of states and societies. Through the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, the EU together with the United Nations

[269] B. Pérez de las Heras, Climate security in the European Union's foreign policy: addressing the responsibility to prepare for conflict prevention, Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 2020.

Environment Programme (UNEP), launched a four-year initiative on climate and security in fragile states (2017-2021), which aims to improve the resilience of communities to climate-fragility risks by strengthening inclusion and relationships, local planning processes and sustainable livelihoods. Projects include actions such as supporting joint management of livestock migratory routes (Sudan) and protecting land from river damage (Nepal). In the proposed multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, 25 % of the EU's new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) will support climate objectives in third countries.[270]

In its recommendations for the post-2020 architecture of the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Development Fund, the European Parliament has already underlined a need to 'include horizontal and cross-sectoral environmental protection and the opportunities offered by environmental policies in all development policies' (2017/2258(INI)).

2.8.4. Multilateralism and climate diplomacy

The EU is committed to addressing the implications for peace and security of climate change through multilateral cooperation. The 2015 Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main multilateral framework governing global action on climate change. The EU was instrumental in brokering the agreement and, in 2018, at the COP24 in Katowice, working for an agreement on the rules for the agreement's implementation by 184 countries. Despite the US withdrawal from the agreement, and the ensuing questions about the limits of global cooperation, multilateralism remains at the forefront of the EU's climate diplomacy. The European Green Deal emphasises that climate change and environmental degradation require a global response and commits to develop a stronger EU 'green deal diplomacy' focused on advancing global action and building capacity to support third countries. The EU aspires to set an example, and to use all instruments available, including trade, development and humanitarian aid, to work with partners – bilaterally and multilaterally – to prevent and mitigate the impact of climate change, including on security. The United Nations (and the UNFCCC within the UN), the G7, G20, the WTO and the WHO are the key multilateral fora in which this agenda can be moved forward. In addition, the EU has bilateral arrangements for dialogue and cooperation with third countries (OECD countries, countries party to the UNFCCC and emerging economies).[271] It also works with several regional organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Gulf.

As part of the EU's climate diplomacy, former HR/VP Federica Mogherini organised a high-level event on Climate Peace and Security in 2018, to raise awareness of the links between climate change and security. Following the 2020 Council Conclusions on Climate Diplomacy, EU Member States are jointly working towards a strategic approach to climate diplomacy, expected in 2020, which identifies ways towards action. Both the Council and experts expect that the strategy will facilitate the integration of climate security and environmental factors in the EU's engagement with partner countries and focus on preventive measures such as early warning systems. The Council has also encouraged the UN to integrate short- and long-term climate and environmental risk factors in the assessment and management of threats to peace and security at all levels. The EU will also place increased emphasis on supporting such efforts in its immediate neighbourhood – in the South, the Eastern Partnership Countries and the Western Balkans – in the context of the climate transition.

[270] EU Budget for the future, European Commission, 2019.

[271] Plans to hold EU Summits with China, Japan, the African Union and India, and other major international events such as the United Nations Ocean Conference and the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity were expected for 2020.

2.9. Managing economic crises

Europeans think the state of the economy poses the most severe threat to jobs in their country: a financial crisis (31%), low economic growth (29%) and economic downturn (28%) are considered the biggest threats to jobs.

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020.

Since the financial crisis in 2007-2008, the accentuated turmoil in the world's financial markets and Covid-19 pandemic has induced major public interventions in Europe and worldwide to secure the stability of the financial system and support the economy. The past financial and economic crisis also underlined the importance of international institutions and multilateral structures, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Bank of International Settlements (BIS) and the G20, where the EU and its Member States play an active role, as these are supporting the macroeconomic performance and resilience of affected countries. Even though principal global indicators, such as decreasing trade volume and global GDP had already in 2019 highlighted that economies were decelerating,[272] the Covid-19 pandemic has created additional stress. Experts predict that the impact of the current crisis will be significantly harder than that of the global economic crisis.[273] According to Jerome Powell, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve (FED) 'the scope and speed of this downturn are without modern precedent, significantly worse than any recession since World War II'.[274] While the coronavirus economic shock appears to be the largest on record, the policy response has also been the fastest and largest response for any post-war downturn, supporting not only economies, but also social stability and peace.

The link between financial crises and a deterioration in democracy, peace and security has been highlighted by several studies. As noted by Matthias Goldmann, 'in recent years, more and more data has become available which reveals a correlation between sovereign debt crises and the outbreak of civil wars. Hence, excessive debt seems to be a potential threat to peace, if peace is understood in a negative sense as the absence of armed conflict'.[275] Thomas Piketty and Branko Milanović have stressed the link between financial crisis, inequality and social collapse.[276] Milanović argues that, under the Covid-19 pandemic, 'the world faces the prospect of a profound shift: a return to natural – which is to say, self-sufficient – economy', a shift which is the very opposite of globalisation'.[277] In addition to economic recession and falling trade volume, global economies are strongly affected by chronic deflation. Historically, there is a correlation between inflation-deflation cycles and the debt cycles: deflationary pressure increases during peace years, and inflationary, during war years.[278] Writing for The Economist, Qian Liu has warned that the next

[272] Mario Draghi, then President of the ECB, said at the Hearing of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament on 23 September 2019, that 'Since my last hearing before this Committee earlier in the year, euro area growth momentum has slowed markedly, more than we had previously anticipated (...) This slowdown is mainly due to the weakness of international trade in an environment of persistent uncertainties related to protectionist policies and geopolitical factors.'

[273] A. Tooze, Is the Coronavirus Crash Worse Than the 2008 Financial Crisis?, Foreign Policy, March 2020.

[274] J. Powell, Speech on Current Economic Issues, Peterson Institute for International Economics, May 2020.

[275] M. Goldmann, S. Steininger, Democracy and Financial Order: Legal Perspectives, Springer, 2019.

[276] T. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Harvard University Press, 2013. T. Piketty, *Capital and Ideology*, Harvard University Press, 2020. B. Milanović, *Global inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization,* Harvard University Press, 2016.

[277] B. Milanović, The Real Pandemic Danger Is Social Collapse, Foreign Affairs, March 2020.

[278] G. Shilling, Historic inflation and deflation, in Insight, December 2019.

economic crisis could cause a 'global conflict'.[279] This is concerning, particularly in the context of the current debate on a new 'cold war' brewing between the USA and China, in the paradigm of a 'Thucydides's trap'.[280]

Figure 35 – Peacetime is deflationary, wartime inflationary

Historic inflation and deflation

Period	Military Engagement	No. of Years	Annualised Wholesale *Price change*
1749-1755	**Peacetime**	**6**	**-0.50 %**
1756-1763	French-Indian War	8	2.27 %
1764-1774	**Peacetime**	**11**	**-0.35 %**
1775-1783	American Revolition	9	12.31 %
1784-1811	**Peacetime**	**28**	**-1.91 %**
1812-1815	War of 1812	4	7.78 %
1816-1845	**Peacetime**	**30**	**2.36 %**
1846-1848	Mexican-American War	3	-0.40 %
1849-1860	**Peacetime**	**12**	**1.05 %**
1861-1865	Civil War	5	4.75 %
1866-1916	**Peacetime**	**51**	**-0.74 %**
1917-1918	World War I	2	23.92 %
1919-1940	**Peacetime**	**22**	**-2.31 %**
1941-1945	World War II	5	6.12 %
1946-1992	Cold War	47	4.20 %
1993-2000	**Peacetime**	**8**	**1.43 %**
2001-2014	War on Terror	13	2.81 %
2015-3Q 2019	**Peacetime**	**4.75**	**1.81 %**

	No. of Years	*Avg. Price Change*
Wartime:	96	8.2 %
Peacetime:	**172.75**	**-0.43 %**
Years Total:	268.75	3.88 %

Source: G. Shilling, December 2019.

The combination of global social risks, increased international tensions due to rising protectionism and the Covid-19 pandemic, has raised some concerns regarding the risk of a repetition of the 1930s scenario, which eventually led to World War II.[281] The US 'America first' protectionist trade policy; the

[279] Q. Liu, The next economic crisis could cause a global conflict, WEF, November 2018.

[280] G. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?*, Scribe 2017. N. Roubini, Could the US-China trade row become a global cold war?, Project Syndicate, 20 May 2019.

[281] Ray Dalio says the economy looks like 1937 and a downturn is coming in about two years, September 2018; Emmanuel Macron : "Le moment que nous vivons ressemble à l'entre-deux-guerres", *Ouest France*, November 2018 ; Coronavirus is unleashing an "economic shock wave" not felt since the 1930s, hedge fund manager Mark Yusko warns, CNBC, April 2020; The legendary economist who predicted the housing crisis says the stock market is far from the bottom,

high rates of unemployment; and unconventional monetary policy measures, including possible 'modernisation' of the main central banks legal mandates and their impact on debt cycles and inequality, have all been cited as reasons for this concern.[282] The dangerous link between the state of the global economy and peace has, once more, come to the fore – this time as a result of the 21st century's gravest health crisis.

2.9.1. Coronavirus implications for global trade and growth

The Covid-19 pandemic created an unprecedented fundamental shift in the very nature of the global economy, combining supply and demand shocks both in emerging markets' economies, as well as within the EU and its main trade partners. Some authors, such as Bernard Hoekmann,[283] argue that global trade had already peaked in 2007-2008, and that the 'new normal' will be marked by slower growth in global trade relative to global income. This view was shared by ECB economists Vanessa Gunnella and Lucia Quaglietti, who point out that, following 1990-2008, when total trade in goods and services increased from 39 % to 61 % of world GDP; trade has slowed to 58 % of world GDP in 2018.[284] The World Trade Organization (WTO) noted that trade volume declined by 0.1 % in 2019, weighed down by USA-China trade tensions and slowing economic growth. Furthermore, in April 2020, the WTO announced that global trade will face an unprecedented decline, within the range of 13 % to 32 %, in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

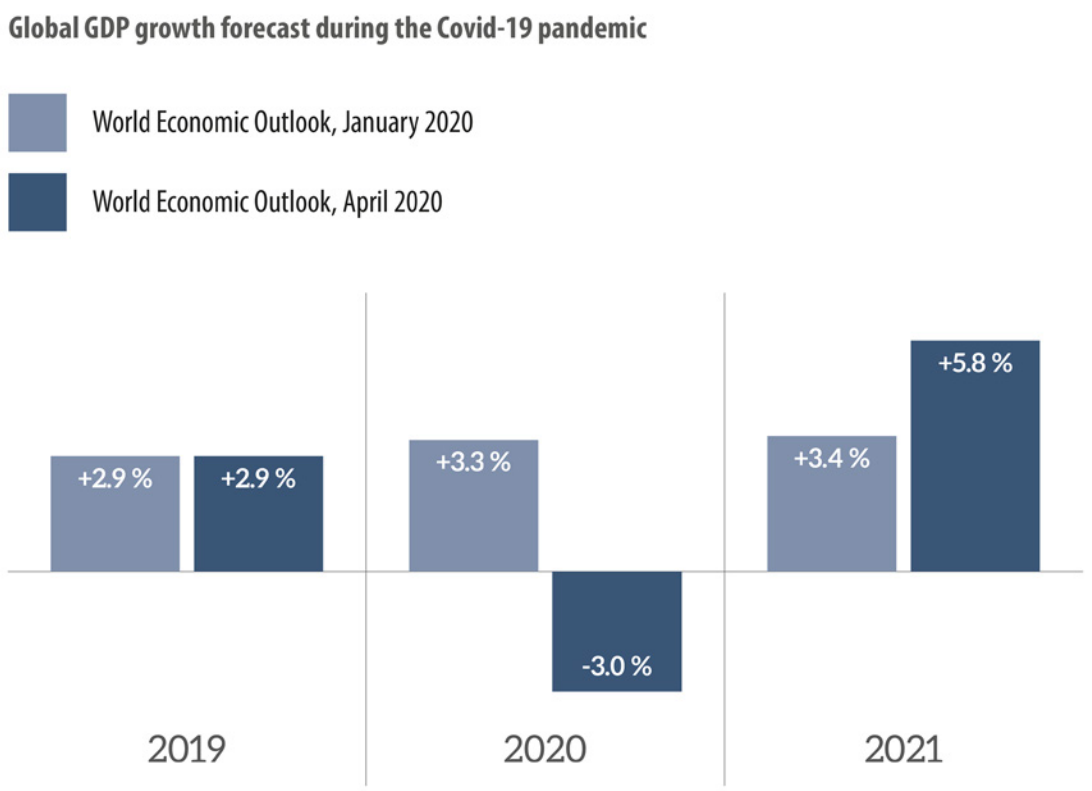
Business Insider, April 2020; Fed's Jerome Powell says economy faces long, uncertain recovery, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 2020.

[282] T. Lee et all., The rise of carry. The dangerous consequences of volatility suppression and the new financial order of decaying growth and recurring crisis, McGraw Hill, 2020.

[283] B. Hoekmann, Has global trade peaked?, World Economic Forum, June 2015.

[284] V. Gunnella, L. Quaglietti, The economic implications of rising protectionism: a euro area and global perspective, ECB Economic Bulletin, 3/2019. See also the World Bank data.

Figure 36 – Global GDP growth forecast



Source: IMF, April 2020.

Emerging market economies (EMEs) are particularly fragile and affected by trade deceleration and by the Covid-19 pandemic in particular, as these countries are not only losing trade revenue, but are also suffering from a depreciation of their national currencies. An August 2019 paper by the Bank of International Settlements discusses the EMEs' vulnerability to adverse exchange rate movements, in particular in Argentina, Brazil, Russia or Turkey.[285] The Covid-19 pandemic has hit EME exchange rates and local currency bond markets hard, as they are not insulated from sharp currency depreciations and capital outflows. To counter large stock adjustment in domestic bond markets, EME central banks may need to expand their toolkit to take on a 'lender of last resort' role.[286] Strong exchange rate movements also put pressure on the currencies of several EME, such as Turkey, where the situation is critical and evolving into a full-blown balance-of-payments crisis. In early May 2020, the Turkish lira slid to an all-time low, due to a weakened balance of payments. The country's financial situation was also already fragile before the outbreak of Covid-19, as it had accumulated excessive foreign currency debt.[287]

To prevent the negative impact of the exchange rate movements, global central banks, including the ECB and the FED, are providing coordinated action to enhance the provision of liquidity via the standing US dollar liquidity swap, including those of the EMEs. In March 2020, the World Bank Group and the IMF called on all official bilateral creditors to suspend debt payments from developing

[285] B. Hardy, F. Saffie, From Carry Trades to Trade Credit: Financial Intermediation by Non-Financial Corporations, Bank for International Settlements, August 2019.

[286] B. Hofmann, I. Shim, H.S. Shin, Emerging market economy exchange rates and local currency bond markets amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Bank for International Settlements, April 2020.

[287] Turkey strains to ward off currency crisis as pandemic weighs on economy, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 2020.

countries that request forbearance, with the aim of boosting their immediate liquidity and allowing time for an assessment of the crisis impact and financing needs for each country.[288] In addition, at their meeting of April 2020, the G20 suggested the idea of debt-cancellation to alleviate the situation of most vulnerable countries. Economic and budgetary pressures will not only pressurise their fiscal capacities and balance of payment, but also the social capacities of these countries to cope with the stress.

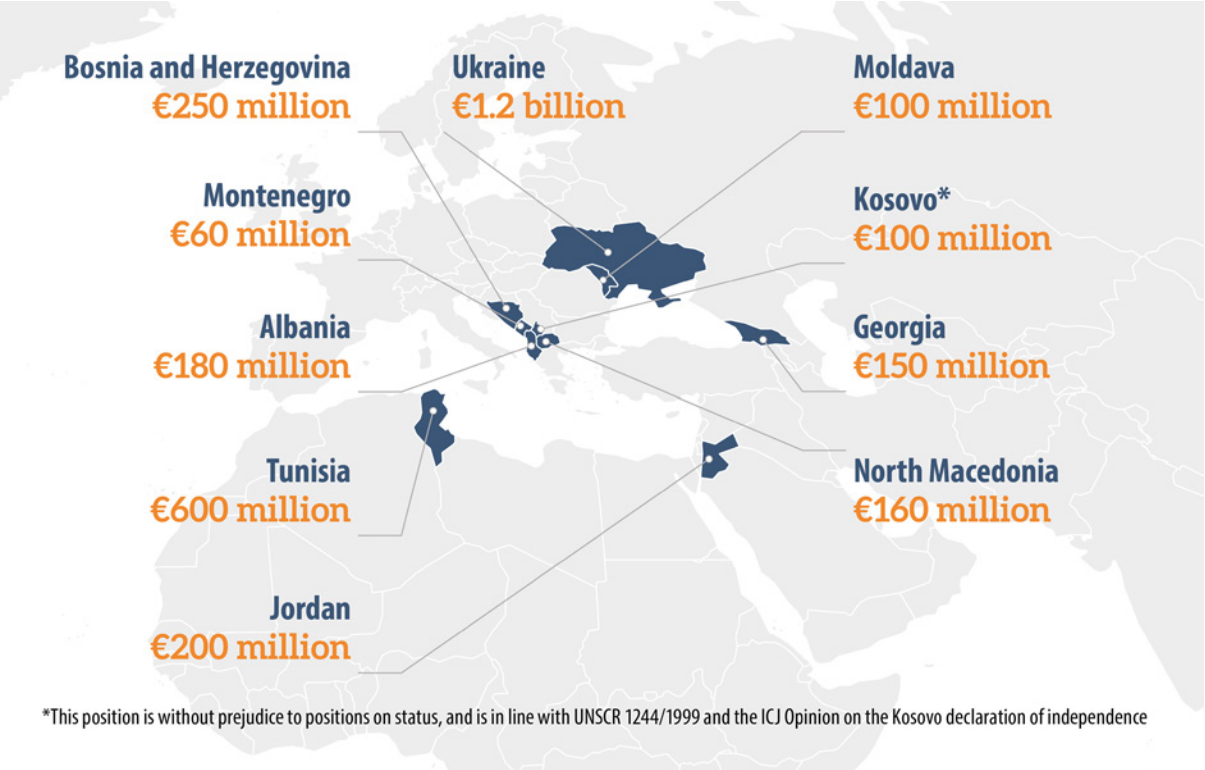
2.9.2. European Union support to third countries

The EU supports partner countries prone to balance-of-payment crises through the Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) loans or grants that are available to countries benefiting from a disbursing IMF programme. This can be combined with investment from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Macro-Financial Assistance is subject to the ordinary legislative procedure under the provisions of Article 212 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), on financial and technical cooperation measures with third countries. It consists of the provision of conditional help to third countries experiencing a balance of payments crisis and is complementary to International Monetary Fund (IMF) financing. In 2018, the EU provided €1 billion of MFA to Ukraine. Following the Covid-19 outbreak, the European Union, reacted promptly to the critical situation in the neighbourhood countries. On 22 April 2020, the European Commission submitted a proposal for a decision for MFA to support 10 enlargement and neighbourhood partner countries in their efforts to mitigate the economic and social consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, for a total amount of €3 billion. The proposal comes on top of the 'Team Europe' strategy providing €20 billion to support partner countries' efforts in tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

The planned MFA package will be financed through a borrowing operation conducted by the Commission on behalf of the EU. The Commission considers that the amounts set aside in the Guarantee Fund for External Actions of the EU provide an adequate buffer to protect the EU budget against contingent liabilities related to these MFA loans. It assessed that the budgetary impact of the proposed MFA operations can be accommodated within the Commission's proposal for the next MFF. The amounts of MFA to be made available are distributed based on a preliminary assessment of the beneficiaries' financing needs (see Figure 37). The Commission is to report annually to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of the decision during the preceding year.

[288] Currently, 76 countries are eligible to receive International Development Association (IDA) resources.

Figure 37 – EU Macro-Financial Assistance during the coronavirus crisis



Source: European Commission, May 2020.

3. Beyond 2020: Future EU action for peace and security

3.1. Peace and security in a post-coronavirus world: The need for foresight

Looking beyond 2020, the EU faces a dual challenge in the field of peace and security. On the one hand, it needs to move its numerous policies that contribute to these goals forward and to implement initiatives to mitigate or counter the threats analysed in depth in this publication. On the other hand, and crucially for its credibility, it will have to work to adapt its policies and its resilience to a world where security and peace will be affected and formed by the impact of the pandemic. In that sense, understanding and interpreting geopolitical trends and incorporating them into EU external policies is critical. Consequently, in the EU, the pandemic may help boost the already building momentum for anticipatory governance, which led to the inclusion of a foresight portfolio in the new Commission, held by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič. As demonstrated in the introduction to this study, the threat of a pandemic – and a contingency plan to counter its occurrence – was relatively unexplored in the security strategies of major countries prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. This in itself demonstrates the necessity for greater foresight capacity.

In any policy process, coping with change is challenging – even more so in the middle of a crisis, when volatility is high, many more actors become actively involved, basic questions are unanswered, and the scale and magnitude of the initiated change is impossible to predict. In foreign policy, unpredictability is bound to increase as the world transforms towards a less regulated international scenario of great power competition – a trend which Covid-19 is likely to speed up, according to some views. In this context, EU policies for peace and security also have to overcome at least four challenges of policy-making: (i) overcoming the 'silo effect', i.e. trying to achieve greater policy integration; (ii) applying the lessons from previous experience, i.e. 'retaining institutional memory'; (iii) collecting, analysing and using evidence to support policy changes – including 'knowledge about possible futures'; and (iv) adopting a long-term view through forward thinking, as part of efforts to 'future proof' policies (see Figure 38).[289]

Figure 38 – Challenges faced by any policy process

Source: EPRS, 2017.

As has been shown in the previous sections, the pandemic has exacerbated trends in the global geopolitical environment that were already growing; the sense of a vacuum in global leadership, an expanded and multidimensional threat environment, a relative decline in multilateralism and the weaponisation of global interdependence have become characteristics of the 'new normal'.[290]

The global and regional environment remains uncertain and instability continues to grow. The forecasts are challenging. In May 2020, the White House published a report on the US Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China, which reiterates the commitment to a competitive strategy, guided by a return to principled realism and discards the assumption that integration into international institutions and global trade can transform powers with differing values and political

[289] J. McEldowney, Foresight – Contribution to the debate on the future of EU agricultural policy, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

[290] R. Haas, The Pandemic Will Accelerate History Rather Than Reshape It, Foreign Affairs, 2020; Geopolitics after Covid-19: is the pandemic a turning point?, EIU, 2020; H. Farrell and A.L. Newman, Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion, International Security, 2019.

persuasions into trustworthy partners.[291] The document mentions strategic competition, and the pursuit of peace through strength, to 'deter and counter Beijing's growing ambitions', outlining a scenario reminiscent of a new Cold War – much of it focused on technological competition.

Great power competition, redistribution of global power and uncertainty about the future relevance of multilateralism will affect security and instability across the world.

Violent conflicts are likely to persist beyond 2020. According to the International Crisis Group, Afghanistan, Yemen, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Libya and Venezuela are among the top 10 conflicts to watch.[292] Alarmingly, Covid-19 is likely to impact conflict areas disproportionately, increasing the vulnerability of conflict afflicted populations and prolonging conflict in areas like the Middle East. The pandemic can act as a 'conflict multiplier' as contestation over resources expands to include securing access to vital medical supplies, among other factors.[293] Proxy wars and competition may also increase in that context, for example in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, where the presence and influence of Russia and China is notably growing.[294] At the same time, and in spite of the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, the displacement of people due to conflict remains high, with 650 000 people displaced by conflict between March and May 2020,[295] suggesting that, in spite of restrictions to mobility, migration will continue to pose a challenge for policy-makers. As noted by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) before the pandemic, rhetoric on migrants and refugees – especially in hotspots such as Central America and the Mediterranean – will continue to be weaponised to fuel nationalist populist rhetoric.[296] As the pandemic impacts societies disproportionately, poverty and insecurity (and not least, lack of access to health and food) will grow for the most vulnerable forcibly displaced populations.[297]

The pandemic is also likely to further strain social relations and state-society relations, potentially leading authoritarian governments to increasingly undemocratic measures in reaction to social disorder.[298] In an increasingly digital world, such tendencies will be backed by disinformation and the dissemination of misleading and fake news through social media – if not mitigated by the appropriate policy responses. Most experts agree that the cyber environment will become even riskier: Europol reports that online crime will increase,[299] while the possibility of major cyber-attacks, including on the critical infrastructure of a large country, will increase as geopolitical competition rises in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.[300]

The economic implications of the pandemic, particularly for the more vulnerable economies, are likely to add additional strains on governance and governments[301]. Already over 90 countries have requested emergency financial assistance from the IMF.[302] Many of the most financially vulnerable countries, also display some of the greatest vulnerabilities in their health systems and their

[291] White House, United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China, 2020.

[292] R.Malley, 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2020, International Crisis Group, 2029.

[293] COVID-19 will prolong conflict in the Middle East, Brookings, 2020.

[294] E. Soler i Lecha, The World in 2020: Ten Issues that Will Shape the International Agenda, CIDOB, 2019.

[295] Norwegian Refugee Council, May 2020.

[296] E. Soler i Lecha, The World in 2020: Ten Issues that Will Shape the International Agenda, CIDOB, 2019.

[297] How COVID-19 is changing the world: A statistical perspective

[298] COVID-19 and Conflict: Seven Trends to Watch, International Crisis Group, 2020.

[299] Europol, Beyond the Pandemic: What will the criminal landscape look like after Covid-19?

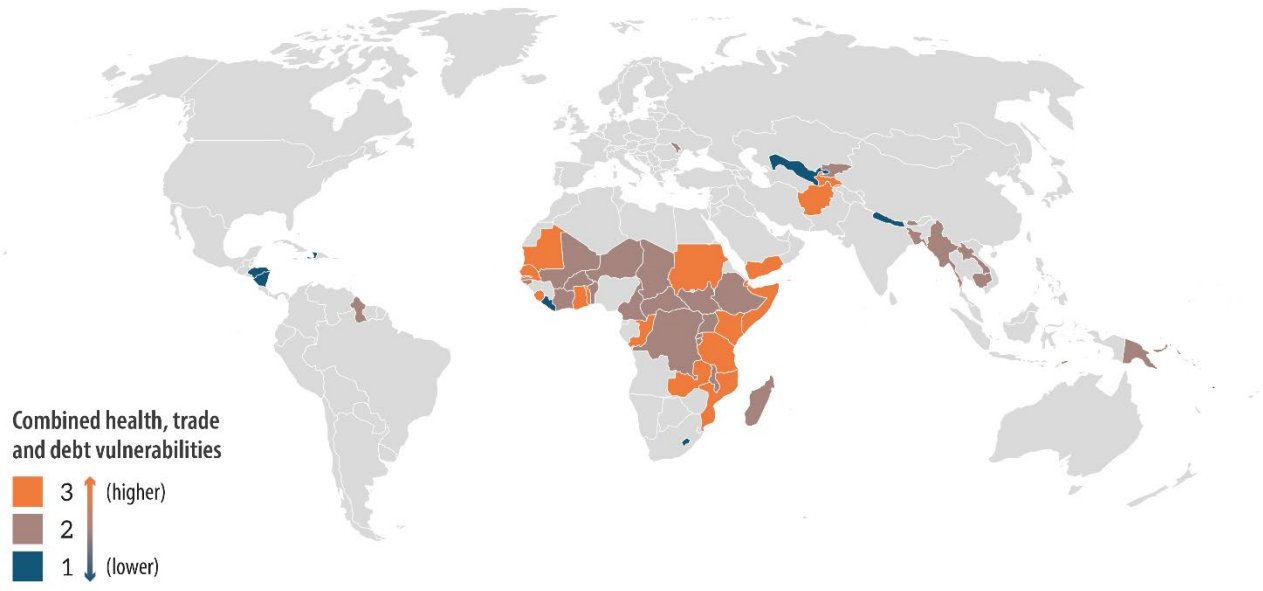
[300] EIU Global Forecasting Service, 2020; Cybercrime and COVID-19, Council of Europe, 2020.

[301] Here are the biggest economic challenges we face over the next 10 years, World Economic Forum, May 2020.

[302] Transcript of Kristalina Georgieva's Participation in the World Health Organization Press Briefing, International Monetary Fund, April 2020.

dependence on trade, compounding the threats to peace and security (see Figure 39).[303] According to some estimates, the pandemic could potentially push up to 60 million people into extreme poverty, with implications for the job market that could threaten equality and fragile gains on gender equality and women's rights, which, as seen elsewhere in this study, have a direct link to peace.[304] The economic impact is likely to threaten food security disproportionately in fragile low-income countries, already prone to malnutrition, reinforcing yet another source of conflict and instability.[305]

Figure 39 – Geographical distribution of simultaneous health, debt and trade vulnerabilities to coronavirus



Source: WHO Global Health Observatory, IMF country DSA, World Bank WDI, UNCTADStat.

The preceding observations are only a few of the many that suggest that the post-coronavirus world will present the most vulnerable countries and populations with enormous challenges. As great powers engage in growing competition for power, there is a strong risk that their commitment to the least developed and most conflict prone parts of the world will be shaped by interest rather than values. Humanitarian assistance, development aid and multilateral cooperation could well be the victims of the return to realist power politics. President Trump's decision to sever ties with the WHO in May 2020, is only the latest in a line of signs that the USA – the EU's traditional ally in issues of security and peace – is likely to be less engaged in global matters as it reconsiders its approach to multilateralism on the basis of its national interests.[306] The US withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty, and the decision to end sanctions waivers covering JCPOA-related nuclear projects in Iran (undertaken by companies based in other JCPOA parties, namely the EU, China and Russia), both

[303] D. Munevar, Covid-19 and debt in the global south: Protecting the most vulnerable in times of crisis, European network on debt and development, 2020.

[304] How COVID-19 is changing the world: A statistical perspective; UNDP, The Economic Impacts of COVID-19 and Gender Equality, 2020.

[305] Ibid.

[306] Restoring the Role of the Nation-State in the Liberal International Order, Speech delivered by Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State, German Marshall Fund, Brussels 2018.

implemented during the height of the pandemic, suggest that the observed trends of a retreat from multilateralism has been unchanged, if not exacerbated, by the new security environment.

At the same time, experts continue to call for more international cooperation on all dimensions of security and for serious reflection on the way forward for global governance.[307] In the words of HR/VP Borrell: 'Demand for multilateral cooperation has never been greater. But supply is falling behind. This is the first major crisis in decades where the USA is not leading the international response. Maybe they don't care, but everywhere we look we see increasing rivalries, especially between the US and China'.[308] For the EU, this scenario presents itself simultaneously as an opportunity, but also a responsibility, to rise to the task of ensuring that it can defend its interests and values, most importantly, the preservation of peace, security and rules-based international cooperation.[309] It will need to ensure that great power politics and the global health crisis will not work to the detriment of the most vulnerable regions of the world and against itself.[310]

Already in 2019, before the outbreak of Covid-19, the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) 2019 report 'Global Trends to 2030', showed that the EU is facing a moment of choice between strategic action and strategic inaction. Only a year ago, the trends of Brexit, a shift in US foreign policy, the rise of China, population movements, technology, and climate change, were already outlining a scenario for even more concrete and targeted EU external action. In the world that the current scenario foreshadows, where the future of conflict, cooperation, democracy and peace is in flux, EU external action is, more than ever, in need of foresight, but also resources, strategic choices and decisions.[311] Some of those choices, such as the focus on the immediate neighbourhood, and the determination to build strategic autonomy will, in 2020 and beyond, form the basis for an EU foreign policy guided by the aspiration to peace and security in an uncertain world.

3.2. Working with neighbours

In a world of changing geopolitics and trans-border threats, geography matters immensely. The stability and security of the EU's neighbourhood is intrinsically linked to the EU's own peace and security, and is the first stepping stone in the promotion of peace and prosperity abroad. The Covid-19 pandemic serves as a reminder of the crucial relationship between the EU's security and that of its neighbours (see Figure 40). As noted in the Global Strategy, working with neighbours is a prerequisite for enlarging the space of stability, security and prosperity, and a priority for HR/VP Borrell, including in the face of the pandemic. The EU's enlargement and neighbourhood policies are, thus, critical tools in the pursuit of peace externally and ensuring their continuity and efficiency is a key goal looking forward. As noted in the new Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 of June 2019, the EU aims to continue to pursue an ambitious and realistic neighbourhood policy, and develop a comprehensive partnership with Africa to work towards global peace and promote democracy and human rights. Stabilisation of the neighbourhood and acceleration of the enlargement process were clearly defined as the geopolitical priorities of the new Commission. In her political Agenda for Europe, the Commission President reaffirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkans. The Commission's Enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans offered the region's six countries a 'credible strategy', indicating 2025 as a possible accession date. On 25 March

[307] We urgently need major cooperation on global security in the COVID-19 era, WEF, 2020; Challenges of Global Governance Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, CFR, 2020.

[308] Annual German Ambassadors' Conference 2020: Opening remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell.

[309] See also: Implications of Covid-19 for the external action of the EU: remarks by HR/VP Josep Borrell at the AFET-SEDE-DROI Committee, April 2020.

[310] J. Borrell, The post-coronavirus world is already here, ECFR, 2020.

[311] State of the Union 2018 – Our future in our hands, European Commission.

2020, the Council opened negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia.[312] The new Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, announced a revised enlargement methodology, which aims to strengthen the process by improving tools to push reforms forward, notably in the areas of the rule of law and the economy. This renders the accession negotiations more credible, more predictable, more dynamic and guided by a stronger political direction.[313] The Commission's new proposals envisage further integration of Western Balkan countries into EU policies, programmes and markets, which would deliver some of the benefits of EU membership even before accession. These proposed changes, together with the EU-Western Balkans summit economic investment plan, offer strong incentives for reforms and future integration of the region where the EU is competing with the Russian Federation and China for both economic and political influence.

Looking to the main hotspots, the EU and its Member States remain key contributors to financial (and other) support for the Western Balkans, Eastern and South Mediterranean countries. The new Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 emphasises the importance of the resilience and security of the whole region, recalling the link between economic and social aspects of resilience, good governance and rule of law: 'Resilience needs strengthening at all levels, including democratic, media, civil society, economic, energy and security resilience. To foster long-term resilience, a strong link is needed between growth and jobs on the one hand and governance and rule of law reform, on the other'.[314] President von der Leyen has announced a review of the long-term policy objectives ahead of the Eastern Partnership Summit in June 2020.[315] Further support for Ukraine's reform process was announced as a key Commission priority, alongside deepening sectoral cooperation with associated countries that are ready.[316]

Security, international terrorism and irregular migration, as well as democracy support, rule of law and human rights, remain some of the main priorities and challenges for a renewed and deepened partnership with the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood. While the Commission will review Association Agendas with each of its partners, policy differentiation will remain a main issue, with a view to rewarding those partners who commit to real reform. Military conflicts in Syria and Libya generate traditional and new threats for regional security and beyond.[317]

The Western Balkans countries were part of the 'Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative' that reallocated €410 million of bilateral financial assistance to the countries of the region, and the 'Team Europe Package' that secured €800 million for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

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[312] Council conclusions on enlargement and stabilisation and association process - Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia, 25 March 2020.

[313] B. Stanicek, A new approach to EU enlargement, EPRS, European Parliament, March 2020.

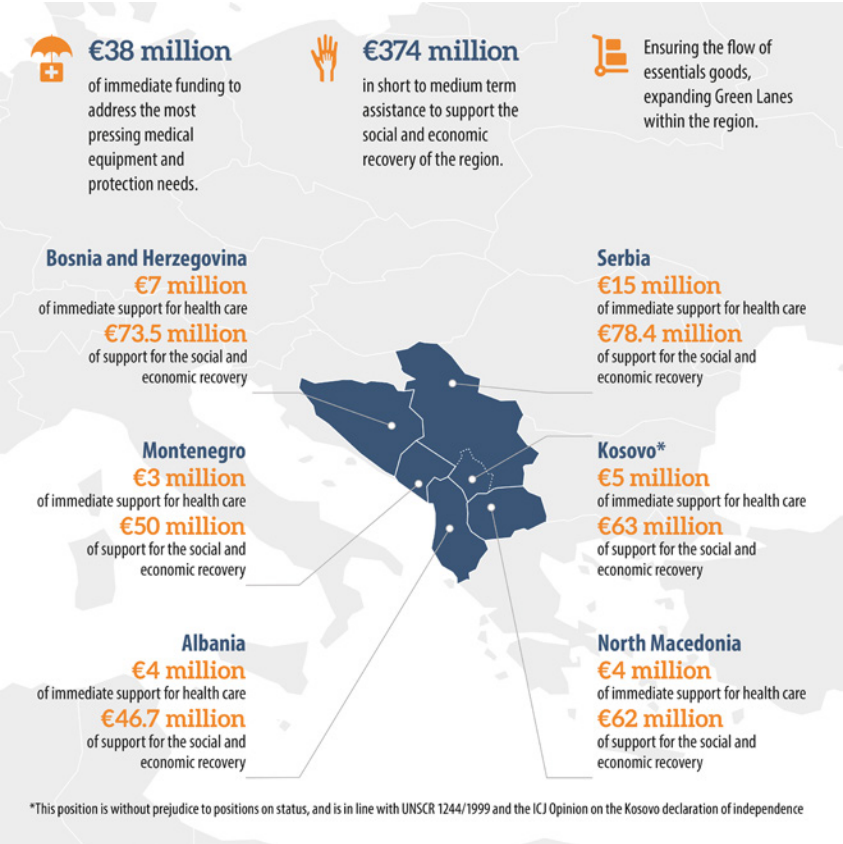
[314] Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Structured Consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership, European Commission, March 2020

[315] U. Von der Leyen, A Union that strives for more. My agenda for Europe, Political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024, June 2019.

[316] Cf. Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Structured Consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership, European Commission, March 2020.

[317] B. Stanicek, Libya: Geopolitics of protracted civil war in the western Mediterranean, EPRS, European Parliament, April 2020.

Figure 40 – Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative: Western Balkans (as of March 2020)



Source: EPRS, European Commission, 2020.

In addition, as discussed earlier in this study, on 29 April 2020, the Commission proposed an EU financial support package of more than €3.3 billion, including reallocations from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance of €38 million for immediate support for the health sector; €389 million to address social and economic recovery needs and a €455 million economic reactivation package. It also included a proposal for €750 million of Macro-Financial Assistance and a €1.7 billion package of assistance from the European Investment Bank. The Western Balkans have also activated the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and have already received assistance through delivery of equipment and repatriation of citizens from the UCPM Member States and Participating States. The EU is treating the Western Balkans as privileged partners by granting them access to many initiatives and instruments reserved for EU Member States, for instance joint procurement of medical equipment. Following the EU-Western Balkans summit in Zagreb on 6 May 2020, the Commission will come forward with an economic and investment plan for the region, to spur the long-term recovery, boost economic growth and support reforms required to move forward on the EU path.

3.3. Building EU strategic autonomy in defence and beyond

As this study has illustrated, the current risk landscape is multidimensional and characterised by both conventional and novel threats: from transnational crime networks and terrorism to the corrosion of arms control regimes, cyber-attacks, and hybrid warfare. The scale and complexity of these factors attest that 'none of our countries has the strength nor the resources to address these threats' alone.[318] According to the EU Global Strategy, the EU's strategic autonomy, referring to autonomous decision-making, implementation and action towards a pre-defined level of ambition, 'is important for the EU's ability to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders'. In the face of Covid-19 and concerns about budgetary constraints, the EU's leaders and foreign ministries have highlighted that the evolution and implementation for plans to build EU strategic autonomy in defence, should not be compromised.[319] In the words of HR/VP Borrell, the security

[318] Foreword by Federica Mogherini in the EU Global Strategy.

[319] Lettre des ministres de la défense française, allemande, espagnole et italien, Ministry of Defence, France, May 2020.

environment is 'becoming less and less secure', and 'if we want to stay safe, we cannot afford to lower the level of ambition for our security and defence'.[320] Investing in defence and other industries, which contribute to EU strategic autonomy, will also help the EU's economic recovery. 'Strategic autonomy' is not about unilateral action but about securing the means to reduce external dependencies whilst continuing to cooperate with partners in a multilateral setting. Its effectiveness derives from the ability to achieve the expected outcome whilst relying on the adequate means and resources. The prerequisites for achieving an effective 'strategic autonomy' are political will and the capacity to act.[321]

While strategic autonomy has been a focus of policy debate in recent years, the coronavirus pandemic has brought to the fore EU vulnerabilities and dependencies that go beyond the original scope of the discussion. Technological and medical autonomy, digital sovereignty, but also self-sufficiency in energy and food, are all part of the renewed commitment to strengthen the EU's ability to act independently in the global arena. While strategic autonomy, thus, entails several facets, a large focus of the EU's planning in the past four years has been on the development of a degree of autonomy in security and defence, which in a geopolitical world arguably matters more. The implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation in security and defence (PESCO), the funding of defence research and development, closer coordination in capability development and procurement, and EU-NATO relations have been at the centre of this quest. The development of a common strategic culture, a common understanding of the strategic environment – through a future Strategic Compass – alongside practical efforts to coordinate or join capabilities and develop the EU's joint operations further will be the joint effort of the coming years. Strategic autonomy is a necessary condition of the progressive framing of an EU defence policy, incorporated in Article 42(2) TEU, and explicitly linked to peace through Article 42(1) TEU. The EU Global Strategy recognises the link between a stronger and more autonomous EU defence policy and the EU's capacity to provide peace internally and externally. It thus argues that:

> *In full compliance with international law, European security and defence must become better equipped to build peace, guarantee security and protect human lives, notably civilians. The EU must be able to respond rapidly, responsibly and decisively to crises, especially to help fight terrorism. It must be able to provide security when peace agreements are reached and transition governments established or in the making.*

The Strategy maintains that, in order to achieve its goals of crisis-response, building capacity and resilience and protecting Europe's peace and security, Member States must boost defence expenditure, make the most efficient use of resources, and meet a collective commitment of '20 % of defence budget spending devoted to the procurement of equipment and research and technology'.[322] At the same time, significant efforts are being made to boost and – where possible – pool together EU capabilities towards more effective and efficient spending.

[320] HR/VP Josep Borrell at an extraordinary meeting of Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE), 26 May 2020.

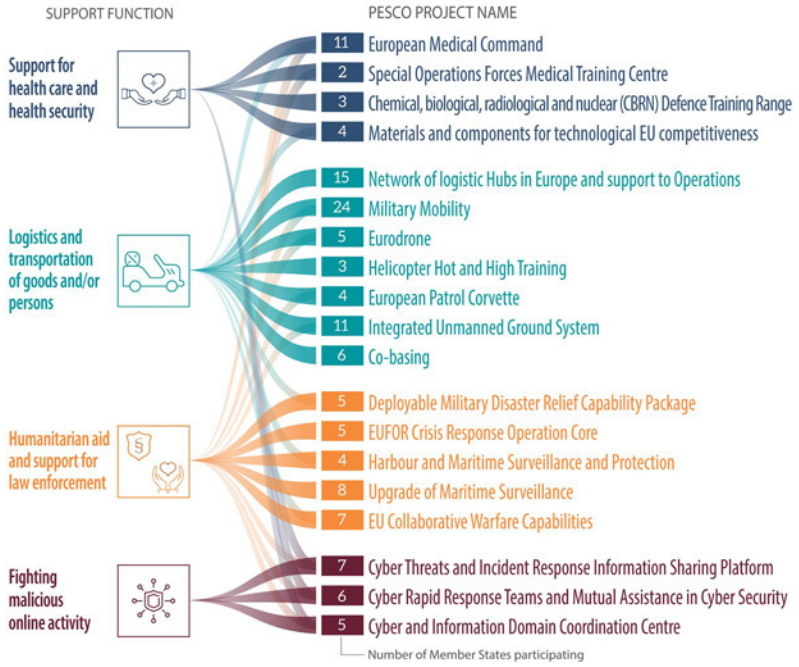
[321] On the path to 'strategic autonomy': The EU in an evolving geopolitical environment, EPRS, 2020 (forthcoming).

[322] EU Global Strategy.

3.3.1. PESCO

PESCO was launched in December 2017, with the participation of 25 EU Member States.[323] PESCO members commit to increase national defence budgets in real terms, increase defence investment expenditure towards 20 % of total defence spending, and invest more in defence research and technology – towards 2 % of total defence spending. In addition, they pledge to develop and provide 'strategically relevant' defence capabilities in accordance with the Capability Development Plan (CDP), the Coordinated Annual Review (CARD) and the European Defence Agency (EDA), and to act jointly and make use of the financial and practical support provided by the European Defence Fund. Finally, they assume the obligation to contribute to projects that boost the European defence industry and the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB),[324] providing 'strategically relevant' defence capabilities.[325] As PESCO is complementary to NATO, military capacities developed within PESCO remain in the hands of Member States that can also make them available in other contexts, such as NATO or the UN. Non-EU states may exceptionally participate at the level of PESCO projects, but discussions on rules for their participation have not been finalised. A Strategic Review of PESCO should take place by the end of 2020.[326] The review will assess the strengths and weaknesses of PESCO and will provide new information aimed at improving implementation and at the development of new EU defence capabilities and capacities through PESCO. Critics argue that the end goal of PESCO projects remains to be contextualised within the wider debate on an EU strategic culture and a concrete vision about the ambition of EU security and defence policy. Interestingly, the coronavirus pandemic, which highlighted the contribution of the armed forces to the mitigation of non-traditional security threats, also opened the door for a discussion on the potential relevance of PESCO projects when dealing with pandemics (see Figure 41).[327]

Figure 41 – PESCO projects relevant for dealing with pandemics (non-exhaustive)



Source: EPRS, 2020.

[323] E. Lazarou, Permanent structured cooperation (PESCO): From notification to establishment, EPRS, European Parliament, 2017.

[324] Strategy for the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, European Defence Agency.

[325] Notification on permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), European Council.

[326] E. Lazarou and T. Latici, PESCO: Ahead of the Strategic Review, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[327] T. Latici, The role of the armed forces in the fight against coronavirus, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

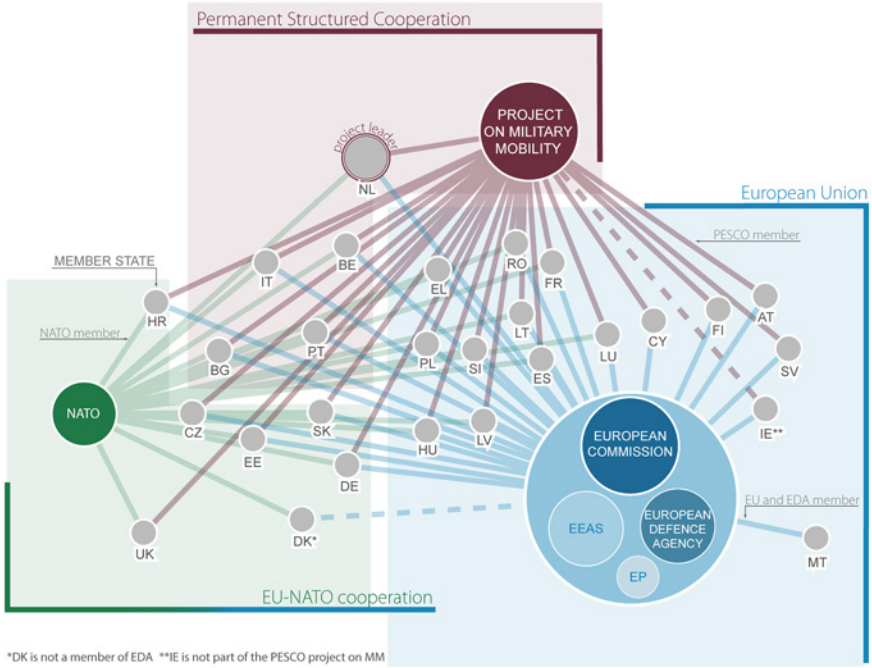
3.3.2. The European Defence Fund

Launched in 2017, the European Defence Fund (EDF) consists of two legally distinct, but complementary, windows: (a) the research window,[328] and (b) the capability window, supporting joint development and joint acquisition of key defence capabilities. Through the Defence Fund, the EU will – for the first time ever – dedicate part of its budget to defence research, but also, through the provision of co-financing, give Member States incentives to increase their defence spending. As of May 2020, the Commission has proposed to provide financing of €8 billion for the Fund for 2021-2027. Projects eligible for EU funding will focus on priority areas agreed by Member States, and could typically include electronics, metamaterials, encrypted software or robotics. Research funding is already operational in the form of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme. The EDF aims to address concerns about weak research and technology (R&T) and the need for more defence cooperation and innovation. Studies suggest that up to 30 % of annual defence expenditures could be saved through the pooling of procurement at EU level. The fund will also help Member States reach two of the benchmarks established in 2007, namely: (1) to invest 20 % of total collective defence spending on equipment procurement, including research and development (R&D) and R&T; and (2) to invest 20 % of total R&T spending on European collaborative defence.

3.3.3. Military mobility

The Commission's action plan on military mobility[329] states the strategic need for better mobility of forces to boost European security and strengthen the CSDP, and proposes concrete operational measures regarding military requirements, transport infrastructure, and regulatory and procedural issues. In 2019 and 2020, the Commission is identifying those parts of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) that are suitable for military transport and to upgrade existing ones in order to accommodate military vehicles. Other planned actions include determining civil-military synergies on transporting dangerous goods, speeding up cross-border movement permissions and developing overall military mobility with a view to also countering hybrid threats. In its most recent proposal on the MFF for 2021 to 2027, the Commission proposed a €1.5 billion envelope for military mobility under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to enhance strategic transport infrastructure. Besides being a Commission action plan, military

Figure 42 – Military mobility stakeholders



Source: EPRS, 2020.

[328] This is already delivering, in the form of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (launched on 11 April 2017).

[329] European Commission, Action Plan on Military Mobility, March 2018.

mobility is also one of 47 PESCO projects[330] and a binding commitment for all 25 PESCO members. It is also a priority area for EU-NATO cooperation[331] and an initiative, which has received strong support from the European Parliament.[332]

The Commission's 2019 progress report on military mobility explicitly links it to strategic autonomy, as a prerequisite for the achievement of the EU level of ambition, a view shared by the European Parliament and by stakeholders in EU Member States.[333]

3.3.4. EU-NATO cooperation

The quest for strategic autonomy in the field of EU defence and security policy has advanced in close partnership with NATO, consistent with the Lisbon Treaty provisions (Article 42(2)). However 'while NATO exists to defend its members – most of which are European – from external attack, the Global Strategy states that Europeans must be better equipped, trained and organised to contribute decisively to such collective efforts, as well as to act autonomously if and when necessary'.[334] Therefore, the strategy understands the partnership between the EU and NATO as being essential, but allowing for an 'appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy' on the part of the EU, in order to be able to 'foster peace and safeguard security within and beyond its border'. It also recognises NATO as the primary framework for collective defence for most Member States, but views the strengthening of the EU itself as a security community as an undeniable necessity for the security and defence policy of non-NATO EU Member States. One example in this context was the first ever activation of Article 42(7) TEU following the terrorist attacks in France in 2015. Article 42(7) incorporates a collective self-defence clause in the rules applicable to the CSDP.[335] It stipulates that when an EU country is the target of armed aggression on its territory, the other EU countries must assist it by all the means in their power. While such commitments are to be consistent with the commitments made by EU countries as members of NATO, the added value of the article is that it also applies for non-NATO EU members.[336] Greater cooperation between the EU and NATO has been pushed forward through two Joint Declarations in 2016 and 2018. Cooperation covers 74 action points, including cyber, hybrid

Figure 43 – EU, PESCO and NATO membership

Source: EPRS, 2020.

[330] Council of the EU, Decision establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO, March 2018.

[331] NATO, Common set of new proposals, December 2017.

[332] European Parliament resolution on military mobility, December 2018.

[333] T.Latici, Military mobility Infrastructure for the defence of Europe, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.

[334] EU Global Strategy, 2016.

[335] S. Anghel. and C. Cirlig, Activation of Article 42(7) TEU. France's request for assistance and Member States' responses, EPRS, European Parliament, 2015.

[336] Collective defence, EUR-Lex glossary.

and terrorism, as well as capacity building for partners and traditional military domains. The two organisations also cooperate to promote the women, peace and security agenda.[337]

3.4. Conclusions

Peace and security are becoming increasingly complex notions. While Europe has been experiencing a protracted period of 'long-lasting peace' since the end of the Second World War, and remains a world leader in quality of life,[338] the coronavirus pandemic has illustrated the speed at which unanticipated events can have a significant impact on multiple facets of peace and security. In that context, the recognition and study of the wide range of traditional and emerging threats that challenge the EU's interests and values, is a necessary exercise for the formulation of the EU's policies.

Even before the appearance of the new coronavirus, global peace had been deteriorating. Rising concerns about the increasing complexity of the international environment and about the deterioration of security – including within its own borders – are reflected in the policy initiatives launched by the EU institutions in recent years. Public opinion polls also indicate that citizens increasingly perceive security as one of the top priorities for EU-level policy-making. The designation of the von der Leyen Commission as 'geopolitical' was a sign of the challenging times for the EU and for global security. At the same time, the EU is designing and reforming several of its policies, which are explicitly or implicitly linked with the promotion and preservation of peace, with the aim of better achieving their goals.

While measuring peace remains a complex task, it is possible to identify and analyse areas of the EU's work, which contribute to its promotion and preservation. Using the Global Strategy and the Normandy Index as a starting point, the EU's contribution to peace and security is assessed through the overview of its work in countering recognised threats to peace: weapons of mass destruction; state fragility; violent conflicts; cyber-attacks; disinformation; terrorism; climate change; energy insecurity; and economic crises. Thus, the EU carries out its pursuit of peace and through a holistic view of the international system, as stipulated by its founding Treaties and by its Global Strategy. The EU's action for peace and security, which includes the common foreign and security policy, as well as other areas of engagement with the rest of the world (such as trade, democracy promotion, development and humanitarian aid), is guided by its own model of integration, collective security and multilateralism and a commitment to the principles of the United Nations. The Global Strategy, which guides the EU's foreign policy, reiterates the dedication to the promotion of 'a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle', echoing the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty. This dedication is emphasised continuously by the European Parliament, which, empowered by the Treaties in the area of EU foreign policy, has brought a stronger element of legitimacy and democratic representation to the EU's global action.

Acknowledging the link between democracy and peace, the EU has developed a wide array of tools for supporting democracy in fragile third countries. These range from political and human rights dialogue, and support for civil society and human rights defenders, to development aid for good governance and the rule of law, and the conditionality enshrined in its bilateral trade and cooperation agreements and in its unilateral trade preferences. At the same time, the Union has refocused its development policy to target fragile and conflict-affected countries through the new consensus on development (2017). In line with the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the concept of 'resilience' outlined in the EU Global Strategy, the new consensus highlights that development cooperation is a pivotal instrument for preventing violent conflicts and minimising

[337] See K.A.M. Wright, Promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda in G. Lindstrom and T. Tardy (eds) The EU and NATO, EUISS, 2019.

[338] ESPAS report 2019, Global Trends to 2030.

their negative consequences. The EU also strives to build its own resilience to shocks driven mainly by external conflicts, such as terrorist attacks on its soil.

Geopolitical and financial challenges, emanating from external and internal factors and from new security domains, such as technology and the environment, will continue to preoccupy policy-makers in the EU institutions and Member States in the coming years. New types of threats and destabilising factors such as pandemics, climate change, foreign interference in democracy, cyber-attacks and bio-terrorism, as well as various types of hybrid warfare, call for innovative thinking and new types of resources and solutions. As this study has illustrated, these challenges continue to reinforce the EU's commitment to preserving and promoting peace and security, and have led to renewed determination on all policy fronts. The proliferation of new strategies and initiatives in all EU policy areas related to peace and security, ranging from development, humanitarian aid, cybersecurity and countering disinformation, to defence and nuclear non-proliferation, is more than evident. Based on the plans of the new Commission and the proposals of the new multiannual financial framework, the years ahead will continue along ambitious lines. The focus will be firmly fixed on rendering the EU a more autonomous, strategic and holistic actor for peace and security, bringing together elements of normative, soft and hard power and adapting to the rapidly transforming world with steadfastness and resilience. While the pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities and external dependencies of the EU, it has also demonstrated the EU's capacity to act in unison in the face of a major transnational threat. In July 2020, EU leaders reached agreement on the biggest joint borrowing ever agreed by the EU as part of the post-coronavirus recovery package. Across the EU, public opinion has shifted to indicate greater support for cooperation in the EU.[339] In that context, the pandemic may surprisingly act as a catalyst for the consolidation of political will and momentum to build EU strategic autonomy on several fronts. A more autonomous EU, committed to its values, will also be a stronger actor for global peace and security.

[339] European Council on Foreign Relations, 2020.

QA-04-20-452-EN-N

This is the third Peace and Security Outlook produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The series is designed to analyse and explain the contribution of the European Union to the promotion of peace and security internationally, through its various external policies.

The study provides an overview of the issues and current state of play. It looks first at the concept of peace and the changing nature of the geopolitical environment, in light of global shifts of power and of the impact of the coronavirus crisis. It then follows the logic of the annual series, by focusing on the promotion of peace and security in the EU's external action. Linking the study to the Normandy Index, which measures threats to peace and democracy worldwide based on the EU Global Strategy, each chapter of the study analyses a specific threat to peace and presents an overview of EU action to counter the related risks. The areas discussed include violent conflict, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, cyber-attacks, disinformation, and terrorism, among others. The EU's pursuit of peace is understood as a goal embodied in several EU policies, including development, democracy support, humanitarian assistance, security, and defence. The study concludes with an outlook for the future.

A parallel study, published separately, focuses specifically on EU peace-building efforts in the Sahel. The studies have been drafted as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum in October 2020.

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