

The European Security and Defence Union

Europe and the Transatlantic Alliance

**Has the community of shared
values become a gilded cage?**



**EU and NATO –
the same forces
but different
strategic objectives**

General Robert Brieger,
Chair EU Military
Committee, Brussels



**Transatlantic
support for Ukraine –
preparing for a
European lion's share**

Gesine Weber,
Research Fellow, German
Marshall Fund, Paris

JAGUAR[®]

The New Apex Predator



Resisting the descent into barbarity

by Hartmut Bühl, Editor-in-Chief, Paris



Hartmut Bühl

The return of war to Europe and its periphery, with the horrendous descent into barbarity inherent in every armed conflict – illustrated by the Russian army's atrocities in Ukraine, and, more recently, by the indiscriminate killing of civilians and hostage-taking by the Hamas terrorist organisation in Israel – has shocked European societies.

We Europeans are discovering with horror what we have refused to contemplate for too long, that peace hangs in a fragile balance. That it is possible for a neighbouring country of the European Union, a nuclear power and member of the UN Security Council to attack another independent country in pursuit of its imperial ambitions, trampling human rights underfoot and overriding international law with the use of force.

We imagined that a new world order was on the horizon, but we now see that Europe is militarily weak and stuck between the new blocks of the emerging south, the BRICS and the west.

This leads us to the question: will the future world order be once again based on war in which military power reassures and guarantees influence? If so, we should urgently prepare for it. We must first understand that we are trapped in a noble but soothing structure of a European Union of trade, freedoms, humanity, the rule of law and a prosperous lifestyle. And we must also understand that we are in no position to defend our beloved Europe that we built after the second world war, primarily to make war in Europe impossible.

The Union never wanted to arm itself collectively because it was designed for peace and until a few years ago, military strength was an anachronism. And even today, the Union is not ready for a "European army", that some are naively calling for, simply because it does not have the institutional structures to accommodate it – the military remains a matter of national sovereignty.

Instead, we have heavily relied on NATO, shielding ourselves under the protection and the nuclear umbrella of the powerful United States. However, this comfortable situation has turned out

to be a gilded cage in view of America's declining strategic interest in Europe and the prospect of Donald Trump moving back into the White House.

As a result, the EU is cruelly short of military capabilities. The militarily well-equipped UK has left the EU, France's armed forces are not prepared for massive, mechanised deployments and Germany's once extremely modern and strong Bundeswehr has disarmed and is only now, under the shock of the war in Ukraine, massively rearming and taking on the responsibility of guarding Europe's Eastern flank.

This said, what should we do now? Firstly, the Member States of the European Union must shoulder full responsibility for developing their own military capabilities and strategic potential to ensure that the Union, ideally together with NATO but, if necessary, alone, can defend its own territory. Secondly, we should stop dreaming and even talking of an integrated European army, which has little chance of seeing the light of day, as 27 sovereign states will never pledge their armed forces to the Union in its current political and institutional configuration. Finally, we must understand that the willingness of European societies to make their armed forces capable of fighting when necessary is crucial for our interests and the best guarantee of maintaining peace.

Therefore, rather than dreaming of a European army, we should promote multilateral European armed forces, assembled, if necessary, from existing large multinational formations (like the Eurocorps) on land, in the air and at the sea, with a high degree of readiness, supplemented by national contingents made available by Member States but conducted by the Union.

But above all, we Europeans must finally understand that the time has come for Europe to offer resistance once again and develop the capability to defend itself and its noble human goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hartmut Bühl'.

Hartmut Bühl

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Office Address:

Mittler Report Verlag GmbH
Beethovenallee 21, 53173 Bonn, Germany
Phone.: +49 228 35 00 870
Fax: +49 228 35 00 871
info@mittler-report.de
www.mittler-report.de

Managing Director: Peter Tamm

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief: Hartmut Bühl (hb)

Deputy-Editor-in-Chief:
Nannette Cazaubon (nc)

Editorial Assistant: Céline Angelov

Translation:

Miriam Newman-Tancredi
Philip Minns

Free Correspondents:

Gerhard Arnold (Middle East)
Debalina Ghoshal (India/South Asia)
Ioan Mircea Paşcu (Southeast Europe)
Hideshi Tokuchi (Japan/East Asia)

Copy Editor: Christian Kanig

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Advertising, Marketing and Business Development

Achim Abele
Phone: +49 228 25900 347
a.abele@mittler-report.de

Exhibition Management and Advertising Administration:

Renate Herrmanns

Advertising Accounting: Florian Bahr

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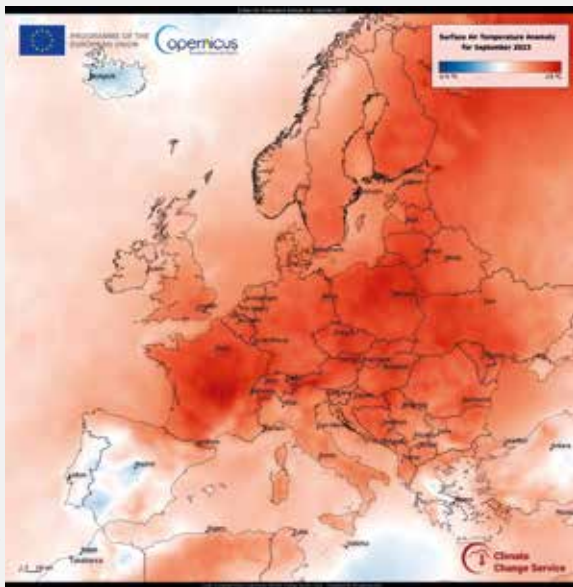
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EU 2024 budget Addressing global challenges

(nc) On 20 November 2023, the Council approved the EU’s general budget for 2024 after the joint text was agreed in negotiations with the European Parliament (EP) on 11 November. The EP obtained an additional €666.5m on top of what the Commission had initially proposed in the draft budget, bringing the total budget for next year to €189.4bn in commitments and €142.6bn in payments. The additional funding will go to programmes and policies crucial for addressing the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza, as well as supporting young people, contributing to the post-pandemic recovery, combating antisemitism and strengthening efforts towards the green transition. The increases include €250m for humanitarian aid, €150m for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe programme, €85m for Horizon Europe, €30m for transport infrastructure (Connecting Europe Facility), €60m to Erasmus+, €20m to LIFE, €20m for young farmers, €10m for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and €10m for Military Mobility.

<https://bit.ly/3N510Bh>

Climate change Report on forest fires in 2022



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September 2023 was the warmest September on record in Europe (Copernicus satellite picture)

(nc) The European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) published a report entitled “Forest fires in Europe, Middle East and North Africa 2022”. It revealed that 2022 was the second worst year for wildfires. In the EU, nearly 900,000 hectares of land was burnt, causing large environmental and economic damage and tragic loss of life. While most of the fires in Europe and its neighbourhood (96%) are caused by human actions, they are aggravated by increased fire danger conditions driven by climate change. The report highlights the importance of prevention measures that must target all sectors of the population. It is a warning signal of what climate change impacts such as global warming can bring about in the coming years, as droughts become more pronounced in many countries. In 2023 also, devastating forest fires were seen in Europe and its neighbourhood, such as in Greece or Tunisia, and many countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region requested help from the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

<https://bit.ly/3SYf43I>

➔ See the articles and interviews on civil protection in the Security & Defence chapter, starting p. 33

EU enlargement A geopolitical necessity



Annalena Baerbock, Illustration

(hb/nc) The enlargement of the European Union (EU) is at the top of the agenda in Brussels. Important decisions on the reform of the EU will be discussed at the next European summit mid-December 2023. Above all, enlargement is seen to be a

matter of weight the Union can gain as a solid bloc of solidarity in dealing with the grand powers. Against the backdrop of the new geopolitical situation, Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova have been given the prospect of joining the EU, thereby becoming potential candidates alongside the six western Balkan candidate countries and Türkiye. The European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AF-CO), a French-German Expert Group and a wise group of European personalities have recently presented their proposals on the reform of the European treaties that should allow the Union to grow more easily. Enlargement was also discussed on 2 November 2023 at the “Conference on Europe” organised by the German government. Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that it was a “geopolitical necessity” to expand the Union while candidate countries such as North Macedonia warned against losing momentum and the risk that their societies will become tired of Europe.

NATO Military Committee First meeting in Ukraine-NATO format



(nc) On 16 November 2023, the NATO Military Committee held the first meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council in military representatives format. The particularity of this new format that was agreed at the NATO Vilnius summit in July 2023 is that Ukraine sits amongst Allies. The Ukrainian military representative, Major General Serhii Salkutsan taking his seat between Türkiye and the United Kingdom was welcomed by the Chair of the NATO Military

Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer. Major General Salkutsan said: "It is an honour to join you all and to take this seat amongst Allies – but most of all we are truly honoured to be part of NATO's partner family and we look forward to moving even closer." The Ukrainian Military Representative then provided an update on the ongoing military activities in his country and the current capability requirements to continue the fight. Admiral Bauer emphasised: "Supporting Ukraine is in our own security interest, because the world would be a more dangerous place if President Putin gets what he wants through the use of force. NATO must remain committed to providing support, so that Ukraine can prevail as a sovereign nation."

➤ See our main chapter on Europe and the Transatlantic Alliance, starting p. 15

Israel-Palestine German Vice Chancellor condemns flare-up of antisemitism

(hb) Four weeks after the Hamas attack on Israel of 7 October 2023, German Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action Robert Habeck addressed the German population in a video with a view to appeasing the growing tensions in his country after anti-Israel demonstrations and antisemitic attacks. He confirmed what former Chancellor Angela Merkel said in front of the Israeli Knesset in 2008: "Germany's historical responsibility is part of my country's *raison d'état*".

Excerpts of Minister Habeck's speech:

" (...) The phrase, 'Israel's security is part of Germany's *raison d'état*' has never been an empty phrase, and it must not become one. (...) Our historical responsibility also means that Jews must be able to live freely and safely in Germany. (...) And this is the reality here today, in Germany, almost 80 years after the Holocaust. Antisemitism is being seen at demonstrations, in statements, in attacks on Jewish shops, in threats. (...) Yes, life in Gaza is life in poverty without prospects for the future. Yes, the settler movement in the West Bank is fomenting discord and robs the Palestinians of hope and rights and, increasingly, lives. And the suffering of the civilian population now at war is a fact, a terrible fact. (...) To say this is as necessary as it is legitimate. Systematic violence against Jews, however, can still not be legitimised by this. Antisemitism cannot be justified by this. (...) Those who have not given up hope for peace in the region, those who believe in the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own and a real perspective – as we do – must now differentiate in these difficult weeks."

Video: <https://bit.ly/49U9pkG>

➤ Read the article by our Middle East correspondent Gerhard Arnold pp. 10-11

US and China A conversation of reason



Joe Biden and Xi Jinping, Illustration

(hb) On the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in San Francisco, US President Joe Biden and China's President Xi Jinping met on 15 November 2023 for the first time in a year for a four-hour conversation. The objective was to ease tensions between the two global powers on various issues and to revive mutual trade relations. The meeting made it clear that political relations remain tense and their views on Taiwan and the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East dissonant. However, their summit ended with the decision to switch on with immediate effect the direct line between the general staffs (which was shut down in May 2022) with the aim of preventing unwanted military clashes and avoiding escalation. This may seem minimal, but it is the first step to normalising relations between the US and China. President Biden later commented on X: "I value the conversation I had today with President Xi (...). There are critical global challenges that demand our joint leadership. And today, we made real progress."

Trump was not an accident of American history

US presidential election 2024 – what if the winner is Donald Trump?

by Professor Dr Thomas Jäger, Chair of International Relations and Foreign Policy, Universität zu Köln, Cologne

The New York Times polls from early November 2023 showed a clear picture of the mood in the US. This may still change by November 2024, when the next US presidential election will take place, but it showed more clearly than before how good Donald Trump's chances are. In six battleground states, all of which Joe Biden had won in 2020, the electoral preference had shifted. Biden is now only ahead in one state. In five states, Donald Trump has an advantage of up to 11%. A deeper analysis also revealed that it will be difficult for Joe Biden to change this. This is because two factors in particular are working to his disadvantage: economic developments, which he cannot simply change, and his age, which he cannot either. There are also special issues, such as his support for Israel, which are rejected by young voters on the Democratic side.

Europe – resistant to learning

There was always the possibility that Donald Trump would return to the White House. He was always tied with Biden in the polls. Biden never managed to get a presidential bonus. And Trump used all the charges against him, which would have ended the political career of any other candidate, to his advantage: he pretends to be the biggest victim of a corrupt political system that Biden and his Democrats stand for, and because many of his supporters also see themselves as victims, they consider Trump to be their leader. It is unlikely that this attitude will change. This increases the chances that European governments will be taught another lesson. Many thought that the four years of Trump would pass, an accident of American history. They philosophised about the fact that you can no longer really rely on others – meaning the US. Those days are over, said the former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, for example. However, she left it as words. Actions did not follow. The German government proved to be resistant to learning. It shares this attitude with many other European governments. Incidentally, it has maintained it to this day, which is quite a mental achievement in view of a war in Europe that Russia is waging against Ukraine and a war on the fringes of Europe that Iran's allied terrorist organisations are waging against Israel. Unfortunately, this is to the detriment of Europe's security.

Central problems of European security

European states cannot defend themselves, they cannot build a deterrent to the outside world and they cannot project political stability into their regional neighbourhood. This has not changed in recent years. And if they do intervene, as in North Africa, it is for the worse. Without these capabilities, however, Russia would be in a position to dominate the European Union politically in the future. The destabilisation of states in North Africa and the Middle East would have a direct impact on the stability of the EU through migration and indirectly through state weakness and its consequences. EU states cannot do anything to counter this. This addresses two central problems for European security. Deterrence and defence on the one hand, and the projection of political stability on the other. NATO is indispensable for the first task. The second task requires the leadership of the US. Some

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Headlines of US newspapers reporting on the announcement of former President Donald Trump being indicted, 31 March 2023

may doubt whether the US is still the indispensable nation worldwide. For the EU, the US is the indispensable nation if security, prosperity and democracy are to be preserved. The problem now is that some in the US no longer see this as an American interest, which they are completely wrong about, and some in Europe believe that the US will ultimately intervene to support them, which is why they believe they can continue to be free riders in terms of security policy.

Both assessments can reinforce each other and lead to transatlantic alienation. This can happen even though the vast majority of voters and MPs in both the US and Europe see it differently and recognise that both sides are dependent on each other, and that Europeans must finally build up more military capabilities. The reasons for this lie in the political systems. In the US, there is a large majority between "moderate Republicans" and "moderate Democrats" in favour of strengthening NATO. However, due to the deep polarisation between the two political camps, a few far-right and far-left representatives can hold the entire parliamentary group hostage. Bipartisan cooperation ends political careers. Just ask Kevin McCarthy.

“Close cooperation with the US is therefore not a gilded cage for the EU, but a necessity if it wants to preserve the democratic values it shares with the US.”



Too late for Europe to wake up?

In Europe, on the other hand, it is coalition governments in many countries that prevent a powerful build-up of the armed forces, a coherent policy of economic security and coercive diplomacy. Just as in the US a few members of parliament are enough to prevent a majority, here parties representing less than 15% of the electorate are enough to adopt veto positions. Nothing changes for the time being. This is not enough in view of the possibility that President Trump will once again ensure an unpredictable, turbulent foreign policy in the US. The EU states have overslept their way through the last 20 years. But instead of waking up, they have fallen into a deep sleep.

This is demonstrated by the fact that EU states will not be able to provide Ukraine with sufficient support on their own if the US withdraws from the Ramstein group. A revival of the Abraham Accords can also only succeed with the US (although Biden has continued Trump's policy here). The EU Member States alone will not succeed in containing China and Russia's influence on Europe's opposite coasts in the MENA region. They cannot even support North African states in the fight against Islamist terrorism. They would rather rely on Russia.

The US sets the tone

The economic competition between the US and the EU would become fiercer under Trump, because he would once again use the EU's weakness in security policy as leverage. Security guarantees in return for economic benefits for the US only was his motto in his first presidency. There is no reason why he should not pick up where he left off. After all, the concept was successful for the US. Although Biden did not try to blackmail EU Member States, he continued the powerful economic policy of the US with the Inflation Reduction Act. The consequence of this policy is that the gap in economic power between the US and the EU has increased significantly in recent years. The EU wanted to increase its competitiveness; the US has done so.

Both sides have put too little effort into managing their relationships. Europeans should have an even greater interest in this than the US. Disinformation campaigns from interested states want to sell to the European public that relations with the US are the problem and not the solution. This could prove to be a major problem for governments to intensify their relations.

In military and economic terms, the US is superior to the EU. As a result of both, the US also sets the tone diplomatically. Not even in the area of soft power, which EU states found attractive due to their other weaknesses, are they still at the top. Close cooperation with the US is therefore not a gilded cage for the EU, but a necessity if it wants to preserve the democratic values it shares with the US.



Professor Dr Thomas Jäger holds the Chair of International Relations and Foreign Politics at the University of Cologne. He is the editor of the publication "Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik".

Arab-Israeli relations – what next?

Escalation and dashed hopes in the Middle East

by Gerhard Arnold, Theologian and Publisher,
Middle East correspondent for this magazine, Würzburg



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Beer Sheva, Israel, 7 October 2023: Column of smoke from the impact of a Hamas rocket fired from the Gaza Strip

The 15th of September 2020 could have been a milestone in Arab-Israeli relations. Through the mediation of US President Trump, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel signed the Abraham Accords in Washington, in which the three governments set out to strengthen peace and foster economic and cultural cooperation, combined with full mutual diplomatic recognition. They were building on the peace treaties signed between Israel and Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Morocco joined the Abraham Accords in December 2020. After taking office, current US President Joe Biden sought to persuade Saudi Arabia to join the 2020 agreement. Secret talks began. In a television interview with Fox News on 20 September 2023, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said the following about the status of the consultations: "For us, the Palestinian issue is very important. We need to solve that part. And we have good negotiations. (...) Every day we get closer." People sat up and took notice and some hopes were raised.

The shock: the Hamas attack

On Saturday, 7 October 2023, the Islamist terrorist organisation Hamas launched a massive and unprecedented attack on

Israel from the Gaza Strip with thousands of highly motivated fighters. How would the Arab countries that had normalised their relations with Israel react?

Reactions in Jordan and Egypt

A few days after the start of the war, Jordanian King Abdullah II said that "no peace was possible in the Middle East without the emergence of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel." Reuters reported further on 11 October: "King Abdullah has since the start of the latest conflict been engaged in a flurry of diplomatic efforts with Western and regional leaders urging swift action to de-escalate the situation, officials say." Immediately after the Hamas attacks, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry began a series of telephone consultations with foreign colleagues, seeking to encourage both parties to return to the path of negotiations with the ultimate goal of reaching a just settlement of the Palestinian question with a two-state solution.

Well-known Egyptian media followed the same course. After 7 October, the media accusations against the Israeli government that it "continues untold crimes against humanity towards 2.3 million Palestinians" became increasingly harsh, as

reported in Al Ahram on 14 October. In addition, the Egyptian government made it very clear that there could be no compromise on the country's security if refugee flows in the Gaza Strip were to move towards the Egyptian border.

No condemnation of the unimaginable massacres perpetrated by Hamas in Israel was forthcoming in Egyptian and Jordanian government statements, nor in their mainstream media.

Reactions from Bahrain and the UAE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain stated clearly in a press release on 10 October 2023: "The Ministry highlighted that the attacks launched by Hamas constitute a dangerous escalation that threatens the lives of civilians. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its regret for the loss of life and destruction of property, offering its condolences to the families of the victims and wishing the injured a swift recovery. The Ministry affirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's denunciation of the reported kidnappings of civilians from their homes to be taken as hostages."

Initially therefore, Hamas was held responsible for its attacks, sympathy was expressed for the victims and the taking of Israeli hostages was condemned. Later however, as civilian casualties mounted in the Gaza Strip, Bahrain's stance became harsher. The Gulf Kingdom recalled its ambassador from Israel on 2 November, when its representative had already left the country. Whether the latter left voluntarily or was expelled was the subject of media speculation.

“All this leaves many questions over the future of Arab-Israeli relations unanswered.”

On 5 November 2023, the Gulf Daily News published a long article by Palestinian Haya Ferrej from the Gaza Strip, entitled "The Holocaust of Gaza". In a self-pitying mode, she focused purely on her own role as a victim, making no mention of Hamas' crimes against the Israelis: "The truth is this hateful and blatant aggression on innocent Palestinians in Gaza is escalating day after day. The Palestinians are paying the price for it with their blood, their children, their loved ones, their homes and everything they possess."

On 8 October, 2023, the Foreign Ministry of the UAE made the same statement on the Hamas attack as Bahrain. On 21 October, however, President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan posted: "The UAE stands unwavering in its calls for the utmost protection of civilian lives, unimpeded access for humanitarian aid, and an immediate end to hostilities in the Gaza Strip". As the number of civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip increased, so did the anger of the UAE Foreign Ministry. Daoud Kuttab, a Palestinian journalist, wrote an opinion piece

entitled "Gaza's never-ending catastrophe" in the Khaleej Times (Dubai) on 22 October that deserves attention. Without expressing any sympathy for Hamas, their crimes against the Israelis are clearly identified, but the Palestinians' experiences of oppression in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are also described. "When Rabin and Arafat shook hands in 1993, they raised hopes that peace between Israel and Palestine was feasible." This is something that needs to be taken up again.

Comparable moderate positions can also be found in other newspapers in the UAE, which is not surprising. Media, politics and education are committed to the principle of promoting the peaceful coexistence of peoples, countries and religions.

Abraham Accords – definitely dead?

The Abraham Accords were linked to the dream of creating regional stability and keeping the Palestine issue out of the picture. Saudi Arabia's talks with Israel, initiated by Washington, were well underway until a few weeks before the start of the war. Under the pressure of its anti-Israeli population and other Arab States hostile to Israel, the Kingdom, as the region's political heavyweight, has been obliged to suspend further talks with Israel for the foreseeable future. Bahrain has scaled back diplomatic and economic relations with Israel, while the UAE hopes that the conflict will soon subside as it has massive interest in further economic, technological and military cooperation with Israel.

Open questions

In the Arab media examined, the question is rarely raised as to whether the Islamist organisation, Hamas, with its programme of wiping out Israel completely, is capable of making peace with Israel at all. And how could the Shiite terrorist organisation of Hezbollah in Lebanon, an Israel-hater like Hamas, be included in a regional peace solution? How could Iran? Nor is any serious thought being given to how the West Bank could be politically unified with the Gaza Strip as part of the two-state solution demanded by all sides. All this leaves many questions over the future of Arab-Israeli relations unanswered. ■

Gerhard Arnold



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is a German protestant theologian and publisher. Born in 1948, he served as minister in the Lutheran Church of Bavaria and was teacher of religion at a High School in Kitzingen from 1982 to 2009. Mr Arnold published numerous monographs and essays in the field of contemporary church history on the themes and issues of ethics of peace and international security policy.

SPOTLIGHT



A danger inhibiting economic recovery domestically and globally

Mines and explosives in Ukraine – a deadly threat to people returning home

by Dr Peter M. Wagner, Director/Head of Service,
Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), European Commission, Brussels

EU High Representative Josep Borrell (middle) and Ukrainian Deputy Minister for the Interior Meri Akopyan (right) visiting a demining site outside Kyiv, 3 February 2023

15 October 2023. In Mykolaiv Oblast, a 14-year-old boy is killed and his 12-year-old friend injured when they trigger a mine explosion while playing in a field near their village. In Chernihiv Oblast, a man is killed and another injured from an explosion in a forest area. Close to Izium (Kharkiv Oblast), a 14-year-old boy suffers serious injuries after a mine explosion.

A sad reality

Several people killed and injured by mines and explosives near their homes on a single day – this is the new sad reality in Ukraine. A reality, in which people, in fear of mines and explosives, are unable to use their gardens and work their agricultural land, accepting the severe impact this has on agribusiness, household income and global food security. As a result of Russia's war of aggression, Ukraine is now the most mine-contaminated country since the second world war. When fleeing during and after the Ukrainian counter-offensive in summer 2022, Russia mined Ukrainian land with land mines of all available kinds and ages, often in several layers.

Ukraine's mine threat did not just start with the full-scale invasion in February 2022: since the beginning of Russia's aggression in 2014 the country was one of the most mine-contaminated areas in the world and while new contamination is ongoing, Ukrainian deminers still find unexploded ordnance from the second world war.

Just two of the many figures: approximately 170,000 km², which is over 30% of Ukrainian land, are currently at risk of landmines and other explosive ordnance contamination. That's about the size of Austria and Portugal or of Ireland, Latvia and Croatia put together. Much of this is agricultural land, now lying unproductive for fear of mines and explosives. The second World Bank-EU Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment presented in February 2023 estimates the cost of survey and clearance of explosive ordnance at around €5.3bn in the short-term.

International support to address the mine threat

The sheer size of the problem and what is at stake in Ukraine requires an efficient and comprehensive mine action strategy, decisive action, and continued international support to help Ukraine tackle this challenge. The overall priority is clear: to safely return as much land back to civilian use as fast as possible. This is a crucial pre-condition for economic activity and for people to return to their homes and communities; to live their lives without fear. This will require innovation in analysis, processes, technology, and financing.

The international community stands by Ukraine in its effort to rapidly address the mine threat. French specialists train Ukrainian mine divers in tackling underwater mines. Cambodian demining experts, financed by Japan, train Ukrainian colleagues in

Poland. EU Member States and the EU are contributing with equipment and numerous mine action activities. In 2023, the EU and its Member States are providing more than €110m to support humanitarian demining in Ukraine. This includes more than €43m financed through EU rapid response and humanitarian assistance.

During his visit to Ukraine at the beginning of 2023, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell visited a mine action site and confirmed the EU's commitment to stand with Ukraine on its mine action challenge.

Cornerstones of a mine action strategy

There are five important elements that are often forgotten in a public debate that often focuses on the provision of heavy demining machines and overall costs:

1. The size of the problem in Ukraine is enormous. There is no previous experience from another country that could be copied. This is why international support and advice are crucial. Supported by its international partners, Ukraine will have to develop and implement its own strategy.
2. Once this strategy has been agreed, it is important to define and implement the right governance system. The many actors (including the ministries of defence, the interior, and the economy) must closely cooperate. Ukrainian institutions, commercial providers, international NGOs – anyone qualified and certified should be able to contribute to the demining challenge.
3. The focus on machines and efforts to demine must be embedded in an efficient national system to first analyse evidence and assess land to determine which territories show no evidence of mines and can already be put into use. Only areas where direct or indirect evidence of mines is detected should be subjected to non-technical and technical survey, and, only where necessary, clearance activities should be deployed.
4. Traditional means to finance demining, such as donations and grants, will not be enough. We need innovative approaches not just for processes and technology, but also for financing.
5. There are no shortcuts and there is no silver bullet. A lot of dangerous and expensive work is ahead of us. Risk-management and long-term commitment will be required.

Implementing the strategy on the ground

Ukraine can count on the support of the EU and its Member States to deal with mine threats. In the European Commission, support is coordinated by its Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). This coordination includes different EU services supporting mine action activities as well as Member States and involves close contact with other international partners, notably the G7. The Commission's support follows five main axes:

1. Funding international NGOs and organisations such as the UNDP, active since 2014 in Ukraine. This support contributes to survey and clearance operations, informs communities about the risks linked to mines, and helps victims of mine-related accidents.

2. On request from Ukraine, EU Member States provide demining equipment and training via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).
3. Increased EU funding for the procurement of demining material. While supporting the purchase of heavy machinery, the Commission also delivers smaller demining and protective equipment items, vehicles and communication means. These are much needed to make the work of the brave men and women working in Ukraine's state demining teams safer and more effective. We are also looking into the scaling up of Ukrainian production capacity and the certification of equip-

“As a result of Russia's war of aggression, Ukraine is now the most mine-contaminated country since the second world war.”

ment “Made in Ukraine”. Much of the demining effort is concentrated in newly liberated areas. Ukrainian deminers work close to the frontlines, exposing them to risks not just from mines, but also from ongoing shelling. It's crucial that equipment to improve safety of mine action can be procured rapidly and as locally as possible.

4. The EU is a leading supporter of Ukraine's coordination, regulatory, and governance work. The funding of Ukrainian and international experts will strengthen Ukrainian institutions. The Commission has nominated the heads of the FPI and the Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) as their representatives in the Advisory Board of the newly created Centre for Humanitarian Demining.
5. Finally, mine action is considered in the framework of the forthcoming Ukraine Reconstruction Facility, where the European Parliament and Council are currently discussing the Commission proposal from summer 2023. This €50bn proposal may, in particular, facilitate the use of innovative financing mechanisms.

As Ukraine continues to battle its mine action challenge, it can count on the support of the EU and its international partners to make its land safe again. ■



Dr Peter M. Wagner is the Director and Head of Service of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), the EU's lead service on mine action. The author is writing in his personal capacity.

Guest Commentary

Europe – the wars that are edging closer

by Jean-Dominique Giuliani, Chairman, Robert Schuman Foundation, Paris



Georgia 2008, Syria 2011, Donbass-Crimea 2014, Ukraine 2022, Armenia 2022-2023, Israel 2023... where next?

Violations of hitherto accepted rules of international law by a permanent member of the UN Security Council have unleashed warthirsty forces everywhere. An accumulation of resentment has turned into violent aggression all around us. War, the ultimate expression of the law of force in service of the “fait accompli”, is back.

It is edging closer to Europe, which is already under challenge because its dimensions go beyond simple geography. It is no longer just a question of territorial disputes, it is now one of a global rejection of democracies and the west.

The European Union finds itself on the frontline. It is neither a state nor an empire and has never wanted to arm itself collectively because it was built for peace.

It must now organise itself to have sufficient forces to lend credibility to its diplomacy. Otherwise, it will continue to make declarations of outrage each time a new military challenge affects it, as in the case of Armenia. It must be able to offer its neighbours the guarantees of security conferred by adherence to its treaties, and the upcoming enlargement, which we are told is essential, must also be thought of in this light.

Europeans must now learn to use force. In other words, they must invent a mechanism that allows them to guarantee, by force if necessary, the integrity of their political model, their interests and their allies.

To gain the respect of increasingly unbridled actors, Europeans cannot ignore the military question. This does not mean waging war as our history has so often shown us, but simply equipping ourselves with credible and dissuasive action capabilities so as not to be humiliated, here by terrorists, as in Iran, there by dictators, as in Russia, Azerbaijan or Türkiye, elsewhere still, like in the Sa-

hel or closer to home, the Tunisian president contemptuous of European aid intended to help him stem illegal immigration, which he does not know how to do.

The European Union is discovering the need to think of itself as more independent. It wants to be more autonomous, more proactive, introducing laws to protect its know-how, its economy and its standard of living, but this is still insufficient.

“ Being determined to use military tools, while wishing not to have to do so, is nevertheless the best guarantee of peace, our interests and our alliances.”

Because in haste we are rearming, hoping that it is not too late; we seek reassurance in the grand old alliances; we continue to “call for restraint” from actors on the international scene who are precisely freeing themselves from it, we procrastinate and, of course, we do everything possible to avoid the use of armed forces. Different national traditions clash and ultimately lead to collective inaction.

Being determined to use military tools, while wishing not to have to do so, is the best guarantee of peace, our interests and our alliances.

Others, increasingly close to us, have no choice but to take up arms to defend their people, but also the values that we share. If Europe wakes up too late, it runs the risk of one day being, in turn, surprised and attacked by this axis of evil which is taking shape before our eyes, from Moscow to Gaza, from Tehran to Baku, from Beijing to the Sahel. ■

A photograph of a Ukrainian flag and a NATO flag flying on a pole in front of a building. The Ukrainian flag is yellow and blue, and the NATO flag is blue with a white compass rose. The background shows a building with a red roof and a window.

MAIN TOPIC

Europe and the Transatlantic Alliance

The Transatlantic Alliance remains a community of values and NATO the cornerstone of collective defence. However, it is high time to reflect on the question of whether the convenient dependence on US power has not become a gilded cage for Europeans. Considering the shift of US interest to the Indo-Pacific region, and the remaining immense challenges of the Ukraine war and post-war period, Europe is becoming aware that it must take control of its destiny.

Adapting NATO forces for the future

NATO's continuous transformation – an inside view

Interview with Jean-Paul Paloméros, former Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (Norfolk), Paris



© NATO

General Paloméros during his active time as Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), January 2013

Hartmut Bühl: *General Paloméros, after serving as Chief of General Staff of the French Air Force, in 2012 you were the first European to become NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) in Norfolk. What was your mission?*

Jean-Paul Paloméros: The mission of the SACT is first and foremost to prepare and adapt NATO military forces for the future. I developed my vision of transformation as a continuous thread running from the past to the future. There are many lessons learnt from NATO's history and engagements that influence the present and the future. Considering its present strengths and weaknesses, the aim of NATO transformation is to brainstorm the future geostrategic environment to orient the development of its members' military capabilities.

Nannette Cazaubon: *NATO has always adapted to new situations. For instance, when Germany became a member in 1954 and again, when France withdrew from the integrated military command in 1966. Why was a more comprehensive reform needed in 2003?*

“The integration of Finland and potentially Sweden into NATO should be an incentive to foster stronger NATO-EU cooperation.”

J.-P. Paloméros: The establishment of the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) some years after the end of the cold war was the outcome of a thorough analysis of the pace of evolving new threats, new technologies, as well as the integration of new member countries from the former Warsaw pact. Since its inception therefore, in full synergy with Allied Command Operations (ACO) in charge of operational planning, command and control of NATO operations, ACT has always provided a unique, complementary and forward-looking pillar to NATO.

H. Bühl: *After a planning phase, the actual reforms were mostly implemented by you as SACT a decade later, starting in 2012. What were the key structural reforms?*

J.-P. Paloméros: Since the foundation of ACT, each of my predecessors has made his own unique contribution to NATO's transformation. Therefore, when I took over my command in 2012, I tried to capitalise as much as possible on this outstanding legacy. From my former experience as French Airforce chief facing a new operational environment, I felt the need to cast a light into the future through a new Strategic Foresight Analysis, followed by a new Framework for NATO Future Military Operations. In addition, ACT made an impressive effort to develop a dynamic training and exercises policy to better prepare NATO's forces for the ever-changing operational environment and new threats.

N. Cazaubon: *And have they proven themselves?*

J.-P. Paloméros: My successors have been able to take the full benefit from these initiatives to consider the detailed impact of our projects on the future, prioritise Allies' capability development and foster innovation. Therefore, in terms of future technologies integration and operational digital transformation, ACT is providing a unique contribution to experimentation and integration.

H. Bühl: *As I see it, the overall effort was tantamount to a covert withdrawal by the US armed forces, which have significantly reduced their operational profile, i.e., their operational readiness in Europe. How did the Europeans in NATO react?*

J.-P. Paloméros: Since the creation of NATO in 1949, the US has been a key contributor to the Alliance. That was perfectly understandable at the time as Western European countries were exhausted by the war and had to rebuild their military forces. However, the first Supreme Commander of NATO, General Dwight Eisenhower, stressed the need for Europeans to take their full share of the collective defence "burden", as US forces were engaged in the Korean war.

H. Bühl: *This question became even more sensitive in the aftermath of the cold war when European countries were prompt to take the so-called peace dividend and dramatically reduce their defence budgets.*

J.-P. Paloméros: You are quite right and, in addition, as you will remember, the opening up of NATO to former Warsaw Pact countries at the Prague summit in 2002 increased the scope of NATO responsibilities while contributing limited capabilities.

N. Cazaubon: *So, it all came down a question of capabilities in a changing environment around Europe?*

J.-P. Paloméros: It was in answer to this crucial issue, that, at the Heads of States "Wales summit" in 2012, the ACT proposed a more ambitious and balanced approach to capability development summarised in the pledge of 2% of GDP for defence budgets agreed by all NATO members states.

N. Cazaubon: *A pledge which is still not fulfilled by all nations... as Europeans face new geopolitical challenges.*

J.-P. Paloméros: Yes, and at a time when the US is again facing the challenge of an ever more demanding geostrategic environ-

ment in Europe, in the Middle East and in Asia. Europe at large must shoulder its responsibilities in terms of a "Europe of defence and security".

H. Bühl: *ACT was tasked not only with fostering technological developments and making them usable for the armed forces, but also with building on experience from operations. If you look back today, were these aspects of the reform successfully implemented?*

J.-P. Paloméros: Thanks to the superb work of the Joint Analysis Lessons Learned Center (JALCC) in Lisbon, a key pillar of ACT, NATO is second to none in integrating lessons identified in the overall transformation process. All these inputs are checked in a very demanding training and exercise programme, designed equally by ACT, in full cooperation with ACO and the end user. The work of JALCC is also crucial in assessing the potential deficiencies in terms of interoperability or combat support functions.

N. Cazaubon: *The NATO reforms also included the establishment of Centres of Excellence. One of the best known is the Cyber Centre in Estonia. What is the overall impact of these centres?*

J.-P. Paloméros: The NATO certified Centres of Excellences (CoEs), such as the well-known Estonian Cyber CoE, have become keys assets in the NATO inventory. They represent a valuable and tangible contribution from the host nations, which put a lot of effort into leading and supporting them. It must be stressed that these CoEs are open to NATO partners and other nations' contributions. In order to optimise the missions and the output of each CoE, ACT is responsible for coordinating and synergising their efforts.

N. Cazaubon: *NATO-EU relations are essential to European security and defence, but some nations seem to prefer to rely on NATO rather than on a future European Security and Defence Union. How do you view this development?*

J.-P. Paloméros: The strengthening of NATO-EU cooperation has been one of my priorities during my tenure and has led to a large number of proposals for improvement, from the strategic level down to the tactical one. Over these years, many efforts have been made to extend the boundaries of this cooperation. However, some nations are very sensitive to exchanges of confidential information between NATO and the EU. The integration of Finland and potentially Sweden into NATO should be an incentive to foster stronger NATO-EU cooperation.

H. Bühl: *General Paloméros, we are most grateful for this insightful conversation.* ■

General (ret) Jean-Paul Paloméros

is a retired French Air Force General who qualified as a fighter pilot in 1976 and graduated from the UK Royal Air Force Staff College, Bracknell, in 1993. General Paloméros led the French Air Force's Plans and Programme Division and served as Head of the Air Force from 2009 to 2012, before being appointed by NATO as its Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SATC) in Norfolk, Virginia, where he served until 2015.

The EU and NATO must live with their differences

The European Union and NATO – the same forces but different strategic objectives

by General Robert Brieger, Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (CEUMC), Brussels

From left to right: Gen Robert Brieger, Chairman EU Military Committee with EU High Representative Josep Borrell and Lt Gen Michiel van der Laan, Director-General EU Military Staff, Brussels, 28 June 2023

The war of attrition between Russia and Ukraine has certainly led to a rethinking of cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Nevertheless, the main question remains: has this increasingly worrying scenario really brought the EU and NATO closer for good? A cooperation between the EU and NATO is indispensable.

Two bodies – inherently different in nature

One of the dogmas we have to take for granted is that the EU and NATO are and remain inherently different in nature. However, both organisations can complement each other, especially since many allies and EU Member States have started to develop a common threat perception. Therefore, Russia's invasion logically leads to even deeper EU-NATO cooperation and should put

an end to unfruitful and inconclusive debates about European strategic autonomy. Being mindful that there is a single set of forces and that “what is good for the EU, is good for NATO and vice versa”, the EU can in fact make a significant contribution to deterrence and defence. Some projects in the frame of the Permanent and Structured Cooperation (PESCO), for instance, help military forces better prepare for conflict, by making it easier for them to move around in a crisis or collectively develop new capacities. Additionally, the EU has a crucial role to play in enabling defence investment and encouraging EU Member States to cooperate more in defence research, development and procurement, something that the Alliance would also benefit from. The EU is especially well placed to deal with those security issues that do not need a conventional military element – for instance relating to regulations or economic sanctions.

Improving cooperation in complementarity

NATO's Strategic Concept and the EU's Strategic Compass talk about strengthening the EU-NATO partnership. The EU policy gives more credit and relevance to the Alliance than NATO's does with regard to the EU, as a security partner. With 22 and soon 23 out of 27 EU Member States being also NATO Allies, instead of debating on what makes the two organisations different, one should focus on how to improve cooperation in a complementary way. There must also be a coherent cooperation on the question of providing forces and enablers. One has to be very clear here: the increased readiness initiatives of NATO, fully acknowledged by the geopolitical landscape, should not by

General Robert Brieger (Austria)

has been the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee since June 2022. Before taking up his current position, he was Chief of Defence of the Austrian armed forces (2018-2021). He served in various positions in the Austrian Ministry of Defence, where he became Director of the Logistics Directorate in 2016 and Chief of Staff in 2017. General Brieger also served as Force Commander of the European Union Forces / Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011-2012) and was Austrian Contingent Commander of the Kosovo Force (2001-2002).

default “unwillingly” reduce the margins for contributions to EU initiatives. Complementarity and mutual understanding should be taken for granted. This in turn can be seen in the NATO Force Model (NFM) on the one hand and in the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) on the other. The NATO allies have committed to strengthen and expand the pool of combat-ready forces, including at high readiness as the NFM, as agreed in Madrid 2022. With the EU RDC in the sense of a “single set of forces” and from a complementary perspective, it would mean that in tier one, NATO could make 100,000 operational soldiers ready in 10 days, and more than 200,000 available between 10 and 30 days in tier two.

Being different entities and having different objectives, the EU and NATO must live with and respect their differences. However, the EU covers the spectrum of crisis management as we see it in

“The current circumstances remain a historic opportunity for the EU and NATO to join their forces, in full respect of their singularities but with due consideration for their complementarity.”

the Western Balkans, Ukraine and in Africa, especially in the Sahel region. When it comes to collective defence, NATO remains the primary framework for most EU Member States. At the same time, EU-NATO relations shall not prejudice the security and defence policy of those members that are not in NATO. The EU should therefore deepen cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance in complementarity, synergy, and full respect for the institutional framework, inclusiveness and decision-making autonomy of the two. Nevertheless, both must reorient themselves towards deterring further aggression, while dealing with existing threats and challenges.

Looking out of common solutions

In both entities, at military-to-military level, which has generated the almost pragmatic and viable solutions for many issues, we are often too focused on obstacles where we should look for common solutions, providing our unfettered military advice. Looking at it from a political and strategic angle, the EU should be the political framework for defining European political and strategic interests. EU-NATO cooperation is then a mechanism for implementing common interests. We therefore have to clearly define what we want and see what we can implement. For this reason, it would be desirable to have a road map in the near future for the implementation of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration. If allies and partners are unable to work together seamlessly, this will inevitably become a force-multiplier for potential adversaries!

The current circumstances remain a historic opportunity for the EU and NATO to join their forces, in full respect of their singularities but with due consideration for their complementarity. The key to the further development of EU-NATO relations at the level of the two institutions lies in the capitals. ■



NATO-Ukraine relations

The relations between NATO and Ukraine date back to the early 1990s and have since developed into a substantial partnership.

1991 – Ukraine becomes NACC member

NATO-Ukraine relations were formally launched in 1991, when the newly independent country joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum for dialogue and cooperation between NATO allies and their former Warsaw Pact adversaries.

1994 – Ukraine joins the PfP programme

In 1994, Ukraine joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP), a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual partner countries and NATO.

1997 – Charter on a Distinct Partnership

In 1997, the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership established the NATO-Ukraine Commission as the main body responsible for advancing NATO-Ukraine relations, providing a forum for consultation between the allies and Ukraine on security issues of common concern.

2008 – NATO summit in Bucharest

At the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, the heads of state and government welcomed Ukraine and Georgia’s “Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO” and agreed “that these countries will become members of NATO”.

2009 – Distinct Partnership Charter update

In 2009, the Declaration to Complement the Charter on Distinct Partnership was signed as a follow-up to the decisions taken at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest. A central role was given to the NATO-Ukraine Commission as regards the deepening of political dialogue and cooperation to underpin Ukraine’s reform efforts.

2023 – NATO-Ukraine Council

In 2023, the NATO-Ukraine Commission was replaced by the NATO-Ukraine Council. This demonstrates the strengthening of political ties and Ukraine’s increasing integration with NATO, as in the Council format, Ukraine sits alongside all NATO member states as an equal participant. The inaugural meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council took place on 12 July 2023 at the NATO Vilnius Summit.

Source: www.nato.int



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Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the NATO Vilnius summit, 12 July 2023

Transatlantic support for Ukraine

Preparing for a European lion's share

by Gesine Weber, Research Fellow at the German Marshall Fund, Paris

Russia's war against Ukraine has shown that the transatlantic alliance can deliver on challenges in its neighbourhood. NATO has proven more united than ever, and has played a critical role in deterrence. While the US has shouldered most of the military aid, European governments have also significantly contributed to this effort through bilateral aid. The activation of the European Peace Facility for financing the delivery of lethal weapons to Ukraine and the launch of joint ammunition procurement have shown that the EU has a role to play as a security provider in its neighbourhood. Lastly, the EU has leveraged its entire toolkit, from budgetary instruments to sanctions and enlargement as a geopolitical tool, to support Ukraine – to an extent that the total support from Europeans to Ukraine today is even higher than the support provided by the US.

The coherence transatlantic partners have shown in their support to Ukraine, both in terms of messaging and concrete support, is remarkable. But as much recognition as this transatlantic effort deserves, it also requires thinking ahead for the next months and years. Most importantly, Europeans must prepare, mentally and through concrete steps, for a situation where they will have to shoulder the lion's share of support for Ukraine.

Europe and US strategic interests

Regardless of the outcome of the US elections in November 2024, it is almost safe to say that Joe Biden was by far the most transatlantic president in the White House for the next decade – and most likely the last “old school transatlanticist”. The reprioritisation of the European theatre was not foreseen in US strategy, which was already characterised by the “pivot to Asia” under President Obama. Reflections on the competition with China guide all aspects of US foreign (and domestic) policy, and Ukraine is no exception. The US sees the two strategic theatres – Ukraine and Taiwan – as closely linked, and commitment to supporting Ukraine therefore constitutes a national interest for the US as long as Russia's war and aggressive behaviour continue. “China is watching” is a phrase that is often used in Washington in this regard. However, Europeans need to be aware that this re-engagement in Europe is therefore a strategic necessity for Washington and not a deliberate choice to strengthen ties with Europeans. In fact, Russia's aggression also forced Europeans to finally implement what the US had been asking for a long time, namely significantly stepping up their defence capabilities to be able to respond to threats in their neighbourhood.

US elections – a catalyst for burden-shifting

The US elections in 2024 are likely to reinforce the structural trend of burden-shifting within the transatlantic partnership. In the best case scenario, the next US president will aim to do this in a coordinated manner, while ensuring smooth cooperation in NATO and the US' contribution to collective defence and deterrence. In a worst case scenario, namely a "Trump bis", Europeans might be forced to take over much of the burden of European defence against Russia sooner rather than later. This also includes military support to Ukraine, to which Republicans have already been growing more reluctant or partly even clearly oppose. Accordingly, working on US involvement in security guarantees for Ukraine, as well as sustainable military aid from the US for Ukraine, must be the European priorities on the road to NATO's Washington summit next year.

Maintaining support in a deteriorating environment

However, Europeans must concretely prepare for a scenario where this US support to Ukraine, and hence a major contribution to European security, cannot be taken for granted. Ensuring European support for Ukraine therefore rightly ranks at the top of the EU's to-do list in security and defence – even more so before the European Parliament elections in June. The most effective tool to do so would be a multiannual budgetary instrument, such as the €20bn support package for four years, proposed by EU High Representative Josep Borrell. Another

“Europeans must prepare, mentally and through concrete steps, for a situation where they will have to shoulder the lion's share of support for Ukraine.”

option could be, for example, an additional inclusion of aid for Ukraine in national multi-annual defence budget planning – as done in France in 2023 – through funds that allow Ukraine to directly access arms from national defence industries.

Beyond the technicalities and political negotiations regarding the support for Ukraine, the political challenge for European governments, as well as the EU, consists in balancing attention to different security challenges and threats at its borders. Hamas' attack on Israel and the resulting war between Israel and Hamas, as well as the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza, show that Europeans have to brace for situations where crisis-management in its south, including civilian or military missions, might become much more central. While the threat perceptions among EU Member States have strongly converged since Russia's war against Ukraine, increasing volatility in the southern neighbourhood may lead to situations where

perceptions and priorities start to diverge. Support to Ukraine will certainly remain a top priority on the political agendas of EU Member States that traditionally tend to look south, but given that political attention, as well as capabilities, are limited, Europeans would be well advised to engage in concrete reflections on their allocation.

Ukraine's EU integration – a long-term challenge

While all eyes are today on concrete support for Ukraine's efforts in countering Russia, the long-term challenge for Europeans is Ukraine's integration in the EU. Even under a best case scenario, where the US contributes to security guarantees for Ukraine and Ukraine also becomes a member of NATO, the implications of this enlargement cannot be overestimated. The numbers speak for themselves: according to world bank estimates, the cost of Ukraine's reconstruction could amount to \$411bn over ten years, and internal EU calculations estimate Ukraine's EU accession to cost the bloc €186bn as reported by Politico and Financial Times.

However, the much more defining challenges for Europeans are directly linked to the future of Ukraine as a Member State, and require political imagination and intellectual flexibility. They are related to the protection of the EU's future external borders, including the interpretation of article 42.7 of the EU treaty, often referred to as the "European solidarity clause", the design of EU institutions for a better Union, as well as almost all internal policies. Albeit not yet visible, this is the actual lion's share Europeans will have to shoulder in the next years and requires bold steps from today. These include strengthening the EU's defence industrial capacities, continuous support for Ukraine's EU integration process, continuously communicating to European citizens why all these efforts are critical investments in the future of Europe – and why they should take this into consideration when casting their ballot in next year's European Parliament elections. ■

Gesine Weber



is a Research Fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). Based in Paris, she works on European security and defense issues. Prior to joining GMF, Ms Weber worked as a defense policy adviser in the German parliament and as a consultant for the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation in Shanghai. Ms Weber holds a master's degree in European affairs (Sciences

Po, Paris) and another in political science (Freie Universität Berlin). She is pursuing PhD research on European defense cooperation at the Defence Studies Department of King's College London.

The story of NATO



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(hb, nc) A few years after the end of the second world war that left Europe in ruins, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was part of a broader project. The US administration under President Harry Truman saw in a transatlantic alliance a powerful instrument to deter the expansionism of the communist Soviet Union (USSR), avoid the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encourage European political integration.

The beginnings

On the other side of the Atlantic, in response to increasing tensions among the victorious western powers and the USSR, several western European democracies considered collective security solutions. On 17 March 1948, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg first signed the Brussels Treaty establishing the Western Union (WU), an intergovernmental defence alliance (to become the Western European Union/WEU in 1954). Then, two years later, after extensive negotiations, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed on 4 April 1949 in Washington with the 12 founding members: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. NATO was born. In article V of the NATO treaty the new allies agreed that "an armed attack against one or more of them (...) shall be considered an attack against them all".

The start of the cold war

Against the backdrop of the first Soviet nuclear bomb tested a few months later and the start of the Korean war in 1950 marking the beginning of the cold war, the new allies urgently needed a military structure to effectively coordinate their actions. In 1951, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Eu-

rope (SHAPE) was established near Versailles in France, with US General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). A year later, a permanent civilian secretariat was installed in Paris with British Lord Ismay as NATO's first Secretary General.

While political stability was gradually restored to western Europe and the post-war economic miracle began, new allies joined the alliance in 1952 with Greece and Türkiye, and in 1955 with the Federal Republic of Germany. In response, the Warsaw Pact, a collective defence treaty, was established by the Soviet Union and other Soviet satellite states in central and eastern Europe.

Massive retaliation

The collective defence arrangements in NATO served to place the whole of western Europe under the American "nuclear umbrella". NATO's first military doctrine adopted in the 1950s was a strategy of massive retaliation: if the Soviet Union attacked, NATO would respond with nuclear weapons. The alliance also took its first steps towards a political as well as a military role. The construction of the Berlin wall in 1961 sealed the division of the world into two blocs, while the Cuba missile crisis in 1962 showcased the risk of escalation between the west and the east.

NATO – a look back into history

1949-1951

- 4 April 1949** Signature of NATO Treaty by US, Canada and 10 European nations.
Start of cold war/
massive retaliation doctrine
- 1951** Establishment of SHAPE and a permanent civilian secretariat in France

1952-1955

- 1952** Greece and Türkiye join the treaty
- 1955** West Germany joins the treaty
- 1955** Creation of the Warsaw Pact between USSR and 7 satellite states

1966-1982

- 1996** France leaves NATO military integration
- 1966** SHAPE moves nears Mons, Belgium and civil secretariat to Brussels
- 1967** Harmel report/
flexible response doctrine
- 1982** Spain joins the treaty

1989-1999

- 1989** Fall of Berlin Wall/
end of cold war
- 1991** North Atlantic Cooperation Council
New Strategic Concept
- 1999** NATO engages in Balkan wars with 19 nations
- 1999** Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland join the treaty



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Checkpoint Charlie, Berlin 1961

France’s withdrawal and Harmel report

After French President Charles de Gaulle announced in 1966 France’s withdrawal from NATO’s integrated military command structure (while remaining in the alliance) and requested the removal of all allied headquarters from French territory, a new SHAPE Headquarters was established in Casteau near Mons, Belgium in March 1967, and NATO HQ moved to Brussels in October of the same year. In the wake of these events, the so-called Harmel report was adopted by the North Atlantic Council in December 1967, establishing a substantial work programme seeking a more stable relationship with the east and containing proposals for disarmament and practical arms control measures. The same year, NATO adopted the revised strategic concept of flexible response, based on a balanced range of responses involving the use of conventional as well as nuclear weapons, to replace the massive retaliation doctrine.

Crisis...

After a decade of detente between the two blocs, relations cooled again with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the Soviet deployment of SS-20 ballistic missiles in Europe. The NATO “dual track” decision to deploy nuclear-capable Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in western Europe while continuing negotiations with the Soviets led to internal discord between NATO members when deployment began in 1983.

...and political change

Things changed with the ascent in 1985 of Mikhail Gorbachev as the Soviet leader, initiating his policy of open-

ing (Perestroika/Glasnost). The US and the USSR signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 1987, eliminating all nuclear and ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with intermediate ranges. The 1980s also saw the accession of NATO’s first new member since 1955 as Spain joined the Transatlantic Alliance.

End of the cold war – the hope for peace

With the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the end of the Soviet Union two years later, the world entered a new era with the hope of peace, democracy and prosperity. In November 1991 NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept and in December 1991 the allies established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997. This forum brought them together with their central and eastern European, and central Asian neighbours for joint consultations. But the hope for long-lasting stability and peace vanished, since the collapse of Communism had also given way to the rise of nationalism and ethnic violence, as it was illustrated by the deadly civil war in the former Yugoslavia in which NATO decided to intervene after wide hesitations in 1995.

New structures and members

Ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, former Warsaw Pact members the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became members of NATO. At the May 2002 summit in Rome, the NATO-Russia Council was established and at the summit in Prague in 2002, important changes in NATO’s structure were decided, with the Allied Command Operations (ACO) headquartered at SHAPE, Belgium, in charge of operational planning, command and control of NATO operations and the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk, US, aimed at adapting NATO to evolving new threats, new technologies, as well as the integration of new member countries. NATO enlargement would continue during the following years, with Finland joining in early 2023 as the 31st member state. Against the background of Russia’s aggression of Ukraine in February 2022, NATO leaders approved a new Strategic Concept at their summit in Madrid (June 2022), describing the security environment facing the alliance and setting out NATO’s three core tasks of deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security.

 www.nato.int

2002-2004

- 2002** Prague Summit decides new command structure
NATO-Russia Council (NRC)
- 2003** NATO engages in Afghanistan
- 2004** Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia join the treaty

2009-2020

- Next wave of post-cold-war enlargement:
- 2009** Albania and Croatia
- 2017** Montenegro
- 2020** North Macedonia

2021-2022

- 2021** NATO soldiers leave Afghanistan in turmoil
- 24 Feb. 2022** Russia invades Ukraine
- 2022** Madrid Summit adopts new Strategic Concept

2023

- 4 April** Finland becomes the 31st NATO member state
- 12 July** Vilnius Summit
Ratification of Sweden’s accession is in process, Ukraine, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have applied for accession



A look back into history

France and Germany's differing approaches to NATO

by Cyrille Schott, Préfet de Region (h), and Board Member of EuroDéfense-France, Strasbourg

Joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in different postures, from the beginning France and Germany did not have the same approach to NATO, the military organisation of the Transatlantic Alliance, and this continues today.

Diverging approaches from the beginning

France signed the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949 and thus belonged to the founding members of the Atlantic Alliance. It actively contributed, notably at the Lisbon Conference in 1952, to the politico-military structuring of the alliance, NATO. It hosted NATO's headquarters in Paris. It was not, however, in direct contact with Soviet-dominated Europe. Being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, it was also a power with global interests, still in possession of a colonial empire.

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) acceded to the North Atlantic Treaty in 1955, following the Paris Agreement of 1954. Faced with the Soviet danger, this accession responded to the American will for German rearmament and came after the failure of the European Defence Community on 30 August 1954. For Chancellor Adenauer, rearmament and NATO membership meant the return of sovereignty to Germany, the loser of the war. The Paris Agreement put an end to the occupation regime and recognised "the full authority of a sovereign state" to the FRG;

the Three Powers (France, UK and the US) nevertheless retaining their rights regarding Germany as a whole until the reunification.

Two armies with a different relation to NATO

The West German Army was built as a NATO army, under the direct command of NATO and, until the end of the cold war, without a General Staff of its own. The FRG has also undertaken not to manufacture any atomic, chemical, or biological weapons. This army, under the tight control of parliament (Bundestag), was on the front line against the Warsaw Pact armies and had no military involvement elsewhere. NATO, with the presence of American troops, appeared to be a fundamental guarantee of security of Western Germany.

“Because of their history, their geographical location, the way they situate themselves in the world, Germany and France do not have an identical approach to NATO.”

While its forces stationed and integrated into NATO, the French army, under national command, deployed largely outside the European continent and fought wars in Indochina (1946-1954) and then in Algeria (1954-1962). It often clashed with the anti-colonialism of the United States, with the Suez crisis in 1956 marking profound differences.

1966 – a first caesura in NATO's history

Although it ended the Algerian war in 1962, after having given independence to the African colonies in 1960, President Charles de Gaulle's France, through its overseas departments and territories, remained present in a large part of the globe and kept bases in Africa, where it did not hesitate to launch military operations. It also asserted its own position in international affairs. Against the will of the United States, it built an independent nuclear force. When the 1963 Elysée Treaty, the founding act of Franco-German friendship, was ratified in the Bundestag, the latter accompanied it by a preamble affirming the close ties of Germany with the United States and NATO.

In March 1966, de Gaulle announced that France was withdrawing from NATO's integrated military structure, while remaining a member of the Atlantic Alliance. Allied forces, especially American forces, left France. NATO headquarters were relocated to Belgium. However, various agreements, including the Ailleret-Lemnitzer Agreement of 1967, ensured the close link of the French forces in Germany with NATO. Subsequently, relations between France and NATO were normalised. In the Euromissile crisis, President Mitterrand spoke out in favour of NATO's deployment of Pershing II missiles in Germany, in response to the Soviet SS 20 missiles, and gave his support to Chancellor Kohl in his speech to the Bundestag in January 1983.

France and Germany in post-cold war NATO

Closeness and nuances

At the end of the cold war, NATO turned to new horizons. It became involved in the former Yugoslavia, led an air operation against Serbia in 1999 during the Kosovo crisis and then, far from European territory, engaged with the United States in Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks of September 2001. France and Germany participated in the actions against Serbia and in Afghanistan but refused to follow the Americans in the Iraqi adventure in 2003 (without NATO involvement), whereas Germany did not follow France and the United Kingdom in the NATO-led operation against Libya in 2011. Depending on its assessment of the appropriateness of these interventions, the decision was made independently by each of the two countries, and, except for Libya, they agreed.

France reintegrating NATO

In 2009, under President Nicolas Sarkozy, France reintegrated NATO. The latter, enlarged towards the east following the Soviet collapse, regained its *raison d'être* after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and especially after the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022: the defence of democratic Europe. Whereas Germany, a central European power, has been participating in NATO's "forward presence" in the Baltic countries and Poland

since 2017, leading one of the four multinational battlegroups (that of Lithuania); France, especially engaged in the Sahel against the jihadist threat, contributed more modestly.

Strategic autonomy vs transatlantic fidelity

Germany and France adopted a common position in support of Ukraine. Germany became its main European arms supplier and decided to deploy a brigade of 4,000 men in Lithuania. France took the lead of one of NATO's four new battlegroups, in Romania, where it holds 1,350 soldiers on site. France keeps other commitments around the world; Germany, as a major power in Europe, reaffirms its vocation in continental defence. And it is designing it within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance, together with the United States. While acknowledging NATO's and the US' role, France has defended the idea of Europe's strategic autonomy for years, which was met with scepticism by Germany and other European countries seeing the distrust of NATO and the potential weakening of the American guarantee. When President Macron spoke of NATO's "brain death" in 2019 in the *Economist*, referring to the impossibility of coordination between the US and its allies in the face of Türkiye's aggressive actions, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas immediately replied that NATO was Europe's "life insurance".

Closeness beyond the couple's quarrels

The war in Ukraine has shown that NATO and the United States are indispensable in the defence of the continent. But after the Trump presidency, the awareness of this has increased: EU Member States, Germany included, need to urgently build their own defence. However, at the same time, Germany sees France retaining a certain reluctance towards NATO and not appreciating the true value of its contribution to the defence of Europe, while France continues to find Germany still too dependent on the Americans and NATO for this European defence.

Because of their history, their geographical location, the way they situate themselves in the world, Germany and France do not have an identical approach to NATO. However, it should not be forgotten that, beyond their couple quarrels, they have developed a closeness that is rare in history and are both leading partners of the Atlantic Alliance. ■

Cyrille Schott



is a retired French regional prefect. After graduating from the National Administration School (ENA), he was an advisor to the office of French President Mitterrand from 1982 to 1987. Thereafter he started his prefectural career in Belfort, followed by five appointments as a departmental prefect and two as a regional prefect. After his appointment as a Chief Auditor in the *Cour des comptes* (audit office), he ended his career as the director of the National Institute for Advanced Security and Justice Studies (INHESJ). He is a reserve colonel and a board member of Eurodéfense-France.

A strong Europe is not weakening NATO

EU and NATO – a complementary and interoperable partnership?

by Michael Gahler MEP, European Parliament, Brussels/Strasbourg

On 4 December 1998 in St Malo, Jacques Chirac and Tony Blair provided the initial impulse for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In the St. Malo declaration, both stated the ambition that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises". While the declaration reflected the European experience of lacking the proper capacities to handle the challenges of the Balkan wars, NATO perceived it quite sceptically. That led then US Secretary of State, Madeleine K. Albright, to

raise concerns with her "three Ds" that need to be avoided: decoupling from the transatlantic partnership, duplication of processes and structures as well as discrimination of non-EU NATO members.

Europe – a weakening competitor?

This perception as a potential weakening competitor echoes still today in reactions to the EU's ambition of strategic autonomy. Additionally, cooperation between the EU and NATO is also hampered by the tensions between Türkiye and Cyprus. While there must be no doubt that NATO is and will remain the cornerstone of our collective defence in the trans-

“A militarily capable Europe is a far more attractive partner to the US than a helpless one and can therefore keep the US committed to Europe.”

atlantic area, an EU that is capable of defending itself, alone if necessary, does not weaken NATO. Quite the opposite is true: firstly, due to its regulatory and budgetary instrument the EU has a unique potential as a driver for European capability development and for a stronger European pillar within NATO. Secondly, a militarily capable Europe is a far more attractive partner to the US than a helpless one and can therefore keep the US committed to Europe – while at the same time, we have to acknowledge that the Indo-Pacific region will become the US' centre of gravity. Thirdly, as there is only a single set of European forces, both organisations are closely linked in practical terms anyway and that requires the EU and NATO to ensure complementarity and interoperability.

Cooperation far behind its potential

However, despite the Berlin Plus Agreement that allows EU access to NATO's command structures for CSDP operations, three joint EU-NATO declarations and a set of 74 common measures, cooperation still lacks far behind its potential and what is needed in these times. There are islands of hope such as interlinking efforts in military mobility through participation of the US, Canada, Norway and the UK in a

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Michael Gahler MEP in the European Parliament hemicycle in Strasbourg, October 2023

PESCO project, also illustrating that there is no intention of the EU to decouple from NATO. The EU-NATO Structured Dialogue on Resilience and the joint task force for the protection of critical infrastructure are further examples. Nonetheless, tangible cooperation mostly rests at the staff level and, politically, things remain difficult as the delay of the third joint EU-NATO declaration which was announced for the end of 2021 shows.

These political difficulties make a certain degree of duplication necessary, especially an EU command structure that enables us to defend our citizens and interests if access to NATO structures is blocked. On the other hand, we can also observe that NATO is duplicating EU measures. The NATO Innovation Fund (NIF), for instance, aims to boost technological innovation like the European Defence Fund (EDF) does. Remarkably, 20 of the 23 participating NATO Member States are also EU Member States while the US and Canada are not participating. Furthermore, one could also question the potential impact of the NIF with a financial envelope of €1bn over 15 years in comparison to the EDF that has a still too limited budget of €8bn for seven years. While one could argue for possible synergies by both institutions being engaged in similar areas, there is also a substantial risk of incoherent, incompatible and unnecessarily costly outcomes.

Develop a stronger interaction

Facing a war on the EU's and NATO's eastern flank, renewed violence in the Middle East, instability in the Balkans, the EU needs to tremendously increase its defence efforts and we need to develop an even stronger interaction between the EU and NATO. To that end, we should revive the ambition of establishing a European corps as laid out in the 1999 Helsinki Headline Goal, integrate this force in the new NATO force model and link the military structure of both organisations by a double-hatted Director General of the EU Military Staff and EU Deputy SACEUR within NATO. Only united will the west be ready to face the challenges of a world that is increasingly becoming insecure. Therefore, we cannot afford to waste any more time. ■

Michael Gahler MEP

has been a Member of the European Parliament since April 1999. He is currently a member of and the EPP Group's coordinator in the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET), the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Ukraine, a substitute member of the Security and Defence Subcommittee (SEDE) and a substitute member of the Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN).



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The end of Finland and Sweden's neutrality

NATO's Northern Flank

by Nick Watts, Journalist, Eurodéfense-United Kingdom, London

The accession of Finland to the NATO Alliance on 4 April 2023, was the direct result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Putin hoped to weaken NATO, but he got a new NATO member on its border. Similarly Sweden's accession to NATO now awaits the agreement of Türkiye and Hungary. Amongst many strategic miscalculations, this development was not what Putin wanted or expected.

Geographical advantage

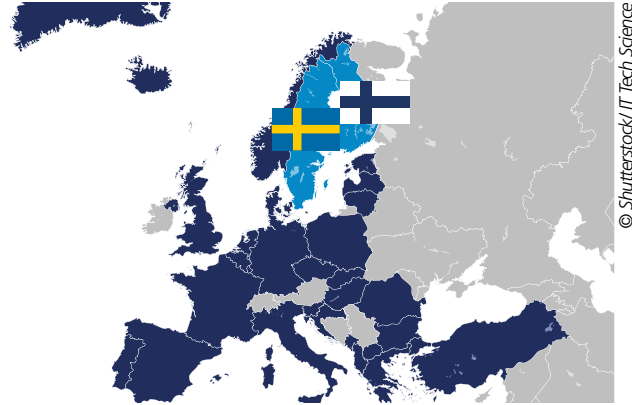
Both Finland and Sweden have well equipped military forces, and well drilled reservists who regularly practice the defence of their homeland. They also have a strong culture of homeland security and resilience, as a result of their long history as neutral nations. Moreover, as readers of Tim Marshall's book *Prisoners of Geography* will recognise, they possess geography. For a regime that fears encirclement by NATO, the invasion of Ukraine has only made matters worse.

“Both Finland and Sweden have well equipped military forces. They have also a strong culture of homeland security and resilience, as a result of their long history as neutral nations.”

Now the Baltic Sea is a NATO lake, with the exception of the enclave of Kaliningrad. In the High North, Finland abuts the Russian border, making the over watch of the North Cape around Murmansk and the approaches to the Arctic Ocean easier. On 19 October, NATO announced that it was strengthening its aerial surveillance of the Baltic Sea following recent damage to under-sea infrastructure. This follows the damage to the Nord Stream pipeline in September 2022.

Valuable partners

Both Finland and Sweden joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme in 1994. As neutral nations, they understood that the post-cold war world would not be the utopia promised by the 'end of history'. Subsequent events have shown that this move was a step in the right direction. Scandinavian and Baltic politicians can give lessons in statecraft to some of their European counterparts, who allowed themselves to be lulled into a



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Reinforcing NATO's Northern Flank with Finland and Sweden

false sense of security by the lure of cheap Russian gas. The pathway for Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO is a reminder of how well Putin can play the 'divide and rule' game. As with European support for Ukraine, many leaders are happy to sign the communique and then do nothing. As NATO's European members reflect on the consequences of a change of regime in the USA in 2024, the accession of two capable members sends a message across the Atlantic that NATO Europe is not complacent about the threat from Russia.

Securing the High North

Nor is this the end of the affair. If Russia achieves its ambitions in securing a neutral and non-aligned Ukraine, or another frozen conflict in the Black Sea – Caucasus region, the requirement for the Alliance to increase its vigilance will need the additional capability that Finland and Sweden bring. The potential calculation in Washington, if a new regime comes into office, will be utilitarian and transactional. Europe cannot afford to be seen as relying too much on Washington. Both in terms of looking after its own back yard, and in re-supplying Ukraine with the means to repel the invader, Washington will be looking to see meaningful action. Securing the High North is a good start. ■

Nick Watts



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is Vice-President of EuroDefense-UK. He has been a policy advisor and freelance journalist in the defence and security sphere since 2001. He previously served in the British Army in west Germany and in a reserve armoured reconnaissance regiment.



*Interview with
Roderich Kiesewetter MdB,
Representative of Foreign
Affairs for the CDU/CSU,
Deutscher Bundestag, Berlin*

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How to keep the United States committed to Europe

Ensuring European security and support for Ukraine by better burden sharing

The European: *Mr Kiesewetter, you are a member of the German Bundestag's Foreign Affairs committee and an expert on security and defence. You recently called for the European Union (EU) to reduce its dependence on NATO. Can you explain the background to your statement?*

Roderich Kiesewetter: I am not talking about NATO as an alliance. This alliance is essential for the survival of the rules-based order in the global systemic war in which we already find ourselves. I am more concerned about credible burden sharing, as in Europe, and especially in Germany, our security is not based on our own efforts, on resilience and combat readiness. It is based on the security provided by the United States (US) in terms of armed forces, but also and above all, in terms of the US nuclear umbrella, as well as cooperation in the field of intelligence. More European independence and more burden sharing should not lead to separation from the US, but rather strengthen both the transatlantic partnership and NATO.

The European: *This is even more important as the US is turning its strategic compass to other regions.*

R. Kiesewetter: Indeed, the US will in the future need more resources in the Indo-Pacific, to keep sea lanes free, protect countries in the region from China's claws and increase deterrence. Therefore, credible burden sharing by the Europeans is essential to secure continuous support for Ukraine and push back Russia. It is also important to show the American people that we Europeans have understood; we are incredibly grateful for the security provided by the US, but we know that it is overdue to do more for ourselves in Europe and internationally.

The European: *Why is your country so often criticised for its reduced defence capabilities?*

R. Kiesewetter: Germany is miles away from being able to provide for its own security and defence. We are not fulfilling our NATO commitments; we are not living up to the pledge of

dedicating 2% of our GDP to defence and the Bundeswehr is far from being combat ready. Too much of the military hardware is not in working condition and ammunition stocks are empty. And I see no willingness on the part of the Chancellor to change this situation.

The European: *However, Olaf Scholz promised on 10 November 2023 a radical change in terms of defence capabilities, reaching the 2% immediately.*

R. Kiesewetter: For the moment, this is only a promise, and it lacks perspective. We need to spend not 2% but nearer 3% of GDP on defence, along the lines of what Poland is spending, and not only €100bn in special funds for the Bundeswehr, but €300bn. Furthermore, Europe has to become on a par with the US when it comes to military support for Ukraine. This is urgent and time is running out.

The European: *What would greater independence of the Union mean in practical terms?*

R. Kiesewetter: We need to look at how wars are fought today. They are hybrid wars in which all aspects of security are under threat. We also need to pay particular attention to three areas of dependence: energy, technology and trade, and security, which means that strategically, Europe must become less dependent on raw materials and technologies from autocracies such as Russia and China. As for boosting the European armaments industry, that should have been started a year and a half ago and we are still not doing enough. Finally, we must find new partners among the rules-based nations with a focus on geostrategy and geoeconomics, as Russia and China have already switched to a "war economy".

“We need what I call a revolution in capabilities, procurement, technology and, above all, mindset.”

The European: *Indeed, we cannot just stand by and watch as we are overrun. What does all this mean in terms of military capabilities?*

R. Kiesewetter: Conventional capabilities will remain relevant, but new ones must be added. The protection of critical infrastructure, particularly in the maritime sector, i.e. seabed warfare, will become more important. Cyber capabilities will also become more important, as will measures to counter disinformation and hybrid warfare. We are currently seeing new and disruptive technologies in use in Ukraine. NATO could benefit from this experience if Ukraine becomes a member. All of this must be considered as inter-connected. We are already under attack, as we are the target of an ongoing hybrid war waged against us by an alliance of autocracies from China, Russia, Iran and North Korea. This is why we need what I call a revolution in capabilities, procurement, technology and, above all, mindset.

The European: *To put your statements in perspective, are you going so far as to call for strategic autonomy for the EU, as the French President did in his Sorbonne speech in 2017 but has since backtracked?*

R. Kiesewetter: A lot has happened since 2017. As I said, the EU must become more independent in terms of economy, technology and energy and do more for its own security. However, the EU will become weaker if we do this separately from the US. We can only survive in a systemic war if we become more united, more decisive and stronger as an alliance, with the US and other countries joining forces in an alliance of rules-based nations.

The European: *But do we not risk a collapse of the entire security structure if the possible next President of the US promises to withdraw from NATO? What would the consequences be for Europe?*

R. Kiesewetter: The consequences would indeed be catastrophic, because without NATO we cannot guarantee our own security. It would be an invitation to Russia to attack other countries in Europe after Ukraine. Our deterrence in Europe would collapse without the US nuclear umbrella. Ultimately this would lead to us Europeans living under Russian influence, in bondage and in poverty, or, alternatively, fighting a war against Russia on our soil with enormous armament costs and sacrifices, of the kind we see today in Ukraine. A US withdrawal from NATO would be an irreparable failure of the West. For China it would be an invitation to attack Taiwan. Taiwan would then not be able to count on support from US. The rules-based order would then be history and we would live in poverty and oppression in the future.

The European: *That is a very bleak scenario. What needs to be done to ensure that it does not happen?*

R. Kiesewetter: Instead of waiting apathetically, we should prevent this scenario by once and for all pursuing a credible burden sharing strategy with the US within NATO. As I said, this would keep the US on board and supporting Ukraine in such a way that it can restore its 1991 borders. We need not only to stop Russia but also contain it, until Russia has learned to lose, which means to accept the right of existence of all neighbour states, unconditionally!

The European: *Mr Kiesewetter, thank you so much for this exchange of ideas and your openness.* ■

Roderich Kiesewetter MdB

has been a member of the German Bundestag since 2009. He is representative on foreign affairs for the CDU/CSU caucus and deputy chairperson in the parliamentary oversight panel supervising Germany's intelligence services. He is a former General Staff Officer of the Bundeswehr, Col (GS) ret. He served almost 30 years in the Bundeswehr in national assignments, with NATO in Brussels and on foreign missions.

Common interests and shared values with the EU and NATO

The Republic of Korea's strategy for the Indo-Pacific and Global Pivotal States

by Dr Eunsook Chung, Senior Fellow Emeritus of Security Strategy Studies at Sejong Institute, Seoul

In December last year, South Korea also adopted its official version of an Indo-Pacific strategy entitled "Strategy for a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region". While emphasising the Indo-Pacific as home to 65% of the world population, accounting for more than 60% of the world's GDP and half of global maritime transport, the Yoon Suk Yeol administration recognised the complicated nature of challenges threatening "a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific." In its view, the Indo-Pacific was facing challenges such as eroding stability of the regional order, uncertainties in the security environment, growing concerns about democratic relapse contesting universal values like freedom, the rule of law, and human rights. In these worrying circumstances, South Korea is to become a "global pivotal state" seeking out an agenda for cooperation in the region and beyond to build a sustainable and resilient regional order.

A strategic partnership with the EU

In the document, European countries, who are also increasing their engagement with the Indo-Pacific, are considered to be important partners in implementing its vision for a free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. In particular, the relationship with Europe is perceived as a partnership based on "value diplomacy." Given this perception, it is logical that South Korea will be heightening substantive cooperation with the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States as well as the United Kingdom, with whom Seoul shares the same core values of freedom, democracy, and human rights. Also, greater linkages and cooperation between the Indo-Pacific and Europe are conceived to help preserve and strengthen the rules-based international order and possibly open discussions on new areas of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Recently the



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President of South Korea Yoon Suk Yeol and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the EU-Korea Summit in Seoul, 22 May 2023

EU has become one of the most important partners for Seoul in economic security such as global supply chains of semiconductor and energy.

At the 10th South Korea-EU Summit in Seoul last May, the leaders celebrated the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations and agreed to further strengthen their strategic partnership established in 2010. The leaders discussed issues of peace and stability, economy and trade, and sustainable development, and particularly at this year's summit, the two sides gave a strong signal of increased cooperation as like-minded partners, reaffirming their partnership based on common interests and shared values, recommitting to the support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula; multilateralism; a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific; and freedom of overflight and navigation, including in the South China Sea. The leaders also highlighted their cooperation on economic security, addressing supply chain disruptions.

A closer link with NATO

South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy 2022 also stipulated 31-member NATO as an important partner for its Indo-Pacific strategy. The document mentioned President Yoon's attendance at the NATO 2022 summit in Madrid, in his inauguration year, as an important juncture in widening its vision of the Indo-Pacific to the Euro-Atlantic and beyond. Indeed, it was the first time a president of the Republic of Korea attended an annual NATO summit. Moreover, South Korea's mission to NATO was newly established in November last year, hoping that the NATO-South Korea partnership will be further developed with it.

Since 2006 when South Korea became a global partner of NATO, its cooperation with NATO has proceeded on an individual country basis, like other partners across the globe for NATO. In the case of the Indo-Pacific, in addition to South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand are also NATO's global partners. In its Security Concept newly adopted by the 2022 Madrid summit, NATO affirmed the close links between the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific and emphasised the need for mutual partnership for a rules-based international order. President Yoon Suk Yeol, who was attending as a leader of a NATO partner

state, expressed South Korea's commitment to strengthening its partnership with NATO based on the shared values of democracy and the rule of law, and to contribute to safeguarding the rules-based international order. This year again, on 12 July 2023 at the NATO summit in Vilnius, President Yoon, while recognising the link between the security of Europe and Asia, expressed his willingness to expand mutual sharing of military intelligence with NATO. South Korea signed the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme with NATO and decided on systematic cooperation in 11 sectors including nonproliferation, cybersecurity and emerging technologies. On the war in Ukraine, President Yoon stressed South Korea's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance and taking part in NATO's Ukraine Trust Funds to strengthen Ukraine's resilience.

“Greater linkages and cooperation between the Indo-Pacific and Europe are conceived to help preserve and strengthen the rules-based international order and possibly open discussions on new areas of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.”

Towards a Global Pivotal State

In line with last year's Indo-Pacific strategy, the Yoon administration released another comprehensive guiding document in June this year, which focuses on national security: "National Security Strategy": Global Pivotal State for Freedom, Peace, and Prosperity. It has three emphases: first, safeguarding universal values and upholding the international order based on rules and principles; second, strengthening the Republic of Korea's military to make it a more solid foundation of security; third, expanding its contribution to the international community in facing global challenges, such as disease, famine, poverty, the digital divide, and climate change. For instance, Seoul is to increase its Official Development Assistance (ODA) volume for the upcoming year by over 40% to assist the Global South.

To summarise, overall, the Republic of Korea and partners in the EU and NATO have common interests and shared values which require far more strengthened cooperation than before in the geographies of the Indo-Pacific, Euro-Atlantic and beyond, including above all the Global South, as well as on major multilateral platforms including the United Nations. As a member of the UN Security Council for the 2024-2025 term, South Korea is committing to playing a responsible role in promoting and building global peace as it works closely with other UN member states. ■

Dr Eunsook Chung



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is Senior Fellow Emeritus of Security Strategy Studies at the Sejong Institute in Seoul. She is a graduate of Korea University and obtained her Ph.D. in Political Science from Ohio State University. Dr Chung has been a visiting fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, and the Peace Research

Institute in Frankfurt. She served on the board of directors at the Academic Council of the United Nations Systems (ACUNS) from 2015 to 2018.



SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Security means more than defence. It means preventing health threats, resilience to extreme weather events caused by climate change, recovery after earthquakes, and providing humanitarian assistance to people suffering from armed conflict. Against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating natural and man-made disaster risk landscape in Europe and its neighbourhood, bilateral and multilateral cooperation in civil protection has moved into the spotlight.

Conference report

Facing the changing Euro-Mediterranean disaster risk landscape

by Nannette Cazaubon, Paris



The City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia

Three major meetings on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in civil protection were held in Barcelona and Valencia from 17 to 19 October 2023. Hosted by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), the three events organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM, see box) brought together 100 officials from 22 countries across the Euro-Mediterranean region. Our magazine was invited to observe the event during the three days. Together with Editor-in-Chief Hartmut Bühl, I travelled to Barcelona and later to Valencia, eager to get first-hand information on the way the EU, together with its neighbours, addresses an increasingly challenging disaster management reality.

(Paris-Barcelona, 16 October 2023) On our way to the city of Gaudí, I studied the background papers we received from the European Commission in preparation for the meetings. I became aware that the Mediterranean region is warming 20% faster than the global average, with far-reaching impacts affecting the countries' ecosystems and socio-economic fabric. This fragile risk landscape is expected to deteriorate and the frequency and intensity of disasters to increase, leading to an overload of national and regional civil protection response capacities.

I remembered well the terrifying news of last summer's extreme weather events that hit many countries in Europe and the Mediterranean region with record-breaking heatwaves, disastrous forest fires like in Greece and Tunisia, and devastating flash floods like in Italy, Slovenia and Libya. These risks come in addition to the already high exposure to natural disasters such as earthquakes, which were tragically experienced in

2023 in Türkiye, Syria and Morocco. Against this backdrop, the three EU-UfM cooperation meetings we would participate in seemed quite timely to me.

PPRD Med Steering Committee meeting

The first of the three events took place on the morning of 17 October in Barcelona, at the UfM permanent Secretariat located in a beautiful palace surrounded by a parc. The first Steering Committee meeting of the new flagship programme "Prevention, Preparedness, Response to natural & man-made Disasters in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean" (PPRD Med, see box) gathered the Directors-General for civil protection or their representatives of the PPRD Med partner countries, as well as delegates from DG ECHO, the UfM, and technological partners.



The PPRD Med meeting took place at the seat of the UfM Secretariat in Barcelona, 17 October 2023

A spirit of cooperation...

The meeting was a pivotal moment for the project governance, as it was the opportunity to review the progress of the inception phase before the start of the implementation phase. Opened by the UfM Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador John Paul Grech, who underlined the spirit of cooperation for what the UfM stands for, the meeting turned out to be quite a technical session but highly interesting in its content.

Officially launched in Rome on 6 June 2023, PPRD Med is a unique collaborative initiative of DG ECHO and the UfM, aimed at fostering a culture of preparedness and proactive risk reduction towards natural and man-made disasters. The risk priorities are above all wildfires, earthquakes, flooding and marine pollution, as well as natural hazard triggered technological accidents (NATECH). Key objectives are the strengthening of operational capacities of civil protection institutions, the development of inter-regional cooperation and synergies with other projects.

...and modern technologies

One of the programme's cornerstones is the use of Earth observation instruments in support of civil protection, as explained PPRD Med Team Leader Philippe Geffroy. He presented in detail the PPRD Med intelligence platform which works with artificial intelligence (AI) and, through real-time high-resolution satellite images, can help to lead rescue teams, identify the passable roads, search for victims, or visualise possible damage on sensible sites such as chemical or nuclear power plants, etc.

Tristan Simonart, Team Lead International Cooperation at DG ECHO with whom I spoke during the lunch break, emphasised that PPRD Med is a country-specific programme and that the partner countries are free to define how they want to participate in the proposed actions and use the tools made available through the programme.

We left Barcelona in the afternoon and reached Valencia after a three-hour bus trip south along the lovely coast of the Mediterranean Sea. There was enough time to study the programme of the next day's first ever joined session of the Directors-General for civil protection of the UfM member and participating states with their peers from the countries involved in the Union Civil



Union for the Mediterranean

(UfM): The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), created in 2008 (Barcelona Process) is an intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation

bringing together the 27 EU Member States and 16 countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean region: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Syria (suspended in 2011), Tunisia, and Türkiye; Libya has observer status. The UfM provides a forum to enhance regional cooperation and dialogue, as well as the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives with tangible impact on the citizens of its member states. The permanent secretariat of the UfM was established in 2010 in Barcelona.

<https://ufmsecretariat.org>



Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM):

The UCPM is a unique initiative established by the European Union in 2001 to facilitate cooperation among EU Member States and

participating non-EU countries in the field of civil protection. The UCPM serves as a platform for sharing resources, expertise, and best practices across borders, fostering a more effective and unified approach to disaster management. The mechanism pools response capacities from all 27 EU countries and the 10 participating countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and most recently Ukraine.

<https://bit.ly/47fSpDy>



PPRD Med: Officially launched in Rome on 6 June 2023, PPRD Med (Prevention, Preparedness, Response to natural & man-made Disasters in the Southern and Eastern Mediter-

anean) runs for 36 months with a budget of €3m. Funded by DG ECHO, it is implemented by the ISTC (International Science and Technology Center) with the support of the ESA (European Space Agency) as the leading technological partner. The 10 partner countries are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. PPRD Med's objective is to build sustainable civil protection capacities; strengthen the links between all relevant governmental actors and civil society stakeholders as well as the scientific community, and enhance regional and sub-regional coordination, institutional and operational cooperation between the southern neighbourhood countries and with the UCPM.

www.pprdmed.eu

Protection Mechanism (UCPM, see box). The latter had started their 51st informal meeting in Valencia in parallel. I read that the meeting would focus on the three key hazards identified for the Mediterranean basin – wildfires, storms and floods, and earthquakes – with the objective of exchanging on the operational side of cross-border cooperation and mutual assistance by showcasing recent experiences in Mediterranean countries.

Joint UCPM and UfM Directors-General meeting

Taking place at the Hotel Barceló with a view of Valencia's most modern City of Arts and Sciences, the first joint UfM-UCPM meeting of 18 October was opened by the Spanish Director-General Francisco Ruiz Boada who welcomed the audience in the name of the Spanish EU Presidency. The Secretary General of the UfM, Ambassador Nasser Kamel, stressed the importance of solidarity, while DG ECHO's Director-General Maciej Popowski emphasised the importance of the first joined session as an opportunity to advance work towards stronger regional cooperation.

Wildfires, floods, and earthquakes

The first of three sessions provided insights on Mediterranean countries' experience of fighting wildfires. Portugal outlined its national preparedness against forest fires, Greece reported on its operational experience during the summer, Lebanon explained its national wildfire strategy and country-specific challenges, while Cyprus presented bilateral cooperation projects with Middle East countries. The second session focused on storms and floods with their dramatic consequences. Italy, Algeria, the Czech Republic and Jordan shared their national strategies and respective experiences from responses to these hazards. The last session was centred on preparedness and response to earthquakes. Romania elaborated on its national preparedness strategy for earthquakes, Palestine showcased cooperation projects in the Mediterranean region, while Tunisia shared its experience of the response to the February 2023 earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye.

The need for cooperation

Hartmut and I were impressed by the countries' willingness to cooperate and put aside their differences as regards geopolitics, ambitions, political systems, populations, or culture and religion, to fight common threats. Telling examples, to name a few, are the trilateral cooperation project on water management between Israel, Palestine and Jordan (even if currently suspended because of the regional conflict), or the bilateral cooperation between Cyprus and geographically close Middle East countries that provided assistance to the island during the devastating wildfires last summer.



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Nannette Cazaubon
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Discussions and exchanges continued into the afternoon and the next day during the meeting of the UfM Directors-General responsible for civil protection.

Fourth meeting of the UfM Directors-General

The fourth meeting of the UfM Directors-General in Valencia on 18-19 October was co-chaired by Hanna Jahns, Director for Disaster Preparedness and Prevention at DG ECHO and the Jordan Civil Defence Director-General Brigadier General Mohammad Mahmoud Al-Omari, in their capacities as UfM Co-Presidents. Ms Jahns said that the meeting was held under a single motto: "show and project the example of solidarity", while General Al-Omari saw encouraging signs of resilience driven by successful cross-border cooperation.

Existing and future cooperation instruments

During the first day, participants discussed the cooperation tools available under the UCPM, such as the UfM regional dialogue platform with its three working groups, the new PPRD Med flagship programme, as well as on-site technical assistance and a multi-country risk mapping study. The second day was dedicated to the reflection on new proposals for cooperation instruments such as the UfM digital platform with three interfaces (public, didactical, operational) and the observatory of volunteerism aimed at involving the civil society in civil protection, presented by Laurent Alfonso, UfM Second National Expert on Civil Protection.

A key item on the agenda was the presentation of the UfM Action Plan 2030 and reflections on the establishment of a voluntary non-binding Mediterranean Civil Protection Framework (MFCP), which would open the way for increased operational interaction between UfM and UCPM countries and translate the technical discussions of the UfM regional dialogue platform into effective action on the ground. While some delegates noted concerns with the creation of new structures, many others were optimistic that such a new framework would enable actors on both sides of the Mediterranean to pool their emergency prevention and response resources more effectively and jointly address the immense security challenges facing the region.

Preparing for the future

Many of the participants we talked to underlined the opportunity the EU-UfM partnership offers for the exchange of knowledge and best practice between the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean. Placed under the motto of solidarity, the three-day event in Spain, with its various meetings, led to significant progress in identifying cooperation potentials and shaping the path for the future, with even closer Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on both sides of the Mediterranean. ■

Our magazine will continue to follow the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of civil protection. We will widely cover the issue of security risks stemming from climate change in our next edition.

➤ See also the interview with Nasser Kamel (UfM) and Maciej Popowski (DG ECHO) starting p. 37



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On the road to shared governance in civil protection

Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

İnsani Yardım

The EU sent rescue teams to Türkiye following its request to activate the Union Civil Protection Mechanism on 6 February 2023

Interview with HE Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM),
Barcelona/Cairo and Maciej Popowski, Director-General of DG ECHO, European Commission, Brussels

The European: Mr Kamel and Mr Popowski, over the past years, the European Union (EU) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) have developed close cooperation on civil protection. New joint projects and programmes have recently been launched. What drives both the EU and the UfM to undertake such an ambitious political and technical initiative between nations with different political traditions, diverging geopolitical ambitions, and societies with different cultures?

Nasser Kamel: Civil protection has long been recognised as one of the main objectives of the UfM since its inception in 2008. In 2020, UfM Foreign Ministers reaffirmed it as one of the six main priorities of our organisation, calling for an action plan to strengthen its prevention campaigns, emergency response and crisis management.

The European: The Mediterranean region is indeed heating up more than any other region of the world.

N. Kamel: Yes, the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC)- Report established that the Mediterranean region is a climate change hot spot. With the incidence of natural and man-made calamities on the increase, both in quantity and simultaneity of occurrence, we need to understand that climate change does not stop at, or recognise, geographical borders, political traditions or cultural differences. The need to cooperate at a regional level is no longer an option, as no country can rely solely on its own national civil protection capacities.

Maciej Popowski: As you said, Ambassador, disasters know no borders. Let me add that due to their geographical proximity, countries on both shores of the Mediterranean face a similar reality of disaster risk management, further exacerbated by the impact of climate change. This is evident in the numerous activations of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) over the summer and early autumn, in response to wildfires in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Tunisia, and floods in Italy, Slovenia and Libya. Not to mention other devastating natural disasters in the region such as the earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye, and, more recently, Morocco. The increasing number of disasters, their complexity and interconnectedness require a strengthened partnership on civil protection between EU Member States and countries in the Southern Neighbourhood.

The European: How is the EU contributing concretely to this objective?

M. Popowski: The Union committed itself to this objective with the revival of a senior level dialogue on civil protection with the UfM in 2019 and with the adoption of a dedicated UCPM Strategy for the Southern Neighbourhood in 2021. I would also like to recall the recent Med9 Declaration of the heads of state and government of the nine EU southern states supporting stronger cooperation on civil protection and disaster risk management in the Mediterranean, including with non-EU countries. This is also



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HE Nasser Kamel, Secretary General of the UfM and Hartmut Bühl in Valencia, 18 October 2023

the aspiration of many of our partners on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, who have called on numerous occasions for a reinforcement of common operational language and procedures in times of crisis.

The European: *Did the EU-UfM conference at the level of Directors-General (DGs) for civil protection last October in Valencia lend fresh momentum to this cooperation?*

M. Popowski: There is indeed willingness and readiness on both sides to build on this renewed momentum for action to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters in the Mediterranean. The meeting of UfM Directors-Generals for civil protection in Spain, the first in four years, including a joined session with the UCPM DGs, was a good opportunity for us to take this work forward, ultimately leading to the creation of a new solidarity instrument, the Mediterranean Framework on Civil Protection (MFCP).

The European: *Can you please elaborate on this?*

M. Popowski: A voluntary non-binding MFCP will gather capacity-building blocks from DG ECHO regional cooperation initiatives in the Mediterranean, as well as from the instruments launched by the UfM at the Directors-General meeting in Valencia. Once established it will complement and further develop the UCPM and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), enabling actors on both shores of the Mediterranean to pool their emergency prevention and response resources more effectively.

The European: *Mr. Kamel, from your perspective, what are the challenges in creating such a framework for closer cooperation?*

N. Kamel: In a way, the sooner that countries come to the realisation that only practical regional collaboration can

safeguard against the overwhelming or catastrophic consequences of climate behaviour, the better. The challenges, in my view, remain in creating the right framework of regional coordination, based on agreed terms of operation. The idea for the MFCP is geared towards this goal.

The European: *And this framework will foster solidarity?*

N. Kamel: For me, civil protection is in itself an act of solidarity between countries and their civilian populations. For Mediterranean countries and other stakeholders to come together and

“The resilience of societies is based on several pillars, and one of the most important and strategic is the commitment of citizens to building shields for their own security.”

Nasser Kamel

explore ways to cooperate in sharing experiences, resources and lessons learnt on prevention, preparedness and response, primarily relative to climate-related or induced hazards and while doing so, developing a common language of engagement with a view to save lives and assist communities in distress, is in my view the essence of the cooperation we seek between the UfM member states, international organisations and private partners.

The European: *Excellency, the UfM Action Plan 2030 that was presented in Valencia is comprehensive, ambitious, and very demanding. Can you tell us what are the essential features of this project?*

N. Kamel: The UfM Action Plan 2030 is the outcome of a series of working groups that have met over the past months. These were preceded by the setting up of a UfM Regional Dialogue Platform on Civil Protection in December 2022, which provided a much-needed space for national civil protection authorities, international organisations and other interested partners to dialogue, engage with each other, share views and ambitions in this regard. This created the possibility for countries from the EU and others hailing from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean to address common concerns arising from the sudden impact of climate related hazards affecting both sides of the Mediterranean, as well as the increasing pressures that countries were experiencing on their limited national civil protection resources.

The European: *Mr Popowski, let me question you on another project that was launched on 6 June 2023 in Rome, the PPRD (Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made Disasters-Mediterranean) Mediterranean programme with 10 southern Partner Countries. It proposes to take advantage of advanced technologies such as earth observation, supported by*

artificial intelligence, and use them for civil protection. Is PPRD Med a complement to the UCPM and the ERCC?

M. Popowski: By fostering the development of a culture of prevention and preparedness in the EU Southern Neighbourhood countries, the PPRD Med regional programme provides operational capacity building, thus opening a Mediterranean window for the work of the UCPM. Another aim of the programme is to enhance institutional and operational cooperation between Southern partners and the UCPM within the framework of the political partnership with the UfM. From an operational viewpoint, we see great potential in the tools developed by PPRD Med and in the added value they can bring to the ERCC. We will explore how to promote further synergies between the ERCC and our partners in the Southern Neighbourhood and reinforce their capacity to use the ERCC when disasters occur.

The European: *This brings me to the question of political stability. Mr Popowski, can such a cooperation bring about more political stability in Europe and its surroundings, one of the leading objectives of the EU neighbourhood policy?*

M. Popowski: Regional and bilateral cooperation on civil protection can help overcome political tensions and contribute to building trust among countries in the Southern Neighbourhood. Its technical nature and the potential cross-border impact of disasters represent a strong incentive for states to work together. A practical example is the cooperation among Israel, Jordan, and Palestine, all members of the UfM, in the Middle East sub-region. It has resulted in the successful organisation of a UCPM full-scale exercise in Jericho in March 2023 on an earthquake scenario hitting the Jordan Valley in the context of the “Professional Dialogue Exercise – Jordan Israel Palestine” (PDEX – JIP) agreed among the three entities. We hope that this collaboration will resume in the future with the launch of new projects.

The European: *Gentlemen, you have both spoken of the need to create a culture of preparedness and proactive risk reduction in the face of natural and man-made disasters in the EU Southern*

Neighbourhood countries and the Mediterranean basin. Among the projects the UfM is proposing is the observatory on volunteerism. The idea is to get civil society engaged in civil protection to support professional first responders. May I ask you, Ambassador Kamel, as Secretary General of the UfM, to outline the underlying idea here?

N. Kamel: The resilience of societies is based on several pillars, and one of the most important and strategic is the commitment of citizens to building shields for their own security. To convert and channel this commitment, volunteerism is a powerful link between institutions and the population, relayed by associations or intermediary bodies, which reinforce the spirit of solidarity. Voluntary engagement in civil protection is one of the ways of exercising solidarity in disaster situations, as close as possible to needs. It also provides added value, in the form of knowledge of the territories. In general, civil protection volunteerism is carried out at the local level, as a first level of response. It is this proximity that increases the efficiency of the action. It also has potential to create social cohesion, as different social groups, men and women, younger and older people work together towards one goal.

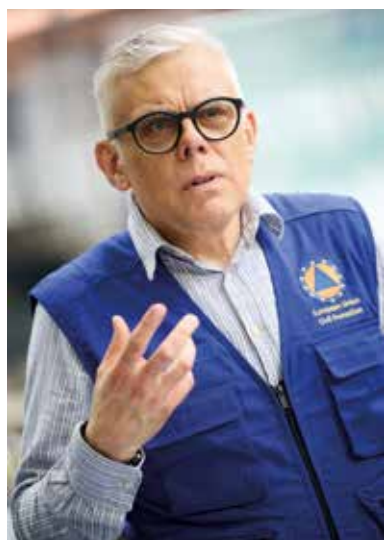
The European: *It is in this sense that the German THW (Bundesanstalt Technisches Hilfswerk) has developed and implemented programmes with Tunisia and Jordan.*

N. Kamel: You are right. The creation of an observatory of volunteerism desired by the member countries of the UfM will draw on the experience of the THW programme by giving it a Euro-Mediterranean character, aiming to promote this model, to create regional synergies, and measuring the results obtained. The observatory will also be a communication tool among populations to promote this form of commitment to society.

The European: *Mr Popowski, may I ask you as Director-General of DG ECHO to conclude this interview by taking a position on a slogan making the rounds during the Valencia conference: “We are striving for a win-win situation between Europe and the South.”*

M. Popowski: Indeed, this is what we want to accomplish! As I said at the meeting in Valencia, we are striving to create a strong Mediterranean community of civil protection practitioners. DG ECHO will continue to support the partnership between European and Southern Neighbourhood countries together with the UfM and reflect on how to leverage our strengths and further develop our cooperation in a complementary and mutually beneficiary manner.

The European: *Gentlemen, I thank you for this conversation and wish you every success in your future endeavours. This magazine will follow your progress and report on your achievements.* ■



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Maciej Popowski,
Director-General of DG ECHO,
European Commission

“The increasing number of disasters, their complexity and interconnectedness require a strengthened partnership on civil protection between EU Member States and countries in the Southern Neighbourhood.”

Maciej Popowski

Interview carried out by Hartmut Bühl

Civil-military protection

High demand for protected and armoured vehicles

A conversation on site between Fred Stoof, owner of Stoof International, Borkheide and Hartmut Bühl, Paris



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Hartmut Bühl during his visit at Stoof International getting explanations on the armoring of a Toyota 300 from Patrick Franke, Head of Internal Sales

The European: *Mr Stoof, thank you for the opportunity to visit your factory in Borkheide. I can see a large variety of vehicles of different brands that are armoured here.*

Fred Stoof: Indeed, we have a lot of work! With our products we are the market leader in Germany and a globally recognised producer of all types of protected and armoured vehicles.

The European: *Who are the people using your vehicles?*

F. Stoof: We produce for the police, civilian and military personnel in humanitarian aid and peacekeeping operations, and medical transport in conflict areas. Even in the field of protection against landmines our vehicles are in use. Not to be forgotten is the protection of limousines for individuals in politics, society and business.

The European: *How long has Stoof International been active in this industry and how did it become established?*

F. Stoof: In the tradition of the company, which was founded over 150 years ago and has always been concerned with converting vehicles, we have managed to achieve an outstanding position on the market for protected and armoured vehicle equipment through our innovation capacity and our highest quality.

The European: *What are the innovative technological capabilities that Stoof offers its customers?*

F. Stoof: To summarise, we visualise customer ideas internally in the shortest possible timeframe; we produce and present prototypes of the idea using the latest 3D printing processes; we use alternative materials that conserve resources; we have respective decentralised information in the company available, which simplifies work organisation; and we network with individual departments to make it easier to control task-specific processes.

The European: *I heard in Brussels that there is currently an increasing demand for protected and armoured motor vehicles in all categories, but especially SUVs.*

F. Stoof: There is indeed a high demand for armoured off-road Toyota Landcruiser 200 and Toyota 300, but the specially protected Range Rover is also in demand. Demand also continues for armoured and off-road cargo vehicles such as the Toyota Hilux and for cash and valuables transporters. We also have armoured personnel carriers for up to 12 people in our portfolio for every kind of user.

The European: *I see work being done on a special vehicle over there...*

F. Stoof: ...yes, we continue to dedicate ourselves to all types of special vehicles, a particular challenge for our engineers and logistics. The car you can see over there is a Toyota that was shot at in a German test centre.

The European: *What about the certification of the converted vehicles?*

F. Stoof: Like this Toyota 300 here, you should know that all LC 300s are certified according to the latest guidelines (ERV version 3, BRV version 3) of the VPAM (Association of Test Laboratories for Attack Resistant Materials and Constructions). Our vehicles leave the production halls at Stoof in Borkheide with a certification of three out of three stars (***) in all categories.

The European: *That means maximum protection! But what about certification according to NATO standards (STANAG 4569)?*

F. Stoof: STANAG certification takes place parallel to the VPAM.

The European: *Mr Stoof, one last question: what are the plans for your company in the future?*

F. Stoof: The Stoof company does not stop at what it has achieved. In addition to constantly developing our products to meet customer needs, we also work on improving our sustainability. We consistently implement this strategy with our own solar system and other ideas regarding sustainability. Our motto "your safety is our goal" remains our obligation and motivation.

The European: *Mr Stoof, thank you for this discussion on site about the safety of those who protect others.*

Cooperation makes us stronger

Protecting Europe from the next health threats

by Charlotte Renckens, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate-General HERA, European Commission, Brussels



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Outbreaks of infectious diseases are on the rise worldwide, and one of the main lessons that we learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic is precisely that we need to be better prepared for future health crises, and that cooperation makes us stronger.

HERA, a new player in the global health security landscape

The recent pandemic is a stark reminder that the world is still not fully prepared for emerging infectious diseases, which are a constant threat. In fact, new diseases can emerge at any time, from anywhere in the world. And investing in health preparedness helps us to detect and respond to these diseases quickly and effectively. Climate change is also exacerbating health risks and increases the spread of diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, while also causing more extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, which can displace people and damage infrastructure, making it more difficult to provide healthcare services. In addition, the volatility of world events increasingly exposes large populations to health risks. For example, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has displaced millions of people and disrupted access to healthcare.

Ensuring availability of medical countermeasures

The European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) was established in the aftermath of the pandemic, in October 2021, to better prepare for and respond to cross-border health threats. Since its inception, it has become clear that although the Covid-19 pandemic was declared over, there is still a lot of work to be done.

HERA strengthens Europe's ability to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to cross-border health emergencies. Its core mission is to ensure that the needed medical countermeasures are accessible and available in Europe. Medical countermeasures include vaccines, medicines, personal protective equipment, as well as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) response equipment. And ensuring their availability starts with supporting the research and development phases.

To this end, HERA invests in the research and development of promising medical countermeasures. It has different funding options at its disposal, such as EU4Health, Horizon Europe, and HERA Invest. The latter is a €100m initiative that provides venture loans to small and medium-sized enterprises developing medical countermeasures to address the most pressing

cross-border health threats. The purpose of HERA Invest is to strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy in the field of health preparedness and response, by incentivising private investment in the development of medical countermeasures that may or may not prove successful.

But HERA's efforts also cover other strands of work. As we know very well from the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccine production can be crucial to ensure an effective response. HERA's initiative EU FAB works to ensure sufficient and agile manufacturing capacities for different vaccine types. The EU FAB network comprises vaccine producers in the EU (Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain). These facilities are required to maintain a certain level of readiness, such as keeping their equipment up to date and their staff trained. Following the recognition of a public health emergency, HERA may decide to purchase vaccines and activate EU FAB. The EU FAB facilities will then rapidly start production and deliver the vaccines.

Equitable access and distribution of medical countermeasures

European solidarity means ensuring that all Member States can access medical countermeasures when needed. However, in reality, not all markets are always served, and prices may differ. On 24 October 2023, the Commission published a Communication [COM(2023) 672 final] on addressing medicine shortages in the EU. As an example of how to increase access to medical countermeasures, the Commission launch-

“European solidarity means ensuring that all Member States can access medical countermeasures when needed.”

Charlotte Renckens



is the Deputy Head of Unit of the Emergency Office of the European Commission's Health Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), a new organisation established after Covid-19, aiming to ensure the availability and accessibility of medical countermeasures in the EU. Previously, Charlotte worked as a policy officer in the Commission's counter-terrorism

unit, where she worked on regulating chemicals that can be used as explosives precursors, and where she held the pen for the EU's counter-terrorism strategy.

es joint procurements, which allow EU countries to pool their purchasing power, and for HERA to negotiate contracts with pharmaceutical companies on behalf of the group. This can help to secure better prices and more reliable supplies of essential medicines and vaccines. In this way, for example, Member States purchased vaccines and medicines against pox viruses, which serve as a tool to respond to outbreaks of the mpox virus but can also be used in case of a re-emergence of smallpox, a major bioterrorism threat.

During emergencies, there often is not enough time to wait for scaled up production, or for procurement contracts to come to fruition. Upon its inception, HERA was allocated €1.2bn to establish stockpiles of medical countermeasures under the rescEU programme, for example to respond to CBRN events. The reserves contain personal protective equipment, vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and so forth. The stockpiles serve as a safety net and can be accessed by countries through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) if an event overwhelms the national capacity to respond. To support national stockpiling efforts, HERA is also exploring more innovative and sustainable ways of stockpiling and working with Member States.

HERA – a promising step forward

HERA's response capacities have already been tested since the Covid-19 pandemic. Faced with the mpox outbreak in Europe, HERA purchased and rapidly deployed over 109,000 doses of mpox vaccines to EU Member States, Norway, and Iceland. This was the first time that the EU has directly purchased and donated vaccines to Member States. The vaccines were being used to protect people at risk of exposure to mpox. Next to the emergency donations of the vaccines, HERA initiated joint procurements for an mpox vaccine and a therapeutic, allowing Member States to build up their national reserves. The Commission also urgently purchased doses of the mpox treatment and holds them in a rescEU strategic reserve at the disposal of Member States in need.

Even if there is still a lot to be done, HERA's establishment has already marked a significant step forward in the EU's health preparedness and response capabilities. Only together can EU countries protect citizens from cross-border health threats. As such, HERA's work is essential to safeguarding the health and well-being of European citizens. ■



More information

EU4Health	https://bit.ly/49smt0H
Horizon Europe	https://bit.ly/3MBJEfh
HERA invest	https://bit.ly/3QSe3ID
EU FAB	https://bit.ly/3QvVF7a



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SECURING
THE SKIES



PROTECTING
YOUR ASSETS



MASTERING
THE SEAS



COMMANDING
THE COMBAT ZONE

