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European Union Security and Defence Policy: Foundation and Development Overview

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One of the key objectives of the European project was to ensure the role of the European continent as an important actor in world affairs through strong economic and diplomatic relations. Peace was established as a core element of the project, which was built on the aftermaths of the World War II, and its model of freedom and equality was intended to be adopted by other parts of the world. The values and objectives of the EU that determine its relations with the rest of the world, as stated in Article 3 of the [Lisbon Treaty](#), include the promotion of European values and interests, **the promotion of peace and security**, the protection of human rights, as well as respect for the Charter of United Nations.

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is the core of EU security strategy and policy.

CSDP enables the Union to take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets.

The idea of a common defence policy for Europe dates back to 1948 when the UK, France, and the Benelux signed the Treaty of Brussels.

Following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent conflicts in the Balkans, it became clear that the EU needed to assume its responsibilities in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management. The conditions under which military units could be deployed were already agreed by the WEU Council in 1992 but the so-called "[Petersberg Tasks](#)" were now integrated in the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam.

The Lisbon Treaty came into force in December 2009 and was a cornerstone in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The treaty includes both a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause and allowed for the creation of the [European External Action Service](#) (EEAS) under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/ Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP).

The "[Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy](#)" presented by former HR/VP Mogherini in June 2016 laid the foundation to develop CSDP further. A comprehensive package of measures in the areas of security and defence was defined at the end of 2016. It consists of three major pillars: new political goals and ambitions for Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security and defence; new financial tools to help Member States and the European defence industry to develop defence capabilities ("[European Defence Action Plan](#)") and a set of concrete actions as follow up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration which identified areas of cooperation.

The “Strategy...” implementation was followed by

- the installment of the [PESCO](#) Treaty-based framework aimed at deepening defence cooperation amongst EU Member States who are capable and willing to do so.
- the launch of [European Defence Fund](#) (EDF) – the European Commission's initiative to support collaborative defence research and development, and to foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base.
- the installment of the [European Peace Facility](#) (EPF) which expanded the EU's ability to provide security for its citizens and its partners.
- The formal approval of the [Strategic Compass](#) which provides a shared assessment of the strategic environment in which the EU is operating and of the threats and challenges the Union faces.

European Security Policy Implementation Challenges

Since the 1990s, the EU [has launched](#) more than 30 military and civilian operations destined to provide humanitarian aid to populations threatened by conflicts and to help resolve wars and tensions. The CSDP missions are far from only serving a humanitarian purpose; they also ensure the EU's security by preventing specific threats from reaching the territory of the Union, such as the newly agreed European Union Monitoring Capacity in Armenia in October 2022.

Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine, launched by Kremlin in February, 2014, as a precursor to its full-scale military intervention 8 years later, proved the EU's realistic policy approach right and set course toward shaping Brussels' defence assistance policy aimed at systematically strengthening Kyiv's defence and security capabilities. This approach can also be seen in the EU military support of Ukraine in terms of Russia's 24 February 2022 full-scale military aggression.

The EU is directly providing lethal weaponry to another country for the first time in its history. Since March 2022, the EU [has sent](#) more than €2.5bn worth of equipment and weapons to Ukraine, using funds from the European Peace Facility. Through this direct military assistance, the EU is involved in helping Ukraine counter the Russian invasion. However, such assistance has another purpose linked with the core objective of the European project: ensuring peace and stability in Europe. The EU's unprecedented military assistance to a non-member state shows that the EU is now ready to be involved in foreign security and defence issues, especially at the military level, to preserve peace within the European continent.

Recommendation

The potential for deepening this partnership extends beyond mere diplomatic lip service; it encompasses comprehensive military training, higher education synergies, advanced research and development, and most importantly, operational readiness in facing common security threats. This series of policy recommendations aims to outline targeted and actionable measures that can fortify the EU-Ukraine alliance. From reforming educational policy and military training to focusing on academic cooperation in combating terrorism, these proposals strive to establish a multi-faceted, resilient, and long-lasting security architecture.

In this complex security environment, the urgency of adapting, expanding, and integrating various aspects of military and civil defense cannot be overstated. Addressing these challenges requires not only sustained political will but also a holistic approach that harmonizes state initiatives with academic insights and civil society engagement.

The following recommendations provide concrete examples for the swift and immediate enhancement of security cooperation between Ukraine and the EU. These suggestions do not necessitate substantial additional funding or the establishment of new mechanisms for interaction between the two entities. However, a review of existing priorities in various integration projects is essential for both parties. Implementing these recommendations will significantly bolster the response to current and future security challenges, thereby ensuring long-term stability and prosperity for the European continent.

Reform Educational Policy - Implement Military Erasmus for Ukraine

It remains crucial for Ukraine to persist in training its military personnel, the active army, and the mobilization reserve. Although the EU and various European countries have exerted significant and influential efforts to train the Ukrainian military, there is still an urgent need to develop these programs further. We not only advocate for the continuity of these programs but also urge an expansion in terms of quality and quantity. We suggest broadening the scope of training for our military and introducing new courses for sergeants and officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Under war conditions, offering high-quality, long-term training for officers poses a significant challenge. Hence, we recommend extending opportunities for Ukrainian military educational institutions through the ["Military Erasmus" \(EMILYO\) program](#) and funding this type of training for Ukrainian officers. This will equip the Defense Forces of Ukraine with necessary skills and promote Ukraine's integration into the EU's common security and defense policy. Policies that encourage defense colleges and universities in Europe to engage and exchange with Ukrainian military academies should also be pursued.

Increase Funding for Security and Defense Research for Ukrainian Specialists

Ukrainian higher education has seen substantial growth and global integration thanks to the Eastern Partnership mechanisms, such as the ["Erasmus+"](#) and ["Horizon"](#) programs. However, a current priority is enhancing the integration of military academies and universities. Ukraine

is already experiencing a shortage of personnel in security analytics, the development and application of new mechanisms, systems, and other tools for strengthening security. This is particularly true in the face of hybrid confrontation, which persists despite active conflict with the Russian Federation. To modernize security institutions in wartime, Ukraine needs increased funding for projects like "Horizon," with a greater emphasis on grants targeting the security sphere. This includes supply chain, military engineering (aviation, unmanned and radar systems), military sociology, and internal security.

Ukraine's integration into [PESCO](#) also presents an opportunity, particularly concerning the financing of effective developments for mass production, such as crewless aerial vehicles, attack drones, and navigation and guidance systems. Increasing funding for such projects in Ukraine will not only allow the country's scientists to maintain adequate working conditions but also aid in developing Ukraine's security integration into the EU.

Develop Infrastructure for Radicalization Prevention and Terrorism Countermeasures Reform

In 2020, the EU identified radicalization prevention [as one of its priorities](#) in combatting political extremism and terrorism. Alongside information countermeasures, this remains a crucial aspect of tackling hybrid threats from the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Ukraine, too, experiences the repercussions of Russian asymmetric warfare methods. As such, a key priority for maintaining stability and security is limiting the Kremlin's ability to wage war and reducing its destabilizing influence. Cooperation between Ukraine and the EU within the principal instrument of combating radicalization remains scarce. However, this development is crucial for protecting the European continent from Russia's subversive influence. In light of this, we suggest the following steps:

Join the Radicalization Prevention Network (RAN)

[The Radicalization Prevention Network](#) (RAN) is among the most effective mechanisms for research, policy development, and other tools to counter violent extremism. Providing funding for RAN experts to research Ukrainian threats would be a significant stride in establishing modern infrastructure to counter extremism. Incorporating Ukrainian specialists and institutions would lead to more insightful studies of Ukrainian cases and more effective adaptation of practices, such as those devised for the Western Balkans.

As a result, initiatives can be established to formalize the collaboration of security services, local authorities, and civil society within the framework of CVE practices. The drafting of normative legal acts on the Ukrainian side and joint research on the initial mechanisms of CVE implementation should be prioritized. This will enhance the protection of vulnerable groups, bolster the capabilities of internal security services, and counter hybrid influence more effectively.

Academic Cooperation in the Field of Combating Terrorism

Just as we have noted the necessity to fortify academic cooperation in the field of security, it's crucial to augment opportunities for key institutions in the fight against terrorism, such as the [Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine](#). This can be accomplished by integrating the academy into the RAN network, financing projects within the framework of grant mechanisms (specifically Horizon-type projects), and networking educators through tools like the Erasmus+ and EMILYO programs.

Development of a Ukrainian Strategy for the Prevention of Radicalization

Ukraine faces unique radicalization threats which, due to historical factors, often diverge significantly from general European trends. The risk of manipulation and misinformation by the Russian Federation (for example, in the discussion about the Assault Brigade Azov of National Guard of Ukraine Brigade and 3rd Separate Assault Brigade of Armed Forces of Ukraine) makes it impossible to simply replicate EU practices in this area. Therefore, Ukraine must formulate its integrated strategy to combat radicalization, which will require consultation, coordination, and support from the European Union, a body that holds some of the most progressive experiences in this field.

Funding and Support of CVE Initiatives in Ukraine

In addition to state programs and academic cooperation, CVE practices primarily serve as a mechanism for civilian activity and civil society in coordination with government officials and security agencies. The need to preserve the humanitarian aspect of these practices necessitates increased support for civil society initiatives in this area. This can be achieved by having the European Union finance such projects in Ukraine. It can be financed through mechanisms like the [Eastern Partnership](#) or, as previously mentioned, Horizon projects. For example, counter-radicalization practices could be incorporated as a new objective within the Eastern Partnership, particularly to encourage the public to focus on this area.

This is especially important as a supplementary stage in supporting the development of prevention practices. At a time when Ukrainian authorities are objectively focused on critical security risks from Russia, they lack the capacity to finance and implement entirely new public policies.

Conclusion

The potential for enhanced security cooperation between the EU and Ukraine remains substantial, with untapped avenues that both parties can explore. While Ukraine must prioritize reforms, even amidst the extreme risks posed by ongoing conflict, the EU can bolster this security integration. This can be accomplished not only by providing material and technical assistance but also by granting access to cooperation in the military-industrial sector, notably through integration into PESCO and fostering advanced research in military technology and internal security institutions. Collectively, these actions serve not only to bolster stability but also to pave the way for Ukraine's deeper integration into Europe's evolving security architecture.

Moreover, it's important to acknowledge that Ukraine is facing the most significant armed conflict in Europe in the past 80 years. As such, the onus to stimulate further cooperation currently leans heavily on the EU. In this context, we recommend concentrating on policy fine-tuning and enhancing the capabilities of existing cooperative mechanisms. Such an approach would expediently and substantially elevate the effectiveness of our joint security efforts. PESCO, EMILYO, HORIZON and Eastern Partnership is our main examples as potential mechanisms for growth this cooperation.

In light of the diverse and escalating security challenges that face both the European Union and Ukraine, the actionable recommendations put forth in this document offer a strategic blueprint for fortified collaboration. From educational reforms in military training to focused efforts in academic research and civil defense, these proposals aim to build a resilient, multi-layered security architecture. By revisiting existing priorities and integrating new initiatives, the EU and Ukraine can enhance their collective response to contemporary security threats. It is imperative for both parties to seize this opportunity to foster long-term stability and prosperity in the European continent.