Peace and Security in 2021
Overview of EU action and outlook for the future

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

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

A parallel study, published separately, focuses specifically on EU peace-building efforts in the eastern Mediterranean. The studies have been drafted as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum scheduled for September 2021.
Executive summary

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

According to the Global Peace Index, the state of peace in the world deteriorated further in 2020, owing not least to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, multilateralism, a core element in the EU’s foreign policy and identity, and a cornerstone of its approach to peace and security, is under increasing pressure from alternative value systems and ideologies; a situation that has been exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic.

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

The overarching values and objectives of the EU guide all facets of its external action, including common foreign and security policy (CFSP); democracy support; development cooperation; economic, financial and technical cooperation; humanitarian aid; trade; and neighbourhood policy. While the promotion of peace remains the objective of EU foreign policy, achieving it is also linked to understanding peace and its components. Thus, measuring peace and the threats that challenge it is becoming an increasingly relevant exercise. In that context, the Normandy Index attempts to measure threats to peace based on variables identified in the EU Global Strategy. The EU Member States, supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS), conducted a comprehensive threat analysis in 2020, as part of the plans to develop an EU Strategic Compass. This has been ongoing in 2021 and is set to be finalised by March 2022.

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

In 2020, the EU advanced its work on countering new threats to peace, such as disinformation, cyber-attacks and climate change. New elements strengthening EU security and defence capabilities are being implemented with the aim of boosting EU strategic autonomy, including its capacity to work for peace and security. These elements of ‘hard power’, together with the EU’s long-standing experience in the practice of soft power, form the backbone of its action for peace and security.

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

Looking to the future, the global environment is expected to grow in complexity, not least because of the long-term effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Threats such as cyber-attacks, disinformation and foreign influence campaigns are here to stay, and demand new types of responses that take into account their nuances. While the EU has made significant progress in furthering its aim of strengthening its presence and efficiency in the area of peace and security, more remains to be done. The 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) is focused on streamlining the EU’s various programmes and instruments to allow for sufficient flexibility to respond to unforeseen threats, while also implementing innovative financial instruments. Underlying the quest for flexibility, efficiency and innovation is the strategic goal of empowering the EU in its global role as a promoter of peace and security, while adapting to the new realities of the international order and the rapid technological, environmental and societal changes of our times. What constitutes peace and security in 2021 has become more multidimensional, dual, and civil-military in nature. The EU is therefore one of the best placed actors to ensure a comprehensive response by employing all its instruments strategically and coherently. Advancing towards increased strategic autonomy will depend on a harmonious blend of instruments and on increasing political and institutional capacity to act. A strategically autonomous EU will be invaluable in achieving the objective of a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world.
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<td>ATT</td>
<td>Arms Trade Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARD</td>
<td>coordinated annual review</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBRN</td>
<td>chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear</td>
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<td>CFSP</td>
<td>common foreign and security policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSDP</td>
<td>common security and defence policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCI</td>
<td>Development Cooperation Instrument</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations</td>
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<td>EDA</td>
<td>European Defence Agency</td>
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<td>EDTIB</td>
<td>European defence technological and industrial base</td>
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<td>EEAS</td>
<td>European External Action Service</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EFSD</td>
<td>European Fund for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
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<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
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<td>ENI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood Instrument</td>
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<td>EOM</td>
<td>electoral observation mission</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
<td>European security strategy</td>
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<td>EUCAP</td>
<td>EU capacity-building mission</td>
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<td>EUGS</td>
<td>Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy</td>
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<td>EUISS</td>
<td>European Union Institute for Security Studies</td>
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<td>EUNAVFOR</td>
<td>EU Naval Force</td>
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<td>EUTM</td>
<td>EU training mission</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
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<td>IcSP</td>
<td>Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace</td>
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<td>IEP</td>
<td>Institute for Economics and Peace</td>
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<td>INF</td>
<td>Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty</td>
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<td>INSC</td>
<td>Instrument for Nuclear Safety Co-operation</td>
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<td>INTPA</td>
<td>European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>JCPOA:</td>
<td>Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran</td>
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<td>MERCOSUR:</td>
<td>Mercado Común del Sur</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFA:</td>
<td>macro-financial assistance</td>
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<td>MFF:</td>
<td>multiannual financial framework</td>
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<td>NATO:</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDICI:</td>
<td>Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</td>
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<td>NPT:</td>
<td>Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons</td>
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<td>ODA:</td>
<td>official development aid</td>
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<td>PCIA:</td>
<td>peace and conflict impact assessment methodology</td>
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<td>PESCO:</td>
<td>permanent structured cooperation</td>
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<td>SDGs:</td>
<td>UN sustainable development goals</td>
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<td>SHARE:</td>
<td>EU initiative for supporting the Horn of Africa’s resilience</td>
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<td>TEU:</td>
<td>Treaty on European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPNW:</td>
<td>Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons</td>
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<td>UN:</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNGA:</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEF:</td>
<td>World Economic Forum</td>
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<td>WMDs:</td>
<td>weapons of mass destruction</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1. Peace and security in the face of coronavirus

Since March 2020, the world has been going through what is with little doubt the most severe and multifaceted crisis of the 21st century so far. The Covid-19 outbreak, the subsequent national lockdowns and their implications for people, the economy, societies, ideas and identities has spurred a rethink and reconsideration of notions that had become part of the policy community's glossary. Globalisation, freedom of movement and individual liberties have had new nuances attached to them. Peace and security are no different. The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the global understanding of peace and security more than ever before. It has exposed a key weakness in policies for the pursuit of peace, security and prosperity: the ability to deal with the unexpected. Preparedness to counter non-traditional threats – globally and in the EU – has been tested, and found, if not inadequate, then lacking. As some of the major strategic documents of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and Germany illustrate, the understanding of health as a peace and security problem had been evolving in previous years, particularly since the Covid-19 outbreak, whereas policy responses had been divergent (see Figure 2).

Figure 1 – The coronavirus pandemic: a year on

As of April 2021, Covid-19 has infected over 140 million people in 219 countries, with over 3 million deaths recorded, and over 3 billion people placed in lockdown.

Data source: Brookings Institution, World Bank, UN, Norwegian Refugee Council, Human rights watch, ENISA, UNOCHA.

In the words of the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell (HR/VP), in his address to the UNSC in May 2020: 'the coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the fragilities of a hyper-globalised and interdependent world. We must learn the lesson and take seriously how human and planetary
health are linked, and how inequalities make us more vulnerable.¹ He also argues that the international community should ask itself why it was not better prepared and how it could do better in the future since this virus ‘was not really a black swan’.²

In the wake of the pandemic, leaders and experts worldwide have acknowledged that threats to peace and security can be caused by non-traditional security threats, such as viruses and extreme weather events. Similarly, the links and impact of Covid-19 on the economy, disinformation, cybersecurity, democracy, state fragility, energy insecurity, violent conflict, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction, illustrate the scale of the challenges to the promotion of peace and security, one of the main goals of the EU and its foreign policy. In a world already marked by heightened geopolitical tensions and declining security guarantees, the coronavirus continues to pose a major challenge in achieving this objective, despite there being light at the end of the vaccination tunnel.

Peace and Security in 2021

Figure 2 – Pandemics in strategic documents of the P5+1

CHINA

REFERENCE TO THREAT OF PANDEMIC
Threats to outer space and cyber security loom large and the threat of non-traditional security issues posed by natural disasters and major epidemics is on the rise. (p. 5)

POLICY RESPONSE PROPOSED
As stipulated in the Regulations on Participation in Emergency Response and Disaster Relief by China’s Armed Forces, China’s armed forces are mainly tasked with (…), epidemic control and medical relief; eliminating or controlling other major threats, dangerous situations (…). (p. 15)

FRANCE

REFERENCE TO THREAT OF PANDEMIC
Among the other vulnerabilities identified by DISSR 2017, and since confirmed by the Covid-19 pandemic, flows in a globalised world are dearer and more numerous, which favours the spread of viruses, complicates the response to health crises and spares no region of the world. (p. 13)

POLICY RESPONSE PROPOSED
The Covid-19 crisis has illustrated the need for a versatile military, capable of strengthening the Nation’s resilience through its ability to take action in a wide variety of critical situations. (…) in the light of lessons learned from the pandemic, among other things, the armed forces’ capabilities need to be strengthened to deal with large-scale crises. In this respect, the implementation of a strategic “protection-resilience” function is now clearly necessary. (p. 40)

UK

REFERENCE TO THREAT OF PANDEMIC
Infectious disease outbreaks are likely to become more frequent in the coming years, while antimicrobial resistance (AMR) remains a long-term challenge to human health. As COVID-19 has shown, such health crises can have devastating human, economic and social consequences, testing national responses and the global health system, and straining international cooperation. (Section IV.3, p. 95)

POLICY RESPONSE PROPOSED
Our third goal is to build health resilience at home and at the international level, recognizing the interconnected nature of our global health system. In particular, we will bolster our efforts to improve pandemic preparedness – taking a One Health approach – and to reform the WHO, applying the lessons of COVID-19. (Section IV.1, p. 87)

‘We must learn the lessons of COVID-19, bolstering our domestic and international action to address global health risks as part of our wider approach to biosecurity. (…) Reflecting the interconnected nature of our global health system, we will sustain our support to health programmes in developing countries. We will also continue our collaboration with partners including the EU and the multilateral development banks on issues such as AMR, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.’ (Section IV.3, p. 94)

USA

REFERENCE TO THREAT OF PANDEMIC
Recent events show all too clearly that many of the biggest threats we face respect no borders or walls, and must be met with collective action. Pandemics and other biological risks, the escalating climate crisis, cyber and digital threats, international economic disruptions, cramped humanitarian crises, violent extremism and terrorism, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction all pose profound and, in some cases, existential dangers. (p. 7)

POLICY RESPONSE PROPOSED
‘We will also join with the international community to combat the continuing threat posed by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases with pandemic potential. We will lead at the World Health Organization, working to reform and strengthen the organization. As we do, we will push for reforms to improve the agency and the role of the United Nations in confronting this pandemic and preparing for the next.’ (p. 12)

‘We will rebuild and strengthen federal, state, and local preparedness to handle not just this pandemic, but also the next one. We will work to restore U.S. leadership on global health and health security, and build the world’s collective preparedness and capacity to detect and rapidly contain infectious diseases and biological threats.’ (p. 16)

RUSSIA

REFERENCE TO THREAT OF PANDEMIC
‘Epidemics are spreading, many caused by newly, previously unknown viruses’. (p. 18)

POLICY RESPONSE PROPOSED
‘The goals of state policy in terms of protecting public health of citizens are to prevent diseases, prevent the growth of diseases that are dangerous for others, increase access to medical care for the population (…).’

GERMANY

REFERENCE TO THREAT OF PANDEMIC
‘Highlights pandemic diseases as “challenges for German security policy”’ (p.44). The paper stresses for instance the possible consequences of an excessive pressure on national and international health care, the massive disruption of transnational transport and economic systems and the de facto quarantine of affected areas.’

POLICY RESPONSE PROPOSED
‘The rapid and needs-based provision of materials and specialist personnel in areas that are difficult to access, but also effective prevention through education and health protection on site, are seen as major challenges.’ (p.45)

NB: P5+1 refers to the UN Security Council’s five permanent members (the P5), plus Germany.

1.2. A geopolitical EU in a volatile security environment

It is far from a novelty to say that the world is leaving a period of relative stability to enter a time of profound transformation of the global order. The past decade has been characterised by volatility and disruption, leading to continual adaptation and transformation at local, regional and global levels alike. For some analysts, global instability is ‘the new normal’, where disorder and tension have gradually replaced two decades of relative stability across the world. Since 2012, conflicts have been on the rise, with the number of civil wars and attacks perpetrated by states and armed groups increasing for the first time in a decade. Violent extremism, terrorism and hybrid threats have grown to constitute new sources of major risks to security, peace and stability around the world. An understanding of the current global risks landscape necessitates concepts and knowledge going far beyond the traditional interpretations of war and peace. This is why the European Parliament has undertaken to map the structural risks facing the EU on a regular basis, as well as the EU’s capabilities and gaps in its capacity to address these risks. These studies have underlined the need for increased anticipatory governance, structured contingency planning and stress-testing of existing and future policies. In 2021, perhaps unsurprisingly, the World Economic Forum ranked infectious diseases as the top global risk in terms of likelihood and impact. They were followed by livelihood crises and environmental threats, such as extreme weather events and failure of climate change mitigation and joined by weapons of mass destruction as the top existential threat. Cyber insecurity is still one of the top 10 risks and threats.

The multidimensional nature of the emerging threats necessitates new approaches to peace and security, merging conventional notions of power with new scientific methods, including foresight, to assess the impact of variables such as natural resources, demographics and technology in the formulation of policy. In the words of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), ‘we live in a world of predictable unpredictability’ (see Figure 3). Already in 2019, before the outbreak of Covid-19, the report on Global Trends to 2030 by the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System suggested that the EU was facing a moment of choice between strategic action and strategic inaction. Envisioning a new relationship with the United Kingdom (UK), recalibrating the partnership with the United States (US) and dealing with China’s global role, population movements, disruptive technologies, and accelerating climate change has brought pressure to bear on the EU to provide for a concrete and targeted EU external action response.

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3 R. Muggah, *The UN has a plan to restore international peace and security – will it work?*, World Economic Forum, 2016.
Figure 3 – Threats to peace and security in the current global environment

**DISPLACED PEOPLE**

- 79.5 million forcibly displaced people, 40% of whom are children
- 4.2 million stateless people
- 1.8 million Colombia
- 3.7 million Venezuela
- 1.1 million Germany
- 3.6 million Turkey
- 2.6 million Afghanistan
- 6.6 million Syria
- 2.4 million South Sudan
- 1.4 million Pakistan
- 1.4 million Uganda
- 1.1 million Myanmar

- 107,800 refugees resettled to 26 countries in 2019
- 68% of refugees worldwide came from 5 countries

- 80% of world’s displaced people are in countries affected by acute food insecurity and malnutrition
- Many of them in countries facing climate and other disaster risks

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

According to NASA, 2020 was the 2nd warmest year recorded since 1880

- 8 out of 10 countries with ongoing peace operations have a high exposure to climate change

- The internet accounts for approximately 4% of greenhouse gas emissions
- By some forecasts, there could be anywhere between 25 million and 1.2 billion environmental migrants by 2050
- Up to 12 million hectares of productive land becomes barren every year due to desertification and drought alone, which is a lost opportunity to produce 20 million tonnes of grain
- More than 40% of internal armed conflicts in the last 60 years have been linked to natural resources

**CYBERSECURITY**

- Global CYBERSECURITY SPENDING predicted to exceed US$ 1 trillion from 2017 to 2021
- 60% of the world’s population had access to the internet at the beginning of 2021
- Over 36 billion records breached in 2020, the highest being in the healthcare sector
- 2020 broke all the records in terms of data lost in breaches and number of CYBER-ATTACKS
- If it were a country, cybercrime would be the world’s 3rd largest economy with damages predicted to reach US$6 trillion

**DISINFORMATION**

- There is evidence of seven countries engaging in information operations to influence foreign audiences in 2019: China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela
- There has been a 190% increase in countries using organised social media manipulation from 2017 to 2020
In this environment, global actors – of all kinds – find themselves in a process of reconsidering and adapting their strategies with regard to security and the preservation of stability. Recognition of new threats to peace and security is reflected in the national security strategies (or equivalent strategic documents) of all the UNSC members, the EU and other G20 states, some of which are summarised in Figure 4. The EU Global Strategy, presented in 2016, echoes concern about the state of the world, labelling the current times as ‘times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union’. The continuing violation of European security in the east; the rise of terrorism and violence in North Africa and the Middle East, as well as within Europe itself; lagging economic growth in parts of Africa; mounting security tensions in Asia; disruptions caused by climate change; and the exertion of foreign influence through the spread of disinformation, are all threats documented in the strategy.

In response to the challenging security environment, emerging or re-emerging global actors, such as Russia, China and India, have been boosting their defence spending (see Figure 5) and upgrading their military capabilities. A growing number of experts maintain that the world has entered a new era of great power competition and strategic documents confirm it. For example, the 2020 US Interim National Security Strategic Guidance argues that China has the potential to ‘mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system’ while Russia remains determined to ‘play a disruptive role and enhance its global influence’.

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**Figure 4 – Threats to peace and security recognised in strategic documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU Global Strategy</th>
<th>UN Security Council</th>
<th>Other G20 countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China  France  Russia  UK  USA</td>
<td>Brazil  Germany  Japan  Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid threats</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic crisis</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy insecurity</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent conflicts</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber security</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinformation/Information warfare</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragile state</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transborder crimes</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMDs</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data sources: EU Global Strategy; China’s 2019 National Defence in the New Era; Actualisation Stratégique 2021 (France); Livre blanc sur la défense et sécurité nationale (France); Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation; 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (UK); Interim National Security Strategic Guidance 2021 (US); Estratégia Nacional de Segurança Cibernética and Estratégia Nacional de Segurança de Infraestruturas Críticas (Brazil); Weißbuch 2016 zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr; Medium Term Defense Program 2018 and National Defense Programme Guidelines, 2018 (Japan); 2020 Defence Strategic Update (Australia).
At the same time, and largely owing to the effects of the economic and financial crisis, defence spending in the EU had been falling for almost a decade and only began to rise again in 2014.\(^7\) The response to the need for a stronger and more capable EU in security and defence matters was initiated by the Juncker Commission and is being taken forward by the von der Leyen Commission, which for the first time established a **Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DE FIS)**, operational since January 2020.\(^8\) Global military expenditure grew by 2.6% from 2019 to 2020 reaching US$1981 billion, according to SIPRI, and making it ‘the biggest year-on-year rise’ since the 2009 financial crisis.\(^9\) Defence spending in Europe also reached levels not seen since before the financial crisis, with an increase of 27% from 2010 until 2020 and with total expenditure of US$227 billion. Nevertheless, compared with other major military actors, the EU-27 remains the only one with relatively lower military spending, compared with a decade ago (see Figure 5). Experts argue that the pandemic does not appear to have had ‘a significant impact on global military spending in 2020’.

**Figure 5 – Change in major global actors’ military spending in the past decade**


The Global Peace Index, an annual report produced by an Australian think-tank, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), confirms that 2019 was marked by a decrease in peacefulness, for the ninth time in the last twelve years.\(^10\) The report also notes that, in 2019, violence cost the global economy US$14.5 trillion in purchasing power parity terms – equivalent to 10.6% of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP). War alone cost the global economy US$521 billion, a reduction compared to previous years. The same report estimates that climate change currently costs the global economy approximately US$200 billion per year, up 400% compared to the 1980s. In this context, the EU’s holistic approach to the promotion of peace, is particularly relevant, not only to fighting the causes of the disruption of peace, but also to reducing the cost of ‘non-peace’ in favour of investment in development and peace.

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1.3. The EU and the pursuit of peace and security

In 2012, the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe by transforming it from ‘a continent of war to a continent of peace’. Six decades after two world wars that had devastating consequences, the achievement of peace in the part of the continent that constitutes the EU is hailed as one of the Union’s major achievements, and is enshrined in its Treaty as one of its main aims (Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union – TEU).

The promotion of peace globally, following its own ‘success story’, has become one of the fundamental pillars of the EU’s external action. Article 3(5) TEU includes the contribution to peace first among the objectives of the EU’s relations with the wider world, alongside security, sustainable development, the protection of human rights and others. These objectives guide the EU in all facets of its external action, including EU common foreign and security policy (CFSP); development cooperation; economic, financial and technical cooperation; humanitarian aid; common commercial policy; and neighbourhood policy. It follows that the promotion of peace goes hand in hand with any type of EU engagement with the world. This has led academics to argue that it is a characteristic of the EU’s identity as a global actor. The Union’s attempts to pass on its own values and norms, including peace, in its external engagement has led to its designation as a ‘normative power’. In that sense, the EU’s foreign policy derives directly from the very nature of the EU itself and its ambition to achieve long-lasting peace through integration. This inherent principle places particular emphasis on multilateral cooperation.

The EU model of regional integration

As the earliest and only project of regional cooperation to attain such a high level of supra-nationalism, the European project that led to the creation of the European Union in the early 1990s has been used as the central empirical object in the study of states’ capacity to move from intergovernmental cooperation to fully fledged integration, guiding the conceptualisation of regionalism across a number of regions. So far, in the study of regional integration, no entity figures as prominently as the EU. In the main literature on the subject, the European integration project is often used as the key example for the building and testing of theories explaining why states choose to integrate, to build supranational institutions, share competencies and pool sovereignty. While common markets, common currencies and customs unions also exist elsewhere, the EU has evolved from that level into a political community with its own institutions, legal system, policies, values and principles. In spite of the impact of the multiple crises of the past decade (the economic crisis, the migration crisis and the rise of populism), this ‘EU model’ of integration, coupled with the levels of prosperity attained, has been at the heart of the EU’s ‘soft power’ of attraction in other regions such as Latin America, Africa and Asia. Conversely, crises that challenge EU solidarity at times reduce enthusiasm for regional integration elsewhere. The coronavirus crisis has arguably reinforced the EU’s ability to react collectively to large scale threats to the security and prosperity of its citizens, as demonstrated by the coordinated EU coronavirus response, which includes multiple initiatives addressing the health and financial impact of the crisis, reinforcing the structures necessary to address it, bolstering foresight capacity in health and promoting recovery, including vaccination, both in and beyond the EU. The pandemic has given new impetus to the idea of an EU health union to help EU Members be better prepared to prevent and address future pandemics. As health is largely a national competence, a health union could be regarded as a next step in EU integration.

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

Beyond the CFSP, the EU’s pursuit of global peace and security is carried out through a number of its policies analysed further in this study. The promotion of peace is also the goal of the EU’s active participation in mediation (see box in next section) and diplomacy, including through the UN.

With the establishment of the common security and defence policy (CSDP), the EU also began to engage in crisis-management activities outside its territory, aimed at ‘peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security’ (Article 42(1) TEU), in line with the UN Charter. Today, the EU is a major actor in peacekeeping, through its own peacekeeping operations, but also together with the UN, with which it has been cooperating systematically at strategic and operational levels. The UN recognises the EU as one of its most important regional partners in peacekeeping, both for its operational capacity but also due to the broad convergence of norms and values. Moreover, the EU and its Member States contribute around 32% of the funding for UN peacekeeping. Sanctions are also an important part of the EU foreign policy toolbox (see next section).

The commitment to multilateralism is one of the cornerstones of the EU’s action for peace and security. Multilateralism lies at the core of the EU’s identity, and of its strategy to promote its values and defend its interests. The TEU (Article 20(1)), the 2003 ESS, and the 2016 EUGS, and also the Commission President’s political guidelines reiterate the EU’s dedication to the promotion and upholding of the rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the UN at its core. In February 2021, the EU adopted a new strategy on strengthening the EU’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism, which among other things states that ‘in a world of increasing geopolitical tensions, conflicts and threats to international and regional stability, the EU has a deep interest in enhancing its efforts to prevent conflict, promote peace and security, uphold fundamental values and strengthen its capacity to act, together with other partners’.

1.3.1. How EU sanctions work to promote peace and security objectives

Sanctions or restrictive measures are one of the EU’s tools to promote the objectives of the CFSP. They are an instrument of a diplomatic or economic nature that seeks to bring about a change in
activities or policies, such as violations of international law or human rights, or policies that do not respect the rule of law or democratic principles.

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

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

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

EU arms embargoes – in the form of UN mandatory, EU supplementary or EU autonomous sanctions – are currently in place against 19 states or non-governmental forces operating within a specific country. Moreover, arms embargoes are in place against two terrorist organisations – al-Qaeda and ISIL/Da'esh – and associated entities. EU sanctions are reviewed at regular intervals. The Council of the EU decides whether sanctions should be renewed, amended or lifted.
European Parliament does not have a formal role in the adoption of CFSP sanctions, but it has the right to be informed. Traditionally, most EU sanctions programmes are geographical in scope, and are therefore applied to individuals and organisations linked to a particular country. However, the EU also has four thematic programmes with an international scope – the most recent of these was adopted in December 2020, and covers a wide range of human rights violations. The remaining three programmes are for terrorism, chemical weapons use, and cyber-attacks.

1.4. From the Global Strategy to the geopolitical Commission

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

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

This assessment remains valid in 2021. In this environment, the strategy maintains, ‘an appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy is important for Europe’s ability to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders’. Furthermore, it recognises the intrinsic link between internal and external security, as well as internal and external peace: ‘our security at home depends on peace beyond our borders’. Based on this realisation and committed to the notion of 'principled pragmatism', the Global Strategy prioritises five broad areas: the security of the Union; state and societal resilience in the EU’s Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood; an integrated approach to conflict and crises; cooperative regional orders; and global governance.

The strategy emphasises the need for more EU action and for Europeans to take greater responsibility for their security (i.e. in respect of terrorism, hybrid threats, climate change, economic volatility or energy insecurity). It calls for stronger security and defence cooperation in full

### Mediation

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

The EU carries out its mediation efforts through a variety of actors, including EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), EU Delegations and CSDP missions. Mediation efforts include direct mediation or facilitation by the EU; financing mediation efforts at different levels; leveraging mediation through political support; promoting mediation and good practice in peace processes and supporting the mediation efforts of others, for example those of the UN, or regional organisations. In recent years, the EU has engaged in mediation activities in a number of countries, including Mali, Myanmar, Lebanon, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Colombia and Ukraine. In February 2021 the EU extended the mandates of six EUSRs, including for the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East Peace Process, the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia. Currently, nine EUSRs support the work of the HR/VP, including EUSRs for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other western Balkan regional issues, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. A number of mediation initiatives are undertaken by Members of the European Parliament. The Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy is a flagship European Parliament mediation initiative.
compliance with human rights and the rule of law.

The strategy recognises the importance of an 'integrated approach' and of 'pre-emptive peace' – monitoring root causes, such as human rights violations, inequality, resource stress, and climate change – as a means to prevent conflicts from breaking out. Finally, it acknowledges the importance of promoting and supporting cooperative regional orders and of a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, as the basis for ensuring peace, security, human rights and sustainable development.20

As the study illustrates and the third annual implementation report of the EUGS confirms, several of the strategy’s proposals have been translated into concrete initiatives.

In the spirit of the strategy, the EU is mobilising all tools at its disposal in a coherent and coordinated way to strengthen all dimensions of foreign policy in accordance with its values. The European Council’s strategic agenda specifies that the CFSP and CSDP must ‘be better linked to the other strands of external relations’. To achieve the objectives of the strategy, the mobilisation and cooperation of all relevant EU institutions, actors and instruments is a prerequisite to deliver peace and security (see Figure 8).

Coordination and coherence in external action is a key priority in the von der Leyen ‘geopolitical Commission’. External policy is thus systematically discussed and decided upon by the College. A specific Group for External Coordination (EXCO) has been created to prepare the external aspects of College meetings on a weekly basis and to enhance coordination between the Commission and the EEAS.21 In her political priorities, President von der Leyen drew a link between peace and power: ‘Europe has always gained its power through peace, and its peace through power’ and pledged to strengthen the EU’s global action through financing, institutional reform (a move to more qualified majority voting in the CFSP) and policy.

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Figure 8 – Peace and security: Who does what in the EU institutions?

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

Polls carried out before or during the coronavirus pandemic indicate high public backing for a common security and defence policy among EU Member States. Common EU action in the field of security and defence was supported by 77% of the respondents. Even in the Member State with the lowest support for CSDP, Sweden, the majority of citizens express a positive view. The support is almost unanimous in Member States such as Luxembourg (93%), Cyprus (88%), Latvia and Lithuania (87%).

Figure 9 – Support for EU policies

Data source: Standard Eurobarometer 93.

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However, citizen support for common policy actions does not necessarily translate directly into a strong desire for EU budget spending. In 2020, security and defence was a preferred spending priority for 23% of Europeans. Despite the small decrease of preference in comparison to 2019’s 25%, it is still significantly higher than the 14% preference in 2011. According to the same survey, 10% of European citizens wrongly perceive defence and security as the policy area with the largest share of the EU budget, whereas Heading 5 Security and Defence part of the 2021-2027 MFF only represents 2.1% of the overall MFF. This confusion regarding the share of EU budget devoted to defence and security can lead many citizens to consider that it is already sufficiently prioritised within the EU budget.

A review of Eurobarometer surveys over the years shows that new threats to security, e.g. terrorism, quickly turn into a leading preference for increased EU action and EU spending, in a crisis. However, even when concern plummets – from 38% at its peak in 2017 to 7% in 2020, this is not reflected in the same level of reduced preference for EU emphasis on the area. The drop in budget spending preference is even smaller in comparison.

Figure 10 – Preference for more EU spending in different policy areas

Regardless of their preference for more, less or the same EU involvement in security-related policies, citizens perceive foreign and security policy as one area where there is notable disagreement between the EU and national governments (17% of Europeans share that perception). The most significant perception of disagreement is shared by respondents in Greece (51%), followed by Austria (30%) and Cyprus (29%).

The Covid-19 crisis has a significant impact on all aspects of people’s lives and thus on citizens’ perception of the world around them and overall security. One relevant aspect is the overall emotional state of uncertainty of Europeans (see Figure 13). This emotional state, especially when it is shared by the majority of the citizens, has the potential to influence the frame of perception of peace and security policy and any change in circumstances around Europe. Although expectations relating to the mitigation of the pandemic effects across countries differ significantly, citizens expect EU involvement, in spite of health falling primarily within Member State competence in this area.24 Some of the measures that the EU public would like to be an EU priority in the fight against the pandemic relate directly to security policy, namely the enforcing of stricter control of the external borders of the EU – supported by 30% of EU citizens. Perceptions of insufficient EU action, even in

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fields with limited EU competence can be exploited by malign actors, in the context of misinformation, to undermine security and cohesion in the EU.

Figure 12 – European citizens’ concerns

![Graph showing the percentage of people who consider terrorism as one of the two most important issues facing the EU from 2010 to 2020. The peak was in 2017 with 38%, followed by 32% in 2016 and 25% in 2015.]

Figure 13 – Emotional status during the Covid-19 pandemic

![Diagram illustrating the emotional status of people during the Covid-19 pandemic, showing percentages for each emotion and time period.]

Source: European Parliament opinion poll.
1.4.2. Financing EU action for peace and security

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

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

The CFSP, with a budget of €2.1 billion, aims to promote peace and security in Europe and the world, in particular, through the common security and defence policy (CSDP), in charge of the development of civilian and military capabilities in conflict prevention and crisis management, and the mandates of EU special representatives (note that the CFSP budget does not fund CSDP military operations or military assistance, more on that below). The CFSP also aims to support the implementation of the strategy on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the strategy on combating the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and EU policies in the field of conventional arms exports.

The EU’s long-term budget, the MFF, is divided into headings covering different policy areas. Around 6% of the €1 082 billion (2018 prices) total 2014-2020 MFF was allocated to Heading 4 ‘Global Europe’, dedicated to external policy. This heading comprised most external financing instruments with a geographical and thematic focus, including the main ones funding peace and security. In addition, a number of relevant funds were to be found outside the budget, and smaller allocations for external activities were available under EU internal policy headings. The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace in particular focuses on stability and peacebuilding. Other instruments under the heading with specific objectives linked to peace building and security include the Humanitarian Aid Instrument, the EU aid volunteers initiative, common foreign and security policy; and the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation.

Until the end of the 2014-2020 MFF, the European Development Fund (EDF) was the largest development fund outside the EU budget. As of the current financing period it is built into the MFF’s external heading. Under the 2014-2020 MFF, the EDF’s €30.5 billion budget drew resources from EU Member States’ voluntary donations and focused on African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. It has promoted peace and security in Africa, including by providing financing for the African Peace Facility.

The 2014-2020 MFF was confronted with a major flexibility challenge. Unanticipated crises in the EU’s neighbourhood quickly exhausted the funding available under the relevant headings, and led to the creation of new instruments outside the budget. Starting in 2014, the EU set up four new trust funds (TFs). These were joint initiatives funded by the EU budget, the European Development Fund, Member States and other donors; the aim was to enable faster decision-making, and link humanitarian and development aid. The TFs were created as emergency, ad hoc instruments to help alleviate the effects of ongoing conflicts and crises for a post-conflict context. Initially set up to run until the end of the previous MFF in 2020, the trust funds have now been extended until the end of...
2021. In 2016, a coordination mechanism within the EU budget, the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, was set up as part of the overall response to the migration crisis. Its budget was €6 billion allocated in two tranches, with an additional top-up of €485 million for two of its flagship programmes, agreed in July 2020. While the EU has concluded the final contracts under the facility’s €6 billion operational budget, projects can run until mid-2025. In addition, increasingly, the EU has resorted to using existing innovative financial instruments, such as the blending facilities, to meet investment needs in developing countries. The EU’s external investment architecture has changed further, with the launch in 2017 of an External Investment Plan and its main financing arm, the European Fund for Sustainable Development.

1.4.4. Main instruments focusing on peace and security

The IcSP, the CFSP, humanitarian Aid and the External Investment Plan were the most important EU budget instruments focusing on peace and security in partner countries under the 2014-2020 MFF. Figure 14 below shows the financial planning for these instruments for the 2014-2020 period.

The IcSP was the main instrument supporting security initiatives and peace-building activities in partner countries. The total funds allocated to the IcSP amounted to €2.35 billion (or around 3.5% of Heading 4). Its specific objectives include providing a swift and effective response in a situation of crisis or emerging crisis; contributing to preventing conflicts, and building peace; and addressing specific global and trans-regional threats to peace, international security and stability.

Humanitarian aid is provided as needs-based EU assistance to people, affected by natural or man-made disasters, which apart from immediate relief and protection, aims to build the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or affected communities. As stated by the World Bank, conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs.

Figure 14 – Financial planning for peace and security instruments – 2014-2020


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Operational expenditure with military/defence implications cannot be funded from the EU budget as per Article 41(2) TEU. So far, it has been covered by the Athena mechanism, funded by Member States’ contributions based on a GNI scale, and the African Peace Facility, which has been funded mainly by the ‘intra-ACP’ envelopes of the 9th, 10th and now 11th EDF.

1.4.5. Financing of EU peace and security policies in the 2021-2027 MFF

Developments in the course of the 2014-2020 MFF led the EU to examine its approach to peace, security and defence closely, both internally and externally. The negotiations on the 2021-2027 MFF, lengthy and complex amidst a global pandemic, were seen as a major opportunity for the EU to build on its potential as an effective global peace actor. A ‘geopolitical’ Europe is a priority in the new financing period, and therefore ensuring that there were funds to match was a challenge throughout the negotiations.

In its 2017 mid-term review of the external financing instruments (a coherence report and a mid-term review report on the external financing instruments), the Commission acknowledged a general need for more flexibility, simplification, coherence and performance. It recommended streamlining the implementation of instruments, including by adjusting their number. These conclusions were taken into account in the Commission’s original proposal for the post-2020 MFF (May 2018) and in its renewed proposal (May 2020), and in the proposals for the individual programmes. Security and military cooperation, and management of migration flows into the EU were outlined as priorities. The Commission’s overall approach was to do ‘more with less’, and put more emphasis on performance and spending efficiency. Efforts to increase flexibility of funding were stepped up, in particular with regard to peace and security.

In the new MFF, adopted in December 2020, peace- and security-related funding for the EU’s global partners is found under Heading 6 'Neighbourhood and the World', which covers programmes previously under Heading 4. Internal security is covered by both Heading 5 ‘Security and Defence’ – a separate heading with a major increase in spending on internal security and defence – and partially by Heading 4 ’Migration and border management’. In the latter, the Commission has sought greater complementarity with external funding instruments by strengthening the external dimension of the Asylum and Migration Fund and of the Integrated Border Management Fund borders and visa instrument, which supports cooperation with and in third countries.

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

The €108.9 billion budget (2018 prices) for Heading 6 initially proposed was cut significantly in the course of the MFF negotiations. The final budget adopted for Heading 6 (see Figure 15) amounts to €98.4 billion in 2018 prices (9.2 % of the €1.074 trillion 2021-2027 MFF). While external action is increasingly recognised as an important area of EU added value, its envelope was not allocated the amount suggested by the European Parliament. The amount agreed represents a slight increase (of around 1.3 %) as compared with the previous MFF. At the same time, in the final stages of the

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35 2021-2027 MFF, EPRS Legislative train, 2021.
40 The calculation is based on data presented in the Draft European Council conclusions of 10 July 2020, Preliminary analysis of figures, MFF ceilings for the 2014-2020 and 7*2020 periods are EU-27 estimations (excluding UK and including the EDF).
negotiations, the European Parliament secured a top up\(^{41}\) for a number of flagship programmes, of which €1 billion for the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and €0.5 billion for humanitarian aid.

Heading 6 attempts to factor in anticipated challenges, and combine continuity and modernisation. It has been reorganised and simplified and ensures greater flexibility than in the previous MFF, allowing the use and reallocation of unutilised funds on a multiannual basis. It reflects the need to focus on strategic priorities, both geographical (the neighbourhood and Africa) and thematic (security, migration, climate and human rights). The key change consists of merging most external financing instruments in a single instrument, and including in it (and thus in the EU budget) the European Development Fund. The NDICI, therefore, absorbs the IcSP. As for the previous period, owing to their specific objectives and separate legal bases, the CFSP and humanitarian aid remain separate instruments. The proposal also included a streamlined investment framework for external action.\(^{42}\) A new European Peace Facility outside the EU budget now funds CFSP operational actions with military/defence implications.

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument: €70.8 billion

The broad financing instrument\(^{43}\) includes a core geographical pillar, a thematic pillar and a 'rapid response' pillar, as well as a ‘flexibility reserve’. Both geographical and thematic programmes address security, stability and peace issues. Rapid response actions contribute to conflict prevention in urgent situations. Under the thematic programmes, the funds for stability and peace in particular have increased. As the IcSP is built in, civil society peacebuilding actors have stressed the importance of retaining the specific objectives to build peace and prevent conflict. ‘Capacity building for security and development’ activities under the IcSP have been incorporated into the NDICI under the provision for ‘capacity building assistance to military actors in support of development and security for development’.\(^{44}\) A cap of €270 million\(^{45}\) was agreed for the latter during the trilogues between Council and the European Parliament. Actions under the NDICI continue to address new challenges linked to conflict prevention, conflict dynamics, mediation and conflict resolution. The NDICI can be deployed to address crises worldwide, with a focus on the eastern and southern neighbourhood,

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\(^{41}\) EU financing for 2021-2027, EPRS infographic, 2020.

\(^{42}\) The NDICI instrument for the 2021-2027 MFF integrates the existing model of the External Investment Plan and offers a broader European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+), comprising a single worldwide blending facility and a new External Action Guarantee with a ceiling for guaranteeing operations of up to €130 billion in current prices after the May 2020 adjustments (as compared to €60 billion in the 2018 proposal). The new framework integrates existing provisions for the EFSD, the external lending mandate, to the European Investment Bank and the Guarantee Fund for External Action.


\(^{44}\) Management Plan 2021, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, 2021.

\(^{45}\) Provisional Agreement resulting from Interinstitutional Negotiations, European Parliament, 2021.
the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, south Asia and Latin America. The NDICI will also be deployed to provide aid for addressing global and trans-regional threats and emerging threats. Last but not least, the NDICI sets an ambitious spending target of dedicating 30% of the overall funds to achieving climate objectives (up from the initially proposed 25%).

Humanitarian aid: €10.3 billion

Although humanitarian crises are on the increase, the budget for humanitarian aid has remained stable. The Commission made changes to adjust the instrument to the growing needs. In March 2021, it proposed to establish a European humanitarian response capacity, to be funded from this instrument, to intervene directly in humanitarian crises where traditional mechanisms for delivering humanitarian aid prove ineffective or insufficient. The objective is to address the root causes of humanitarian crises by using synergies and doing more to link humanitarian aid to development, peace-building and disaster risk reduction. The Commission also plans to introduce innovative methods of financing in its humanitarian toolbox and actively promote the involvement of the private sector in humanitarian financing.

Outside Heading 6 and the MFF ceilings, additional funds are available under the new Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve, one of the EU’s flexibility instruments.

Common foreign and security policy: €2.4 billion

The CFSP is aimed at preserving peace, preventing conflicts and strengthening international security as laid out in Article 21 TEU. It remains a key instrument for delivering on the Commission’s political priority of a ‘stronger Europe in the world’. The CFSP pursues specific objectives through which it also reinforces other external and internal initiatives relating to the security of both the EU and its partners.

The European Peace Facility (EPF): €5 billion

The new EPF, which is not under the MFF ceiling, has been set up to fund CFSP operations with military and defence implications for the duration of the MFF. It replaces the Athena mechanism and the African Peace Facility, but also builds upon them with a wider scope and new types of assistance available on a permanent basis. It is financed by Member States’ contributions based on a GNI distribution key (see more below). The Council Decision was adopted on 22 March 2021.

1.4.6. EU budget for 2021

The 2021 EU budget is the first to be implemented under the 2021-2027 MFF and for an EU of 27 Member States, given the withdrawal of the United Kingdom. As a whole, it is an unprecedented budget, since the new MFF and the recovery instrument have introduced major changes. Set at €164.25 billion in commitments (1.17% of EU-27 GNI), it represents, in absolute numbers, a decrease of 5.5% in commitment appropriations from 2020 values.

In 2021, the ‘Neighbourhood and the world’ heading (see Figure 16) accounts for €16 097.2 million in commitment appropriations, split mainly between development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Of the total allocation for heading 6, 75% goes to the main instrument, the NDICI, which covers EU actions with very broad geographical and thematic scope, including issues such as climate change, migration, human rights, democracy and rule of law, and security. In the context of the pandemic, spending under heading 6 also contributes to the implementation of the global EU response to Covid-19. As the NDICI is a new comprehensive tool with global reach, merging a number of previously individual instruments, comparisons with the 2020 budget are difficult.

The allocation for humanitarian aid amounts to €1.5 billion. Payment appropriations have been increased by 49% to cover the growing needs linked to progress in implementation of the actions that began in the previous financial period.

Figure 16 – Neighbourhood and the world' heading, 2021 commitment appropriations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood, Development and International Co-operation Instrument (NDICI)</th>
<th>Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid (HUMA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12071.0</td>
<td>1901.4</td>
<td>1503.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Migration, border management and security continue to be financing priorities in the 2021 budget, however, as mentioned above, they are covered under headings relating to internal policies. Heading 4 'Migration and border management', with an allocation of €2,278.8 million in 2021 is one of the smallest in the MFF, but finances EU actions of growing importance in areas such as strengthening the external border control, migration and asylum, mainly under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF).

EU global measures to tackle the coronavirus outbreak

The EU has adopted a series of budgetary measures to address the impact of the pandemic. It has launched a major EU recovery plan to help Member States cope. To help its global partners, the EU adopted the 'Team Europe' approach, bringing together the EU institutions and Member States. The initiatives undertaken have included highlighting the need for debt restructuring at global level.

In its January 2021 communication, entitled 'A united front to beat Covid-19', the Commission states that the EU is leading international efforts to respond to the global crisis. Since April 2020, it has allocated a total of €38.5 billion (current prices) under the common Team Europe approach to assist partner countries with their emergency responses to humanitarian needs, strengthening health systems and crucial health services, and assisting economic recovery and social support. The EU has mobilised humanitarian assistance worth €449 million for medical supplies, medical staff, logistical help and funding support for humanitarian organisations. Under the Team Europe approach, the EU also supports the COVAX Facility, the global initiative to ensure equitable and fair access to safe and effective vaccines. Team Europe has so far announced contributions of more than €2.2 billion to COVAX. This is made up of: the EU contribution, which was raised to €1 billion in February 2021; a new €300 million EU grant and €200 million in guarantees from the European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (under NDICI) to back a loan by the European Investment Bank, and a previous €100 million grant and €400 million in guarantees from the EU budget.
1.5. Measuring threats to peace: Normandy Index

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

The Normandy Index, prepared yearly by the European Parliament together with the IEP, adopts an approach tailored by and to the action of the European Union, assessing the overall state of ‘conflictuality’ of a given entity as a product of factors linked to the main threats identified by the EU in its external action strategy. As described above, the EU Global Strategy identifies the following 11 threats as the main current challenges to peace and security: terrorism, energy security, fragile states, hybrid threats, violent conflicts, trans-border crime, economic crises, cybersecurity, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), climate change, and disinformation.

The index uses nine of these eleven threats as factors assigned equal weight in the final result for 137 UN countries (with the EU-27 being counted as one). The Normandy Index adds to the 10 above-mentioned factors the quality of the democratic process, as democracy support is a core dimension of EU external action. In addition, as analysed in following sections, there is a strong correlation between weak democratic processes and threats to peace and security. The Normandy Index is therefore a tool to be used by EU policy-makers to assess countries most at risk in the world according to the EU’s Global Strategy and target EU action. It is not a ranking of countries according to their peacefulness but a ranking of specific threats to peace per country (see Figure 17).

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Figure 17 – Normandy Index, 2021.

Data Source: EPRS and IEP, 2021.
As attested by the Normandy Index, according to the WEF, Europe consistently ranks as the most peaceful region in the world.\footnote{These are the world’s most peaceful regions in 2020, World Economic Forum, 2020.} In terms of positive peace, all 27 EU Member States rank within the top 45 states on the list, scoring ‘very high’ or ‘high’ in the level of positive peace.\footnote{Positive Peace Index, Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018.} By all accounts, the level of threats to peace in the EU remains very low compared with other regions and countries. In the 2021 Normandy Index rankings, the EU-27 rank as the 12th least threatened area of the world. Energy security is the only dimension where Europe is more at risk than the world at large (see Figure 18).

At the same time, the EU’s neighbourhood continues to be subject to a number of ongoing conflicts. Out of over 70 crises in the world monitored by the International Crisis Group (ICG) Crisiswatch global conflict tracker, several are located in countries negotiating their accession to the EU, or with a European perspective (see Figure 2). According to the Normandy Index, the western Balkan countries, as well as Georgia, are less at risk than neighbourhood countries, while many European neighbours such as Turkey, Ukraine, Egypt and Lebanon are at serious risk. This means that the EU needs to continue its support for these countries in a decisive manner, as rising threats for one country tend to spread to neighbouring regions. For the EU, the geopolitical consequences of the pandemic present a challenge and an opportunity to further reinforce its role as a global actor in peace and security.\footnote{E. Lazarou, Foreign policy consequences of coronavirus, EPRS, European Parliament, 2020.}
2. EU action to counter threats to peace and security

2.1. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

The number of nuclear weapons worldwide has been declining since the mid-1980s, when they had reached an all-time peak of nearly 70,000 nuclear warheads. The decline has been due primarily to cuts made in the Russian and United States’ nuclear forces as a result of three arms limitation treaties agreed since 1991, as well as unilateral force reductions. Nevertheless, there are still approximately 13,100 nuclear weapons worldwide; of these 3,800 are deployed with operational forces and 1,900 of these are kept in state of high operational alert by the United States (US), Russia, the UK and France, ready to be used at short notice. Between them, the US and Russia still possess some 11,807 deployed and stockpiled nuclear warheads. Moreover, the pace of reductions in nuclear arsenals is slowing. Neither Russia nor the US – which together hold about 90% of the world’s nuclear weapons (see Figure 19) – has so far signalled any intention to make further reductions in its strategic nuclear forces beyond the cuts mandated by the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). New START has just been extended for another five years.

Figure 19 – Nuclear weapons worldwide in 2021

Data source: Federation of American Scientists, March 2021; all figures are estimates.

At the same time, all nuclear weapon Possessing states continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals. Russia and the USA have launched large-scale programmes to replace and modernise nuclear warheads, missile and aircraft delivery systems, and nuclear weapons production facilities. Russia announced in 2011 that it would spend up to US$70 billion until 2020 on modernising its strategic nuclear forces as part of its state armament programme for 2011–2020. It is difficult to ascertain whether this amount has actually been spent, since Russian military expenditure is mostly classified. However, it is certain that Russia has developed several new types of powerful nuclear weapons. According to 2017 estimates, nuclear weapon spending plans in the US were expected to cost up to US$1.2 trillion in inflation-adjusted dollars between the fiscal years 2017 and 2046, equal to approximately 6% of all national defence spending. The Trump administration introduced plans for nuclear weapons capabilities that would push up spending on nuclear

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52 NTI, Russia – Nuclear, October 2018; J. Cooper, How much does Russia spend on nuclear weapons? SIPRI, October 2018.
54 Kingston Reif, U.S. nuclear modernization programs, Arms Control Association, August 2018.
weapons to at least 6.4% of the national defence budget, rising to 8% in the late 2020s.\footnote{The US administration requested a total of US$44.5 billion in fiscal year 2021 for the Pentagon (US$28.9 billion) and the Energy Department (US$15.6 billion) to maintain and modernise US nuclear delivery systems and warheads and their supporting infrastructure, an increase of about US$7.3 billion, or 19%, on the 2020 fiscal year. Source: Kingston Reif, \textit{US nuclear budget skyrockets}, Arms Control Association, March 2020.} It is too early to say whether the Biden presidency will amend these spending plans or how. Even though the nuclear arsenals of the other nuclear-armed states are much smaller, all are either developing or deploying new weapon systems or planning to do so. China, India, Pakistan and most recently the \textbf{UK} are also increasing the size of their nuclear arsenals.\footnote{SIPRI, \textit{Yearbook 2019}, Modernization of world nuclear forces continues despite overall decrease in number of warheads, 17 June 2019; ICAN, \textit{UK to increase nuclear stockpile limit}, 16 March 2021.}

\subsection*{2.1.1. The Non-Proliferation Treaty under threat}

The cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime is the 1970 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, as the parties to the NPT celebrate its 50th anniversary, the treaty has come under pressure from various quarters. In June 2019, the Council of the EU made available almost €3 million to support the process of confidence-building measures that are intended to lead to the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.\footnote{Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/938 of 6 June 2019.} The treaty has also come under pressure from supporters of the ‘humanitarian initiative’ launched in 2013 to reframe the nuclear disarmament debate by emphasising the devastating effects of a nuclear detonation on citizens all over the world. The initiative led to the adoption, on 7 July 2017, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the TPNW), the first multilateral, legally binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years.\footnote{B. Immenkamp, \textit{Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons – the ‘Ban Treaty’}, EPRS, European Parliament, January 2021.} However, opponents of the TPNW, which include many EU Member States, argue that the conditions for disarmament do not currently exist, and point to the danger of undermining the NPT. Entrenched disagreements between supporters and opponents of the treaty are likely to impact on future negotiations under the NPT and may derail the next NPT review conference, potentially further weakening the existing non-proliferation and disarmament regime.\footnote{The 10th NPT review conference was scheduled to take place in New York from 27 April to 22 May 2020. In light of the global coronavirus pandemic, State Parties decided to \textit{postpone the 2020 Review Conference} to a later date, as soon as circumstances permit, but no later than August 2021.}

The NPT is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It is built on three pillars – nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy – and aims to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, promote cooperation among states parties on civilian nuclear energy, and ultimately achieve complete nuclear disarmament. It grants the five nuclear-weapon states recognised by the NPT exclusive rights to possess nuclear arsenals, but also obliges them ‘to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race ... and to nuclear disarmament’ (NPT, Article VI). Moreover, the NPT enshrines the right of non-nuclear weapon states parties to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Nuclear disarmament}
\end{center}

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

When the NPT opened for signature in 1968, five countries – the US, Russia, China, France, and the UK – possessed nuclear weapons. The NPT was intended to prevent new countries from developing nuclear weapons, and confine the arms race to these five nuclear weapons countries. Today, with 191 States Parties, the NPT is nearly universal. However, Israel, Pakistan, and India have refused to sign the treaty and have built substantial nuclear arsenals. North Korea initially signed but left the treaty in 2003 and tested its first nuclear weapon in 2006. Nuclear proliferation concerns have grown also in relation to Iran’s commitments under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and to the country’s obligations under the 1974 bilateral NPT safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018, Iran in 2019 resumed uranium enrichment to increasingly high levels incompatible with the agreement. This led other parties to the JCPOA to invoke the agreement’s dispute resolution mechanism, a move which might ultimately lead to the re-imposition of UN Security Council sanctions on Iran. In December 2020, Iran passed a law, requiring the country to enrich uranium to 20%, or five times the limit agreed under the JCPOA. On 13 April 2021, the country announced that it would raise the level of enrichment to 60% purity, following an attack on its enrichment facility at Natanz, for which Iran blames Israel. At the same time, Iran is no longer complying with some of its safeguards obligations under the NPT. On 23 February 2021, Iran suspended the provisional application of the Additional Protocol, as well as additional transparency provisions under the JCPOA. In addition to concerns about Iran’s non-compliance with the JCPOA and the NPT safeguards agreement, there are fears that Iran may eventually follow the example of North Korea and leave the NPT, altogether. President Biden has indicated that he intends the US to re-join the JCPOA, in which case Iran would be expected to reverse all actions that are inconsistent with its commitments under the JCPOA and the NPT. The signatories of the JCPOA, namely France, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), the EU, China, Russia, the US and Iran began meeting in Vienna in early April, to explore ways to bring both the US and Iran back into compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal.

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61 Safeguards agreements under the NPT ensure that all nuclear activity a state undertakes is for peaceful purposes and that a state is not engaging in illicit nuclear activities.
64 J. Masterson and K. Davenport, Iran passes nuclear law, Arms Control Association, December 2020.
65 Iran’s NPT obligations are separate and legally independent from Iran’s commitments under the JCPOA.
66 M. Hibbs, Iran and the NPT: Safeguards at stake, 6 March 2020.
67 M. Rouhi, Will Iran follow North Korea’s path and ditch the NPT?, Bourse & Bazaar, 29 March 2020.
68 D. Ross, How Biden Can Overcome Iran’s Maximum Pressure, 12 March 2021.
2.1.3. Demise of the INF Treaty

Of particular concern to European security is the demise, in 2019, of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. In February 2019, the US and Russia announced the suspension of their obligations under the landmark nuclear arms control treaty, which they signed in 1987. The INF Treaty eliminated and prohibited ground-launched intermediate ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 km. The signing of the INF Treaty in 1987 led to the removal and destruction of nearly 3,000 US and Soviet short-, medium- and intermediate-range nuclear-capable missiles stationed in or aimed at Europe.\(^69\) When the two parties failed to reconcile, the INF Treaty ended on 2 August 2019, taking down a cornerstone of the European security order. Any redeployment of intermediate-range missiles will once more put Europe in the line of fire of strategic nuclear weapons. In February 2019, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the future of the INF Treaty and the impact on the European Union, in which it called on Russia and the US to engage in constructive dialogue and to ensure that the – at the time – uncertain future of the INF Treaty did not put other arms control agreements in jeopardy.

2.1.4. Changes in nuclear policies of major nuclear weapon states

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) report\(^70\) of the US government marked a definitive move away from the ambition to reduce the country's nuclear arsenal, which has guided US nuclear weapons policy since the early 1990s.\(^71\) Experts consider that the NPR is worrying because it broadens the scenarios in which nuclear weapons may be used.\(^72\) The NPR introduces 'low yield nuclear weapons' and revises the circumstances that would call for use of nuclear weapons, broadening the definition. President Biden indicated very early on in his presidency, and confirmed in his administration's [interim national security strategic guidance](#) of March 2021, that he would take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the US national security strategy and head off costly arms races. The new administration is likely to conduct its own NPR and reconsider some of the policies and programmes incorporated in the 2018 review.

The UK also announced a change in its nuclear defence policy in March 2021, allowing it to use nuclear weapons to respond to a non-nuclear attack involving other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical or biological capabilities, or emerging technologies with an impact comparable to that of nuclear weapons.\(^73\)

For its part, Russia\(^74\) has placed greater emphasis on nuclear weapons in its military and national security strategy over the past decade. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in 2018 that Russia would build five new nuclear-capable, strategic weapons systems, including a new heavy intercontinental ballistic missile, a nuclear-armed hypersonic glide vehicle, a nuclear-armed, air-launched hypersonic missile, a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile and a nuclear-armed submarine drone.\(^75\) Experts are divided as to whether these new systems are intended to achieve a measure of superiority over the US, or if they represent Russia's response to concerns about

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72 European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Security and Defence, [Public Hearing on The future of nuclear arms control regimes and the security implications for the EU](#), 18 February 2020.
developments in US capabilities.  Russia now has 20 nuclear weapons delivery systems, and six more under development.  NATO allies together only have seven delivery systems and one under development. NATO has expressed serious concerns about Russia’s continued investment in nuclear weapons.  European countries are particularly concerned about the deployment of Russian nuclear-capable weapon systems on European soil, including at the heart of NATO territory.

2.1.5. Multilateral arms control under threat

The past few years have been marked by the waning commitment of major countries to multilateral arms control, an issue that is of great concern to the EU. Some experts have gone as far as declaring ‘arms control (almost) dead’. The extension of the New START Treaty, although very welcome, is not currently expected to reverse this trend. New START, a bilateral treaty between the US and the Russian Federation, came into force on 5 February 2011. It set limits on strategic arms that the two parties had to meet – and met – by 5 February 2018. New START replaced and superseded earlier arms reduction treaties between the US and Russia, and thus continued the process of reducing their strategic nuclear arsenals that began in 1994. New START imposed limits on nuclear warheads and its delivery systems (missiles, bombers and launchers). The Treaty nearly lapsed in February 2021, before the parties agreed at the last minute to extend it for another five years, until 2026.

New START is the only nuclear arms control treaty left between the US and Russia, and the only bilateral nuclear arms control treaty currently in force. Its demise would have marked the end of any limits on the size and composition of the nuclear arsenals of these two leading nuclear weapon states. However, while this would have been problematic, any threat to peace and security emanating from the US and Russia does not lie solely in the size of their nuclear arsenals. Experts point, in particular, to a new presumption of ‘controllable nuclear exchanges’, which will ‘reduce the calculations of risk and increase the likelihood of conflicts escalating to nuclear war.’ Some consider the risk of nuclear war between the US and Russia to be as great now as it was in ‘the most dangerous periods of the Cold War’.

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

Participation in the work of the United Nations

Since its creation, the UN has pursued two parallel and mutually reinforcing goals: the elimination of weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical and nuclear) and the regulation of conventional arms (in particular the illicit trade in small arms). The EU is committed to pursuing these goals through its status in the UN and through the participation of its Member States in the various UN bodies responsible for disarmament and non-proliferation (see box). Within the UN and its related bodies, a number of important disarmament treaties have been formulated, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Moreover, there are voluntary and informal measures on missile arms control, including the Missile Technology Control Regime and the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. In order to regulate the trade in conventional arms, the UN General Assembly approved the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2013.

Guiding principles

Based on the EU Global Strategy, the EU strategy against the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems and the 'new lines for action', the EU's guiding principle in the fight against the proliferation of WMD continues to be a commitment to effective multilateralism, including safeguarding the centrality and the promotion of the universality of global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, through diplomatic action and financial assistance to third countries and international organisations.

The EU also pursues close cooperation with countries to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. Close partners in this regard have historically included the US, Canada and Japan, but an increasing number of the EU's bilateral relationships include a non-proliferation component. Some 28 agreements between the EU and third countries now contain a WMD non-proliferation commitment. Negotiations continue on a WMD clause for a new agreement with Azerbaijan. Moreover, the EU addresses non-proliferation issues in the EU's bilateral political and non-proliferation dialogue meetings and in more informal contacts.

The Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) has been used to promote the highest standards and practices in nuclear safety, applied in the EU, in third countries. It is also used to promote alignment with EU policies and priorities in the field of nuclear safety in non-EU countries. Under the MFF 2021-2027, the INSC has been replaced by the Instrument for Nuclear Safety, with a

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85 Information provided by the EEAS on 26 April 2021.
budget of €300 million for 2021-2027.\(^8^8\) According to the Commission, the INSC has brought unique added value to ‘nuclear safety cooperation with third countries, well beyond the capacities of Member States and other donors’.

The EU is a strong supporter of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which it sees as essential to peace and security worldwide. The EU contributes to the implementation of the 2018-2021 IAEA nuclear security plan,\(^8^9\) which funds IAEA activities towards the universalisation of international non-proliferation and nuclear security instruments, and other priorities.

**EU dual-use export control**

Certain goods and technologies have legitimate civilian applications but can also be used for military purposes; so-called ‘dual-use’ goods are subject to the EU’s export control regime. The EU controls the export, transit and brokering of dual-use items, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). EU export controls reflect commitments agreed upon in key multilateral export control regimes such as the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. The regime has been revised, mainly to take account of significant technological developments in cyber surveillance technology and in emerging technologies – including biotechnology, advanced surveillance technologies, position, timing and navigation technology (PNT), additive manufacturing, artificial intelligence and robotics – and to create a more level playing field among EU Member States.\(^9^0\) The views of the European Commission and the European Parliament on the importance of further limiting the export of cyber surveillance items prevailed during trilogue negotiations, as did their views on strengthening human rights considerations in export control.\(^9^1\) The new regulation is expected to enter into force in 2021.

### 2.2. Democracy support for fragile states

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

#### 2.2.1. Factors of risk for fragile democracies

**Democracy as a safeguard against conflict**

There is a wide scholarly consensus that, based on existing historic evidence, democracies tend to avoid war with each other, are more peaceful in their relations with undemocratic states,\(^9^2\) and are internally more stable and peaceful. This holds for democracies that have reached a certain threshold of maturity and stability. Today, however, many regimes in the world mix features of democratic and autocratic governance and are undermined by corruption and weak institutions.

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\(^9^1\) In its resolution on *Arms export: implementation of Common Position 2008/944/CFSP* adopted on 17 September 2020, the European Parliament highlighted the detrimental effect that the uncontrolled export of cyber surveillance technologies by EU companies can have on the security of the EU’s digital infrastructure and on human rights.
Such ‘hybrid regimes’ can be more aggressive externally and also more prone to conflict and instability internally. A further hypothesis posits that democracies at lower stages of economic development are more prone to violent changes of power, but this remains disputed among experts. Moreover, transitions to democracy are also a risk factor for instability. Recent experience from states where democratisation has been attempted, such as in North Africa, Ethiopia, Iraq or Afghanistan, indeed suggests that the potential for instability in such situations is considerable. Peaceful transitions to democracy are more likely to reduce conflict than violent transitions. On the other hand, internal conflicts rarely end with building strong democratic structures. Most civil wars end with decisive military victories either by the government or by the rebels, with only about a quarter ending through negotiated settlements. Even in such cases, the resulting democratic structures may remain fragile and require continued support, as for example in Bosnia.

### Coronavirus pandemic impact on political institutions in fragile countries

The coronavirus pandemic has already impacted and will continue to impact political systems in severe and lasting ways in fragile countries. The following countries with a significant degree of fragility – Cameroon, Egypt, Haiti, Mauritania, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Venezuela (all autocratic regimes) – have experienced major pandemic-related violations of democratic standards, according to the V-Dem pandemic index. In Uganda, the pandemic has also contributed to a serious risk of democratic backsliding. The violations most often experienced by these countries in 2020 included limitations on the role of the legislature (most severe in Sudan, Haiti, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Venezuela), as well as excessive violence by state security forces to apply pandemic-related measures (most severe in Uganda and Venezuela), as well as some degree of disinformation by the government. In many other fragile states, the impact of pandemic-related measures on democracy has been minor, possibly also because the extent of restrictions was limited, particularly in regions less affected by the pandemic such as sub-Saharan Africa.

### Democracy in fragile countries

Using the ‘regimes in the world’ classification established by researchers working on the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project, the vast majority of the world’s most fragile states (classified as such based on the Fragile State Index) are not genuinely democratic. With some exceptions (namely those classified as closed autocracies – Yemen, South Sudan, Sudan, North Korea, Syria, Eritrea, Libya or Somalia in 2020), fragile states organise regular multiparty elections. However, in the majority of them, elections are marred by widespread irregularities, and freedom of association, freedom of expression and the independence of elected officials are severely curtailed. Therefore these regimes are not democracies, but ‘electoral autocracies’. Only a minority (in 2020 these were Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau) reach the standards of ‘electoral democracies’. These ‘electoral democracies’ organise free elections, sometimes leading to changes of power such as in

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


97 The Regimes of the World measure ‘builds on the regime-classification by Lührmann et al., 2018. While using V-DEM’s data, this measure is not officially endorsed by the Steering Committee of V-DEM (only the main V-DEM democracy indices have such an endorsement’. See A. Lührmann, M. Tannenberg, and S. I. Lindberg, *Regimes of the World (RoW): Opening New Avenues for the Comparative Study of Political Regimes*, *Politics and Governance*, Vol. 6(1), 2018: 'RoW classification is more conservative, classifying regimes with electoral manipulation and infringements of the political freedoms more frequently as electoral autocracies'.
Nigeria or Liberia, but show deficiencies when it comes to the rule of law and other liberal principles, according to the ‘regimes of the world’ classification.

The challenges in achieving democratic consolidation in such fragile democracies are enormous, and the risk of democratic backsliding is significant. Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger are also under enormous pressure from jihadist groups operating in the Sahel, and from other often transnational violent groups, driving armed banditry or interreligious and interethnic conflict. For more than a decade, Guinea-Bissau’s regime – another country in this group – has been embroiled with organised crime centred on international narcotic trafficking.

Pervasive societal insecurity in fragile states

In certain societies, societal insecurity takes such pervasive forms that it can be almost as deleterious to individual wellbeing, human development and social cohesion as armed conflict. The rate of intentional homicides particularly in connection with organised crime (e.g. in Central America) can be at levels similar to those witnessed in civil conflicts. According to research on the topic, ‘New forms of violence that are distinct from those associated with traditional armed conflict have emerged as a major global concern in recent years’. T. M. Adams underlines the link between this type of violence and state fragility: ‘chronic violence is most prevalent in countries or regions with long-term state fragility and/or relative state absence, and among people lacking the power to change these conditions in the short or medium term’.

Organised crime, thriving on various illegal activities, such as trafficking in drugs, precious minerals, or human beings across borders, has a particularly destabilising impact in fragile countries. It undermines state authority and leads to the capture of state and economic institutions, sometimes contributing along other factors to the complete breakdown of state control over parts of its territory, such as for example in northern Mali. In 2012, Mali, a poor but functioning multiparty democracy since 1992, lost control of half of its territory to jihadist and separatist groups after ‘apparent political connections with organised crime [had] brought the democratic system into disrepute among the general public, and most acutely among certain dissident ethnic groups’. Despite strong efforts by the international community to stabilise the situation through UN peacekeeping, international mediation efforts leading to the signature of a peace agreement with rebel groups in 2015, and numerous development aid initiatives, democracy finally crumbled in Mali in 2020 with a military coup against the elected president.

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98 See World Bank data on the issue.
99 T. M. Adams, Chronic violence and non-conventional armed actors, Clingendael, 16 September 2014.
101 International Crisis Group, Report 267/Africa, 13 December 2018, Drug Trafficking, Violence and Politics in Northern Mali: ‘Since the 2000s, drug trafficking has played a role in the development of unprecedented forms and levels of violence. As the central state weakens and armed insurrections – including jihadists – rise, drug trafficking has become both a central stake and an essential resource for the struggles that are redefining political power relations in the country’s north’.
2.2.2. EU support for democracy and its link to peace

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

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

At global level, the EU, together with its Member States, is an important provider of official development aid (ODA) specifically targeted at government and civil society. Together, their share represented roughly 50% of ODA disbursed in the world for this sector between 2010 and 2019 (see Figure 21). This share is set to decrease since up until 2019 almost 25% of the EU Member States’ total ODA was provided by the United Kingdom.

EU development aid in the field of government and civil society funds a wide range of measures that have the potential to strengthen the resilience of societies to conflict. EU support for measures to improve the accountability and transparency of public administration, to fight corruption, to reform and strengthen judiciaries, to reform the security apparatus, including through training in human rights, increases the legitimacy of state institutions and reduces the potential for civil conflict. As can be seen in Figure 23, an important share of EU development aid for government and civil society is

![Figure 21 – Official development assistance worldwide for government and civil society 2010-2019 (in € million, current prices)](data_source: OECD, Official Development Aid Database, Creditor Reporting System, gross disbursements, data for EU28.)
Peace and Security in 2021

 granted to states in situations of fragility. This share has represented between 30% and 40% of total EU development aid for government and civil society since 2009.

Under the new European Peace Facility assistance must comply with human rights and humanitarian norms. The Council will put in place a risk and safeguards methodology for assistance measures. However, there is a need to strengthen EU's capacity to assess whether the militaries that become stronger thanks to its assistance will act with due respect for rule of law and democratic norms or as factors of political instability. This need became particularly relevant in light of the 2020 military coup in Mali. The EU suspended its training for the Malian army immediately after the coup. The army had received extensive training and support from the EU during the seven preceding years, but most prominent leaders of the coup had not. The democracy conditionality enshrined in EU trade and cooperation agreements is another important tool for supporting democracy in the world, and can play a decisive role in conflict prevention and resolution. In the more than 20 cases in which the EU has suspended its development aid, it has done so mainly in response to coups d'état or flawed elections, i.e. clear breaches of democratic principles with major potential to lead to internal conflict. Development aid was reinstated after partner countries complied with EU recommendations. In response to coups in particular, EU sanctions have generally been considered effective in helping to restore constitutional order. EU's unilateral trade preferences provided under the generalised system of preferences are also conditional on respect of human rights and democratic principles. In August 2020, the EU withdrew a part of the trade preferences granted to Cambodia under the 'everything but arms' scheme, due, among other things, to the serious and systematic violations of the human rights principles enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Cambodia has a relatively high fragility score (highest warning level) on the Fund for Peace ranking and it worsened in 2020. Myanmar and Bangladesh – both beneficiaries of EU GSP and both with high fragility indicators – have been under

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

104 According to a Crisis Group report on the facility from 2021, How to Spend It: New EU Funding for African Peace and Security, 'the EU's new approach to funding will allow Brussels to finance military training and lethal equipment for national armies. This type of support can be especially risky in states where security forces are rife with mismanagement and corruption, making it difficult to ensure that equipment is used for the intended purpose and does not fall into the wrong hands… In fragile states, characterised by high levels of institutional and social fragility or affected by armed conflict, where the risk of misuse is especially acute, the EU should refrain from funding arms and ammunition and focus its attention on non-lethal support.'

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

enhanced EU monitoring, on grounds that also include violations of civil and political rights. The EU also adopts targeted sanctions against individuals with a high degree of responsibility for grave human rights violation and breaches of democracy. Coup perpetrators in Myanmar have recently been included under EU sanctions.

Undoubtedly, a central instrument of democracy support is represented by the EU's electoral observation missions (EOMs). For more than two decades, the EU has sent EOMs to many regions of the world. EOMs only take place only at the invitation of the country concerned. After consultation with the European Parliament, the High Representative decides to send EOMs to those countries where there are credible prospects of free and fair elections. The effectiveness of these missions in building trust among opposing groups in society, and therefore in preventing conflicts, has been documented. The EU's contribution to electoral reform over the electoral cycle also contributes to internal stability. Based on the annual state fragility scores calculated by the Fund for Peace, EU EOMs since 2006 have mostly taken place in countries with some level of fragility, at either warning or alert level (see Figure 23).

Figure 23 – EU electoral observation missions between 2006 and 2020 in fragile countries

Data source: European Union Database on Election Missions, Fund for Peace for fragility scores in the respective years.

The European Parliament has established its own measures to support parliamentary democracy in third countries identified as priority partners for democracy assistance. Some of these measures aim specifically at building trust and facilitating dialogue and consensus-building on legislative issues.

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108 Fund for Peace.

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

110 The following countries/territories have also received EOMs, but the Fund for Peace does not provide fragility data for them: Fiji (2006), Kosovo (2017, 2014, 2013), Palestinian Territory (2006). They do not therefore appear on the map. The map also includes the two election assessment teams sent to Iraq, in 2010, and Libya, in 2012, although they were much smaller than normal EOMs because of the security situation. In roughly half of the countries shown on the map, the EU went twice or several times to observe elections. The EU does not send electoral observation missions to the regions covered by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (encompassing Europe, central Asia and North America), where this organisation observes elections itself using a similar methodology. A European Parliament delegation is, however, often involved in the International Electoral Observation Missions (IOM) organised by the ODIHR – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights – of the OSCE. Note that Figure 23 does not include such missions, including those in which the European Parliament has participated.
among conflicting political forces, in parliamentary environments characterised by a lack of political trust, such as in Ukraine. Parliament’s delegations have made efforts to facilitate dialogue between political forces, public authorities and other stakeholders in third countries (such as Tanzania or Kenya) in order to prevent electoral violence.

2.3. Preventing violent conflicts: Security and development

2.3.1. Conflict and fragility aggravate each other

There is a strong correlation between development issues and conflict-affected situations. Half of the world’s poor live in fragile or conflict-affected states. In conflict-affected areas, youth unemployment, lack of economic opportunities, climate change and difficult access to resources fuel violent armed groups, drug trafficking, and social or ethnic conflict. Conversely, conflict hinders development: violence has a cost equivalent of to up to 60% of GDP (in Syria) and 41% of GDP on average in the 10 countries where the economic cost of violence is highest (it is 3.9% on average in the ten most peaceful countries). Conflict situations also compound humanitarian crises linked to climate change, food insecurity, and the impact of Covid-19, resulting in a forecast by UNOCHA that 1 person in 33 will need humanitarian assistance in 2021 – 235 million people, close to a 50% increase since 2020, when the figure was already considered 'the highest figure in decades'.

Figure 24 – The economic cost of violence is beyond 50% of GDP in three countries

Cost of violence in US$ million (2019 PPP) and as % of GDP.

Data source: Global Peace Index 2020.

Civilians, including children, are widely afflicted by conflict, which takes a heavy toll on their lives, livelihoods, and physical and mental health. In 2019, conflict and insecurity were the primary drivers of food crises in 22 countries, hitting 77 million people (out of the 135 million acutely food-insecure people in 55 countries – the highest figure for at least four years). While there is a lack of up-to-date

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112 On average, according to economists, a rise in local temperature of half a degree Celsius is associated with a 10 to 20% increase in the risk of deadly conflict. (Foreign Affairs, 28.9.2020).
data, food security analyses conducted between March and September 2020\(^{115}\) have shown the aggravating impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

In fragile states, coupled with climate change, rapid demographic growth and unsustainable agriculture, conflicts put more pressure on the availability of a nutritious diet for all, as they intensify population displacement and land grabs. Health and sanitation services are also affected or destroyed, so that food insecurity is often combined with epidemics (Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and other conflict-affected countries have been hit by severe cholera outbreaks; the toll taken by Covid-19 is partially accounted for in the reports available at the time of writing). In addition, starvation is used as a method of warfare in some conflicts, despite being prohibited under international humanitarian law.\(^{116}\) The award of the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme\(^{117}\) has highlighted the strong links between hunger and conflict.

Widespread violations of international humanitarian law prevent humanitarian access to certain areas and have led to a rise of attacks on health and aid workers. Consequently, millions of people are deprived of basic care.\(^{118}\) There are currently 79.5 million people in the world who have been forcibly displaced (1% of the world’s population) and most of them originate from conflict zones (68% of refugees come from Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar).\(^{119}\)

Figure 25 – Numbers of acutely food-insecure people by key drivers (2019)


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\(^{119}\) See: UNHCR, [Figures at a glance](https://www.unhcr.org), accessed 19 March 2021. In the text above, ‘refugees’ include refugees under UNHCR mandate, Palestinian refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad.
Coronavirus measures will reshape aid priorities

The pandemic has further aggravated situations of fragility. Precautionary measures, such as social distancing and regular hand washing were nearly impossible to observe in overpopulated neighbourhoods or areas where clean water and sanitation are barely accessible. Lockdowns and border closures also complicated humanitarian access and food delivery. In fragile states, enforcing such measures has been more than often beyond the capacity of governmental or armed groups’ security forces. The growth of serious cases has added to the burden of health and aid infrastructures already on the brink. Containment measures have undermined economies, particularly the informal sector, affecting the livelihoods of many. The coronavirus crisis has emphasised fragile states’ incapacity to protect their citizens.

At the beginning of April 2020, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) provisionally estimated the needs for the Covid-19 global humanitarian response plan – a fraction of global Covid-19 related funding – at US$2.01 billion, in July 2020 the updated plan included a US$10 billion appeal. In March 2021, less than 40% of this plan had been funded. On 8 April 2020, the EU launched a 'Team Europe' Covid-19 package aimed at assisting vulnerable people and countries. This €38.5 billion package (as of March 2021) is the reorientation of uncommitted funds or of funds committed for projects delayed due to the pandemic, from the EU budget and the European Development Fund, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Member States). Some €502 million has financed the emergency response; of which €2.8 billion goes to support health and sanitation systems; and the bulk of the EU package, €12.8 billion, to address economic and social consequences. Part of the package will be used to help strengthen social services, police and justice, to address escalating violence against populations at risk. Lockdown measures have indeed led to a doubling in cases of violence against women in some countries, increased abuse of boys and girls, and unleashed hate speech against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and minority communities.

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

2.3.2. Conflict sensitivity and EU aid

Research 120 nuances the intuitive notion that aid and relief necessarily appease tensions.

Development programmes, if they focus only on certain social groups (e.g. religious minorities, women) or geographic areas, risk aggravating dissent and rejection by the rest of the population. In addition, the presence of cooperation or humanitarian staff can itself contribute to economic distortion. This has been evidenced, for example, in Central African Republic.121 The approach taken by the donor also enters into play: research shows, for example, that both World Bank and Chinese aid prevent recipients from engaging in outright conflicts, however ‘Chinese aid is associated with more government repression and an increased acceptance of authoritarian norms, while World Bank projects strengthen democratic values’.122

Development cooperation and humanitarian aid are long-standing EU commitments, enshrined in the Treaties (TEU, Article 21; TFEU, Article 4(4) and Title III). In conflict-affected areas, humanitarian and development interventions are confronted with multiple challenges. Conflict-prone ‘fragile

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120 See case studies on Princeton’s Empirical Studies of Conflict project website.
states’ all suffer from weak legitimacy, a limited capacity to deliver services to the population, and security issues. Each fragility or conflict situation involves a complex matrix of deficits in those areas. The EU, which is committed to aid effectiveness frameworks and has also endorsed the new deal for engagement with fragile states, endeavours to take this complexity into account when planning and implementing aid programmes, so as to avoid any possible negative impacts. Aid can be effective in reducing the level of violence when it is informed by a good knowledge of the social context that led to the conflict, for example, sectarian divisions. The conflict sensitivity approach is applied by EU staff in fragile and conflict-affected countries, clearly targeted by the 2017 'new European consensus on development'. This approach is informed by appropriate analytical tools, based on a large set of lessons learned and the sharing of expertise with other multilateral actors, in particular the World Bank.

Conflict prevention: Early warning for better efficiency

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

Ongoing conflict: Challenges of the comprehensive approach

At the heart of conflicts, the peace and conflict impact assessment methodology provides for a two-way assessment of the possible impacts of a conflict on external intervention, as well as the possible impacts of an intervention on the dynamics of the conflict. Other methodologies focus on the peacebuilding relevance of development interventions (aid for peace), or on the gender aspects of conflicts and interventions (gender and conflict sensitivity). Most stakeholders acknowledge that better coordination would foster the complementarity of short-term humanitarian interventions and longer-term development programmes (the ‘humanitarian-development nexus’). However, the EU cannot avoid tensions between its various objectives, such as fostering development ownership

125 Council conclusions on conflict prevention, 20 June 2011 – EU conflict early warning system … SWD (2016) 3 final, High Representative/European Commission, 14 January 2016. According to the 2014 EEAS factsheet ‘The EWS also directly responds to the European Parliament’s call for the EU to move away from predominantly reactive responses to crises towards earlier conflict prevention and to present a sound basis for decision-making on complex conflict situations’. (This sentence is not in the 2020 factsheet).
126 A comparative analysis on EWS was published in 2017, with recommendations for the EU EWS: J. Berglund and D. Bruckert, Report on Technological Shortcomings in Early Warning and Conflict Analysis, EU-CIVCAP, 2017.
and tackling illegal migration;¹²⁸ providing a neutral humanitarian response and making transitional arrangements for justice.

**Post-conflict interventions: Making recovery possible**

In areas emerging from conflict, the recovery and peacebuilding assessment (RPBA)¹²⁹ methodology is designed to analyse the drivers of the conflict and to assess its impacts, in order to draw up a roadmap for the implementation of recovery measures. Rather than a set of tools, RPBA is a process. The EU and other international organisations play a crucial role in this process: they coordinate their actions to create the conditions for effective recovery under the ownership of a legitimate government. For example, the 2017 Central African Republic’s recovery and peacebuilding plan is the outcome of a RPBA conducted with support from the EU, UN and World Bank Group. This plan informed the political agreement for peace and reconciliation signed in Bangui in February 2019.¹³⁰

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¹²⁸ See, for example, interview with Maria-Manuela Cabral, Head of Unit for Fragility and Resilience, DG DEVCO, European Commission, in Voice Out Loud, Issue 26, November 2017, p. 14.


2.3.3. Crisis management: CSDP missions and operations

Through its common security and defence policy (CSDP) the EU has developed a broad crisis management agenda which includes conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and post-conflict stabilisation, in accordance with the principles of the UN, one of the EU’s most important partners in peacekeeping. Currently, the EU has 17 CSDP missions and military operations on three continents, with a wide range of mandates including military training, capacity-building, counter-piracy, rule of law and security sector reform, and border assistance. They deploy over 5,000 civilian and military personnel (see Figure 24). EU civilian missions carry out tasks consistent with the Global Strategy’s commitment to strengthening the resilience and stabilisation of partner countries recovering from or threatened by conflict and instability. They also provide training on areas such as countering trafficking, human resource management, legislative drafting, policing, and others. Military missions are currently focused on areas such as countering terrorism, irregular migration, piracy and capacity-building of armed forces. The type of training provided by executive and non-executive military missions includes infantry skills, force organisation, sniper skills, mortar firing, leadership, engineering, logistics, tactical air control and intelligence gathering.

The majority of CSDP missions and operations have been in Africa and, in many cases, they have operated in parallel with UN peacekeeping operations and African Union (AU) missions. Since 2017, the EU has strengthened the coordination of its security efforts in the Sahel, by creating a regional coordination dimension for its CSDP operations in the region. It established a regional coordination cell based within EUCAP Sahel Mali in 2017. The regional coordination cell, renamed regional advisory and coordination cell (RACC) in 2019, includes internal security and defence experts in G5 Sahel countries, deployed in Mali but also in EU delegations in other G5 Sahel countries, namely Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. This reinforced regional approach aims to support cross-border cooperation in the Sahel and regional cooperation structures, and to enhance national capacities of the G5 Sahel countries. The objective of the reinforced RACC will be ‘to strengthen the G5 Sahel regional and, where appropriate, national capacities, in particular to support the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel joint force military and police components, with the aim of facilitating and improving regional cross-border cooperation in the field of security and defence’.

In 2018, the EU adopted the civilian CSDP compact (CCC). The compact is designed to enhance mission capabilities in terms both of response time and access to relevant training. It aims to boost responsiveness, flexibility and reaction time. It also intends to increase integration among Member

Women in CSDP

As a signatory of the UNSC Resolution UNSCR 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (WPS), the EU has undertaken to increase the number of women dealing with crisis management and peace negotiations. The Global Strategy emphasises the intention to involve more women in the EU’s foreign and security policy and the EEAS adopted a gender and equal opportunities strategy for 2018 to 2023. The European Parliament has called for the EU to lead the efforts to implement Resolution 1325. The civilian CSDP compact (CCC) commits to actively promote the representation of women in the EU’s missions. According to the EEAS, the overall share of women personnel in CSDP missions and operations is 24%, and 20% when it comes to operational and management functions.

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

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


States, whether via programming, implementation or information sharing. Full delivery of the CCC is expected at the latest by summer 2023. Its first annual review identified several points on the way forward, including increasing the number of seconded experts in the missions, strengthening responsiveness tools, and exploring possible modalities of evaluating the operational impact of the missions. The Council has emphasised the need to enhance and streamline Member States’ engagement in conflict management and stabilisation.\textsuperscript{135} A \textit{European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management} was established in Berlin, Germany, in February 2020, having become operational in September 2020. Following the annual review of the CCC in November 2020, the Council adopted conclusions in December 2020, highlighting the important contribution of civilian CSDP ‘in responding to new and emerging threats and challenges’, aspects to be addressed by the ongoing ‘strategic compass’ process.\textsuperscript{136}

CSDP missions and operations cooperate with over 150 national counterparts (local ministries of the interior, security, justice, and foreign affairs, and law enforcement associations such as judicial councils and policing boards, as well as local civil society organisations) and almost 180 international partners (e.g. EU delegations, EU agencies such as Frontex and Europol, the UN, OSCE, Interpol, the African Union, NGOs and several development agencies). The European Peace Facility, a new mechanism covering all of the EU’s external action with military and defence implications, including the common costs of military CSDP operations, was adopted in March 2021 as an off-budget fund worth €5 billion over the next seven years.\textsuperscript{137} The facility will also support peace operations led by the African Union and partner countries bilaterally, and will be able to provide military equipment, subject to strict safeguards and control mechanisms.

The European Parliament is a longstanding advocate of a more effective CSDP. In January 2020, it called for a forward-looking approach to capability planning and development, as well as early anticipation of needs for crisis response. The EP has urged the Council to work for harmonisation and standardisation of European armed forces, to facilitate cooperation among EU military personnel. In January 2021, Parliament underlined the need for CSDP missions and operations to become more robust, including through an increase of ‘contributions of forces and assets’.

CSDP missions and operations and the fight against coronavirus

In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU’s CSDP missions and operations have continued to deliver on their security mandate and are exploring ways to support their host countries. While ongoing missions and operations do not have a humanitarian aid mandate, within their existing mandates, means and capabilities, civilian missions provide specific advice and share information with international and national partners helping to address the pandemic (see Figure 24). Several missions have donated medical and protective equipment. The actions of the CSDP missions are in full coherence with the wider actions undertaken in the ‘Team Europe’ global response to the coronavirus addressing the humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences of the crisis. Within the limits of their resources and mandate, military missions also offer support.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{135} Council of the EU, \textit{Conclusions on the implementation of the Civilian CSDP Compact}, 2019.
\textsuperscript{136} Council of the EU, \textit{Conclusions on Civilian CSDP Compact}, 2020.
\textsuperscript{137} Council of the EU, \textit{EU sets up the European Peace Facility}, 22 March 2021.
\textsuperscript{138} Information provided by the EEAS.
2.3.4. The maritime component of the CSDP

Geopolitical activities at sea have been on the rise: from illegal trafficking and piracy operations to energy exploration missions and military posturing, the waters surrounding Europe have become stormier. The maritime dimension of CSDP missions and operations are a direct way for the EU to build its profile as a security provider and peace promoter.\textsuperscript{139} The EU currently has two major naval operations deployed: the EUNAVFOR Somalia operation Atalanta in the western Indian Ocean and EUNAVFOR MED Operation Irini. Operation Irini partly took over the mandate of its predecessor, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia, which was terminated in 2020 and rescued 44,916 persons between 2015 and 2020. In 2019, the EU deployed approximately 960 personnel to these two operations. Launched in March 2020, operation Irini has a mandate to patrol the international waters of the central Mediterranean about 100 km off the Libyan coast in order to implement the arms embargo imposed on Libya by UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011). By mid-June 2020, it had hailed over 130 vessels, at least 100 of them in relation to suspected violations of the arms embargo. The operation’s mandate has been renewed until March 2023.

Operation Atalanta was deployed in 2008 in the territorial waters of Somalia, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1816, with the aim to protect vulnerable vessels, such as those from the World Food Programme, off the Somalian coast by ‘deterring, preventing and repressing acts of piracy and armed robbery’. Some authors argue that this operation is the most visible example of the EU’s ‘potential as a maritime security provider’. Atlanta has two complementing civilian ‘sister missions’: the EU capacity-building mission (EUCAP Somalia) and the EU training mission (EUTM Somalia). The EU’s strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, approved by the Council on 16 April 2021, highlights the value of regional partnerships in support of maritime security more broadly and underscores its support for increased cooperation in the framework of CSDP missions. Specifically, the EU aims to conclude new framework participation agreements with Indo-Pacific partners and welcomes ‘the contributions of Asian partner countries’ naval forces’ to Operation Atalanta.

A new concept to increase the EU’s maritime engagement was launched by Council in January 2021, namely coordinated maritime presences, to encourage greater engagement and international cooperation at sea – with a pilot case in the Gulf of Guinea. The region was chosen on account of its importance for freedom of navigation, trade routes and sustainable development, as for the multiple threats present, such as armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity, kidnapping of seafarers, and smuggling and trafficking of drugs and arms. The presence consists of operations and assets deployed under national command and on a voluntary basis, aiming to enhance operational engagement in the region.

Finally, defence capabilities in support of the maritime component of the CSDP are developed through the EU’s defence initiatives. For instance, 6 of the 47 PESCO projects are focused on maritime capabilities, e.g. on maritime surveillance and unmanned systems, and a horizontal project, namely the Crisis Response Operational Core (EUFOR CROC), which aims to create ‘a coherent full spectrum force package’ to improve the EU’s crisis management capabilities, including on maritime security. Additionally, the European Defence Fund’s two precursor programmes have also co-financed defence research and capability development projects relevant for enhancing the EU’s maritime expeditionary capacity.

2.4. Addressing cyber (in)security and disruptive technology

Societies’ dependency on the internet is growing in step with their vulnerability to cyber threats. The transformational benefits brought by the internet and associated technological innovations are countless but they also allow cyber threats to grow in sophistication and impact particularly as digital divides become more exposed. Malicious cyber actors range from lone wolves to professional criminals and to state and non-state actors, exploiting the anonymity and affordability of cyberspace.

Cyber threats include anything from outright cyber-conflict or warfare, to cyber sabotage, espionage, targeting of critical infrastructure, and to severely challenging democratic systems’ resilience. Cyber instruments are key components in the mix of subversive tactics constituting hybrid warfare. Coordinated launches of cyber-attacks alongside economic pressure, disinformation and armed warfare are testing the resilience of democratic states and institutions, including the EU. Peace, security and stability in the EU are therefore directly targeted. Such malicious actions aim at the long-term erosion of citizens’ trust in institutions, politicians, the state, media and democracy.

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140 E. Pejsova, The EU as a maritime security provider, EUISS, 2019.
141 Council of the EU, Conclusions launching the pilot case of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept in the Gulf of Guinea, 2021.
This has been confirmed by data suggesting that the number of countries experiencing such attacks increased by 150% between 2017 and 2019.\footnote{Idem WEF, 2021.}

Virus threats: Coronavirus and cyber

The pandemic has been accompanied by a spike in cyber-attacks, riding the wave of the virus in the information sphere. Perpetrators have been taking advantage of the millions of people working from unprotected WiFi connections, but have also capitalised on public fear, tempting people to click on malicious links. One\footnote{ENISA, \textit{Threat Landscape Report 2018}, 2020.} company estimated a 30,000% increase in coronavirus-related cyber-attacks in the space of a few months since the beginning of 2020.

Attacker have been capitalising on the confusion and panic surrounding the pandemic, the restrictions in response to it and also vaccinations\footnote{ENISA, \textit{Main incidents in the EU and worldwide}, 2020.}. For example, one\footnote{Idem WEF, 2021.} scheme used an interactive map created by Johns Hopkins University to spread password-stealing malware. Cybercriminals have been found to disseminate fake emails impersonating national authorities and the World Health Organization. The European Medicines Agency also experienced a hack\footnote{IT Protocol, \textit{Cybercrime cost the world over $1 trillion in 2020}, 2021.} that resulted in unlawful access to information about a Covid-19 vaccine. Hackers have also frequently been targeting\footnote{World Economic Forum, \textit{The Global Risks Report 2020}, 2020.} vaccine supply chains. All EU institutions have actively spread

2.4.1. The landscape

The EU Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) paints a gloomy picture of malware, phishing attacks, spam, identity theft and cyber-espionage as dominating the cyber-threat landscape in Europe in 2020 while Europol highlights the rise of the darknet.\footnote{ENISA, \textit{Threat Landscape Report 2018}, 2020.} Appropriately, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has placed cyber-attacks in its top 10 global risks for several years, including 2021, in terms of both likelihood and impact.\footnote{Idem WEF, 2021.} Some estimates place the cost of cybercrime in 2020 over US$1 trillion.\footnote{IT Protocol, \textit{Cybercrime cost the world over $1 trillion in 2020}, 2021.} Others note that security breaches have grown by 67% in the last five years and predict a risk of approximately US$5.2 trillion in losses due to cyber-attacks.\footnote{World Economic Forum, \textit{This is the crippling cost of cybercrime on corporations}, 2019.} Though the nature of cyber threats can vary across countries, attacks targeting Europe show no sign of slowing down. ENISA reports that the most targeted sectors between 2019 and 2020 were digital services, government administration and the technology industry.\footnote{ENISA, \textit{Main incidents in the EU and worldwide}, 2020.} As the internet boom is sweeping the African continent, so are cyber-threats. Not only is\footnote{Idem WEF, 2021.} Africa becoming a growing target for cyber-attacks, it is also a source. A report\footnote{IT Protocol, \textit{Cybercrime cost the world over $1 trillion in 2020}, 2021.} finds that the African continent could be seen as a more permissive environment for cyber criminals due to a lack of security capabilities, strong legislation and lack of awareness. There is a growing trend of targeting strategic sectors and critical infrastructure, which are vital for the functioning of a society. These include hospitals, government systems, energy grids, oil refineries, but also nuclear facilities. Cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure can have disastrous, potentially catastrophic effects. Such attacks risk paralysing a country, as illustrated in the 2015 attack on Ukraine’s power grid right before Christmas Eve. The WEF rated cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure in particular as the fifth top global risk in 2020.\footnote{World Economic Forum, \textit{The Global Risks Report 2020}, 2020.}
What the specialised literature often documents as a push for ‘cyber sovereignty’ can easily escalate from resistance to international regulation into geopolitical tensions. The WEF argues that global interconnectivity, cooperation and interoperability are at stake. Cyber sovereignty or a digital arms race, could compromise the fragile progress on global cyber norms and even risk resulting into offensive deployments of disruptive technologies in order to ‘win the race’. Politicised discussions about 5G deployments and artificial intelligence demonstrate this trend towards geopolitical technological competition150.

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, the remaining legal ambiguities in cyberspace could also constitute a threat to peace and security particularly when malicious operations fall below the threshold of armed conflict. Although the UN Group of Governmental Experts and Open Ended Working Group are essential for ‘advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace’, globally-agreed international agreements or binding guidelines on rules of engagement are still lacking.151 Countries still disagree on the applicability of international law when it comes to self-defence and counter-measures in cyberspace.152

2.4.2. EU cyber action

Europeans increasingly feel at risk of becoming victims of cybercrime. However, in 2020 the number of Europeans who feel more able to protect themselves is also increasing153. In 2017, over eight in ten (87 %) saw cybercrime as an important challenge.154

152 F. Delerue et al. The application of international law in cyberspace: is there a European way?, EU CyberDirect, 2019.
Cyberspace is now considered the fifth domain of warfare alongside the traditional sea, land, air and space domains. The EU Global Strategy itself begins by saying that 'our union is under threat'. This includes cyber threats. The strategy pledges the EU to be a ‘forward-looking cyber player’ and explicitly seeks to support responsible state behaviour in cyberspace based on existing international law. In 2017 the EU undertook a wide array of cyber measures, comprised in the cybersecurity package. They include a permanent mandate for ENISA (the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, an EU cybersecurity certification framework, guidelines for fully implementing the Directive on the Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS) – the first piece of EU-wide legislation on cybersecurity, a blueprint for rapid emergency response, an EU-wide cyber research network and overall improvements in the responses and deterrence across the EU, among others.

In December 2020, a political agreement was reached to create an EU Cybersecurity Competence Centre, to be located in Bucharest, Romania, and a network of national coordination centres to strengthen European cybersecurity capacities.

Cyber and critical infrastructure resilience

The pandemic has confirmed the status of ‘resilience’ as a key policy buzzword. With the intention of boosting the EU’s resilience in 10 critical sectors (energy, transport, banking, financial market infrastructures, health, drinking water, waste water, digital infrastructure, public administration and space), the Commission proposed a directive on the resilience of critical entities in December 2020. The provisions include the obligation for Member States to draft strategies to ensure resilience in those sectors and undergo national risk assessments as well as systematic risk assessments and cross-border cooperation of critical entities.

For example, the case of energy systems illustrates that their digitalisation also brings vulnerability to cyber-attack. As societies become more connected, their dependency on the electricity grid increases. Thus, modern societies depend on secure energy systems, making them a particularly attractive target for malicious actors, as the attack on Ukraine’s electricity grids demonstrates. In this context the Commission has recommended providing guidelines for Member States to become more cyber resilient in the energy sector.
Figure 27 – Non-exhaustive mapping of cyber stakeholders

- ENISA
- Europol (EC3)
- EU Intelligence and Situation Centre
- Hybrid Fusion Cell
- EU Military Staff Intelligence Directorate
- EU Military Staff Situation Room
- CERT-EU
- Emergency Response Coordination Centre
- Member States’ Computer Security Incident Response Teams

- Council of the EU Horizontal Working Party on Cyber Issues
- European External Action Service cyber staff
- European Defence Agency cyber staff
- PESCO Cyber projects*
- European Defence Fund**
- eu-LISA
- European Parliament (cyber-focused resolutions, rapporteurs, delegations)
- EU Cyber Direct
- Council of Europe (cybercrime actions)

- European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
- NATO (Hybrid Analysis Branch and cyber defence staff)
- SHAPE
- NATO CCDCoE
- OECD
- African Union Cybersecurity Expert Group
- ASECAN Cyber centre
- The Organization for American States’ Cybersecurity Program
- INTERPOL
- OSCE
- Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative
- Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation
- WEF Center for Cybersecurity
- NetMundial
- World Bank

- Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST)
- Global Forum On Cyber Expertise
- Global Cyber Alliance
- Internet Society
- International Social Security Association Cyber Programme
- Global Cybersecurity Capacity Centre University of Oxford
- The Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace
- Global Commission on Internet Governance
- Global Conference on Cyber Space
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- AfricaCERT
- Asia-Pacific CERT
- Task Force on Computer Security Incident Response Teams

*Eight projects are cyber-focused while at least 19 others have a cyber component.
**The Fund is also geared towards funding cyber projects, among other priority areas.

On 16 December 2020, the Commission and the HR/VP presented a new EU cybersecurity strategy – the EU’s second one, following the first from 2013. The strategy aims to ‘bolster Europe’s collective resilience against cyber threats’ and promote trustworthy services and tools. It sets out an ambition for the EU to lead efforts for secure digitalisation and to become technologically sovereign. It also outlines how the EU’s values and partnership can help achieve this ambition. On the same date, the Commission proposed a directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, updating and replacing the first NIS Directive. The proposal aims to boost the level of cybersecurity in the EU and ensure robust cyber resilience. This proposed directive is connected to the Commission’s proposal on another directive on the resilience of critical entities, as they are subject to cyber resilience obligations under the proposed second NIS.\(^{157}\)

The 2020 cyber strategy was welcomed in the March 2020 Council conclusions, which take a forward-looking view at the EU’s cyber threats and action. Council thereby encourages the Commission to create a joint cyber unit for streamlining the EU’s cybersecurity crisis management framework, invites Member States to explore the proposal to establish a cyber-intelligence working group, and supports the development of an EU external cyber capacity building agenda to increase cyber resilience and capacities worldwide and with partners. Council also suggests exploring the relationship between the EU’s ‘cybersecurity crisis management framework, the cyber diplomacy toolbox and the provisions’ of the EU’s solidarity and mutual defence clauses – Article 42(7) TEU and Article 222 TFEU.

The EU’s cyber landscape spreads across bodies such as ENISA, Europol – especially its Cyber Crime Centre, eu-LISA – the EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Computer Emergency Response Team, and the Intelligence and Situation Centre (IN TCEN). The EEAS and the EDA also play important roles, most notably on cyber defence. Since 2017, the EU has crafted a ‘cyber diplomacy toolbox’\(^{158}\) establishing a framework for a joint diplomatic responses to malicious cyber activities. All EU Members currently have national cyber strategies and some also have subordinate ones on cyber defence.\(^{159}\)

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

Diplomacy has always been the preferred European response to security matters, including cyber threats. The EU’s cyber diplomacy toolbox, set up in 2017, equips it to both react to cyber incidents and to engage in capacity and capability building at home and abroad to ensure cyber resilience. Besides the aim to streamline cyber diplomacy across policies and engagements, the EU has more structured cyber cooperation\(^{160}\) with its 10 strategic partners.\(^{161}\) The EU also has cyber engagements with the African Union and with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as throughout the eastern and southern neighbourhoods.\(^{162}\) Since 2016, cyber has become a key area for EU-NATO cooperation.\(^{163}\) This translates into cyber crisis management cooperation, but also in joint participation in cyber exercises such as the Parallel and Coordinated Exercises (PACE) or Cyber Coalition 2019.

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161 Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States.
In 2019, Council introduced a legal framework for restrictive measures (sanctions) in response to cyber-attacks. In July 2020, EU Member States decided for the first time to enact sanctions targeting cyber perpetrators. A total of eight individuals and four entities responsible or involved in cyber-attacks affecting the EU and its members were sanctioned in 2020. The HR/VP and the Commission are currently working on a proposal to define the EU’s cyber deterrence posture. Increasing attention is being paid to the relationship between the EU’s mutual defence and solidarity clauses (Articles 42(7) TEU and 222 TFEU), as illustrated by the strategy, proposed directives and Council conclusions. The 2020 cyber strategy emphasises the EU’s intention to work with partners to ‘promote a political model and vision of cyberspace grounded in the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic values’. It envisages an open cyber space building on a holistic international cyber policy that is ‘mindful of the increasing interconnection between economic aspects of new technologies, internal security and foreign, security and defence policies’.

The EU encourages and participates in multiple governmental alliances, public-private partnerships, academic consortia and mixed expert commissions to promote a safe and responsible cyberspace. Examples include the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace—focused on cyber norms and responsible cyberspace behaviour; Microsoft’s proposed Digital Geneva Convention—proposing a cross-sector legally binding agreement; Siemens’ and the Munich Security Conference’s Charter of Trust initiative; or French President Emmanuel Macron’s Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace. The EU’s cybersecurity act includes a commitment to protecting the ‘public core’ of the internet, a norm developed by the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace and is working closely with the UN on projects to advance responsible state behaviour.

The European Parliament has advocated robust EU measures in the cyber realm. In a June 2018 resolution focused on cyber defence, Parliament confirmed its commitment to an open, free and secure cyberspace, in respect of EU values. In March 2019, Parliament approved the Cybersecurity Act, establishing the first EU cyber-certification scheme and giving ENISA a permanent mandate. In January 2020, it called for increased EU efforts to confront cyber threats, deeming the active cooperation between the EU and NATO as vital, and it recalled that cyber-attacks ‘could constitute sufficient ground for a Member State to invoke the EU Solidarity Clause (Article 222 of the TFEU)’. In January 2021, it highlighted ‘the urgent need to further integrate cyber aspects into the EU’s crisis management systems’ and called for greater EU coordination on the collective attribution of cyber-attacks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs is drafting a report on the state of EU cyber defence capabilities, expected to be debated and voted in the European Parliament plenary in September 2021.

164 T. Lațici, EU cyber sanctions: Moving beyond words, EPRS, 2020.
165 Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace (GCSC).
166 Microsoft, 2017.
2.5. Countering disinformation and foreign interference

The impact of disinformation – defined by the European Commission as ‘verifiably false or misleading information created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public’ – has increased significantly in recent years. Following Russia’s disinformation campaigns against Ukraine, which began in 2014 as part of a hybrid war against the country, the issue gained notoriety as a global challenge during the United States presidential elections of 2016 and 2020. New waves of disinformation in the context of the coronavirus pandemic show that disinformation campaigns are not limited to democratic processes.

Disseminators of disinformation include state-linked actors (for example, Kremlin trolls during the 2016 US presidential campaign) and non-state actors, such as far-right Trump supporters promoting the QAnon conspiracy theory. In many cases, these two groups – state and non-state – pick up and amplify each other’s messages. The overall effect of their activity is to sow distrust, fear and confusion among audiences, manipulate public opinion and undermine public trust in official information (including about health, as has been observed during the pandemic), democratic institutions and media. It can pit different groups in society against each other, stoke tension, spark fear and reinforce underlying divisions. A March 2018 Eurobarometer survey indicated widespread public concern about the issue of ‘fake news’, with 83% of respondents identifying it as a problem for democracy.

2.5.1. Disinformation as a part of the authoritarian hybrid toolbox

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

Disinformation techniques are constantly evolving. Today, social media combines the oral tradition with new electronic means of dissemination, enabling (potentially disruptive) messages to spread instantaneously. In Europe, Russia’s attacks against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine as of 2014 are among the clearest examples of hybrid warfare. Disinformation campaigns include the orchestrated spread of conspiracy theories, for example during the pandemic or in the wake of the August 2020 poisoning of Russian opposition activist Alexey Navalny.

172 Final results of the Eurobarometer on fake news and online disinformation, 12 March 2018.
174 EU probes Russian disinformation efforts on Navalny and Belarus, Euractiv, 17 September 2020.
2.5.2. Growing evidence of online disinformation across the world

The Oxford Internet Institute (OII) has found increasing social media manipulation by governments and political parties across the world. According to OII, Facebook and Twitter found evidence of seven states engaging in information operations to influence foreign audiences in 2019: China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. However, over 10 times as many countries are using such techniques to influence domestic audiences: In 2020, the institute found evidence of organised social media manipulation in 81 countries, significantly more than in previous years.\(^{175}\) Russia is a well-known player in the field of hybrid warfare, disinformation and influence operations, and its techniques and narratives are well-documented. As already mentioned, an increasing number of state actors make sophisticated use of such tools. Perhaps most prominently, China’s use of social media to influence audiences abroad has evolved significantly over recent years. Whereas the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for years seemed to focus mainly on domestic platforms for online propaganda, Beijing appears to have boosted its global media influence campaigns since 2017, increasing its activities around the world.\(^{176}\) During the Hong Kong protests, the CCP began using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to control the narrative about the events. In many cases, content that originates from sources linked to authoritarian regimes is picked up and amplified within democratic societies, for example by populist politicians and their supporters, as well as unwitting social media users.

Whereas encrypted messaging services (such as the Facebook subsidiary WhatsApp) play an increasingly important role in spreading mis- and disinformation (for example, in recent elections in Brazil\(^ {177} \) and India),\(^ {178} \) Facebook remains the platform of choice for social media manipulation across the world, partly due to its global market dominance. With 2.7 billion users worldwide, Facebook is by far the most popular social network, followed by YouTube (2.3 billion users), WhatsApp (2 billion), Facebook Messenger (1.3 billion) and Instagram (1.2 billion). Twitter has 353 million users.\(^ {179} \)

2.5.3. The EU’s response to online disinformation

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

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\(^{175} \) In each of these countries, researchers found that there was at least one political party or government agency involved in using social media to influence public opinion. See: 2019 and 2020 Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation, Oxford Internet Institute.


\(^{177} \) *What 100,000 WhatsApp messages reveal about misinformation in Brazil*, First Draft, 27 June 2019.

\(^{178} \) *‘India had its first ‘WhatsApp election’. We have a million messages from it’*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, 16 October 2019.

\(^{179} \) *Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2021, ranked by number of active users*, Statista, January 2021.
In recent years, the EU has stepped up efforts to counter disinformation. In September 2015, the East StratCom Task Force (ESTF) was set up under the EEAS. The European Parliament has consistently pushed for proper staffing and ‘adequate resources’ for the StratCom Task Force and used all its tools, including resolutions and its budgetary powers, to this end.\textsuperscript{180} To date, the Task Force has collected over 11 000 samples of pro-Kremlin disinformation in its EUvsDisinfo database. The EEAS has also added two further task forces, Western Balkans and South, for the MENA and Persian Gulf region. The European Commission included an initiative against fake online information in its 2018 work programme.\textsuperscript{181} In 2018, the Commission proposed the creation of an independent network of fact-checkers, more media literacy to help citizens spot online disinformation, and additional support for quality journalism. It also proposed an EU-wide code of practice on disinformation for key online platforms, social networks and the advertisement industry. Published in September 2018, the code is geared towards reducing online disinformation. Among other things, it encourages social media platforms to make it clearer for users where promoted content comes from, to direct users to trustworthy and diverse news sources, and close down fake accounts. Following the code of practice, in December 2018 the Commission and HR/VP adopted a joint action plan. Moreover, EU institutions and Member States launched a rapid alert system in March 2019, to share information about disinformation\textsuperscript{182} and set up a European cooperation network for elections. An observatory for social media analysis (SOMA) was created and European Media Literacy Week was launched to increase awareness and societal resilience. In the June 2019 joint communication on the

Figure 29 – Overview of EU joint and coordinated action against disinformation

Data source: European Commission.

implementation of the action plan against disinformation, the Commission and the HR/VP concluded that, despite some progress made by online platforms, more remained to be done. All online platforms needed to: provide more detailed information to facilitate the identification of malign actors and targeted Member States; intensify their cooperation with fact checkers and empower users to detect disinformation more easily; and give the research community meaningful access to data, in line with personal data protection rules. In September 2020, the Commission’s assessment of efforts by social media platforms since signing the code of practice reached similar

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{181} \textit{2018 Commission work programme}, European Commission, 24 October 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{182} European Parliament, Legislative train,\textit{ Online platforms, the digital single market and disinformation}.
\end{itemize}
conclusions. To address some of the shortcomings, in December 2020 the Commission unveiled its proposal for a digital services act.

Disinformation also features prominently in two European Commission action plans on democracy, the first focusing on the EU itself, the second on promoting democracy in the rest of the world. The European democracy action plan adopted in December 2020 envisions new legislation on political advertising, an overhaul of the September 2018 Code of Practice on Disinformation, and stricter requirements for online platforms. This is flanked by a March 2020 global action plan on human rights and democracy (March 2020). The latter envisages measures to support independent media and counter disinformation, building on the EU’s own internal measures in this regard.

2.6. Combating terrorism

Measured in terms of deaths of persons, the fight against terrorism has recorded significant successes over the past few years. According to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index (GTI), in 2019, deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year from a high of 33,555 in 2014 to 13,826 in 2019, a fall of 59%. At the level of individual countries, for 103 countries the terrorism score improved, while for 35 it deteriorated. However, terrorism is still widespread, with 63 countries recording at least one death from terrorism in 2019, and seventeen recording over 100.

Over 96% of deaths from terrorism are recorded in countries that are already experiencing conflict. The 10 countries with the highest number of deaths from terrorism are all engaged in armed conflict. Afghanistan has replaced Iraq as the country most affected by terrorism and the Taliban have replaced ISIL/Da’esh as the deadliest terrorist group in the world. In 2019, only Afghanistan and Nigeria recorded more than 1,000 deaths from terrorism, even though both countries in fact saw significant reductions in deaths from terrorism in 2019. The security situation in Afghanistan could get worse again once US and NATO troops leave the country by 11 September 2021, with experts warning of a resurgence of ISIL/Da’esh and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In 2019, deaths attributed to ISIL/Da’esh nearly halved, from 1,571 in 2018 to 942, falling below 1,000 for the first time since the group emerged in 2013. However, owing to the expansion of ISIL/Da’esh affiliated groups in sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a surge in terrorism in the region. Seven of the ten countries that saw the highest increase in terrorism in 2019 are in sub-Saharan Africa. By contrast, the MENA region saw the biggest improvements concerning the impact of terrorism, and the number of completed, failed and foiled attacks in Europe has also continued to decrease.

As deaths from religious-inspired terrorism have decreased, deaths from far-right political terrorism have seen a steep rise in the past five years. In North America, Oceania and Western Europe far-right attacks increased by 250% between 2014 and 2019, with deaths increasing by 709%. The threat of a terrorist attack comprising chemical, biological, radiological and/or nuclear (CBRN) elements has become a realistic scenario. Repeated chemical attacks by both state and non-state actors in the Syrian conflict, the 2018 Novichok attack in Salisbury (UK), the 2020 Novichok attack on Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and foiled terror plots in France, Germany and Italy in 2018 that involved chemical or biological agents have sharpened the EU’s resolve to tackle the
growing CBRN threat. Moreover, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, even though it is believed to have occurred naturally, provides a real-life example of the potential for large-scale disruption of certain biological agents and how a ‘bio-terrorist attack might unfold in the world’.

2.6.1. Terrorism in Europe

For Europe, the terrorist threat has grown significantly over the past two decades. Groups with an explicitly anti-Western and anti-European ideology, such as al-Qaeda and ISIL/Da'esh, have expanded in size and importance. Nevertheless, the number of deaths from terrorism fell for the third successive year, from over 200 people in 2017 to 58 in 2019. In the EU, deaths from terrorism fell to 10 people in 2019, with all fatalities the result of jihadist attacks. However, it is noticeable that arrests and attacks linked to right-wing terrorism have increased consistently over the same period.

The vast majority of terrorist acts that Europe has witnessed since 2004 have been perpetrated by individuals either directly linked to or inspired by extremist groups with centres outside Europe’s borders (see Figure 29). The realisation that there is a connection between internal and external security has come to shape EU action.

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

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

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192 The 2019 figures still include the United Kingdom.
Figure 30 – Terrorist attacks and arrests, EU Member States (EU-28), 2019

Number of suspects arrested for religiously inspired/jihadist terrorism in EU Member States in 2019

2.6.2. EU policy developments

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

In 2005, following the Madrid and London attacks of 2004 and 2005, the EU adopted an overarching counter-terrorism strategy based on four pillars: prevention, protection, pursuit and response. The strategy was last updated in December 2020. The new counter-terrorism agenda proposes actions to be taken at local, national, EU and international levels, in four priority areas. It seeks to anticipate new threats, help local communities to prevent radicalisation, give cities the means to protect public spaces and ensure that the EU can respond quickly and more efficiently to attacks.194

The fight against terrorism is also a main priority in broader strategic documents, such as the EU's internal security strategy, adopted in 2010, renewed in 2015 and updated once more in July 2020, when it was renamed the EU security union strategy. It is also part of the wider policy package adopted in 2016 with the aim of joining up internal and external policies.

The new EU security union strategy for the 2020-2025 period sets out the areas where the Union can bring added value to support Member States in ensuring security. The new strategy addresses combatting terrorism, alongside other major threats such as organised crime, hybrid threats, cyber-attacks and attacks on critical infrastructure. Anti-radicalisation, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration, are identified as key elements of the fight against the root causes of terrorism. The effective prosecution of terrorists, including foreign fighters, are also seen as essential, as is effective border security legislation and better use of databases. Highlighting the links between terrorism and organised crime, the Commission also sets out various measures to tackle organised crime. The new strategy builds, inter alia, on the work of the European Parliament’s Special Committee on Terrorism and the Council discussions on the future direction of EU internal security.195

Within the current Commission structure, achieving a 'genuine European Security Union' is one of the main tasks assigned to Margaritis Schinas, Commission Vice-President responsible for promoting the European way of life. His responsibilities also include ensuring coherence between the internal and external dimensions of security. However, in today's geopolitical Commission, terrorism is also part of the portfolio of other commissioners, including the HR/VP – Josep Borrell, the Commissioner for Justice and Consumers – Didier Reynders, the Commissioner for Financial Services, Financial Stability and the Capital Markets Union – Mairead McGuinness, and the Commissioner for the Internal Market – Thierry Breton.


2.6.3. International cooperation

In the fight against terrorism, the EU cooperates with international organisations and bodies including the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Global Coalition against ISIL/Da'esh, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Council of Europe. The EU is actively implementing the UN's global counter-terrorism strategy adopted in 2006, and relevant UN Security Council resolutions and sanctions regimes for suspected terrorists (individuals or groups). The EU has acceded to the 19 UN conventions dealing with terrorism that have been issued since 1963. The UN has set standards on preventing and combating terrorism, including criminal law measures and tools to address terrorist financing, as well as foreign terrorist fighters. The EU and seven individual Member States belong to the Global Counterterrorism Forum, an informal, multilateral counter-terrorism platform launched in 2011. The EU and 26 individual Member States are members of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, set up in 2014 to counter the group's spread and ensure its defeat. In addition to military campaigns in Iraq and Syria, the coalition seeks to tackle ISIL/Da'esh's financing infrastructure, counter its propaganda and stem the flow of foreign fighters. The EU strategy for Syria adopted in 2017 (and re-endorsed in 2018) and the EU strategy for Iraq, adopted in 2018, are also part of the EU's efforts to combat ISIL/Da'esh. The FATF issues anti-money laundering recommendations that also cover terrorist financing and that are recognised and implemented by many countries around the world. The EU has implemented the FATF's recommendations through successive anti-money laundering directives. The Council of Europe has adopted several major conventions setting legal standards for law enforcement and human rights in the area of counterterrorism. In 2018, the EU ratified the Council of Europe’s Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism.

The EU cooperates bilaterally with third countries in the field of counterterrorism. Since 2001, the EU has included counter-terrorism clauses in bilateral and multilateral agreements, such as the partnership and cooperation agreements, association agreements, and stabilisation and association agreements with the western Balkan countries. The scope of the agreements differ, but the provisions on countering terrorism are phrased similarly. The EU has also concluded sectoral agreements with non-EU countries (on police and judicial cooperation). These include counter-terrorism objectives: mutual legal assistance and extradition agreements, passenger name record (PNR) agreements, and Europol and Eurojust cooperation agreements. In 2010, the EU concluded the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) Agreement with the US on the exchange of financial information to allow law enforcement agencies access to financial transaction data. Specific counterterrorism action plans are meanwhile in place with Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel and Tunisia, and the western Balkans.
2.6.4. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) defence

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

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

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

The March 2018 Salisbury attack in the UK, in particular, gave impetus to the EU’s resolve to counter the growing CBRN threat and the Commission followed up in June 2018 with a joint communication on increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats, setting out additional measures to address the ‘developing and evolving’ CBRN threat. In October 2018, the European Council committed to further strengthen the EU’s deterrence and its resilience against CBRN threats and the Council of the EU adopted a horizontal sanctions regime to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons. This allows the EU to impose sanctions on persons and entities involved in the development and use of chemical weapons anywhere, regardless of their nationality and location.

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

In 2017, the European Parliament convened a Special Committee on Terrorism (TERR). In its final report, TERR highlighted the threat of terrorist use of CBRN materials and called for the uniform use of certain standardised naming conventions in the online sale of chemical substances.196

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196 European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2018 on findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on Terrorism.
Legislation and agreements of the past six years

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

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

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

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

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

**Exchanging information:** data is an important tool in the fight against terrorism, but it is crucial that law enforcement authorities in different EU countries share information. Several steps have been taken to enhance the collection and exchange of data. These include the EU PNR Directive of April 2016, which established an EU system to collect flight passenger data in order to detect suspicious travel and counter the foreign fighters’ phenomenon. New rules have also been adopted to strengthen the Schengen information system, and to enhance the security of identity cards and residence permits issued by EU Member States.

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

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

**Support for joint forces in the Sahel:** the G5 Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad – are increasingly threatened by terrorists and organised crime groups involving trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings. To help address the situation, the EU contributed nearly €150 million to help set up a Joint Force of the countries concerned, comprising 5 000 troops. The EU has also deployed two civilian capacity building missions and one military training mission to Niger and Mali. In April 2021, the Council approved conclusions on the EU’s integrated strategy in the region.

**EU counter-terrorism dialogues** are held with 20 countries; since 2015, the focus has been on counter-terrorism cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries, the Balkans and Turkey.

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

**EU-US cooperation:** the USA is the EU’s main partner in the field of counter-terrorism. There is substantial political dialogue on justice and home affairs issues, including counter-terrorism, with regular meetings at ministerial and senior official level.
The EU formed the Union civil protection mechanism as a common instrument to tackle the consequences of a natural disaster or a man-made crisis, including a terrorist attack, in one or several EU Member States. The mechanism has evolved since its inception in 1985. Today, its main role is described as ‘facilitating cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major emergencies’. However, experts have questioned the mechanism’s effectiveness in tackling the consequences of a major terrorist attack involving CBRN or a CBRN offensive by a state actor.197

2.7. Tackling energy insecurity

Energy security, defined by the International Energy Agency as ‘reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources’,198 is often taken for granted by consumers and businesses. However, even a partial disruption to supplies can have a devastating impact. In 1973, Arab oil producers imposed an embargo on western countries supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur war, causing oil prices to quadruple. The economic effects included galloping inflation, a stock market crash and global recession. In the UK, energy shortages led to strikes and the fall of the government. For energy-importing countries, the crisis highlighted their vulnerability to pressure from suppliers. With a large share of the world’s hydrocarbon reserves located in volatile regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, energy supplies also risk being disrupted by political instability.

2.7.1. Energy security in a globalised world

Fortunately, energy embargoes are extremely rare in peacetime, and the 1970s oil crisis has never been repeated. Energy exporters, such as Saudi Arabia and Russia, are just as dependent as importers, such as EU countries and China, on continued trade; given that hydrocarbons generate over half of Russian exports, and three-quarters of Saudi Arabia’s,199 the economies of these two countries would very quickly collapse were they to stop selling oil and gas.

Globalised markets mean that oil, like most other commodities, can be flexibly transported and traded across the world. Given that practically any oil producer can export to any market, imposing an effective embargo has become practically impossible, even on a country like North Korea that is subject to international sanctions.200 As the world’s reserves showing no signs of running out, oil remains cheap and plentiful. Although supplies from some of the world’s leading producers – such as Iran, Iraq and Venezuela – have been disrupted by regional instability and international tensions, importers still have plenty of alternatives to choose from. Even escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf, after drone attacks in September 2019 and January 2020 killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and damaged a Saudi oil facility, had only a limited and short-lived impact on global oil prices.

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

199 Data from UN Comtrade.
200 Is a full oil embargo against North Korea even possible? South China Morning Post, January 2018.
2020, Bulgaria, Latvia, Armenia and Mongolia were among several countries where three-quarters or more of gas imports came from Russia.201

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

However, LNG is not always an ideal solution. Expensive purpose-built LNG carrier ships are needed, as is land-based infrastructure in the form of terminals where the fuel can be unloaded and reconverted to gaseous form before feeding into the importer country's distribution pipelines. As a result, it tends to be more expensive than pipeline gas, although plentiful global supplies (not least due to the development of US shale gas) have helped to narrow the gap. It is also more polluting, as shipping and liquefaction generate additional emissions. For these reasons, LNG still only represents a minority share of gas imports by countries with pipeline connections — around 15% in the EU.202

From an energy security perspective, nuclear energy offers several advantages. Uranium is abundant, and most nuclear power plants in the EU have a choice of suppliers. The exceptions are some types of Russian-designed reactors, for which Russia is the only manufacturer of nuclear fuel, although this problem can be at least partly addressed by having sufficient stockpiles; in 2019, the Euratom supply agency calculated that EU nuclear power stations had enough uranium to last an average three years.203 However, the problem of disposing of nuclear waste and post-Fukushima safety concerns deter wider use of nuclear energy.

The EU is a leader in promoting energy efficiency and renewable sources. Apart from their environmental benefits, both help to cut reliance on energy imports — energy efficiency because it reduces overall energy consumption, and renewable energy because it can be produced locally. However, renewable energy requires high initial investment. In addition, electricity production from wind and solar power inevitably depends on weather conditions. Batteries and other technologies can store surplus electricity so that it is available for periods of low output, but they also create new forms of import dependence on minerals such as lithium and cobalt, and are very expensive. In the longer term, technological advances should help to solve the latter problem by bringing the cost of electricity storage down to a viable level.

### 2.7.2. Energy security as a challenge for the EU

Although Europe has some energy resources of its own, these are far from being enough to meet demand. In 2019, the EU had to import over half (61%) of its total energy consumption (see Figure 31).204 The share of imports rises to 97% for crude oil and 90% for natural gas, which are the two biggest components of the energy mix. Since 1990, when only 40% of energy was imported, energy dependence has increased. On the one hand, the EU’s total energy consumption is declining (thanks to more efficient energy use), and the contribution from renewable energy is growing. On the other, many EU countries are moving away from nuclear energy and polluting coal, and renewable energy — which still only accounts for one-seventh of total EU energy consumption — is not yet ready to take up the slack (see Figure 32). Therefore, gas consumption is rising, at the same

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201 [ITC Trade Map](https://www.commoditiescharts.com/trade-map), imports of petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons


204 [Energy production and imports](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat), Eurostat.
time as the EU’s own production of gas, for example in the North Sea, is in steep decline. The result is a sharp rise in gas imports, and with it, continued high overall energy dependence.

Figure 31 – EU energy dependence
% of EU energy consumption covered by imports

Figure 32 – EU energy consumption
Million tonnes oil equivalent

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

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

The EU’s need for imported gas is a cause for concern. As explained in the previous section, diversifying gas supplies is often difficult due to the need for pipelines; in the EU’s case, over two-thirds of gas imports come from just two countries, Russia (45%) and Norway (25%). Ten EU countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland) get over three quarters of their gas imports from Russia.

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

Since the 1990s, Russia has diverted some of its European gas exports away from the Ukrainian route to new pipelines such as Yamal (via Belarus and Poland) and Nord Stream, which started operating in 2011 and connects Germany and Russia directly under the Baltic Sea. Following a similar route,

Nord Stream 2 is at an advanced stage of construction, while the new TurkStream pipeline linking Russia to Turkey also supplies supply south-eastern Europe.

Russia’s massive investments in pipeline projects reflects the extent to which its gas sector needs to export to Europe; notwithstanding tensions, the prospect that Russia could hold Europe to ransom by withholding gas is a very remote one. However, there are at least two scenarios which could make EU gas imports even less diversified than at present. In the first, additional pipeline capacity could enable Gazprom to flood European markets with cheap gas, squeezing out other suppliers. In the second, Gazprom could decide to downgrade the Ukraine route or even abandon it altogether, leaving most imports to central Europe concentrated on a single supply route, via the Nord Stream pipelines.

Gazprom’s new pipelines also have important geopolitical implications, strengthening Russia at the expense of the EU and its allies. For Ukraine, they mean the potential loss of billions of dollars in gas transit fees – a serious blow to its ailing economy. Nord Stream 2 has created intra-European and...
transatlantic disunity, pitting supporters against other EU Member States such as Poland and the Baltic States, together with the US, who argue that it should be stopped, in view of the need to diversify EU gas supplies, support Ukraine and penalise Russia for continuing human rights abuses. In December 2019, the US adopted sanctions against participating companies, which have delayed but not stopped its construction. Although it has not been enthusiastic about Nord Stream 2, the European Commission criticised the US sanctions, as did the German government, which described them as unjustified interference in European internal affairs. US president Joe Biden has held off adopting further sanctions so far, but in March 2021 Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned that participating companies risked penalties.

Transatlantic critics in particular argue that the EU’s reliance on Russian gas imports makes it a less united and principled actor vis-à-vis its main supplier than it could otherwise be. According to them, the EU’s decision in 2014 (unlike the United States) to exempt the Russian gas sector from economic sanctions, and its disunity over Nord Stream 2, are signs of weakness. Not all European observers would agree with this point of view: after all, though narrower in scope than US measures, EU sanctions have had a considerable impact on Russia’s economy. However, the controversy around Nord Stream 2 highlights the extent to which the EU, an economic giant dependent on multiple energy suppliers, remains a ‘Gulliver in chains’, as the European Commission put it in 2000. Energy insecurity has been identified by the Global Strategy and by the Normandy Index as one of the EU’s main external vulnerabilities.

2.7.3. EU action to counter energy insecurity

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

However, constraints on renewable energy storage will mean continued reliance on fossil fuels for the short and medium term. The EU has therefore also taken action to secure oil and gas supplies, using the legal basis provided by the Lisbon Treaty, which gives the EU a role in promoting European energy security. Spurred by the 2009 gas crisis, the EU adopted new legislation, such as the 2017 Security of Gas Supply Regulation, which among other things creates mechanisms for sharing gas between Member States in the event of a crisis. Regulatory measures are flanked by the construction of physical infrastructure, such as

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211 Where does our energy come from?, Eurostat.
reverse flow and interconnector pipelines allowing gas to be transported more flexibly from one country to another. For 2021-2027, the European Commission is proposing a €5.2 billion budget from the Connecting European Facility to support energy investments such as new pipelines and electricity cables linking EU countries and their neighbours, gas storage facilities and LNG terminals.\(^2\) The EU and its Member States fund research into renewable energies and energy efficiency, including in cooperation with international partners such as Japan.\(^3\)

The EU plays a leading role in managing relations with external energy suppliers and has been active in enforcing compliance with single market rules. In 2018, the European Commission's threat of legal action forced Gazprom to offer EU importers revised supply contracts, with lower prices and less restrictive clauses. The EU also insists that Nord Stream 2, if it eventually starts operating, will have to respect EU rules which prohibit Gazprom from owning the pipeline and simultaneously supplying gas through it.

### 2.7.4. Prospects for European energy security

In its 2014 European energy security strategy, the European Commission points to the fact that there has been no lasting disruption of supplies since the 1970s as evidence that energy security measures have succeeded.\(^4\) Nevertheless, energy security remains a concern, and there are both positive and negative trends. In the longer term, renewable energy gives the EU an opportunity to develop its own sources of clean energy, but until that happens, it will continue to import most of its energy.

The EU is continuing efforts to diversify its energy imports. However, Russia is likely to remain the EU's main supplier of energy, and gas in particular. As LNG is too expensive, Algeria and Azerbaijan do not have the capacity to cover more than a small share of EU demand, Iran remains off-limits, and a trans-Caspian pipeline connecting to Turkmenistan's huge reserves is only a distant prospect due to legal and financial obstacles, many European countries remain heavily dependent on Russian gas. However, most of them are now better prepared to cope with potential supply disruptions than they were in 2009; for example, Lithuania has built an LNG terminal, while Latvia has expanded its gas storage capacity. EU gas markets have become more integrated: according to one report, as much as 75% of gas in the EU is consumed in a competitive and well-functioning market, in which gas can be flexibly routed to countries and regions where the need is greatest.\(^5\)

Russia's energy clout gives it political leverage over EU countries. Because of Member States' divergent energy interests, forging a coherent EU position is often difficult. However, the EU's

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2\(^2\) Research and innovation international cooperation in the field of renewable energy technologies, European Commission, December 2020.

2\(^3\) European energy security strategy, European Commission communication COM(2014) 0330 final.

dealings with powerful companies such as Gazprom demonstrate that, in energy as in other aspects of external policy, the EU is stronger when it speaks with one voice.

2.8. Mitigating the security impact of climate change

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

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

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

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

The report also finds that all the climate security risks assessed today are likely to increase by 2040. In short, climate change as a risk to global security is here to stay.217.

Existing security risks linked to the changes in weather and climate conditions are exacerbated by the consequences of phenomena such as droughts, floods, deforestation, desertification and environmental degradation. Since 2008, events referred to as natural hazards – many of them linked to climate change – have forcibly displaced approximately 265 million people, amounting to more than three times as many forced movements as those caused by conflict and violence (see Figure 34).

217 2020 World Climate and Security Report. See also Clingendael, Military responses to climate change, March 2020.
Climate change can increase extreme weather events and fuel further instability through consequences such as food and water scarcity, competition over decreasing natural resources, disaster-related displacement and the disruption of production and supply chains. Threats to energy and economic infrastructure are also increasingly linked to extreme weather phenomena.

The forecast for Europe is also alarming. A report by E3G, an environmental think tank, predicts that annual damages from coastal floods in Europe ‘could be as high as €1 trillion per year affecting over 3.5 million people, drought-hit cropland could increase seven-fold, agricultural yields could decline by up to 20 %, land burnt by forest fires could double and almost one in two Europeans could be affected by water scarcity’.218

2.8.1. EU action for climate-related security risks

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

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

- leading by example, through the European Green Deal;
- setting standards for sustainable growth across global value chains;
- using diplomacy, trade and development cooperation to advance climate goals.

The communication on the European Green Deal recognises the link between global environmental challenges and security, acknowledging that climate change is a significant threat multiplier and source of instability. It asserts that ‘the ecological transition will reshape geopolitics, including global


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economic, trade and security interests. This will create challenges for a number of states and societies’. Consequently, the EU commits to ‘work with all partners to increase climate and environmental resilience to prevent these challenges from becoming sources of conflict, food insecurity, population displacement and forced migration, and support a just transition globally. The European Green Deal consolidates the commitment to make climate policy implications an integral part of EU external action – including in security and defence.

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

### 2.8.2. Support in conflicts and crises

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

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

Conflict prevention is one of the main goals of EU foreign policy. The conflict early warning system is a key tool in this context and uses a wide range of inputs from multiple sources to assess potential risks. This enables the identification of long-term risks for violent conflict in a given country or region thereby integrating climate security thinking into policy planning. Experts highlight that the
challenge facing the early warning system is to ensure that it can successfully identify evolving climate security risks and to make sure that decision- and policy-makers make use of it.\textsuperscript{219}

Figure 35 1– The 15 countries most vulnerable to climate change

In practice, some of the countries most vulnerable to climate change are situated in regions of conflict and fragility (see Figure 35). It follows that CSDP missions and operations are often deployed in countries that are negatively affected by climate change such as Libya, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Iraq and the Central African Republic, which are among the 15 most vulnerable countries (see Figure 35). The instability and crises the missions and operations address are directly or indirectly results of factors ‘multiplied’ by climate change. Operation Atalanta, for example, protects food aid shipments from the World Food Programme for the Somalian population; the food and nutrition crisis in Somalia is itself linked to floods and droughts. According to the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), climate is one of three trends that are likely to shape the evolution of the EU’s missions and operations in the decade ahead.\textsuperscript{220} Indeed, in December 2020, six of the ten largest UN peace operations were in countries that have a high vulnerability to climate change, with 80\% of active UN personnel deployed in such countries. The effect of climate change can have serious repercussions for peacekeeping operations and special political missions. For example, the lack of proper response mechanisms can weaken the confidence in governance, creating power vacuums that can be exploited by local criminal groups. In June 2020, the Council invited the HR/VP to address the links between climate change and defence through a set of concrete actions. The ensuing climate change and defence roadmap was prepared by the EEAS in cooperation with Commission services and the EDA. The roadmap contributes to the wider agenda of the EU, in particular the January 2020 Council conclusions on climate diplomacy. Central to EU climate policy, the roadmap


Data source: Normandy Index 2021.
includes short-, medium- and long-term goals in three interwoven areas of action: the operational dimension; capability development; and strengthening multilateralism and partnerships.

All actions are targeted towards mainstreaming climate change and environmental aspects into the planning and implementation of CSDP mandates, by carrying out the necessary reviews (for example, a review of the 2012 *European Union military concept on environmental protection and energy efficiency for EU-led military operations*), increasing preparedness, including through training and exercises, improving early warning, situational awareness and strategic foresight. The roadmap highlights how EU Member States can contribute to the defence roadmap by improving national climate and environment capabilities, data collection and energy efficiency. The ongoing ‘*strategic compass*’ process, including the first EU threat assessment carried out under the German Presidency, is also expected to produce further direction in tackling the security and defence aspects of climate change.

NATO has also acknowledged the effects of climate change on Allied security. NATO’s ‘*strategic concept*’ includes climate change – alongside health, water scarcity and energy needs – as one of the key environmental factors which will impact on the future security environment, on defence strategy and military operations. In 2014 the alliance adopted the *green defence framework* which seeks to reduce the environmental footprint of military operations. In their report on NATO 2030 the group of experts appointed by NATO’s Secretary General recommended a revision of the 2014 framework and the establishment of a centre of excellence on climate and security. The ‘NATO 2030 young leaders’ recommended framing climate change ‘as an opportunity to innovate and increase military effectiveness’, setting green targets for defence planning and incentivising investments in the development of sustainable technologies.

The European Parliament has highlighted that EU foreign policy should develop capacities to monitor climate change-related risks, including crisis prevention and conflict sensitivity and has stressed the importance of mainstreaming climate diplomacy in EU conflict prevention policies, broadening and adapting the scope of EU missions and programmes in third countries and conflict areas.

### 2.8.3. Development

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

The Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) works with the least developed (and least resilient) countries via the *Global Climate Change Alliance* (GCCA+) and supports activities dealing with adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and desertification. It also contributed to the ‘*new climate for peace*’ project commissioned by the G7 to identify compound climate-fragility risks that pose serious threats to the stability of states and societies. Through the IcSP, under the previous MFF, the EU together with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), launched an initiative on climate and security in fragile states (2017-2021), which has aimed to improve the resilience of communities by strengthening inclusion and relationships, local planning processes and sustainable livelihoods. Projects have included supporting joint management of livestock migratory routes (Sudan) and protecting land from river damage (Nepal). Under the current 2021-2027 MFF, 30 % of the NDICI will support climate objectives in third countries.  

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2.8.4. Multilateralism and climate diplomacy

The EU is committed to addressing the implications of climate change for peace and security, as well as its potential geopolitical implications, by means of multilateral cooperation. The 2015 Paris Agreement within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main multilateral framework governing global action on climate change. The EU was instrumental in brokering the agreement and, in 2018, at the COP24 in Katowice, working for an agreement on the rules for the agreement’s implementation by 184 countries. The European Green Deal emphasises that climate change and environmental degradation require a global response and commits to develop stronger EU ‘green deal diplomacy’ focused on advancing global action and building capacity to support third countries. The EU aspires to set an example, and to use all instruments available, including trade, development and humanitarian aid, to work with partners – bilaterally and multilaterally – to prevent and mitigate the impact of climate change, including on security. The UN (including the UNFCCC), the G7, G20, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the World Health Organisation are the key multilateral forums in which this agenda can be moved forward. In addition, the EU has bilateral arrangements for dialogue and cooperation with third countries (OECD countries, countries party to the UNFCCC and emerging economies). It also works with several regional organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Gulf. The Biden administration’s return to the Paris Climate Agreement, and the re-prioritisation of climate change as a central policy issue presents the US as a likely ally in multilateral cooperation. An executive order released on 27 January 2021 stated that climate considerations are to be ‘an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security’. In April 2021 the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council participated in the Leaders’ Summit on Climate, an initiative of the new US President.

Following the 2020 Council conclusions on climate diplomacy, EU Member States have been asked to jointly work towards a strategic approach to climate diplomacy that identifies avenues towards action. Both Council and experts expect this climate diplomacy strategy to facilitate the integration of climate security and environmental factors in the EU’s engagement with partner countries and focus on preventive measures such as early warning systems. The EU has also stressed the need for climate and environmental risk factors to be built into the UN’s agenda on peace and security at all levels. The EU will also place increased emphasis on supporting such efforts in its immediate neighbourhood – in the South, the Eastern Partnership countries and the western Balkans. The Council has agreed to revert to the topic of climate diplomacy ahead of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) which will take place in Glasgow in November 2021.

2.9. Managing economic crises

Since the financial crisis in 2007-2008, the accentuated turmoil in the world’s financial markets and Covid-19 pandemic has induced major public interventions in Europe and worldwide to secure the stability of the financial system and support the economy. The past financial and economic crisis also underlined the importance of international institutions and multilateral structures, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Bank of International Settlements (BIS) and the G20, where the EU and its Member States play an active role, as these are supporting the macroeconomic performance and resilience of affected countries. Even though principal global indicators, such as decreasing trade volume and global GDP had already in 2019 highlighted that economies were decelerating, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought additional stress. Experts have

222 Mario Draghi, then President of the ECB, said at the Hearing of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament on 23 September 2019, that ‘Since my last hearing before this Committee earlier in the year, euro area growth momentum has slowed markedly, more than we had previously anticipated (...) This slowdown is mainly due to the weakness of international trade in an environment of persistent uncertainties related to protectionist policies and geopolitical factors’. 
predicted that the impact of the current crisis will be significantly greater than that of the global economic crisis.\textsuperscript{223} Economists have confirmed that Covid-19-induced financial stress in emerging market economies was even greater than during the last financial crisis (2007-2008) and that these economies have departed from their monetary policy playbooks by cutting rates even in the face of sharp currency depreciations and massive capital outflows.\textsuperscript{224} While the coronavirus economic shock appears to be the greatest on record, the policy response has also been the fastest and largest response for any post-war downturn, supporting not only economies, but also social stability and peace.

The link between financial crises and a deterioration in democracy, peace and security has been highlighted by several studies. As noted by Matthias Goldmann, ‘in recent years, more and more data has become available which reveals a correlation between sovereign debt crises and the outbreak of civil wars.\textsuperscript{225} Thomas Piketty and Branko Milanović have stressed the link between financial crisis, inequality and social collapse.\textsuperscript{226} In addition to economic recession and falling trade volumes, global economies are strongly affected by chronic deflation. Historically, there is a correlation between inflation-deflation cycles and the debt cycles: deflationary pressure increases during peace years, and inflationary, during war years.\textsuperscript{227} Writing for The Economist, Qian Liu has warned that the next economic crisis could cause a ‘global conflict’.\textsuperscript{228} This is concerning, particularly in the context of the current debate on a new ‘cold war’ brewing between the US and China, in the paradigm of a ‘Thucydides’s trap’.\textsuperscript{229}

The combination of global social risks, increased international tensions due to rising protectionism and the Covid-19 pandemic, has raised some concerns regarding the risk of a repetition of the 1930s scenario, which eventually led to World War II.\textsuperscript{230} The US ‘America first’ protectionist trade policy developed under former president Donald Trump could reignite under Joe Biden’s stimulus package. Under the Biden administration, protectionism may be more targeted and subtle, but it is not going to disappear. Furthermore, high rates of unemployment, and unconventional monetary policy measures, including possible ‘modemisation’ of the main central banks’ legal mandates and their impact on debt cycles and inequality, have all been cited as causes for concern.\textsuperscript{231} The dangerous link between the state of the global economy and peace has, once more, come to the fore – this time as a result of the 21st century’s gravest health crisis. Massive stimuli by central banks and governments, such as US$120 billion in monthly bond purchases by the US Federal Reserve, or the $1.9 trillion stimulus bill adopted by US Congress (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) awoke, in January 2021, not only hope of economic growth but also fears of rising inflation. The US Treasury

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{223} A. Tooze, \textit{Is the Coronavirus Crash Worse Than the 2008 Financial Crisis?}, Foreign Policy, March 2020.
\item \textsuperscript{224} A. Aguilar, C. Cantú, \textit{Monetary policy response in emerging market economies: why was it different this time?}, BIS Bulletin, November 2020.
\item \textsuperscript{225} M. Goldmann, S. Steininger, Democracy and Financial Order: Legal Perspectives, Springer, 2019.
\item \textsuperscript{227} G. Shilling, Historic inflation and deflation, in Insight, December 2019.
\item \textsuperscript{228} Q. Liu, \textit{The next economic crisis could cause a global conflict}, WEF, November 2018.
\item \textsuperscript{230} Ray Dalio says the economy looks like 1937 and a downturn is coming in about two years, September 2018; Emmanuel Macron: ‘Le moment que nous vivons ressemble à l’entre-deux-guerres’, \textit{Ouest France}, November 2018; Coronavirus is unleashing an ‘economic shock wave’ not felt since the 1930s, hedge fund manager Mark Yusko warns, CNBC, April 2020; The legendary economist who predicted the housing crisis says the stock market is far from the bottom, \textit{Business Insider}, April 2020; Fed’s Jerome Powell says economy faces long, uncertain recovery, \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, May 2020.
\item \textsuperscript{231} T. Lee et al., \textit{The rise of carry: The dangerous consequences of volatility suppression and the new financial order of decaying growth and recurring crisis}, McGraw Hill, 2020.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
yield curve has steepened to four-year high and, as noted by Standard & Poor’s Global Market Intelligence Unit, ‘A steep yield curve – when there is a large spread in interest rates between shorter-term Treasury bonds to longer-term bonds – often precedes a period of economic expansion, as investors bet that a central bank will be forced to raise rates in the future to tamp down higher inflation’.

2.9.1. Coronavirus implications for global trade and growth

The pandemic has created an unprecedented, fundamental shift in the very nature of the global economy, combining supply and demand shocks both in emerging markets’ economies and within the EU and its main trade partners. Even before that, some authors argued that global trade had already peaked in 2007-2008, and that the ‘new normal’ would be marked by ‘slowbalisation’, slower growth in global trade relative to global income. This view was shared by ECB economists Vanessa Gunnella and Lucia Quaglietti, who have pointed out that, following the 1990-2008 period, when total trade in goods and services increased from 39% to 61% of world GDP; trade slowed to 58% of world GDP in 2018.

The WTO has noted that trade volume declined by 0.1% in 2019, weighed down by US-China trade tensions and slowing economic growth. Furthermore, in April 2020, the WTO announced that global trade was going to face an unprecedented decline, within the range of 13% to 32%, in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This decline, confirmed by consequent WTO data, was the biggest fall in merchandise trade since 2009, when trade fell by 22% (see UNCTAD’s 2020 Handbook of Statistics). The countries most affected included some emerging market economies (Turkey), and countries affected by trade decline and internal political crisis (Lebanon).

United States measures to stabilise the global economy

As one of the three main engines of the global economy, the US does much to shape it through its monetary and fiscal policy. The American Rescue Plan Act (see above) comprised a mix of domestic economic measures to support incomes and spending in the US, including direct financial payments to households, extended unemployment benefits, tax credits for families, food vouchers, relief for delinquent mortgage and rental payments, and financial assistance for businesses. In March 2021, the OECD forecast that the act would more than double US GDP growth in 2021 from 3.2 to 6.5%, and add approximately one percentage point of GDP growth to the world economy as a whole. The act also contains US$11.3 billion in international economic and development assistance to help other countries manage the health and economic consequences of the pandemic. This includes $930 million earmarked to meet ‘economic and stabilization requirements’ resulting from the coronavirus.

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The emerging market economies are particularly fragile and affected by trade deceleration and by the Covid-19 pandemic in particular, as these countries are not only losing trade revenue, but are also suffering from a depreciation of their national currencies. An August 2019 paper by the Bank of International Settlements discusses these economies' vulnerability to adverse exchange rate movements, in particular Argentina, Brazil, Russia and Turkey. The Covid-19 pandemic has hit emerging market economy exchange rates and local currency bond markets hard, as they are not insulated from sharp currency depreciations and capital outflows. To counter large stock adjustment in domestic bond markets, emerging market economy central banks faced the need to expand their toolkits to take on a ‘lender of last resort’ role. The scale of monetary easing by emerging market economy central banks was larger, and the pace faster, than in some past crisis periods. This was influenced by the sudden and synchronised nature of the pandemic economic shock and the large scale policy response in advanced economies that occurred alongside the emerging market economy response. It also reflects the significant improvements emerging market central banks have made to their institutional frameworks over recent decades and the development of these economies' financial markets over the same period.

To prevent the negative impact of the exchange rate movements, global central banks, including the ECB and the FED, are providing coordinated action to enhance the provision of liquidity via the standing US dollar liquidity swap, including those of the EMEs. The World Bank Group and the IMF called on all official bilateral creditors to suspend debt payments from developing countries that request forbearance, with the aim of boosting their immediate liquidity and allowing time for an assessment of the crisis impact and financing needs for each country. In addition, the G20 suggested the idea of debt-cancellation to alleviate the situation of the most vulnerable countries, and in November 2020 agreed on a common approach to restructuring their debt. Economic and budgetary pressures will not only pressurise their fiscal capacities and balance of payments, but also the social capacities of these countries to cope with the crisis.

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236 Currently, 76 countries are eligible to receive International Development Association resources.
2.9.2. European Union support for third countries

The EU supports partner countries prone to balance-of-payment crises with macro-financial assistance (MFA) loans or grants that are available to countries benefiting from a disbursing IMF programme. This can be combined with investment from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Macro-financial assistance is subject to the ordinary legislative procedure under the provisions of Article 212 of the TFEU, on financial and technical cooperation measures with third countries. It consists of the provision of conditional help to third countries experiencing a balance of payments crisis and is complementary to IMF financing. In 2018, the EU provided €1 billion in MFA for Ukraine. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the EU reacted promptly to the critical situation in its neighbourhood countries. In May 2020, Parliament and Council adopted a decision on MFA to support 10 enlargement and neighbourhood partner countries in their efforts to mitigate the economic and social consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, for a total amount of €3 billion. This decision came on top of the 'Team Europe' strategy pledging over €40 billion to support partner countries' efforts in tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

The MFA package is financed through a borrowing operation conducted by the Commission on behalf of the EU. The amounts of MFA made available are distributed on the basis of a preliminary assessment of the beneficiaries' financing needs (see Figure 38). The Commission reports annually to the European Parliament and to the Council on implementation of the decision during the previous year.
Figure 38 – EU macro-financial assistance during the coronavirus crisis

3. Looking ahead: EU action for peace and security in a post-pandemic world

3.1. Foresight and resilience

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

In any policy process, coping with change is challenging – even more so in the middle of a crisis, when volatility is high, many more actors become actively involved, basic questions are unanswered, and the scale and magnitude of the initiated change is impossible to predict. In foreign policy, unpredictability is bound to increase as the world transforms towards a less regulated international scenario of great power competition. In this context, EU policies for peace and security also have to rise to at least four challenges of policy-making: (i) overcoming the ‘silo effect’, i.e. trying to achieve greater policy integration; (ii) applying the lessons from previous experience, i.e. ‘retaining institutional memory’; (iii) collecting, analysing and using evidence to support policy changes – including ‘knowledge about possible futures’; and (iv) adopting a long-term view through forward thinking, as part of efforts to ‘future proof’ policies (see Figure 39).

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

The global and regional environment remains uncertain and instability continues to grow. The forecasts are challenging. The Global Trends to 2040 report of the US National Intelligence Council accurately sums up the impact of the pandemic as having ‘shaken long-held assumptions about resilience and adaptation and created new uncertainties about the economy, governance, geopolitics, and technology’. Among the numerous concepts and notions that encapsulate the challenge for policy making looking to the future, the concept of resilience has without doubt

featured most prominently and will continue to do so looking forward. It is, therefore, no surprise that the first strategic foresight report issued by the von der Leyen Commission in 2020 was entitled ‘Charting the course towards a more resilient Europe’.

Among the four key dimensions of resilience-building highlighted by the report, the geopolitical one addresses key vulnerabilities, capacities and opportunities for the EU to sustain its effectiveness and role as a promoter of peace and security. The crisis of multilateralism, the degree of disunity in EU foreign policy, the shifting balance of power both in terms of actors and of the nature of power (hybrid and cyber warfare), challenges to EU economic sovereignty and over-reliance on suppliers of critical raw materials are highlighted among the vulnerabilities. On the other hand, the report emphasises that recent policy decisions at EU level, aimed at strengthening EU strategic autonomy and industrial sovereignty, but also at strengthening partnerships with like-minded actors, offer opportunities for the EU to increase its geopolitical clout and use that, in turn, to promote its action in the areas of peace and security, particularly in its neighbourhood. The report also points to the perceptions of the EU as an ‘anchor of stability and a guarantor of peace’, a ‘trusted partner’ and a ‘responsible leader’ in times of uncertainty.

In a similar vein, the European Parliament's study 'Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus', illustrates the critical nature of foresight in matching capabilities with identified structural risks, and in identifying ex ante gaps in necessary capabilities, as a prerequisite for building resilience. Among the risks identified in the study, several are relevant to peace and security as they exemplify the ways in which current trends could further destabilise the EU's domestic, regional and global environment.240

The destabilisation trend is echoed by a multitude of studies and foresight analyses. Of five possible scenarios for 2040 outlined by the Global Trends 2040 report, three portray a situation where international challenges are reinforced by more acute US-China competition. Indeed, in May 2020, the White House published a report on the US strategic approach to the People’s Republic of China, which reiterates the commitment to a competitive strategy, guided by a return to principled realism and discards the assumption that integration into international institutions and global trade can transform powers with differing values and political persuasions into trustworthy partners.241 While the election of US President Joe Biden has set the scene for a fundamental shift in US foreign policy away from that of his predecessor, Donald Trump, US-China competition is poised to remain stark, systemic and constant, shaping the geopolitical and geoeconomic environment. It follows that great power competition, the redistribution of global power and uncertainty about the future relevance of multilateralism will affect security and instability across the world, not sparing Europe.

Violent conflicts will persist beyond 2020. According to the International Crisis Group, Afghanistan, Yemen, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Libya and Venezuela are among the top 10 conflicts to watch in 2021.242 Alarmingly, the coronavirus is likely to impact conflict areas disproportionately, increasing the vulnerability of conflict-affected populations and prolonging conflict in areas like the Middle East. The pandemic is acting as a ‘conflict multiplier’ as contestation over resources expands to include securing access to vital medical supplies, among other factors.243 Proxy wars and competition may also increase in that context, for example in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, where the presence and influence of Russia and China is notably growing.244 At the same time, and in spite of the UN Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire, the forced displacement of

240 European Parliament, Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus: Options to enhance the EU’s resilience to structural risks, EPRS with DG EXPO and DG IPOL, April 2021.
people due to conflict, persecution or other circumstances, increased dramatically in 2020. By June 2020 the UNHCR reported that 1% of humanity was displaced, while estimates suggest that over 80 million people were displaced in 2020.245

Migration will continue to pose a challenge for policy-makers. As noted by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), rhetoric on migrants and refugees – especially in hotspots such as Central America and the Mediterranean – will continue to be weaponised to fuel nationalist populist rhetoric; according to the report, fear-mongering discourse about migrants carrying the virus could exacerbate this trend. At the same time, those same countries of origin will come under acute emigration pressures, as the pandemic stresses economies, leads to job losses and leads to falls in remittances. These phenomena might lead to the creation of new epicentres of migration-related crises, which, according to CIDOB, could include the Gulf countries and the region surrounding South Africa. One positive migration-related effect of the pandemic, on the other hand, is the fact that lockdowns have made the essential work of migrants more visible. This could potentially contribute to the reversal of xenophobic narratives in parts of the world.246

As discussed extensively in this study, climate change will undoubtedly exacerbate these trends. Foresight analyses concur that carbon neutrality and a transition to clean energy will be game changers in determining the degree of impact that environmental degradation will have, including on peace and security. The World Economic Forum reports that, with the global population expected to grow to 9 billion by 2050, an enormous and unequal need for energy (predicted to double by 2050) will shape the global landscape. The pandemic has illustrated the connection between human development and the environment; in all domains of foresight, ‘green resilience’, as defined in the EU’s 2020 strategic foresight report, will need to inform policy.

The pandemic has further strained social relations and state-society relations, leading authoritarian governments to adopt undemocratic measures, at times in reaction to social disorder.247 In an increasingly digital world, disinformation and the dissemination of misleading and fake news through social media are likely to continue to feed destabilising discourse with higher sophistication and a faster pace. As noted by the EU’s 2020 foresight report the pandemic has ‘accelerated attacks from authoritarian regimes against democratic systems via misleading narratives’ with the spread of misinformation and disinformation about Covid-19 and related issues becoming a direct threat to democracy, as well as to human lives. The Institute for Economics and Peace reports that the pandemic has put serious strain on several of the institutions that underpin positive peace, for example on healthcare, education and welfare systems, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict, violence and civil unrest in the years to come, as the rise of polarisation is already illustrating.248

Most experts agree that the cyber environment will become even riskier. According to a recent Chatham House report, the pandemic has accelerated the pre-existing trend of increasing cybercrime, noting that going forward cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure, including health infrastructure, will potentially multiply security concerns.249 Europol’s 2021 serious and organised crime threat assessment reports that in 2021 the use of technology is a key feature of serious and organised crime, with the trend of online crime expected to increase.250 In tandem, the possibility of

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248 These are the world’s most peaceful regions in 2020, World Economic Forum, July 2020.
250 Europol, Beyond the pandemic: What will the criminal landscape look like after Covid-19?
major cyber-attacks, including on the critical infrastructure of large countries, will increase as geopolitical competition rises in the wake of the pandemic.\(^{251}\)

Figure 40 – Geographical distribution of simultaneous health, debt and trade vulnerabilities to the coronavirus

![Map showing geographical distribution of health, debt, and trade vulnerabilities](source: WHO Global Health Observatory, IMF country DSA, World Bank WDI, UNCTADStat.)

The economic implications of the pandemic, particularly for the more vulnerable economies, are likely to place additional strain on governance and governments in the coming years.\(^{252}\) Many of the most financially vulnerable countries in the world also display some of the greatest vulnerabilities in their health systems and their dependence on trade, compounding the threats to peace and security (see Figure 40).\(^{253}\) With global extreme poverty having risen for the first time in over 20 years in 2020, some estimates predict that the pandemic could potentially push up to 150 million people into extreme poverty by the end of 2021.\(^{254}\) This also threatens equality and fragile gains in gender equality and women’s rights, which, as seen elsewhere in this study, have a direct link to peace.\(^{255}\) The economic impact will threaten food security disproportionately in fragile low-income countries, already prone to malnutrition, reinforcing yet another source of conflict and instability.\(^{256}\)

The preceding observations are only a few of the many that suggest that the post-coronavirus world will present the most vulnerable countries and populations with enormous challenges. As great powers engage in growing competition for power, there is a strong risk that their commitment to the least developed and most conflict prone parts of the world will be shaped more visibly by

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\(^{252}\) *Here are the biggest economic challenges we face over the next 10 years*, World Economic Forum, May 2020.


\(^{254}\) *COVID-19 to Add as Many as 150 Million Extreme Poor by 2021*, The World Bank, October 2020.


\(^{256}\) Ibid.
interests rather than values. Humanitarian assistance, development aid and multilateral cooperation could well fall victim to the return of realist power politics.

However, an observed reversal of previous US policies following the election of Joe Biden suggests that a return to multilateralism and a renewed momentum in development and humanitarian aid supported by the United States may be a trend in formation. Alongside the growing threats presented by rising geopolitical and geo-technological competition, foresight experts also discern opportunities in the renewed push for multilateralism and for resilient democracy in the context of a serious reflection on the way forward for global governance. While the pandemic has highlighted existing vulnerabilities for all actors – national, subnational, supranational and international – for the EU, this scenario presents itself simultaneously as an opportunity, but also a responsibility, to rise to the challenge of ensuring that it can defend its interests and values, most importantly, the preservation of peace, security and rules-based international cooperation in its Member States and beyond. If anything, experts concur that the past years have challenged the assumption that US support for multilateralism is here to stay, with actors around the world continuing to hedge their bets while the Biden administration sets out to restore confidence and trust in American leadership. China, externally, and polarisation, internally are two of the biggest factors that will determine this. In the meantime, experts suggest that resilience and strategic autonomy are likely to remain high on the agenda.

The construction of internal resilience and its promotion abroad will remain a key goal in this process. The Commission's second strategic foresight report will offer new resilience dashboards to act as 'policy compasses' for the EU and its Member States in the face of transformative global trends exacerbated by the coronavirus crisis. The report will also provide an in depth analysis of the EU's strategic autonomy and strategic dependencies. Even before the Covid-19 health crisis, the rise of China, Brexit, population movements, technology, and climate change, were already outlining a scenario for even more concrete and targeted EU external action. In the world that the pandemic foreshadows, where the future of conflict, cooperation, democracy and peace is in flux, EU external action is, more than ever, in need of foresight, but also resources, strategic choices and decisions. Some of those choices, such as the focus on the immediate neighbourhood, and the determination to build strategic autonomy will, in 2021 and beyond, form the basis for an EU foreign policy guided by an aspiration to peace and security in an uncertain world. A more strategically autonomous EU, equipped with the ability to reinforce resilience internally and abroad, with an emphasis on its neighbourhood, guided by a common understanding of threats and by robust foresight capacity on all fronts, will be in a position to continue to promote its fundamental goals of peace and security despite the tumultuous context of the 21st century.

3.2. Working with neighbours

In a world of changing geopolitics and trans-border threats, geography matters immensely. The stability and security of the EU's neighbourhood is intrinsically linked to the EU's own peace and security, and is the first stepping stone in the promotion of peace and prosperity abroad. The Covid-19 pandemic serves as a reminder of the crucial relationship between the EU's security and that of its neighbours (see Figure 41). As noted in the Global Strategy, working with neighbours is a

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


260 State of the Union 2018 – Our future in our hands, European Commission.
prerequisite for enlarging the space of stability, security and prosperity, and a priority for HR/VP Borrell, including, or even more so, in the face of the pandemic. The EU’s enlargement and neighbourhood policies are, thus, critical tools in the pursuit of peace externally and ensuring their continuity and efficiency is a key goal looking forward. As noted in the new Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, the EU aims to continue to pursue an ambitious and realistic neighbourhood policy, and develop a comprehensive partnership with Africa to work towards global peace and promote democracy and human rights. Stabilisation of the neighbourhood and acceleration of the enlargement process were clearly defined as the geopolitical priorities of the new Commission. In her political Agenda for Europe, the Commission President reaffirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkans. The Commission’s Enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans offered the region’s six countries a ‘credible strategy’. On 25 March 2020, the Council opened negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. The Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, announced a revised enlargement methodology, which aims to strengthen the process by improving tools to push reforms forward, notably in the areas of the rule of law and the economy. This renders the accession negotiations more credible, more predictable, more dynamic and guided by a stronger political direction. The Commission’s new proposals envisage further integration of western Balkan countries into EU policies, programmes and markets, which would deliver some of the benefits of EU membership even before accession. In October 2020, following the EU-western Balkans summit in Zagreb, the Commission adopted an economic and investment plan for the western Balkans to support economic recovery and convergence, with a financial package of €9 billion. As regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are key elements in the EU accession process for all western Balkan countries, the EU is supporting the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue and other regional initiatives.

Looking to the main hotspots, the EU and its Member States remain key contributors of financial (and other) support for the western Balkan, and eastern and south Mediterranean countries, including through the NDICI instrument of the current MFF. In addition, enlargement countries will be beneficiaries of some €12.9 billion from the Instrument for Pre-accession (IPAIII) funds. The European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) will remain the financial arm of the EU External Investment Plan, which covers investments in the EU’s neighbourhood and Africa. As the NDICI regroups 11 financial instruments from the previous MFF and covers a range of bilateral and thematic programmes, the main challenge is how it will provide coherent positive reinforcement effect and leverage. In some special cases, such as the ‘trust funds’ covering Libya and Syria, that will be closed in 2021, it is not yet clear how NDICI will finance these funds through the geographic and thematic programmes.

The new eastern partnership policy beyond 2020 emphasises the importance of the resilience and security of the whole region, recalling the link between economic and social aspects of resilience, good governance and the rule of law: ‘Resilience needs strengthening at all levels, including democratic, media, civil society, economic, energy and security resilience. To foster long-term resilience, a strong link is needed between growth and jobs on the one hand and governance and rule of law reform, on the other’. President von der Leyen announced a review of the long-term policy objectives ahead of the Eastern Partnership Summit in June 2020.
Ukraine’s reform process was announced as a key Commission priority, alongside deepening sectoral cooperation with associated countries that are ready.266 As part of its global response to the coronavirus outbreak, the Commission stood by its eastern partners and mobilised an emergency support package of almost €1.11 billion for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Furthermore, some eastern neighbourhood countries are also taking part in the COVAX programme.

The southern neighbourhood is facing its most severe challenges for decades, combining security threats, economic deceleration and social tensions. As part of the renewed partnership with the southern neighbourhood, in February 2021 a financial package was agreed of up to €7 billion under the €79.5 billion NDICI, including EFSD+ guarantees and blending under the Neighbourhood Investment Platform, to help mobilise private and public investments of up to €30 billion. Economic diversification, regional cooperation and better integration of young people remain priorities. As one of its five key areas, the agenda focuses on peace and security with a view to supporting countries in addressing security challenges and finding solutions to ongoing conflicts. It also aims to address forced displacement and promote resilience. As the Commission review its association agendas with each of its partners, policy differentiation will remain key, with a view to rewarding those partners that commit to genuine reform.

During the pandemic, EU response reflected needs and capacities of individual partner countries. The Western Balkans countries were part of the ‘Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative’ that reallocated €410 million of bilateral financial assistance to the countries of the region, and the ‘Team Europe Package’ that secured €800 million for the Western Balkans and Turkey. In April 2021, European Commission and Austria announced delivery of some 650 000 vaccines to the Western Balkans countries, in addition to the support provided to the region through the COVAX programme. Despite the EU efforts, a majority of Balkan countries relies on vaccines from Russia and China.267

On 29 April 2020, the Commission proposed an EU financial support package of more than €3.3 billion, including reallocations from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance of €38 million for immediate support for the health sector; €389 million to address social and economic recovery needs; and a €455 million economic reactivation package. It also included a proposal for €750 million in macro-financial assistance and a €1.7 billion package of assistance from the European Investment Bank. The western Balkans also activated the Union civil protection mechanism (UCPM) and received assistance through delivery of equipment and repatriation of citizens. The EU is treating the western Balkan countries as privileged partners by granting them access to many initiatives and instruments reserved for EU Member States, for instance joint procurement of medical equipment.

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3.3. Building EU strategic autonomy in defence and beyond

As this study illustrates, the current risk landscape is multidimensional and characterised by both conventional and novel threats: from transnational crime networks and terrorism to the corrosion of arms control regimes, climate security risks, cyber-attacks, and hybrid warfare. The scale and complexity of these factors led the former and current HR/VPs to argue that ‘none of our countries has the strength nor the resources to address these threats’ \( \textit{alone} \) and if Europe does ‘not \textit{act together} now’, it will become irrelevant. According to the EU Global Strategy, the EU’s strategic autonomy, referring to autonomous decision-making, implementation and action towards a predefined level of ambition, ‘is important for the EU’s ability to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders’. In the face of Covid-19 and concerns about budgetary constraints, the EU’s leaders and foreign ministries have highlighted that plans to build EU strategic autonomy in defence, should not be compromised.\(^{268}\) In the words of HR/VP Borrell, the \textit{security environment} is ‘becoming less and less secure’, and ‘if we want to stay safe, we cannot afford to lower the level of ambition for our security and defence’. ‘Strategic autonomy’ is not about unilateral action but about

securing the means to reduce external dependencies whilst continuing to cooperate with partners in a multilateral setting. Its effectiveness derives from the ability to achieve the expected outcome whilst relying on the adequate means and resources. The prerequisites for achieving an effective 'strategic autonomy' are political will and the capacity to act.  

While strategic autonomy has been a focus of policy debate in recent years, the coronavirus pandemic has brought to the fore EU vulnerabilities and dependencies that go beyond the original (defence) scope of the discussion. Technological and medical autonomy, digital sovereignty, but also self-sufficiency in energy and resources, are all part of the renewed commitment to strengthen the EU's ability to act independently in the global arena, building on increased resilience at home. While strategic autonomy has become a concept used across policy fields, a large focus of the EU's planning in the past four years has been on the development of a degree of autonomy in security and defence, which in a geopolitical world arguably matters more. Working on ways to reduce duplication and seize the collective benefits collaborative defence research and development as well as harvesting the complementary attributes of other international organisations. The development of a common strategic culture, a common understanding of the strategic environment – through the ongoing 'strategic compass' – alongside practical efforts to coordinate or join capabilities and develop the EU's joint operations further will be the focus of the coming years. Strategic autonomy is a necessary condition of the progressive framing of an EU defence policy, incorporated in Article 42(2) TEU, and explicitly linked to peace through Article 42(1) TEU.

The EUGS maintains that, in order to achieve its goals of crisis-response, building capacity and resilience and protecting Europe's peace and security, Member States must boost defence expenditure, make the most efficient use of resources, and meet a collective commitment of 20% of defence budget spending devoted to the procurement of equipment and research and technology. This study illustrates the significant efforts being made by the EU to boost its resilience, and that of Member States, in critical sectors as well as its ability to better protect its citizens and respond to crises.

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3.3.1. PESCO

PESCO was launched in December 2017, with the participation of 25 EU Member States. PESCO members commit to increase their national defence budgets and defence investment expenditure, towards 20% of total defence spending, and invest more in defence research and technology. In addition, they pledge to develop and provide ‘strategically relevant’ defence capabilities in accordance with the capability development plan and the coordinated annual review, and to act jointly and make use of the financial and practical support provided by the European Defence Fund. Finally, they assume an obligation to contribute to projects that boost the European defence technological and industrial base.

As PESCO is complementary to NATO, military capacities developed within PESCO remain in the hands of Member States, which can also make them available in other contexts, such as NATO or the UN. Non-EU states may exceptionally participate in PESCO projects, subject to certain conditions. PESCO underwent a strategic review that concluded in November 2020; it highlighted the need to deliver concrete outputs by 2025 and to increase its political visibility.

Interestingly, the coronavirus pandemic, which has witnessed the contribution of armed forces to the mitigation of non-traditional security threats, also opened the door for a discussion on the relevance of PESCO projects when dealing with pandemics and on the need to take better account of non-traditional threats of this kind (see Figure 41).

3.3.2. The European Defence Fund

Launched in 2017, the European Defence Fund (EDF) consists of two legally distinct, but complementary, windows for developing collaborative projects: (a) the defence research window and (b) the defence capability window. Through the EDF, the EU will – for the first time ever – dedicate part of its budget to defence research and provide co-financing for defence projects (including eligible PESCO projects) to give Member States incentives to increase their defence spending in a collaborative manner. The EDF aims to boost the EU’s technological sovereignty by developing cutting-edge research and technology by means of projects involving at least three Member States. Studies suggest that up to 30% of annual defence expenditure could be saved by

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270 E. Lazarou, Permanent structured cooperation (PESCO): From notification to establishment, EPRS, 2017.


273 The preparatory action on defence research received a budget of €90 million during the 2017-2019 period and the European defence industrial development programme had a budget of €500 million for 2019 to 2020.
pooling procurement at EU level. The fund will also help Member States reach two of the benchmarks established in 2007 by the European Defence Agency, namely: (1) to invest 20% of total collective defence spending on equipment procurement, including research and development and research and technology; and (2) to invest 20% of total research and technology spending on European collaborative defence. The EDF has been allocated approximately €7 billion in the 2021-2027 MFF and its first work programme is expected to be published by the Commission in the first half of 2021.

3.3.3. Military mobility

The Commission’s action plan on military mobility states the strategic need for better mobility of forces to boost European security and strengthen the CSDP. It proposes concrete operational measures regarding military requirements, transport infrastructure, and regulatory and procedural issues. Since 2018, the Commission has been identifying those parts of the civilian trans-European transport network (TEN-T) suitable for military transport and those that need upgrading to accommodate military vehicles. Other planned actions include determining civil-military synergies on transporting dangerous goods, speeding up cross-border movement permissions and developing overall military mobility with a view to also countering hybrid threats. In the 2021-2027 MFF military mobility has been allocated a €1.5 billion envelope under the Connecting Europe Facility. In addition to being a Commission action plan, military mobility is also one of 47 PESCO projects and a binding commitment for all 25 PESCO members. It is also a priority area for EU-NATO cooperation and, on the whole, an initiative with strong support from the European Parliament. The US, Canada and Norway will also participate in the military mobility PESCO project, being the first three countries to be associated to PESCO. The Commission’s 2019 progress report on military mobility explicitly links it to strategic autonomy, as a prerequisite for achieving the EU’s level of ambition, a view shared by the European Parliament and by stakeholders in EU Member States.

3.3.4. EU-NATO cooperation

The quest for strategic autonomy in the field of EU defence and security policy has advanced in close partnership with NATO, consistent with the Lisbon Treaty provisions (Article 42(2)). However, while NATO’s mission is to defend its members from external attack, the Global Strategy states that ‘Europeans must be better equipped, trained and organised to contribute decisively to such collective efforts, as well as to act autonomously if and when necessary’. Therefore, the strategy sees no contradiction between a close EU-NATO partnership and the EU building an ‘appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy’, to be able to ‘foster peace and safeguard security within and beyond

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275 European Parliament resolution on military mobility, December 2018.
its border’. It recognises NATO as the primary framework for collective defence for most Member States, but views the strengthening of the EU itself as a security community as an undeniable necessity for the security and defence policy of non-NATO EU Member States and as a means to increase European burden-sharing in defence. Greater cooperation between the EU and NATO was pushed forward through two joint declarations in 2016 and 2018. Cooperation covers 74 action points, including cyber, hybrid and terrorism, as well as maritime security, capacity building for partners and traditional military domains. The two organisations have also cooperated to fight the coronavirus pandemic by using military assets to distribute medical supplies and personnel and coordinate disaster relief provision. Both the EU and NATO are currently conducting strategic reflection processes with an eye to the upcoming decade and exploring ways to face the challenges ahead. The ‘strategic compass’ and, respectively, the NATO 2030 process emphasise resilience and the increased importance of non-traditional threats in the international security environment.

3.4. Conclusions

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

Even before the appearance of the new coronavirus, global peace had been deteriorating. Rising concerns about a more multifaceted international environment and about worsening security – including within the EU’s own borders – are reflected in the policy initiatives launched by the EU institutions in recent years. Public opinion polls also indicate that citizens increasingly perceive security as a top priority for EU-level policy-making, a topic also to be debated during the Conference on the Future of Europe. Geopolitics now transcend policy areas such as digitalisation, technology, even health and climate. At the same time, the EU is designing and reforming several of its policies that are explicitly or implicitly linked with the promotion and preservation of peace, with a view to achieving their goals more effectively and collaboratively.

While measuring peace remains a complex task, it is possible to identify and analyse areas of the EU’s work that contribute to its promotion and preservation. Using the Global Strategy and the Normandy Index as a starting point, the EU’s contribution to peace and security is assessed through an overview of its work in countering recognised threats to peace: weapons of mass destruction; state fragility; violent conflicts; cyber-attacks; disinformation; terrorism; climate change; energy insecurity; and economic crises. Thus, the EU carries out its pursuit of peace by favouring an inclusive and multilateral approach, as stipulated by its founding Treaties and by its Global Strategy. The EU’s action for peace and security, transcending policies from the common foreign and security policy, trade, democracy promotion, development and humanitarian aid, is guided by its own model of integration, comprehensive security and multilateralism and a commitment to the principles of the United Nations. The EU’s dedication is confirmed by a communication from early 2021 intending to strengthen the Union’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism by leading its adaptation to new security challenges and power distribution. The European Parliament, empowered by the Treaties in the area of EU foreign policy, has continuously encouraged such leadership on multilateralism, adding a stronger element of legitimacy and democratic representation to the EU’s global action.

277 T. Lațici, The role of armed forces in the fight against coronavirus, EPRS, April 2020.
278 ESPAS report 2019, Global Trends to 2030.
Acknowledging the link between democracy and peace, the EU has developed a wide array of tools for supporting democracy in fragile third countries. These range from political and human rights dialogue, and support for civil society and human rights defenders, to development aid for good governance and the rule of law, and the conditionality enshrined in its trade and cooperation agreements. The Union has refocused its development policy to target fragile and conflict-affected countries through the new consensus on development (2017). In line with the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the concept of ‘resilience’ outlined in the EU Global Strategy, the new consensus highlights that development cooperation is a pivotal instrument for preventing violent conflicts and minimising their negative consequences. Recent years have seen the EU striving to build its own resilience to shocks through internal and external policy initiatives.

Geopolitical and financial challenges, emanating from external and internal factors and from new security domains, such as technology and the environment, will continue to preoccupy policymakers in the EU institutions and Member States in the coming years. New types of threats and destabilising factors such as pandemics, climate change, foreign interference in democracy, cyber-attacks and bio-terrorism, as well as various types of hybrid warfare, call for innovative thinking and new types of resources and solutions, since they are here to stay. As this study has illustrated, these challenges continue to reinforce the EU’s commitment to preserving and promoting peace and security, and have led to renewed determination on all policy fronts. The proliferation of new strategies and initiatives in all EU policy areas related to peace and security substantiates this fact. The focus of the von der Leyen Commission will remain firmly fixed on rendering the EU a more autonomous, strategic and holistic actor for peace and security, bringing together elements of normative, soft and hard power and adapting to the rapidly transforming world with steadfastness and resilience. It sees the EU as a reliable actor in an uncertain world. While the pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities and external dependencies of the EU, it has also demonstrated the EU’s capacity to act in unison in the face of a major transnational threat, and its effectiveness. In July 2020, EU leaders reached agreement on the biggest joint borrowing ever agreed by the EU as part of the post-coronavirus recovery package. Across the EU, public opinion has shifted to indicate greater support for cooperation in the EU, to be further assessed in the Conference on the Future of Europe. Overall, surprisingly, the pandemic may act as a catalyst for the consolidation of political will and momentum to build EU strategic autonomy on several fronts. A more autonomous EU, committed to its values, will also be a stronger actor for global peace and security.

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

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

A parallel study, to be published separately, focuses specifically on EU peace-building efforts in the eastern Mediterranean. The studies have been drafted as a contribution to the Normandy World Peace Forum scheduled for September 2021.