



Charlemagne Prize Academy Annual Report 2021 – on the Future of the Union

**Europe at the Crossroads –
New Perceptions of Solidarity**



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How to achieve the EU's strategic autonomy in security and defense while upholding the transatlantic alliance?



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Introduction

Over the last years, EU member states have taken significant steps towards strengthening their security and defence cooperation. Security and defense policy – traditionally viewed as the least promising area of European integration – have become a priority for European leaders who started promoting the notion of an 'EU army'¹ and are calling on the EU to learn the 'language of power'². Meanwhile, European countries continue to rely on NATO, and even the 2016 EU Global Strategy, which advocates the goal of EU strategic autonomy, states that 'NATO remains the primary framework'³ in matters of collective defense. The commitment and contribution by the United States to the transatlantic alliance, however, can no longer be taken for granted. President Donald Trump's initial refusal to uphold American security

agreements and his decision to reduce the number of US troops in Germany left many European allies confused and worried about the future of European security.

Europe is confronted with a fundamental dilemma. The EU cannot claim the mantle of independent leadership and project the image of a serious global player, when at the same time it continues to outsource its security to the US, even when it comes to dealing with threats in Europe's immediate neighbourhood. Addressing the power asymmetry in the transatlantic partnership is a sensible response to the perceived hesitancy of Washington's commitment to its European allies, but it risks triggering a US withdrawal from Europe altogether – the very scenario most European leaders wish to avoid. The aim of this project

In the post-Brexit era, the convergence of preferences among France, Germany and Poland holds the key to the prospect of achieving EU strategic autonomy in security and defense.

was therefore to investigate how the EU can proceed to achieve strategic autonomy in security and defense while upholding the transatlantic alliance.

Solidarity in EU security and defense policy

While EU integration in terms of security and defense policy is shaped by a variety of factors – supranational bureaucrats⁴, domestic politics⁵, decision-making rules⁶, structural power shifts,⁷ historical legacies⁸ – this project was driven by the assumption that the ability of the EU to establish itself as a strong defense actor depends on the degree of inner-European solidarity among its member states. 'Solidarity' is a commonly used expression in European discourse, especially when it comes to recent debates on the Eurozone crisis and EU asylum policy⁹, yet it remains a neglected concept in political and academic debates on the EU as a security and defense actor¹⁰. In this project, member states' solidarity regarding their security and defense approaches was examined across three inter-connected dimensions: (1) solidarity as 'mutualization' of threats; (2) solidarity as a common sense of purpose; (3) solidarity as a shared external dependence.

In the post-Brexit era, the convergence of preferences among France, Germany and Poland holds the key to the prospect of achieving EU strategic autonomy in security and defense. These three EU and NATO members – also known as the 'Weimar Triangle' – were selected for analysis in this project due to their relative weight in the EU and their representation of a wide spectrum of positions on key aspects of European security debates. France and Germany are the EU's two most powerful military powers, while Poland is the only one of the three to long spend 2% of GDP on defense in accordance with NATO commitments. France and Poland represent Europeanist and Atlanticist foreign policy traditions respectively, while Germany wavers between the European and Transatlantic defense solutions.

Solidarity as 'mutualization' of threats

The perception of security threats is the single most important point of departure on the path towards any security policy. Policy makers and defense planners need an accurate analysis of their strategic environment to make sensible decisions about security matters. In the European context, diverging or loosely aligned

¹ Juncker calls for an EU army. Politico, 9 March 2015, <https://www.politico.eu/article/juncker-calls-for-an-eu-army/>

² Von der Leyen: "Europe must learn the language of power". Deutsche Welle, 8 November 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/von-der-leyen-europe-must-learn-the-language-of-power/a-51172902>

³ European Union (2016) Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. European Union Global Strategy. Brussels, 20.

⁴ Dijkstra, H. (2014) Agenda-Setting in the Common Security and Defence Policy: An Institutionalist Perspective, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47 (4), 454-472; Riddervold, M. (2016) (Not) in the hands of the member states: How the European Commission influences EU security and defence policies, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54 (2), 353-69; Haroche, P. (2020) Supranationalism strikes back: a neofunctionalist account of the European Defence Fund, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27 (6), 853-872.

⁵ Hofmann, S. (2013). *European Security in NATO's Shadow: Party Ideologies and Institution Building*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Pohl, B. (2014) *EU Foreign Policy and Crisis Management Operations: Power, Purpose and Domestic Politics*, Abingdon: Routledge.

⁶ Howorth, J. (2012) Decision-Making in Security and Defense Policy: Towards Supranational Inter-Governmentalism?, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47 (4), 433-453.

⁷ Posen, B. (2006) European Union Security and Defense Policy: Response to Unipolarity?, *Security Studies*, 15 (2), 149-186; Hyde-Price, A. (2008) A 'Tragic Actor'? A Realist Perspective on 'Ethical Power Europe', *International Affairs*, 84 (1), 29-44; Rosato, S. (2011) Europe's Troubles: Power Politics and the State of the European Project, *International Security*, 35 (4), 45-86.

⁸ Tardy, T. (2018) Does European defence really matter? Fortunes and misfortunes of the Common Security and Defence Policy, *European Security*, 27 (2), 119-137.

⁹ Goldner Lang, I. (2018) The EU financial and migration crises: two crises – many facets of EU solidarity. In: A. Biondi, E. Dagilyte and E. Küçük, *Solidarity in EU Law: A Legal Principle in the Making*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 133-160.

¹⁰ Ferreira-Pereira, L. and Groom, A.J.R. (2010) 'Mutual solidarity' within the EU common foreign and security policy: What is the name of the game?, *International Politics*, 47 (6), 596-616.

threat perceptions are viewed as a major obstacle towards the formulation of a common foreign and security policy, as well as Europe's ability to defend itself. By contrast, shared assessment of security threats can lead to more trust and solidarity among European countries paving the way to a common European strategic culture.

Multiple security crises at the EU's borders have brought Germany, France and Poland closer together in terms of their strategic outlook. There is greater overlap in how the three European partners assess their security environment today, as opposed to how they did so before Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the rise of the Islamic State. In the past, only three security concerns – international terrorism, weapons proliferation, failed states – were shared within the Weimar Triangle, whereas the range of shared assessments grew to include a total of nine security threats after 2014. A comparison of the current strategy documents¹¹ shows that Berlin, Paris and Warsaw are generally like-minded in their perception of non-traditional transnational threats – energy security, climate change, uncontrolled migration, hybrid and cyber threats – and conventional military threats associated with interstate conflicts.

At the same time, not all of the identified threats and risks are perceived with the same sense of urgency and priority among the Triangle members. French leaders unambiguously claim that 'jihadist terrorism is the most immediate and significant

threat'¹² to the country. This sentiment is largely shared by the French public.¹³ In Germany, transnational terrorism also tops the strategic agenda, although the majority of the German public perceives climate change as the most important security challenge.¹⁴ In contrast, Polish defense planners leave no doubt that Russia's 'aggressive policy' constitutes the existential security threat for Poland, and more than three quarters of the Polish people agree with that assessment.¹⁵ It is true that Berlin and Paris have no illusions about the negative implications of the Kremlin's military assertiveness for European security, but their strategic documents carefully avoid classifying Russia as a security threat to the countries' fundamental interests.

It has become a commonplace to claim that Europeans are divided by geography in their threat perceptions. The established wisdom says that Eastern and Northern members of the EU look to the East (and 'see' Russia), while Western and Southern Europeans look to the South (and 'see' terrorism and migration).¹⁶ Geography continues to play a role in determining what Europeans fear most, but the growing complexity and inter-connections among security threats increasingly render 'East vs South' a false dichotomy. In the last years, Russia has significantly increased its military footprint beyond the post-Soviet space to engulf the Southern Mediterranean, while the EU's Eastern periphery has been exposed to a growing pressure from non-state challenges and hybrid threats.¹⁷ As the security landscape becomes more blurred, convergence of threat assessment among

Geography continues to play a role in determining what Europeans fear most, but the growing complexity and inter-connections among security threats increasingly render 'East vs South' a false dichotomy.

¹¹ French Republic, Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017, Paris; Ministry of National Defence, The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw, May 2017; The Federal Government, White Paper 2016 on German Security Policy and the Future of Bundeswehr, Berlin.

¹² French Republic, Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017, Paris, p. 29.

¹³ Transatlantic Trends 2020. Transatlantic opinion on global challenges before and after COVID-19, p. 16. <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/ressources/pdfs/publications/transatlantic-trends-2020.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Security Radar 2019. https://www.fes-vienna.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Security_Radar_2019_Booklet.pdf

¹⁶ Wallace, W. (2017) European foreign policy since the Cold War: How ambitious, how inhibited?, The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 19 (1), 77-90.

¹⁷ Interview with a French official, 7 July 2021.

Germany's active stance in both contexts – as a framework nation for the NATO battalion in Lithuania and an active member of the anti-IS coalition of the willing – is emblematic for Europe's forward-looking strategic outlook.

the three EU members opens the door to greater 'mutualization' of threats that is an understanding that in order to make progress on the European security agenda in the East, one needs to contribute to security provision in the South and vice versa.¹⁸

This renewed sense of collective interdependence among Europeans is more than just rhetoric. By sending a military contingent to the Baltic states as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the region, France signalled that it 'has begun re-engaging with the countries of Northern and Eastern Europe'.¹⁹ French military planners now underline the need to prepare its armed forces for a high intensity, state-to-state military conflict.²⁰ Breaking with the previous strategy, Poland has admitted the need to keep NATO's unstable southern neighbourhood high on its agenda 'to support Allies in various endeavours'.²¹ Even though for Poland southern neighborhood often implies the Black Sea region, Warsaw did recently deploy troops and assets to military missions in Lebanon and off the coast of Libya.²² Germany's active stance in both contexts – as a framework nation for the NATO battalion in Lithuania and an active member of the anti-IS coalition of the willing – is emblematic for Europe's forward-looking strategic outlook. In the current strategic environment, where a shared understanding of security threats is an indispensable element of trust and solidarity, there is no need to choose between threats coming from the East and threats emanating from the South.²³ Instead, Europeans need to be capable of addressing both, whether through the EU or NATO, otherwise there can be no common European defense worthy of its name.

Solidarity as a common sense of purpose

The notion of strategic autonomy has become an indispensable part of the EU's narrative of a stronger global actor. 'Effective strategic autonomy', 'smart strategic autonomy', 'open strategic autonomy' – the conceptual proliferation is now fully underway in EU discourse and documents stretching to cover policy areas well beyond security and defense. While this expansion is symptomatic for the EU's drive towards a more self-sufficient standing in a growing number of policy fields – from industry and trade to energy and health – the various adjectives actually reflect the absence of a joint understanding of what strategic autonomy means, as well as the lack of established boundaries of where it starts and where it ends.

The notion of strategic autonomy originated from the field of defense dating back to the launch of the European Security and Defense Policy in the end of the 1990s. Back then, the idea was tied to the area of crisis management where the EU was expected to launch a military mission in cases when the United States or NATO were unwilling or unable to provide support for such action. The 1998 British-French Declaration of Saint-Malo that kickstarted the nascent EU defense policy has referred to 'the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, [...], in order to respond to international crises'.²⁴ Strategic autonomy was also explicitly mentioned in the 2016 EU Global Strategy as the EU's 'ambition', while the Council of the EU later in same year defined it as 'capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible'.²⁵

¹⁸ Interview with a German official, 11 May 2021.

¹⁹ French Republic, Defence and National Security Strategic Review 2017, Paris, p. 60.

²⁰ Interview with a French official, 31 August 2021; Armée de Terre, Strategic Vision of the Chief of the French Army: 2030 Operational Superiority, April 2020.

²¹ Ministry of National Defence, The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, Warsaw, May 2017, p. 28.

²² Interviews with a Polish expert and an official, 20 August 2021 and 21 September 2021.

²³ Haroche, P. (2018) Retour sur l'échec de l' "armée européenne" (1950-1954) : quelles leçons pour demain?, Les Champs de Mars, 30 (1), 47-72.

²⁴ Saint Malo Declaration, 1998. https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2008/3/31/f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f/publishable_en.pdf

²⁵ EU Global Strategy, 2016. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10715-2016-INIT/en/pdf>; Conclusions of the Council of the EU, November 2016. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22459/eugs-conclusions-st14149en16.pdf>

It is acknowledged, also in Poland, that non-executive training missions, which have become something of a golden standard of late for EU operational engagement, are no longer sufficient for ensuring stability in the neighborhood.

Even though in the area of security and defense strategic autonomy seems to be an agreed purpose among EU member states, it is here that the concept remains most contested compared to other policy fields. As the substance of EU Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) expanded over the last two decades from crisis management to protection of the Union and external capacity building, the meaning of strategic autonomy has become less clear-cut. In a narrow sense, strategic autonomy implies developing material and institutional capabilities to better protect European interests and values. In a broad sense, strategic autonomy is about managing interdependence and reducing vulnerability to external influence. Maintaining a degree of ambiguity about the substance of strategic autonomy is not negative per se, as long as it helps EU member states to move forward on European defence agenda, but it does create additional space for frictions and misunderstandings.

To provide more clarity, EU member states started to work on a 'Strategic Compass', a new political military document to be adopted in 2022 during the French EU Presidency. The document intends to refine operational goals of EU security and defence policy based on a common analysis of threats and challenges. There is a broad understanding that Europe alone cannot defend itself against a conventional military attack from a peer adversary, therefore collective defense remains, at least for the time being, off-limits for the EU.²⁶ Yet, France and Germany – the main drivers of the Strategic Compass – agree on a need for a

more ambitious and credible EU role in crisis management and for the CSDP to be the major tool to generate stability in the EU neighbourhood. It is acknowledged, also in Poland, that non-executive training missions, which have become something of a golden standard of late for EU operational engagement, are no longer sufficient for ensuring stability in the neighborhood.²⁷ At the time when military power is the currency of many regional actors, the EU is expected to be capable of launching robust peace enforcement operations with a military component, similar to the French-led coalition effort in the Sahel.²⁸

Moreover, Paris and Berlin push for a greater EU role in securing access to the global commons, in particular through the increased maritime presence in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Guinea. EU member states, including Poland, are also eager to explore the remits of the Lisbon Treaty's 'mutual assistance clause' (Article 42.7) by regularly simulating hybrid and cyber-attacks on their territories.²⁹ Finally, in 2017, EU member states launched permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), which has been widely perceived as a watershed moment for EU defense cooperation.³⁰ Together with the nearly €8 billion European Defense Fund (EDF), PESCO aims at enhancing joint development of EU defense capabilities, increasing investment in defense research and technology and improving the availability of deployable armed forces. At present, PESCO includes 60 collaborative projects, with more than twenty reaching operational capacity by 2025. While the precise meaning of EU

strategic autonomy remains disputed, these practical steps and aspirations speak for themselves. As one interviewee put it, 'strategic autonomy is what you make of it'.³¹

Yet, the EU faces difficulties in putting into effect even the moderated level of ambition. The EDF was significantly downsized from the original €13 billion envelope proposed by the European Commission, PESCO projects experience significant delays, while the European defense landscape continues to be plagued with capability shortfalls and national approaches to capability development.³² In addition, diverging attitudes towards security and defense integration in the EU further exacerbate the problems. For France, for instance, it is clear that it wishes to preserve its own autonomy and flexibility by forging coalitions of member states outside of the EU rather than 'taking the risk' of acting through the CSDP.³³ Mindful of the CSDP's cumbersome decision-making, France launched the European Intervention Initiative that includes selected EU partners and non-EU countries, such as the UK and Norway.³⁴ This contrasts with Germany, which typically favours an inclusive approach with EU institutions and a broadest number of member states on board.³⁵ Polish position is somewhat close to that of France, but Warsaw's lack of enthusiasm in security and defense cooperation through the institutional channels in Brussels is better explained by a fear of losing national sovereignty and a general lack of confidence in the EU.³⁶

Solidarity as shared external dependence

The Biden administration has pursued an extensive diplomatic engagement with Europe aiming at resetting the transatlantic alliance after the turbulent Trump years. During the Trump presidency, Europeans faced unpredictable and erratic Washington that snubbed the EU's new defense initiatives, exploited Europe's vulnerabilities and pursued bilateral deals with member states at the EU's collective expense. President Biden, by contrast, was quick to endorse the importance that the US traditionally attaches to strong and united European allies. The new administration, for instance, reversed the Trump's administration plan to with-

draw 12,000 US troops from Germany and instead committed to deploy 500 additional military personnel. At the same time, the US abrupt exit from Afghanistan and Washington's proactive efforts in forging new defense partnerships in Asia signal that the US primary focus lies squarely at China and the Indo-Pacific region. The US domestic politics will likely remain volatile casting a significant constraining effect on the US engagement abroad. Indeed, the notion of 'a foreign policy for the middle class',³⁷ introduced by Biden and his team, provides a glimpse of a future in which the US will exercise its power on the world stage judiciously and selectively, and Europe might not be on its top priority list.

In the context of a geopolitical power shift, the top concern for European and especially German policy-makers remains the need to re-commit the US to European security. The EU needs to amplify its own defense efforts, especially in regard to conflict resolution and crisis management in the Western Balkans, Southern Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa. A successful defense against Russia, however, is impossible without relying on the US' nuclear capabilities and NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements.³⁸ Europeans tend to neglect the nuclear dimension of strategic autonomy, but, as Thomas de Maizière put it, 'defense without nuclear deterrence is useless'.³⁹ While French President Macron has recently invited European partners to a strategic dialogue about the role of nuclear weapons in Europe, experts are skeptical about the likelihood of France extending its nuclear deterrent to the rest of Europe.⁴⁰ French officials themselves admit that the 'Europeanization' of the French nuclear forces – if it eventually unfolds – is a long-term project and, until then, Europe will remain dependent on the US nuclear capabilities.⁴¹

For France, therefore, the imperative of keeping Americans engaged in European security is just as relevant as for Germany: French-led counter-terrorist and stabilization efforts in the Sahel would not be feasible without the American provision of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. Yet, French policy makers are more conscious about the likelihood of the

²⁶ Interviews with Heinrich Brauß, former assistant secretary general of NATO, and Erhard Bühler, former director general of the German Ministry of Defence.

²⁷ Interview with a German official, 11 May 2021; Interview with a French official, 30 August 2021; Interview with a Polish official, 21 September 2021.

²⁸ Interview with a German official, 11 May 2021; Interview with a French official, 31 August 2021.

²⁹ Interview with a French official, 30 August 2021.

³⁰ Sven Biscop, 'European Defence: Give PESCO a Chance', *Survival*, vol. 60, no. 3, June-July 2018, pp. 161-180; Petar Petrov and Iulian Romanysyn, 'Capability development in Europe: how can the EU defense push benefit the transatlantic partnership?', *Atlantisch Perspektif*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2020, pp. 54-58.

³¹ Interview with a French official, 20 July 2021.

³² EU military projects face delays, leaked document shows, Politico, 12 July 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-document-shows-delays-in-eu-military-pact/>; European Defence Agency, Results of First Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, 20 November 2020.

³³ Interview with a French official, 7 July 2021.

³⁴ Pannier, A. and Schmitt, O. (2019) To fight another day: France between the fight against terrorism and future warfare, *International Affairs*, 95 (4), 897-916.9

³⁵ Bunde, T. (2021) Defending European integration by (symbolically) integrating European defence? Germany and its ambivalent role in European security and defence policy, *Journal of European Integration*, 43 (2), 245-261.

³⁶ Interviews with a Polish expert and an official, 2 September and 15 September 2021.

³⁷ Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World, 4 February 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world>.

³⁸ Multiple interviews with German officials and experts, April-May 2021.

³⁹ Interview with Thomas de Maizière, former German Minister of Defence.

⁴⁰ Interview with a German official, 9 April 2021.

⁴¹ Interview with a French official, 12 August 2021.

US disengagement from the continent given the US long-term pivot towards Asia.⁴² From a Polish perspective, maintaining the US' foothold in Europe is imperative, even when it comes at the expense of the relations with its European partners. But unlike German leaders, Polish policy-makers view the EU-NATO relationship in zero-sum terms, where a more strategically autonomous EU chips away from NATO. In addition, the US' presence in Europe is also instrumental in counter-balancing Franco-German power on the continent, especially after the UK's exit from the EU.⁴³

The way forward for the Euro-Atlantic security and defense

The future of the transatlantic security and defense relations should be based on the assertion that there is no contradiction between Europe's capacity to act and Europe's be a good partner and ally. Both need to go hand in hand, just like both EU and NATO are necessary for the defense of Europe. In order to achieve EU strategic autonomy and uphold the transatlantic partnership at the same time, Europe needs to redefine its place in the relationship by making it more balanced and equal. Several practical steps would help to rebalance the transatlantic relations in security and defense.⁴⁴

Endorsing the goal of EU strategic autonomy.

The Biden administration should avoid following the footsteps of previous administrations' erratic approach to European defence: simultaneously complaining that Europeans do not do enough and do too much. The US would be well-advised to

embrace PESCO and explicitly endorse the goal of European strategic autonomy. This would send a powerful message to sceptics within the EU, such as Poland, that a less dependent and more self-reliant Europe is not incompatible with NATO, but rather is a precondition for a revitalized transatlantic alliance. Today, senior members of the US defence establishment prudently acknowledge that America cannot protect itself or all of its interests entirely without the help of others.⁴⁵ US allies, Europe included, are a part of America's calculus in terms of its geopolitical competition with China and Russia. It is therefore in America's interest to have more capable European armed forces supported by a more consolidated European industrial base, even though this may imply a certain loss of export markets for US defence companies. The new US approach should be guided by a principled belief that Europeans doing less presents a higher risk than Europeans doing more.

Strengthening the European pillar within NATO.

Europeans should consider forward deployment of troops and equipment in the Baltic region on their own with the aim to eventually replace US conventional forces along the Eastern flank. Complementary to NATO efforts, boosting the conventional military presence (troops, battle tanks, armoured vehicles) of Europe on the Eastern flank would arguably be the most direct and effective demonstration of European defence solidarity. Similar steps should also follow in the Black Sea basin, where allies need a regular year-round naval presence in the form of a Black Sea maritime patrol mission, in addition to ongoing air policing. France, Germany and the UK, three countries with significant

As the withdrawal from Afghanistan shows, the US is no longer willing to defend those who are not willing to defend themselves.

interests in the region, can take a lead in assembling a multinational European naval force that together with a limited American and Canadian contribution would support Romania and other NATO littoral states and partners in training, exercising and capacity building at sea. In addition, France should consider taking over Canada's role as a framework nation for NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia. France's upgraded profile, as for the only continental nuclear power, would send a strong message of reassurance to the Eastern allies, foremost Poland, and would signal to Kremlin that Paris is serious about allied deterrence posture.

Improving EU defense actorness.

Poland and other Eastern flank nations should fully commit to the development of the EU Strategic Compass, especially its crisis management and resilience baskets. Improving the EU's ability to launch and sustain

military operations with executive mandates and without US involvement is essential. Central and Eastern European countries need to show a constructive stance with regard to the need to activate Article 44 of the Lisbon Treaty which allows a group of member states to decide – possibly with a vote – and undertake a military mission on behalf of the EU. Greater EU role in stabilizing its Southern neighbourhood would bode well with NATO, for which projecting stability in the South has been a lower priority since 2014. Just as boosting European conventional capabilities at the Eastern flank, taking over crisis management tasks in the Southern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa – regions of little strategic value for American interests – is likely to be welcomed in Washington as an active measure of transatlantic burden-sharing. As the withdrawal from Afghanistan shows, the US is no longer willing to defend those who are not willing to defend themselves.

In order to achieve EU strategic autonomy and uphold the transatlantic partnership at the same time, Europe needs to redefine its place in the relationship by making it more balanced and equal.

⁴² Multiple interviews with French officials and experts, June-August 2021.

⁴³ Multiple interviews with Polish officials and experts, July-September 2021.

⁴⁴ Romanyshyn, I. (2021) Breaking the Law of Opposite Effects: Europe's Strategic Autonomy and the Revived Transatlantic Partnership, Egmont Security Policy Brief, no. 140, March.

⁴⁵ Schake, K., Mattis, J., Ellis and Felter, J. (2020) Defense in Depth: Why U.S. Security Depends on Alliances – Now More Than Ever, Foreign Affairs, 23 November.





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