

# Adaptation Under Pressure: NATO and the EU in the Shifting European Security Landscape

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The European security order is undergoing significant change. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU) are adapting to new threats and developments from inside and outside the continent. They thus fulfil their role as the key institutions for a stable Europe. They guarantee security and a strong political framework – providing, among other basic advantages, economic freedom, individual liberty, and the rule of law. In doing so, both institutions contribute not only to regional but also to global peace and prosperity.

As the nature and intensity of the challenges to European stability change, however, both NATO and the EU feel increasing pressure to become more flexible and adjust properly. It is thus useful to take a closer look at the current dynamics of the European security landscape and to examine what measures NATO and the EU have undertaken so far.

## EUROPEAN SECURITY LANDSCAPE

The continent's security landscape is shaped by many factors, most of which will only change in the very long term, if at all. Such factors are geography and the European nation-states and their cultural identities, including demography and ethnicity. They also include the standing of the European states, individually and collectively, in the hierarchy of relative international power.

To be sure, none of these factors is static, and all of them deserve the attention of strategists and policy-makers. In the current situation, however, there are more immediate developments affecting the European security landscape. In fact, four major factors can be traced back to single events within the last three to four years which critically altered most Europeans' perceptions of their security situation. These four events were the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014; the wave of migrants hitting the EU in 2015; the British referendum in 2016 voting for the UK to leave the EU; and the 2016 election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United

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States. By dissecting each of these distinct events in turn, one can demonstrate that they not only put pressure on European security but that they will continue to do so. That is because they are not singular or isolated accidents but flashpoints highlighting broader trends that should be worrisome to Europe and the wider liberal international order.

## Russia's Aggression

The first key event changing the European security order, and arguably the most important one, was Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014. It was the first time since World War II that one European state conquered and incorporated another's territory by force. This was a most severe breach of the principles underlying the European security order, violating the United Nations (UN) Charter, the Budapest Memorandum, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act – to name just a few of the relevant international treaties and compacts signed by Russia. The aggressive annexation was a throwback to an age most Europeans had thought overcome.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine happened in the context of political upheaval in Kiev at the end of 2013 and early 2014. When President Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign an association agreement with the European Union, mass protests ("Euromaidan" movement) ultimately toppled his government. Yanukovich fled the country and subsequent elections brought an EU-friendly reformist government to power. Elections were overshadowed, however, by deep rifts across the country, with the Eastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk in particular opposing the process. Russia built on close historic, economic, and cultural ties to that region, the Donbass, and fomented unrest and separatist violence. It did so through indirect support as well as through the presence of fighters without insignia which were later acknowledged to be Russian soldiers carrying out orders from the Kremlin. The conflict between Russian-supported separatists and the forces of the legitimate Ukrainian government continues to this day.

In the course of its undeclared invasion of Ukraine, Russia seized the opportunity to take Crimea, a peninsula in the Black Sea of about 25,000 square kilometres and with more than 2.3 million residents. Historically part of Russia, Crimea had been declared part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic by the General Secretary of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, in 1954. After the independence of Ukraine and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Crimea was recognised as part of Ukraine by Russia and international laws. Following the Russian invasion in 2014, Crimeans voted in a tightly controlled referendum for accession to Russia.

Russia's aggression seems to be driven by four central, interrelated motivations. First is the fear of revolutions. The popular movements in former Soviet Republics such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Georgia have led to democratic, liberal, market-oriented, pro-EU, and pro-NATO governments. That has been to the

demonstrable advantage of these countries in terms of individual liberty and economic development – to say nothing of the success stories of former Warsaw Pact members such as Poland and the Czech Republic. To Moscow’s authoritarian power structure and President Vladimir Putin’s crony system, however, these examples close to Russia’s borders are downright threatening. For fear of Russian citizens following the example of their neighbours, Putin is interested in stopping the tide of liberalising reform movements – to make them stall and fail whenever possible. His stranglehold on Ukraine’s East gives him the perfect tool to undermine and sabotage the government in Kiev and its legitimacy and effectiveness.

The second motivation is Russian nationalism, which is an important expicent of Putin’s system of authority. It is thus problematic for Putin that all of the four pillars on which his country’s claim to great power status rests are in varying states of decay. They are the sheer size of Russia’s territory and population; the might of its armed forces, especially its nuclear weapons; the strength of its economy; and its status as one of only five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Given the sharp decline in Russia’s population, exacerbated by rather low life expectancy due to widespread alcoholism and a feeble health care system, its one-trick pony of a shrinking fossil energy economy, and its lamentable role as a spoiler rather than an agent of positive change at the UN, Russia’s standing in world affairs is diminishing.

Because changing Russia’s policy at the UN or investing in a more diverse and less corrupt economy and a more liberal, energetic society would put his authoritarian system at risk, the only pillar Putin is modernising is the military. As a consequence, a policy of conquest and aggressive “solutions” to border disputes creates showcases for Russian strength. By extending military “protection” to Russian-speaking minorities or even mere sympathisers abroad, Putin can portray himself as the strongman needed to keep the expansive and diverse Russian state together. Accordingly, with the support of state-controlled Russian media, the annexation of Crimea provided at least a short-term reprieve from domestic troubles and basically unified public opinion behind Putin’s nationalist leadership.

The third motivation pertains to the Crimean city Sevastopol and its harbour. Since the 18th century, it has been of key strategic importance for Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. Under the Yanukovych government Russian forces could use the harbour as an essential point of departure for operations in the Black Sea and, more importantly, the Mediterranean and its access routes to other regions. With the Syrian war endangering the continued use of the Mediterranean harbour of Tartus for the Russian navy, Sevastopol gained additional importance. The annexation of Crimea ensured Russian control over it.

The fourth motivation is the culmination of the previous ones: Russia’s desire to display strength and demonstrate that it is no mere “regional power” (Barack Obama) but of at least equal standing to the West. To Putin, who in 2005 described

the downfall of the Soviet Union as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century”, two closely interconnected goals are of premier importance: The survival of his own regime and the re-establishment of Russia as a global power with a distinct and far-ranging sphere of influence where it is the undisputed hegemon. In achieving this goal, it is essential for Putin to paint himself as an ideological alternative to the West, especially the US, and to prove that at least in certain geopolitical situations, his hard power cannot or will not be matched by the West.

At least in the short run, Putin did accomplish this goal with the ongoing aggression against Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea – just as he managed to halt or at least complicate the democratic revolution, to stir Russian nationalism and merge it with his rule, and to secure Sevastopol harbour. In the long run, however, these actions will backfire on Putin, mainly because of the consolidated reaction by the West to be discussed below.

This reaction was made possible by the understanding in the West that Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine was not an isolated, one-off event. It was seen as (so far) the high point – or rather low point – in a series of actions by Putin’s government going back at least to the war against Georgia in August 2008. Putin has increasingly defined his Russia in opposition to the West, politically, culturally, and geostrategically. It is no coincidence that the struggle for Ukraine’s future and integrity was sparked by the controversial association agreement between Ukraine and the EU. Ultimately, Europe is experiencing a conflict between liberty and authoritarianism. While the European Union had to learn that fact the hard way, Putin knew this all along – and as long as he and his government see liberal democracy, rule of law, and plurality as a threat to their system of power, this conflict will continue to vex the European security order.

## Mass Migration

The influx of migrants and refugees in the second half of 2015 was a stress test for the cohesion of the European Union and individual member states’ societies. More than one million people, mostly from Africa and the Middle East, sought asylum and a better future for themselves in the EU. Coming mainly across the Mediterranean Sea or the Balkans, often at the mercy of ruthless organised traffickers, they overwhelmed the border security and bureaucratic capacities of the EU countries of first entry such as Italy or Greece.

It is a complex problem with many nuances, especially in the interplay between EU member states, national and international law, and the moral and humanitarian challenges – not to mention the daunting task of integrating vast numbers of people of fundamentally different cultures and, often, minimal education. Focusing on the narrow perspective of the European security landscape, however, three aspects stand out.

First is the startling effect the migration crisis had on political discourse in European societies. For many citizens, especially in Western Europe – and in particular in well-to-do Germany – the wave of migrants was a stark reminder that they did not live on an island of bliss, far removed from the existential crises of other parts of the world. The migration crisis provided tangible and, at times, shocking proof of the interconnectedness of today’s globalised world. War and squalor on other continents can have a direct impact on the average European’s everyday life. This new and more realistic understanding of the fragility of the European order and the need for a more international mindset broadened and changed political discourse.

Second, this change in mindset strengthened the argument for a more engaged and pro-active foreign and security policy. Addressing the causes of mass migration suddenly seemed preferable to dealing with the effects of it on domestic soil. As a consequence, the political stability of Northern Africa and the Middle East became a key concern for European strategists and policy-makers. Development and economic policy became increasingly tied to issues of good governance. Ideas on how to limit the war in Syria gained currency. And new ways to cooperate with countries of origin in stemming migration and fighting organised crime and human trafficking were explored. Especially for the European Union’s foreign policy, stabilising its periphery in the Mediterranean became the most urgent concern.

Third, for European publics, the issue of mass migration was closely related to the fear of Islamist terrorism. In fact, such a connection is tenuous as most terrorist attacks in Europe since 2015 were not committed by refugees or migrants but by homegrown terrorists. Still, radicalisation of minorities in Europe and the long reach of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) are a major security concern in France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and many other EU countries. The sheer number of often undocumented young Muslim men gaining entry into these countries fostered unease among many Europeans.

Terrorism and migration became related in another sense as well. The horrors of terrorist attacks, like the one in Paris in November 2015, make abundantly clear that EU nations need to cooperate much closer in sharing intelligence, strengthening their external border security, and tracking possible attackers. Given the diverse legal systems and political cultures, this is difficult enough to accomplish. But the migration crisis makes it even more complicated as the political disagreement about how to handle the problem exacerbates differences between the member states.

The consequence is a paradox: The migration crisis increases pressure on EU member states to act in unified solidarity while it undermines that exact solidarity by accentuating individual national capabilities, attitudes, and interests. As a security concern, the migration crisis therefore reaches beyond the question of whether possibly dangerous people receive entry into the EU or whether the number of arrivals is an economic, cultural, and political strain on Europe. More than that, it

pertains to the most basic questions of European identity and the role of Europe in international affairs.

## Brexit

When the British people decided in a referendum on 23 June 2016 that the United Kingdom was to leave the EU, they dealt a severe blow to the project of European integration. There is no precedence for a member leaving the Union, and the intricate negotiations about how to disentangle the UK from the EU by March 2019 have since bound much energy on both sides. Britain's exit ("Brexit") was a stunning vote of no-confidence in an institution that many – such as the Nobel Peace Prize Committee in 2012 – credit with bringing lasting stability, freedom, and prosperity to a continent historically ravaged by competing nationalisms. Because it spreads doubt about the pacifying and stabilising effect of the European Union and its institutions, laws, and regulations, Brexit poses a challenge to the European security order.

In a larger sense, Brexit calls into question the stabilising effects of international institutions in general. This is particularly lamentable at a time when authoritarian regimes and religious fanatics are working hard to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the liberal international order. This exercise of Britain's national, democratic prerogative therefore perversely threatens to strengthen all actors opposed to liberal democracy.

The United Kingdom is the strongest military power in the European Union and the state with the keenest sense of international responsibility, the broadest strategic horizon. A European Union without it will certainly be weaker – not only economically and politically, but also militarily and strategically. So when the EU will be needed perhaps more than ever as an anchor of stability and as a purveyor of an idea of a better future for many people on the continent and at its periphery, it will also be less able to fulfil that role than before.

Some European integrationists can find reason for optimism in the UK's decision to leave. They see a chance now to move forward with a truly integrated EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). With its strong preference for NATO and national sovereignty, the UK has indeed blocked several CSDP initiatives, such as the creation of a EU Operational Military Headquarters. Maybe with the UK veto gone, the EU will finally get serious and operational as a strategic actor in defence and security affairs. But maybe not; maybe the national caveats of other members will substitute for the UK veto, and maybe the British pragmatism and preference for output over structures will be painfully missed.

The European Union's recent CSDP initiatives will be discussed below, but what is clear already is that Brexit injected a tremendous dose of uncertainty into European affairs. In security terms, uncertainty and self-doubt are never good.

They drain energy and (political) capital, and they encourage opponents to probe for weakness. So no matter how the Brexit negotiations will develop, and no matter how convincing the protests of British leaders that they will remain deeply invested in European security through NATO are, the damage has already been done: The European Union's boat is leaking.

## Trump

The election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States of America in November 2016 was in many respects a watershed moment. Trump is the first US president with no prior experience in holding political office or serving in the military. He campaigned on the strength of his TV personality and personal wealth. His platform of "America First" rhetoric targeted immigrants and other minorities, blamed the moneyed and political elites for selling out the American Dream, railed against international trade agreements and international institutions, and pledged to restore American power by shunning at least some of her global responsibilities. In short, Trump's election amplified all the worries associated with Brexit – the fear that the West itself was losing faith in the liberal model.

The election of Donald Trump is of highest significance for the European security order. After all, Europe remains dependent on the United States for its security. Without the American security guarantee – enshrined in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty – European states would be incapable of withstanding the conquering force of a nuclear-armed great power such as Russia. The alliance with the US therefore protects European nations not only from attack but also from political blackmail and thus ensures the freedom of Europe's liberal societies.

Moreover, the NATO alliance makes the US a constant actor in the European balance of power. As a benevolent hegemon, the US alleviates the security dilemmas and power competitions between European nations that have spawned fears and wars for centuries. This holds especially true for the role of Germany as the strongest country in Europe that is yet not strong enough to control or stabilise the continent on its own. It is the US security guarantee that keeps the lid on the German Question.

Trump's "America First" agenda, however, calls this guarantee into question. In fact, he is the first president since the creation of the liberal international order after World War II who is not a reliable supporter of that order. Many of his remarks during the campaign, and even upon assuming office, display an instinctive opposition to the ideas and arrangements constituting this order. His decisions to break with the Paris Climate Accords and to drop out of the Trans-Pacific free-trade agreement (TPP) are cases in point.

Most unnerving, from a security perspective, were Trump's campaign musings about whether the US should keep its defence commitments to NATO allies who did

not invest sufficiently in their own military capabilities and his statement in March 2016 that NATO was “obsolete”. Coupled with Trump’s stated readiness to “strike a deal” with Russia’s Vladimir Putin, such comments created profound insecurity in Europe, especially among Central and Eastern European states who had joined NATO not so long ago to finally achieve safety from Russian expansionism. It took Trump several months into his presidency to declare NATO “no longer obsolete” and to unequivocally confirm his commitment to NATO’s Article 5, the mutual support clause.

Still, his seeming reluctance to do so and his blustering insistence on fair burden-sharing are diminishing whatever calming effects he might have wanted to achieve. So despite the fact that many of the Trump administration’s key officials – such as Secretary of Defence Mattis and the former National Security Adviser McMaster – are highly respected and implementing a NATO policy that is very much in continuity with the promises and commitments made by Trump’s predecessor, most NATO leaders and their publics remain deeply sceptical of US reliability under Trump. Given the president’s fickleness and irascibility as well as his view of international (security) relations as a zero-sum game of national competition unfettered by shared values or historical bonds, this is all too understandable.

This world view and, in consequence, Trump’s loose talk about the validity of the mutual defence treaty, have already undermined NATO’s most important asset: the credibility of its deterrence strategy. To keep potential foes from waging war against the alliance, allies must exude readiness and willingness to fight and win such a war. It will take significant work to repair the trust Trump’s rhetoric has damaged among allies and adversaries alike.

As with Brexit, this is a problem that is not confined to the European security order. Because US security guarantees are global in scope, US allies in other world regions, mainly in Asia, feel a similar pinch as Europeans do. What is at stake is America’s larger role as the caretaker of the liberal international order – and with it, that order itself.

## REACTIONS BY NATO

As the premier security organisation in Europe, NATO had to react to the changes in the European security order. By design and historical experience, the transatlantic alliance focuses on issues of defence against great-power adversaries. This is what it was built for, and this is what NATO is best at. Accordingly, NATO’s development since 2014 is mostly geared toward hedging against the renewed Russian assertiveness and aggression. There is a certain irony in the fact that Putin’s actions have provided NATO with a sense of purpose and unified energy that often seemed lacking during the alliance’s strategic struggles in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 age.



The major decisions for NATO's strategic adaptation were taken at the 2014 summit in Newport (Wales, UK) and the 2016 summit in Warsaw (Poland). In hindsight, both summits can be seen as a continuous arch, starting with reassurance of those Eastern NATO allies most unsettled by the war in Ukraine and then leading to an improved deterrence posture against possible Russian aggression.

First and foremost, allies put a renewed emphasis on collective defence. They recommitted to Article 5, stating that an attack against one would be treated as an attack against all. NATO's 2010 strategic concept identifies collective defence as one of three NATO core tasks, besides crisis management and cooperative security with partners outside the alliance. In the course of better relations with Russia and especially the NATO mission in Afghanistan, collective defence seemed to lose some of its standing as the first and most crucial among the three tasks. After 2014, that was corrected in rhetoric and policy.

The centrepiece of NATO's new policy was the Readiness Action Plan (RAP). Begun at the Wales summit, it is the most significant reinforcement of NATO's collective defence since the end of the Cold War. It includes the expansion of the NATO Response Force from 13,000 to around 40,000 personnel and the creation of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) of around 20,000 personnel, of which about 5,000 are ground troops, to act as a "spearhead" for the Response Force. In addition, the alliance has established eight NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU) in Central and Eastern Europe – small headquarters to facilitate readiness and the rapid deployment of forces. They are accompanied by expanded headquarters for the Multinational Command Northeast in Szczecin, Poland and the Multinational Division Southeast in Bucharest, Romania.

Building on the implementation of the RAP, NATO decided on a rotational enhanced forward presence. One multinational battalion was stationed in each of the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and Poland. Led, respectively, by the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and the United States, this trip wire is central to NATO's revamped deterrence posture.

Three aspects are particularly noteworthy about this reinforcement. First, it is a tangible reversal of US policy under the Obama administration. After years of reduced US military presence in Europe, the US is now recommitting with significant increases underwritten by broad congressional support for the so-called European Deterrence Initiative amounting to 3.4 billion USD by 2017. The Trump administration has continued that policy and even proposed an additional funding of 1.4 billion USD. NATO therefore displays not only its effectiveness and vitality when needed as a defence organisation, it also serves its purpose as a strong political link between transatlantic partners in trying times.

Second, such a revitalisation of the NATO defence and deterrence posture requires proper capabilities and resources. After years of shrinking defence

expenditures in many European countries, allies therefore agreed in Wales to the defence investment pledge. It calls for halting further decline and requires all NATO member states to aim for spending at least 2% of their GDP on defence by 2024. In addition, at least 20% of each member state's defence spending should be invested in procuring or researching and developing military capabilities.

In 2016, only five NATO members met the 2% guideline (US, Greece, Estonia, UK, Poland); ten met the 20% guideline (Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Norway, US, France, UK, Turkey, Romania, Italy). Some countries that fail to meet the guideline, such as Germany, have increased their defence budgets but maintain that the arbitrary guideline does not appropriately reflect actual output and responsibilities within NATO. Spending and fair burden-sharing therefore remain politically contentious issues, both in intra-alliance relations and domestic politics.

Third, it is important to note that all these measures are in line with the provisions of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. Although Russia has violated this act by breaking the territorial integrity of Ukraine, NATO allies have continued to stick by it as a sign of their willingness to return to less hostile relations with Russia. In the same spirit, the NATO-Russia Council has not been abandoned and has met five times since 2016. NATO remains open to dialogue with Russia, but a precondition for meaningful partnership is that Russia fulfils its legal obligation and end the occupation of Crimea and stops fomenting hostilities along and across the Ukrainian border.

NATO has adapted successfully and responsibly to a changed security situation at its Eastern border. While items on the alliance's to-do list remain, i.e., adjusting its nuclear posture and strategy to Russia's nuclear modernisation, investing in the substance and the logistics of the follow-on forces that join the forward presence in case of attack, and updating the 2010 Strategic Concept, overall the Eastern flank is secure.

And yet, the Eastern flank is not all there is; NATO cannot and will not return to the strategy of the Cold War. International terrorism, instability in the Middle East and Northern Africa, as well as crisis management on a global scale also remain high on NATO's agenda – and in addressing these challenges, the alliance also contributes to countering the tendencies of dissolution and nationalistic populism in the West.

One could give a long list of bullet points demonstrating NATO activities on these issues since 2014. It would range from naval support in the Mediterranean to secure European borders to joining the global coalition to fight ISIS to accepting Montenegro as NATO's 29th member and thereby continuing the alliance's proud tradition of stabilising Europe through enlargement. However, these activities cannot obscure the fact that NATO is never as sure of itself and its effectiveness as when dealing with great-power antagonists. Fighting terrorism, supporting fragile

governments, building defence capacities, providing a forum for political and strategic debate – all of this NATO can do and is doing. But by design and the intent of its members, its contribution to, say, stabilising Northern Africa must necessarily remain small.

That is why NATO's cooperation with other institutions, especially the European Union, is of such crucial importance. At the Warsaw Summit 2016, both institutions issued a joint declaration outlining specific areas of more strategic partnership. As the first progress report in June 2017 concluded, this intention has been backed up by substantial improvements. This is the right way to go as both organisations will have to complement each other in order to master the challenges brought on by the changing European security situation.

## REACTIONS BY THE EU

The European Union is not Europe's key institution on security, and certainly not on defence. But it is the continent's key political and economic institution, and as such it was deeply affected by all four of the shifts in the European security landscape described here. To its credit, the EU reacted to all of them and did so by employing the vast spectrum of its political tools. For the purposes of this essay, the focus will be on the most important measures pertaining to security policy in a narrow sense of the term.

Most important was the European Union's reaction to the Russian breach of the European security order. Starting immediately after the annexation of Crimea, the EU implemented a series of sanctions against Russia. They range from travel bans and asset freezes against leading perpetrators to targeted sanctions against Russian banks, energy companies, and defence contractors. Most of the far-reaching sanctions are in direct relation to the Minsk II agreement of February 2015, when Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany agreed to a package designed to alleviate the war in Ukraine. As Russia has not yet complied with all of the provisions – such as respecting the integrity of Ukraine's border and supporting the ceasefire – the sanctions remain in place.

While it was not the EU negotiating the Minsk agreement, it is still significant that it mustered the unity and conviction to follow through with the sanctions, which are unpopular in quite a few European states and business sectors. What is more, the EU came to recognise its geopolitical responsibility over the Ukraine war. Some leaders in Brussels and national capitals had clung to the notion that the EU was nothing but a friendly club of political and economic progress. While that is not quite wrong, it is also not quite right: As the Ukraine situation has clarified, the EU is a major player in the geostrategic struggle between democratic and authoritarian systems. Russia and the non-EU countries in Europe's East have always understood

this; after 2014, it was abundantly clear to the EU as well. Accordingly, the EU has re-emphasised its support of democratic reforms and liberal rule of law in Ukraine and elsewhere.

The understanding of its geopolitical role triggered several beneficial developments. Most significantly, the EU agreed on a new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy. The first such document since 2003, it is a thoughtful reflection on the EU's role in the world and serves as a starting point for the implementation of further, more specific reforms. One example is a renewed push for closer NATO-EU cooperation, especially in areas such as fighting hybrid threats and threats in and from cyberspace.

A key EU strategy in countering such threats is strengthening resilience, meaning its ability to absorb shocks and even learn from them and come out stronger after a crisis. This increase of European resilience might in fact be seen as the EU's greatest contribution to security as it affects such a broad range of policy areas. EU initiatives on asylum and refugee policy, financial and economic stability, as well as terrorism prevention through intelligence sharing and establishing a data system on EU entry and exit all amount to a stronger institution benefiting its member states' security.

Last but not least, the EU has also revitalised its dormant Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In response to external threats and the prospective withdrawal of the United Kingdom, the EU initiated a few reforms to increase its capacity to act, especially in military crisis management. For example, the EU established a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC). While not quite the Operational Military Headquarters blocked by the UK in the past, the MPCC is an important step towards an EU military command.

Another significant reform on CSDP is the European Commission's creation of a European Defence Fund, providing up to 5.5 billion Euros annually for common defence research and procurement. This will help remedy problems of efficiency and duplication; it is also the first time that the EU Commission – the EU body with the power of the purse – has engaged in defence policy.

Finally, the EU is also activating Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a provision from the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, allowing individual member states to move ahead as an *avant-garde* on CSDP, as long as their projects remain open for other member states to join later. On 6 March 2018, EU ministers of defence adopted 17 initial projects for PESCO and laid out plans for further implementation. The projects range from common training and exercises to bridging operational gaps. Although tangible results have not yet been produced, this promises a new dynamism in force generation and crisis management cooperation.

All these structural reforms are designed to enable the EU to deal more effectively with the challenges at its Eastern and Southern borders and to become

a more attractive partner for other security institutions, especially NATO. In step with its political and economic efforts to stabilise the states in Northern Africa and the Middle East, these measures should all tangibly demonstrate the effectiveness and benefits of the EU and its institutions to the individual citizen. Thereby, as a side-effect, the EU should (re-)gain much-needed legitimacy in the fight against the corrosive effects of populist nationalism as well.

In sum, both NATO and the EU have proven themselves to be up to the task of adapting to a changed European security landscape. Adaptation, however, is a continuous process, as risks and threats will further evolve and challenge freedom and prosperity on the European continent. By keeping the threats in check, both NATO and the EU will also in future contribute to stability in Europe and beyond.

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