

## A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO STABILITY AND PROGRESS. THE ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** *The EU is an undeniable economic and civil-normative power. Military force is a key element of "hard power." Stability is a prerequisite for development, and a strong army is a guarantor of stability. This analysis will explore the advantages and challenges of establishing a common European army, focusing on available resources (cultural-historical, economic, and military). Success requires financial resources. We will emphasize the need for an opportunity to create a common army. There will be no lack of infrastructure, innovation, and defense technologies, along with the presentation of potential economic benefits. While external threats can speed up the process, a lack of consensus and slow progress in the CFSP hamper its realization.*

**Keywords:** EU army, stability, hard power, security threats, economic integrations, strategies & defense policies

**JEL classification:** F50, H56, O14, Y10

### 1. Introduction

The document examines the EU's global leadership ambitions and the importance of developing the military capabilities necessary to achieve the status of "hard power," which improves regional stability and cooperation between states and creates an environment conducive to development. Given the current geopolitical context, the study assesses the feasibility and strategic timing of establishing a unified European army, addressing its potential benefits, challenges, and necessary resources. The paper integrates distinct cultural-historical, military, and economic analyses while systematically identifying key obstacles. Through the defense sector, a common army can contribute to deeper economic integration in conjunction with an interconnected European defense industry. Moreover, it adopts a robust argumentative framework designed to influence policymakers and the public on the future of European defense. The study explores its implications for achieving peace through deterrence and enhancing international influence by shifting the European Union's strategic focus from "soft power" to "hard power," along with all the economic and security benefits.

### 2. Literature review

We propose a literature review to address several deficiencies in EU defense policy: institutional overload (Howorth, 2001), limited involvement by the Commission,

persistence of unanimity rules (Wessels & Bopp, 2008), lack of a cohesive strategic culture, overlapping competencies, absence of influential figures (Margarita, 2010), weak military collaboration among member states, and hesitance to integrate the defense industry (O'Donnell, 2013). Economic and systemic divides also impede cooperation (Blockmans & Crosson, 2021), and gaps in capacity hinder military innovation (Crosson & Blockmans, 2022).

Jurčák (2023) argues that a European army requires transferring national powers to the EU. Public concerns about Russia and critiques of NATO support a European army (Graf, 2020), while Sahin & Sahin (2023) highlight potential benefits despite sovereignty concerns. Although CSDP and NATO have broad support, views differ on a common army (Mader et al., 2020).

According to Hrivík (2019), despite launching the PESCO project, developing and implementing the Common Security and Defense Policy following the Lisbon Treaty, which provides the legal basis, have not made significant progress.

All the initiatives that took place in the two decades leading up to PESCO, aimed at strengthening European military capabilities, have achieved little or failed, both within NATO and the EU (Maulny and DI Bernardini, 2019)

The progress report on EU-NATO cooperation from June 2020 highlights the spirit of complementarity between PESCO and NATO activities, emphasizing that most PESCO projects address NATO's priorities (Lazarou and Lațici, 2020).

In 2021, S. Blockmans and D. M. Crosson described the PESCO structure (Permanent Structured Cooperation) as a remarkable institutional innovation. It has been moving well and producing the most comprehensive expression of enhanced cooperation. Indeed, let's compare it with the few achievements of previous years in terms of the development of collective military capabilities at the EU level. We have remained deficient, with few exceptions.

Authors Houdé and Wessel (2023) analyzed the nature of PESCO within the broader context of CSDP and revealed that the term is not as common as it might suggest. PESCO's flexibility rules, which circumvent the unanimity requirement, may result in too much fragmentation instead of promoting the community that the treaties envision for the Common Security and Defence Policy.

From the author Nováková (2021), we retain two aspects: the European army should be the European pillar of NATO and not its competitor, and on the other hand, the main task of the European army would be to strengthen the EU's position on the international stage. The arguments for and against creating a European army focus on political will, inconsistent foreign policies, differing or sometimes conflicting foreign policy priorities, incompatible technical equipment, divergent views on fair command structures, and the financial capacities of member states and the Union.

The Russian aggression has intensified support for EU security as complementary to NATO (Fernández et al., 2023), and Fiott (2023) examines institutional responses to the Ukraine conflict. A seven-country survey indicates support for a "stronger, united, and autonomous EU in military matters" (Wang & Moise, 2023).

The invasion of Ukraine in 2022 had a limited impact on strengthening the capabilities of the EU, but it strengthened national powers supported by European institutions (Genschel, 2022).

Russia's breach of European security has underscored the need for a unified EU response, as a lack of cohesion is no longer viable. Given Russia's economic and

social ties with EU nations, a robust response is essential across policies like trade, energy, immigration, and neighborhood affairs, building on over 50 years of European foreign policy principles (Maurer, Whitman, & Wright, 2023).

On the other hand, the transatlantic partnership remains crucial, as highlighted by the 2016 EU-NATO joint declaration on complementary defense capabilities. In 2022, Crosson and Blokmans argued that the EU and NATO should ensure their funding is complementary and synchronized to enhance the technical interoperability of solutions.

The EDA and the Commission have increased efforts to invest in emerging technologies and dual-use items. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has shifted the EDTIB's focus to prioritizing arms supply and replacement over innovation investments.

The establishment of a common European army should also take into account the options of the citizens. European citizens want this. Eurobarometer results from 2017/2018 indicate that they expect the EU to guarantee their security and peace. Thus, 75% of Europeans want standard EU policies in defense and security, 55% favor the creation of a European army, and 68% have higher expectations from the EU in defense. European leaders have also recognized this necessity (at least declaratively), with E. Macron initiating a typical European military project in 2017. Meanwhile, Chancellor A. Merkel stated in the European Parliament 2018 that "we should work towards the vision of creating an appropriate European army." Of course, strengthening security and defense has been one of the declared priorities of the current Von der Leyen Commission.

However, until February 24, 2022, actions did not convince us, nor did the somewhat discouraging statements of J. Borrell (HR/VP) at the annual conference of the European Defence Agency (EDA) -"We realize that we lack critical defense capabilities." On the other hand, "the Agency has identified several critical gaps that EU countries will need to strive to fill, such as long-range air transport, aircraft carriers, and tanker ships for refueling..." (without these, we would be unable to conduct potential military operations beyond the EU's borders). Also, there is a significant gap between the EU's strategic plans and its capability to deploy battle groups in military operations.

### **3. Methodology**

- literature review;
- a quantitative approach (grouping and statistical processing, making comparisons);
- argumentation and logical demonstration.

*Research questions:*

Is it possible to create a common European army? But is it likely? Economic benefits?

To provide context, what new perspective has the war in Ukraine brought to the EU?

### **4. Results and discussions**

We will establish the current context by examining the available cultural, military, and economic resources.

- Regarding cultural-historical resources, the EU has, at least for now, self-defined as a genuine civil-normative force, a soft power in the sense defined by J. Nye, Jr. This explains a certain detachment over time from security and defense issues, which have been conveniently managed under the umbrella and protection of NATO and the Americans. Moreover, even the modest CSDP missions demonstrate the EU's preference for predominantly humanitarian-civil missions, and only exceptionally for military ones, with the note that the latter has been chiefly conducted under UN, NATO, etc. auspices for maintaining or restoring peace (Wallace et al., 2015).

The transition from a civil EU to a militarized one is not simple, as culture and organization in this area are no longer the EU's strong points. The CSDP, as an appendage of the CFSP, emerged as a result of Franco-British negotiations, suffering due to the intergovernmental decision-making pillar under which it operates, knowing that defense has primarily remained a feature of national sovereignty, with all the inconveniences that this entails (slow decisions, even a lack of consensus among member states). Moreover, the EU's military strategy (doctrine) is insufficiently defined and sometimes unclear. As if this were not enough, there are also reduced defense investments, weak cooperation between member states, uneven military training, and the diversity and, in some cases, inadequacy of the member states' military equipment.

- Economic resources: Assessing the EU's financial capacity is critical, as aspirations for a common defense force depend on sufficient funding. Despite recent crises, the EU's GDP remains robust, just below China and the U.S.

**Table 1.** Real GDP, in various expressions, 2019–2022

real GDP (constant, 2015), bil. USD (\$)	year 2019	%	year 2020	%	year 2021	%	year 2022	%	Σ (2019-2022)	%
USA	19929	23.51	19377	23.58	20529	23.52	20927	23.26	80,762.00	23.47
China	14296	16.86	14616	17.79	15851	18.16	16325	18.15	61,088.00	17.75
EU	14770	17.42	13935	16.96	14773	16.93	15282	16.99	58,760.00	17.07
Russia	1462	1.72	1423	1.73	1503	1.72	1472	1.64	5,860.00	1.70
WORLD	84771	100.00	82172	100.00	87269	100.00	89963	100.00	344,175.00	100.00
real GDP (constant, 2015) / capita, USD (\$)	year 2019	%	year 2020	%	year 2021	%	year 2022	%	AVERAGE (2019-2022)	%
USA	60698	554.32	58452	556.26	61830	558.89	62789	554.92	60,942.25	556.09
China	10156	92.75	10358	98.57	11223	101.45	11560	102.17	10,824.25	98.77
EU	33014	301.50	31126	296.21	33037	298.63	34160	301.90	32,834.25	299.61
Russia	9959	90.95	9714	92.44	10252	92.67	10030	88.64	9,988.75	91.15
WORLD	10950	100.00	10508	100.00	11063	100.00	11315	100.00	10,959.00	100.00
real GDP (constant, 2017), in PPP, bil. USD (\$)	year 2019	%	year 2020	%	year 2021	%	year 2022	%	Σ (2019-2022)	%
USA	20511	15.70	19943	15.73	21129	15.68	21538	15.46	83,121.00	15.64
China	22493	17.21	22996	18.14	24939	18.50	25684	18.43	96,112.00	18.08
EU	19850	15.19	18742	14.78	19860	14.73	20569	14.76	79,021.00	14.87
Russia	4000	3.06	3894	3.07	4112	3.05	4027	2.89	16,033.00	3.02
WORLD	130662	100.00	126785	100.00	134789	100.00	139322	100.00	531,558.00	100.00
real GDP (constant, 2017) / capita, in PPP, USD (\$)	year 2019	%	year 2020	%	year 2021	%	year 2022	%	AVERAGE (2019-2022)	%
USA	62471	370.13	60159	371.08	63636	372.42	64623	368.79	62,722.25	370.59
China	15978	94.67	16297	100.52	17658	103.34	18188	103.80	17,030.25	100.62
EU	44371	262.89	41824	257.98	44413	259.92	45978	262.39	44,146.50	260.84
Russia	27255	161.48	26581	163.96	28057	164.20	27450	156.65	27,335.75	161.51
WORLD	16878	100.00	16212	100.00	17087	100.00	17523	100.00	16,925.00	100.00

Source: own elaboration by authors based on WB database, July 2024

Table 1 shows the evolution of real GDP in a condensed format (2019–2022).

According to World Bank data, in the last 22 years (2000-2022), the EU ranked second globally in aggregate values, accounting for approximately 19.4% of total world GDP (constant, 2015), with 302 trillion USD. However, China's real GDP, expressed in billions of dollars at purchasing power parity (PPP), has surpassed the leading United States since 2017.

Analyzing the EU's economic potential is essential, as aspiration alone is insufficient; the financial capacity to build a strong common army must also be present.

To enhance the European Union's defense capabilities, policymakers have recognized the necessity of increasing defense expenditures to respond to potential threats and improve efficiency adequately. Studies indicate that billions of euros are lost annually due to duplication of capabilities and procurement barriers. Moreover, a more coordinated approach is required, emphasizing close collaboration among member states. Currently, only 18% of all defense program investments within the EU involve cooperative efforts, a figure deemed insufficient. At the NATO level, the share of collaborative investments is even lower, at less than 15%. The European Defence Agency's statement from November 11, 2022, highlights persistent shortcomings in coordination and cooperation, noting that "defense planning continues to be carried out mostly in isolation, and EU member states remain unconvinced by European cooperation projects." However, the Strategic Compass, approved by the European Council in March 2022, marks a modest yet significant step forward. It includes plans for a rapid deployment force of up to 5,000 EU soldiers, signaling a cautious shift in the EU's collective military ambitions without duplicating NATO's capabilities. To provide context, what new perspective has the war in Ukraine brought to the EU? Contrary to Russia's expectations, it has contributed to rallying the Allies and moving beyond some taboo subjects for member states, accelerating measures for restoring, reinforcing, and modernizing military capabilities and improving collaborative projects in defense and its industry. But not enough.

In 2022, the total defense expenditure of the 27 Member States reached €240 billion, continuing the positive trend of eight consecutive years of growth (EDA, 2023). However, it's important to note that if the threshold of 2% of GDP for defense expenditures had been reached, it would have resulted in a value of 318 billion euros in actual prices, indicating a significant potential for growth in the future.

- Next, we will quantitatively analyze the *military capabilities* of the leading powers to see where the EU stands (noting that I have analyzed the leading European military powers). Currently, the USA is considered by most specialists to be the only army superpower (Anglițoiu, 2015), confirmed through the figures allocated for defense spending — 13 trillion USD cumulatively over the last 20 years (2003-2022), four times China's and twelve times Russia's expenditure (Table 2). In a dynamic perspective for 2022, here are the defense budgets as a percentage of total military spending worldwide - USA: 39,6%, China: 13,2%, Russia: 3.9% / UK: 3.1% / France: 2.4%, Germany: 2.5%, Italy: 1.5%, Spain: 0,9%.

As of 2022, the European Union member states have demonstrated their commitment to defense by collectively spending almost 240 billion Euros on military defense. This includes money spent on procuring weapons, paying salaries, other operational costs, and research & development expenditures. According to Statista,

the increase in military spending in 2021 exceeded the threshold of 2,000 billion USD (in constant 2020 prices), aggregated globally, which cannot leave the EU indifferent.  
**Table 2.** Military expenditures/countries, (Bil. USD, current) & (% of GDP), 2003-2022

Region/Country	Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Σ (bil. \$)
<b>Americas</b>																						
<b>North America</b>																						
<b>USA, Bil USD (\$)</b>		440.53	493.00	533.20	558.34	569.59	656.76	705.92	738.01	752.29	725.21	679.23	647.79	633.83	639.86	646.75	662.49	734.34	778.40	806.23	876.9	13319
USA, annual growth rate, %		11.91	8.15	4.71	5.60	11.39	7.49	4.55	1.94	3.60	-3.60	-6.34	-4.63	-2.15	0.95	1.08	5.53	7.60	6.00	3.58	8.77	
USA, increase compared to 2003, %		11.91	21.04	33.83	49.08	60.24	67.53	70.77	64.62	54.18	47.05	43.88	46.25	46.81	54.92	66.69	76.69	83.01	99.06	133.19	13319	
<b>USA, % GDP</b>		3.83%	4.02%	4.09%	4.04%	4.07%	4.45%	4.88%	4.90%	4.82%	4.46%	4.03%	3.89%	3.48%	3.42%	3.32%	3.32%	3.43%	3.70%	3.46%	3.45%	
<b>Asia &amp; Oceania</b>																						
<b>East Asia</b>																						
<b>China, Bil USD (\$)</b>		33.14	37.90	42.79	51.45	62.14	78.84	96.60	105.52	125.29	145.13	164.07	182.11	196.54	198.54	210.44	232.53	240.33	257.97	285.93	292	3039
Ch, annual growth rate, %		14.36	12.89	20.25	20.76	26.88	22.53	9.23	18.73	15.84	13.06	10.99	7.92	1.02	6.00	10.50	3.36	7.34	10.84	2.11	2.11	
Ch, increase compared to 2003, %		14.36	23.10	55.24	87.47	137.87	191.46	218.38	278.01	337.87	395.02	449.45	492.98	499.02	534.94	601.58	625.12	678.34	762.69	780.88	780.88	
<b>China, % GDP</b>		2.00%	1.94%	1.87%	1.87%	1.75%	1.72%	1.89%	1.73%	1.66%	1.70%	1.71%	1.74%	1.78%	1.77%	1.67%	1.68%	1.76%	1.61%	1.61%	1.60%	
<b>Europe</b>																						
<b>Eastern Europe (EuroAsia)</b>																						
<b>Russia, Bil USD (\$)</b>		16.97	20.96	27.34	34.52	43.53	56.18	51.53	58.72	70.24	81.47	88.35	84.70	66.42	69.25	66.91	61.61	65.20	61.71	65.91	86.37	1178
RU, annual growth rate, %		23.46	30.45	26.27	26.12	29.05	-8.28	13.95	19.61	15.99	8.45	-4.14	-21.58	4.25	-3.37	-7.93	5.83	-5.35	6.80	31.05	31.05	
RU, increase compared to 2003, %		23.46	61.05	103.36	156.48	231.00	203.60	245.95	313.80	379.97	420.53	398.99	291.32	307.96	294.22	282.97	284.13	263.58	288.29	408.84	408.84	
<b>Russia, % GDP</b>		3.67%	3.30%	3.33%	3.25%	3.12%	3.15%	3.92%	3.59%	3.43%	3.69%	3.85%	4.11%	4.87%	5.43%	4.25%	3.72%	3.86%	4.17%	3.72%	4.06%	
<b>Western Europe</b>																						
<b>France, Bil USD (\$)</b>		38.57	44.52	44.44	45.79	50.68	55.37	56.44	52.04	54.12	50.22	52.00	53.13	45.65	47.37	49.20	51.41	50.12	52.75	56.65	53.64	1004
FR, annual growth rate, %		15.44	-0.19	3.04	10.68	9.24	1.94	-7.79	3.99	-7.21	3.55	2.18	-14.09	3.77	3.85	4.50	2.51	5.24	7.39	-5.31	-5.31	
FR, increase compared to 2003, %		15.44	15.23	18.73	31.41	43.55	46.34	34.94	40.32	30.20	34.83	37.77	18.35	22.82	27.55	33.29	29.95	36.76	46.87	39.08	39.08	
<b>France, % GDP</b>		2.10%	2.02%	1.98%	1.98%	1.91%	1.90%	1.97%	1.89%	1.87%	1.85%	1.86%	1.87%	1.87%	1.92%	1.91%	1.84%	1.84%	2.00%	1.92%	1.94%	
<b>Germany, Bil USD (\$)</b>		33.00	35.78	30.33	35.88	40.11	45.10	44.53	43.03	45.16	43.80	44.24	44.66	38.17	39.91	42.28	46.50	49.08	53.32	56.51	55.76	867
DE, annual growth rate, %		8.42	-15.24	18.33	11.78	12.44	-2.26	-3.38	4.97	-3.02	1.01	0.95	-14.54	4.56	5.94	9.97	5.55	8.64	5.99	-1.33	-1.33	
DE, increase compared to 2003, %		8.42	-8.10	8.75	21.56	36.67	34.95	30.39	36.87	32.73	34.08	35.35	15.68	20.95	18.13	40.91	48.74	61.58	71.27	68.98	68.98	
<b>Germany, % GDP</b>		1.32%	1.27%	1.07%	1.20%	1.17%	1.21%	1.31%	1.27%	1.24%	1.19%	1.19%	1.15%	1.14%	1.15%	1.17%	1.26%	1.39%	1.34%	1.39%	1.39%	
<b>Italy, Bil USD (\$)</b>		26.82	30.26	29.74	29.63	31.98	36.84	34.05	32.02	33.83	29.78	29.96	27.70	22.18	25.03	26.45	28.42	26.38	32.93	36.25	33.49	604
IT, annual growth rate, %		12.81	-1.73	-0.35	7.93	15.19	-7.56	-5.87	5.65	-11.97	0.69	-7.53	-19.93	-12.86	5.65	7.46	-7.18	-24.82	10.08	-7.61	-7.61	
IT, increase compared to 2003, %		12.81	10.86	10.47	19.23	37.94	26.95	19.37	26.11	11.02	11.88	3.27	-17.31	-6.68	-1.40	5.95	-1.65	-2.76	35.14	24.85	24.85	
<b>Italy, % GDP</b>		1.71%	1.68%	1.60%	1.52%	1.45%	1.55%	1.50%	1.48%	1.43%	1.40%	1.28%	1.27%	1.33%	1.36%	1.36%	1.31%	1.27%	1.72%	1.68%	1.68%	
<b>Spain, Bil USD (\$)</b>		12.88	15.26	16.00	17.25	20.07	22.23	20.18	19.71	19.70	18.86	17.24	17.18	15.19	14.01	16.04	17.82	17.19	17.43	19.54	20.31	354
ES, annual growth rate, %		18.49	4.82	7.84	16.31	10.77	-9.22	-2.92	-0.08	-4.24	-8.58	-0.37	-11.59	-7.72	14.48	11.09	-3.56	1.41	12.12	3.90	3.90	
ES, increase compared to 2003, %		18.49	24.20	33.94	55.78	72.57	56.86	53.03	52.91	46.43	33.87	33.37	17.91	8.80	24.56	38.37	33.45	35.33	51.74	57.65	57.65	
<b>Spain, % GDP</b>		1.42%	1.43%	1.39%	1.37%	1.36%	1.37%	1.36%	1.33%	1.32%	1.25%	1.27%	1.25%	1.27%	1.25%	1.23%	1.25%	1.37%	1.37%	1.47%	1.47%	
<b>UK, Bil USD (\$)</b>		52.34	60.25	61.65	64.22	73.45	72.92	64.01	63.98	66.57	65.45	63.84	67.00	59.99	53.33	52.08	55.63	56.57	58.33	67.50	68.46	1248
UK, annual growth rate, %		15.11	2.33	4.16	14.37	-0.73	-12.21	-0.05	4.05	-1.68	-2.47	4.95	-10.46	-11.11	-2.35	7.22	1.32	3.12	15.72	1.43	1.43	
UK, increase compared to 2003, %		15.11	17.79	22.69	40.32	39.90	22.23	27.18	25.05	21.96	14.61	1.88	-0.51	6.67	8.07	11.44	28.96	30.80	30.80	30.80	30.80	
<b>UK, % GDP</b>		2.55%	2.42%	2.37%	2.37%	2.49%	2.65%	2.57%	2.50%	2.42%	2.26%	2.18%	2.04%	1.98%	1.95%	1.94%	2.16%	2.16%	2.23%	2.23%	2.23%	


Source: own elaboration by authors based on SIPRI & WB database, June 2024

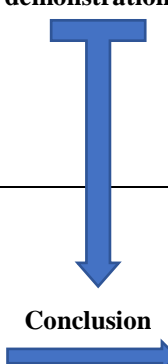

Our calculations from 2003 to 2022 reveal that the total defense expenditures (in USD, at current prices) of the major European powers (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom) exceed 4 trillion USD. This figure, which rises to approximately 2.8 trillion USD when the United Kingdom's spending is excluded, places the EU at the top of the global military expenditure ranking. When combined with other member states, the EU surpasses China, consolidating its second position in the international army spending ranking. These calculations are further supported by information from the European Parliament website: "EU member states collectively represent the second-largest investor in defense in the world after the USA. Still, it is estimated that €26.4 billion is wasted each year due to the duplication of spending, outdated capabilities, and barriers to public procurement."

To compare military capabilities, the EU will be assessed against the USA, which remains the global leader. A 2014 European Parliament study revealed that, apart from troop numbers, the EU significantly lags behind the USA in all aspects of military power, primarily due to insufficient practical cooperation among member states. Kissinger (2018) emphasized the USA's commitment to maintaining unmatched military dominance. To close this gap, the EU must prioritize deeper collaboration. The combined military personnel of six key European NATO members (FR, DE, IT, ES, UK, PL) totals approximately 1 million, or 800,000, excluding the UK (GFP, 2024).

The methodology for applying argumentation and logical demonstration to answer research questions is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Argumentation and logical demonstration

Argument and logical demonstration regarding the establishment of a common European army from the perspective of security and economy		
Argumentation	ARGUMENT	explanation
	The necessity of common security	In the context of global threats (external aggressions, terrorism), member states need a unified approach to ensure the security of their citizens ( <i>Axiom</i> )
	Efficiency of resources	A common European army would allow for a more efficient use of financial and human resources. Instead of each country investing separately in defense, a joint force could centralize these efforts, reducing costs and avoiding duplication ( <i>Currently, losses of 26.4 billion euros annually - the report of the European Parliament</i> )
	Cooperation and solidarity  Stability and influence	Establishing a common army would strengthen cooperation among the European Union member states, promoting solidarity and mutual trust. This could lead to more excellent stability in the region, as well as an increased international influence ( <i>Only 18% of defense investments involve cooperation – EDA, defense data 2022</i> )
	Deepening economic integration	A robust and interconnected defense sector enhances industrial competitiveness and facilitates deeper economic integration.

	Opportunity	The war in Ukraine can be a mobilizing factor ( <i>Steps have been taken, but not enough</i> )
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Logical demonstration</b></p> 	<b>PREMISE</b>	<b>detail premises</b>
	Premise 1:	Security threats are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected ( <i>Apart from traditional threats, even if not all are related to the military, it is worth mentioning cybercrime, terrorism, and collaborative international criminal networks, which require a common approach</i> )
	Premise 2:	A fragmented approach to defense could prove ineffective against these threats.
	Premise 3:	Economic opportunities with an integrated defense industry
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conclusion</b></p> 	
	<p>Considering the premises, the arguments favor building a European army to ensure a coordinated and effective response to security challenges. Establishing a European army is possible, but not likely shortly, considering states' sovereignty and cultural-historical resources. In addition, we discuss an increase in international influence by achieving global power status through the concept of 'hard power.' In this context, the economic benefits would be indisputable. Developing an interconnected European defense industry can contribute to deeper economic integration among member states.</p>	

Source: authors' elaboration, November 2024

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, we can say that although the European Union, in aggregate values, seems to have a commendable economic and military position, the actual situation is entirely different for several reasons:

- Defense budgets are low (the EU bloc has a "native" inclination toward economic cooperation, and there are still many states that do not contribute at least 2% of their GDP to defense),
- The deficiencies mentioned above, along with a lack of certain weapons, inadequate logistics, defective "capacity-operability" relationship, gaps in modern technologies, and especially the lack of sharing existing military capabilities among member states (some individual military capabilities exist among member states but are dispersed, while others are absent),
- Ineffective or limited cooperation and collaboration,
- The absence of a strong pillar of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) due to the intergovernmental nature of decision-making and
- The absence of a strategic culture within the EU (differences in cultural identity among member states and varying geopolitical and geostrategic visions between "newer" and "older" member states, or between Atlanticist and Europeanist member states, or between states with external borders and the rest, along with the EU's preference for peacekeeping and humanitarian/civilian missions—issues already presented), represent significant challenges for the EU and barriers to the establishment of a common European army.

With the war in Ukraine, an opportunity has arisen for a historic decision.

It is expected that either PESCO will be directed towards "Europeanization" or a move towards a simplified decision-making process through qualified majority voting



(QMV). These solutions could facilitate the decision to establish a common army. It remains to be seen whether this opportunity will be seized.

Establishing a common European army remains a subject of debate; those who deny such a need (for example, the British until Brexit and the countries of Eastern Europe) continue to prefer to strengthen an effective defense within the existing partnership, NATO. This argument cannot be ignored, but the idea can also be formulated in other terms. Since a common European army should not imply abandoning NATO structures, the right question would be: does the EU want to become a "global power"? If so, the EU will have to rely on a standard army.

"The superpower that manages to mobilize its allies in the global space will dominate in the future" (Marga, 2021), and the EU must secure its place. The EU must achieve a complex power status to influence global decisions successfully. Our conviction is that, in the current regional context, the EU can no longer afford a weak CFSP-CSDP pillar; it needs a strong, professional, and well-equipped common army based on modern technologies.

However, the decision to assume the role of a global actor lies with the Member States. As an economic and normative superpower, will the EU be willing to add a collective military component? In short, based on the dynamics of the last decades, it probably is not. Weighing the pros and cons presented in this paper, establishing a common army of the union is feasible (the need exists, as does the opportunity). The crises of recent years (economic-financial, pandemic, energy) have come successively and have constituted significant obstacles. Another obstacle is the tumultuous history of Europe.

On the other hand, from an economic perspective, we highlight the following aspects and benefits, as applicable:

- **Financial Requirements:** Establishing a unified European defense force entails substantial financial investments. Leveraging the EU's economic strength and developing a shared fund for operating and maintaining a joint military force could be an initial framework.
- **Economic Benefits:** A unified defense initiative can stimulate economic growth by generating employment opportunities in defense, research, and technological innovation sectors.
- **Cost Efficiency through Economies of Scale:** Consolidating resources under a common defense force minimizes duplication and promotes efficient allocation, leading to significant cost reductions.
- **Stability as a Foundation for Development:** Investments in defense contribute to stability, fostering an environment favorable to sustained economic progress.
- **Defense Industry Integration:** Coordinating and harmonizing the defense industries of EU member states while supporting European companies in competing on a global scale offers considerable economic advantages.
- **Safeguarding the Single Market:** A collective European defense force can enhance internal markets' resilience by mitigating instability risks and ensuring economic continuity and security.

In conclusion, from an economic standpoint, a European army has a significant positive impact on the development and resilience of the European Union.

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