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The European Union's Approach to Security Through the Lens of IR Paradigms

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Abstract The chapter examines the evolution of the EU's understanding of security in the post-Cold War era, which has presented various opportunities and challenges for the EU's position on the global (security) stage. The EU's understanding of security is examined at the institutional, policy, and normative levels, with a particular focus on the main security innovations. The analysis is conducted within the framework of main International Relations (IR) paradigms that helps us comprehend the complex and multi-faceted evolution of the EU' approach to security. The EU's approach reflects strengths but also weaknesses to respond effectively to turbulent and rapidly evolving security environment.

Keywords: • EU • security • International Relations (IR) paradigms • institutions • policies • norms • security innovations

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1 Introduction

The end of the Cold War marked a significant shift in the security dynamics across the world. From a bipolar international order during the Cold War to unipolar (USA) and multipolar system with the rise of European countries and BRICS, the international system is now evolving into turbulent and uncertain interpolar system. "Interpolarity is understood as the interaction between multiple interdependent poles of different sizes. Poles can be epitomized by states, inter-governmental organizations, non-state actors, and other agents" (Baciu, 2022).

The EU's security policy has evolved significantly with several new initiatives or innovations in the field of security and defence, reflecting (security) changes both on the international and regional levels and within the EU. While the first coordination meetings of foreign ministers of the European Economic Community already occurred in the 1960s and the foreign policies of Member states have been harmonized through European Political Cooperation in the 1970s, the milestone in the field of EU's security is the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) that has established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The idea of a common defence policy for Europe dates to 1948, when the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux countries signed the Brussels Treaty. The treaty included a mutual defence clause that laid the foundations for the creation of the Western European Union (WEU), which, along with NATO, remained the main forum for consultation and dialogue on security and defence in Europe until the late 1990s (EEAS, 2021).

After the end of the Cold War and the subsequent conflicts in the Balkans, it became necessary for the EU to assert its responsibilities in the field of security and defence. The conditions under which military units could be deployed were already agreed by the WEU Council in 1992 but the so-called "Petersberg Tasks" where integrated in the Treaty of Amsterdam 1997/1999. In addition, the post of the "High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy" was created to allow the Union to speak with "one face and one voice" on foreign policy matters. The Treaty of Amsterdam codified several new structures and tasks for the EU's CFSP, and, although it did not create a common defence policy, it did increase responsibilities in the realms of peacekeeping and humanitarian work i.a. by creating closer links with the WEU. At the Cologne European Council in 1999, Member States reaffirmed the Union's willingness to develop capabilities for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces. A key development was the "Berlin Plus agreement" which refers to a comprehensive package of arrangements finalised in early 2003 between the EU and the NATO that allows the EU to make use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations. In 2003 the former High Representative was tasked by the Member States to develop a Security Strategy for Europe. The document entitled "A Secure Europe in a Better World", analysed for the first time the EU's security environment and identified key security challenges and subsequent political implications for the EU. The implementation of the

document was revised in 2008 (EEAS 2021). When it comes to the normative level, the EU's understanding of "security" broadened to include non-traditional threats like terrorism, organized crime, migration issues, energy security, cyber security, and environmental challenges.

A foundation for the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was the Lisbon Treaty (2009). The treaty includes both a mutual assistance and a solidarity clause and allowed for the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) that officially started functioning in 2011 under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who is also a Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) (EEAS, 2023). The two distinct functions of the post give the HR/VP the possibility to bring all the necessary EU assets together and to apply a "comprehensive approach" to EU crisis management (EEAS, 2021). This also allows further coordination and ensure coherence in EU foreign policy as the European Commission has important international responsibilities such on trade, development, neighbourhood policy and humanitarian aid (EEAS, 2023).

In response to a range of (security) challenges across the world such as political transformations in the Middle East and North Africa region and the Ukraine crisis in 2014, the EU adopted a Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy[1] in 2016, redefining its approach to security and defence and presenting the foundation to develop CSDP further. In 2017, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) was launched to deepen defence cooperation among EU member states. In the same year EU also initiated Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and European Defence Fund (EDF). The main aim of CARD is to provide Member States and the EU with a picture of the existing defence capability landscape in Europe and to identify potential cooperation areas. Over time, this could lead to a gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices which, in turn, will ensure a more optimal use and coherence of national defence spending plans. European Defence Fund (EDF) supports collaborative defence research and development, and to foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base. In 2021 European Peace Facility (EPF) further expanded the EU's ability to provide security for its citizens and its partners. It enables the EU to provide all types of military equipment and security infrastructure to EU partners, in compliance with the highest human rights standards. EPF supports partners, prevents conflicts, builds peace, and strengthens international security. With €7.9 billion the EPF enhances the EU's geopolitical position as a global security and defence actor by: providing lethal and non-lethal equipment to partners; financing peace support operations led by international and regional organisations; providing equipment to complement EU training; supporting African-led Peace Support Operations with €730 million (2021-2024) (EEAS, 2021; 2023).

In rapidly changing and hostile security context with severe geopolitical rivalry, the latest security innovation of the EU is embodied in the so called "A Strategic Compass for

security in defence" (Strategic Compass in continuation) adopted in 2023. The Strategic Compass aims to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider. To that end, it identifies clear goals in EU security and defence, the means to achieve them and specific timelines. The Strategic Compass is setting out concrete actions in the following four work strands (act, secure, invest, partner): Act more quickly and decisively when facing crises; Secure EU's citizens against fast-changing threats; Invest in the capabilities and technologies we need; Partner with others to achieve common goals. More concretely Strategic Compass: a) provides a shared assessment of EU's strategic environment, the threats and challenges it faces and their implications for the EU; b) brings greater coherence and a common sense of purpose to actions in the area of security and defence that are already underway; c) sets out new actions and means to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises; secure the interests and protect EU's citizens by strengthening the EU's capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats; stimulate investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies; deepen the cooperation with partners, notably the UN and NATO, to achieve common goals; d) specifies clear targets and milestones to measure progress (Strategic Compass, 2023).

The following chapter takes a closer look at the EU's complex approach to security through the lens of the main International Relations (IR) paradigms - realism, liberal pluralism, and social constructivism.

2 Main security threats for the European Union

Today's security landscape is shaped by multiple sources of complex security threats, competing narratives, weaponization and the return of power politics. Dysfunctional governance, deepening socio-economic inequalities, religious and ethnic tensions, environmental degradation etc. are increasingly intertwined with unconventional and transnational threats and geopolitical power rivalries.

In the Global Risks Report 2023 (WEF 2023), World Economic Forum (WEF), explores some of the main risks that the world is and may be facing in the next decade. The aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic and outbreak of war in Ukraine has caused surging inflation and marked the start of an economic period characterized by slow growth and minimal investment. As emphasized by WEF such low-growth and low-cooperation era may affect climate action, human development, and future resilience (WEF 2013). The next decade will be characterized by environmental (natural disasters, extreme weather events, failure of climate change adaptation etc.) and societal (erosion of social cohesion, societal polarisation, involuntary migration) crisis, driven by underlying economic trends and geopolitical/geoeconomic confrontation (Rončević & Modic, 2011; Makarovič, et al., 2014; Modic & Rončević, 2018). In such context, EU is facing a range of traditional and unconventional security threats.

Military aggression against Ukraine is the most serious security crisis in Europe in decades, however EU's (security) interests are also at stake in the Western Balkans, wider Middle East, in the Sahel and in the Indo-Pacific region (Jelen et al., 2023).

Radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism continue to evolve and pose a serious threat to peace and security, both within the EU and globally. The data show a shift in the dynamics of terrorism, which is becoming more concentrated in regions and countries suffering from political instability and conflict (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023). The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is also an ongoing threat, as evidenced by the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programmes, the repeated use of chemical weapons, and the development and deployment of new advanced ballistic, cruise and hypersonic missiles. Both Russia and China are expanding their nuclear arsenals and developing new weapons systems. These trends are exacerbated by the erosion of the arms control architecture in Europe, from the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty (Tučić, 2023).

Hybrid threats are growing both in frequency and impact. Hybrid threats combine military and non-military as well as covert and overt means, including disinformation, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, the use of irregular armed groups and the deployment of regular forces. Hybrid methods are used to blur the lines between war and peace and to sow doubt in the minds of target populations, and aim to destabilise and undermine societies (Tučić, 2023; NATO, 2023).

We are facing increasing attempts of economic and energy coercion. The EU's dependence on external energy sources, particularly from politically unstable regions or strategic rivals, poses a security risk. Issues include potential supply disruptions and the use of energy resources as a tool of political coercion. The role of ACER in this context can be taken in consideration (Klopčič, et al., 2022). Moreover, conflicts and instability are often compounded by the threat-multiplier effect of climate change that is increasingly recognized as a security threat. Climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters can have impacts on food, water and energy supplies, increased competition over natural resources, loss of livelihoods, climate-related disasters, and forced migration and displacement, all of which can lead to instability and conflict on local and international levels (UN environment programme, 2023; Mileva-Boshkoska et al., 2018; Džajić Uršič & Jelen, 2022). Organisational instability (Besednjak Valič, 2022b; Golob et al., 2023) can contribute to further insecurities. While migration is a normal part of human history, large-scale and uncontrolled migration can pose security challenges. The 2015-2016 refugee crisis tinted issues such as border security, social integration, and political radicalization. Further, COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the security implications of health crises and offering challenges in different economic sectors (Kukovič, 2021; Besednjak Valič, 2022b). Pandemics can cause widespread social and

economic disruption, strain international relations, and create openings for malicious actors to exploit.

In an increasingly digital era, cyber threats became very complex and destructive. Cyberspace which consists of various network-connected computer systems (see also Besednjak Valič, et al., 2022; Besednjak Valič et al., 2023; Golob & Makarovič, 2021) and integrated telecommunications systems has become crucial part of our daily lives, business (also in terms of technology transfer systems – see more in Modic et al., 2022), military etc. However, the ubiquity of these interconnected systems has brought a measure of dependency and vulnerability to individuals, industries, and governments that is difficult to forecast, manage, mitigate, or prevent. Cybersecurity has been defined as "the activity or process, ability or capability, or state whereby information and communications systems and the information contained therein are protected from and/or defended against damage, unauthorized use or modification or exploitation." (NATO 2016).

Finally, the EU and world are becoming more autocratic with democratic values and human rights under serious attack. 72% of the world's population live in autocracies by 2022. The level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2022 is down to 1986 levels. In the last decade there has been a drastic (negative) change when it comes to freedom of expression government censorship of the media (see also Uršič & Jurak, 2023; Fric et. al. 2023; Golob et al., 2023), government repression of civil society organizations and quality of elections (V-Dem Institute, 2023). How to address the given situation on political level, through societal steering is further discussed in (Makarovič et al., 2014c) (*An Active Society in a Networked World,* 2022).

3 The analysis of EU's Approach to Security through the Lens of IR paradigms

To comprehend the complexity of EU's approach to security, together with its strengths and weaknesses, the chapter applies conceptual framework of main IR paradigms - Realism, Liberal-Pluralism, and Social Constructivism.

3.1 Realism

Realism is often regarded as traditional and still dominant theory in International Relations (IR), both in academic as well as "real" worlds since it is favoured in most foreign policies of different countries (Hough 2018). Focus of realist approach is power or power politics and the national interest. Realists assume that state's security is achieved by pursuing the maximization of its own power and that the security of its own state is likely to be enhanced at the expense of another state in what has been termed "security dilemma". For Realists this dilemma can be averted by the balance of power or preventing the most powerful states from becoming too powerful. Such approach preserves a status

quo and a sense of order in anarchical international system (Hough, 2018). The rise of economic interactions and increased involvement in the 1960s and 1970s broadened the scope of IR and thereby contributed to neo-realism which maintained focus on states and power but also considered the importance of economies, and diplomatic influence exerted via IGOs (Hough, 2018).

From the perspective of Realism, the post-Cold War era provided the EU with several opportunities and challenges in terms of security. The dissolution of the Soviet Union severely disrupted the balance of power and led to unipolar world with the United States of America (USA) as world's only superpower at the time in which the US' military power has remained largely unchecked (Cladi, 2022). But the removal of significant security threat posed by the Soviet Union also gave the EU with the opportunity to consolidate its power and ensure its security and (national) interests, especially by enlarging its territory/membership and enhancing internal consolidation with new institutions/agencies and, common security and defence policy.

Since the end of the Cold War, the EU has significantly expanded its membership. This enlargement has not only increased the EU's economic power, but also reduced its vulnerability to external threats to certain extent from a realist outlook.

The EU has strengthened its security and defence agencies, such as Europol and Frontex, to better respond to (emerging) security threats. The development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) can also be seen (in part) as a realist strategy. By combining their resources and coordinating their defence policies, EU member states seek to enhance their collective security. In current international system, it's rational for smaller states to band together to be able to compete with larger powers. However, as stressed by Michaels (2023) EU policymakers and analysts need to understand how Central, Eastern, and Southern EU member states perceive European security and the EU's responses, or lack thereof, especially of those who remained sceptical of the European Strategic Autonomy concept (Michaels 2023). According to Michaels (2023) the EU was not developing into a serious sovereign security actor due to persistent capability shortfalls in member states' national security and defense (Michaels 2023), which could be at least party explained due to the broad differences and not equal progress of member states (Jurak, 2021b).

Further, through the CSDP, the EU has been involved in various peacekeeping and crisis management operations around the world, helping to prevent conflicts that could have a spillover effect on European security.

The Realist perspective can also explain the trajectories in the field of common intelligence. As emphasized by scholars such as Van Puyvelde (2020) and Lledo-Ferrer and Dietrichthe (2020) European intelligence integration is hampered by the primacy of sovereign nation states and their national interests in security matters. Organisations such

as Europol and the EU's Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN) collect and analyse intelligence, but don't collect sensitive information or control intelligence processes as national agencies do. Factors such as geography, history, (political) culture, resources and levels of investment in national security, national experiences led to different goals and means, and several intelligence agendas (Van Puyvelde, 2020; Lledo-Ferrer and Dietrich, 2020). While scholars agree that informal channels of cooperation are expected to continue, and that countries will deepen and develop common practices and products at the European level, facilitated by data and information sharing platforms, emergence of a supranational European intelligence system is unrealistic without a significant transfer of political power to the EU (Van Puyvelde, 2020).

The (neo)Realist paradigm can also help us explain the EU's relationship with the US. Debates about Europe's influence in the field of security are diverse. Some claim that the European security cooperation is aimed at becoming independent of the US (e.g. Posen, 2006), others believe that European security cooperation occurs out of choice (e.g. Smith, 2017) and third believe that the EU is fashioning world politics in its own image (e.g Whitman, 2011) (all quoted in Cladi, 2022). While the EU and the US share many common values and interests, the EU has had the complex task of maintaining a close relationship with the US while asserting its own identity and interests. The relationship between the EU and US has been described as "irreplaceable" since the European Security Strategy of 2003 and continues to be as such (Andersson, 2023). Recent developments, such as the 2021 EU-US Summit and the establishment of a dedicated Security and Defence Dialogue, have created a strong momentum for defence cooperation. The EU's 2022 Strategic Compass identifies the United States as the EU's most important bilateral partnership. The EU's growing role in defence provides more opportunities for engagement with the US, as evidenced by the invitation to join the PESCO military mobility project and strong coordination on arms supplies to Ukraine and sanctions. The signing of an Administrative Arrangement between the EDA and the US Department of Defence in 2023 provides a framework for further exploration of opportunities, although cooperation on capability development and research and technology activities is not currently included in the initial scope (Andersson, 2023). However, since almost all EU Member States have their own bilateral security and defence partnership agreements with the US it is crucial to identify the areas where Member States see a common need to discuss defence with the US at the EU level (Andersson, 2023). Despite such partnership between EU and US, neorealist framework remains relevant framework for understanding this security cooperation since it indicates that European states' responses are still consistent with the broader trajectory of European security cooperation since the end of the Cold War. (Cladi, 2022) shows that the behaviour of European states can be best understood as "bandwagoning" rather than "hedging" which means that European states continue to remain dependent on the US and are not really prepared for a future in which the US might not be willing or able to assist with security affairs (Cladi, 2022). European states do not have a credible military set-up to be autonomous, thereby the EU security operations and missions are still largely reliant on US capabilities and US continues to be

largely involved in European security (Diyarbakirlioglu, 2019; Cladi, 2022). Further, EU defence initiatives remain divisive among member states and are ultimately less ambitious than they seem and mostly they are there to support NATO (Cladi 2022).

In conclusion, despite several security innovations (PESCO, CARD, EDF) that contributed to greater integration, EU's foreign, security and defence policies remain largely ineffective and depended on US and NATO. One of the most obvious examples were the Arab uprisings. While the EU seemed institutionally prepared for a regional crisis in Middle East and North Africa and gradually the foreign policy mechanisms were adjusted and included diplomatic efforts, humanitarian actions and assistance to economic development as well as sanctions, Diyarbakirlioglu stresses that "there have been significant shortcomings and limitations of the EU's foreign policy, which in many ways are systemic in nature and therefore can only partially be compensated for by optimizing the institutional mechanisms of the EU" (Diyarbakirlioglu, 2019). Thereby, the consequences of the uprisings not only remained external but also internal challenge for the EU that intensified the conflict of interests between the national states and European institutions (Diyarbakirlioglu, 2019). The record in the Balkans remains poor as well. For example, the EU has failed to establish stability and democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina; NATO forces are still needed to maintain stability as clashes erupt between Serbia and Kosovo. Finally, without strong US political, economic, and military support for Ukraine, the EU would not have achieved the unity it has so far in rallying around Ukraine (Dempsey 2023).

3.2 Liberal-Pluralism

Liberalism or Liberal-Pluralism emerged in the 1960s as critique of Realism not being able to consider changes that have occurred in the world since 1940s. As implied by the term, "pluralism" acknowledges that a plurality of actors (such as EU, UN, multi-national corporations - MNCs), rather than just states, exert influence on the world stage (Hough 2018). The paradigm focuses on international governmental and international non-governmental institutions, cooperation, (security) partnerships, collective action, international law as means to achieve peace and security both within EU and beyond.

In post-Cold war era, the EU has adopted a largely liberal approach to security. Even though the member states/national governments remain key players in security and defence, EU has several institutions and other actors that play a role in shaping and implementing its security policy. This is in line with the liberal assumption that well-designed institutions can encourage cooperation and prevent conflicts. The European Council, comprising the heads of state or government of the EU member states, sets the overall strategic direction and priorities for the EU, including in the security area. The Council of the EU is where representatives from each member state meet to discuss and adopt laws and coordinate policies. The Foreign Affairs

Council deals with the EU's external action, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, also plays a role in security, particularly in areas like counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and crisis management. While the European Parliament does not have a formal role in decision-making on the CFSP and CSDP, it provides important democratic oversight. It can also make recommendations and requires regular consultation on these matters and controls the EU budget that includes funding for security and defence. The European External Action Service (EEAS) is the European Union's diplomatic service. It carries out the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy to promote peace, development, security, , and the interests of European citizens around the world. It is led by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EEAS 2023). European Defence Agency (EDA) supports EU member states in improving their defence capabilities, promoting defence cooperation, and fostering an innovative and competitive European defence industry. European Border and Coast Guard Agency or Frontex, manages the cooperation between national border guards to secure the EU's external borders.

These institutions have produced several policies to define EU's common vision and priorities in the field of security and defence. The launch of CFSP and the ESDP are not only a reflection of realist perspective but also echo the liberal idea of collective security. From a liberal perspective, the development of the CSDP is seen as a manifestation of cooperative security since it encourages member states to coordinate their security and defence policies, combine resources, and develop collective responses to security threats and crises. This approach is rooted in the liberal belief that cooperation and collective action can mitigate the security dilemmas in anarchic international systems.

According to the EU Global Strategy (European Union 2016), the security of the union, state, and social resilience to the East and South, an integrated approach to conflicts, cooperative regional orders, and global governance for 21st century are its EU's key priorities. To achieve these priorities, EU is acting by mobilising its unparalleled networks, its' economic weight and all the other tools at their disposal and aims to collectively invest in a credible, responsive, and joined-up Union (European Union 2016). To deepen the integration in this area, EU also developed a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) on defence in 2017, organizing common military trainings and joint capabilities. PESCO initiative is supported by a Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC), which relies on civil–military cooperation to improve situational awareness. As emphasized by Van Puyvelde (Van Puyvelde, 2020), European decisionmakers hope that a "common strategic culture" will facilitate "convergence in threat assessment" and "commitment to common responses." There are, however, several potentials in further discuss the implementation of EU strategies (Fric et al., 2023).

In the last decade there have also been more intense discussions related with the establishment of common European intelligence that are already evolving since the late

1960s in which EU sought to strengthen intelligence and security cooperation to counter terrorist threats. This cooperation has led to the creation of several platforms for the exchange of data and information, such as the Club de Berne, the Counter Terrorism Group (CTG) and institutions such as Europol. The creation of these platforms shows that national services feel an increased need to work together, which is also supported by public opinion in Europe. Scholars emphasize that there are several intelligence agendas, that partially overlap and that while the situation will most probably not change in the following years, especially due to absent further political integration, the common threats, and international pressures (potential American retrenchment, threats posed by Russia, instability in the MENA region etc.) will most likely deepen the intelligence cooperation among EU countries (Van Puyvelde, 2020). Lledo_Ferrer and Dietrich stress that the "Intelligence College in Europe will decisively contribute to the emergence of a European strategic culture by enabling joint reflection about prospective and strategic issues and regular interactions. It completes the defacto solidarity that already exists at the operational level between the intelligence agencies across Europe and helps build a European intelligence community that is more than the sum of its parts" (Lledo-Ferrer and Dietrich, 2020).

While the world is facing a severe crisis in multilateralism also seen in more transactional relations among states, the EU's commitment to multilateralism is a significant pillar of its foreign and security policy. In a contested interpolar world EU needs to work with partners to provide security. The Schuman Security and Defence Forum brings together the EU and its closest international partners to facilitate dialogue and strategic reflection to address common challenges on a rapidly expanding security and defence agenda (EEAS, 2023). The EU has consistently supported multilateral institutions like the United Nations (UN), NATO, regional organizations such as OSCE, African Union and ASEAN, as well as international agreements on climate change, nuclear proliferation, and human rights. The EU works with the UN to prevent conflicts, build sustainable peace and resolve crises, currently providing: 13 of the 21 EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions/operations are deployed alongside UN missions; EU Member States provide 25% of the UN peacekeeping budget; the EU supports partners' counterterrorism capacity-building and programmes to prevent violent extremism (EEAS, 2023). In Europe the most important defence partner is NATO. The Strategic Compass reiterates the EU's commitment to further strengthening the bond with NATO in accordance with the Joint Declarations from 2016, 2018 and 2023 maintaining decision-making autonomy of both organisations, cooperation – based on inclusiveness, reciprocity, openness and transparency - on 74 identified actions has been steadily progressing. Since 24 February 2023, EU-NATO cooperation has intensified and has never been closer. Emphasising the importance of this partnership, both organizations call for further enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including military mobility, hybrid, cyber and climate change-related threats, outer space, and emerging and disruptive technologies (Andersson, 2023). However, the partnership remains subject to several constraints with defence innovation as an example. The EU Member States have established a Hub for European Defence

Innovation (HEDI) in the European Defence Agency (EDA), but many of the same Member States are as Allies also setting up a Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) in NATO. HEDI and DIANA will both be working with public and private sector partners, academia, and civil society to develop new defence-related technologies. To avoid duplication, cross-briefings between EDA and NATO have taken place, but to ensure long-term complementarity further coordination will have to be established (Andersson, 2023). Complementarity will be also needed in other areas of mutual interest mentioned above.

In addition to the EU and NATO, the European security architecture consists of numerous regional multilateral and bilateral defence cooperation formats – Andersson mapped nearly 200 such defence partnerships (Andersson, 2023). Different defence partnerships are formed based on different factors, and their membership sometimes overlaps. Some partnerships are driven by geographical proximity or similar strategic cultures, while others are the result of shared technological or industrial interests. While some partnerships follow traditional top-down approaches, many European defence collaborations are currently bottom-up and demand-driven. Like-minded states are working together in innovative ways to maintain essential defence capabilities, including cross-border training, joint education, pooling of spare parts and joint operation of air-to-air refuelling tankers (Andersson, 2023). (Andersson, 2023) emphasizes the importance of prioritizing coherence and quality of output in European defence partnerships, rather than the quantity of meetings. The proliferation of cooperation formats and meetings may be unsustainable and counterproductive. The fragmented nature and slow pace of defence cooperation indicate that the lack of essential European capabilities is not being adequately addressed. It is crucial to focus on defence partnerships and cooperation formats that deliver value while reducing duplication and overlap. One suggested approach to enhance efficiency and flexibility is to concentrate on time-limited projects that focus on outcomes, rather than open-ended partnerships that emphasize processes. Additionally, it is proposed to hierarchically integrate certain cooperation formats within the EU or NATO to improve coordination (Andersson 2023). (Dempsey, 2023) argues that the lack of EU's defence strategy is Europe's Achilles' heel. While EU has the ambitions to become a global player, which it can achieve up to a point through its trade and competition policies, they are not backed up by any kind of hard power (Dempsey, 2023).

While several initiatives we have mentioned reflect the liberal belief that international law and institutions are essential for maintaining global peace and security, this vision of multilateralism which prevailed internationally after the end of the Cold War has been severely challenged by the dismantling of universal values by those who advocate a strict sovereignist approach that represents a return to the power politics mentioned in the section on realism. As such, the current international reality is very fragmented with an increasing number of actors seeking to expand their political space and challenge the existing security order.

Lastly, deep economic integration within the EU, which has been a major focus since its inception, further contributes to security. From the liberal perspective, economic interdependence reduces the likelihood of conflict because the potential costs of war are too high.

3.3 Social Constructivism

The ending of Cold War and trajectory of a "New World Order" challenged the assumptions of existing paradigms in the IR and stimulated new theories. Especially Social Constructivism argues that understanding political events demand more introspection and less grand abstract theories. This paradigm adopts a more sociological and cultural approach and focuses on the aspect of ideas, norms, and identities in international politics (Hough, 2018) and thereby offers a different lens for understanding EU's approach to security.

The EU's understanding of security has evolved over time to incorporate a more comprehensive approach and normative change about what constitutes security. This includes normative framework that also incorporates non-military aspects such as environmental security, energy security, cyber security, and human security.

From a constructivist perspective, a key aspect of the EU's security policy is its own identity as a "normative power". The EU often emphasizes the promotion of its values in its foreign and security policies, which indicates that it is not just pursuing raw power or material interests, but also attempting to shape the international system according to its norms. In 2002 Ian Manners conceived the term "Normative Power Europe (NPE)". By differentiating NPE from the previous conceptualisations of military and civilian power, Manners highlighted the uniqueness of the EU's nature and identity and suggested focusing on visions, ideations, norms, and values as the substantive foundation of EU foreign policy (Manners, 2002).

(Manners, 2002) argues that the European Union (EU) is distinguished from other international actors by its 'normative power of an ideational nature', characterised by shared principles and a willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions. This normative power derives from three sources: historical context, hybrid polity and political-legal constitution. These factors, particularly in the post-Cold War era, have helped to establish a common framework of values among member states and to foster commitment to shared norms and principles at the national and supranational levels.

The EU's principles and values which basically derive from human dignity concept (Kleindienst, 2017a; 2019; Kleindienst & Tomšič, 2022a) including peace, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, constitute the EU as a sui generis political entity that places universal norms at the centre of its relations with the rest of the

world (Manners 2002; Xuechen 2022). While the EU studies community has largely
engaged with the NPE literature and studied EU norm-entrepreneurship at theoretical and
empirical levels, (Xuechen, 2022) stresses that the NPE literature suffers from two major
shortcomings: it falls short in uncovering the multifaceted nature of EU diffusion objects
across different policy areas; the effectiveness of EU norm diffusion remains
underexplored (Xuechen, 2022).

The EU supports global norms and international agreements on issues like climate change
(Paris Agreement), sustainable development (Agenda, 2030; Fric et al., 2023; Džajić
Uršič et al., 2024), nuclear non-proliferation (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action –
JCPOA or Iran Nuclear Deal), and cybersecurity (Budapest Convention). For instance,
the conclusion of the Iran Nuclear Deal in July 2015 presents one of the most crucial
achievements of the EU diplomacy. Since 2006, the EU High Representative has led
diplomatic efforts between the E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United
Kingdom and the United States) and Iran, which led to the conclusion of the JCPOA in
Vienna on 14 July 2015. The JCPOA is designed to ensure that Iran's nuclear programme
will be exclusively peaceful and provides for the comprehensive lifting of UN, EU and
US nuclear-related sanctions (EEAS, 2021). However, sanctions imposed by the EU in
view of the human rights situation in Iran, support for terrorism and other grounds are not
part of the JCPOA and remain in place (EEAS, 2021).

In the social constructivist framework, one of the latest security innovations in the field
of intelligence, is the establishment of Intelligence College in Europe (ICE), which aims
to promote a unified European intelligence culture. ICE proposes to organise regular
workshops and learning experiences across Europe to facilitate the exchange of
experience and understanding among intelligence officers. This initiative is not intended
to be another avenue for operational cooperation, but to facilitate better cohesion within
the European intelligence community, promote common norms of behaviour and foster
long-term trust (Van Puyvelde, 2020). Van Puyvelde (2020) assesses that in the next
decade such cooperation could lead to the adoption of a common European intelligence
strategy, highlighting the shared liberal democratic values and security priorities of EU
member states. At a more practical level, this common vision and the socialization of
practitioners could support the development of a strategic analysis and its emphasis on
sharing strategic foresight and scenario development (Van Puyvelde, 2020).

A constructivist perspective is also visible in the EU's approach to crisis response and
conflict prevention. The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) enables EU to
take a leading role in peace-keeping operations, conflict prevention and in the
strengthening of the international security. It is an integral part of the EU's comprehensive
approach towards crisis management, and it draws on both military and civilian assets
(EEAS, 2021). EU has often employed a range of tools from diplomacy, development
aid, to peacekeeping missions, and even sanctions to manage crises and conflicts which

reflects the influence of norms about appropriate and effective responses to international crises.

Further, the EU's enlargement policy, especially after the end of the Cold War, has been important tool for norm diffusion. Enlargement is often claimed to be the most successful foreign policy of the EU and it is considered to have contributed to democratic consolidation, respect for human rights, minority protection, conflict resolution, and stability in the parts of the EU's neighbourhood, with the EU's political accession conditionality as the cornerstone of this success (Schimmelfennig, 2008). The EU's use of conditionality in the enlargement process, where countries are required to implement certain reforms before they can join, demonstrates how the EU uses its power to shape norms in its neighbourhood. But while the EU has continued the consistent policy of political conditionality, the negotiations with remaining countries (like Serbia, BiH, Turkey, etc.) demonstrate that its effectiveness is weakened, especially in countries with legacies of ethnic conflicts (former Yugoslavia, Cyprus) that bedevils most remaining eligible non-member countries and increases the domestic political costs of compliance with EU political conditionality. To maintain its impact on political reform under these conditions, the EU will need to reassure applicant governments even more convincingly of the credibility of its commitment to enlargement and move negotiations closer to the endgame (Schimmelfennig, 2008). It is also important to consider that while the scholars on enlargement process of the EU, have conceptualized democracy promotion as an asymmetric relationship between EU as a "donor" and "recipients" of democracy promotion where the external donor has democratizing leverage over the domestic recipient, it is argued that this relationship should be rather considered as a dynamic interaction. For example, on the case of Croatia Grimm (2019) illustrates that in the enlargement negotiations between EU officials and the governments of the (potential) candidate countries, both sides introduce ideas about democratic norms and institutions, reform procedures and expected outcomes intended to adapt the (potential) candidate's political system to EU requirements. Content, scope, procedure and pace of reforms can become subjects to be negotiated between external and domestic actors involved, thereby both sides dispose of leverage (Grimm, 2019). Similar findings are present also on the case of EU-ASEAN security cooperation where norm diffusion should be understood as a two-way process. Xuechen claims that ASEAN stakeholders should not be regarded as a passive recipient of EU's norms and policy-settings but as active players with significant role in shaping the diffusion process (Xuechen, 2022).

4   Conclusion

Contemporary security threats are extremely complex and interconnected. Thereby the EU's approach to security demands an innovative approach that will be comprehensive and cooperative.

As demonstrated in the chapter, the EU's post-Cold War trajectory in understanding security has been shaped by elements of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism. The dominance of sovereign member states and their national interests in security matters, and EU's ambitions to enhance its security and power in geopolitical confrontations, are in line with realism. Thereby, Realism helps us understand the role of strategic considerations (e.g., enlargement, new institutions, and policies) and national interests in security matters (case of intelligence agendas) in the EU's approach to security. In the context of neorealism, the EU and its member states remain largely dependent on the US and NATO for security and are not able to project their influence autonomously on the global (security) stage. The fragmented nature and slow pace of defence cooperation also indicate there is not sufficient attention given to the lack of essential European (military) capabilities.

On the other hand, some of the recent security innovations are consistent with liberal (e.g., PESCO), as well as constructivists ideas (e.g., ICE). From a liberal perspective, the EU's approach to security is deeply rooted in the principles of cooperation, institutionalism, multilateralism, democracy and human rights, and economic interdependence. While partnerships and cooperation with the UN, NATO and regional organizations are beneficial, the EU must also priorities coherence and quality over quantity of cooperation formats that could lead to further duplication and become unsustainable and counterproductive.

Social constructivism helps us understand the importance of identity, values, and norms in the EU's security policy. The EU's principles and values, including peace, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, constitute the EU as unique political entity that places universal norms at the centre of its relations with the rest of the world. These constructivist elements are visible in various aspects of the EU's security policy, from its comprehensive understanding of security, approach to crisis response, and enlargement policy. However, there are also several issues that EU will have to tackle to remain effective, especially when it comes conditionality in enlargement policy, norms diffusion etc.

In an extremely globalised and complex world with high geopolitical tensions, the EU must take responsibility for both internal and external security and enhance its capacity to become a stronger global actor. The analysis demonstrates that EU has important potential to contribute to a safer and more stable world, especially due to its strong commitment to multilateralism, broader approach to security, normative power etc. But to be more effective in responding to turbulent and rapidly evolving security environment EU will have to tackle several weaknesses, especially the fragmentation of institutions, agencies, policies and cooperation formats, limited security and defence capabilities, dependence on the US and NATO, issues of conditionality in the enlargement policy, etc.

Notes:

[1] Global Strategy consists of three major pillars: new political goals and ambitions for Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security and defence; new financial tools to help Member States and the European defence industry to develop defence capabilities ("European Defence Action Plan") and a set of concrete actions as follow up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration which identified areas of cooperation (EEAS, 2021).

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