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Security deficit in Europe:

UPDATING AND UPGRADING THE EU'S SECURITY ROLE IN UKRAINE

by Iulian Romanyshyn

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FOREWORD

This paper was presented in December 2021, two months before Russia launched its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. Many, if not all, of the policy recommendations outlined in this paper back then may have looked unrealistic, far-fetched or downright illusionary. Yet, Russia's aggression has upended the European security order and, with it, many of the long-standing taboos in EU security and defence policy. For example, in 2021, the fairly unambitious proposal to reform Ukraine's professional military education was still seen by some EU member states as too provocative towards Moscow. Today, the EU aims at training 30 000 Ukrainian military personnel on its soil as a part of the first ever military mission aimed at a country in its Eastern neighbourhood. If in 2021, the EU's benchmark of military assistance was set at a few dozen million euros of non-lethal aid drawn from the European Peace facility, today it has committed to supply Ukraine with € 4.6 billion assistance measures under the EPF. While in 2021, only a few EU countries were convinced about the need to provide Ukraine with bilateral military assistance and equipment, EU member states, with a few exceptions, have to varying degrees stepped up their support of Ukraine's right to defend itself. In other words, most of the policy recommendations contained in this paper on how the EU can boost its provision of security to Ukraine have become reality since 2021. For obvious reasons, medium and long-term measures related to Ukraine's integration into the European Defence Union have taken a backstage in comparison to the immediate needs. Nonetheless, efforts to involve Ukraine in EU defence initiatives and institutions described below stand a good chance to materialize over time, as Ukraine is now on a path to become a member of the EU.*

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About this policy paper

This policy paper was prepared for the project which LibMod implemented in cooperation with the Policy Planning Unit of the German Federal Foreign Office in 2021-22. The project brought together high-profile experts from think-tanks in the EU, Ukraine, and North America to discuss the EU's long-term policy towards Ukraine in key areas and develop policy recommendations. All policy papers initially served as input papers for the discussions and were finalised before being published.

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1. INTRODUCTION

2014 has become a watershed year in relations between Russia and the West. By annexing Crimea and launching a covert military intervention in Eastern Ukraine, Russia has mounted the most serious challenge to the European security order since the end of the Cold War. Moscow put to the test the principles of territorial integrity, equality of states, and rejection of the use of force – all the norms and values the EU stands for. The Kremlin seeks to establish a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space with a right of veto over sovereign foreign policy choices of neighbouring states. Ukraine is a crown jewel in this sphere of influence, without which Moscow cannot claim the status of an independent great power.[1] In light of Russia's growing military assertiveness, Ukrainian leaders repeatedly called to expand their Association Agenda with the EU to incorporate security and defence dimensions.[2] This sentiment was echoed by the European Parliament, which strongly called 'to boost cooperation in security and defence' between the EU and Ukraine, highlighting the need to broaden the spectrum of existing bilateral dialogue.[3]

The goal of this paper is to explore the EU's ability to exert itself as a strong and meaningful security provider for Ukraine. First, I discuss implications of Russia's aggression against Ukraine for European security and how those repercussions manifest themselves across conventional, non-conventional and maritime security domains (section 2). Second, the paper will review and evaluate the evolution of security and defence policies of the EU and Ukraine since 2014 (section 3). As a next step, the paper will examine opportunities for EU actions which will be grouped in two baskets: measures related to Ukraine's integration in the European Defence Union and measures pertinent to the EU's security provision on the ground (section 4). The concluding section will outline concise policy recommendations (section 5).

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2. IMPLICATIONS OF RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY

2.1. Conventional security

Russia's military intervention in Ukraine since 2014 showed to Russian leaders the utility of military force to achieve strategic aims. The success of the Kremlin's military campaign in Ukraine validated the progress in restructuring and modernizing the Russian armed forces which started after the war with Georgia in 2008.[4] Russia's 2015 national security strategy and 2016 foreign policy concept both underscored the growing importance of military force as a decisive instrument of international affairs.[5] The relatively low price that the Russian leadership paid for its aggressive policy designs in Ukraine clearly emboldened the Kremlin to intervene militarily elsewhere, particularly in Syria in 2015. Moreover, in the same year, Russia abandoned the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe that established limits on deployment of offensive military capabilities in Europe. This was just one example of Russia's disdain for arms control regimes in Europe, as also evidenced by its continuous violation of the 1990 Vienna Document and the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Russian military strategy, as it was revealed by the Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov, is based on the concept of 'active defence', which implies pre-emptive military strikes with elements of surprise, decisiveness, and strategic initiative.[6] According to estimates, Russia today can deploy 70,000-150,000 troops of different types at short notice across vast distances.[7] To compare, the NATO's readiness initiative pledges to generate 40,000-strong force within 30 days, while the EU is only in the process of talks to establish a rapid response force of up to 5,000 troops possibly by 2025.

Following the illegal annexation of Crimea, Russia has taken many steps to transform the peninsula into a military stronghold. According to various estimates, Russia summoned between 28,000 and 32,500-strong military force that encompasses ground forces, combat aircraft and new naval vessels.[8] This number is expected to reach 43,000 troops by 2025.[9] What is more, Ukrainian experts believe that Crimea hosts ballistic missile systems and strategic bombers capable of delivering nuclear warheads to many European capitals. Given Ukraine's limited military capability to retake Crimea by force, it became clear that Russia's enhanced military build-up on the peninsula was related to potential offensive operations in the south of Ukraine, intended to seize control of the North Crimean Canal.

There were further consolidation of Russia's military forces and equipment close to the Ukrainian borders. In 2020, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) reported the formation of the 20th Combined Arms Army at Voronezh and the 59th Tank Regiment at Yelna.[10] In April 2021, Moscow amassed around 100,000 troops on Ukraine's border, raising concerns about an imminent land invasion. Moscow justified the military build-up with preparations for the Zapad-2021 military exercise in September. At the time of writing, however, according to Ukraine's defence intelligence chief, Russia still maintains 40 battalion tactical groups with 1200 tanks, 2900 armoured vehicles and 1600 artillery systems pre-positioned at the border for an alleged attack in winter 2022.[11]

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2.2. Non-conventional security

Ukraine has become the laboratory for Russia's 'hybrid warfare' activities, which the Kremlin tests and refines before exporting them to the West. Hybrid or 'grey zone' warfare refers to a combination of conventional operations (kinetic) and non-conventional activities (disinformation, cyber-attacks, political subversion) against an adversary. Russia successfully used this tactic during the illegal annexation of Crimea by combining a disinformation campaign against the Ukrainian government with a covert military operation by Russian special operation forces ('little green men'). This playbook was repeated in Eastern Ukraine, where Russian disinformation and intelligence agents fomented discontent among the local population while regular intrusions of the Russian military forces prevented the Ukrainian government from regaining control of Donetsk and Luhansk. Previous measures of economic coercion, such trade embargos and manipulation of gas supplies, were coupled with regular cyber-attacks against government agencies and energy infrastructure, for example the NotPetya malware attack in 2017.[12]

It is true that many of these hybrid activities are not fundamentally new, but rather constitute continuity with activities of the Soviet-era security services. What has changed, however, is that Russia no longer limits its hybrid warfare to the post-Soviet space. Russian military leaders believe that they are at war with the West, and in that war non-kinetic and asymmetric measures provide additional leverage.[13] Over the last years, the Kremlin expanded its cyber-attacks, disinformation, economic coercion, and political subversion beyond Ukraine to the EU and NATO member states.[14] Examples include the cyber-attack on the German Bundestag, Skripals' poisoning in the UK, orchestrated explosions of arms depots in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, energy supply cut-offs, financial support of extremist and anti-EU political parties and organizations. Since the summer of 2020,

Putin's client state – Belarus – weaponized migration at its border with the EU, directly drawing on Russia's hybrid playbook. The aim of such activities is to weaken European societies, undermine the transatlantic alliance, but also 'to divide, distract, and deter Europe from challenging Russia's activities in its immediate neighbourhood'[15]. As Putin himself put it, 'if someone mistakes our good intentions for indifference or weakness [...], Russia's response will be asymmetrical, swift and tough.'[16]

2.3. Maritime security

The illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Russia's aggression against Ukraine resulted in a dramatic shift in the balance of power in the Black Sea basin., Russia significantly upgraded its military infrastructure and defence capabilities, transforming the peninsula into an 'unsinkable aircraft carrier'. Moscow deployed sophisticated radars, electronic warfare systems, S-400 ground-based air defence systems, and anti-ship coastal missiles.[17] Russian military leaders aimed to create an effective 'area denial zone' along the Black Sea coast which prevented EU and NATO countries from conducting surveillance and intelligence gathering operations in the region.[18] Six new submarines, integrated into the Black Sea Fleet and equipped with Kalibr-type cruise missiles, regularly crossed the Turkish Straits in violation of the Montreux Convention.[19] The Kremlin's naval build up in the region enabled Moscow to project power as far as to Northern Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. For instance, Russia's sustained military campaign in Syria and occasional incursions into Libya would have been impossible without Russia's naval dominance in the Black Sea.

Russia's military assertiveness posed significant risks for the freedom of navigation in the region. In November 2018, Russian navy denied three Ukrainian naval vessels a transit through the Kerch Strait, and attacked and subsequently seized the ships. Contrary to international law, the Kremlin seems to be determined to transform the Sea of Azov into its 'internal lake' by proactively restricting access of foreign vessels and causing, as a result, economic hardship to Ukrainian Azov ports. According to Ukrainian experts, Russia may well be planning to extend the economic blockade to Ukraine's biggest ports of Odesa and Mykolaiv, a scenario which would likely involve a take-over of the strategically important Serpent Island in the western part of the Black Sea. #20 In July 2021, Russian naval and air forces on two separate occasions harassed British and Dutch warships (HMS Defender and HNLM Evertsen) sailing and exercising in international waters in the Black Sea. The Kremlin later instrumentalized these episodes to spin a false narrative according to which Russian patrol vessels and fighter jets fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of the NATO warships. #21 To further deter and intimidate the West, the Kremlin's spokesperson declared that similar 'provocations' would be met with 'tough' response in the future.

3. SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICIES OF THE EU AND UKRAINE SINCE 2014

3.1. The European Union: unlocking the potential of common security and defence

In the years following 2014, EU member states took significant steps towards strengthening the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Russia's military assertiveness, coupled with other internal and external factors (Brexit, Trump's Presidency), were major drivers behind this process. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the European Defence Agency (EDA) reported a record level of defence spending (€ 186 billion) among its 26 member states. In 2014, only 3 NATO member states were spending at least 2 % of their GDP on defence in line with Alliance commitments, while the number grew to 10 in 2021.[22] The 2016 EU Global Strategy charted an ambitious objective for the EU to step up its contribution to Europe's collective security by protecting EU citizens, enhancing resilience of EU neighbours and engaging in peace-building and crisis-management efforts overseas.[23] In 2017, the European Commission published a Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence illustrating advantages of collective approach to capability development, defence procurement, technological innovation over prevailing national solutions.[24] The same year, then European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker put forward a goal to establish a European Defence Union by 2025.

Following this blueprint, 25 EU member states (all but Denmark and Malta) launched permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), which was perceived as a watershed moment for EU defence cooperation.[25] Together with the nearly € 8 billion European Defence Fund (EDF), PESCO aims at enhancing joint development of EU defence capabilities, increasing investment in defence research and technology, and improving the availability of deployable armed forces. At present, PESCO includes 60 collaborative projects covering various domains, such as land, air and maritime capabilities, hybrid and cyber as well as space.[26]

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Third countries can be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects if they fulfil specific conditions. For instance, a country applying for a project must share the values on which the EU is founded, it must have an agreement to exchange classified information with the EU, its participation must provide substantial added value to the project, strengthen the CSDP and not lead to dependencies on the applicant country.[27] In May 2021, Canada, Norway and the US became the first non-EU counties to join the Dutch-led project on military mobility which promotes swift movement of military personnel and assets throughout the EU to improve operational readiness. If PESCO proves successful it will create a wide spectrum of defence capabilities which will be owned by the participating member states, who would be then able to decide whether to use them for national or multinational operations and missions (EU, NATO, or UN).

Two more EU initiatives in security and defence policy stand out. Firstly, the EU launched the € 5 billion European Peace Facility (EPF) to financially support its external actions with military and defence implications.[28] EU member states can draw on the EPF resources to fund common costs of military CSDP missions, as well as to support peace operations led by other international actors. More importantly, the EPF enables the EU to provide military support and capacity building to partner countries, including lethal equipment, training, and infrastructure for security purposes. Secondly, since 2020, the EU has been working on the so-called Strategic Compass – a military document that will set out a common vision for EU security and defence for the next 5–10 years. Released in November 2021, the blueprint of the Compass maps out security threats faced by the EU and elaborates a set of new ideas to strengthen the Union,

such as the development of an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity for crisis management, creation of an EU Hybrid Toolbox to address hybrid threats and an EU Security and Defence Partnership Forum for closer cooperation with third countries.[29] The document was scheduled to be adopted in March 2022 during France's EU Council Presidency.

3.2. Ukraine: restoring security and defence policy

Prior to 2014, Ukraine's military forces had been in a prolonged state of decay, lacking proper training, command and control capabilities, combat readiness and financial support. With defence expenditure traditionally less than 1% of GDP, Kyiv reportedly could barely summon 5,000 combat ready troops to defend itself against Russian intervention in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Russia's military aggression, however, triggered a revival of Ukraine's security and defence policy. Ukraine's defence budget grew more than fourfold from UAH 26.9 billion in 2014 to UAH 117.5 billion (2.8% of GDP) in 2020.[30] The dedicated budget line was to be increased even further in 2022 – up to UAH 131 billion, as requested by the government – subject to parliamentary consent. The number of active personnel of the Ukrainian military grew from 165,000 in 2013 to 246,700 in 2020, making Ukraine's armed forces the second largest army in Europe after France.[31]

Ukraine has also taken steps to establish a modern legislative framework for its security and defence policy. In line with commitments required for NATO accession, the Ukrainian authorities have passed new laws on national security (2018), defence procurement (2020), intelligence (2020), territorial defence (2021). In September 2020, Ukraine's strategy for national security entered into force outlining its three major pillars: deterrence (developing security and defence capabilities to prevent an armed aggression against Ukraine), resilience (reducing state and societal vulnerabilities to changes in the security environment) and cooperation (strategic partnerships with the EU, NATO, the US and other actors).[32] On that basis, Ukraine's military strategy was developed and concluded in March 2021. The document defines Russia as Ukraine's main security threat and confirms the need for reforms in security and defence sector in line with Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

While security and defence reforms are important, in themselves, they are not sufficient to deter Russia from further aggression. Ukraine's armed forces lack major material capabilities, such as air defence systems, naval forces, whereas available capabilities, such as combat aircraft, require significant modernization. Following the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine lost 70 % of its naval fleet, making it vulnerable to amphibious attacks from the sea. In 2018, Ukrainian leadership adopted the naval forces strategy which put forward the goal to build a mosquito fleet due to Ukraine's lack of resources to procure larger vessels. Moreover, Ukrainian air force leadership conceded that by 2030 most of the country's fighter jets would be non-viable.[33] In 2020, the air force planners launched a comprehensive strategy, committing UAH 320 billion by 2035 to modernize the air forces, but questions remained whether Ukraine would be able to foot such an expensive spending bill.[34] Air reconnaissance, ground-based air defence and cyber space are further areas with shortfalls and modernization gaps to be addressed.

4. ADDRESSING SECURITY DEFICITS IN UKRAINE: OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS FOR EU ACTIONS

4.1. Integrating Ukraine into the European Defence Union

Ukraine is currently implementing an ambitious Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU. Ukraine is integrated in the Energy Community and intends to become a part of the EU digital market. Differentiated integration is today's reality in Europe and it can also serve as a model in the realm of security and defence cooperation. Ukraine has extensively engaged with the EU's CSDP by contributing military personnel and capabilities to EU peace-keeping missions and operations (EUNAVFOR Atalanta off the coast of Somalia, EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUPOL Proxima in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and by participating in rotating EU Battle Groups (on six occasions between 2011 and 2020 as a member of HELBROC Battle Group and the Visegrad Battle Group).[35] As the scope of CSDP itself expanded beyond conflict management towards the goal of a fully-fledged European Defence Union (see section 3.1. above), Ukraine's differentiated integration with EU in this field can be streamlined accordingly to reflect a more ambitious agenda in the areas of capability development, defence interoperability and defence industry.

4.1.1. Capability development
Ever since the EU reached consensus on third-party participation in PESCO in November 2020, Ukraine has consistently articulated its interest in the initiative. Kyiv views PESCO as one of the vehicles to strengthen and modernize capabilities of its armed forces by getting access to cutting-edge defence technologies. Ukraine's ambition to join individual PESCO projects was acknowledged for the first time in the joint

statement following the EU-Ukraine Summit on 12 October 2021.[36] Just days before the Summit, Ukraine's Parliament adopted a strongly worded declaration on the future of Ukraine's integration with EU listing participation in PESCO among top priorities.[37] Ukrainian leaders emphasized that the country is no longer willing to simply be on the receiving side of various European security projects, and is keen to play an active role in jump-starting or developing these defence initiatives.[38]

At the same time, Ukrainian officials have so far fallen short on providing many details about specific projects of interest. Ukraine's Ambassador to the EU claimed that Kyiv contemplates participation in more than 20 PESCO projects.[39] Given the capability needs and the security threat it faces, Ukraine may be interested in a whole range of projects developing a new generation of drones (the German-led Eurodrone project) and anti-drone equipment (the Italian-led Counter Unmanned Aerial System project), coastal defence systems (the Italian-led Harbour and Maritime Surveillance and Protection project), underwater surveillance (the Bulgarian-led Deployable Modular Underwater Intervention Capability Package), medical capabilities (the German-led European Medical Command project). Ukraine can also benefit from projects that harmonize standards and improve readiness, such as Military Mobility project, or the projects that have already reached their operational capacity, such the EU's Cyber Rapid Response Teams.

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In practice, the prospect of Ukraine joining the PESCO initiative will not be easy to fulfil. To be clear, PESCO was launched to improve defence cooperation among EU member states and thereby to enhance the EU's strategic autonomy. And when member states were negotiating conditions for third party access, they had primarily the US and other non-EU NATO countries in mind.[40] At the same time, Ukraine already fulfils many of the legal and political requirements (for instance, contribution to the CSDP, respect of EU values, contractual relationship with EDA), but it would need to demonstrate a substantial added value of its participation to an individual project. To initiate an accession process, Ukraine would need to approach a project coordinator state with convincing evidence about how its participation would help contribute to the success of the project. These arguments would have to be taken on board by other project members following by a unanimous vote in the Council on Ukraine's application. Much depends on how strictly these rules will be applied, but it is acknowledged that Ukraine is well-placed to offer its knowledge and expertise in areas like cyber security and armoured vehicles which EU member states can benefit from. Steps have already been taken to facilitate Ukraine's participation in the Lithuanian-led project on the Cyber Rapid Response Teams.[41]

4.1.2. Defence interoperability
Ukraine is one of the few third countries (in addition to Norway, Switzerland and Serbia) that set up an Administrative Arrangement with the EDA. Signed in 2015, the agreement allows for exchange of classified information and for Ukraine to promote its views within the Agency. It enables Ukraine to participate in selected projects and programmes, albeit without decision-making rights. Ukraine has expressed interest in cooperating in the areas related to the Single European Sky, materiel standardisation, logistics, and helicopter training. These are rather technical areas aimed at increasing convergence between the armed forces and defence policies of Ukraine and the EDA members. For instance, the cooperation on materiel standardisation encompasses work on blasts effects, military uniforms, automatic identification techniques, etc. As military convergence and interoperability require time investment and perseverance, Ukraine's cooperation with the EDA will likely not lead to a step-change in a short term, but it can 'potentially increase Ukraine's capability in the long-term'.[42]

This does not mean however that Ukraine's engagement with EDA has reached its limits. Ukraine will be well advised to explore opportunities of joining those projects and programmes with more strategic implications. The case in point is the EDA's longest-running project on maritime surveillance (MARSUR) which facilities maritime situational awareness and exchange of maritime data among its participants. Ukraine's Black Sea fleet and coast guard can benefit from increased interoperability with European maritime counterparts. Another example is the project on neutralizing improvised explosive devices (Counter-IED) which can boost capacity of Ukrainian armed forces to address destructive effects of this equipment, which is often utilized by the Russia-backed insurgents in the Donbas region. Ukraine is also excluded from the EDA's flagship initiative – the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) – which maps the landscape of military capabilities across the EU to identify shortfalls, duplications, and areas for potential cross-border collaboration. Integrating Ukraine into the CARD mechanisms can improve awareness of each other's problems and needs, but also trigger an important socializing effect in terms of convergence of strategic cultures between EU member states and Ukraine.

4.1.3. Defence industry

Defence budget growth and rising domestic demand for defence equipment have boosted Ukraine's defence industrial sector. The share of private companies supplying the national defence sector grew from 23 % in 2015 to 54 % in 2020.[34] The Ukrainian government has recently established a new ministry for strategic industries which will oversee the reform process of the Ukroboronprom, a defence conglomerate that encompasses 130 state-run defence companies. Since 2014, Ukraine has gradually reduced its dependence on Russian defence equipment and supply chains, and currently Ukrainian defence companies work to strengthen industry cooperation and exports to other countries. For example, the share of European markets in the export of Ukrainian defence equipment increased from 3 % in 2013 to 16 % in 2020.[44] This shows a growing competitiveness of the Ukrainian defence industry as well as an increased interest of European partners in this strategic sector of Ukraine's economy.

At the same time, Ukrainian defence companies are much better at repairing obsolete Soviet-era military weapon systems rather than developing new technologically advanced defence equipment. Lack of financial investment in the research and development sector is a consistent and serious problem. It is here that the EU's newly established EDF in support of defence research can play a supportive role. Just as with PESCO projects, third-country access to EDF is a subject to specific conditions, but the rules appear even more technocratic and restrictive. A key distinction is between countries that participate in the EU single market (like Norway), which makes their industries eligible, and countries which are outside of EU single market (like Ukraine). In theory, Ukrainian defence companies can still expect to join EDF-funded projects, but the rules stipulate that the outputs of research and the related intellectual property rights should stay within the EU, which could make participation less appealing or impractical.[45]

4.2. Strengthening the EU's security role in Ukraine

4.2.1. A new EU military mission

A proposal for a new military CSDP mission in Ukraine first surfaced in public in early October 2021, but the idea had been discussed in closed circles in Brussels and other national capitals since the summer. Lithuania has been the major driving force behind the initiative. Even though Vilnius' suggestion caught other European countries by surprise and 'sounded like a joke' #46 at first, it did gain the support of other member states along the Eastern flank. A key question in the initial considerations was: what kind of training can be provided by the EU to the country that is at war with a more powerful state opponent? The EU runs several military training missions in Africa, but those missions would necessarily differ in the context and sophistication compared to a potential mission in Ukraine. If anything, EU member states could learn more from Ukraine and its combat experience against Russian military forces.[47]

It was decided to focus on professional military education in Ukraine since this action might be easier to agree on and appear less provocative to Moscow. The idea was to review how Ukrainian military personnel is educated, to eradicate deep-rooted Soviet legacies and traditions, and to reform the system in line with the Western practices. The Ukrainian authorities welcome the initiative and a fact-finding mission dispatched by the EEAS to Ukraine in October 2021 was positive about the mission's rationale. At the time of writing, however, there had been no agreement on launching the mission. Even though EU member states agreed in principle that Ukraine needs this kind of support, there was no consensus on what shape and form the potential mission should take: advisory mission, training mission or both? Some member states, including Germany, intended to water down the 'military' component of the potential mission, casting doubt on whether it should be a stand-alone task

force or an integrated part of the civilian EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) already on the ground.[48]

The proposal to reform professional military education in Ukraine might not seem a very ambitious mission in comparison to classic EU training or peacekeeping operations, but the idea is nonetheless commendable. Ukrainian military educational institutions have long turned into 'dumpsters' of military personnel.[49] To revamp the entire system by itself may prove too demanding for Ukraine, not least due to entrenched corruption issues. It is true that some steps have already been taken in this field. Ukrainian officers have a possibility to participate in military 'Erasmus' programmes with individual member states (for example, in the Baltic Defence College), some Ukrainian military universities can benefit from their integration into the European Security Defence College network, while NATO has run the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) in Ukraine for several years. Yet, these initiatives are isolated from one another and hardly amount to the systemic change that is needed. The potential EU mission can become a coordination hub or umbrella for ongoing patchy activities, promoting its view on how to holistically modernize the curricula programme, training of faculty members, and teaching methods with far-reaching effects. For that goal to be achieved, the mission is required to be established as a stand-alone entity and granted with a broad and ambitious mandate.

4.2.2. European Peace Facility

For the first time, the EU will provide Ukraine with military equipment through the EPF vehicle. In early December, EU member states agreed in the Council to supply Ukraine with assistance package worth of EUR 31 million over a period of three years to support military medical units, including field hospitals, engineering, transport and logistics, and cyber security. The fact that EU member states rushed to adopt the decision within several month of the EPF's

existence signals a high priority they attach to Ukraine and other Eastern partners, notably Georgia and Moldova. At the same time, EUR 31 million amounts to only 7.4% of the total EPF budget for 2021, with countries like Mozambique receiving a EUR 44 million assistance measure in the same year. Furthermore, while the EPF rules allow for provision of military assistance of any kind, EU member states still seem to lack consensus on the prospect of arming Ukraine with lethal military equipment (for instance, anti-drone weapons or air reconnaissance drones) despite them having a greater deterrent effect on Russia. Depending on how successfully the initial package of assistance measures is implemented, the EU will consider providing additional military aid under the EPF banner.

4.2.3. EU-Ukraine Cyber Dialogue

In June 2021, the EU and Ukraine launched a bilateral Cyber Dialogue. This makes Ukraine a seventh partner, in addition to Brazil, China, India, Japan, South Korea and the US, with whom the EU has a similar dialogue on cybersecurity. Ukraine is also the first Eastern Partnership country to open such a dialogue with the EU. The goal is to establish a regular information exchange on best practices in tacking malign cyber activities, developments in cyber-related legal and institutional frameworks, individual positions in international bodies and organizations which regulate cyber space. A few months prior to the launch of the Dialogue, Ukraine adopted a new Cybersecurity Strategy 2021–2025, which among other things took stock of Ukraine's progress in building its cyber resilience.[50] The document reveals that all the key governmental ministries and agencies - from communication, infrastructure and finances to internal security and defence – now benefit from the internally established cybersecurity and cyber-defence departments.

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While it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cyber Dialogue, Ukraine's interest in this cooperation clearly goes beyond simple information sharing and exchange. Kyiv is interested in the EU's help in building Ukraine's capacity to resist and deter Russian cyberattacks. From this perspective, the future iterations of the Dialogue should upgrade its bilateral agenda to include mutual intelligence sharing and learning on cyber threats, assistance in the areas of securing governmental communications and critical infrastructure, as well as joint cyber exercises. When it comes to the latter, the buy-in and commitment of capable EU member states is crucial, as the EU often lacks resources to conduct cyber exercises on its own.[51] Ukraine can benefit from the EU's Rapid Cyber Response Teams, which recently reached their operational readiness. As the leaders of the project confirmed, in the event of a crisis, the Teams can be dispatched to assist not only EU institutions and member states, but also partner countries.[52] There is ample room to fill when it comes to strengthening and institutionalizing ties between Ukraine on the one hand and the EU Agency for Cybersecurity and the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats on the other. Finally, the EU should proactively engage Ukraine in building an EU Hybrid Toolbox and improving the existing EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, as recently declared by EU member states in the context of ongoing talks on the EU Strategic Compass.

4.2.4. EU Coordinated Maritime Presence in the Black Sea

Since the adoption of the EU Maritime Security Strategy in 2014, the EU has positioned itself as a global maritime security provider. The EU has pledged to defend freedom of navigation and security of maritime routes by addressing a rising number of maritime security threats. These include provocative unlawful acts at sea, piracy, disputes on maritime areas, access denial and hybrid threats. To protect its maritime interests,

the EU has launched the pilot of the Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) concept in the Gulf of Guinea.[53] The idea is to maintain permanent presence in the designated maritime area by deploying naval and air assets of EU member states. The advantage of the CMP concept is that member states contribute on a voluntary basis, the assets remain in national command, while the EU institutions facilitates coordination and information sharing. As it falls outside the scope of CSDP, the CMP concept provides for more flexibility by circumventing unanimity voting rules usually required in security and defence policy decision-making.

The EU Strategic Compass has signalled the EU's willingness to extend the CMP pilot beyond the Gulf of Guinea. Given the nature of the maritime security threats in the Black Sea (see section 2.3. above), the region presents itself as a perfect testing ground for further development of the CMP. Over a period of years, Ukrainian officials consistently called on its partners and friends to counter Russia's dominance in the Black Sea. The European Parliament echoed Ukraine's concern by proposing to develop a permanent mechanism to monitor the passage of all vessels through the Kerch Strait.[54] EU member states, however, were reluctant to increase their naval presence in the Black Sea. In 2020, for example, Germany sent just one naval vessel into the area for a total of 10 days. France and Italy were not much different – 3 warships for 50 days and 3 warships for 63 days respectively. To effectively deter Russia, Europeans would need a regular year-round naval presence with the CMP concept at the core. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands – all countries with significant naval capabilities – can take a lead in assembling a multinational EU naval force that, together with American and British allies, would support Ukraine and other littoral partners in training, surveillance, and capacity building at sea.

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SECURITY DEFICIT IN EUROPE: UPDATING AND UPGRADING THE EU'S SECURITY ROLE IN UKRAINE
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4.2.5. Bilateral partnerships with EU member states

The EU lacks consensus on the issues of training Ukrainian armed forces and supplying them with lethal weapon systems. This direct military assistance is provided by individual member states. The most active in this regard are Lithuania and Poland. Vilnius and Warsaw dispatched between 30 and 40 military instructors which on a continuous basis train and advise their Ukrainian counterparts on conducting special operations, shooting, military policing, and other aspects. Moreover, Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine established a joint multinational military brigade (LITPOLUKRBRIG) to increase interoperability among their armed units and improve preparedness for a potential joint deployment. Warsaw and Vilnius also provide Ukraine with lethal and non-lethal military equipment (armoured vests, thermo-visual devices, ammunition, and drones), although the scale of support here is rather limited due to their small domestic defence sectors. Those EU countries with greater defence capabilities and technologically advanced defence industries (France, Germany, Italy) were reticent about delivering direct and decisive defence aid (military trainers and weapon systems) to Ukraine. The military assistance that proved to be most effective in deterring or responding to Russian incursions was provided by non-EU NATO states, foremost the US (anti-tank missile systems), the UK (modernization of the Ukrainian navy), and Turkey (combat drones).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this analysis, the following recommendations are put forward with a view to updating and upgrading the EU's role as a security provider to Ukraine.

- Make Ukraine's partnership with EDA more strategic. The EU and Ukraine would be well advised to explore possibilities of working together on the projects and programmes that go beyond technical approximation and rather boost Ukraine's ability to better defend itself. Socializing Ukraine with the EDA's flagship project – CARD – will have a positive effect on the long-term convergence of strategic cultures.

- Ensure flexible interpretation of PESCO and EDF rules. The EU should avoid applying a too restrictive approach on the partner's participation in these initiatives and instead foster Ukraine's enthusiasm in joining them. Joint cooperation on new defence capabilities would strengthen industrial interdependence between the EU and Ukraine. The buy-in of EU member states and a sense of co-ownership in Kyiv will be key for success.

- Go ahead with launching the EU military mission. Even though the mission might fall short of original expectations (e.g. peacekeeping mission in Donbas), reforming Ukraine's professional military education is a goal worth pursuing. The dispatch of the mission would also send a powerful political message of support to Ukrainian people, signalling the EU's resolve to respond to Russia's coercion and ensuring that the current military build up at Ukraine's border is not left unchecked.

- Expand the EPF support in quality and quantity. The EU should enlarge the initial financial envelope dedicated to Ukraine and consider a more diversified package of military assistance measures.

- Explore the full potential of the Cyber Dialogue. The EU and Ukraine should go beyond information exchange towards a more ambitious bilateral agenda that involves intelligence sharing and joint exercises. The EU should strengthen Ukraine's cyber resilience including through promoting stronger institutional ties between Ukraine and various European agencies responsible for tackling cyber and hybrid threats.

- Respond to the shifted balance of power in the Black Sea. The EU and its member states should respond to mounting maritime security threats in the region and thwart Russia's efforts to turn the Black Sea into its exclusive sphere of privileged access. The EU can replicate the previously tested Coordinated Maritime Presences concept in the Black Sea. The EU will not be regarded as a credible maritime security actor in the Indo-Pacific if it cannot address similar challenges in its own backyard.

- Upgrade bilateral military assistance. Capable EU member states should join Lithuania and Poland in providing military assistance that can make a difference when it comes to Ukraine's ability to defend itself and deterring the Kremlin from aggressive policy designs towards Ukraine.
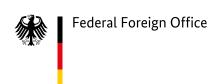
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This paper was presented in December 2021, two months before Russia launched its full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. Many, if not all, of the policy recommendations outlined in this paper back then may have looked unrealistic, far-fetched or downright illusionary. Yet, Russia's aggression has upended the European security order and many of the long-standing taboos in EU security and defence policy.

Today, most of the policy recommendations contained in this paper on how the EU can boost its provision of security to Ukraine have become reality. Moreover, as Ukraine is now on a path to become a member of the EU, Ukraine's integration into the European Defence Union will also progress.

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