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# THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Abstract: The emergence of the war in Ukraine, conditioned by the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the invasion of the Russian Federation in 2022 is, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the event that will have the greatest geopolitical implications for the international arena, including the European Union, in particular the Common Security and Defense Policy. The ongoing war involves a number of long-term effects on the security and stability of the European continent. The degree of possibility of some of the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war will be negligible and will be the subject of debates for academia, but also for Western political leaders for many years to come. The purpose of this article is to highlight the main issues that have taken place in the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union as a result of the outbreak of war in Ukraine. This will analyze the steps taken by the EU to ensure peace on the European continent. Some aspects of EU-NATO cooperation in the context of the war in Ukraine will also be highlighted.

Keywords: aggression, conflict, war, Ukraine, politics, security, European Union

### Introduction

The main feature of the 21st century is the presence of Russian-Western rivalry manifested mainly by the Russian-Ukrainian War, a war conditioned by

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the unjustified invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine marks the geopolitical rivalry in relations between Russia, the European Union (EU) and the United States (USA). It is also an unprecedented break in the Euro-Atlantic security order, which has deteriorated considerably since 2008<sup>3</sup>. The result of the war in Ukraine is, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the event that will have the greatest geopolitical implications on the international arena, including the European Union. The degree of possibility of some of the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war will be negligible and will be the subject of debates for academia, but also for Western political leaders for many years to come<sup>4</sup>.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war involve a number of long-term effects on the security and stability of the European continent. The civil wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the terrorist attacks on cities in the European space in the years 2000 and 2010, the destabilization of North Africa and the Middle East in 2011 and the occupation of Crimea by 2014, and, more recently the unjustified invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has led the European Union to adopt a common security and defense policy<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, in order to highlight the main aspects of the impact of the war in Ukraine on the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union, as well as for the purpose of elaborating this research we used a set of general-specific research methods, such as: phenomenological method, historical method and web graphic method.

The phenomenological method, as a method of research in philosophy, allowed the examination of the fundamental conditions and events (,, phenomena" which contributed to the acceleration, or the strengthening of the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union in the context of the war in Ukraine conditioned by the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the unjustified invasion of 2022 by the Russian Federation.

The use of the historical method allowed analyzes to be carried out on the strengthening of the EU Security and Defense Policy in the context of the war in Ukraine. There is still no research in the scientific literature of the Republic of Moldova on the impact of the war in Ukraine on the strengthening of EU security policy, the use of the web graphic method was used, which offered the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> F. Steinberg, J. Tamames, *La UE en el mundo tras la guerra de Ucrania*, <a href="https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/la-ue-en-el-mundo-tras-la-guerra-de-ucrania/">https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/la-ue-en-el-mundo-tras-la-guerra-de-ucrania/</a> (12.02.2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Invasión rusa a Ucrania cambiara el entorno de seguridad de Europa "durante décadas", <a href="https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/invasion-rusa-de-ucrania-cambio-el-entorno-de-seguridad-de-europa-durante-decadas-/6977069.html">https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/invasion-rusa-de-ucrania-cambio-el-entorno-de-seguridad-de-europa-durante-decadas-/6977069.html</a> (12.02.2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> A. Marrone, *Dove va la sicurezza europea?*, <a href="https://www.affarinternazionali.it/la-guerra-russo-ucraina-e-le-sfide-per-la-sicurezza-europea/">https://www.affarinternazionali.it/la-guerra-russo-ucraina-e-le-sfide-per-la-sicurezza-europea/</a> (12.02.2024).

possibility to examine the issue submitted to the research at theoretical and practical level from the main sources published on the websites.

# European security and defense policy in the context of the war in Ukraine

Over the last three decades, that is, since the end of the Cold War, security and defense issues have held a relatively peripheral position for the European political class. Presence of an active war for more than a year, high intensity on the European continent has led to an exponential increase in political and information interest in security and defense issues. Although since 1999, more than 23 years, the EU has a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) - in reality (CSDP), former European Security and Defense Policy or ESDP) was not really well outlined. Since 1999, European leaders have made it clear that the CSDP's goal was to provide Europe with the capabilities and mechanisms needed to conduct crisis management operations abroad, i.e. peacekeeping and stability operations in conflict zones. The territorial defense and deterrence against potential threats from European states were primarily within the competence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Thus, over the years, EU defense policy has therefore been a security policy, which has prioritized low- and medium-intensity capabilities and operations, as evidenced by experiences in the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The EU's emphasis on crisis management operations abroad can be explained by the fact that territorial defense and deterrence were NATO's objectives, which has an integrated and consolidated command structure, and the strategic and political opinion is represented by the leadership of the United States of America (USA). On the other hand, in the late 1990s, with the launch of the CSDP, defense and deterrence seemed to become superfluous, given the geopolitical and technological-military hegemony of the USA and the West. In this context, NATO itself is launching in the field of managing operations abroad, such as those in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Thus, in the last two decades, we see NATO and the EU coexisting in the field of crisis management operations abroad, with NATO generally dealing with, of those tasks which may involve fighting (high and medium-high intensity) and EU- involved in stabilization tasks bordering the police sphere and finding added value in the connection between the military (low intensity) and "civil" (police tasks, judicial advice or administrative and development policies). This task-sharing logic has worked over the last two decades, from the launch of the CSDP in 1999 to the last years. Now, however, we are entering a radically different geostrategic context, in which issues related to territorial defense and the discouragement of the great powers are again regaining their primacy in the debates on security policy. The return of threats from states such as the Russian Federation indicates a greater interest in defense, but also a different way of approaching defense issues, by focusing on territorial defense and deterrence to the detriment of crisis management operations abroad<sup>6</sup>.

The shock has also served in the international system in recent years as alarm signals for the European Union to be aware of the need to strengthen its defense capabilities. First, in the summer of 2021, the withdrawal of the US and NATO from Afghanistan, perceived as a substantial failure by the entire Western world has led many European leaders to return to the concept of "strategic autonomy". About six months later, the Russian invasion of Ukraine again forced European leaders into a new geopolitical reality<sup>7</sup>.

What is European defense specifically? The concept is in fact more evasive and less concrete. CSDP is, in essence, the political framework through which European Member States can develop a strategic culture with reference to security and defense, can jointly address conflicts and crises, they can protect the Union and its citizens and strengthen international peace and security. Over the years the EU has been endowed with specific financial, financial and cooperation instruments in the field of public or other procurement. The idea of the Common Security and Defense Policy dates back to 1948, when France, the United Kingdom and the Benelux countries signed the Brussels Treaty, which in 1954 led to, when the Western European Union was established, a politicalmilitary alliance that remained virtually inactive until the' 90s. The idea of creating a European army also dates back to the 1950s, although it has never been implemented before: France, in fact, after proposing the creation of the European Defense Community (CEDE), it did not ratify the Treaty. Since the 1990s, the themes of defense and security have once again taken up space in the European debate, with a number of initiatives leading precisely to the establishment of a common foreign and security policy framework and the strengthening of cooperation with NATO, making it more structured and sustainable. Moreover, concrete steps are being taken in the next three decades to seek the creation of a common strategic culture, as well as in launching initiatives to better integrate the armed forces of the Member States. The European Defense Agency (EDA) was established in 2004, the European External Action Service (EEAS or EEAS) was established in 2009, and a first relevant strategic document, the comprehensive European strategy was published in 2016. In addition, PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) was launched in 2017, allowing Member States wishing and able to develop

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> L. Simón, *Autonomía estratégica y defensa europea después de Ucrania*, <a href="https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/autonomia-estrategica-y-defensa-europea-despues-de-ucrania/">https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/autonomia-estrategica-y-defensa-europea-despues-de-ucrania/</a> (12.02.2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

defense capabilities together, investing in joint projects for the benefit of their armed forces and, consequently, of operational capacity at European level<sup>8</sup>.

Just one month after the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the member countries of the European Union adopted on March 10, 2023, in Brussels, at a time when we are witnessing the return of war to Europe, European Defense Strategic Compass – a new common defense policy that will allow the EU to establish rapid reaction forces<sup>9</sup>. The aim of the strategic compass is to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider. The EU must be able to protect its citizens and contribute to international peace and security. This is all the more important at a time when the war returned to Europe, following Russia's unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, and also at a time of major geopolitical transformations. This Strategic Compass will strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy and its ability to work with partners to protect its values and interests <sup>10</sup>.

A stronger and more capable EU in terms of security and defense will make a positive contribution to global and transatlantic security and complement NATO, which remains the basis of collective defense for its members. The EU will also step up its support for the rules-based world order, at the heart of which the United Nations is at the heart. The threats are rising and the cost of inaction is clear. The strategic compass is a guide to action. It sets out an ambitious path for our security and defense policy for the next decade. It will help us take responsibility for security, in front of our citizens and the rest of the world. The strategic compass provides a joint assessment of the strategic environment in which the EU carries out its actions and of the threats and challenges facing the Union. The document presents concrete and achievable proposals, with a very precise implementation timetable, to improve the EU's capacity to act decisively in crisis situations and to defend its security and its citizens. The compass covers all aspects of security and defense policy and is structured around four pillars: action, investment, partnerships and security<sup>11</sup>. The publication of the Strategic Compass, which set concrete goals to be

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> A. Marrone, *Dove va la sicurezza europea?*, https://www.affarinternazionali.it/la-guerrarusso-ucraina-e-le-sfide-per-la-sicurezza-europea/> (12.02.2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> *Une boussole stratégique pour l'UE*, <a href="https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/infographics/strategic-compass/">https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/infographics/strategic-compass/</a> (12.02.2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Une boussole stratégique pour renforcer la sécurité et la défense de l'UE au cours de la prochaine décennie, <a href="https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/">https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/</a> (12.02.2024).

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

achieved by 2025, is a more decisive and concrete document as opposed to the 2016 Global Strategy<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, the "Action" pillar provides that in order to be able to act quickly and firmly whenever a crisis breaks out, with partners if possible and on their own when necessary, the EU:

- will establish a strong EU rapid deployment capacity of up to 5,000 troops for various types of crises;
- will be prepared to conduct a CSDP mission of 200 fully equipped experts within 30 days, including in complex environments;
- will perform regular real exercises on land and at sea;
- will increase military mobility;
- will strengthen CSDP missions and operations (common security and defense policy) civilian and military promoting faster and more flexible decision-making, acting more firmly and ensuring greater financial solidarity;
- will make full use of the European Peace Instrument to support partners.

For the second pillar "Security", the EU will strengthen its capacity to anticipate, to discourage and respond to current and emerging rapidly evolving threats and challenges, as well as to protect the EU's security interests. To this end, the EU:

- will strengthen its information analysis capabilities;
- will develop a set of tools to counter hybrid threats and response teams in the event of hybrid threats that bring together various tools whose role will be to detect a range wide hybrid threats and respond to them;
- will further develop the toolkit for cyber diplomacy and establish an EU cyber defense policy to increase preparedness and respond to cyberattacks;
- will develop a set of tools for foreign information manipulation actions and for foreign interference;
- will develop an EU space strategy for security and defense;
- will strengthen the EU's role as an actor in the field of maritime security.

The third pillar of the Strategic Compass "Investments" requires the Member States to substantially increase their defense spending in order to respond to the collective ambition to reduce critical deficiencies in military and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> C. M. Banu, Politica de securitate și apărare comună a UE – de la Strategia globală (2016) la Busola strategică (2022). Spre reconfigurare prin efectul războiului din Ucraina? Studiu (12.02.2024).

civilian capabilities and to strengthen the European defense industrial and technological base. In this context, the EU:

- will exchange national targets for increasing and improving defense spending to meet our security needs;
- will provide additional incentives for the Member States to engage in collaborative capacity building and to invest jointly in strategic support factors and new capabilities generation of operating on land, sea, air, cyberspace and outer space;
- will drive technological innovation in the field of defense to close strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependencies.

For the fourth pillar "Partnerships", in order to address common threats and challenges, the EU:

- will strengthen cooperation with strategic partners such as NATO, the UN and regional partners, including the OSCE, the AU and ASEAN;
- will develop more appropriate bilateral partnerships with countries and strategic partners who share the same vision, such as the USA, Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, Japan and others;
- will develop adapted partnerships in the Western Balkans, in our eastern and southern neighborhood, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, including by increasing dialogue and cooperation, promoting participation in CSDP missions and operations and supporting capacity building<sup>13</sup>.

Thus, the EU Strategic Compass will help to strengthen a common European culture of security and defense and to define the right objectives and concrete goals for EU policies. It will address four different, interconnected areas: — crisis management missions; resilience; tools and capabilities; cooperation with partners. From this perspective, the EU Strategic Compass resembles the NATO programmatic document — The Strategic Concept — which sets out three pillars: collective defense, crisis management and security through cooperation. In fact, the adoption of the EU Strategic Compass was followed by the adoption of the next NATO Strategic Concept at the Madrid Summit on 29-30 June 2022<sup>14</sup>.

Collaboration with NATO has also been strengthened by the signing of a new cooperation agreement - Joint Declaration signed on 10 January 2023. This is the third joint statement, following the Warsaw Declaration of 2016 and the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> A. Marrone, *Dove va la sicurezza europea?*, <a href="https://www.affarinternazionali.it/laguerra-russo-ucraina-e-le-sfide-per-la-sicurezza-europea/">https://www.affarinternazionali.it/laguerra-russo-ucraina-e-le-sfide-per-la-sicurezza-europea/</a> (12.02.2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> R. Lupiţu, *UE aprobă luni Busola strategică a apărării, care prevede o forță militară de 5.000 de soldați și creșterea cheltuielilor pentru apărare*, <a href="https://www.caleaeuropeana.ro/ue-aproba-luni-busola-strategica-a-apararii-care-prevede-o-forta-militara-de-5-000-de-soldati-si-cresterea-cheltuielilor-pentru-aparare/">https://www.caleaeuropeana.ro/ue-aproba-luni-busola-strategica-a-apararii-care-prevede-o-forta-militara-de-5-000-de-soldati-si-cresterea-cheltuielilor-pentru-aparare/</a> (12.02.2024).

Brussels Declaration of 2018, as part of a partnership of over twenty years. The most significant aspect is probably the declaration of desire for "further strengthening of cooperation (EU and NATO) in existing areas, as well as its extension and deepening, in particular as regards geostrategic competition, resilience issues, critical infrastructure protection, and disruptive technologies, space, climate change security implications, as well as the manipulation of information and the interference of foreign actors.

In this sense, the most interesting innovation brought by the Strategic Compass was the proposal to create, by 2025, a rapid reaction capacity (European Rapid Deployment Capacity (EU DRC), in order to allow troops to deploy up to a maximum of 5,000 units in a non-permissive environment in response to different types of crises. About one year after the publication of the Strategic Compass on March 9, 2023, The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) approved a report to better define the characteristics to be assigned to this new instrument, which is considered key to the strategic autonomy of the European Union. The draft was then presented in plenary, which approved the resolution entitled EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (CDR), EU Battle Groups and Article 44 of the EU Treaty (TUE): "The path to follow".

The comparison between the EU's Rapid Deployment Capacity and EU fighting groups has been inevitable since the presentation of this new instrument, although in a closer analysis the two instruments differ substantially significantly. EU combat groups are defined as " multinational military units, generally composed of 1,500 staff each and are an integral part of the European Union's rapid response military capability to respond to emerging conflicts and crises around the world". These combat groups have been operational since 2007 and have contributed as a tool for defense cooperation and transformation, but for various reasons they have never been carried out at operational level. As an instrument falling under the CSDP umbrella, in fact, the decision on their use must be approved unanimously by all Member States. In addition – can be an even more decisive factor in discouraging their use - their operation provides for troops to be supplied on a rotating basis by Union countries and as their possible use be fully funded by any state that contributes in terms of people and equipment. For the CDR, the EU has decided to provide funding at central level. However, as these are measures relating to the Common Security and Defense Policy, the decision-making power remains in the hands of the Member States<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> S. Samorè, *Il momento della difesa europea: prospettive e criticità a più di un anno dall'invasione dell'Ucraina*, <a href="https://www.pandorarivista.it/articoli/il-momento-della-difesa-europea-prospettive-e-criticita-a-piu-di-un-anno-dall-invasione-dell-ucraina">https://www.pandorarivista.it/articoli/il-momento-della-difesa-europea-prospettive-e-criticita-a-piu-di-un-anno-dall-invasione-dell-ucraina</a> (12.02.2024).

Russia's invasion of Ukraine a year ago triggered a long-term transformation in European defense policy. The war in Ukraine has produced unprecedented political convergence in Europe, with a unanimous perception of the need to increase defense capacity. This unanimity corresponds to a renaissance of NATO's collective security dimension. But we can still ask ourselves the question of the future of this consensus on the use of a European Union military force. Suppose that the Council of the European Union already has the power to mobilize a rapid action force of 5,000 people, as proposed in the Strategic Compass. In the current context, it could certainly have helped to strengthen the Union's defense position in the neighboring Member States with Ukraine or Russia. Exactly what some EU and NATO members have already done in the NATO Response Force (NRF), whose capabilities have already been increased since 2014. If we expand the current scenario, it would seem difficult to think of a possibility of EU military intervention that does not fall within NATO's policy in Europe. A direct intervention of an EU force in Ukraine while NATO would remain defensively would be a misinterpretation at various levels. It would then be necessary to consider using this force in other scenarios,, outside NATO" (evacuation of citizens, peacekeeping interventions for low-intensity commitments, etc.)<sup>16</sup>

The current political moment is favorable to defense. It makes it possible to put the military issue back at the heart of the European debate, a return to a principle of desirable realism after a period marked by a paradigm of European economic and normative growth. Leaving aside the operational aspect of European forces that remain directly controlled by the Member States, it is also, legitimately, we think that the various statements of increases in military budgets could allow a real leap in the European military industry. The prospect of an integrated and unified civilian and military technology market at European Union level with the strengthening of strong public demand would allow for extremely favorable conditions for development, taking into account an existing mechanism in the United States, where defense spending plays an important role in technology development. Moreover, there are already institutional mechanisms, such as the European Defense Agency (AED), which are able to carry out joint military technological development programs and which can certainly benefit greatly from an increase in budgets.

The war in Ukraine is also a key moment in developing a European strategic autonomy. This political statement, which has been a real success since last year, offers the opportunity to benefit from the progress of the programs already launched by the commission by adding military spending to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Invasión rusa a Ucrania cambiara el entorno de seguridad de Europa "durante décadas", <a href="https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/invasion-rusa-de-ucrania-cambio-el-entorno-de-seguridad-de-europa-durante-decadas-/6977069.html">https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/invasion-rusa-de-ucrania-cambio-el-entorno-de-seguridad-de-europa-durante-decadas-/6977069.html</a> (12.02.2024)

common benefit. From this point of view, the Strategic Compass seems very weak because, if it evokes, through various measures, a strengthening of cooperation with a mechanism to stimulate multilateral cooperation in defense. Therefore, it would be desirable to rapidly amplify it with a European plan on the military side of "technological sovereignty" to prevent the restoration of autarchic reflexes in terms of defense spending and chapel multiplication which annihilates the effects of critical mass and technological progress.

Based on these reasoning, the conditions for a future vision of European defense should be laid down. The project to create European rapid response forces bringing together the contributions of different Member States, in order to have a common instrument that makes it possible for Europe to collective defense, which would in itself be a form of political response to the presence of war on the European continent<sup>17</sup>.

The war in Ukraine has changed not only relations between Russia and the rest of Europe, but also relations between the Member States of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Currently, in the context of the war in Ukraine, a new balance is emerging between the states belonging to Western Europe, on the one hand, and the states of Central and Eastern Europe, Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and northern European states (Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden). Prior to the war in Ukraine, the states of Northern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe were considered, in all respects, as a "junior partner" within the EU, given the supremacy of Franco-German relations that shaped and guided the debates on collective security issues. Under French influence, Western Europe has worked with both the EU and NATO to create a strategic military autonomy for Europe. The war in Ukraine has made this strategic orientation absolute.

The Eastern part of the North Atlantic Alliance consists of three groups of states, stretching from the Baltic Sea in the North to the Black Sea in the South, it is now forming the Eastern flank of NATO, which considers the United States to be the most important ally for protecting security, as well as for defending liberal democracies in Europe. The Eastern part of NATO perceives the United States as a key ally, able to balance the relationship between NATO's two wings (East and West). Neither France nor Germany, for various reasons, are able to do so. In fact, the United States resumed, under the presidency of Joe Biden, the same role they played in the most acute phase of the Cold War (1947-1962). The United States' commitment to Ukraine and its desire to ensure the security of Eastern NATO have set aside the false assumption that it is moving away from Europe, pivoting towards Asia, to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> La relance de la défense européenne et le conflit en Ukraine : dynamiques et paradoxes, <a href="https://www.frstrategie.org/publications/notes/relance-defense-europeenne-conflit-ukraine-dynamiques-paradoxes-2022">https://www.frstrategie.org/publications/notes/relance-defense-europeenne-conflit-ukraine-dynamiques-paradoxes-2022</a>> (12.02.2024).

control China, which tends to annex Taiwan by force. President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow on March 20-22, 2023, sealed the alliance, already forming for several years, between China and Russia. This new geopolitical reality presupposes the military presence of the United States in Central and Eastern Europe, essential for both European and Asian security. Following Russian aggression against Ukraine, NATO states have seen that without the decisive contribution of the United States, the war could have ended in 2022 with the defeat of Ukraine and the deletion of its state in favor of Russia. The strategic axis linking NATO's eastern flank and the United States thus emerged following Russian aggression on February 24, 2022, and was implemented during President Biden's visit to Kiev and Warsaw on February, 21 and 22, 2023.

In the Poland capital, the US president met with the nine heads of states from the Central and Eastern Europe, thanking them for their support for Ukraine since the beginning of Russian aggression. Following this meeting, the states of northern Europe (Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden) decided to further integrate their air forces, by signing NATO in Germany, a statement to that effect. These countries have more than 300 fighter jets, a considerable force that contributes to discouraging and defending NATO. This military cooperation allows Sweden (pending its accession to NATO, currently blocked by Turkey) to prepare its armed forces for integration into the Alliance system.

Of the Central and Eastern European states, two states - Poland and Romania – are at the forefront of NATO defense. Both states have a long border with Ukraine and have accepted hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees on their territory. One year after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Poland significantly increased its armed forces. Its military budget for 2022 is 2.4% of GDP. The goal for 2023 is to reach 4%, well above the 2% and desired by the 30 NATO members. The Polish army has 170,000 soldiers, a size comparable to that of Germany. Poland intends, according to Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak, to increase its army number to 300,000 troops in the coming years, to become the largest army in Europe. In turn, Romania has an army of 70,000 active soldiers, 60,000 members of the paramilitary forces and 55,000 reservists. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the country has doubled its investment in the military industry, allocating significant amounts in the purchase of military equipment. During 2023, Romania will host a defense innovation accelerator for research into new technologies that currently concern the military sectors: artificial intelligence, biotechnologies and innovative materials. Also, a major missile shield was installed in Romania at Deveselu. Also, at the Mihail Kogălniceanu military base, located 185 kilometers east of Bucharest, 2,000 American soldiers<sup>18</sup> are stationed.

## **Conclusions**

Currently, the European security architecture is going through a redefining phase, being determined by crises and multidimensional challenges, especially being redefined by the emergence of war in Ukraine. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has marked a turning point for Europe and will mark the memory of future generations. On the other hand, the Russian invasion made the European Union more united and that all its members — including Poland and Hungary to align themselves against the actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. We have also been present at the reactions of historically neutral countries, such as Sweden and Finland, which have reiterated their right to join NATO, and Switzerland, which has adhered to the economic sanctions of the European Union.

We are currently present at strengthening the military capabilities and capabilities of the European Union, the purpose of which is to ensure security on the European continent. Also, in the context of the war in Ukraine, we are present not only to promote Europe's strategic autonomy, but also to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation in ensuring European security, which in the future, will cause Russia to face a militarily strengthened Europe.

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