
Security, Defence, and the Future of Europe

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Editors

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Views from the Capitals



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Foreword

This excellent and important volume provides views on security and defence from the capitals. So let me give the view from Europe.

These contributions show that what unites us is greater than what divides us. The debate on defence is a European debate. We're clear about the threats that face us and that we must take action. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the defining moment in all Member States, triggering universal condemnation but also security concerns. Russia is universally seen as a threat to peace.

Certainly, this is less so in some Member States farther removed from the fighting. However, it is clear to all that Putin is challenging us, with drone incursions on the eastern border and drone provocations at airports across the entire European Union (EU). He could be ready to test the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) by 2030—or even sooner—according to intelligence service estimates. Actual Russian aggression against an EU Member State would have devastating consequences for all Member States and for the entire EU, politically, economically and militarily. If the storm comes, no one will escape the consequences.

Putin hates the EU because the massive economic and social success of the countries formerly under Soviet domination is a stark contrast with the collapse into oligarchy and corruption of Russia and the countries still under its sway. It is a constant reminder that there is a better way than the Putin way. Our power to inspire is an existential threat to the Putin regime.

Add to that the United States' (U.S.) increased focus on Asia, and it is clear to everyone that Europe must take more responsibility for its own defence. At the same time, it's also obvious that defence is primarily a responsibility for Member States. Together with NATO, they decide on defence budgets, capability needs and what they purchase for their defence. Member States operate their armed forces together with NATO.

I want to be clear about the EU's role. There will be no duplication. There is a clear division of labour, with NATO offering military power and the EU providing production power. The EU offers European added value: European laws, European funding and European coordination. This makes it possible for Member States to operate on a continental scale. Together in the EU Member States can achieve things no Member State can ever achieve alone. Delivering this European added value has been my mission as Commissioner for Defence and Space.

At the very beginning of my mandate, I said that it was my goal to have a “big bang” in defence. We now have that “big bang” in defence finances. At the historic June Summit, NATO set capability targets and agreed to increase defence spending to 3.5 % of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2035. If all Member States manage to meet their pledges, this means EUR 6.8 trillion for defence over the next 10 years.

The EU is helping Member States to meet these pledges, with unprecedented decisions on defence finances: EUR 150 billion in attractive Security Action For Europe (SAFE) loans backed by the EU budget; provision of budgetary flexibility by invoking the national escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact. We have also proposed a five-fold increase in European defence and space spending in the next multiannual EU budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), to EUR 131 billion from 2027 to 2035.

From the numbers, it is clear that the bulk of defence spending will come from Member States. Assuming an equal division, this would mean 100 times more than from the MFF. However, here there is one danger, namely that this increase in national defence spending will only increase fragmentation of production or spending outside the EU. This is why from the Union side we encourage not only spending more but also spending better and spending European. We incentivise joint development as well as joint procurement and joint production, with a prescribed 65% minimum level of European components in our EU instruments.

In the last years we have carried out successful initiatives to scale up ammunition production (the Act in Support of Ammunition Production [ASAP]) and joint procurement (the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act). We build on these successes with our European Defence Industry Programme, which will make it possible for Member States to work together in new ways on defence production. This allows the building of pan-European defence industry projects—European Defence Projects of Common Interest—which no Member State can ever build alone, but that will protect the whole of Europe.

We also support our defence industry with proposals and initiatives to reduce red tape for industry and transform our defence industry based on Ukraine’s battlefield experience, into a transformative ecosystem linking innovation, industry, testing and soldiers in the field within a constant loop. We have presented a proposal on military mobility, binding EU law to replace fragmented national rules, so troops and equipment can move in hours or days across Europe instead of months as is currently the case.

In short, we have achieved in the first year of the mandate what I call the opportunities for defence readiness. Now we must move on to the delivery phase.

Our Roadmap on Defence Readiness 2030 offers guidance for delivery, which makes it possible for Member States to fill the massive capability gaps, proposing defence industrial ‘flagship’ projects to protect the entire Union. These include the Drone Defence Initiative and Eastern Flank Watch, or Air Shield and the European Space Shield Initiative (ESSI) led by Member States, produced by industry, operated by NATO and Member States, supported by the EU.

In short, this is how European added value supports Member States. Here now are just a few points of general principle.

Firstly, security is a public service. We need defence to safeguard our societies, democracies and welfare states. Not investing in defence will have a much higher social cost: war.

Secondly, we need not only material defence readiness (weapons and equipment) but also institutional defence readiness to organise our defence readiness on the European continent.

It is time to build a European Defence Union. A new security architecture for Europe, which must also involve Ukraine, because there are now only two states with battle-tested armies on the European continent: Russia and Ukraine. That is why integrating Ukraine's defence industry is part of everything we do: purchasing equipment in, with and for Ukraine and learning from Ukrainian experience.

These contributions give the view from the capitals. I have given the European view and tried to provide some European added value.

As a final word: the EU is a project of peace.

Our goal in ramping up defence is not war, but to prevent war.

Our goal is to deter Russian aggression and preserve peace

Our policy is production, but our purpose is peace.

European Commissioner for Defence and Space

Andrius Kubilius

Why this Book?

Since the devastating world wars of the twentieth century, which claimed millions of lives, the EU's foundational narrative of “never again” has been standing at the core of its identity. It has allowed EU Member States and their neighbours to enjoy decades of peace and prosperity. Yet, war never completely disappeared. It merely shifted elsewhere, flaring up across other world regions and, repeatedly, on the European continent itself, from the Western Balkans and Chechnya to Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.

Si vis pacem, para bellum—if you want peace, prepare for war. Today, four years after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Europe faces intensified hybrid attacks, disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, acts of sabotage, assassinations and weaponised migration, while at the same time the transatlantic relationship with the U.S. stands on fragile ground. The European threat perception has changed fundamentally. Although countries still differ in their assessment of risks, a new understanding of security, deterrence and military preparedness has emerged. Since the Cold War ended, many European countries have placed their faith in diplomacy, multilateralism and trade while outsourcing hard security to the U.S. Today, the doctrine of *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade) appears to have failed. China, Russia and even the U.S. use dependencies as a geopolitical Trojan horse to increase leverage and undermine Europe's cohesion. However, defending the rules-based international order requires a stronger European answer by recalibrating the balance between diplomacy, economic resilience and military capability. Some argue that rearmament risks militarising European societies and fuels escalation, yet recent history also shows that failing to confront aggressors early on only increases their appetite for expansion. Adjusting the balance between diplomacy and deterrence has therefore become essential.

Having long benefited from America's conventional and nuclear security umbrella, Europe is now advancing towards a European Union for Security and Defence (EUSD). This will be an integrated framework going beyond the military dimension to encompass resilience, cyber-defence, critical infrastructure protection and societal preparedness. Finnish President Sauli Niinistö's 2024 report ‘Safer together: Strengthening Europe's civilian and military readiness’ and the ‘EU Strategic Compass implementation review’ from the same year both stress that collective preparedness must span every level of society.

Accordingly, in March 2025, the European Commission and the High Representative jointly presented the ‘White Paper for European Defence—‘Readiness 2030’’, setting out a roadmap to close critical capability gaps and consolidate a robust European defence industrial base. This paper operationalises the ReArm Europe Plan, proposing major investment in defence research and development, joint procurement of key military systems and strategic stockpiling. It also integrates the European Defence Industry Programme, endorsed by the European Council in June 2025, to accelerate production capacity for ammunition, air defence and advanced surveillance technologies.

While NATO remains Europe’s cornerstone of collective defence, the EU’s role as a security provider has expanded substantially. Between 2021 and 2024, Member States increased total defence expenditure by more than 30%, reaching an estimated EUR 326 billion in 2024 (around 1.9% of EU GDP). In 2025, the figure is projected to exceed EUR 350 billion, reflecting both national budgetary adjustments under the reformed Stability and Growth Pact as well as establishment of the European Defence Investment Fund. The ReArm Europe Plan and ‘Readiness 2030’ aim to mobilise at least EUR 800 billion in additional investment, structured around three pillars: Flexibility within fiscal rules (activating the national escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact to provide budgetary space approaching 1.5% of GDP for defence investment); Capital market mobilisation (jointly raising up to EUR 150 billion through the SAFE initiative); together with private and institutional leverage (mobilising private capital via the European Investment Bank (EIB) group and advancing the Savings and Investments Union to channel European household savings into strategic security industries).

Meanwhile, Russia’s military spending has surged by 240% since 2000 and China’s by over 600%. Despite diminished financial transparency, Russia’s military expenditure in 2024 is estimated at 7.2% of GDP (RUB 15.5 trillion), but with Russia’s GDP being approximately one-tenth of EU GDP. By contrast, the U.S. defence budget reached nearly USD 1 trillion in 2024, about 3.4% of its GDP. In addition, during the late summer 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague, Allies committed (with the tentative exception of Spain) to investing 5% of GDP annually on core defence requirements along with defence- and security-related spending by 2035. This new arms race is not merely about EU countries spending more, therefore, but about more efficient cooperation and expenditure.

In a world where deal-making, disruption and military might have become the new normal, the EU must find a way to consolidate its political, industrial and military capacities. It must learn to act strategically. To regain geopolitical relevance, the EU and its Member States, together with neighbouring and like-minded countries, will need to leverage economic power and transform their collective posture. Building a credible EUSD will not replace NATO, but it will help Europe to sit at the global security table.

This volume offers the much-needed preparatory groundwork, as it provides insights into the different mindsets and priorities, the willingness, concerns and fears in the 27 EU Member States and 15 neighbouring countries. Short, opinionated articles outline many answers to questions that complete the European picture,

explain the current challenges it faces and how these could potentially be overcome. Each country chapter ends with clear recommendations to the respective national governments and European decision-makers.

EU Security and Defence: National Contributions, Priorities and the Path Towards an EUSD

Across Europe, security and defence have moved from peripheral concerns to the very centre of political discourse. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has transformed threat perceptions and the urgency of rearmament. Yet, the EU's capitals interpret the idea of an EUSD rather differently.

Northern and Eastern EU Member States such as Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Poland and Denmark are now driving the agenda for stronger European defence integration. Estonia and Lithuania, facing direct Russian pressure, are investing record shares of GDP in defence (3–5%), maintaining robust conscription and calling for the EU to become a capability provider within NATO rather than a substitute. Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO has strengthened the northern flank and demonstrated that neutrality is no longer a viable long-term option. Denmark, historically one of the most transatlanticist states, has since Trump's second term turned markedly towards Europe, seeing the EU as the only dependable partner should America retreat from the continent. The same holds true for Norway and Iceland.

In Central Europe, countries such as Czechia, Slovakia and Croatia are pursuing modernisation and seeking a balance between NATO reliance and EU autonomy. Czechia, once cautious about EU defence, now supports joint U.S. systems. Croatia has raised defence spending to 2% of GDP and reintroduced conscription in 2025. However, the political wind of change and polarisation in many countries is likely to complicate European support for Ukraine still further.

Among the southern members, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece are advocating a pragmatic yet ambitious European approach, arguing that Mediterranean security (migration, energy, maritime and climate change) must feature alongside the Eastern threat. France continues to be the intellectual leader of European strategic autonomy, while Italy and Spain emphasise complementarity with NATO. In addition, costs for the military build-up and support for Ukraine are often at odds with budgetary possibilities and social spending.

Neutral states show more ambivalence, with Austria, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta and Switzerland remaining outside NATO. Austria insists on its neutrality, but is slowly increasing spending and participation in EU missions. The country's 2025 defence plan targets 2% of GDP by 2032, yet its armed forces still remain largely focused on disaster relief. Belgium and Luxembourg, though fully committed politically, have long used European cooperation as an excuse for under-investment; the fairy tale of a European army has masked decades of neglect. Under U.S. pressure, Belgium has finally accelerated its budget path towards 2%. Ireland feels far away from the conflict zone, while Cyprus clearly sees Turkey as its main threat.

Front-line states such as Bulgaria, Romania and Poland view the EUSD primarily as a reinforcement mechanism for NATO. Bulgaria's Black Sea exposure, combined with heavy modernisation (F-16s, Strykers, Rheinmetall joint plants), shows how smaller countries can link EU and NATO priorities. Poland, already spending well over 4%, is calling for an 'EU of defence' that strengthens deterrence, but warns against diluting NATO command.

While the United Kingdom (UK) finds itself between its 'special relationship' with the U.S. and the need for stronger defence cooperation with Europe, all European eyes seem to be set on Germany, with its plans for massive investments in its military and infrastructure.

Looking forward, the EU's capacity to 'walk the path' to an EUSD will depend on reconciling the different viewpoints. A core group (France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain, the Nordics) is likely to move ahead via 'coalitions of the willing' within the EU treaties. Full independence from NATO remains unrealistic, but gradual autonomy, such as joint procurement, intelligence, cyber-defence, air and space security, appears achievable. The main risk is internal division between those without budgetary room to invest, those reluctant to spend and the 'front-liners' ready to do whatever it takes. The EUSD thus emerges as a layered system of overlapping commitments.

EU Independence and the U.S. Role

Trump's second presidency has fundamentally altered European strategic thinking. The U.S. remains Europe's indispensable ally, but no longer its unquestioned protector.

In Denmark, the Greenland dispute and U.S. unpredictability turned Washington from a trusted partner to a potential medium threat level. In polls, an unprecedented 46% of Danes now see the U.S. as a threat. Hence, the Danish government is advocating European 'self-help', expanding security spending to 3% of GDP and seeking closer defence ties with northern neighbours.

Belgium offers a textbook case of dependence: the recent leap to 2% of GDP was achieved mainly to appease Washington. Political elites still regard the transatlantic link as vital, but stress that future cooperation must be "for us, not for the U.S.". Similarly, Czechia and Poland continue to rely heavily on U.S. technology (F-35s, Abrams, Patriots) yet fear American disengagement if Washington prioritises the Indo-Pacific.

By contrast, France interprets U.S. retrenchment as validation of its long-standing push for European strategic autonomy. Germany remains the pivot: still anchored in NATO, but under pressure to lead after the *Zeitenwende*, investing EUR 100 billion in rearmament and introducing voluntary military service. Berlin is stressing complementarity with its slogan "stronger Europeans, not weaker NATO".

Southern Europe follows a more nuanced line. Italy and Spain welcome U.S. backing in NATO, but support diversification of alliances in Africa and the

Mediterranean. Portugal stresses transatlantic continuity, yet also champions EU-Africa security partnerships to reduce dependence on U.S. naval power.

In Eastern and Northern Europe, particularly Estonia, Finland, Lithuania and Poland, the U.S. is still viewed as essential for deterrence. Estonian officials privately worry that a U.S.-Russia bargain ‘above Ukraine’s head’ could endanger Baltic security. Thus, Europe must simultaneously keep the U.S. engaged (“keep America in”) while building its own capabilities (“keep Europe up”).

Looking ahead, most capitals foresee the U.S. as a partner, but on a transactional basis. If Europe fails to pay the price and demonstrate burden-sharing, Washington might become a competitor rather than an ally. Hence, the EUSD concept is not anti-American but insurance against U.S. unpredictability.

Financing Defence Investments

Europe’s rearmament can rightly be called a fiscal revolution. Between 2022 and 2025, average EU defence spending rose from 1.3% to 1.9% of GDP; furthermore, the EU’s ‘White Paper on Defence Financing’ and the SAFE mechanism aim to mobilise EUR 800 billion by 2035.

Germany’s special fund remains the largest single investment (EUR 100 billion), yet delivery delays highlight the challenge of absorption capacity. France raised its multi-annual defence budget to EUR 413 billion for the period 2024–2030. Poland is already investing more than 4% of GDP, funding expansion through bonds and domestic industry; Estonia plans 5% of GDP by 2028, financed through new taxes and borrowing.

Among smaller states, Belgium has raised spending from EUR 7 billion to EUR 11 billion, using debt and one-off dividends from a state-owned bank. Public acceptance is lukewarm: only 17% support a higher value-added tax (VAT) to fund defence. Bulgaria reached NATO’s 2% target for the first time in 2025 and uses EU funds and U.S. arms deals; the Euro adoption in 2026 and the ‘escape clause’ will help exclude defence from deficit rules. Croatia plans 3% by 2030, financing purchases through growth rather than social cuts. Austria aims at 2% by 2032, but remains far below average (0.8% in 2025).

Northern states combine economic resilience with strategic purpose. Denmark’s increase to 3.2% of GDP was largely financed by growth, not cuts; Finland has reached 2.4%, focusing on readiness. Norway and Sweden are also investing heavily and integrating closely with EU procurement frameworks while retaining national control.

The EU’s White Paper is being widely welcomed for offering flexible tools, loans, tax incentives and exclusion of defence investment from deficit ceilings, but smaller and fiscally constrained members (Belgium, Bulgaria, Portugal, Greece) call for European Defence Bonds to ensure equity. However, critics fear that such common borrowing could spark fiscal moral hazard.

Overall, the fiscal trajectory is upwards, albeit uneven. Wealthier members (Germany, Nordics, Poland) can absorb higher spending, whilst fiscally fragile

states (Belgium, Portugal, Italy) are relying on EU support. The political challenge lies in more efficiency and explaining that security is a public good, not a competing budget item.

Public Opinion, Threat Perception and Awareness

Public opinion across Europe reveals striking contrasts. Using the traffic-light system based on Tu (2024) and Rousseau & Garcia-Retamero (2007), the picture is mixed, identifying particular regional patterns: ‘red’ peripheries with ‘green’ interiors.

Colour	Countries (examples)	Perception and framing
Red (high threat)	Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Denmark (re Russia), Cyprus (re Turkey), Romania, Bulgaria (re Russia)	Adversaries possess superior capabilities; imminent aggression feared; military and civil preparedness high; adversaries openly labelled ‘enemies’
Yellow (medium threat)	Czechia, Croatia, Slovakia, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Denmark (re U.S.)	Adversaries seen as capable but not immediate; partial preparedness; hybrid and cyber threats dominate discourse
Green (low threat)	Austria, Ireland, Malta, Switzerland, Portugal	Military aggression seen as implausible; neutrality, diplomacy, or distance from conflict reinforce complacency

Source: Own compilation based on chapters

Baltic and Nordic countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, Denmark) show a ‘red’ level of threat. Estonian surveys (May 2025) report 82% of respondents viewing Russia as an existential danger. Danish polls record 86% seeing Russia as an enemy, with 75% backing aid to Ukraine. Central Europe sits between ‘yellow’ and ‘red’: Czechia’s threat perception is a ‘yellow-red hybrid’, with strong institutional preparedness, but declining public enthusiasm for supporting Ukraine (circa 40%). Southeastern Europe displays mixed signals: Bulgaria rates Russia ‘red’, regarding migration and ‘yellow’ for cyber threats. Croatia identifies Russia as the main external challenge, yet only ‘yellow’ for direct threat, focusing instead on Western Balkan instability. Western Europe trends towards ‘green’: Belgium’s low perceived risk (‘green’) is indicative of its reluctance to fund defence; whilst Austria’s neutrality yields ‘green’ complacency. Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal) is generally ‘yellow-green’: threats are seen as diffuse (terrorism, energy, migration) rather than military. Cyprus remains ‘red’ due to Turkey’s occupation and hybrid warfare.

Public understanding of security interdependence remains limited. Countries with historical trauma (Estonia, Poland, Finland) show high awareness and readiness; societies with long peace traditions (Austria, Ireland) underestimate threats. Far-right and populist parties exploit this divide, portraying rearmament as leading to escalation. Austria’s far-right party slogan, “Neutrality protects us”, illustrates this. Some governments attempt to ‘translate’ the urgency, but again approaches differ: Denmark links defence to gender equality (female conscription); Czechia

and Belgium frame spending as protection against cyber and energy attacks; Bulgaria and Poland highlight national industry benefits—overall, a patchwork of interpretations that mitigates against the creation of a truly common European strategic culture.

Systems of Military Service Vary Widely

Across Europe, systems of military service vary widely, reflecting differing strategic cultures, constitutional traditions and threat perceptions. A number of states maintain compulsory service, though the details differ considerably. Finland continues to operate a robust conscription model for men, with around 75% of each cohort called up and service lasting between 165 and 347 days. Women may also volunteer. Lithuania reintroduced conscription in 2015, requiring service from young men while again women are allowed to volunteer. Cyprus mandates military service for all males over 18, currently set at 14 months. Austria also retains compulsory service, with strong public support for maintaining and even extending the current six-month term. Turkey also preserves compulsory military service for men as a core element of national defence.

Other states have recently revived conscription: Croatia reinstated mandatory service in 2025 for men, with voluntary service for women, providing two months of basic training and a monthly net salary of around EUR 1100; conscientious objectors may complete unpaid civilian service instead.

In contrast, a number of countries have abolished conscription and rely entirely on voluntary recruitment. Spain professionalised its armed forces in 2001 and retains an all-volunteer model without any political debate about returning to conscription. Romania has had voluntary service since 2007, though debates persist on whether to reintroduce compulsory service due to shrinking reserves; however, public opinion still leans towards voluntary forms of participation. North Macedonia abolished mandatory service in 2006 and maintains a professional, voluntary force, although its legal framework would allow reintroduction in emergencies. Bulgaria ended compulsory service in 2008 and now fields a professional army of nearly 27,000 personnel.

Various European states operate hybrid or selective systems. Norway applies gender-neutral conscription, but calls up only a portion of each cohort, as does Denmark. Meanwhile, Sweden reinstated gender-neutral conscription in 2017, requiring all 18-year-olds to undergo mustering, with selected individuals obliged to complete military training. Debates about reintroducing or reforming conscription have also re-emerged in Germany, compulsory service having been suspended in 2011. Political and societal discussions about its potential return have recently intensified, resulting in Germany's decision to introduce voluntary military service after months of wrangling. The government will not reintroduce conscription, but all 18-year-old males will have to fill in a questionnaire and young men will soon have to undergo mandatory physical examinations; in the UK, recruitment challenges have sparked debate about reinstating national service, although as yet no

plans exist, with conscription having ended in 1960; Montenegro continues to rely on voluntary service, but repeatedly revisits the question of whether mandatory service should be reintroduced.

Peace Talks and the EU's Role in Negotiations

Across Europe, there is broad recognition that the EU must play a more prominent diplomatic role in future peace processes between Russia and Ukraine. However, differences persist on how and when.

Eastern and Nordic states (Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, Finland) reject any premature negotiations that could reward aggression. They insist that peace must follow a Ukrainian victory and full territorial restoration. For them, EU leadership means long-term support, sanctions enforcement and accountability for war crimes.

Central and southeastern members (Czechia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Slovakia) combine firmness with pragmatism. Bulgaria's surveys show that 94% favour peace talks, reflecting a societal preference for diplomacy. Sofia advocates an EU-, NATO-, and UN-coordinated mediation once battlefield conditions permit, seeing itself as a bridge due to cultural ties with Russia. Croatia supports EU coordination, but warns that peace "must not reward the aggressor".

Western Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal) stresses diplomacy. France seeks "European seats at the table", arguing that Europe must not again depend on U.S.-Russia bilateralism. Germany, while upholding Ukraine's sovereignty, prepares for a "post-war order" centred on reconstruction and deterrence. Italy and Spain emphasise humanitarian diplomacy and energy security.

Neutral and non-aligned countries (Austria, Ireland, Malta, Switzerland, Serbia, Moldova) perceive mediation as their natural niche. Austria offered to host talks, yet its credibility eroded after joining the European Sky Shield Initiative. Russia now sees Vienna as 'performatively neutral'. Switzerland's traditional mediator role endures but is questioned after its alignment with EU sanctions. Serbia and Moldova, balancing between EU integration and Russian ties, could serve as regional facilitators if neutrality were perceived as genuine. Cyprus presents a unique perspective: its own experience of occupation makes it empathetic to Ukraine yet critical of double standards. Nicosia argues that Europe's credibility requires consistent enforcement of international law, including pressure against Turkey, and that the EU must set clear red lines on territorial integrity.

In summary, most European governments envisage the EU as co-architect of eventual peace, but timing and reality divides them. The north-eastern 'security first' camp sees peace talks only after victory; the southern 'diplomacy first' camp calls for immediate preparation of negotiation frameworks. A unified EU approach, combining deterrence, reconstruction planning and credible mediation, remains aspirational, but increasingly recognised, at least in Europe, as indispensable.

To conclude, this volume enhances our understanding of Europe as a continent in strategic transition under duress. The war in Ukraine has catalysed unprecedented convergence on the need for common defence, yet European unity remains fragile.

Threat perceptions range from existential ('red') in the east and north to complacent ('green') from the west to the south. Fiscal capacities diverge widely whilst public opinion oscillates between solidarity and fatigue.

This book in our series 'The Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals' takes us through a tremendously heterogeneous and vibrant political landscape of Europe and the trajectory is clear. We must move towards an EUSD that: complements, but does not replace NATO; seeks autonomy with openness; and aspires to a distinct role in building a lasting and just peace as well as security. Europe's ability to achieve this depends on three variables: sustained public support, equitable financing together with the political courage to match rhetoric with capability and strength.

As a guidebook, students and teachers, journalists and practitioners, but also the interested public may find the short overviews, scores of questions, differences and common ground provide the means to explore more deeply the breathtaking diversity that defines, sometimes divides, but ultimately unites this continent.

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Michael Kaeding
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List of Abbreviations

ASAP	Act in Support of Ammunition Production
AI	Artificial intelligence
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EEA	European Economic Area
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European People's Party
ESSI	European Sky Shield Initiative
EU	European Union
EUSD	European Union for Security and Defence
GDP	Gross domestic product
ISSA	Institute of Social Studies and Analysis
JEF	Joint Expeditionary Forces
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
RS	Republika Srpska
RNS	<i>Revue nationale stratégique</i>
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
VAT	Value-added tax