



EPPC 2022

EU DEFENCE AT A CROSSROAD

FINAL REPORT

OPENING NOTE

When the 2022 organizing team chose the theme of European Defence, back in September, we were far from imagining that just a few months later it would take on the relevance it has. While the evolution of the world in the 21st century had already made security a pressing issue for the EU, the prospect of war on European soil was a distant thought.

Geopolitics tend to be analyzed in the comfort of a safe environment, perhaps in a school like ours far away from any conflict zone. Too often geopolitics is considered a game, a game of power in which people are pawns to the states and their rulers. It is easy to forget the consequences of these games of power when one does not directly confront them. This is why voice must be given to those who suffer from the decisions of some power hungry dictators and from the complicit inaction of the international community.

We wanted, through this 14th annual edition of the European Public Policy Conference, to create a dialogue between testimonies of lived experiences and insightful analysis. While each keynote, panel, and workshop is independent from one another, there is one main thread running throughout our conference: understanding the state of the art of EU defence, its geopolitical situation in the world and identifying possible future evolutions.

On February 24th 2022, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia confirmed the importance of our topic on European defence. Suddenly a sovereign European country, partner of the EU, was under attack, threatening the European Union and its values. For seventy years the EU's member states have slowly worked together towards the construction of a democratic system that promotes the rule of law and respects human rights. After decades of peace on our continent, the everlasting struggle for democracy and against totalitarianism has now returned to our doorstep.

2022 Team

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THE 2022 EPPC TEAM



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PANEL SUMMARIES

THE ROLE OF THE EU IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Analyzing the situation from a continental perspective, the speakers identified the allies and opponents of the EU as well as possible areas of future tension. Boris Vormann began by arguing that the EU should endeavor to support and protect states that share democratic values against threatening states that aim at challenging the rule of law. Dr. Laura von Daniels followed by confirming that the EU institutions regularly condemn human rights violations of death sentences, infringement to the freedom of press, and the Uyghur genocide in China.

Dr. Zoe von Winck affirmed the importance of not abandoning African countries to China and Russia, highlighting that seventeen African countries abstained from

condemning Russia's actions. Along these lines, General Lieutenant Martin Schelleis argued for European support of military forces as corruption has shown that both military and political support are required to build stability there.

Finally, Elmer Schialer, addressed Latin America, insisting that although they had discrete relations with Russia, they were more culturally influenced by the West, maintaining strong ties with the EU. He believes however that Europe is losing its positive influence, identifying China as the real threat in Latin America. He explained that China was exploiting the slowness and ineffectiveness of the EU in different fields to extend its presence on this continent. He recommended that the EU take action by reinforcing its economic partnerships in Latin America to protect democratic values.





EASTERN EUROPE AS A STAGE FOR POWER POLITICS

Our panelists began by reiterating the importance of understanding history in continuity. The collapse of the Soviet Union, for example, should not be seen as a single event, rather it should be examined as an event whereby the Soviet Union continues to experience a process of disintegration as pointed out by Jaroslava Barbieri. Mariia Vladymyrova stressed that relations between Russia and Ukraine have been tense from the very beginning of Ukraine's independence in 1991. In retrospect, therefore, it is important to acknowledge that Russia's aggression actually started in 1991, prior to Putin becoming Prime Minister in 1999, due to the problematic dissolution of the Black Sea Fleet which was under formal jurisdiction of the newly independent

Ukraine. However, while such conflicts shaped Ukrainian foreign policy, notably after the invasion of Crimea in 2014, the EU has continued in their foreign policy approach of "Wandel durch Handel" towards Russia.

In the ensuing discussion on the current and potential sanctions against the Russian regime, Mariia Vladymyrova described the energy embargo as an effective measure to impact Russian security. That being stated she believes that there should be more transparency within the European Union, especially in relation to concrete implications and discussions on their accompanying costs.

Europe must start thinking seriously about European security. If Ukraine falls, then the entirety of the EU security architecture is in danger. Europeans need to understand that Ukraine must be supported with more than just words.

EU COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY & NATO: COMPLEMENTARITY & DIVERGENCE

The third panel began by examining the statement, “NATO is brain dead” by French President Emmanuel Macron. Ambassador Da Cruz, recognized that NATO was “ill” and that France had a history of not wanting to be subordinate to the US by pushing for an autonomous EU defence. A unified European defence system can only arise from a unified foreign affair system, which the EU currently lacks due to an inability to find a common minor denominator among member states.

Olga Korablyova then presented the Ukrainian perspective on the key challenges to the EU and NATO, explaining that Ukrainian security was supported by individual European countries rather than by the EU as a whole. She believes that the

long term envisioning of security in the world relies on NATO and that it was thanks to NATO that Ukraine could receive weapons. Following this,

Brigadier Jason Rhodes stated that NATO was the bedrock of EU defence. He felt the EU could not defend itself without NATO, noting that questions on the reliability of the USA arose from President Trump understandably defending American interests by asking European countries to do their share.

Democracy takes centuries to build from the bottom up, top down approaches are failing. European countries are lucky to have a democratic model, but they cannot force others to abide by the same one. For now, European security relies on NATO, however an EU voice and defence within NATO should be developed to tackle future challenges. The war in Ukraine can be the beginning of a new European cohesion, where the EU can strengthen its integration and secure a safer future.



KEYNOTE SUMMARIES

EUROPE'S GRAND STRATEGIC OPTIONS IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

Marina Henke presented the audience with three potential scenarios for the future of European defence. The first, a 'transatlantic renewal', would see the EU-USA military cooperation strengthened and coordinated. The second, the European strategic autonomy, is one that would imply heavy investments in European defence capabilities and the development of a European nuclear deterrent. The third scenario, 'minimal defence', draws inspiration from the Swiss model relying on non-military or neutral positions.

Henke's keynote introduced key challenges for the future of European defence. During the following days of the conference, the panels, workshops, and keynotes brought elements that allowed the audience to weigh the three scenarios.



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF RISING TENSIONS

Jhy Wey Shieh compared the situation in Ukraine to that of Taiwan, who is under threat of invasion, in this case China. The invasion of Ukraine should be a wake-up call for the USA and the European Union due to the potential dangers of a Russia-China alliance, who have promised to "scratch each other's backs".

Shieh observed that Europe was hesitant to support Taiwan, mainly due to not wanting military involvement abroad. The European Union however should have an interest in defence initiatives in the Indo-Pacific for the protection of its democratic values as well as for its economic interests, with every third euro made in Europe passing through this region. The keynote highlighted how democracies are threatened globally and need strong support and unity to resist authoritarian threats.

HOW RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE IS CHANGING THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Jaroslava Barbieri highlighted the pressing questions of EU enlargement prospects, military power, and the accompanying prevalence of disinformation being released, that this invasion has raised for the future of EU security. Putin is now fighting a war of attrition, after the failed attempt to take key Ukrainian cities in a blitzkrieg failed. Civilians have been deliberately targeted to pressure the Ukrainian government into accepting Russian conditions.

Barbieri depicts a politically and economically isolated Russia with mass social discontent, due to Putin's brutal military action against Ukrainians and the implications of sanctions. Looking ahead, Russian youth will be torn between further militarization or leaving the country, thereby contributing to an ongoing brain drain. This also brings about an ideological confrontation between democracy and autocracy.



NATO IN UKRAINE AND GEORGIA: HOW 2008 LED TO 2022

Elene Tskhadadze quoted a statement by Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on April 25, 2005, "The breakup of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century". In her opinion, this represents the cornerstone of Russia's foreign policy towards its neighbours. While Putin reflects on what he sees as a glorious age of unity and stability for the Soviet Union, others experienced 70 years of tyranny, terror and a yearning for independence and self-determination. Reminders of past tyranny, such as the man-made Holodomor famine where 4 million Ukrainians lost their lives, the 2008 separatist-sanctions in Abkhazia and Ossetia, as well as 2014, in Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, all representing lessons Europe never learned. The wars fought by Georgians, Moldavians and Ukrainians have all been wars for the principles of democracy, territorial integrity, freedom of choice, peace, and the right of self-determination.

WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

FOREIGN INTERFERENCES AND CYBERSECURITY

Kaan Sahin looked at the ongoing Russian invasion in Ukraine and assessed the importance of cyber operations there. Johannes Steger explained background knowledge, covered the role of Hacktivists as hackers who see themselves as political activists and how their participation in the generation and spreading of fake news can influence both active wars as well as threats of war.



FRONTEX

Bernd Kasperek provided information on the various developments of FRONTEX. An interactive discussion arose with questions on accountability, reform, and shortcomings inside the agency. The workshop opened debates on border protection, migration, and human rights, especially in the Mediterranean with its numerous reports of illegal pushbacks.



MILITARY LOGISTICS

Lieutenant General Schelleis highlighted Germany's role as an important transit zone, due to its location in the heart of Europe. Well-functioning military logistics for combat readiness is crucial as the ongoing war in Ukraine has proven. Schelleis further explained the role of military logistics during non-conflict related crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.





FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Caroline Färber went through different definitions of feminist foreign policy, how it translates into practice, and how it centers around individuals. Nicola Popovic explained the feminist foreign policy agenda of needing to re-think foreign policy, negotiate and communicate differently, and act differently, calling for more empathy and kindness as recognized qualities in leaders to begin with.



EUROPEAN AND INDIAN SECURITY RELATIONS

Tomasz Lukaszuk explained how the military is just one aspect of security, and how energy is important to India in terms of the Russia Ukraine conflict. Discord between Europe and China is becoming more obvious, particularly in light of China's failure to condemn Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. Tension is also increasing between India and China, however India can also be a significant ally to the EU in the development of Africa, providing another perspective to the EU's view.



CONFLICT PREVENTION AND SECURITY BUILDING

Asena Baykal and Michelangelo Freyrie, spoke at the workshop on Conflict Prevention & Security building. While the workshop was moderated, it turned into more of a lively discussion with the audience. Additionally, to dispelling misconceptions on what Conflict Prevention actually entails and answering content related questions, the listeners were also provided with insights on what a career in that field would look like.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The words given in a speech by Pericles in 430 B.C in honor of the Athenians who died in the war against Sparta, strikingly resonate with the current events.

"Our government is called a democracy because it is in the hands of the many and not of the few. Our laws secure equal justice for all in their disputes, and our public opinion welcomes and honors talent in every achievement, not for any sectional reason, but on grounds of excellence alone. Open and friendly in our private relations, in our public acts we keep strictly within the law. We recognize the restraint of reverence; we are obedient to officials and laws, especially to the laws that protect the oppressed and to the unwritten laws whose violation brings admitted shame.

Yet ours is no work-a-day city only. No other provides so many recreations for the spirit—contests and sacrifices all year round, and beauty in our public buildings to cheer the heart and delight the eye day by day. Moreover, this city is so large and powerful that the wealth of all the world flows into her, so that our own products seem no more homelike to us than those of other nations.

In education, our enemies laboriously cultivate courage from early youth, while we live at ease, and yet are equally ready to face danger when it arises.

We love beauty without extravagance, and wisdom without unmanliness. We employ wealth, not as a means to vanity and ostentation, but as an opportunity for service. To acknowledge poverty is no disgrace; the true disgrace is in making no effort to overcome it. If few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the lack of full information which is gained by discussion prior to action.

Athens is the school of all Greece, and Athenians yield to none in independence of spirit, versatility of accomplishment, and complete self-reliance in limbs and brain. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the state."

As Russia invades Ukraine, history reminds us that democracy is fragile. We hope that by the end of this 2022 conference report you now understand what can be done to defend democracy.





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A NEW STRATEGIC COMPASS FOR EUROPE

