

THE MAIN RESPONSE TO REAL CHALLENGES FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION: STRATEGIC COMPASS

Summary. *Considering the current landscape of security risks in the European region and the world (open military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, state terrorism, humanitarian disasters, etc.), we investigate the key provisions of the 'European Union Strategic Compass' which represents the 'common strategic vision' of the EU security and defense policy for the next 5-10 years. The Strategic Compass answers for the question which security policy should the EU provides to its citizens, and emphasizes that Member States must operate faster and more decisively to protect values and interests and to contribute to international peace and security. We analyzed the key security trends and threats on the European Union global and regional levels. It is emphasized that the 'Strategic Compass' identifies a wide range of risks and problems that characterize the security of the European Union, despite the fact that different Member States perceive threats in their own way. It is argued that today the EU must develop a broad political consensus and a strong political will to maintain peace and security.*

Key words: *European Union, Strategic Compass, European security, war.*

КЛЮЧОВІ РЕАКЦІЇ НА СЬОГОДЕННІ ВИКЛИКИ ДЛЯ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ: СТРАТЕГІЧНИЙ КОМПАС

Анотація. *Враховуючи сьогоденний ландшафт безпекових ризиків у європейському регіоні та світі (відкрита військова агресія РФ проти України, державний тероризм, гуманітарні катастрофи тощо) з'ясовано ключові положення*

¹ **Дорош Леся**, кандидат політичних наук, доцент кафедри політології та міжнародних відносин Національного університету «Львівська політехніка», lesia.o.dorosh@lpnu.ua

² **Лемко Юлія**, кандидат політичних наук, старший викладач кафедри політології та міжнародних відносин Національного університету «Львівська політехніка», yuliia.r.lemko@lpnu.ua

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«Стратегічного компасу ЄС», який представляє «спільне стратегічне бачення» політики ЄС у сфері безпеки та оборони на наступні 5-10 років. Стратегічний компас дає відповіді на питання щодо того, яким постачальником безпеки для своїх громадян повинен бути ЄС, наголошує, що країни-члени повинні діяти швидше і рішучіше, щоб захистити цінності та інтереси та зробити внесок у міжнародний мир і безпеку. Проаналізовано ключові безпекові тенденції та загрози на глобальному та регіональному рівні ЄС. Наголошено, що «Стратегічний Компас» визначає широкий спектр ризиків і проблем, які характеризують безпеку Європейського Союзу, попри те, що різні держави-члени сприймають загрози по-своєму. Стверджується, що сьогодні ЄС повинен виробити широкий політичний консенсус і сильну політичну волю у сфері підтримки миру та безпеки.

Ключові слова: *Європейський Союз, Стратегічний компас, європейська безпека, війна.*

Until February 24, 2022, it was common to believe that from March 2020, the world was experiencing the worst crisis of the XXI century. It was about the Covid-19 outbreak, the subsequent national quarantines and their consequences for societies, economies, and individuals that led to a rethinking and revision of concepts which are an integral part of the glossary of the modern political community. With the beginning of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war on February 24, 2022, we are understanding that the threats to peace, security, human freedom and democracy are acquiring new and catastrophic shades. So, the Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the global understanding of peace and security like never before. According to researchers, this revealed a key weakness of the policy aimed at achieving peace, security and prosperity: the ability to fight with the unexpected³. And it was not the disease that came as a surprise, but aggression and terrorism on the part of Russia and its authoritarian leader. Therefore, the readiness to confront such threats on a global scale and in the EU was tested and it was found that it is, if not insufficient, then absent at all⁴.

³ Peace and Security in 2021. Overview of EU action and outlook for the future. Study, *EPRS. European Parliamentary Research Service*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU\(2021\)690669](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2021)690669)

⁴ Daniel Fiot, Marco Zeiss. Yearbook of European security 2021, *EU Institute for Security Studies*, 2021, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/YES_2021.pdf

The current landscape of security risks is clearly pronounced today: we talk about open military aggression, state terrorism, humanitarian catastrophes, and so on. And this is not just about Ukraine, but about Europe and the whole world. We habitually explain the multidimensionality of modern threats, taking into account in their analysis the combination of traditional and new aspects: from the activities of transnational criminal networks, terrorism to the destruction of arms control regimes, climate security risks, cyber attacks and hybrid warfare. European analysts emphasize the scale and complexity of these factors, showing that none of the countries has the strength or resources to address these threats alone, and that Europe must act together⁵. According to the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), the autonomy which concern autonomous decision-making, implementation and action on a certain level of ambition is ‘important for the EU’s ability to promote peace and security inside and outside the Union’⁶.

The multidimensional nature of emerging threats requires new approaches to peace and security, combining conventional notions of power with new scientific methods, including predictions, to assess the impact of variables such as natural resources, demographics and technology on security policy-making. According to the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), ‘we live in a world of predictable unpredictability’⁷. Already in 2019, before the outbreak of Covid-19, the report on global trends until 2030, prepared by the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, predicted that the EU is faced with a choice between strategic action and strategic inaction. Anticipating new relations with the United Kingdom, re-establishing the partnership with the United States and defining China’s global role considering the population migration, destructive technologies and accelerating climate change, all this

⁵ Peace and Security in 2021. Overview of EU action and outlook for the future. Study, *EPRS. European Parliamentary Research Service*. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU\(2021\)690669](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2021)690669)

⁶ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy, June 2016. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

⁷ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy, June 2016. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

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indicators pressure on the EU to respond the specific and purposeful answer to it external challenges.

In the time of open Russian military aggression in Ukraine, the intensified of strategic competition between states and complex security threats, the security of a united Europe is also at stake. It is not surprisingly, that in this security environment, global actors of all kinds are faced with the necessity to review and adapt their security strategies and maintain stability to the nowadays. After 2014, the recognition of new threats to peace and security was reflected in the national security strategies (or equivalent strategic documents) of all members of the UN Security Council, the EU and other G20 Member countries. The EU's Global Strategy, launched in 2016, raises concerns about the state of the world, describing the current times as 'times of existential crisis inside and outside the European Union'⁸. It was a long-term violation of European security in the East; the rise of terrorism and violence in North Africa and in the Middle East, as well as in Europe itself; lagging economic growth in some parts of Africa; rising security tensions in Asia; disturbances caused by climate change; and foreign influence through the spread of misinformation – all these threats are enshrined in the strategy⁹.

In order to achieve their goals of responding to the crisis, building capacity and sustaining and protecting Europe's peace and security, the Member States were required to strengthen defense, spending, maximize resource efficiency and meet a collective commitment of 20% of defense budget expenditure. equipment and research and technology. In response to the need for a stronger and more capable European Union in security and defense, the Juncker Commission was initiated (The Juncker Commission), and was later replaced by the von der Leyen Commission(The von der Leyen Commission), within which the Directorate General of Defense Industry and Space was established (The Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DEFIS), DG DEFIS), operating from January 2020.

⁸ Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy, June 2016. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

⁹ Peace and Security in 2021. Overview of EU action and outlook for the future. Study, EPRS. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU\(2021\)690669](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2021)690669)

According to the High Representative of the European Union of the Foreign Affairs and Security Policy J. Borrell, the security environment is ‘becoming less secure’ and ‘if we want to stay safe, we cannot afford to lower our ambitions for our security and defense.’ ‘Strategic autonomy’ is not about unilateral action, but about providing the means to reduce external dependence by continuing to work with partners in a multilateral environment.

Its effectiveness stems from the ability to achieve the expected result, relying on appropriate tools and resources. The preconditions for achieving an effective result of ‘strategic autonomy’ are political will and ability to act.

Although strategic autonomy has been the focus of political debate in recent years, the pandemic has highlighted the EU’s vulnerabilities and dependencies that go beyond the original (protection) sphere of discussion.

Technological and medical autonomy, digital sovereignty, but also self-sufficiency in energy and resources are all part of a renewed commitment to strengthening the EU’s ability to act independently in the global arena, building on resilience at home.

Although strategic autonomy has become a concept used in all policy areas, much of the EU’s attention has been paid over the past four years to planning some degree of security and defense autonomy, which seems to be more important in a geopolitical context. Work on ways to reduce duplication and benefit collectively, the joint defense research and development, and engaging the interacting mechanisms of other international organizations. The development of a common strategic culture, a common understanding of the environmental strategy – through the ‘strategic compass’ – along with practical efforts to coordinate or join the capabilities and further development of joint EU operations, will be the focus of politicians and officials in the coming years. Strategic autonomy is a necessary condition for the gradual formation of EU defense policy, included in Article 42 (2) of the Treaty on European Union and directly related to peace through Article 42 (1)¹⁰.

So, on June 16, 2020, the Ministers of Defense of the European Union began to develop a new initiative in the field of security and defense called ‘Strategic Compass’. It is a document that represents a ‘common strategic

¹⁰ The Treaty on European Union, *EUR-Lex*. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>

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vision' of EU security and defense policy for the next 5–10 years. The strategic compass must answer the question of which security provider the EU will provide to its citizens, and emphasizes that member states must act faster and more decisively to protect values and interests and contribute to international peace and security. Compass itself envisages strengthening and focusing on the level of the EU's security and defense ambitions, as agreed in November 2016.

Thus, the development of the Strategic Compass was initiated to provide specific operational guidance and goals in the areas of crisis management, resilience, capacity building and partnership. Compass will also help build greater coherence between existing EU security and defense instruments and mechanisms, such as EDF, PESCO and CARD¹¹.

It all began with an informal meeting of defense ministers on 4 and 5 March 2020 in Zagreb, Croatia, to promote the need for a joint EU threat analysis.

The development of Compass has become a 2-year process aimed at ensuring an enhanced political and strategic direction of the EU's security and defense and the level of its ambitions in this area. This is not about replacing the EU Global Strategy, but about further improving it. The level of the EU's ambitions in this area, agreed in November 2016, relate to: (i) participation in crisis management; (ii) supporting capacity development for partners; and (iii) the protection of the EU and its citizens. However, the Global Strategy did not provide further clarity on how the EU should perform these tasks operationally. Moreover, the level of ambition should undoubtedly be assessed in the light of the transition to a more competitive geopolitical context and rapidly evolving technological trends. So, this is the gap that Compass is designed to fill by better linking strategic, operational and EU needs. Based on this, the first step in the process of developing the Strategic Compass was the analysis of the threats facing the EU to determine their nature and severity, in the short and medium term (during 2025-2030 years)¹².

¹¹ Daniel Fiot, Marco Zeiss. Yearbook of European security 2021, *EU Institute for Security Studies*, 2021. URL: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/YES_2021.pdf

¹² Fiott D. 'Uncharted territory? Towards a common threat analysis and a Strategic Compass for EU security and defence', *EUISS*, Brief No 16, July 2020. URL: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%2016%20Strategic%20Compass_0.pdf

The work on the Strategic Compass officially began following the Council's conclusions on security and defense in June 2020. Accordingly, the Council invited the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Borrell, to present by the end of 2020 a comprehensive analysis of the Union's key threats and challenges, its Member States and citizens, including global and regional threats, and neighboring conflicts. and non-state actors. The intelligence was to be conducted by (the Union's Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) in the close collaboration with the national intelligence services, and formed the basis for the Strategic Compass.

The Threat Analysis was carried out, resulting in a secret intelligence report identifying key security trends and threats at three levels:

- 1) on the global level: slowing globalization, growing economic rivalry between world powers, climate change and competition for resources, migratory pressures and threats to the multilateral system;
- 2) on the regional level: regional instability, conflicts, state weakness, interstate tensions, external influences, destabilizing influence of non-state actors;
- 3) at EU level: governmental and non-governmental actors target the EU through hybrid instruments, including subversive technology, disinformation and other non-military sources of influence; terrorist threats¹³.

In general, the Strategic Compass includes 4 key components of the EU's common strategic vision for security and defense:

- 1) action, that is increasing the readiness of EU armed forces and civilian experts to strengthen SPBO missions and operations; developing the European Union's Rapid Deployment Capacity for up to 5,000 troops with the support of strategic actors;
- 2) Invest – joint investment in key military capabilities for land, sea, air, cyberspace and outer space; intensifying research and innovation to fill strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependence;
- 3) secure – strengthening the ability to prevent, deter and respond to hybrid threats, including external cyberattacks and manipulation of foreign information and interference; protection of EU security interests in the maritime and space spheres;

¹³ A Strategic Compass for the EU. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/towards_a_strategic_compass-2021-11.pdf

4) Partner – strengthening cooperation with NATO and the UN, as well as with the OSCE, AU and ASEAN; deepening cooperation with individual partners, such as the United States, Canada, Norway and other countries¹⁴.

In addition, on November 9, 2020, The European External Action Service (EEAS) published a roadmap for climate change and defense. The roadmap outlined a number of EU actions on the links between climate change and defense, including in the context of The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and the broader link to climate security. The roadmap covers three interrelated areas of short-, medium- and long-term action, including operational measurement, capacity development and strengthening multilateralism and partnerships. The document acknowledges that climate change will affect CSDP missions and operations, and emphasizes that ‘changing weather conditions and increasing extreme weather events will affect the frequency of deployment, CSDP tasks and working conditions.’ Climate change and environmental degradation may exacerbate existing tensions in the conflict, which will eventually lead to increased violence and additional humanitarian needs, which may increase the demand for military and civilian CSDP missions and operations. In the same vein, large areas of inhospitable territories may no longer be under effective state control and become a safe haven for enemy forces. Due to more frequent and severe weather events, the armed forces of the EU Member States may also be more frequently involved in disaster relief and assistance, both inside and outside the EU border¹⁵.

The Strategic Compass was formally approved by the European Council on 21 March 2022. Thus, the Strategic Compass has unified the basic principles and responses of the EU in the field of security and defense until 2030. He also noted that member states have the opportunity to more actively influence the security and defense sphere¹⁶.

¹⁴ A Strategic Compass for the EU. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/towards_a_strategic_compass-2021-11.pdf

¹⁵ Climate Change and Defence Roadmap. Working document of the European External Action Service, 06/11/2020, *European External Action Service*. URL: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12741-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁶ Michaela Ungureanu. EU’s Strategic Compass for Security and Defence: A New Approach in 2021, *FINABEL*, 2021. URL: <https://finabel.org/eus-strategic-compass-for-security-and-defence-a-new-approach-in-2021/>

In this context, it should be noted that the work on the Strategic Compass was accompanied by a broad political debate on the importance of strategic autonomy. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Borrell, also joined the discussion, noting that strategic autonomy is a ‘process of political survival’. In this context, our traditional alliances continue to be important. However, it will not be enough. As power gaps shrink, the world will become more transactional, and all nations, including Europe, will also tend to be more transactional. This is the inevitable truth¹⁷.

Thus, the Strategic Compass identifies a wide range of risks and issues that affect the security of the European Union, despite the fact that different Member States perceive threats differently.

The point is that the European Union must give priority to immediate threats from now, as the EU does not have the resources to deal with all the conflicts and threats of each country. Thus, Union officials need to persuade the 27 Member States that have their own problems and threats to identify and agree on their priorities.

If the Strategic Compass is designed to unify these threats and set priorities, then each member state must support it, not just powerful countries such as France and Germany¹⁸.

For the successful implementation of the Strategic Compass, which will really bring results, requires integration into the protection processes and strategies of individual Member States. The political will of each EU Member State depends on the concurrence of the security interests of individual countries with the priorities proposed in the Compass.

The analysts confirm that the Compass should be the link between the most of the tools and capabilities which already working on the European Union level. That is, at first, the EU must explain what the Union’s objectives are and what military capabilities it needs, based on those that already exist.

¹⁷ Peace and Security in 2021. Overview of EU action and outlook for the future. Study, *EPRS. European Parliamentary Research Service*. URL: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU\(2021\)690669](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2021)690669)

¹⁸ Monika Sus. The EU Strategic Compass’ three principles: inclusivity, integration, and implementation, *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, 2021. URL: <https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Essay-4-The-EU-Strategic-Compass.pdf>

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Secondly, EU countries need to agree on whether it should play a significant role in territorial and high-intensity operations, or in crisis management in less important areas, particularly in areas where NATO has little experience, such as protecting critical infrastructure from cyberattacks. If the Strategic Compass provides the institutional framework for the security architecture and connects and forms existing instruments, it will put at the end to the chaotic number of strategic documents that from time to time limit the Union's role as a geopolitical entity. In addition, Compass will potentially be able to concretize the still vague concept of the geopolitical Union, as well as determine which player the European Union wants to be in the field of security and defense, in particular to develop key priorities for the next decade^{19,20}.

The main proposal of the document is that the countries of the Union have the opportunity to quickly deploy up to 5,000 troops to counter numerous potential threats. Instead of a permanent force under the command of the Brussels commander, rapid response teams will be made up of troops from all EU member states to carry out a specific task.

These tasks can range from evacuation missions, for example in Afghanistan, to peacekeeping or humanitarian missions, including at the border. It is noted that not all EU countries will take part in one or another mission, but the decision to deploy troops on behalf of the EU will require the coordination and involvement of all member states.

Although Eurosceptic ridicule of the idea of an idea 'EU army' means that the latter proposal is far from the 1999 target of 60,000 troops ready for deployment at any time, it is still ambitious and, unusually for a multilateral EU, widely supported by all 27 Member States. The document also described the need for a common approach to defense procurement, research and intelligence to make the EU more competitive and efficient. It recognizes that for realization this, the national and EU spending must increase and focus on filling the gaps that currently exist across the EU.

¹⁹ Monika Sus. The EU Strategic Compass' three principles: inclusivity, integration, and implementation, *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, 2021. URL: <https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Essay-4-The-EU-Strategic-Compass.pdf>

²⁰ Michaela Ungureanu. EU's Strategic Compass for Security and Defence: A New Approach in 2021, *FINABEL*, 2021. URL: <https://finabel.org/eus-strategic-compass-for-security-and-defence-a-new-approach-in-2021/>

European officials, diplomats and politicians from various EU countries agree that the EU needs to take steps to maintain security. In general, it sounds like this: something needs to be done to keep Europe safe. In particular, Italian Ambassador to the EU Pietro Benassi said that Europe could ‘build a common strategic culture’ and that the plan would provide impetus to achieve this goal. Undoubtedly, the most active country is France. President Emmanuel Macron does not hide his dream of a stronger Europe with greater integration in foreign affairs. He even called for a ‘true European army’ to reduce Europe’s need for US-led NATO protection. The French president’s ambitious goal was to agree on a Strategic Compass in March 2022, while France will hold the EU presidency.

However, there are some differences. For example, such countries as Poland, Estonia and Lithuania support the plan, but only if the formal agreement specifically refers to the threat posed by Russia and, to a lesser extent, China. The deputies of European Parliament and former Lithuanian Defense Minister Rasa Juknevičienė claims that ‘only the EU can solve’ the hybrid threats it faces from hostile actors in Russia and China. However, she is concerned that if the bloc fails to agree on issues ranging from cybersecurity, military capabilities, a more ‘realistic view of Russia’ and, above all, spending, then, as Greta Thunberg says, it will simply be ‘blah -bla-bla’²¹.

Currently, the document refers to the return of the war to Europe after Russia’s unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, as well as serious geopolitical changes that determine the need to strengthen the EU’s strategic autonomy and its ability to work with partners to protect its values and interests²². The EU’s eastern states have also expressed concern about any plan that would undermine NATO. The Scandinavians are also concerned about Russia’s actions. Diplomats and officials from these countries explained that ‘in this part of the world we are at real risk

²¹ Luke McGee. The EU realizes it can't rely on America for protection. Now it has a blueprint for a new joint military force, *CNN*. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/20/europe/european-union-security-analysis-intl-cmd/index.html>

²² A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade, *Council of the EU*, 21 March 2022. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>

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from Russia' and made it clear that 'the transatlantic alliance needs to be strengthened as part of any broader EU plan.' Officials from Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden have expressed doubts about the defense strategy. According to them, the EU may never need a rapid reaction force, while the money will be spent on them. Former Prime Minister of Finland Alexander Stubb believes that Brussels' renewed enthusiasm for security is 'timely, important and realistic. The United States is not going to support European security forever. ' It says that if Europe wants to take itself seriously, 'it must understand that the line between war and peace is blurring. Soft force was used in weapons and became a hard force. We see that asylum seekers use it as a weapon. We see that information, trade, energy and vaccines are being used as weapons. The last piece of the puzzle is Germany. Due to the change of government, opinions on the Strategic Compass may change in this country. However, despite all the potential pitfalls, there is sincere optimism that these differences can be overcome if everyone becomes realistic and serious²³.

The EU has largely praised his sincere ambitions, and analysts hope they will be able to reach a meaningful agreement on one of the most difficult issues in European diplomacy.

Velina Chakarova, director of the Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy, admits that reaching a consensus will be a long process, but a positive movement can be observed. 'Once approved, there will be specific areas in which the EU and its member states must move when it comes to building partnerships and alliances, empowering, building resilience in key areas and sectors, and finally achieving rapid and effective governance through a common strategic strategy. assessment of common threats²⁴.

In conclusion, in 2012 the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe by transforming it from a 'continent of war to a continent of peace'.

²³ Luke McGee. The EU realizes it can't rely on America for protection. Now it has a blueprint for a new joint military force, *CNN*. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/20/europe/european-union-security-analysis-intl-cmd/index.html>

²⁴ Luke McGee. The EU realizes it can't rely on America for protection. Now it has a blueprint for a new joint military force, *CNN*, URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/20/europe/european-union-security-analysis-intl-cmd/index.html>

Six decades after two devastating world wars, achieving peace on the EU's continent is hailed as one of the Union's main achievements and enshrined in its Treaty as one of its main objectives (Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union)²⁵.

Of course, the positions of the member states of the European Union differ significantly in their strategic culture, as well as in their priorities and prospects in the security sphere. Today, the EU is on the path to building a broad political consensus and strong political will to maintain peace and security.

The European Union's Global Security Strategy sets higher priorities, but in the next phase of developing the security architecture, EU member states need to take more concrete action, including deciding what falls within the EU's competence and what it can do in crisis management, capacity building and capacity building. protection of the territories of the EU Member States and its citizens.

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic once again show the role of EU solidarity and joint efforts in the field of security.

In conclusion, despite the differing national interests of member states, this strategic plan is a sufficient compromise to avoid national irritation of member states, when so much money and political capital are at stake, and ultimately in light of Russia's open aggression against international and regional peace and security.

Today, the Strategic Compass is seen as a 'quantum leap' to increase the capacity and willingness to act, strengthen resilience and invest in EU defense capabilities²⁶. Of course, the Strategic Compass does not provide for the formation of an EU army, which many would like to see, but it is worth noting the efforts of member states in a broad discussion of security issues, which undoubtedly need to be addressed urgently.

²⁵ The Treaty on European Union, *EUR-Lex*. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>;

²⁶ A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade, *Council of the EU*, 21 March 2022, URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>

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