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THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF INCREASING MILITARISATION OF COUNTRIES

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Abstract

In light of the worsening military and political situation in Europe and other regions of the world, military spending is on the rise in most countries. Statistics on military expenditures across various countries and regions have been compiled and analysed. This confirmed the trend of increasing military expenditures both in absolute and relative terms, including the percentage of GDP, level of militarisation, and defence expenditures per capita.

Key words: *defence expenditures, level of militarisation, defence budget.*

The current system of collective security in Europe is in need of radical revision, as well as the entire system of global security in the world. The current geopolitical situation is characterised by extreme turbulence: the situation and the balance of power in the world are changing at an extremely rapid pace. Undoubtedly, the growing tensions in the world are milestones in the formation of not only a new world order, but also global civilisational shifts in general. In the modern context, there is a need to build a fundamentally new system of regional, collective, pan-European and even global security.

In recent years there has been a steady increase in defence spending in absolute and relative terms: 2020 r. – USD 2,091.9bn (3.1% growth); 2021 – USD 2,104.1bn (3.1% growth). The growth in defence spending in absolute and relative terms has been steady in recent years: 2020 – USD 2,091.9bn (3.1% growth); 2021 – USD 2,104.1bn (0.6% growth). In 2022 – USD 2,181.9bn (growth of 0.6%), 2022 – USD 2,181.9bn (growth of 3.7%). In 2022 – \$2,181.9bn (growth of 3.7%) [1]. According to the Global Firepower website, at the beginning of 2024 the top five leaders in terms of absolute defence spending were: the USA (\$831.8bn), China (227), Russia – 109), India (74), Saudi Arabia (71.7) [2]. Together, they together account for 62 per cent of all global military expenditures. Obviously,

the transition of the military conflict in Ukraine to a protracted stage means for all European countries (and not only Europe) an increase in military expenditures in the strategic perspective.

Overall, NATO countries' defence budgets increased from \$910,407 million to \$1,050,779 million between 2015 and 2022, an overall increase of 15.5%. On average, the share of military spending in NATO countries' GDP is 2.57% in 2022. The Baltic-Black Sea region countries among NATO countries take a small part of the total budget, but it is growing. If in 2015 the combined budget of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland was 1%, in 2022 their share in the total budget is already 1.4%, which is quite significant for such small countries. In general, the countries of the Baltic-Black Sea region in 2023 are among the top 10 countries with the highest defence budgets (Table 1):

Table 1

**Top 10 NATO countries by defence budget level
(%BBII, 2021, 2023) [3]**

№	Country	%GDP, 2021	%GDP, 2023
1	Greece	3,82	3,0
2	USA	3,52	3,5
3	Croatia	2,79	1,8
4	United Kingdom	2,29	2,1
5	Estonia	2,28	2,7
6	Latvia	2,27	2,3
7	Poland	2,10	3,9
8	Lithuania	2,03	2,5
9	Romania	2,02	2,4
10	France	2,01	1,9
10	Finland	–	2,5

Ukraine has also significantly increased its level of militarisation, ranking 6th in Europe in 2021 (vs. 41st in 2014), increasing its military expenditures by 9% (\$5.9 billion) and moving up to first place in 2023. In 2020, the spending level was 4.1 per cent of GDP for the 209,000-strong military. This led to a 3-point improvement in Ukraine's position for 2020, and overall, since 2014.

According to the Militarisation Index, there is also an increase in militarisation in Eastern Europe. The most militarised countries in Europe are Armenia, Russia, Greece, Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro, Turkey, Ukraine and Finland (Table 2):

Table 2

Most militarised countries in Europe, 2019-2022 [4; 5]

Country	Military Expenditure Index		Human Capital Index		Heavy Weapons Index		GMI value		Rank	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Armenia	2,2	2,0	1,7	1,79	2,3	2,28	310	223	2	3
RF	2,1	2,05	0,9	1,06	2,7	2,45	285	204	8	10
Greece	1,6	1,89	1,1	1,13	2,7	2,71	269	211	12	7
Cyprus	1,2	1,25	1,5	1,05	2,7	2,66	268	182	13	17
Azerbaijan	2,1	2,37	0,9	0,93	2,1	2,26	254	204	16	9
Belarus	1,0	0,97	1,4	1,49	2,3	2,27	231	174	17	19
Montenegro	1,0	1,11	1,5	0,96	1,3	1,59	226	134	18	42
Turkey	1,8	1,04	0,7	0,7	2,0	1,94	223	135	20	41
Ukraine	1,9	5,11	0,8	1,29	1,8	1,75	221	335	22	1
Finland	1,1	1,19	0,7	0,68	2,3	2,28	203	152	29	26
Lithuania	1,36	1,55	0,99	1,01	1,66	1,84	200	162	31	21
Estonia	1,38	1,39	0,54	0,59	1,95	1,94	193	144	33	29

We can note that it is the Baltic States that demonstrate the greatest dynamics and increase in the level of militarisation, with the Eastern European countries in second place in terms of dynamics. Obviously, the presence of such a strong aggressive country as Russia contributes to the growth of militarisation and the level of armaments in the bordering countries. For example, Finland has increased its position from 33rd

to 29th place (facilitated by the presence of more than 1,000 kilometres of border with Russia), spending more than \$5.6 billion (1.5% of GDP) on armaments in 2021 [5]. In turn, Norway invested over \$7.4 billion in weapons systems and the military, representing 1.7 per cent of GDP (increasing its figures relative to 2014, when spending was 1.5 per cent of GDP). These funds were spent, among other things, on the purchase of heavy weapons systems (increasing their number to over 800), fighter jets (F-35), and armoured personnel carriers.

Almost all countries are experiencing an increase in military expenditures, except for the USA and Turkey. The highest rates in 2022 are in the USA (3.47%), Greece (3.76%), the UK (2.12%), Poland (2.42%), Lithuania (2.36%) and Estonia (2.34%) (Fig. 1):

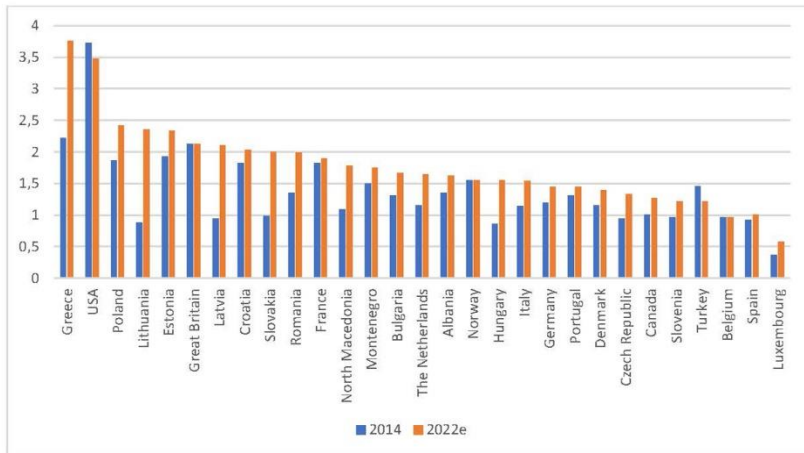


Figure 1. Defence expenditure as a share of GDP (%), 2014-2022 [3]

Also quite revealing is the level of funding of the military sector compared to the level of funding per capita. According to Table 3, we can see that the list of the top ten players varies slightly: USA – US\$2351.1, Norway – 1312.0, Korea – 892.1, Great Britain – 872.6, Denmark – 855.2, France – 808.1, Finland – 737.7, Netherlands – 734.1, Switzerland – 658.8, Sweden – 639.0, Germany – 629.8, Belgium – 471.2, RF – 422.9 (Table 3):

Table 3

**Military expenditure per capita by country, 2000–2020
(in current US\$) [5; 6]**

Country	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Canada	271,3	403,8	565,6	497,9	611,6	666,2	700,6
USA	1136,2	1807,5	2388,3	1975,3	2351,1	694,8	–
Korea, South	291,3	455,0	568,7	719,6	899,5	991,6	903,3
Estonia	56,0	150,8	249,4	352,5	541,2	565,0	613,4
Latvia	29,4	121,0	122,5	141,5	393,5	440,9	459,0
Lithuania	40,1	90,9	104,5	160,7	431,3	485,8	650,7
Poland	81,6	153,7	229,3	268,5	353,2	399,8	439,1
Belarus	14,2	47,3	81,5	75,2	74,9	80,8	87,0
RF	63,0	190,3	409,3	458,1	422,9	451,7	592,4
Ukraine	14,3	44,2	56,5	65,9	135,5	136,7	1018,7
Denmark	448,0	639,7	810,7	591,3	843,8	907,2	937,1
Finland	300,3	570,3	692,7	620,2	698,2	676,3	868,2
France	481,3	727,1	827,7	708,2	808,1	865,8	817,9
Germany	325,5	371,6	532,3	466,7	636,4	673,6	664,7
Sweden	539,2	610,5	626,8	551,7	621,0	746,3	755,7
UK	667,7	1022,7	1008,2	910,9	859,3	989,6	999,5

Based on these data, the Global Expenditure Index is formed, which is part of the Global Militarisation Index. It is worth noting that this indicator (the percentage of military expenditures relative to the GDP of countries) tended to decrease until 2018 (Fig. 2).

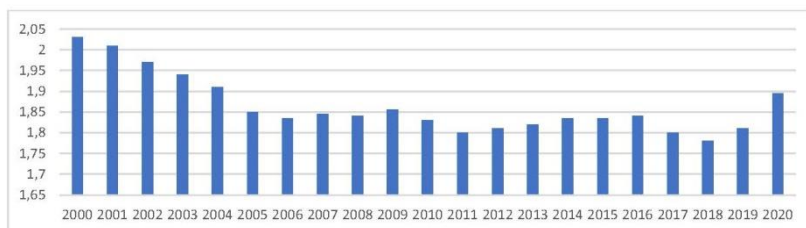


Figure 2. Dynamics of the Global Expenditure Index, % GDP [3]

Since 2020, there has been a steady increase in the Global Spending Index, indicating rising global tensions and increasing defence spending by countries in absolute and relative terms.

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