

## CHAPTER «SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENCES»

### SECURITY ALLIANCES OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-473-3-19>

**Abstract.** In light of the changes in the international order that are prompting transformations in the security priorities of international actors, the search for new allies in the fields of security and defense is becoming increasingly relevant. This brings attention to the security initiatives of individual European states beyond the framework of the European Union – both in bilateral and/or multilateral formats and involving “third” countries. It concerns the creation of a dense network of defense interactions of varying intensity and depth among European states and its intensification. The aim of this article is to clarify the formats of defense cooperation among European states outside the EU, highlighting their characteristics, types, and prospects. To achieve the research outcomes, primarily systemic and historical methodological approaches were employed, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the specifics of defense initiatives outside the EU. These methods enabled the tracing of the dynamics of defense projects (agreements), considering their priority status, as well as identifying a set of interrelated factors that influence the transformation of security priorities among European states. The analysis details three types of defense initiatives in Europe: a) Defense agreements for comprehensive and far-reaching integration of operational and industrial sectors among the countries that sign the agreements. Examples

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include the Franco-Greek Security Agreement and the Franco-Spanish "Friendship" Agreement, as well as treaties like the Aachen Treaty between France and Germany and the Quirinal Treaty between France and Italy, b) Agreements with specific military or industrial focus. These initiatives are centered around particular military capabilities or projects, such as the Belgian-Luxembourg Intelligence Battalion, the Belgian-Luxembourg Bi-national Air Transport Group, BeNeSam, the Benelux Air Defense, NORDEFECO (Nordic Defense Cooperation), EUROCORPS, the European Air Transport Command, EUROMARFOR, the European "Sky Shield" Initiative, and motorized capabilities, c) Agreements, including "Protocols of Intent" and arrangements, with potential that has yet to be realized. This includes the Quadrilateral Initiative, the European Intervention Initiative, Central European Defense Cooperation, the Lublin Triangle, and the 5+5 Security Initiative. These initiatives illustrate the varied approaches to defense cooperation in Europe, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing new security challenges. It has been determined that the participants in these allied projects generally overlap, but each partnership has distinct characteristics, foundations, and emerging factors (for example, geographic proximity, similar strategic cultures, and/or shared technological or industrial interests). It has been proven that European countries actively interacting within the EU are also developing other, more specific multi- and minilateral cooperation formats that define their common approaches to defense and security. Notably, France is the undisputed leader in intergovernmental defense cooperation through bilateral and multilateral initiatives outside of the EU. Alongside France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Greece form the core of any future defense integration in Europe.

**The purpose of this article** is to clarify the forms of defense cooperation among European states outside the institutional frameworks of the EU, highlighting the features, types, and prospects of such defense initiatives. **Research methodology:** To achieve the research results, a systematic and historical methodological approach was primarily applied, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the specifics of defense initiatives by EU members beyond its institutional boundaries. This approach enabled tracking the dynamics of the introduction and implementation of their defense projects and agreements, including their prioritization, and identifying the

interconnected factors influencing the transformation of security priorities among European States [6].

**Research results:** researchers identify three types of defense initiatives:

1. Clear long-term defense agreements: these agreements aim to comprehensively unite both the operational and industrial sectors of the signing states.

2. Military and/or industrial agreements.

3. Agreements whose potential has not yet been realized.

**Value.** Due to the latest interrelated threats and risks, in particular, general disintegration trends, we can observe an increase in instability, uncertainty in the field of security and defense in the European region and at the global level, and, on the contrary, the search for new determinants of reliable international cooperation and the creation of sustainable international associations. Therefore, (supra)national efforts will be complemented by overcoming (reducing) security threats.

### 1. Introduction

The changing international order is evident today, particularly highlighted by Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Under Vladimir Putin's leadership, Russia has unmistakably set its sights on territorial expansion, aiming to reclaim its "historical lands" – areas that once belonged to the Soviet Union but are now sovereign and independent states [35]. Historically, the international community inadequately responded to Russia's aggressive policies, such as its actions in Chechnya, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Crimea, and parts of Luhansk and Donetsk, as well as its direct or indirect influence on security situations in Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, and Serbia [34]. Thus, the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war underscores Russia's expansionist agenda, demanding an urgent response from the international community. This shift is altering the security priorities of global actors, compelling them to seek new allies in defense and security. For instance, NATO has intensified collaboration with Eastern European nations, while countries like Sweden and Finland have sought NATO membership, reflecting a proactive approach to collective security amidst rising threats. In response to the evolving security landscape, defense partnerships are actively developing in the European region, primarily within the institutional framework of

the EU. Key initiatives include the European Defence Fund (EDF), the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), the European Peace Facility (EPF), the European Defence Agency (EDA), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), such as the EU Battlegroups. Moreover, EU members are also collaborating outside of these structures through bilateral and multilateral formats, often involving "third" countries like the United States. For instance, the recent establishment of the EU-US Task Force on Defense Industrial Cooperation exemplifies how these partnerships are enhancing defense interactions [4]. This involves joint exercises and procurement initiatives that aim to strengthen collective security and address emerging threats, demonstrating a robust network of defense cooperation with varying levels of intensity and integration. The security and defense cooperation among European states extends beyond the European Union, with deep-rooted and ongoing partnerships. While the list of participants in these allied projects may overlap, each partnership exhibits unique characteristics based on various factors such as geographical proximity, similar strategic cultures, and shared technological or industrial interests. Researchers highlight that some of these defense collaborations are traditional, characterized by top-down agreements [3].

## 2. Partnerships with a Defense Component

The first group consists of partnerships between states with a pronounced defense component.

Group 1: Partnerships with a Defense Component.

Agreement	Side A	Side B	Date of agreement signing
<b>Franco-Greek Defence Agreement</b>	France	Greece	2021
<b>Treaty of Aachen</b>	France	Germany	2019
<b>Franco-Spanish Friendship Treaty</b>	France	Spain	2023
<b>Quirinal Treaty</b>	France	Italy	2021

Source: Drafted by author

A notable example of such cooperation is the French-Greek Security Agreement signed on September 28, 2021. It includes the sale of modern French frigates and corvettes to the Greek Navy (defense purchases estimated at 6 billion euros by 2026), as well as the establishment of a new "strategic

partnership for cooperation in defense and security." The "cornerstone" of this partnership is the "mutual defense" clause (Article 2), which obliges France and Greece to protect each other in the event of an armed attack on their sovereign territory by any means at their disposal, including, if necessary, the use of armed force. This bilateral alliance is complemented by similar security guarantees within NATO and the EU [36]. This agreement was made just two weeks after the unexpected announcement of the signing of the AUKUS security pact by Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. As part of this cooperation, Australia canceled a deal to procure 12 French diesel-electric submarines worth 35 billion euros. Consequently, following the announcement of AUKUS and the cancellation of the deal with France, E. Macron stated the intention to build a more autonomous European defense posture that is less dependent on the United States. The ships ordered by Greece under the agreement will enhance its defense capabilities in light of Greek-Turkish tensions and will also help reorganize the French Naval Group after the termination of its contract with Australia. France presents the partnership with Greece as an example of successful cooperation among EU countries for the sake of collective security [37]. Although the Franco-Greek agreement does not transform the mutual defense obligations of its participants, it provides a certain degree of confidence in the security realm for its signatories, sheds light on the crisis scenarios they anticipate in the region, and simultaneously supports deterrence and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean [42].

**The Aachen Treaty on Franco-German Cooperation and Integration** was signed on January 22, 2019, by the President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron and the Federal Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty of 1963, signed by President Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, which marked a "geopolitical miracle" after centuries of Franco-German conflicts [43]. The recent treaty came into effect on January 22, 2020 [19]. The 2019 agreement aims to establish bilateral cooperation and prepare both countries and the EU as a whole for the challenges of the 21st century. Within the framework of the Treaty, the current Franco-German "agenda" in the field of security and defense includes: mutual support in the event of an armed attack on their territories; development of joint strategies to strengthen the European Defense Union; enhanced cooperation between the

armed forces of France and Germany based on their shared security culture and joint deployment; establishment of joint defense programs; defining a common approach to arms exports; and the formation of a Franco-German Defense and Security Council as the governing political body for security cooperation [24]. However, this agreement is not a detailed, ready-to-implement action plan but rather a guideline for Franco-German relations in the coming decades. It outlines areas of cooperation, but their specifics and scope have yet to be defined.

**The Franco-Spanish "Friendship" Agreement** was signed by the Prime Minister of Spain, Pedro Sánchez, and the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, in Barcelona on January 19, 2023, during the 27th Franco-Spanish Summit. The agreement consolidates close bilateral relations based on a significant political and legal framework that addresses the challenges of the 21st century. Analysts claim that this treaty, signed by the two nations, is an unprecedented roadmap for coordinating France and Spain within the EU. Such an arrangement makes the development of joint projects more effective and flexible and institutionalizes annual bilateral summits and reciprocal meetings of the two states' Councils of Ministers. The signing of this agreement accelerates consultations between the two countries at all levels and establishes a bilateral coordination forum – the Franco-Spanish Defence and Security Council. This agreement declares the firm intention of Spain and France to engage in "increasingly intensive economic, security, scientific, educational, digital, industrial, and cultural cooperation." Particularly, the treaty reinforces the relationship between the two allies in the field of security and defense, taking into account the common challenges to their security. To this end, France and Spain complement each other in defense capabilities and sectoral projects, such as the Future Air Combat System and the space sector [25].

**The Quirinal Treaty** (named after the residence of the President of the Italian Republic – the Quirinal Palace in Rome, where it was signed) is an agreement on "deepened" cooperation between France and Italy, signed on November 26, 2021 [38]. Initial negotiations between Italy and France regarding its signing began in January 2018. Researchers analyzing this treaty compare it to the Franco-German Aachen Treaty of 2019, which also establishes a model for regular institutional interaction between states, serves as the foundation for a new strategic partnership, and has

the potential to create lasting, well-coordinated cooperation among the members of the "big three" of the EU, with France in a leading role [7]. This treaty is declarative rather than binding, as it does not specify concrete rights and obligations for its parties. The document is primarily aimed at organizing cooperation between the two states, creating new institutions, and/or ensuring each state's presence in the relevant institutions of the partner state. The treaty proposes the establishment of a multi-level network of formal interactions between Italy and France: their governments and agencies, which include an annual intergovernmental summit, ongoing interministerial consultation forums, and joint training and exchange programs for their officials [2]. Their cooperation pertains to foreign policy, defense, economic and social development, EU integration, cultural affairs, neighborhood relations, and the space sector, and is generally directed at strengthening the future security and defense policy of the EU and developing European strategic culture and strategic autonomy. The Work Plan, signed in the context of the Treaty, specifies areas of cooperation such as developing naval and missile capabilities of the signatory countries, ensuring security in space, and developing next-generation munitions [7].

Mostly, the aforementioned agreements and arrangements with a pronounced defense component unite the states of the Mediterranean region. Three of the four agreements, which foresee deep cooperation in the field of defense, have been signed by Mediterranean EU members, while the fourth is a revised, updated version of an agreement that supported the Franco-German "axis" of the Union 60 years ago. France is the initiator of all four agreements aimed at restoring its geopolitical role in the region and safeguarding its interests, taking into account its security challenges shared with the other three main countries of European Mediterranean. Theoretically, participation in these agreements with binding defense obligations for the signatory states creates a regional network of defense cooperation in the Mediterranean, and not merely reflects France's ambitions for leadership in the region.

### **3. Initiatives aimed at expanding military cooperation among European states**

Group 2. Initiatives aimed at expanding military cooperation among European states

Name of initiative	Side A	Side B	Another side	Year	Multinational command	Pooling of personnel and resources
Belgian-Luxembourg reconnaissance battalion	Belgium	Luxembourg	-	2030	Two way command	Yes
BeNeSam	Belgium	Netherlands	-	1996	Two way command	Yes
BeNeLux Air Defence	Belgium	Netherlands	Luxembourg	2015	No	No
EUROCORPS	France	Germany	Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain	1992	Yes	Yes
European Air Transport Command (EATC)	France	Germany	Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain	2010	Yes	Yes
Belgium-Luxembourg Binational Air Transport Unit	Belgium	Luxembourg	-	2020	Two way command	Yes
EURO-MARFOR	France	Italy	Spain, Portugal	1995	During deploying	No permanent forces
European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)	Germany	Great Britain	Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden	2022	No	No
NORDEFCO	Finland	Sweden	Denmark, Norway	2009	No	No
Motorized Capacity (CaMo)	Belgium	France	-	2018	No	No
Nordic Air Force Cooperation	Denmark	Finland	Norway, Sweden	2023	Possible	Not possible (per now)

Source: Drafted by author



**The Belgian-Luxembourg reconnaissance battalion** was established in accordance with an agreement between the defense ministers of Belgium and Luxembourg on June 15, 2023. The declaration on the battalion's locations (main: Marche-en-Famenne in Belgium; additional: Arlon in Belgium and Diekirch in Luxembourg) was signed in October 2022. The battalion's maximum strength is set at 700 personnel, with operational capability expected by 2030. This battalion will coordinate activities with the Belgian-Luxembourg multinational air transport group and will integrate with the "Capacités Motorisée" (CaMo) project. Initiatives like the Belgian-Luxembourg joint reconnaissance battalion are significant for small states within the international system, which often find it challenging to independently allocate military resources for such projects and manage them. These initiatives help identify new areas of security cooperation among participants, such as joint procurement and maintenance of combat reconnaissance vehicles and equipment [32].

**BeNeSam** (Belgisch-Nederlandse Samenwerking, Belgium-Netherlands Cooperation Accord) represents the collaboration between the Belgian and Dutch navies through joint command structures and the use of shared training and logistical resources for frigates and minesweepers [5]. The idea for such naval cooperation originated in 1948 when the establishment of a joint naval headquarters was proposed. Later, in 1995, Belgium and the Netherlands signed an "Agreement on Cooperation" between their fleets during both peace and war. Under this agreement, both navies established a joint operational headquarters on January 1, 1996, commanded by an admiral from Benelux, headquartered in Den Helder. Their collaboration includes joint exercises; however, both countries retain sovereignty over the operational deployment of their fleets. For the Benelux states, BeNeSam serves as a model for deepening cooperation in other areas.

**The Benelux Air Defense** – announced on March 4, 2015, is an initiative of three countries that provides for a system of air defense based on joint control and patrolling of the airspace of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands in peacetime. As part of this initiative, every four months, there is a rotation of the Belgian Air Component and the Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAf) to ensure the availability of their fighter jets for "quick reaction" to threats (quick reaction alert (QRA) fighters) under NATO or national control, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This technical

agreement was signed on December 21, 2016, and includes monitoring of civilian aircraft that may pose a terrorist threat. It emphasizes that the integration of air control among the three states based on a “rotational strategy” aims at their synergy for better execution of their air forces' expeditionary tasks. This is an example of "smart defense," which unites and distributes the military potential of NATO members. Their cooperative approach helps create modern defense capabilities for the Alliance that are more economically efficient and cohesive [20].

**EUROCORPS** is a permanent multinational land headquarters for rapid deployment forces, certified to achieve the goals of NATO and the EU. It was established as a result of the Franco-German initiative on May 22, 1992, to unite the units of their armed forces according to the decision made by François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl at the 59th Franco-German summit in La Rochelle, formalized in the 'La Rochelle Report.' A provisional headquarters for the Corps was set up in Strasbourg on July 1, 1992. In a Franco-German memorandum on November 30, 1992, it was proposed that EUROCORPS be transferred to the Western European Union (WEU). This decision was made on May 19, 1993, at a meeting of the WEU Council of Ministers in Rome. On January 21, 1993, France and the Federal Republic of Germany signed an agreement with the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SACEUR) regarding the conditions for using EUROCORPS in NATO's interests. This Franco-German initiative attracted interest from other European countries. Thus, Belgium became a full member of the Corps on June 25, 1993. The official ceremony establishing EUROCORPS, under the command of German Lieutenant General Helmut Wilmann, took place in Strasbourg on November 5, 1993, in the presence of the defense ministers of the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, and France. The next to join Eurocorps (July 1, 1994) was Spain. Luxembourg became its fifth member state on May 7, 1996. The Eurocorps was declared operationally ready in 1995 and maintained a high level of combat readiness in several military exercises. For the first time, its military took part in hostilities in 1998 in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the command of NATO. On May 29, 1999, at the Franco-German summit in Toulouse, these two initiator states proposed to officially transfer the Eurocorps to the EU, and submitted it to the European Council meeting in Cologne on June 3-4, 1999. The latter decided that the EU should strengthen its potential

intervention and create crisis response forces. This decision was confirmed at the meeting of the participating states in Helsinki in December 1999 after the signing of the "Luxembourg Report" on November 22, 1999 by the five participating states of Eurocorps. The report outlines the steps that need to be taken to transform it into a rapid response force. In 2002, after undergoing very complex training, its personnel received the NATO High Readiness Force (HFR) certificate. In 2006, Eurocorps was certified as a NATO Response Force (NRF). On 26 February 2009, a significant event in the functioning of Eurocorps took place, when the basic agreement signed by five states, known as the "Strasbourg Agreement", came into force, defining the status of the corps. Eurocorps gained legal capacity and independence in managing its finances and equipment. This is the only military organization of this level, regarding the functioning of which a separate international agreement has been concluded. In 2022, Poland received the status of a Framework Nation (Framework Nation) [16]. Today, EUROCORPS is a model of European defense cooperation. With five associated states (Austria, Greece, Italy, Romania and Turkey), it forms the basis of future security developments [11]. Military EUROCORPS have multiple experience of participating in NATO and EU missions. The EUROCORPS concept envisages that this structure should conduct operational-tactical level operations under different commands. The flexible modular organization enables EUROCORPS to plan and execute a wide range of missions at short notice without the need to deploy its entire headquarters [23].

**The European Air Transport Command (EATC)** is the only multinational command that manages the air mobility of the armed forces of seven European states (France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain and Italy), which have combined their means of support air mobility of the military under one command, with a single set of rules and norms of activity/deployment/application. The EATC idea arose and was developed in 1999 at the Washington (NATO) and Helsinki (EU) summits. Their participants recognized the shortcomings of their military air transport (its insufficient operational interoperability) and the need to solve them. This command was established on September 1, 2010 at Eindhoven Air Base (Netherlands). The objectives of the EATC are: to improve the combined operational capabilities of its members; execution of missions to ensure the air mobility of their forces (cargo and

passenger transportation, support of military operations and exercises on the planet, VIP flights, landing of troops and cargo, etc.) and aero-medical evacuation; improving the efficiency and interoperability of air transport. EATC unites all the national resources (air mobility means) placed at its disposal in accordance with the international obligations of its members, has authority over them, for effective operational control over them. EATC operates approximately 170 aircraft of more than 20 types (for transport, air refueling and aero-medical evacuation). They are stationed at 15 national air bases in seven countries. An integrated staff (more than 200 people) flexibly and effectively manages the planning and setting of tasks for this fleet, controls it in peacetime and during a crisis, selects the aircraft that best meet the requirements of the current mission. EATC cooperates with those interested in the air mobility of EU forces, NATO, EDA, OCCAR-EA, the European Movement Coordination Center Europe (MCCE). Over the years, the EATC has proven its ability to support multinational military operations [17].

**The Belgian-Luxembourg binational air transport group** jointly manages and operates a fleet of Airbus A400M aircraft from 2020. In 2001, these states signed an agreement "On joint acquisition" of Airbus A400M transport aircraft (7 for Belgium and 1 for Luxembourg). Therefore, with the receipt of the aircraft by Luxembourg, this group began to function [32]. The military of this group took part in joint multinational NATO exercises, in the framework of which they developed tactical training capabilities and practical skills, ensuring the full operational capability of the Belgian-Luxembourg air transport squadron A400M [12].

**EUROMARFOR** is a union of units of the French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese navies, initiated in Lisbon on May 15, 1995 [10] within the framework of the Western European Union (WEU) (activated on October 2, 1995). The association is open to the accession of other members of the CEU, although, as of today, other states have not taken advantage of this opportunity. EUROMARFOR is a non-permanent pre-configured force with maritime and amphibious capabilities, whose missions are humanitarian assistance, search and rescue, civilian evacuation, surveillance, maritime policing and maritime control in a crisis area. The members of the association noted that these forces can be provided to NATO, the EU, or the UN (formerly the WEU) to achieve their goals [22]. The command of

EUROMARFOR is changed annually by its member states. This grouping is focused on operations in the Mediterranean and usually includes an aircraft carrier and 4-6 ships from its escort, landing forces, amphibious ships and a supply ship. The forces and means necessary for the functioning of this grouping are allocated by its participating states from the composition of their navies, which can provide them to fulfill a specific operational request of the EU or the UN (formerly the CEU). The member states of EUROMARFOR noted that the forces and means of this were to be used under the control of the WEU, but it could be deployed under the control of NATO. When this naval group was not deployed for specific WEU or NATO missions, it was activated once or twice a year for exercises organized by the WEU permanent planning unit (until it was integrated with the EU security component). The creation of EUROMARFOR did not entail any additional costs for its members, as this association uses already existing forces and command structures of the navies of its members. EUROMARFOR is a non-permanent unit that is activated to carry out an ad hoc mission, for which it is, however, prepared in advance during training. These exercises helped the Navy of its participants to jointly plan and conduct operations, gave them the experience necessary to conduct combat exercises and operations in practice. Since its creation, this association has been closely linked to NATO, and later became a component of the common security and defense system of the EU. Since 1998, Euromarfor soldiers have participated in missions and operations under the auspices of NATO and the EU [40].

**The European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)** is a defense project that exists in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding on Further Development signed by the defense ministers of 10 NATO members (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Slovenia) on October 11, 2023. On October 13, 2023, at a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels, representatives of 15 European countries agreed to cooperate closely in the development of European air defense within the framework of a Letter of Intent (air defense) of short, medium and long range. This German-led initiative is aimed at strengthening the multi-layered air and missile defense of Europe through the joint acquisition by the countries of the continent of equipment for three different air defense systems and missiles

of different ranges (short, medium and long range) and the joint sharing of costs (expectedly high) for them acquisition. Within its framework, the procurement of systems is being discussed: German – IRIS-T SLM ((Infra-Red Imaging System-Tail/Surface Launched Medium Range) (short and medium-range air defense system, which can be used to protect the territory from UAVs, helicopters, airplanes and cruise missiles ), the American – Patriot (Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target) (long-range air defense that intercepts large UAVs, cruise and short-range ballistic missiles) and the Israeli – Arrow 332 (air defense that protects objects from high-precision long-range weapons and intercepts medium and medium-range ballistic missiles outside the atmosphere) [44]. As part of the project to protect the territory of Europe from short-range missiles, helicopters and UAVs, the Close Air Defense System (LVS NNbS) has a close-range air defense system (LVS NNbS), which will strengthen the Ozelot system, which was previously used for such purposes. All these systems will become part of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defense System (NATINAMDS) [21], which will allow its participants to jointly purchase air defense systems using effective, cost-effective solutions (interoperable and standard). the multinational project offers its participating states a flexible, scalable way to strengthen their means of deterrence and defense [30]. On the other hand, ESSI, as an exclusively procurement project, unable to realize its full defense potential, instead increases political tension within NATO, rather than strengthening the cohesion of its members vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. Therefore, this initiative needs to be expanded (in the areas of: logistics, training, sharing of infrastructure, maintenance, development of operational concepts, creation of joint units) in order to strengthen the capabilities of its individual participants and the collective air defense of the Alliance, including the coordination and interoperability of its elements of different levels [44].

**NORDEFECO (the Nordic Defense Cooperation)** – since 2009 unites the five Scandinavian ("Nordic") states – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, strengthens their national defense, explores their joint defense cooperation and seeks for it effective solutions. It covers almost the entire spectrum of the defense sectors of these countries to achieve the profitability of their defense industry and increase the operational capability of their military forces. NORDEFECO was preceded by

1) the Nordic Armaments Cooperation (NORDAC), founded in the 1990s, which coordinated their military development and procurement programs, 2) the agreement of the Nordic states on the Coordinated “Military Peace Support” (the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support, NORDCAPS), which provided for “joint training [forces] of the Nordic countries for peace support operations, and also coordinated the contribution of the Nordic countries to capacity building and Security Sector Reform in Fragile and Developing Countries.” Finally, in 2008, Norway, Sweden and Finland created the Nordic Supportive Defense Structures (NORDSUP) to deepen cooperation between their forces in the areas of training, logistics and production. Already in 2009, NORDEFECO combined these three forms of cooperation of their armies, coordinating defense cooperation in the region of the European North. Cooperation within NORDEFECO is quite flexible, within bilateral, trilateral or multilateral formats. At the same time, existing forms of cooperation of its participants at any of their stages are open to the accession of other Scandinavian states [31; 15].

**Motorized Capacités Motorisée (CaMo)** is a joint initiative between Belgium and France to ensure enhanced cooperation and interoperability between their armed forces, allowing them to integrate as smoothly as possible into each other's operations. The CaMo agreement is the basis for Belgium's purchase of French multi-purpose armored vehicles VBMR Griffon and armored reconnaissance combat vehicles EBRC Jaguar [32].

**Cooperation of the Air Forces of the Nordic States** – an initiative of 2023, due to the vulnerability of the air defense systems of the Mon. of Europe revealed as a result of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war. This vulnerability led the Nordic countries to initiate the unification of their air forces. So, on March 16, 2023, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, four Scandinavian states (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) signed the First Agreement "On the Intent [to create] the Northern Air Command" (Nordic Air Commander's Intent, NACI), first – for the unification of their air defense forces, and later for the creation of the "Unified Nordic Airforce". Thanks to this, the continuous "joint work" of the Air Force of the Nordic countries as a single force in the Nordic region should be ensured [18]. The agreement "On the intention..." is a plan to centralize the management of approx. 250 combat aircraft of 4 states. Their combined fleet is comparable to the air fleet of a major European power (e.g., France or the United

Kingdom) in terms of its numbers and operational capabilities. In particular, it is combat aviation represented by technologically advanced fighters (F-35 Lightning II, F-16 Fighting Falcon, F-18 Hornet and JAS-39 Gripen E, etc.). The idea of uniting the air command (and even the combined Air Force) of the Northern States with Sir. In the 1990s, it ran into the fact that Sweden and Finland were non-aligned, which could not cooperate with other North European countries because of this. by European NATO members within the framework of the Alliance's standard command and control systems. However, despite the neutral position of Sweden and Finland, they conducted joint air operations and training with NATO. Today, the above-mentioned member states of the Alliance, therefore, legal obstacles to the unification of the air forces of the Pn states have disappeared. of Europe Therefore, on March 23, 2023, the NACI "Nordic Warfighting Concept for Joint Air Operations" ('Nordic Warfighting Concept for Joint Air Operations') was published, which declared its 4 goals [18]: 1) integrated air command, planning and execution of air operations; 2) flexible and stable air base; 3) joint awareness of the states of the North about the situation in their airspace; 4) joint education, training and training of Air Force employees. The combined air forces of the Nordic countries should counter the Russian threat and have air superiority in the Arctic and Baltic regions both over the Russian Air Force and over other adversaries in the event of a conflict with them. Therefore, the United Air Force Mon. Europe is a serious military challenge for the air fleet of Russia. Their appearance should have significant positive consequences for the maintenance of regional security in particular, and for the North Atlantic space in general, since the United Air Force of Mon. Europe will help NATO compensate for the weaknesses of its Air Force in the airspace over the Baltic Sea. In particular, it is expected that the unification of the air forces of the states of Pn. Europe "will increase the cost and reduce the probability of a Russian attack or strikes on any of the Scandinavian countries" [13]. On the other hand, such a union will reduce the dependence of the Northern states on NATO military aid, because the well-trained and equipped, coordinated air forces of the Nordic states will be able to withstand the initial phase of a full-scale war with the Russian Federation until the aid of other Alliance members arrives. In addition, the new military association will be a model for the creation of regional defense alliances ("mini-NATO") in other



## Chapter «Sociological sciences»

regions of Europe, which will increase its defense capabilities. Thus, such a defense association testifies to the desire of the northern states to support both regional security and cooperation and integration in various spheres, from political to military [41].

Of course, this list of international security agreements and agreements in Europe is not exhaustive, but it allows us to systematize data on operational military cooperation of EU member states "on the ground". Thus, the Benelux Trio (BeNeLux) dominates four of them, creating a separate direction of their defense cooperation. Southern states Europe cooperates only within the framework of one such initiative (EUROMARFOR), in which France and Italy are leaders, and Spain and Portugal are ordinary participants. States Mon. of Europe (Finland, Sweden and Denmark) cooperate with Norway in NORDEFECO. Franco-German cooperation in two initiatives (EUROCORPS and European Air Transport Command) involves other EU members. The innovations are the European Sky Shield initiative and the cooperation of the air forces of the Scandinavian countries, initiated in March 2023. In this context, it is worth noting that in the new (complicated) security environment in Europe, strengthening the cooperation and interoperability of its armies and the military-industrial complex is important both operationally and politically levels (as a signal to her allies and potential opponents).

The third group is created by defense initiatives that only have to demonstrate their role (usefulness) in the security architecture of Europe.

### 4. Potential security initiatives

#### Group 3. Potential security initiatives

Name	Side A	Side B	Side C	Side D	Another sides	Year
<b>Quadripartite Initiative – QUAD</b>	France	Cyprus	Greece	Italy	-	2020
<b>European Intervention Initiative</b>	France	Belgium	Estonia	Denmark	Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, Sweden	2018

<b>Central European Defence Cooperation</b>	Austria	Czech Republic	Croatia	Hungary	Slovakia, Slovenia	2010
<b>Lublin Triangle</b>	Latvia	Ukraine	Poland	-	-	2020
<b>5+5 Defense Initiative</b>	France	Italy	Spain	Malta	Portugal + Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	2004

*Source: Drafted by author*

**The Quadripartite Initiative** (Quadripartite Initiative, Quadripartita, QUAD) is a security association of the Mediterranean. As part of this initiative, EUNOMY exercises are being conducted by the forces of Cyprus, Greece, France and Italy. Their goal is to uphold international law, promote stability in the region, support it, and ensure freedom of navigation in the East. Mediterranean. These exercises increase the level of operational readiness and interoperability between the naval and air forces of their participating states, develop their ability to conduct international air and sea operations in the Mediterranean Sea, and coordinate them [14].

**The European Intervention Initiative** (EII/ EI2) is an operational union of the forces of 10 European states, initiated by French President E. Macron in September 2017 as part of his vision of a "sovereign, united and democratic Europe". Its implementation will allow European states to take responsibility for their own security. To this end, the French leader suggested forming a joint European intervention force, developing joint doctrines for their actions, a strategic culture independent of the EU, which was considered incapable of quickly responding to crises in the European "sphere of influence". So, Paris wants to bypass the slow, complex bureaucracy of the EU and unite beyond its borders capable states in the security sphere, including those that are not part of the EU. On June 25, 2018, nine European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Great Britain) launched the initiative in Luxembourg by signing a Letter of Intent. In 2018, Finland joined the initiative [45]. Elements of EII are: flexibility; a non-binding association of European states capable of deploying their

military forces when and where necessary and willing to defend European security interests across the spectrum of crises; the intention to develop a common strategic culture of Initiative participants; strengthening bilateral defense relations and joint efforts carried out through multilateral organizations (EU, NATO, UN); focusing on the areas of: strategic forecasting and intelligence sharing; developing scenarios and planning their implementation; support of military operations and acquisition of knowledge and doctrines necessary for this; the absence of permanent European forces and "new" rapid response forces, and, on the contrary, reliance on existing structures and a network of liaison officers in various military structures of the participating states; participation in specific initiatives and/or military operations based on the sovereign decision of the state; contributing to ongoing NATO and/or EU efforts to deepen their defense cooperation. The European intervention initiative is large-scale, covering territories from the Sahel to the Russian border, potentially including operations beyond this area and the collective defense of Europe. Its participants must respond to: terrorism, migration crises, instability in the Sahel and the Middle East, increased natural disasters, "the resumption of open warfare on [Europe's] doorstep and demonstrations of force on its territory, including as a result of a strategy of intimidation, on its eastern flank » [8]. Today, 14-15 countries cooperate in this initiative. The immediate goal of the EII is to strengthen the ability of its participants to quickly jointly intervene in a crisis that covers the entire range of threats, to create optimal preconditions for actions based on plans jointly developed by members of the initiative [8]. The prospects of the EII will depend on its member states – the development of their common strategic culture and the constant manifestation of their political will, its ability to coexist with the EU and NATO, complementing their efforts, but avoiding duplication with them [28].

**The Central European Defense Cooperation (CEDC)** was launched in 2010 to strengthen the defense cooperation of the Central European states (Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. Poland has observer status in it). It includes: the association and the development of defense capabilities of its members, their joint use, training and training, etc. The meeting of the defense ministers of the participants of the initiative was held in Frauenkirchen, Austria. In September 2017,

the group organized the joint military exercise Cooperative Security 2017 (COOPSEC17) in Allensteig, Austria, aimed at strengthening border protection in the face of mass migration. The significant potential of such cooperation is based on the successful implementation of projects by its participants, such as: a multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defense battalion initiated by the Czech Republic – a multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defense battalion, staffed by military of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, which is the leader of the battalion; the Austro-Croatian initiative to train Special Operations Forces (SOF) officers, which other members of the association can join; initiated by the Czech Republic in 2010. The Multinational Logistic Co-ordination Center (MLCC) and a regional initiative to create a multinational Joint Logistics Support Group (JLSG); Hungary-initiated state cooperation in the field of Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED), in particular the "Train the Trainers" event and the "Weapons Intelligence Team", WIT) to share knowledge about improvised explosive devices; during the NATO operation in Afghanistan – the joint training of Czech, Croatian and Hungarian Air Mentor Teams for Afghanistan (The joint training of Czech, Croatian and Hungarian Air Mentor Teams for Afghanistan). Therefore, voluntary projects within the unstructured and non-institutionalized Central European defense cooperation are successful, practical, flexible, open to the accession of "third" states, capable of integration with the broader NATO regional program "Smart Defense". The success factor of the CEDC is that it unites states with similar material resources and military power, which ensures their equal weight and influence in this regional forum [31].

**The Lublin Triangle** is an agreement signed in Lublin (Poland) on July 28, 2020 by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Lithuania and Ukraine. Its parties consider its advantage in the modern world to be the stronger political, economic, infrastructural, security, defense and cultural ties of the three states, given the common security threats to them in various spheres [29]. Thanks to this tripartite security cooperation, the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LitPolUkrBrig) is functioning. Its creators undertake to deepen and expand military cooperation – bilateral and tripartite, in particular, fully

using the capabilities of NATO [26]. The top priority for these countries is transport cooperation, which gives a significant economic effect and creates accompanying institutional advantages for its participants [9].

**The 5+5 Security Initiative** is a subregional forum of 10 countries of the West. Mediterranean (5 – from the North Mediterranean (Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Portugal) and 5 – from the South (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia). This informal subregional forum was initiated in 1983 by France, but institutionalized in July 1990 during the conference of Foreign Ministers in Rome). It establishes a political dialogue between the states from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea, creates opportunities for their cooperation and solving common problems on a regular basis. The forum gradually expanded its spheres of activity from domestic and foreign policy to others, such as: defense, transport, migration, labor and social issues, education, renewable energy and the environment, health care, tourism, etc. To stimulate the "5+5" dialogue, which was blocked in 1991 due to deep disagreements among its participants, in 2004 France launched the "4+3" format of practical cooperation in the field of security and defense (Portugal, Spain, France and Italy, as well as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). The "5+5" initiative is aimed at: creating and maintaining a climate of trust and sincere cooperation between its ten participants; their contribution to solving common problems in the field of security and defense [27]. The activities of the states within the framework of the initiative are carried out in the format of consultation forums - annual meetings of their defense ministers, which develop high-level relations between the armed forces of its member countries, which meet the real need for cooperation. The members of the initiative cooperate in three areas: maritime security, air security and cooperation for civil protection in case of natural disasters or humanitarian crisis. Later, it included the training of civilians and military personnel in the above-mentioned aspects. In addition to the annual action plan of the initiative, six projects have been developed: regional virtual center for maritime traffic control (Regional Virtual Center for Maritime Traffic control); Defense School "5+5" (5+5 Defense School); Euro-Maghreb Center for Strategic Researches and Studies for Western Mediterranean (Euro-Maghreb Center for Strategic Researches and Studies for Western Mediterranean) with headquarters in Tunisia; Training Center for humanitarian demining;

Contribution of Armed Forces to the protection of civilians in disasters (Contribution of Armed Forces to the protection of Civilians in disasters); Cooperation in Search and Rescue issues (SAR). The 5+5 Security Initiative allows all its participants to exchange information to find an effective response to common challenges in the field of security and defense. It has shown that the member states of the Initiative are capable. The cooperation of the armed forces of the countries of the "5+5" Initiative, especially the countries of the southern Mediterranean, is crucial for building trust, respect and transparency between them, their efforts to contain the spread of the threat of conflicts, to prevent the spread of terrorist groups, to control migration flows and natural resources their countries [33].

In general, most of the agreements of the third group remain on paper, their practical implementation is not covered. The potential for implementation of such agreements is high, but their lack of a clear operational component raises concerns about their operational – or, rather, political – rationale. For example, the French-led European Intervention Initiative (EI2) resembles the more flexible PESCO and illustrates French investment in common defense both inside and outside the EU institutional structure. However, there is a question of the "additional value" of such initiatives, the extent of their duplication with other organizations. Yes, Francines intends to put all "eggs in one basket" and therefore seeks to have alternatives for defense cooperation – inside the EU and outside it. Which path it will ultimately take will depend on the dynamics of European defense cooperation.

## 5. Conclusions

Today, due to the latest interconnected threats and risks, including general disintegration trends, we can observe an increase in instability and uncertainty in the sphere of security and defense both in the European region and globally. Conversely, there is a search for new determinants of reliable international cooperation and the creation of networks of resilient international associations. The general perception of a more unstable security environment, particularly in light of Russia's aggressive policy, is a key factor driving the current defense momentum experienced by European countries. This has led to a significant strengthening of European defense initiatives, which involve alliances among EU member states,

with or without the participation of third countries (such as the USA) of varying intensity and scale. Consequently, (supra)national efforts are being complemented to overcome (reduce) security threats.

European states actively interacting within the EU are developing specific multilateral and mini-lateral cooperation formats that shape their common approaches to defense and security. This involves comprehensive defense agreements that include operational and industrial collaboration among countries. Leading nations such as France, Germany, Greece, Spain, and Italy dominate the signatories of these agreements. In addition, specific cooperation mechanisms with a clear security and/or defense focus are being expanded. Neighboring countries or those within a particular subregion – like Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the Nordic countries – play a crucial role in this context. Notably, agreements with significant potential in the near to medium term include the Lublin Triangle, which involves Ukraine and highlights the importance of regional partnerships.

Thus, we see that France is the undisputed leader in defense cooperation through so-called bilateral and multilateral initiatives outside the EU. In addition to France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Greece form the vanguard, the core of future defense integration in Europe. Of course, within the analyzed security cooperation formats, certain participants often overlap; however, each of these partnerships has unique characteristics and is based on factors such as geographical proximity, similar strategic cultures, and/or common technological or industrial interests.

In conclusion, it should be acknowledged that the resurgence of high-intensity conflicts in Europe has led to intensified efforts to establish more effective, robust, and operationally compatible mechanisms among European states. This is essential for addressing the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war and other long-term security and defense challenges. For instance, the European Union's strategic compass and NATO's enhanced readiness initiatives are direct responses aimed at improving collective defense capabilities in light of these emerging threats.

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