CHAPTER «POLITICAL SCIENCES»

EVOLUTION AND THE MODERN STATE OF THE EU'S ACTORNESS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE LARGESCALE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR ON THE CONTINENT

Lesia Dorosh[1]
Yurii Tushkyn[2]
Iuliia Zakaulova[3]

Abstract. The Russian aggression against Ukraine has turned out to pose a threat not only to Europe, but also to the other current conflict zones being an obvious challenge for international security, global legal order, territorial integrity, unity, and sovereignty of the states in the world. Correspondingly, the research into the actorness of the EU, its status as the global civil and normative actor destined to protect the international legal order and the rule of law is considered to be relevant. The escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 proved the EU to have preserved a proper global status.

The research source base comprises regulatory documents, treaties and agreements of the EU determining its status in the international arena and its positioning in the sphere of security and other spheres, especially, during the period of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war [7; 10; 12; 34]. The basis for this analysis is complex analytical research of the modern manifestations of the EU's actorness [2; 5; 11; 14; 17; 23–24; 27–28; 32; 40], in particular, its strategic and operational capabilities. [3; 6; 15; 18; 25; 29;

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[1] Full Professor, PhD in Political Science, Associate Professor
of the Department of Political Science and International Relations,
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine
[2] Associate Professor, PhD in Political Science, Associate Professor
of the Department of Political Science and International Relations,
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine
[3] Associate Professor, PhD in Pedagogical Science, Associate Professor
of the Department of Foreign Languages,
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine

37; 41]. The synthetic works of researchers are also worth being highlighted [1; 8; 13; 16; 19-20; 30-31], those analyzing the challenges for the EU caused by the largescale Russian aggression against Ukraine, the impact of this exogenous factor on the security of certain European countries, and the implementation of the EU actorness as a whole.

The aim of the research is to identify the specificity of the EU's actorness manifestations considering its peculiarities, key determinants, and the perspectives to be implemented in the light of the Russian-Ukrainian war, namely in the times of the full-scale invasion.

Research methodology. In order to achieve the research results, systemic and methodological approaches have been applied, which makes it possible to comprehensively consider the specificity of the EU's actorness, to follow the dynamics of its manifestations and implementation taking into account the full-scale stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war started in February 2022 to reveal a range of interrelated factors influencing the transformation of the actorness of the United Europe.

Research results. The dynamics of the transition from the EU's non-military approach to security issues to the emphasis on the development of the European Union from a civilian force to a comprehensive force exercising a strategic vision and playing an active role at every stage of international conflict management have been analyzed in detail.

It has been proven that in the conditions of the full-scale stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war, a significant change in the EU security paradigm can be observed: from a normative, liberal, and more optimistic perspective focused on the spread of the European norms and values of the 2000s to a more defensive and cautious European perspective in 2010, and to even more considerate, confident and strict treatment of the EU towards security issues in 2022, when the full-scale invasion against Ukraine started.

The EU sanctions against Russia, which have clearly gone beyond its previous "red lines", demonstrate a remarkable shift in the EU position as a global actor possessing internal de-jure and de-facto powers to become a player in the regional security and be obviously capable of de-escalating the Russian-Ukrainian war together with its allies, namely the USA and Great Britain.

Value. It has been also emphasized that in its regulatory documents, the EU expresses the will to strengthen its actorness and the role in the sphere

of security stating that during conflicts it will follow a multi-level approach and may act at the local, regional, national, and global levels, as well as develop the EU security structures accordingly.

The significance of the discussions regarding the fact that the EU still lacks integrity and inflexibility as a strategic player has been highlighted. This exposes the EU to the risk of failure of its international effort due to the absence or limitation of its hard power potential.

1. Introduction

The Russian aggression in Ukraine does not bode well, not just for Europe, but for many other conflict areas where Russia may also actively try to undermine the international rule-based global order [8]. What is more, the military presence of Russia in Crimea and on the mainland Ukrainian territory remains a direct challenge to international security with serious implications for the international legal order that protects the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of all the states in the world [20]. At the same time, the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014 has not yet undermined the EU's image and the status of a global civilian and normative state; and *the escalation of the war in 2022 proves that the EU has preserved its appropriate global status.* Its successful international agreements with the other states, like the Association Agreement, the Waiver Agreement, the Free Trade Agreement; a successful adaptation of the EU's legal system and technical standards by the states of the Old World, particularly, by post-Soviet and post-Communist states, third countries, and members of the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the European Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean have formulated the trend of 'Europeanization' of Ukraine. All this has allowed Ukraine to distance itself from Russia which made a decision not to 'Europeanize' and stay away from the European Neighbourhood Policy. Under such circumstances, the consistent actions of Russia aimed at terminating the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement at the European Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 28-29 November 2013, forced V. Yanukovych to disperse Maidan participants by means of the police in November 2013 – February 2014. In addition, the occupation of Crimea in March 2014, the hybrid war in Donbas, the introduction of the Russian troops in Donbas in 2014-2015 which resulted in signing quasi-international protocols between Ukraine and Russia titled 'Minsk-I' and

'Minsk-II', and, finally, the outbreak of a largescale war on 24 February 2022 manifest that Russia is not able to hinder the EU's influence as a civilian state, and thus, an aggressive military invasion as 'the final argument of Kings' should be interpreted as the last resort for Russia to stop 'Europeanization' of Ukraine [35, p. 227–228]. Thus, the latest prevailing trend of Ukrainian 'Europeanization' may be considered nearly '*an ideal type*' (in M. Weber's understanding [39; 47]) of the EU's successful international influence as a global civilian state despite numerous problems Ukraine faces nowadays, namely: domestic political problems, unstable economy, inconsistent reforms, and open war. We may presume that if the EU's soft power policy has turned out to be effective in Ukraine, even under such adverse circumstances as war, demographic depopulation, ecological crisis, this policy may be even more effective in the other regions of the world which do not have the abovementioned difficulties but still face such problems as corruption, ineffectiveness of state and business institutions, economic crisis, and the other.

Fighting its non-democratic opponents, the European Union has not just condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine as a mammoth violation of international law. It has also framed its support for the Ukraine's accession as a way to secure the latter's democratic future [2]. In general, the Union has construed the clash with Moscow in normative terms, as a collision of values – the rule of law and freedoms, on the one hand, and the might and authoritarianism, on the other hand.

2. The EU as an international actor: multiple subjectivity

The EU is generally described as an effective actor in those areas where the authority is clearly delegated on the Community level. In those areas, as we may see, the EU is considered to have a strong undisputed influence on the international scene. This is the case of foreign trade and technological development, the sectors in which the EU is said to play, probably, a more powerful role than the US [5]. Some scholars believe the EU to have acted as an inadvertent great power vis-à-vis Russia in its Ukraine policy, which was primarily driven by the supranational decision-making apparatus and low-politics considerations, but engendered a bipolar power struggle with Russia over Ukraine. Following the example, the scholars express the opinion that the risks inherent in the EU inadvertent great power politics

are deeply ingrained in the EU's institutional structure and, therefore, are difficult to mitigate [13].

According to N. Wright [40], the EU stays 'almost impotent' in the spheres of 'high politics' which encompass 'foreign policy, security, justice and internal affair' and demonstrate a low level of integration – 'the stage of an embryo' – because national governments maintain the leading position, which obviously limits the global competence and the Community actorness in these spheres. However, analyzing the EU's actorness in the sphere of high politics, one should consider the EU's potential role as a direct intervenor in specific international conflicts – its most actor-like function in the conventional sense, as intervention is something an actor does, but it is also the least fulfilled one as the EU does not perform well in this realm. Nevertheless, it is believed that this story of failure, doubt and ambivalence also continues the EU actorness, besides its natural unity and subjectivity because an actor is not just a thing, even and easy, it is, instead, problematic, critical – a cracked actor [6].

Scholars also argue that the unique character of the EU as [actor] sui generis has contributed to its unconventional approach of addressing global security issues via traditionally non-strategic and non-military centred policies, like its neighbourhood policy – ENP. The EU's Security Strategy argues that 'large-scale aggression against any Member State is now improbable' [7]. Evidently, it is reasonable to contend that the EU rejected the prospect of a revisionist Russia posing a security threat to the EU's member states or its regional partners engaging in political and economic reform in pursuit of the prospect of EU membership [29]. Moreover, demonstrating the EU's non-military centric approach to security, the 2008 'Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy' omitted regional conflicts as a key security threat and instead chose to include the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism and Organized Crime, Cyber Security, and Climate Change [29]. A new policy approach of the EU to the international affairs of 2013 emphasizes upon the development of the Union from a civilian power to a comprehensive power with a strategic vision and an active role in all phases of the conflict [16]. The EU's Global Security Strategy of 2016 [34] also paid close attention to international conflict management. This EU's strategy expresses its will for a stronger security role in the formulation that 'In conflicts the EU

will pursue a multilevel approach, and act at the local, regional, national and global levels'. Finally, the comprehensive approach by the notion of an 'integrated approach' in 2018 portrayed the EU's ambition to engage even more strongly and in a coherent and holistic manner in external conflicts and crises, and to develop structures accordingly [16]. However, considering the evolution of the vision concerning the EU's role in dealing with international conflicts, one should keep in mind that notwithstanding its theoretical framework related to the issue, the EU remains a strategically underdeveloped actor wedded to the liberal logic of the ENP, which renders the Union strategically inflexible and, especially in view of its high level of investment, exposes it to risks of failure of its international efforts because of the lack of hard power [16]. In the current situation, under the circumstances of the Russian-Ukrainian war, one may witness an important paradigm shift: from a normative, liberal and optimistic view centred on diffusing European norms and values in the 2000s, to a more defensive and cautious European approach in the following decade [31].

Apart from this, the EU's limited military actorness affects the implementation of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) plans and programs and depends on the Member States and their treatment upon the EU's common security issues. The implementation of the Common Security Policy is being ruined by 'the plague of the 19-20 centuries' – nationalism, which undermines the EU's unity due to the existence of the self-centred elites capable of breaking the principle of unanimity while making common decisions and the right to veto any decision during the Security Council meetings. This is particularly true for small European states, like Hungary, which do not share external policy strategy of the other Member States, instead, cherish their own national interests and, therefore, restrain European performance in the international security sphere and, what is more, they may intimidate the EU with their 'right to veto' and narrow European freedom of action in the sphere of global security. Further, they disable the EU as a potential military actor and reduce its effectiveness in this sphere. They may also create risks of ineffective and/or inconsistent implementation of security policy in Europe and the USA. This is the reason why the EU as an actor in the military sphere has been mostly the object than the subject of the global politics, notwithstanding the rich imperial history of its members and its global ambition [22]. Moreover, the EU will

have hardly become a strategically independent, strong actor, a provider of international peace and security by the year 2030, as its documentation states [17].

Taking the abovementioned into account, to implement the neo-realist hypothesis that describes the EU as a superpower – a military competitor of the US in the 21 century [38], the Union has to: create an effective mechanism for coordinating common interests; increase military aggregate spending; and invest heavily in its military sector, in particular, the command-and-control system and the European Military Forces Intelligence, instead of gradual development of PESCO projects. Otherwise, the Armed Forces of certain member states, except France and Sweden, will not be able to fully deploy military action beyond NATO [22].

Today, the security and defence potential of the EU as a global actor has been reduced because of Brexit and, as a consequence, Great Britain stop being its member, the state possessing massive military strength, diplomatic authority and international representation [6]. As soon as the EU does not have strategic autonomy and is actually unable to defend itself, the security of European states depends upon NATO and the USA respectively [22]. Consequently, NATO can exist without the EU, but the EU cannot exist without NATO, despite the continuous efforts (since 1954) of France and the other states which have been contributing to the EU's military potential and strengthening its military identity and strategic autonomy from NATO and the US since 2017. Concluding, we may argue that there exists a functional distribution of competencies in Europe between the abovementioned international governmental organizations (the EU and NATO): NATO maintains its military role on the global, continental and Atlantic scale, and the EU's 'civilian' identity contributes to this; further, developing close institutional relations between the EU and North Atlantic Alliance is another factor that promotes the functional distribution of powers.

The history of the EU's global actorness can be considered through its content and parameters. Since 1957, the EU's predecessors – European Communities – have been acting in the global politics developing friendly relations with the African states, the Caribbean counties and the Pacific states. However, it has been mostly a de-facto union of metropolitan states and their former overseas possessions. The first attempts from the side of the European Communities to manifest themselves as those demonstrating

their own interests and identity took place in 1970s-1980s. It was the time when the Communities had an opportunity to manoeuvre between the USA and the USSR in the times of the Cold War between the East and the West, as well as during the Falklands War in 1982, when they supported their Member, the United Kingdom being in military confrontation with Argentina, while the USA maintained status quo in relation to the conflict [4]. When the third Cod War between Iceland and Great Britain took place in 1972-1973, Iceland was sanctioned in accordance with Protocol 6 of the European Community Agreement to meet European states halfway concerning fishing grounds and maritime borders in the Atlantic [26]. When the Cold War was over, European Communities tried to oppose superpowers on the global scale acquiring the role of the global civilian state with its economic strength compensating for its limited military potential [38, 378].

Since 1995, the EU has become an active global actor due to its interaction with numerous states of Europe, Asia and Africa, namely, Western Balkans, South Africa and West Mediterranean in the frames of the Union for the Mediterranean (EUROMED, the Barcelona Process) and the former republics of the USSR in the frames of the Eastern Partnership in 2009. Today, actively expanding due to its soft power, the EU has been forced to deal with an unstable situation along the boundaries with the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and even the US (under the presidency of D. Trump) [11]. It also has to respond to the statements, dated November 2019, by Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, who has said that if Europe could not think of itself as a global power, it would disappear [33].

3. The reaction of the EU as a global actor
to the Russian-Ukrainian war

While analysing the EU's response to the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and the ways to deal with it, we should differentiate between the European Communities' actions in the period of 2014–2022 and those in the period of 2022 and up to now – the time of a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. We do understand that the reaction of the EU to the Russian aggression against Ukraine should be considered due to the *EU's role as a combination of a normative power (a regulatory power) and a civilian power*, which allows studying the EU not only through its capabilities, but

also through the normative approach which considers integration to have been influencing and even changing the underlying choices, preferences and interests of others, not only member states (internally), but also actors in the international arena (externally) [19].

Scientists have analyzed the EU's international actorness during the last decade, as it is said to challenge the EU as a global security actor. Over the last decade, it has been a changing domestic and international context in which policies need to be formulated and implemented. Firstly, an increased intra EU contestation has been particularly prominent since the beginning of economic and financial crisis and has obviously impacted the EU's foreign and security policies. The second challenge has been an increasing fragmentation of the regions all over the European neighbourhood and beyond. Finally, a competitive multipolarity may pose a significant challenge to the EU as a security actor [8]. While previously, the EU normally had the full backing of international institutions and other states in conflict countries, it is currently competing with other powers espousing different views of order, who may act through state-sponsored non-state actors, such as the Kremlin-backed Wagner group, to frustrate the EU's objectives [8]. Multipolar competition has certainly generated momentum for a stronger global role of the EU, as attested to by the Union's robust response against Russia's aggression in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022, yet, in most cases, the Union has suffered from the effects of increasing great power rivalry [2].

Other scientists believe that since 2014, when the US military involvement in Europe has reduced and Russia's revisionism has driven it to annex Crimea to prevent the further integration of Ukraine into the EU and NATO, the EU obtained an opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness as a regional security actor. They emphasize that through the US de facto leadership transfer of European continental security to Europeans, the UK and other powerful member states are explicitly calling on the EU to create a collective response to Russia's invasion and occupation of a part of Ukraine, and the institutional leaders of the EU are invoking international law to justify the response to the continental security crisis [29]. Thus, the EU obviously possesses recognition and authority to act in the Ukraine crisis, both within the Union and in the frames of the collective West. Acting as a 'force for good', the EU aspires to create a 'ring of friends' – democratic, stable and prosperous countries with an efficient governance

sharing European values which, in the end, may objectively serve the interests of European security [37]. However, until 2014, the EU reluctance to being actively and directly involved in the settlement of frozen territorial conflicts in partner countries and the absence of a consolidated strategy and mechanisms for such an involvement in contrast with Russia's military presence in the region have considerably limited its power projection capacity [37]. According to A.-S. Maass [19], instead of being an agenda setter in peace and state-building in Ukraine, the EU became a passive bystander witnessing Crimea's annexation by Russia in 2014. The EU was not organizationally geared up for geopolitical contestation with Russia, and thus, during the Ukraine crisis [autumn 2013 – winter 2014], it took the back seat to a power [of Moscow] that was precisely configured to wage geopolitical struggles on a global scale [with the EU and the US]. On the other hand, the scientists argue that according to the rationalist perspective, the EU's various partnership initiatives to project stability and prosperity to its eastern neighbourhood under the guise of its normative and civilian intentions should be conceived as a reflection of its interests to increase economic strength and regional competitiveness comparing to the other geopolitical and geoeconomic efforts [37].

In 2022, the nature of the EU's external actorness has changed together with a largescale Russian-Ukrainian war being strictly treated by the Members of G7, particularly, the US and the UK. Under such circumstances, the EU had to respond more harshly to the largescale bilateral conflict taking into account the fact that the EU's own resilience is very much linked to the resilience of its partners (its members or other states around the globe facing various challenges), as the EU is not insulated from the pressure that affects them [27]. As L. Groen and A. Niemann [14] argue, 'in terms of effectiveness it also matters whether the EU has devised a strategy that takes the external environment into account'. The rhetoric of the EU has changed due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, and its member states (and the other states and IGOs) started to interpret its power and international competitiveness in increasingly realist terms. Considering this, we may agree to L. Scazzieri [27] who believes that the EU's reaction to the invasion is not only about defending Ukraine or the principles of international law, but also about reducing the concrete risk of the future Russian aggression towards the EU itself, for example, towards Poland or Baltic States.

At the same time, the crises in the neighbourhood have prompted the EU to review its security strategy, which now highlights the fact that world politics is increasingly ruled by geopolitical considerations [24].

In terms of the consistent external policy of the Union Members, their institutional bodies and officials, researchers identify a range of factors that constrain the EU's actorness in this sphere. Thus, the EU's international actorness depends on the distribution of competence between the EU and its member states and the unwillingness of the latter to delegate the competence to the former as well as the existence of conflicting preferences across member states [3]. This, for example, can be observed in divergent views of the EU's member states upon the members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or Eastern Partnership. However, since 2014, the EU member states have basically tended to commit to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Regarding coherence, most of the EU member states condemn an aggressive Russia's involvement in Ukraine and try to impose tough sanctions against Russia to create internal procedural mechanisms to collectively respond to harsh actions from the side of Moscow. P. Silva [29] states that since the first imposition of travel bans in 2014, the EU has consistently implemented its strategy to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on Russia, expanding and extending sanctions since March 2014. Then, the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, declared that sanctions are not a question of retaliation; they are a foreign policy tool – not a goal in itself, but a means to an end. Our goal is to stop Russian action against Ukraine, to restore Ukraine's sovereignty – and to achieve this we need a negotiated solution [19]. Since the beginning of a largescale aggression in Ukraine in 2022, the EU put together ambitious sanctions packages, which have clearly gone beyond the previous 'red lines' (halting the construction of Nord Stream 2, freezing the assets held by the Russian Central Bank, cutting off most Russian banks from the SWIFT system, curtailing imports of coal, severely limiting trade in key technologies, sanctions on President Vladimir Putin and his entourage [8]. Scientists argue that the EU's active approach stands out from its inactivity in comparable cases, for instance, Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states in the aftermath of the Georgian war in 2008. To the same category as the sanctions belong the decisions to suspend the EU-Russia Partnership Agreement and all the EU's cooperation

programs (except those developing civil society) and loan agreements with Russia. These measures indicate a stable political consensus among EU member states, which made joint action toward Russia possible [16].

On the other hand, evaluating the level of consistency among the EU member states and its institutions in terms of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, we may observe a non-linear relationship between increased coherence and greater effectiveness concerning goal attainment.

Scientists [23] have demonstrated that efforts to achieve coherence can result in lower common dominator, ineffective policies that are reflected (inter alia) in the EU's preference for inducements of Russia rather than threats when seeking to exert influence. A. Shepherd [28] notes that the EU, while improving coordination, remains hampered in its responses by its stubborn institutional silos. Therefore, it is unable to manage the security continuum as well as it aspires to its ambition to have a more comprehensive and integrated approach to security.

Thus, one should understand an extremely difficult task for the EU to enhance its actorness in the regional security sector. The EU's energy dependency on Russia constrains the EU's ability to impose maximally damaging economic sanctions on Russia in response to its involvement in the Ukrainian crisis [29]. However, we have witnessed a clear, consistent response of the EU to a largescale Russian aggression in Ukraine. Despite the different historical and economic relationship EU member states have with Russia, their response is built on shared values, preferences, and the use of internal policy-making procedures. Overall, since 2014 and, particularly, since 2022, there has been horizontal consistency among member-states continued support for the sanctions and vertical consistency between member states and EU institutions as demonstrated through their collective response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine [29]. Thus, the conflict can be considered an example of the EU's increasing its global weight, speaking with one single voice [25].

Evaluating the EU's external opportunity structure, scientists believe that stronger actorness does not necessarily generate more EU effectiveness, or ability to influence potential outcomes in the regional security system in the specific setting of a crisis [30]. In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the EU international actorness in Ukraine in 2014 allowed the EU to acquire the role of a successful regional security actor via using its soft power to

settle this international crisis. An example of the EU's soft power policy is launching its civilian mission – the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM), to give advice on reforming the civilian security sector. The decision by the EU to implement this Mission is based on the evaluation of the Ukrainian civilian security sector and considering the latter to be an archaic and a corrupted one, infiltrated by Russian operatives. Scientist [29] argues that because of the EU's inability to hard-balance against Russia, the EU has utilized the EUAM to soft-balance against Russia. By making the Ukrainian civilian security sector more accountable and resilient, the EU may make Russia less able to influence and shape it. Despite the political, economic and humanitarian shortfalls in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests, the annexation of Crimea and the military confrontation with Russia, the EU continuously promoted transformative domestic reforms in Ukraine. The signing of the Association Agreement set the program of reforms in line with the EU standards and norms in 2014. Further, the completion of the Association Agreement with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement in June symbolized the EU's support for political, economic and social transformations in Ukraine [19].

It can be said that the EU's action in Ukraine in the period of 2014–2024 as an example of its international actorness is ambivalent. On the one hand, the values and norms upon which the EU is founded, and those written in its treaties, have been incorporated within cooperation and association agreements with Ukraine. The positive projection of European values has, in this sense, been the occurrent indicator of its transformative capability in its neighbourhood [41]. On the other hand, the EU's performance in the regional security sphere cannot be considered totally successful, despite the EU's deployment of all available capabilities to achieve its stated goal of coercing Russia to implement the II Minsk Agreement. Notwithstanding the implementation of diplomatic and economic sanctions on Russia, the EU's soft balancing against Russia in Ukraine, and strengthening of its bilateral relationship with Ukraine the EU has failed. The EU's idealistic hope that Russia may alter its aggressive behaviour in the international arena to a peaceful one, and, consequently, the failure of its peace-keeping mission, and an open aggression of Russia today change the EU's strategic thinking and demonstrate its return to smart power politics [29].

Being ahead of the events, since 2017, the EU has been developing hard power (defence) capabilities to defend its regional interests against the Russian aggression in Ukraine (and Georgia). Until recently, the EU has rejected such practice as power politics (geopolitics) of the superpowers considering it unacceptable. The decision to start acting from the power perspective is due to the decision made by its 25 member states to participate in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the area of defence and security policy. By creating a treaty-based framework, PESCO seeks to address the EU's security challenges by facilitating further integration and enhancing further cooperation among the participant states [10]. Joint development of defence capabilities, increasing interoperability of the military potential by reducing the different number of weapons' systems in Europe, and thus, enhancing operational cooperation among member states may increase the EU's ability to defend its regional and global interests. While PESCO does not shift control of EU member-states' militaries from the nation-state level, it seeks to strengthen its strategic autonomy to defend its regional and global interests [29]. The EU has been rather explicit about balancing its idealistic, normative focus on promoting its principles, values and norms, with the focus upon its own strategic interests and internal security. The European Union's Global Strategy (EUGS) states that in its external affairs the EU takes the position of 'principled pragmatism' balancing its values and interests, with soft and hard power going hand in hand, which should be understood as 'smart politics' [12; 28].

Since 24 February 2022, the lack of opportunities for the EU to provide military support for Ukraine has had ambivalent consequences for the EU's international actorness. Scientists indicate that the extent of international, particularly, security roles of an actor depend on the perception of the action recipient. Hence, the extent of the EU's participation in international security relies on the partners of the EU including third countries and other regional institutions [16].

The EU's lack of capabilities to support Ukraine in the military sphere also has consequences. The Union is hardly taken seriously as a security actor in Ukraine, whereas the USA and certain EU member states are often perceived as much more promising partners [16]. We may also agree with N. Wright [40] that any EU's security role is better framed as a complimentary one rather than competing with the Member States or NATO. The solution

to the problem of effectiveness lies in coordinating the performance of Member States rather than searching for a role which is institutionally and temperamentally ill-suited by the EU. However, what concerns logistical support, and especially, military and police action and training, the EU strives to expand its limited military potential [15]. In general, we may agree with other scientists who emphasise upon a hard choice the EU and its member states are facing in relation to the type of capabilities that need to be acquired for their security policies. With Ukraine in mind, the odds are in favour of hard power military capabilities, whereas the 'soft' tools required for an integrated approach, the resilience paradigm, and the instruments to deal with hybris threats are lower on the priority list [8]. This fact forces Ukrainian high officials to rate the EU's military potential low. However, this may lead to a stronger EU's foreign and defence policy, at least in terms of greater integration of the EU's defence industrial base and, potentially, of its power projection capacity. Due to this, European strategic autonomy and/or sovereignty, for years championed by French President Emmanuel E. Macron, may soon take clearer contours [1].

Thus, from the perspective of the EU's international actorness, coherence between the EU's actions and those of its member states and institutions, and the implementation of these actions in 2022, the EU displays noteworthy actorness in great power recognition of its role in European security, internal de jure and de facto authority to be a player in the regional security, and serious opportunities to demonstrate its actorness to deescalate the Russian-Ukrainian war together with the US and the UK [29]. Despite its lack of military power, the EU has the ability to pursue great power politics in Europe. Like any other domestic or international entity, it has acquired actorness in its own right to the extent that it has both, control over significant governance resources that potentially affect other actors and the ability to employ these resources according to the organizational strategies and intentions. It may act as a great power if it can significantly affect the security situation within the other great powers [13]. In 2022, the EU demonstrated its significant geopolitical power dealing with the challenges posed by the Russian-Ukrainian war. The EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Joseph Borrell, hailed the EU's response to the conflict as a 'geopolitical awakening' [27]. The EU's considerable geopolitical power rests on the unity of its members and its

internal unity, but it is not clear if that unity may endure a drawn-out war in Ukraine or the loosening of the transatlantic front together with possible negative consequences for the whole Europe and its economic and social sectors [1].

According to M. E. Smith [32], the EU possesses multiple types of power in the global politics, and these efforts are not mutually exclusive; in other words, it is possible to *act both 'strategically' (relying on realistic, geopolitical considerations) and 'normatively' (relying on idealistic considerations)*. A. Härtel [16] argues that the Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2014, like many other conflict scenarios, has become an extreme challenge that puts the EU's flexibility to test and necessitates the development of new approaches or an appropriate adaptation of the existing ones. In the end, despite the incremental securitization of the EU's role in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, one must admit that a genuine strategic contribution would require appropriate security policy instruments and capabilities to be implemented in the frames of the EU's common foreign policy and security policy. While raising politically difficult and principled issues, the EU needs to better align its proclamations, policies and practice (institutions, capabilities and actions) if it is to be of a greater value to its member states as a critical instrument for implementing their foreign and security policies [28].

4. Conclusions

Thus, it can be said that after the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, we may draw conclusions that the EU has a specific international status and limited capabilities as a global actor. Its global actorness is reflected in its being a 'global civilian state' which is extremely powerful in the sphere of 'low' politics (certain spheres of domestic governance granted to EU member states on the supranational level) and thus may influence any state in the neighbourhood and in the world. But what concerns the sphere of 'high' politics (hard military security for itself and its members), the EU has not acquired an appropriate competence in it and, thus, has always relied upon the security assistance from the side of NATO. The abovementioned factors may help to evaluate the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict upon the EU as a global political actor. We should take into account the fact that the attempts of the EU as a 'global

civilian state' to exert influence on its neighbouring countries, i.e., on the states of the Eastern Partnership, have become the reason why the Russian-Ukrainian conflict broke out. Russia's elites and people interpreted the reciprocal aspiration of Ukraine and the EU towards integration and its successful implementation in the form of the Association Agreement, the development of a comprehensive zone of free trade, visa waiver between the EU and Ukraine, the Treaty on Open Skies and an 'industrial visa waiver' (unifying industrial standards of the EU and Ukraine) as an ultimate loss of its sphere of influence in Ukraine. This apprehensiveness was backed by Russia falling behind in its integration (but not trade) with the EU, and Ukraine being rather successful in its applying for admission to the EU (in the long run), which took place on 28 February 2022) [21; 36], due to the fulfilment of European Union Membership Criteria in accordance with the Maastricht Treaty and the Copenhagen European Council Declaration. This fact has become an incentive for Russia to wage war against Ukraine as an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the latter from applying for admission being in the state of an armed conflict; to create influential pro-Russian groups on the territory of Ukraine to block its Europeanization; to establish hostile quasi-states of Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic; to invade Ukraine and stop its existence as a state which could become an external international actor for the EU. A. Härtel [16] believes that Russia's actions in the Ukraine conflict prove that the EU has consciously or unconsciously become a major competitor in the international system, whose policies directly affect the interests of other geopolitical and geostrategic actors.

On the other hand, in terms of functional allocation of competences of the EU and NATO in Europe, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in its semi-latent (2014–2022) and large-scale aggressive war (since 2022-up to now) phases is hardly able to undermine the EU's regional and global actorness. It is true because, as a military actor, the EU relies mostly upon NATO as its institutional partner than prefers acting individually. On the contrary, we may assume that the Russian-Ukrainian war can make the EU interpret its military power on various levels as a crucial component and, thus, develop its global actorness as a military alliance. It is believed that joint defence procurement will increase interoperability among the EU member states' militaries and will also enhance the EU's strategic autonomy to act separately

from NATO. PESCO and EDF reflect the growing acknowledgement of the EU's changing attitudes about the need to enhance its hard power capabilities if it is to successfully defend its regional and global interests in an increasing multipolar world. Rephrasing the statement by P. Silva, we may say that the international context presents an opportunity for the EU to create its own identity independent of the US [29]. Another important point to pay attention to is that Russia and Ukraine are the two biggest neighbouring states of the EU on its Eastern borders, and there are the other partnering states (Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) having Russian troops deployed in their territory, and due to this, there are both, hard and soft influence of the Russian Federation [9]. Besides, EU member states have already felt the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war because of millions of refugees from Ukraine and Russia fleeing war and seeking asylum in Europe and, also, consequences of reciprocal Russian-European cultural and economic sanctions.

Evaluating the EU's actorness in the light of a largescale Russian-Ukrainian war, it should be emphasized that despite all claims about the EU's distinctiveness as a new type of a foreign policy actor, its behaviour cannot be placed into purely constructivist or purely rationalist modes of action [37]. In assessing the EU's actorness in its dealings with Russia, the importance of hard power capabilities is not to be underestimated. Possessing hard power in the times of international crisis can guarantee security to its owner. At the same time, this power gives the EU a chance to attain its ambition, which is to emerge as a regional and global power and a norm setter in the world. The Russian-Ukrainian war has made it clear for the EU that the current international system dominated by nation-states protecting their national interests which presuppose their own survival and security, which act rationally and judge actorness in terms of capabilities, force the EU to strive for traditional aspects of capabilities – a European military, an EU nuclear arsenal [29]. Thus, due to the crisis of 2022, the EU can indeed act as a rational geopolitical power (*realistic*) in implementing its foreign policy, and, at the same time, remain committed to its norm-based (*idealistic*) reform agenda towards its external environment [37].

Thus, it can be stated that the situation in Ukraine proves the effectiveness of the EU as a global civilian state by the fact that even Russia, a superpower possessing massive soft power potential and huge economic resources,

cannot compete with the EU in terms of soft power and has to openly apply its hard power to terminate 'Europeanization' of the other states in the traditional spheres of geopolitical influence.

The Russian-Ukrainian war cannot undermine the EU's effectiveness as a global actor in the soft security sphere – a global civilian state which does not rely on hard military power. However, the Ukraine war as an evident challenge to the EU's soft and hard security may force the Union to develop its military potential as a military geopolitical entity which is likely to become a global superpower due to its present military potential. All this could slightly harm the relations between the EU and NATO, the latter being the one sharing competence with the EU. The war in Ukraine will thus be '*a game-changer for the EU's security policy'* [8] because the context, in which policies need to be formulated and implemented, has so drastically changed. What is also important here, in thinking about the EU as a security actor, is the realignment between Europe, the United States, and the renewed primacy of NATO over European security questions.

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