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# **REIMAGINE AND RECONSTRUCT**

Analysis on the discourses regarding the European defence industrial collaboration and implications for the European project

# ABSTRACT

Saija Juslén: Reimagine and reconstruct. Analysis on the discourses regarding the European defence industrial collaboration and implications for the European project

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The defence industry has traditionally been considered a national priority, whereas joint defence industry has received little attention in the collective discourses on European security. Over the course of the past few years the arguments for strengthening the European defence industry have become more accentuated, especially as the war in Ukraine has made it clear how unprepared European nations were for a large-scale crisis. Concepts such as strategic autonomy for Europe and reduced dependencies from third countries especially with regards to critical security and defence technologies are particularly important in these arguments. In this master's thesis the European leadership's narratives on building a stronger defence industrial base in Europe are studied. The primary research question of the thesis is: how does the European leadership argue and justify the need for the strengthening of the European defence industry cooperation? The secondary research question is: in particular, what role does the concept of strategic autonomy play in this process? The research will focus on studying and analysing the policy decisions, strategy papers and communications as well as the EU leadership's addresses and speeches on the European defence industrial cooperation published over the time period of 2013-2024. In particular, the analysis will focus on the justifications presented for strengthening the European defence industrial collaboration. The theoretical framework for the research is based on integration theories, in particular the neofunctionalist approach of supranationalism, as an explanatory tool for the EU institutions', and especially the Commission's role in defining the direction for European security and defence policies. The research methods used in the analysis are critical discourse analysis as well as content analysis. These methods are valid tools for studying how the arguments for a stronger European defence industry were built and what role can the concept of strategic autonomy be considered having played in this process.

The key findings of the study suggest that there is evidence in the research material that support the notion of increased EU leadership's role in emphasising the need for a unified and strengthened European defence industry. Furthermore, the research findings suggest that there are several ways how the European leadership is arguing and justifying the need for strengthening the European defence industry cooperation, such as the dangerous geopolitical context around Europe as well as the region's need to protect its citizens. The various arguments on the complexities and variables affecting European security and the EU's position in the current world political context were identified as forming also the justifications for building a unified and robust defence industry collaboration. Also, as a finding of the study it can be said that the concept of strategic autonomy is included in many of the arguments presented in the analysed material. Based on the analysed research material it can be concluded that there has seen a significant shift in the European leadership's views towards building a stronger European defence industry collaboration, and the thematic is addressed with a sense of urgency. Over the observed time period of 2013 to 2024 the EU leadership's arguments in favour of strengthening the European defence collaboration have become stronger. As the geopolitical situation surrounding Europe continues to stay tense, this development can be expected to maintain its course on the rhetorical but also policy-making level. This will also emphasize the need for further academic research on the subject in order to understand the current and future developments and dynamics in the European defence industry collaboration.

Keywords: security, defence, discourse analysis, defence industry, European integration

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
ASAP	Act in Support of Ammunition Production
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review
CDP	Capability Development Plan
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DG DEFIS	Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDF	European Defence Fund
EDIDP	European Defence Industrial Development Programme
EDIP	European Defence Industry Programme
EDIS	European Defence Industrial Strategy
EDIRPA	European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act
EDTIB	European Defence Technological and Industrial Base
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PADR	Preparatory Action on Defence Research
SEAP	Structure for European Armament Programme
STANAGS	Standardisation Agreements
TBB	Technical Building Blocks

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Europe is facing unprecedented turmoil in its regional security, surrounding geopolitical and geoeconomic realities while its capacity to compete globally in economic, technological and security prowess is challenged in a manner unlike before. Russia's unlawful attack on Ukraine in February 2022 revealed how volatile the surrounding security environment is for the European nations, but it also brought to daylight how unprepared Europe was in maintaining its own defence and security capabilities, ensure resources for continuous support for its neighbouring regions for upholding security structures, and provide credible answers to external threats. As the Russian attack against Ukraine intensified, the voices in European policy landscape grew stronger calling for more robust defence capabilities and unified approach to ensure the development of the Union's own defence technological capabilities. However, this was not the first time European defence was on the agenda, as the debate for strengthening European defence capabilities and the defence industrial base had been ongoing for years before, picking up the speed at around 2016 and the years that followed. Around this time the European leadership, especially the Commission and the European Council, introduced a number of new strategies, policy guidelines and financial instruments to support Member States and European defence industry to collaborate to provide endemic defence solutions for the region and thus reducing outside dependencies on various of capabilities. This development has maintained its course, with numerous collaborative European defence capability projects involving industry actors and Member States currently underway, and the historic introduction of the European Defence Industrial Strategy in the first quarter of 2024. The European project of deepened integration can thus be considered having received a new, legitimated dimension in the form of defence industrial collaboration.

In my master's thesis I will study the development of the European defence industry from a sector that was traditionally focused on building national capabilities towards a more collaborative sector that focuses on building joint European capabilities. In my research I will focus on the European Union leadership's narratives legitimating the need for strengthening the European defence industrial collaboration and the concept of building a common European defence industry. I will be analysing the ways how this development was argued for in the official communications and narratives from the EU's leadership during the observed time period of 2013 – 2024.

The primary research question in my thesis is the following: how does the European leadership argue and justify the need for the strengthening of the European defence industry cooperation? The secondary research question is: in particular, what role does the concept of strategic autonomy play in this process? In my research I am especially interested on how the notion of strategic autonomy is incorporated in the discourses calling for more defence industrial collaboration in Europe. In my analysis I will employ critical discourse analysis as well as content analysis as research methodologies in studying how the arguments for a stronger European defence industry were built and what role can the concept of strategic autonomy be considered having in this process. The theoretical framework for the research draws from integration theories, especially neofunctionalism's accounts on supranationalism as an explanatory tool for the EU institutions', especially the Commission's, increased role in defining the direction for European security and defence policies. As my research material I will analyse the Commission's and the European Council's (and to some extent the Council of the European Union, i.e. "the Council") strategic papers, action plans and policy papers on critical technologies and European autonomy in defence industrial sector, as well as communications, and speeches by the Commission's and the European Council's leadership from the time period covering 2013 to 2024. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the ways how the strengthening of the European defence cooperation is justified and how the concept of strategic autonomy is employed in this narrative.

My research is structured in the following way. The Chapter 2 gives an overview to the research topic, the development of the policy arguments and institutional framework on the European defence industrial collaboration and strategic autonomy, the current institutional structures as well as strategies and activities in the European Union to enable this collaboration. Subchapter 2.5 on the aims of research will give an overview on the objectives and approach of my research. Chapter 3 will discuss the previous studies on the European industrial collaboration. Chapter 4 will discuss the theoretical framework for my research, namely the integration theories and especially neofunctionalism's accounts on supranationalism. Chapter 5 will provide an overview to the research methodology on critical discourse analysis and content analysis which are employed in this research. The chapter will also give an overview to the research materials. Chapter 6 provides the analysis of the findings of the research, and Chapter 7 provides a discussion on the analysis and its findings. Chapter 8 provides concluding remarks and recommendations for future studies.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

In my master's thesis I will study the development of the European defence industry from a sector that was traditionally focused on building national capabilities towards a more collaborative sector that focuses on building joint European capabilities. In my research I will focus on the European Union leadership's narratives legitimating the need for strengthening the European defence industry and the concept of building a common European basis for defence industry. I will be analysing especially the ways how this development was argued for in the official communications and narratives from the EU's leadership during the observed time period of 2013 – 2024. For the purpose of this research, I am referring to the EU's central institutions, mainly the Commission and the European Council and the Council of the European Union, as the EU leadership when observing the narratives on defence industry. To certain extend I will also include observations on the EU Parliament's contributions to the topic. To be more specific, I will be studying the rise of defence technology and capability narrative in the Union over the observed time period, a topic and narrative which was side-lined and received stark criticism for many years prior but has now risen to prominence in the EU's rhetoric.

Moreover, along with analysing the EU leadership's narrative on the defence industrial collaboration my research will also be taking a closer look at the policy processes and the administrative framework developed over the course of the 2010s and early 2020s to implement a more robust defence and security structures for the European defence industry. This overview serves as the essential background for understanding the EU's defence narrative. The aim of these policy processes is to cement Europe's position as a region with a strong defence industry, ultimately aiming to reduce dependencies on third countries and fortifying endemic capability developments and security of supply for the European Union.

Unlike only about a decade ago, in the recent years a defence dimension has been constructed over the Union's policy thinking and numerous administrative and policy structures have been built to enable a more coherent approach to the EU's security, and this development is currently intensifying. For example, an instrument providing public funding for joint European defence industry research and development (R&D) projects, the European Defence Fund (EDF), is now intended to be an integral part of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the Union. Despite defence being considered mainly a national priority and responsibility in the EU, it is however important to

note that defence collaboration and developing relevant capabilities in this domain is also enabled by the Treaty of the European Union, namely under Article 42 where e.g. possibility to enable Member States capabilities for implementation of the CSDP as well as the improvement of those capabilities is stated clearly.<sup>1</sup>

As an example of the development of defence industrial policy, a roster of new processes, each given their own name and acronym, has been defined and integrated to the EU-level policy vocabulary and processes to pave the way for a more coherent approach to defence cooperation between the Member States. Aside from the EDF, these include, but are not limited to, Capability Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), Technology Building Blocks (TBB), European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), Preparatory Action for Defence Research (PADR), and the European Defence Industry Reinforcement Through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), and European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS), to name but a few. From 2016 the argumentative trend in favour of building a common European defence industry seems to have accelerated, and with the introduction of coherent institutional structures to support the industry cooperation in the form of various funding and policy frameworks this trend took an even more robust approach to solidify a joint approach in building the European defence industry. Over the past few years, arguments emphasizing Europe's strategic autonomy and complex geopolitical developments seem to have only accelerated this development.

My research will study the policy decisions, and the Commission's and the European Council's communications made in the form of written speeches and statements on the European defence industrial cooperation, the basic characteristics of this envisioned cooperation and the justifications presented on the need for a common defence industry approach in Europe. Especially, the notions of strategic autonomy are interesting in this analysis as arguments in favour of strengthened defence industrial base and collaboration between the Member States and industry actors in realising this goal. Drawing from the integration theories, the interplay of intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism perspectives, but especially the neofunctionalism's discussion on supranationalism serves as the theoretical framing for my research. This will help me to analyse the narratives on the building of stronger European defence industry and collaboration therein from a more collective perspective as opposed to national process. The supranational perspectives in this theoretical framework will help

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<sup>1</sup> See for information: Treaty of European Union, Article 42

with analysing especially the EU institution's role in this discussion, although I acknowledge that the Member States' points of view are influencing the narratives, as well.

The discussion on European defence capabilities has been indeed heightened and this debate can be considered different from the rhetoric that has historically associated the EU as a peace project. This development in the narratives encouraged also the formulation of the title for this thesis. In other words, the research and analysis presented in this thesis present a viewpoint of looking at the EU leadership's narratives for a stronger European defence industry and the consecutive policies which support this process as acts of *reimagining* and *reconstructing* the European project with a stronger defence policy dimension. As my research method I will analyse the ways how the EU leadership, especially the Commission and the European Council, are justifying the arguments for building stronger European defence structures and defence industry. In analysing the results of this research, I will discuss whether a decisive narrative approach was implemented through the 2010s and early 2020s to fortify European defence industry's position and underline the importance of its independence from third countries in a changing world, and the need for Europe to be autonomous when it comes to its strategic capabilities and technological readiness. In my research I am especially interested on how the notion of strategic autonomy is incorporated in the discourse calling for more defence industrial collaboration in Europe. I will employ critical discourse analysis as well as content analysis as research methodologies in studying how the arguments for a stronger European defence industry were built and what role can the concept of strategic autonomy be considered having in this process.

In the following sub-chapters I will be discussing the concepts and premises of my research in more detail to provide a background for the reader to the underlying arguments and political processes behind European defence collaboration over the past decade or so. The final sub-chapter will discuss the aims of my research in more detail.

## **2.1 The EU's defence ambitions: robust EDTIB and the concept of strategic autonomy**

Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the unprovoked attack on the country that begun on February 24, 2022, brought to daylight also Europe's unpreparedness for large scale crisis and forced the Member States to acknowledge how years of underspending in defence capabilities had had a detrimental effect on the region's preparedness to defend itself. This development had been acknowledged, however, years before in Brussels and these remarks grew stronger by the year. For

example, in 2013 the European Council made a statement calling for a stronger European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and these claims gained prominence in the following years in official communications by Brussels, and strategy roadmaps such as the Global Strategy in 2016<sup>2</sup>.

A couple of years later, this notion is still of paramount interest to the European leadership, stated e.g. in the Strategic Compass, which was coordinated and tabled by the High Representative in 2021 and approved by Council of Foreign Affairs and endorsed by the European Council in 2022 as a guiding strategy the EU's security and defence cooperation. In the strategy document, the EU leadership's message was clear in calling for a more determined and stronger Europe in ensuring its security and defence<sup>3</sup>.

A considerable milestone in this development was the release of the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) on 5 March 2024 that projects long term strategies for building European defence industrial base<sup>4</sup>. The central argument in these communications seems to be Europe's precarious position in the changing world, and especially the concept of EU's strategic autonomy is portrayed as a vital framework for prosperous and safe Europe, and for ensuring plausible defence capabilities in the region. It is important to note that the EDIS provides avenues for furthering the cooperation between the EU and Ukraine in strengthening support for Ukraine, as the unlawful aggression by Russia against Ukraine is posing threat also to Europe and its security of supply and ability to maintain its defence industrial base<sup>5</sup> but it also set an objective to Ukraine closer to the EDTIB and provide means to innovate and develop defence capabilities directly in the battlefield.<sup>6</sup> The EDIS aims for creating a baseline for European defence industrial policy until 2035 and proposes several policy and governance actions to be taken for a stronger and more concerted European defence industry. It also introduces the EDIP, European Defence Industry Programme, a regulation crafted by the Commission to bring the EDIS into practical actions. The EDIS is indeed an ambitious effort to bring the European defence industry together towards a more joint approach and bridge the gap between the investment and identified military capability needs and it is a strategy that continues the Commission's positioning on building a common defence industry in Europe<sup>7</sup>. As a tangible example of the EDIS

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<sup>2</sup> Perotto 2023, 479

<sup>3</sup> Council of the European Union (2022), 6

<sup>4</sup> Joint Communication JOIN(2024) 10

<sup>5</sup> Commission Staff Working Document C(2024) 4822 final from the European Commission on 8 July 2024, 7

<sup>6</sup> Fiott 2024

<sup>7</sup> See for information: European Commission, DG DEFIS 2024

is the opening of EU's Defence Innovation Office in Kyiv in September 2024, which aims bringing Ukrainian expertise on the defence technologies and the EDTIB closer together and support the integration of the Ukrainian and European defence industries<sup>8</sup>.

Ambitions on strengthening the defence industrial base can be considered building on the logic of the single market approach in the EU, but also drawing their justifications from explicit directives given by the European Council tasking the European Commission to create structures and instruments to enable closer cooperation between defence industry actors and Member States<sup>9</sup>. The EDIS can be seen answering some of the challenges which the European defence is facing, and providing a strategic approach to building a strengthened defence industry, but many open questions remain in terms of synchronising and Europeanising defence plans as well as concerning the long timeline which is required in building a strong defence industry – strategy is one thing but implementing it requires efforts and commitment from all Member States jointly<sup>10</sup>. It can also be argued, as Daniel Fiott states, that not much has been achieved in terms of truly strengthening the European defence industries, since the European Council stated that defence matters<sup>11</sup>, and more concrete actions and ambition for collaboration among the Member States are needed. The development of instruments and policies are indeed welcome for the European defence industry, but more political ambition and more avenues for securing funding for the joint development (e.g. in the form of European Investment Bank lending money for the European defence industry as well as freeing resources from the EU budget to develop defence<sup>12</sup>) are called for by the experts following closely the developments in European security and defence industrial and policy domains. Also, the role between NATO and the EU in the region's defence, as well as debates on the allocation of influence and power between the Member States and the EU institutions, mainly the Commission, as well as European defence industry actors and their mutual rivalry are factors that need further addressing as the European defence industrial collaboration is moving forward<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See for information: European External Action Service 2024, press release 10.09.2024.

<sup>9</sup> European Council Conclusions 12-13 December 2012; EUCO 205/2012, as described in Tiilikainen, 2016

<sup>10</sup> European Commission 2024: *EDIS – Our Common defence industrial strategy*.

<sup>11</sup> Fiott 2023

<sup>12</sup> Pirozzi 2024, 21

<sup>13</sup> Taylor 20204, 28

## *Conceptualising strategic autonomy*

The arguments underlining the need for and the policies in support of strengthened European defence industry also connect closely on notions for improved strategic autonomy in the arguments made by the European leadership. As part of my thesis, I will employ a specific viewpoint on how this concept of strategic autonomy is used in the EU's narratives and how it is linked to the demands of improved defence collaboration. Extensive research has been made on the notions of strategic autonomy and its connotations for Europe. In the midst of deteriorating security environment, the notion of Europe's strategic autonomy has gained traction, not only from the security policy point of view, but also concerning economic and technological developments. It can be argued that the strategic autonomy idea has been brewing for a long time and is widely tied in the emerging of the EU's Global Strategy since 2016, with its more conventional manifestations being a topic for policy debates since the 1990s<sup>14</sup>.

Perotto discusses the concept further and argues that strategic autonomy can be considered through external and internal dimensions. The external dimension relates to the objective of being autonomous of third country influence especially in the context of defence industry and its development work; the internal dimension is considered as the Union's ability to be proactive and cooperative in the defence domain among the Member States<sup>15</sup>. The strategic autonomy is a set of its own policy openings aiming for a more comprehensive reach on global issues facing the region and aiming for a broader impact in solving these issues, while strengthening the European nations' position globally. In broad terms the strategic autonomy notion aims to position the EU vis-à-vis such global forces as the US and China<sup>16</sup>.

Helwig has divided the concept of EU's strategic autonomy to two perspectives: conventional and global strategic autonomy. The conventional perspective pays attention to Europe's capability to defend itself without depending on the United States' support and to the industrial, operational as well as strategic capabilities the region must foster to become a credible defence player<sup>17</sup>. The global perspective emphasizes the EU's capacities also beyond defence, e.g. in trade and digitalisation, and how the Union can maintain and advance its values and interests in the face of great power rivalry,

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<sup>14</sup> Helwig 2020, 5

<sup>15</sup> Perotto 2023, 480

<sup>16</sup> See for example: Helwig 2020, 12

<sup>17</sup> Helwig 2020, 5

geopolitical pressures and the weakened multilateral world order<sup>18</sup>. For the purpose of my research, I find this division to conventional and global perceptions on strategic autonomy particularly useful and acknowledge the relevance of the conventional perspective in the context of my research, as my focus is on understanding the EU leadership's argumentation for a strong European defence industry and the role strategic autonomy plays here. Heljä Ossa has also studied the European strategic autonomy in her doctoral dissertation, focusing on how it is perceived in the transatlantic context<sup>19</sup>. Her research follows the conventional perception on conceptualising strategic autonomy as proposed by Helwig, and I find it highly valuable that this approach has been employed in further research also previously, thus building on the academic discussion and understanding of this concept which is widely used in the European policy narratives.

Helwig also proposes three distinctive approaches to understanding the strategic autonomy: institutional autonomy, material autonomy and political autonomy, underlining the various policy fields the notion can be considered addressing<sup>20</sup>. Defence and security are one of the most prominent, though not only, fields where the strategic autonomy is seen as a vital development. The tumultuous periods during Donald Trump's presidency, volatile security situation in Europe's vicinity as well as shifts in the perspectives on China's political and economic ambitions changing from cooperation to rivalry, are part of such larger global developments that have underlined the need for a strategy for more self-sustaining and robust Europe, acknowledging and addressing its dependencies.

Further elaborating on the concept, Helwig and Sinkkonen write that the discourse and debate around the concept of strategic autonomy have historically changed between four main themes. First debate centred around European military dimension in the 1990s, emphasising the strengthening of the defensive and crisis management capabilities of the EU. Second aspect to the discussion on strategic autonomy emerged around 2016 and strengthened the terminology's role in describing the EU's policy dimensions internally and externally. Third discussion on the thematic centred around the EU's position geopolitically, especially in terms of economic resources and how these can be used in favour or against the EU's interests by major powers such as the US or China. Fourth discussion on strategic autonomy emphasized autonomy in terms of welfare and health as well as the use of the EU's economic resources in recovering from a global pandemic. As a result of this, a notion of "open strategic autonomy" received more attention in the EU, in an attempt to promote European leadership

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<sup>18</sup> Helwig 2020, 6

<sup>19</sup> Ossa 2024

<sup>20</sup> Helwig 2020, 8

and its strategic choices in a tumultuous world realigning itself after the global pandemic. These four examples of the debates on strategic autonomy exemplify how the term is employed over time to strengthen and guide the way for a clarified role for the European Union in the changing global arena and to perhaps even realign the EU's identity in the growing influence of major powers globally<sup>21</sup>.

Indeed, the understanding the many dimensions of the concept of strategic autonomy as well as observing the concept from the conventional perspective as discussed by Helwig are relevant approaches for my thesis, and these will help with the analysis of the body of text studied to understand how the concept has been used in the EU leadership's policy communications and strategies as well as statements and addresses.

## **2.2 EU governance bodies and Member States: collaboration for strengthening the EU's defence domain**

The central European governance bodies for my research are the European Commission and the European Council, and to a certain extent the Council of the European Union, as they steer the work towards a joint European approach in the Union. This work happens outside of but in close cooperation with the Member States. The Commission has been central implementing body in driving concerted efforts in building a stronger European defence industrial base, and since releasing its Action Plan for defence in 2016 it can be considered having taken a forward-leaning approach to push for initiatives and supportive institutional structures to lower the threshold for Member States' and industry's collaboration for joint European defence. Also, the European External Action Service, EEAS, the European Defence Agency EDA as well as a specific implementing office under Commission's rule, the Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space, DG DEFIS, are such actors, that bear a closer explanation when researching the developments in strengthening the European defence industry.

The Commission's growing role can be considered an interesting turn of the tide, as according to Håkansson<sup>22</sup> the Commission has traditionally been considered on the sidelines of the EU's security and foreign policy developments, but especially the war in Ukraine has served as a catalytic moment in re-inventing the Commission's role and bringing it to the foreground of building a joint approach to the defence sector in Europe<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Helwig & Sinkkonen 2022, 16

<sup>22</sup> Håkansson 2024

<sup>23</sup> Håkansson 2024, 38

The European Commission is a governance body of the European Union, that develops and implements EU policies through proposing laws to the European Council and the Parliament, supports Member States with implementing the legislation, and monitors EU budget as well as distributes its funding. The Commission is led by the President Ursula Von Der Leyen and it comprises of 27 Commissioners, forming the “College” who are appointed from each Member State and who steer the Commission’s work. The European Council appoints the Commissioners every 5 years, and the Commission is democratically accountable to the European Parliament. Operating under the Commission, several policy departments are responsible for the specific policy areas of the Commission’s operation. These Directorate-Generals develop, implement, and manage the related EU policies and funding instruments under the relevant Commission policy area<sup>24</sup>. The DG DEFIS was specifically created to implement the European Defence Fund instrument, and it operated for a long time under the Commissioner for Internal Market. After the European Parliamentary elections in June 2024, the new College of Commissioner-designates was announced in September 2024. Among the proposed positions was also a position of Commissioner for defence and space, which was appointed to former Prime Minister of Lithuania, Andrius Kubilius<sup>25</sup>. At the time of writing this thesis, Commissioner-designate Kubilius passed his hearing with the European Parliament in November 2024 and his appointment was waiting for the final formalities.

The European Council is the institution that defines the overall political direction for the European Union. It comprises of 27 heads of Member States or their government leaders, as well as the European Council President and the President of the European Commission. The Council of the European Union and The European Council can be considered the intergovernmental bodies of the EU, as through them the Member States representatives convene and steer the EU policy directions and implementation together<sup>26</sup>.

The Council of the European Union, or the Council, is one of two legislative bodies of the European Union together with the European Parliament. It comprises of the national government ministers from each Member State, divided into specific policy areas. The Council’s presidency rotates every six months with a relevant minister from a particular Member State taking the position and steering the work. Together with the European Parliament the Council negotiates, agrees and adopts the European

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<sup>24</sup> For information: European Commission [www-pages](#), *Organisation of the European Commission*

<sup>25</sup> European Commission 2024, *Commissioner-designate (2024-2029)*

<sup>26</sup> For information: European Council [www-pages](#), *European Council*

laws. Also, it develops and implements the EU's foreign and security policy, including defence policy. In this process the European Council's guidance is considered closely. The Common Security and Foreign Policy as well as its central component namely the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) are coordinated under the Foreign Affairs Council, (FAC) steered by the High Representative of the of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy<sup>27</sup>.

Two relevant institutions should still be mentioned, operating under the Council of the European Union. These are the European External Action Service, EEAS, the diplomatic section of the European Union. It also hosts the security and defence policy section of the European Union under its operations and has been responsible for coordinating the preparation of Strategic Compass for the EU in 2022. Likewise, the European Defence Agency, EDA, operates under the Council of the European Union. The EDA acts as an umbrella agency for Member States' Ministries of Defence and relevant governance bodies for increased defence collaboration especially on capability development, innovation and research and development activities, but also supports the governments to understand the implications of the defence policies as well as manages training and exercise activities. EDA is also coordinating processes such as the Capability Development Planning, CDP, Coordinated Annual Review on Defence CARD, and Permanent Structured Cooperation PESCO (together with the EEAS)<sup>28</sup>. It also partakes in supporting the EDF, but it should be mentioned that EDF is managed under the Commission's DG DEFIS.

The different governance bodies and agencies operating in the EU's security and defence domain are listed in table 1 below. The strengthening of the Commission's role especially in terms of defence policy thinking and building the defence industrial base, as well as the roles which the different agencies play in this process on the EU's institutional level show how defence thinking has gained traction on the Union's institutional level. A lot of this work is being done in collaboration and with the blessing of the Member States but the Commission's increased confidence during the past year also shows stronger supranational tendencies on the institutional level in this development.

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<sup>27</sup> For information: European Council [www-pages](#), *Foreign Affairs Council configuration*

<sup>28</sup> For information: European Defence Agency [www-pages](#), *What we do*.

Table 1 Relevant governance bodies and agencies in the EU's security and defence domain

<b>Relevant EU governance bodies in European defence</b>
The Council of the European Union, i.e. “the Council”
The European Commission, i.e. the “Commission”
The European Council
The European Parliament
<b>Relevant EU agencies in European defence</b>
Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space, DG DEFIS
European Defence Agency, EDA
European External Action Service, EEAS

### 2.3 Strategies for developing the European defence and security sectors

Two major policy guidelines for strengthening the European security and foreign policy domains, gradually also including the defence domain, have been the Global Strategy from 2016 and the Strategic Compass of 2022 coordinated by the EEAS. Commission contributed, however, to including the defence industry dimension in the Strategic Compass<sup>29</sup>. Also, more defined action steps for defence sector were provided already earlier with the European Defence Action Plan of 2016. The following subchapter will give a brief overview on the underlying notions on security and defence at the EU leadership’s deliberations, and how the meaning of these concepts can be seen shifting in the European strategic planning. Figure 1 below provides an overview to the launching of central strategies and policy documents enabling the building of European defence industrial collaboration structures.

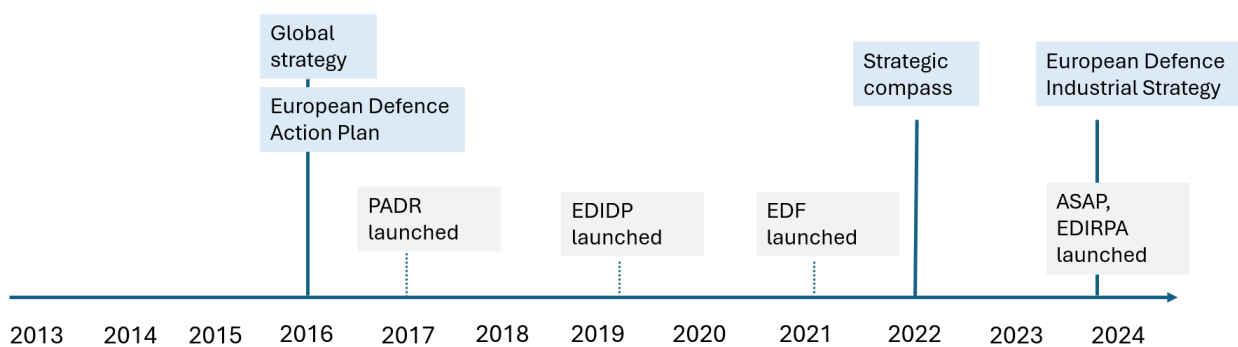


Figure 1 Timeline of central decisions and strategies of European defence collaboration

<sup>29</sup> Håkansson 2024, 36

### 2.3.1. The Global Strategy 2016

The High Representative was mandated by the European Council to prepare a Global Strategy for the EU in order to provide a comprehensive and multi-dimensional strategy framework for a more coherent foreign and security policy for the European Union and to fortify the sense of unity in a time of turmoil around Europe, including invasion of Crimea by Russia in 2014, terrorism affecting in European cities and the UK's referendum to leave the EU. Released in June 2016 the Global Strategy replaced the European Security Strategy of 2003 and provided an overview to key focus areas for the EU's foreign policy. The Global Strategy set out several objectives for crafting a stronger Union, and five priorities for its external action were identified: 1) the security of the Union 2) state and societal resilience to East and South 3) integrated approach to conflicts 4) cooperative regional orders and 5) global governance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>30</sup>. Håkansson writes, that the EUGS has been considered as a “watershed moment for European security and defence integration”<sup>31</sup>.

Security and defence were discussed as essential parts of the Union's strategy, with notions of the importance of strategic autonomy for the European Union as well as acknowledging that the “idea that Europe is an exclusively ‘civilian power’ does not do justice to evolving reality”<sup>32</sup>. When looking at the outlined strategic approaches to specifically defence, the process for strengthening defence was considered as a needed step for strengthening the Union<sup>33</sup>, and defence cooperation was seen necessary in maintaining Member States' defence capabilities. Moreover, the EU was seen as the potential driving force in encouraging this and creating a European defence industry, which would also ensure the continent's autonomy<sup>34</sup>. In enabling the security of the Union, the Global Strategy also calls for a better equipped, trained, and organised Europe to ensure its security<sup>35</sup>. Strategic autonomy is seen as central part of this approach as well as better readiness for Europeans to protect themselves.

While it is acknowledged that the Member States are in central role in maintaining the necessary defence capabilities, Håkansson writes that deepened defence cooperation is needed for better “interoperability, effectiveness, efficiency and trust”<sup>36</sup> and this is seen requiring investments and

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<sup>30</sup> Global Strategy 2016, 9-10

<sup>31</sup> Håkansson 2024, 29

<sup>32</sup> Global Strategy 2016, 4

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 9

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 19

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 20

optimising the use of national resources for defence cooperation. National defence planning cycles and capability development practices were called for in order to bring Member States and their defence sectors closer together<sup>37</sup>. In this way defence received more attention in the Global Strategy than perhaps in the previous strategies, and this development had been prepared during the years before with Commission's strategy and policy guidance on joint defence cooperation and investments. In the Global Strategy the notions on defence domain's role in Europe were nevertheless clearly stated, and the Commission articulated its will how it foresaw the security and defence fields' role in the Union's development in a changed geopolitical environment. Where the Global Strategy maintained a rather high-level approach to the needs for developing these sectors, the Commission's Implementation Plan<sup>38</sup> on Security and Defence published in 2016 took a more pragmatic approach in proposing actions to realise the strategy in practice. The Implementation Plan was part of a larger package of policy guidance and recommendation, to which also the European Defence Action Plan belonged to.

### **2.3.2. European Defence Action Plan 2016**

In the European Defence Action Plan, released in 2016, the Commission outlined the critical issues hampering the European defence capabilities landscape, spanning from years of underspending to develop the sector, as well as overlapping defence capabilities and lack of comprehensive industrial cooperation in the region. The Action Plan stated three main approaches for strengthening the European defence industrial sector. The first was the launching of the EDF, the second aims to foster investments in the defence supply chain, and the third approach focuses on strengthening the defence single market. By directing strong financial incentives as well as refining the institutional structures around the defence industry the Commission aimed to support the Member States' efforts for developing and collaborating towards a stronger European Defence industry<sup>39</sup>, taking thus an active role in creating a comprehensive approach to the strengthening of the European defence industry and responding to the emerging security threats.

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<sup>37</sup> Global Strategy 2016, 21

<sup>38</sup> Implementation Plan on Security and Defence 14392/16 from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Head of the European Defence Agency to the Council on 14 November 2016

<sup>39</sup> European Commission: COM(2016) 950 final, 4

### 2.3.3. Strategic Compass 2022

The Strategic Compass continued the development of the Global Strategy in building a coherent picture of the European Union's foreign policy direction. Published in 2022 in an even more volatile security environment than during the time of the publication of the Global Strategy, as the pandemic and Russians aggressive war in Ukraine had a cataclysmic effect on Europe and the stability in its vicinity, the Strategic Compass takes an even more asserted approach in defining Europe's strategic approach in maintaining its role in the global context. Europe's commitment to defend its integrity and security is underlined, and how the changes in the surrounding geopolitical context require the EU to increase its capacity and willingness, and strengthen its resilience and solidarity, between Member States but also to neighbouring regions<sup>40</sup>. The Strategic Compass provides four strands of work to obtain the high-level ambition goals of fortifying European security and defence.

These strands are equipped with rather dynamic and descriptive names<sup>41</sup>:

1. The *Act* work strand aims for a Union that is able to act rapidly and in a robust manner in the face of crisis, with or without partners.
2. The *Secure* work strand aims to enhance ability to anticipate threats, maintain secure access to strategic domains as well as protect EU citizens.
3. The *Invest* work strand aims to strengthen investments in capabilities and technologies and bridging gaps and reduce dependencies in the industry and technologies.
4. The *Partner* work strand aims to strengthen partnerships for addressing common threats and challenges.

The objective of having a strengthened European security and defence is quite prominent in the Strategic Compass, calling for Europe to truly think about defence capabilities as central aspects in maintaining its role and position in the global context. The changes in security environment seem to be permanent as per the renewed strategies' driving force, and strategic competition, complex security threats and attacks on security order are all seen challenging the European security, to which the EU must be able to react and act accordingly<sup>42</sup>. The Strategic Compass is explicitly stated as complementary to European policies in responding to external threats that impact internal security

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<sup>40</sup> European Commission: COM(2016) 950 final, 10

<sup>41</sup> Strategic Compass 2022, 11-12

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 14

and aligns with the Commission's Security Union Strategy 2020 as well as provides actions to implementing the Versailles agenda 2022<sup>43</sup>.

The Strategic Compass acknowledges the "return of power politics"<sup>44</sup> in the world and it provides and sets out multiple objectives for ensuring European security at a rather high-level but also with concrete policy and action recommendations to fulfil these objectives. Under especially the *Invest* work strand, practical steps for enhanced defence capabilities and cooperation are identified, presenting the Commission's recommendations for the Member States and the EU institutions for steps to take to enable this development. These steps involve increased and improved defence spending to strengthen the European defence industry; enhanced defence capability development processes and involving the Member States in this process; focus on strategic capability development in all defence domains and encourage Member States collaboration in developing these capabilities; address and reduce strategic dependencies on technologies and improve Europe's own supply chains and autonomy in critical technology domains<sup>45</sup>. In the Strategic Compass, it can be considered that the Commission takes a forward-leaning approach in defining the focus areas for improving European security and maintains a defence-heavy perspective on the future actions to be taken in Europe to answer growing complexities globally. Nevertheless, Member States are seen in a central role in enabling the much-needed collaborative and joint approaches to radically update and upgrade European security and defence structures, from ways of working together to creating a strengthened European defence industry.

Further commitments to bolstering European defence industry were made in the European Council's meeting in Versailles in March 2022 as a response to the war Russia had launched just two weeks prior against Ukraine. Among other things the Versailles Declaration calls for more investments to be directed at defence capabilities and developing different technologies by encouraging more expenditure on defence as well as incentives for Member States' collaborative investments to enhance cooperation and procurement in the defence domain<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Strategic Compass 2022, 15

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 17

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 49-51

<sup>46</sup> European Council, Versailles Declaration 2022, 4

### 2.3.4. The European Defence Industrial Strategy 2024

On March 5, 2024, the European Commission released the new European Defence Industrial Strategy, which is its most ambitious and extensive communication of consolidated initiatives to strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base to date. In the strategy, the Commission provides insights to the reasons for the need for a more coherent strategy for the European defence industry and provides several proposals for actionable steps to enable Member States to boost their efforts to “invest more, better, together and European”<sup>47</sup>. Europe’s defence readiness is to be improved significantly in order for the region to be able to defend its values, and strategic responsibility is called for from the Member States to realise this<sup>48</sup>. The EDTIB is seen having three challenges currently: 1) there is a lack of collective demand for defence capabilities resulting in duplication and lack of synchronised investments, 2) the supply of products is not encouraging the creation of cooperative structures with different actors and the economies of scale approach is not utilised, 3) the Member States have a tendency to prioritise third country products in their procurement, thus weakening the European industrial base further<sup>49</sup>.

The European Industrial Strategy proposes several practical initiatives to bridge the gap of investment and technology development in Europe in the defence domain. These action steps are set to support such proposed new regulatory initiatives as the European Defence Industry Programme EDIP, and the reinforcement of the European Defence Industry through Common Procurement, EDIRPA, as well as the Act in Support of Ammunition Production, ASAP. Especially the EDIP is considered as a way of solidifying the defence industry initiatives as it is envisioned that:

The proposed EDIP will expand in time and scope the support to the competitiveness of the EDTIB brought by EDIRPA and ASAP. It will incentivise cooperation in the procurement phase of defence products manufactured by the EDTIB, support the industrialisation of products stemming from EDF funded actions or other EU cooperative frameworks and more generally support the defence industrial ramp-up in the Union.<sup>50</sup>

The EDIS provides several practical initiatives for enhancing EDIP and creating a supportive structure for improved EDTIB. These include, for example, the creation of Industrial Readiness Board with members from the Commission, Member States and the High Representative / Head Of Agency

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<sup>47</sup> European Commission: JOIN(2024) 10 final, 2

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 7

and its responsibilities are considered to perform the EU defence joint programming and procurement function, including identification of programmes and projects of common interest for the EU, as well as support the implementation of the EDIP<sup>51</sup>. The EDIP is also envisioned to have capacities to financially offset the challenges currently facing cooperation and common procurement of the defence products, providing a joint procurement support window<sup>52</sup>. The use of civil and defence standards will also be supported, e.g. the use of NATO STANAGS (Standardisation Agreements) as well as cross-certification activities will be supported to support standardisation and improved interoperability<sup>53</sup>. New, practical frameworks, such as the Structure for European Armament Programme (SEAP) are proposed to enable Member State cooperation throughout the defence products' life-cycle, not just the R&D phase as enabled by e.g. the EDF, with proposed value-added tax exemptions and bonus systems within the EDIP to encourage the updating of such long lasting cooperation<sup>54</sup>. Launch of the European Military Sales Mechanism is another framework suggested in the strategy to encourage the promotion of the availability and the possibility of the procurement of European defence products.<sup>55</sup> Another aspect of a stronger EDTIB is the availability of the defence products and the strategy also proposes initiatives to ensure “ever-warm” facilities as well as an option to repurpose civilian production lines for the benefit of a stable and robust defence industrial base.<sup>56</sup> New financing instruments as well as easier access for finances especially for small technology companies to develop innovative defence products is also proposed in the strategy, through the Commission's EUDIS (EU Defence Innovation Scheme) financing but also in cooperation with EDA's innovation programmes<sup>57</sup>.

An EU-wide security of supply scheme is also proposed for initiation to ensure resilience and competitiveness of the European supply chains in the defence domain. This EU Security of Supply regime is intended to enhance solidarity and effective response to any supply issue that may arise in the production of capabilities and thus mitigate any potential crisis in the production chain<sup>58</sup>. The strategy also outlines ways to ensure defence sector access to more sustainable private and public finances. The Commission proposes to initiate high-level discussions together with EDA and Member States with banks and investors for enhanced participation of the private financing sector in building

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<sup>51</sup> European Commission: JOIN(2024) 10 final, 8

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 9

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 12

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 13

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 17

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 19

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 21

the defence investments. This would also include engaging with such actors as the European Investment Bank through dialogue to consider exemptions for defence industry in their lending policies (and view these policies in terms with current EU policy priorities), as well as increase transparency and information about the defence industry among private investors and increase considerations for the EU's sovereignty, resilience and security in terms with the EU's sustainable finance framework<sup>59</sup>.

The EDIS is a strong initiative from the Commission where it takes an active stance to enabling a strong EDTIB also for the years to come – the current ongoing EDF programme, designed until 2027, is thus seen as only a beginning for this development and strengthening of the defence industrial collaboration requires even more concerted efforts. In the strategy Commission portrays itself as a primus motor for the developments, but these indeed need to be realised in close cooperation with the Member States and other EU bodies for truly coherent and unified approach.

The work in developing these strategy frameworks and instruments for industry and policy cooperation in the field of European defence has been extensive and detailed over the course of almost a decade now. The policy processes in creating a joint approach on the EU-level to defence material and industry collaboration is interesting and is worth of taking a closer look, as it has an overarching effect across the Union to the Member States and their military capabilities, enabling a joint approach to processes that have been traditionally uni- or bilateral in nature.

#### **2.4. Overview to the EU's defence research and development initiatives for a stronger defence industry**

In my thesis I will study the discourses around justifying the strengthening of European defence industrial collaboration. The debate on intergovernmentalism's vs. neofunctionalism's aspects of the building of this collaboration serves as a theoretical framework for my study, especially focusing on the supranational arguments regarding this integration process. When considering the European defence industry collaboration on the policy level, the European Defence Agency, EDA, represents an intergovernmental structure in this domain. EDA is organised under the supervision of the Member States enabling an intergovernmental collaborative platform for defence collaboration. The European Defence Fund, managed and implemented by the European Commission is thus effectively a supranational structure for advancing defence collaboration in Europe. On a broader level, for this

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<sup>59</sup> European Commission: JOIN(2024) 10 final, 25

collaboration to become possible even in theory, one must look back to 1998 and to the Saint-Malo Declaration, in which the leadership of France and the United Kingdom declared that:

The Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises<sup>60</sup>.

Europe's failure to act decisively during the conflicts in the Balkan region in the 1990s was a catalyst for the declaration and the consequent actions to enhance defence collaboration, expanding also to the industrial and technology levels. The Saint-Malo Declaration is seen as the starting point for EDA<sup>61</sup>, and later in 1999 the European Security and Defence Policy, nowadays referred to as Common Security and Defence Policy, CSDP, was created. However, it should be noted that the observation period for my thesis is much shorter than the creation of these institutional structures and spans from the 2010s to the early 2020s to understand the narrative of the European leadership concerning the development of European defence collaboration especially on the industrial level.

When it comes to understanding the processes of strengthening the European defence industrial base, Brichet et al. distinguish three different national approaches to defence industry activities which all can be considered impacting the European industrial cooperation dynamics. Firstly, there are countries with strong historical defence industry traditions and strong export-oriented approach (e.g. Germany, Sweden, France). Secondly, there are countries with rather broad defence industry base and export base (The Netherlands, Finland, Czechia). Thirdly, there are Member States where defence industry players are mainly subcontractors or have very specific areas of expertise (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Austria)<sup>62</sup>. For Brichet et al, what follows is thus that the EDF instrument enables increased defence industry cooperation which is nevertheless characterised by the Member States' individual aspirations and understanding of their role in the defence industry. Member States with strong and established defence industry consider such instruments as supporting unnecessary fragmentation of the market. Then again, for Member States with smaller defence industries the instrument and the cooperative projects it enables equals fair conditions to strengthen their industrial base. With a finite budget, it is however a dilemma, which projects will enable the best return of money: targeted large-scale projects with a focus on specific capabilities and harnessing the resources of the strongest nations and industries or small-scale projects providing for specialised capabilities by niche actors

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<sup>60</sup> Franco-British St. Malo declaration from 4 December 1998

<sup>61</sup> EDA 2024, 14

<sup>62</sup> Brichet et al. 2021, 1

and thus diversifying the defence capability portfolios of the Union<sup>63</sup>. This is a debate that has been ongoing since the start of the EDF programme and has yet to be concluded.

#### **2.4.1. Management and coordination of EU's defence R&D programmes**

Considering the administrative structures of different defence industrial R&D initiatives on the EU-level, the EDA is coordinating its own research and development programmes (albeit these are moderate in budget than compared to, for example, the EDF projects) as well as facilitates discussion with the defence industry, whereas the DG DEFIS under the Commission's management is overseeing programmes such as the EDF<sup>64</sup>.

EDA was considered to be on the losing side, when it was decided that the Commission would take the multi-billion euro EDF instrument under its governance<sup>65</sup>. EDA is essentially an agency of intergovernmental character and under its coordination the EDF would have been outside the European Parliament's control. EDA is focusing on defining the central capacity needs of the Union as well as defining the research and technology requirements. As an intergovernmental body, many of the strategic decisions at EDA require a consensus from the Member States, which in their turn can be considered having their different, nationally and regionally influenced agendas<sup>66</sup>. This in turn sheds some light to the different dynamics characterising the European defence cooperation and the defence industrial base, namely the interplay between strong Member States' national interests as well as the EU leadership's ambitions on how the European defence capabilities should look like.

The EDF is effectively an instrument steered by the European Commission. As discussed by Brichet et al., the Commission has taken the leading role in strengthening the European defence industrial base as well as the cooperation between Member States in the field of defence industrial cooperation<sup>67</sup>. The Commission is considered as a legitimate actor in this sense, as it is viewed as more efficient in creating functioning cooperation in the field, instead of lengthy intergovernmental processes. Indeed, the Commission is considered as advancing Europe's interest in the field of defence cooperation, as it does not need to focus on solving Member States' arguments and decision-making's bottle necks caused by national interests<sup>68</sup>. Commission is administratively independent of

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<sup>63</sup> Brichet et al. 2021, 1

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 4–5

<sup>65</sup> For example, Brichet et al. 2021, 4

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 4

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 4

the Member States and is thus free of political or budgetary changes, making it possible to establish more long-term policy orientations. However, the Member States' interest can be considered playing a role in the background of the EDF and its work programmes<sup>69</sup>.

Prior to the EDF programme, a test programme period from 2014 to 2020 was initiated. During this phase, the necessary procedures and frameworks were set up, and the precursor funding programmes Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR), and European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP) were executed. PADR was coordinated and overseen by the EDA, mandated by the Commission, with the programme's financing derived from the forthcoming EDF's budget. It was active from 2017 to 2019 with a budget of about 90 million euros.<sup>70</sup> The purpose of the PADR was to create a preparatory framework for European research and technology development activities, that focused on defence explicitly, and that would also have synergies with the ongoing research programmes within the Horizon 2020 programme as well as activities within EDA<sup>71</sup>. Between 2017 and 2019 PADR awarded 18 projects for funding, out of its total funding budget of 90 million EUR<sup>72</sup>.

The EDIDP ran from 2019 to 2020 and in 2021 the EDF programme became fully active, with both programmes coordinated under the DG DEFIS. EDA also participates the EDF through a so-called capability dimension as well as by providing a marketplace for Member States as an informal network for presenting planned projects and initiatives with relation to the EDIDP/EDF programmes<sup>73</sup>. The first pilot project in European defence was awarded in 2016<sup>74</sup>. The EDIDP had a funding budget of 500 million EUR. In 2019 16 projects were awarded funding and in 2020 26 projects received positive funding decision from the programme<sup>75</sup>. The EDIDP's objectives were to support the cooperation between different projects initiatives and Member States as well as different sized industry actors for strengthening the development of defence capabilities, as well as building a more competitive European defence industry in the internal markets as well as globally and building the foundation for the upcoming EDF<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> Bricet et al 2021, 5

<sup>70</sup> For information: EDA www-pages, *Pilot project and Preparatory Action on Defence Research*

<sup>71</sup> European Commission (2017), Commission decision C(2017) 2262 final, 6.

<sup>72</sup> For information: European Commission, *Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR)*

<sup>73</sup> For information: EDA www-pages, *European Defence Fund (EDF)*

<sup>74</sup> For information: EDA 2024. *First EU Pilot Project in the field of defence research sees grant agreements signed for €1.4 million*

<sup>75</sup> European Commission: *European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)*

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

The EDF instrument was created to bridge the capability gap in the European militaries, harmonise and streamline some of these capabilities, and provide cooperation structures for the Member States' armament agencies and industry actors. Besides research projects, a notable part of the instrument entails funding for capability development projects, which aim to jointly develop next-generation defence technologies based on identified military capability needs and which shall be procured by the Member States. Approximately 8 billion euros have been earmarked for the EDF within the multiannual financial framework for years 2021-2027<sup>77</sup>.

The EDF Regulation provides a detailed framework for managing the defence research and development projects under the allotted EU funding. It defines the purpose of the EDF as contributing to a strong, competitive and innovative European Defence Industrial Base as well as contributing the EU's strategic autonomy by enabling

... cross-border cooperation between Member States as well as cooperation between enterprises, research centres, national administrations, international organisations and universities throughout the Union, both in research and development phases of defence products and technologies.<sup>78</sup>

The EDF is foreseen supporting development of disruptive technologies (however, with considerations on ethics and e.g. human control of autonomous systems<sup>79</sup>) in the defence industry, as well as supporting the standardisation activities in the field, and commonly agreed specifications and requirements between Member States and between legal entities, in order to decrease the fragmentation in the European defence industry<sup>80</sup>.

The projects should be carried out in a collaborative manner by industry consortia, where at least three legal entities<sup>81</sup> established at least in three different Member States are cooperating, where one legal entity is appointed as the coordinator for the action. The Regulation gives further provision on the limits of control potentially exercised by the entities over each other and what are the provisions for countries outside the EU. In principle, only legal entities established in the Union or associated countries (Norway) and which are not subject to non-associated third country control, are eligible for

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<sup>77</sup> See for example: European Commission, *EDF – developing tomorrow's defence capabilities*

<sup>78</sup> REGULATION (EU) 2021/697 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092, 2

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>81</sup> In this regard the EDF Regulation defines legal entity as: 'legal entity' means a legal person created and recognised as such under Union, national or international law, which has legal personality and the capacity to act in its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations, or an entity which does not have legal personality as referred to in point (c) of Article 197(2) of the Financial Regulation. For information: EDF Regulation 2021, 11

applying for the funding, with some derogation clauses pertaining to the control by these non-associated third countries<sup>82</sup>. In this way the funding is directed specifically for developing European capabilities and strengthening also the internal market, by de-risking the research and development activities investments, and supporting widening collaboration between especially small- and medium sized enterprises as well as middle capitalisation companies in the defence industry<sup>83</sup>. Furthermore, clear links to previous research programmes should be fostered (PADR, EDIDP) as well as the capability needs should be in line with the framework defined within the CSDP and CDP, as well as align with the CARD and PESCO processes<sup>84</sup>.

The Commission manages and monitors the EDF, the funding is allocated through calls for proposals in accordance with Union's Financial Regulation principles. The Commission is responsible for the selection and award procedures for the projects, and it also monitors closely the execution of individual projects<sup>85</sup>. However, it does so in close cooperation Member States and the industry in order to maintain an open dialogue. At the end, a decisive aspect of projects' eligibility is also whether the Member States will intend to procure the developed technologies, as the actions should aim for a commercially viable and demand-driven products. Hence, Member States' views and intention to procure the technologies are of importance and they are asked to express this intention already at the application phase and partake to the funding of the development projects up to a certain extent, referring mainly to project activities entailing prototyping and further to e.g. testing of the technologies (EDF projects focusing solely on research receive 100% funding, whereas projects aiming for developing technological capabilities at more advanced stages receive part of the funding from the EU and the remaining parts are financed through other means, e.g. with possible Member States' co-financing)<sup>86</sup>.

By early 2024, about 145 projects involving 2618 participants have been launched under the EDF. This can be considered forming an active European defence industrial ecosystem, currently addressing a variety of defence capabilities and technologies. The projects involve research organisations (609 participations), SMEs (826 participations), larger entities (1113 participations), public bodies (456 participations) and higher education institutes (230 participations)<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> EDF Regulation 2021, 3

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 2, 6

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 4-5

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>87</sup> European Commission: JOIN(2024) 10 final, 20

Nevertheless, despite being implemented under Commission's management and its budget being allocated from the EU's budget, the governance process of the EDF is impacted by the double comitology process. In other words, the Member States take part in the work programme committee meetings which determine the EDF work programme, according to which the calls for proposals and ultimately funding will be decided upon every year. The EEAS and EDA participate the meetings as observers. The Commission ultimately facilitates the decision process and implements the work programmes, but the work programme can only be adopted if it has qualified majority votes from the Member States. This gives the Member States power over determining the direction of the annual work programme<sup>88</sup>, though the EDF and its implementation have significant supranational undertones.

Besides EDF, also other structures have been defined and set up to create a common European defence approach. The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and Capability Development Plan (CDP) provide an administrative backbone for the defence aspirations of Brussels and the Member States<sup>89</sup>. These are also effectively highly intergovernmental processes, where EDA's role in coordinating these initiatives is prominent. Unnecessary silos and overlap between the different research and development programmes coordinated by these different agencies are avoided by seeking synergies and added value within the EDF projects in the form of e.g. funding bonuses for projects with identifiable continuation between a PESCO project and also synergies with previous/ongoing EDIDP/EDF project are encouraged in some cases. Also, an aspect which is observed in the selected EDF projects is what kind of linkages these can be considered having with the Capability Development Plan and its outputs i.e. Strategic Context Cases and Technology Building Blocks, which are effectively defence capability priorities derived in the intergovernmental process between the Member States<sup>90</sup>. Overall, the launching of the EDF instrument as well as accepting dual-use technologies to be developed under the EU's flagship R&D funding instrument Horizon Europe, are processes that strengthen the public funding for innovations and development in the defence sector and provide incentives for the defence industry actors to join forces.

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<sup>88</sup> Directorate General for the External Policies 2021, 17

<sup>89</sup> Fiott, Daniel, 2018

<sup>90</sup> Directorate General for the External Policies 2021, 17

## 2.4.2. Other initiatives for European defence industry collaboration

The release of the European Defence Industrial Strategy in March 2024 introduced the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act, EDIRPA, aiming to support and incentivise defence procurement between the Member States. With a budget of 310 million the programme supports procurement in three areas: 1) ammunition, 2) air and missile defence, and 3) platforms and replacement of legacy systems<sup>91</sup>. Also, ASAP programme, or the Act in Support of Ammunition Production, was released following the publications of EDIS. With a budget of 500 million the objective of ASAP is to support the ramp up of European defence industry's ammunition production, in order for it to reach a capacity to produce 2 million shells per year by the end of 2025<sup>92</sup>. Despite their small scale, the objective for the EU is to build on these programmes during the forthcoming European Defence Industry Programme, EDIP. These are all important developments, but indeed many hurdles remain, as for example the need for consensus from 27 Member States to decide on many of the EU instruments for the industry, as well as underlying mistrust and suspicion many Member States still have on expanded EU influence on defence matters and national industries in this regard<sup>93</sup>.

Commenting on the need for a stronger European defence industry, the European Parliament's briefing summarises the reasons for reinforcing the defence industry under a variety of issues<sup>94</sup>:

- Under-investment (measured in national gross domestic product) to defence: there has been a significant disparity in terms of spending on the European defence industry's production, and the investment has also been rather directed to acquiring third-country products, thus strengthening dependencies to third-country technologies.
- Fragmentation of both the capabilities (overlapping, duplicate, and redundant technologies) and defence planning focusing on the immediate national capability needs rather than spanning over to joint capability development project; in other words, the coordination of joint industrial endeavours and capability needs analysis is lacking.
- Dependencies on critical raw materials for key technologies and applications, such as semiconductors: the dependency on raw materials and applications imported from outside

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<sup>91</sup> European Commission, Annex C(2024) 1700 final

<sup>92</sup> European Commission 2024: *The Commission allocates €500 million to ramp up ammunition production, out of a total of €2 billion to strengthen EU's defence industry*

<sup>93</sup> Scazzieri 2024, 26

<sup>94</sup> Clapp 2023, 2-5

Europe is causing supply chain as well as security of supply issues in the European defence industry.

- Low production and manufacturing capacities: evident especially during the ongoing war in Ukraine and the critical need for ammunition and equipment from Europe, which are used by the Ukrainian troops faster than they can be produced in Europe.

The ways in which the European Parliament proposes strengthening of the European defence industry include both structural (in terms of financial and policy tools) as well as cooperative solutions for more far-reaching effects. The Parliament announced its strong support for strengthening the European industrial base and the initiatives in accomplishing this. The support is seen happening through a wide variety of instruments and cooperative structures on a joint European level, calling for Member States' commitment and efforts in coming together for a stronger European defence industry<sup>95</sup>. Furthermore, the notions of a stronger European defence were emphasized as the European Council adopted Strategic agenda in June 2024 for 2024-2029, where security and defence constitute a dedicated development area for the Union, and Europe is sought to become a credible defence actor and a supporting element for NATO in this<sup>96</sup>.

The reasons for increased defence industry cooperation in Europe are multifaceted and a topic of much academic and industry debate. For example, for Csernatonni the increasingly complex geopolitical environment in which the Union needs to navigate, rivalry between great powers, and competition for technological innovations form a backdrop to understand Europe's attempts to strengthen its approach to security and defence, rather than these being exclusively under Member States' responsibilities. The introduction of multiple defence initiatives on EU's policy and institutional level can be seen as initiatives to create a "common defence consciousness" and shared defence innovation culture for the EU as well as its Member States<sup>97</sup>.

## **2.5 Aims of the research**

The EU's approach to strengthening its industrial defence base and the Member States' procurement and cooperation in the field of defence is a notable development, and undoubtedly treated with a new sense of urgency in Brussels after the war in Ukraine and the worsening geopolitical circumstances.

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<sup>95</sup> Clapp 2023, 12

<sup>96</sup> European Council, Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

<sup>97</sup> Csernatonni 2021, 10

My research will look into two things in this development: firstly, the justification for the development of the supporting structures enabling European defence industry collaboration at a much larger and deeper scale than before. Here, the analysis is focusing on the EU leadership's communications, strategies and policy documents, State of the Union addresses and other speeches introducing the defence technology cooperation, especially on the European Commission and the European Council's level. The second objective for this research is to understand the nature of this development, i.e. bringing integration theories' debate to the discussion and contributing to this debate on the EU's versus the Member States' roles in the strengthening of the European defence industry.

In my thesis I am interested in exploring the development of the European defence cooperation especially from the point of view of the strengthening of the defence industry and European military capabilities. What is especially interesting is the change towards a more acceptable *defence discourse* within EU institutions' narratives and among the Member States, as opposed to the previously rather disapproving reactions towards developing dual-use technologies and defence cooperation. In this regard in my research, I have defined defence discourse as referring to the growing amount of different narratives and conceptualisations in the official EU rhetoric, where need for defence and security capabilities are discussed and called for, referring to various identified variables as the nominators of security in Europe, and which require addressing for ensuring that security is preserved for the Member States and their citizens.

The primary research question in my thesis is the following: how does the European leadership argue and justify the need for the strengthening of the European defence industry cooperation? As secondary research question I have formulated the following: in particular, what role does the concept of strategic autonomy play in this process? My hypothesis thus is that there is evidence and indications in the official narratives that support the notion of an increased EU leadership's role, in this regard referring especially to the Commission, the European Council and to certain extent to the Council of the European Union, in emphasising a notion of a unified European defence industry. Furthermore, the concept of strategic autonomy and strengthening it in Europe can be argued playing a role in this narrative process as a supporting argument for increasing the defence industrial collaboration.

Specifically, I am interested in both the policy level discussion as well as manifestations of this new approach in the EU policies towards the European defence industry, especially in the form of research and development structures and investments through public funding programmes such as the EDF. I

will thus be looking into the background policies and supporting arguments presented at the EU level as institutional means for crafting a framework for practical defence industry-level cooperation on the topic. The Commission's strategic papers such as action plans and policy papers on critical technologies and European autonomy in defence industrial sector as well as communications, and speeches by the Commission's leadership, i.e. State of the Union speeches and joint statements are analysed to understand the ways through which the building of stronger European defence cooperation is justified and how the concept of strategic autonomy is employed. The chosen material for my analysis is relevant for the purpose of this research. The timeframe of my analysis of the material covers period from 2013 (the European Council's statement calling for a stronger European Defence Technological and Industrial Base) to early 2024 (the presenting of EU's first Defence Industrial Strategy). This timeframe has relevance as the discourse for a stronger and more independent European defence industry can be considered having become increasingly prominent during this time frame, and also the structures for a more robust European defence cooperation begun to take their form. Thus, the chosen material for the analysis covers the crucial nodes in the timeline of the development of the European defence industry collaboration and their closer analysis is thus a valid approach to understanding the developments in the EU's leadership's narratives calling for a closer cooperation in the defence industry.

In my research I aim to study and understand the move towards European defence industry collaboration on the institutional and structural level as well as the accompanying narratives on EU's decision-making level. As a theoretical framework integration theory, especially the cross-pull between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism provide the necessary framework and dynamism for my research and its context. The different mechanisms and instruments, as well as the policy initiatives created to enable a stronger and strategically autonomous Europe are of central interest for my work, as they are seen as the prime movers for the strengthening of the European defence sector and industry.

### 3. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Relevant literature for my research on the European defence industry, European defence and security policies and their transformation consists of previous academic research, and especially briefings and industry studies, reports and white papers on the topic. Over the past few years there has been a growing literature discussing the changing perceptions of the EU's defence thinking, observations on the rationale behind the growing role of EU institutions in this field as well as on the interplay between intergovernmental and supranational tendencies in this process. In the following chapter I will discuss these studies and the topical discussions on the transformation of the European defence thinking, which have considerable relevance for my research.

Teija Tiilikainen has discussed the transformation of the EU's security and defence strategy in her briefing paper<sup>98</sup>. She gives an overview to the structures and conceptual changes in Brussel's defence thinking since the 2013's meetings on security and defence policy, as well as the establishment of various structures and instruments supporting the building of European defence industrial base and defence industry's cooperation among the Member States. Tiilikainen argues that a new and more comprehensive approach has been adopted in the European security and defence policy since already the early 2010s<sup>99</sup>.

Antonio Calcara<sup>100</sup> and Daniel Fiott<sup>101</sup> have both discussed the defence cooperation in their respective authored editions. Calcara's *European Defence Decision-Making. Dilemmas of Collaborative Arms Procurement* (2020) discusses the state and defence industries' relations in four major European arms producers and takes a closer look at the paradoxical interplay of the competition between the states in arms procurement as well as the identified cooperation of different European countries in this field. It is worthwhile, however, to note that my work differs from this existing literature on its focus on specifically the EU's defence narrative and the intergovernmental vs. supranational interplay by the different institutional structures and instruments created. This interplay has also been discussed rather extensively in the academic research.

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<sup>98</sup> Tiilikainen 2016

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 6

<sup>100</sup> Calcara 2020

<sup>101</sup> Fiott 2019

Raluca Csernatonu writes on her Working Paper *The EU's Defense Ambitions: Understanding the Emergence of a European Defense Technological and Industrial Complex* (2021) on the EDF and its foundational effects on the European project the following:

What is certain, though, is that the EDF marks an important transformation in consolidating the EU's increased supranational activism in the defense technological and industrial field. It also highlights the commission's strong interventionism in a high-politics field that traditionally was the exclusive preserve of national sovereignty.<sup>102</sup>

Csernatonu discusses the development of the European defence industry landscape on more broader terms as the emergence of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Complex, EDTIC, and especially how this development seems to centre around the different EU institutions and industrial groups as well as the interaction and intertwining of these two<sup>103</sup>. For Csernatonu, the European Defence Fund and the Commission's role in implementing and coordinating the multiannual initiative for defence innovation and capability projects is a considerable step towards a more supranational approach and role for the EU institution on a sector that has traditionally been under national coordination. Furthermore, she writes that the developing of EDF can be seen impacting the "very nature and orientation of the European project" as it brings agency to the European Commission in the traditionally intergovernmental sector, namely security and defence, as well as opens the opportunity for the Commission to influence the governance model of the EU's defence, thus transiting it towards a more supranational domain.<sup>104</sup>

Csernatonu's study gives an insightful perspective to the transformation of Europe from a peace project towards a security and technology complex, which can be seen as a response to the tightening international competition as well as geopolitically challenging situation. In her working paper Csernatonu takes a specifically supranational view to the increased role of the Commission and provides an extensive overview to the changing nature of European defence thinking on an institutional level, and especially how the demands for building a robust European Defence Industrial and Technological Base have become stronger over the few years. Csernatonu considers that the process for strengthening the EU's defence actorness has been seen as directed from the top-level from Commission and the high-level policy decision-making processes. This process is in stark contrast with the process being inclusive of the European Parliament and national decision-making,

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<sup>102</sup> Csernatonu 2021

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

which for Csernatoni also creates problems with ensuring that the transformation towards more defence-oriented mind-set in the EU's policies is also maintained as a democratic process. To ensure democratic aspects are accounted for in the decision-making and maintaining openness of the security and defence dimensions of the Union ensure accountability towards the EU citizens and maintain inclusiveness for different actors in the European defence domain<sup>105</sup>. As Csernatoni writes, the Commission has taken an active role in defining the direction and agenda for the Union's defence development, acting "both as a multistakeholder venue and a supranational policy entrepreneur"<sup>106</sup> and advances the Europeanisation of the defence research and development policies.

In his research on European defence policies, Daniel Fiott, on the other hand, employs more of a liberal intergovernmental view to the creation of defence collaboration. For example, Fiott discusses the role of defence industries and defence investments in EU's security and defence strategies in his article *Strategic Investment. Making geopolitical sense of the EU's defence industrial policy from 2019*<sup>107</sup>. His paper provides a strategic overview to the role of defence industry in the EU and the structures which are used to amplify it for the sake of strategic autonomy and a stronger European industrial base in the precarious geopolitical situation.

Adding a more recent contribution to the academic research on the topic and addressing the release of the EU's Defence Industrial Strategy, EDIS, in March 2024, Monika Sus et al. discuss recommendations for a strategically selective and focused approach for the EU in order for the Union to become a more credible global actor<sup>108</sup>. In the researchers' view, the EDIS plays an important role in this, but the Council should bring focus to those defence industry cooperation areas which support the EDIS' goals, and efforts need to be put also in increasing the EU's defence budget to encourage Member States to further cooperate on joint capability projects. This is a process that requires collaboration between the Member States and the Commission. The researchers see the EDIS itself as a step forward to support this, but further efforts need to be made to ensure momentum in the collaboration<sup>109</sup>. Moreover, Souverbie et al. argue that the Commission's growing role in the EU defence is underlining also the need to reconsider the intergovernmental and supranational action. For the authors, the Commission has strengthened its role in defence capability sector and has truly engaged its competencies in industrial policy, raising also possibilities for further interplay of

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<sup>105</sup> Csernatoni 2021, 4-5

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>107</sup> Fiott 2019

<sup>108</sup> Sus et al. 2024

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 5

intergovernmental and supranational efforts and not only placing them at polar opposite to each other<sup>110</sup>.

Ondrej Ditrych and Tomas Kucera have researched the history of the European defence industry cooperation and the reasons for this transnational defence integration. They look at the forming of a security community (referring to the political and social dimensions of the concept) as linked to defence integration, but not in a completely linear fashion. Namely, according to them, the emergence of a security community encourages the strengthening of identity and trust between the actors, thus encouraging defence integration. The defence integration then creates common practice and ultimately communities of transnational character. This collaboration brings “productive gains” also to the security community that further enhance the security community and trust between its members. Furthermore, the defence integration can further encourage other communities of practice, e.g. the defence industry<sup>111</sup>. Throughout the past decades, the defence industrial collaboration and co-development between European industry actors produced clear gains and a transnational community or a so called “defence industry machine” was created<sup>112</sup>. As the underlining motivation for the defence industrial actors was essentially growing the businesses’ earnings and positioning themselves in the industry<sup>113</sup>, the prime mover for the deepening of the industrial collaboration was seen thus in the economic gains promised by this collaboration. This collaboration was also strengthening the European security community through productive returns, thus suggesting essentially economic incentives as motivations for the defence industrial collaboration in Europe. Trust, shared practices and identity were at the foundation of this community building but the increasing defence industry cooperation in the form of defence industry machine which was made possible within the community structures indeed strengthened the defence cooperation and gave it definitive European characteristics<sup>114</sup>. Indeed, Ditrych and Kucera see that the efforts of reducing fragmentation in the European defence are prominent in the current defence industrial developments and the EDF can be considered as an effective incentive in this strategy<sup>115</sup>.

It should also be noted that a master’s thesis on the thematic of European defence industry collaboration has been made before by Andrea Constantini. In thesis titled “The European security

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<sup>110</sup> Souverbie et al 2024

<sup>111</sup> Ditrych and Kucera 2023, 133

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 137

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. 136

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. 137

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 148

and defence discourse and the role of arms companies. A Critical Discourse Analysis on European security policies post-2016”<sup>116</sup> Constantini gives a timely analysis on the security discourse in Europe especially in the context of various administration structures, such as the EDF, and what could be considered as the implications of the change in public discourse in terms of defence cooperation.

The previous research and comprehensive articles provide a framework and a matrix of different views and arguments on the development and current state of the European defence industry collaboration and its development. It is useful also to note that in chapter 2.1 of this master’s thesis I have discussed the academic research on the concept of strategic autonomy and how the term can be conceptualised in order to understand its meaning in building of the European defence industrial collaborations. My thesis is thus taking part in this broader discussion by including analysis of the policy guidelines and the communications from the EU’s leadership on the defence industry collaboration over the observed time period of 2013 to early-2024. In this way I aim to provide also timely notions on how the discourse on European defence industry collaboration has been developed in the early 2020s in the light of recent global events. Rather than focusing on providing a literature review of the ongoing academic discussion on the topic, my aim with this research is to provide a contribution and commentary to this thematic and help to bridge any observed gaps in the studied timeline of the current European defence discourse.

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<sup>116</sup> Constantini 2021

#### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the process of building the theoretical framing for my research, I have considered integration theories relevant in helping to frame and understand the discourses on the building of a stronger European defence industry. Choosing integration theories as theoretical framework is plausible, as it helps to place the arguments on European defence collaboration in a broader context of the power dynamics between the Member States and the EU institutions' interests in developing the defence domain. Especially, this framework will help me in understanding the supranational undertones in the EU leadership's discourses on building a stronger defence industry. In the following chapter I will discuss the different dimensions of the integration theories, how I consider their position in explaining the European integration especially from defence industry collaboration point of view and how they are employed as the framework for this study.

Integration theories provide ways to explain, analyse, and critique the integration processes<sup>117</sup>. One perspective to this dynamic is provided by the neofunctionalist approach of supranationalism which explains the European integration taking place through spillover effects, where power is indeed concentrating in Brussels rather than to national actors in the pursuit of supranational institutions' interests. The second well-known approach is intergovernmentalism, which considers the nation states maintaining their central role as actors and drivers in the European integration and decision-making. Pierre Haroche's thoughts on supranationalist versus intergovernmentalist approaches in observing the development of the European defence industry cooperation have specific relevance considering my study. He focuses on the EDF instrument and argues that, instead of an intergovernmental endeavour, it should be viewed as a clearly supranational project<sup>118</sup>. As discussed by Haroche, the new intergovernmentalism argues that intergovernmental deliberation is of central importance in the EU-level decision-making, and it should be considered at the centre of new initiatives in the Union. However, neofunctionalism claims that supranational institutions are likely to drive integration and new initiatives as these benefit the expansion of their tasks and enable a cultivated spillover to national policy areas<sup>119</sup>. Indeed, for Haroche the European defence policy and the current push for strengthening the defence industry is essentially supranational in its character. Traditionally, European defence thinking has been intergovernmental in its approach, but in the case

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<sup>117</sup> Börzel & Risse 2018

<sup>118</sup> Haroche 2019, 856

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 855-856

of the EDF, for example, the instrument was proposed and negotiated under the Commission's control and its implementation is the Commission's responsibility. For Haroche, this change in the policy approach can be explained by the EDF's research and development orientation's close connections to the single market policies, which are essentially the Commission's domain, and for Member States this was agreeable as it provided them with a venue to bridge the underinvestment gap in defence cooperation projects. Haroche considers that this development entails also a possibility that the European defence becomes an ever-politicised matter, rather than being a bi- or multilaterally negotiated topic between the Member States<sup>120</sup>.

Liberal intergovernmentalism emphasises the role of Member States' interests and bargaining power in reaching agreements on the Union's level. From the liberal intergovernmentalism's point of view the Member States define their objectives, negotiate on the terms of reaching these and finally create appropriate structures to advance these objectives<sup>121</sup>. The Member States play a central role in defining the EU's defence industry by providing their national capability needs to the planning phase and thus contributing to the common capability development process, further defined e.g. in the EDF's specific call texts for proposals.

Perrotto argues that as the cooperation to strengthen European defence industry greatly depends on the Member States' willingness to partake in them, the geopolitical aspect of the strengthening of the European defence industry is rather weak and depends largely on national interests. This aspect further underlines the intergovernmental nature of the cooperation in the European defence landscape, exemplified in agreements and pacts between Member States rather than being considered a showcasing of the EU's unified approach in security and defence policies. But as the defence industry has become a more accessible arena for Member States' cooperation than before, Perrotti also argues that increased cooperation in this particular field may support further development of EU's strategic autonomy<sup>122</sup>.

The interplay of intergovernmental cooperation and supranational institutionalism is an interesting framework for the research on the reasoning and evolution of the building of a European defence industry. In the following I will discuss further a few recent academic contributions to the

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<sup>120</sup> Haroche 2019, 855-856

<sup>121</sup> Börzel & Risse 2018

<sup>122</sup> Perrotto 2023, 485-486

intergovernmentalist vs. neofunctionalist debate on the European defence collaboration, as I find these as particularly interesting examples on the multidimensionality of the topic.

Calle Håkansson writes that it is also possible to observe neofunctionalist notions on supranationalism as well as liberal intergovernmentalism side by side when understanding the developments for example in the field of defence in the EU, and thus provide a more pragmatic turn in European integration studies<sup>123</sup>. The process can thus be seen as an interplay between Member States and EU institutional leadership dynamics, rather than a mutually exclusive process. Moreover, Jelena von Achenbach has further defined the distinctions between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism in the EU's security and defence policy, calling it EU's New Defence Policy<sup>124</sup>. As von Achenbach writes, the idea of transgovernmental relations could be a more apt way of defining this interplay<sup>125</sup>. Also, Moritz Weiss has described how the new structures for defence cooperation between Member States, namely PESCO, and how defence offset or industrial participation schemes, and compensations for defence companies received regulative actions from the Commission, and supranational features were thus inserted in the defence procurement practices, bringing national defence procurements and the single market closer together<sup>126</sup>.

For Schout and Wolff intergovernmentalism and supranationalism are intertwined and inseparable, as opposed to the often-employed theoretical approach of distinguishing these two and placing them on a scale, with varying degrees of policy trade-offs<sup>127</sup>. Instead, for Schout and Wolff these concepts are interlinked and prerequisites for one another. According to them, the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 can be seen employing both traditions of intergovernmentalism and supranationalism<sup>128</sup>. The Commissions' and Parliament's power grew with extension of co-decision powers as well as giving the Parliament more fiscal power over the financing of e.g. agricultural policies and structural funds. Likewise, the European Court of Justice's power was extended to cover revisions of e.g. the European Council's decisions. The financial crisis and the extensions of the EU institutions' powers via the Lisbon Treaty shed more light to the different views on whether the Union should become more intergovernmental or supranational. Especially large Member States can be seen considered

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<sup>123</sup> Håkansson 2024, 26

<sup>124</sup> von Achenbach 2019

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Weiss 2019

<sup>127</sup> Schout and Wolff 2012, 6

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. 7

strengthening their interests via intergovernmental cooperation, whereas Commission is considered as a great support for smaller Member States and driving their interests<sup>129</sup>.

As an example of a more recent investigation into the supranational tendencies in the European integration, Tine Brøgger has studied the level of integration in European defence collaboration. For Brøgger, the developments in European security and defence are an example of the European integration moving beyond intergovernmentalism, as experts and EU institutions are playing an increasingly important role in driving this process, and the Member States are engaging in integrative commitments through the instruments such as EDF, PESCO and CARD coordinated by the EU institutions<sup>130</sup>. Brøgger argues that it is important to observe PESCO, CARD and EDF in conjunction, as the underlying economic mechanisms behind these instruments are mutually reinforcing, although PESCO projects are mostly financed by Member States (but the 10% bonuses available from PESCO activities in EDF projects creates an important link between the instruments)<sup>131</sup>. Building on a set of indicators evaluating the level of integration, Brøgger considers the EDF, PESCO and CARD are mechanisms in which the Members States' role has been limited to a certain extend. For example, in EDF the Commission has indeed role in the implementing and evaluating which defence capabilities shall be developed, and the EDIRPA on its part provides funding from the EU to the Member States to development and upgrading of their national military assets. For Brøgger these capabilities are now called European capabilities, and individual technologies are now developed towards common capabilities. The Commission can thus be seen having a say in the national defence budgets, impacting the Member States' decision-making process and even their ability veto decisions on financial investments by the Commission, and thus posing different forms to integration as what the intergovernmental approach suggests<sup>132</sup>. Furthermore, the introduction of these instruments fortified the idea that developing military capabilities is indeed a European undertaking, and Member States have been increasingly agreeing on incorporating notions of hard power i.e defence capabilities as part of the idea of Europe which, as Brøgger points out, are also very similar notions repeated in the statements and proposals from the EU institutions setting the foundation for PESCO, CARD and EDF - a narrative which is very different from e.g. the adoption of the euro<sup>133</sup>.

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<sup>129</sup> Schout and Wolff 2012, 9

<sup>130</sup> Brøgger 2024, 3

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 4

<sup>132</sup> Brøgger 2024, 5

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 12-13

Indeed, the integration of European military capability development has not happened because of a single Member States values or interests, but Brøgger sees the convergence of developments in the field of defence as driving force behind this, and warranting supranational tendencies as the Member States are giving some of their decision-making power to the European institutions. Reasons for these are amalgamated from realism (increased collaboration for facing geopolitical threats), liberal institutionalism (economic benefits for Member States to collaborate in terms of efficiency, coordination, and systems compatibility) as well as constructivism (underlying effects of norms and identity in developing an idea of a European identity in security and defence) into a comprehensive explanatory framework for the supranationalist elements of the integration<sup>134</sup>.

Moreover, contributing to the growing academic literature analysing the European defence industry collaboration, Sabatino et al discuss weaknesses in the European defence cooperation policy, observing these on three levels: 1) legal basis and governance; 2) operational deployments; and 3) capability deployment<sup>135</sup>. They argue that despite many different structures and initiatives for cooperation, the defence industry collaboration and capability development initiatives lack coordination and fail to combine EU-level and national processes and systems into a functioning framework, despite that this process is considered intergovernmental in nature. Strategic Compass was seen to instil more integration and collaboration between these two sectors and introduce more supranational processes for coordination. The EDA's Capability Development Plans enable viewing common priorities for European capabilities but as these are not mandatory requirements to follow, for the Member States, the results are nominal and despite the CARD process national planning is hardly coordinated at the EU's level<sup>136</sup>. This hampers coordination and collaboration, and despite the policy structures the results are underwhelming. Sabatino et al provide recommendations for improving collaboration and consider that the Commission taking a more announced role in this, with its competencies in the industrial aspects of defence sector, could be an improvement in this regard. For the authors, more coordination between the Commission and Member States should be emphasized to avoid a situation where the capabilities and technologies developed are in contradiction to what is actually needed by the Member States<sup>137</sup>. Moreover, also for Souverbie et al, this dynamic exemplifies the importance of finding avenues for combining intergovernmental and supranational processes and policies for a more functioning defence industrial base in Europe<sup>138</sup>.

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<sup>134</sup> Brøgger 2024, 16

<sup>135</sup> Sabatino et al. 2023

<sup>136</sup> Sabatino et al. 2023, 13, 15

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 24

<sup>138</sup> Souverbie et al. 2024, 6

The overview to integration theories and especially the academic discussions on intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, especially supranationalism, provide a feasible framework for understanding also the European defence collaboration and the different national and institutional motivations behind it. Especially, the interplay between the intergovernmentalist and supranationalist approaches has relevance also for my research, as it displays the dynamism between Member States' agency and authority on the national security, but it also shed light on the Commission's policy push in defining the outlines for security and defence cooperation to reach desired milestones for a more robust European defence industry. With reference to the theoretical framework of my study, I acknowledge the interplay between intergovernmental and supranational undercurrents of the defence capability developments. However, considering the objectives and focus of my research I find relevance in the neofunctional perspectives on supranationalist tendencies in the building of European defence industry, as in the context of my research this helps me to understand the EU leadership's role and argumentation in favour of building a common European defence industry. In this regard, both Pierre Haroche's and Tine Brøgger's respective works on studying the EU's defence industrial collaboration structures are particularly relevant for my study, as they investigate the supranational tendencies of the collaboration. The theoretical framework of my research, drawing from neofunctionalism's understanding of supranationalism, also justifies the choice of method in critical discourse analysis supported by content analysis, as these provide means to study the nuances and interplay in the EU leadership's communications on the European industrial strategy and the leadership's role vis-à-vis the role of the Member States.

As a clarification on the perspective for this research, I am primarily interested in looking at the processes with which the EU-wide defence industry cooperation is created as well as looking at the EU decision-making bodies which are in central role in the defence cooperation framework. Undoubtedly, Member States play a significant role in the defence capability development of the Union. However, considering the perspective which I have chosen for my thesis on the policy processes and defence discourse leading up to deepening defence industrial cooperation in the Union, it is warranted that I should focus my attention to the EU institutions with supranational characteristics within the Union. Moreover, the Member States interest can be acknowledged to influence behind the defence cooperation structures, as the Member States contribute heavily to identifying the capability needs which define the EDF programme's focal areas for each year. This, however, is not the focus of my research.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.1. Research methodology: critical discourse analysis and content analysis

The relevant analysis method for my research comes from interpretative policy analysis. More specifically, to understand the strengthening of and the specific characteristics in the defence discourse in the European Union leadership's narratives, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an efficient methodology to dissect the narratives' implicit meanings. I have chosen this methodology as it will support me in understanding the policy process of speech act (justifying the process) and practical implications (process itself) as well as evaluating the relation between these two.

Wagenaar<sup>139</sup> describes, that the interpretative policy analysis incorporates methods to understand the social world and the premises which surround the interactions of social actors and is thought to provide more in-depth knowledge on its subject than for example empiricist policy analysis. Wagenaar divides interpretative policy analysis to three categories where meaning is understood differently: 1) hermeneutic meaning looks at individuals' understanding of shared traits, practices, routines and how they position themselves in relation to these; 2) discursive meaning looks at the linguistics as well as practical frameworks which go often unchallenged by individuals and which categorise our shared world and social reality; 3) dialogical meaning looks at the social and practical connotations and forms of meaning<sup>140</sup>.

In interpretative policy analysis, the research aims to reveal how the decision-makers, the public, as well as targets of the policy discourses look at the situation at hand and their position in it. Discourse analysis centres around the notion of captivity, or a system of judgement that helps individuals position themselves in the social world and makes the environment where individuals operate in, understandable and intelligible for them. When contradictory or discombobulating information is received, this undermines individuals' understanding of their reality and their place in it, however, changing the world image which has been created is not possible and individuals are held captive by it. In this contradictory situation hegemony holds the existing world image steadfast in its place, and despite critical notions and doubts, it is not possible for the individuals necessarily even to

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<sup>139</sup> Wagenaar in Fischer et al. 2015

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. 422 - 423

differentiate themselves from the reality they perceive with criticism<sup>141</sup>. Wagenaar describes this captivity to be distinguished into aspectual captivity as well as ideological captivity. Ideological captivity refers to a state of being, which maintains and reinforces false beliefs, and thus also allow oppressive structures and institutions to exist. In this state value statements are then considered as facts and an unchanged state of affairs of the social world.

Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA, looks into the very essence of these ideological constructs in the material it analyses, by making evident the information that is considered as unproblematic and part of the natural fabric of the status-quo. It sheds light to the self-evident stances and claims made in the material composing or creating an acceptable narration of the state of affairs<sup>142</sup>. CDA is the study of the narratives and how language is used in the construction of the socially shared reality. As Wodak writes, the CDA is interdisciplinary in nature, bringing together several theories, such as social theory and linguistic theories, to enable researcher detangling the many meanings given to the narratives. These theories are then cooperating in a framework supporting a coexistence of these different theories for holistically exploring the ways language is used to exert power by powerful actors. CDA sees the use of language in texts and narrations as a way of contest and struggle, where different discourses and value systems are competing for existence and prevalence of the one over the other<sup>143</sup>.

As Wodak describes, CDA is to be understood as a theoretical framework which centres around the investigation of especially ideology and power. Consequently, a relevant approach within CDA is a Discourse-Historical Approach, DHA, which relies on Critical Theory orientations<sup>144</sup>. DHA should be open about its object's as well as its applier's own dispositions, as well as about the reasons why one discursive reading would be chosen above another. Analysis of inclusion and exclusion are central in the critical discourse analysis approaches, to understand the power struggles of underlying ideologies trying to take dominance. DHA offers tools to look at these power dynamics as it draws inputs from historical sources of the social and political contexts where the discourse is applied. It also differentiates between 1) topics which are handled either in written or orally, 2) the different discursive strategies which are utilised, and 3) the linguistic means that are used to deliver the topics and the discursive strategies<sup>145</sup>. Moreover, Wodak differentiates the four layers of context in DHA, which help to analyse the changes in discourses as effected by the context: 1) the intertextual and

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<sup>141</sup> Wagenaar in Fischer et al. 2015, 427

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. 428

<sup>143</sup> Wodak 2011, 5

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. 38

interdiscursive relationships between oral speeches, texts, different genres and discourses; 2) the extra-linguistic social/sociological variables; 3) history and archaeology of texts and organisations; 4) the institutional frames of the specific context of situation<sup>146</sup>.

Wodak considers macro-topic relatedness, i.e. what is considered true and normatively valid between different social actors, pluri-perspectivity in multitude of voice in a certain social arena and argumentativity constituting discourse. Especially the construction of identities through discourse uses strategies of positive self-presentation and the negative presentation of others<sup>147</sup>. For Wodak, five strategies in this process are particularly interesting: 1) referential (nominational) strategies, through which actors are constructed and represented (in-groups and out-groups); 2) predicational strategies, which characterise social actors and groups (positive and negative traits which aim to label social actors in a negative or positive manner); 3) argumentation strategies, which justify the positive or negative attributes or e.g. policy processes as negative or positive; 4) perspectivation (framing or discourse representation) in which the speaker positions themselves to the discourse and their point of view in it; and 5) intensifying strategies and mitigation strategies as aspects of the presentation, in impacting the underlying of or alleviating of the discourse's meanings. Furthermore, the positive self and negative other -presentations utilise justification and legitimation strategies, where content-related warrants or *topoi* are in central role in analysing the contents of the argument, as generalised key ideas of underlying reasoning, which tie the arguments with the central claims<sup>148</sup>. Wodak provides a list of seven of these kinds of most common *topoi*, or key ideas, that can be traced in a discourse. These are *topoi* of: burdening; reality; numbers; history; authority; threat; definition; justice and urgency<sup>149</sup>.

In my analysis of the EU leadership's communications, I will employ Critical Discourse Analysis, and more specifically Discourse-Historical Approach, as my underlying analysis method. More specifically, I will analyse the warrants used in the argumentation for building stronger defence industry in Europe. This will help me to understand on a more detailed level how the argumentation for strengthening the European defence industry has been built, and thus helps with finding an answer to my first research question how the European leadership argues and justifies the need for the strengthening of the European defence industry. The different *topoi* as presented by Wodak are listed in the Figure 2 below:

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<sup>146</sup> Wodak 2011, 39

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. 41

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 42

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. 44

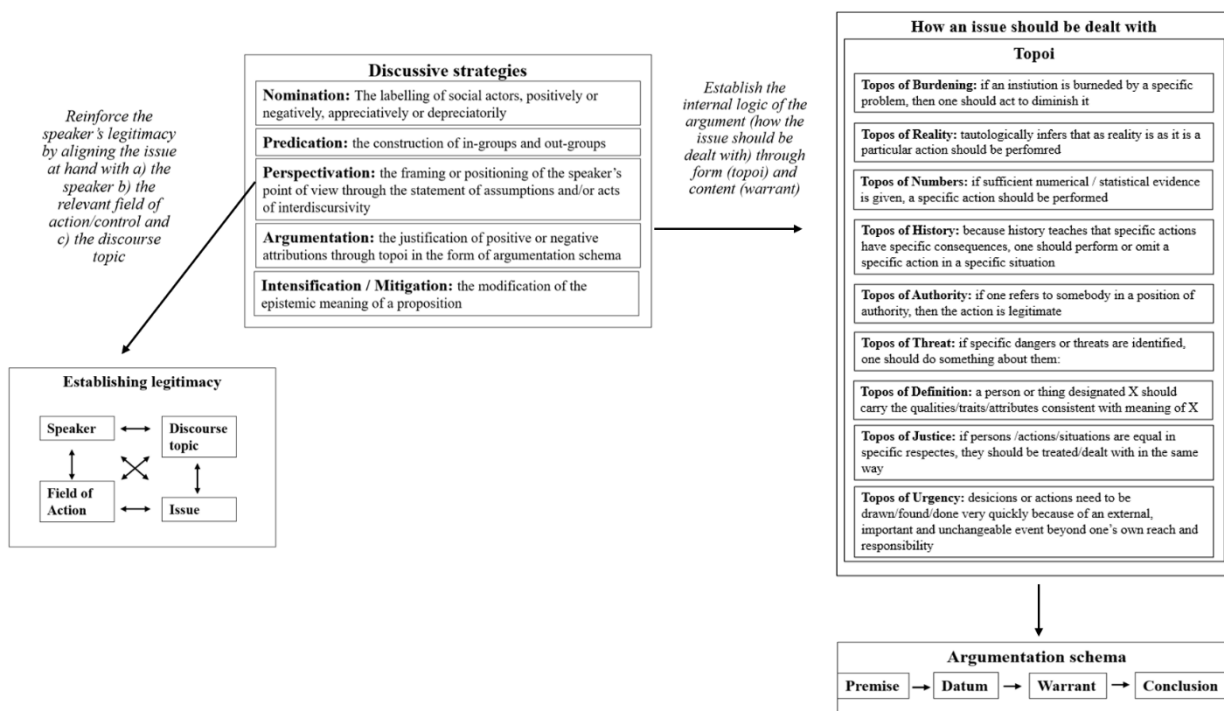


Figure 2 Discursive strategies and topoi (source: Wodak 2011)

To support the investigation of my second, supportive research question: what role the concept of strategic autonomy plays in the process of justifying the strengthening of the European defence industry, I will also combine content analysis as a method for my research. I have chosen this as an auxiliary method as content analysis will be useful in terms of understanding how strategic autonomy, in particular the notion of Europe's capability in defence, as well as concepts of resilience are understood and presented in the analysed texts. Although content analysis is quantitative in its approach and positivist in nature, and the CDA (DHA) is qualitative and takes a more constructive and interpretative approach, these methodologies can be seen supporting each other, in certain research contexts. A debate over quantitative and qualitative approaches in research is well known, and as Mayring writes, qualitative research methods are often dismissed as subjective, impressionistic, and weak by many researchers<sup>150</sup>. This debate exemplifies the division between two approaches to research: the constructivist approach that observes reality as constructed and interpreted based on subjective predispositions, as well as the positivist approach which is interested in measurable units in explaining an objective reality. Qualitative content analysis can borrow from these both positions, and it deals with subjective structures and text analysis for systematically interpreting the material, categorising, and providing explanations on the results for hypothetical

<sup>150</sup> Mayring 2022, 11

reality for which the research offers an estimation<sup>151</sup>. Understanding its contingencies in subjectivity and requirement of previous knowledge from the researcher, qualitative analysis should indeed maintain a reflective stance acknowledging its approaches.

Hardy et al. consider that content analysis and CDA methodologies can be complementary and support each other in understanding the shared social realities, in which policy processes also take place<sup>152</sup>. Forms of content analysis can also resemble discourse analysis, as they take into account the usage and context of words and sensitivities therein and can thus be employed as a discourse analytical method. Despite their differences in the ontological and epistemological sense, these two methodologies can complement each other, especially when more interpretive content analysis approaches are used, and more structural discourse analysis is employed<sup>153</sup>, making the question of compatibility of the methodologies thus a matter of perspective into the methodologies being used. As an example of utilising these methods, Anna Kuteleva & Dmitrii Vasiliev have employed both approaches in their research<sup>154</sup> in order to manage and code the vast text material and notice the shifts in media coverage, but also to analyse the techniques and the context in which the framing of ideas is done.

In practice I have used categorization and coding in my content analysis. As Krippendorff writes, content analysis enables researcher to analyse seemingly unstructured data and to understand the meaning, content, and communicative role the data plays in the creator of the data<sup>155</sup>. The method can help show the presence of concepts and words in large sets of text or other communication materials. It is possible to categorize and code written text, images and other communication materials to better understand the meanings and interrelations for certain themes and concepts in the qualitative material. To aid my research, which entails large amounts of texts and to better understand how the strengthening of the European defence industry collaboration is understood and justified, I will employ a simple form on content analysis, namely conceptual analysis in which the concept of strategic autonomy is examined by categorising and coding the texts. This brings structure for my discourse analysis, with which I am aiming to understand the ways the strengthening of the European defence industry is justified in the EU leadership's official communications and policy guidelines. The category of this study is strategic autonomy and under it I have coded the following words as

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<sup>151</sup> Mayring 2022, 20

<sup>152</sup> Hardy et al 2004, 19

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. 22

<sup>154</sup> Kuteleva & Vasiliev 2021

<sup>155</sup> Krippendorff 1980, 51

relevant concepts to observe in my analysis: resilience, capability (also in plural capabilities), defence and industry.

*Table 2 Categories and codes used for content analysis in this research*

<i>Category</i>	Strategic Autonomy			
<i>Codes</i>	resilience	capability/capabilities	defence	industry

These concepts are also present in strategy documents such as the Global Strategy from 2016 and Strategic Compass from 2022, and the proposed coding will help me to better understand how the communications create the narrative of building a stronger European defence. I acknowledge the challenges and criticism posed for content analysis especially in terms of validity but as Krippendorff writes, content analysis must be understood in examining large amounts of texts that are considered having meaning in terms of the chosen context<sup>156</sup>, in this case the EU leadership’s communications on European defence industry and its role over the observed time period.

As a summary, in this thesis I will be analysing the ways how the EU leadership’s narrative constructs the justification and necessitation for common European defence industry cooperation and the EU instruments to support this, especially the argumentation for building a stronger European technology base for the defence and security industry. The theoretical framework for this comes from integration theories, especially juxtaposing the neo-functional and intergovernmental frameworks in explaining the building of European defence capabilities. To be more specific I will look for the supranational tendencies in this argumentation, while I acknowledge that the integration development can be understood as interplay between both intergovernmental and supranational tendencies.

In my analysis, I am taking a closer look at the ways the EU’s leadership’s narrative is constructing the justification for increased defence cooperation and a stronger defence industry in this regard, in other words how can the idea of a stronger defence be seen emphasized on the high level of European policy making and discourse. CDA, and more specifically DHA, will provide my research with the necessary tools to analyse the high-level communiques to understand the ways in which the building of a stronger European defence industry is argued for. Furthermore, these tools for analysis will help with understanding how Europe’s role is understood in the geopolitical context especially concerning

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<sup>156</sup> Krippendorff 1980, 365

its strategic autonomy, and, consequently, how the developing of the European defence industry is seen supporting this.

Analysing the discourse strategies in the EU leadership's communications, State of the Union addresses, and other guiding policy documents will help to understand the argumentative ways with which the role of the defence industry has been emphasized in official narratives. The purpose of this study is thus to understand how the perception of the European defence industry and the need for strengthening it have evolved throughout the observed time period, and how the European defence industrial base has been advocated for at Europe's high-level decision-making bodies.

The research will focus on the following two categories of material:

- The Commission's and the European Council's statements, strategies and policy documents on the European security and defence.
- State of the Union addresses and other official communications and statements from high-level EU leadership on defence and security.

This material can be considered giving a comprehensive overview to understanding how the strengthening of the European defence industrial base is justified and argued on the EU-level. I have not included specific, explicit Member State's perspective to this analysis, as my focus is to understand the development of defence thinking especially on the EU's institutional level, more specifically at the level of the Union's high leadership, which can be considered giving the strategic recommendations and policy guidance for common consideration in the Union, as well as display the EU's political positioning towards third countries. I acknowledge that the Member States have an important role in the strengthening of the European defence industry and the discourses revolving around this thematic, but I have made this choice as my research is specifically focusing on the EU institutions and the leadership's narratives and how these argue for the need for a stronger defence industry in the Union.

A critical notion should be raised as a self-reflection, as I acknowledge the context-relatedness and subjective connotations that the chosen research methods of CDA (DHA) and content analysis have, and this should also be kept in mind while reading through this research. My analysis is guided by my two research questions and contain implicit assumptions on the EU leadership's active role in building the defence capabilities on the European level, being also reflective on the fact that most of my research material is released and drafted by these very leadership institutions. By being explicit

on the premises of my study, I welcome also the reader’s critical reflection on the findings of the analysis and the discussion on the topic which this thesis provides.

## 5.2. Research material for the analysis

The relevant texts for a closer analysis comprise mainly on the Commission and European Council-level releases, communications, and speeches but also relevant policy plans and strategies, as well as implementing decisions are included in the list of material for analysis presented in the table 3 below. For clarity in terms of following the analysis, the material for analysis has been divided into two sections: 1) communications, strategies, policy plans and implementing decisions and regulations, and 2) State of the Union addresses, speeches and other declarations. This is to help the structuring and processing of the rather extensive research material selected for the study. As evident in the list below, the first section of analysis materials is further divided into three parts, in order to group the similar documents (similarity based on document’s type and purpose) together for the sake of clarity in the structuring of the analysis. Furthermore, the analysis of the research material is structured in subchapters in Chapter 6 following this division in order to maintain coherence in the analysis and provide ease for the reader.

*Table 3 Material for analysis, grouped according to the category*

Nr.	Communications	Pages
1	European Council’s statement calling for a stronger European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), 2013	10
2	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector, 24 July 2013	17
3	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Launching the EDF, 6 June 2017	19
4	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Commission’s contribution to European defence, 15 February 2022	22

5	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence, 15 February 2022	16
6	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward, 18 May 2022	
<b>Implementation plans and strategies</b>		
7	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A New Deal for European Defence, 24 June 2014	14
8	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Head of the European Defence Agency: Implementation plan for defence and security, 14 November 2016	31
9	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS European Defence Action Plan 30 November 2016	19
10	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries, 22 February 2021	19
11	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A new European Defence Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry, 5 March 2024	32
<b>Regulations</b>		
12	REGULATION (EU) 2021/697 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092	29
13	REGULATION (EU) 2023/1525 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 July 2023 on supporting ammunition production (ASAP)	19
14	REGULATION (EU) 2023/...OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA)	42
<b>State of the Union addresses</b>		

15	State of the Union Address 2017 by President Jean-Claude Juncker, 13 September 2017	11
16	State of the Union Address by President Ursula von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary, 16 September 2020	15
17	State of the Union Address by President Ursula von der Leyen, 15 September 2021	13
18	State of the Union Address by President Ursula von der Leyen, 14 September 2022	13
19	State of the Union Address by President Ursula von der Leyen, 13 September 2023	17
<b>Other declarations and speeches</b>		
20	JOINT DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, 8 July 2016	2
21	Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government Versailles Declaration, 10-11 March 2022	10
22	Speech by President Ursula von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on strengthening European defence in a volatile geopolitical landscape, 28 February 2024	N/A

I have defined this list, and the research material based on their relevance in the observed time period and the significance of the documents and their contents in the policy processes building the European defence industry and the narratives supporting this. The list could be expanded to several more speeches, communications, and policy documents, but I have considered the current selection of material for analysis as representative of the essential discussions and argumentations from the EU leadership on the European defence industrial developments.

## 6. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The material for analysis for this thesis comprises of official statements, policy guidelines, communications, regulations as well as State of the Union addresses and other declarations by the EU's leadership, mainly by the European Commission and the European Council, on creating a stronger European defence industry. The timespan which these statements cover is from 2013 to 2024, covering the most prominent communications towards the Parliament and Member States on the topic.

As an overview, it can be stated that the arguments for building a stronger European defence industrial base and premises for the defence collaboration grew stronger over the observed time period. For example, in its statement for strengthening the EDTIB from 2013 the European Council explicitly called for a greater focus on European defence industry and discussed the strengthening of the EDTIB in conjunction with increased strategic autonomy. Further, the Defence Action Plan by the European Commission from 2016 sets out strategic steps to take in order to strengthen the European defence industries.

Consequently, the State of the Union addresses over the observed time period provide further material for analysis on the official communiques from the Commission's leadership towards, not only the governing institutions of the Member States but also the Parliament and thus the citizens of the EU. The addresses and other declarations maintain a varying level of focus on defence matters and a strong industrial base. The arguments for the importance of strengthening the strategic autonomy for Europe and building a capable defence industry grew even stronger as the war in Ukraine unfolded in 2022.

In the following chapter I will take a look with more detail into the ways the Commission, the European Council, and to certain extend the Council of the European Union and the EU leadership at large have argued for a strengthened European defence industry, and how the different values and understanding of Europe's global role were reflected in these narratives, and what kind of role especially the notions of strategic autonomy played in the discourses over the observed period of time.

I have employed CDA, or more specifically DHA, as my research method in analysing argumentative ways which are used for justifying the building of a stronger European defence industry. Furthermore,

content analysis has helped me to pinpoint how the notion of strategic autonomy has been utilised in the argumentation for increased defence industrial collaboration. For clarity, I have analysed communication and policy plan documentation from EU leadership in sub-chapter 6.1. and the State of the Union speeches and other selected declarations in the sub-chapter 6.2 separately. Furthermore, both subchapters include separate segments discussing the findings from the discourse analysis as well as the content analysis.

## **6.1 The EU leadership’s communications and policy guidelines on strengthening European defence**

The European Commission has communicated several joint communications and strategy papers on the European defence industrial base and its strengthening over the observed time period 2013-2024. In this chapter I will discuss the findings from each document by employing CDA, and more specifically DHA, in considering the ways the arguments have been constructed through discursive strategies and warrants (topoi) as well as considering through content analysis what role the concept of strategic autonomy plays in these arguments. I have divided this chapter into two sub-chapters: 6.1.1. will discuss my findings provided by the discourse analysis and 6.1.2 will discuss findings from notions on the concept of strategic autonomy obtained through content analysis.

### **6.1.1. Analysis on the discourses**

The following chapter will discuss the findings from discourse analysis performed on the research material. I have structured the chapter in three sections for clarity: 6.1.1.1. covers communications; 6.1.1.2. covers strategies and implementing decisions; and 6.1.1.3 covers regulations.

#### **6.1.1.1. Communications**

In 2013 the European Council announced in its statement regarding the European Defence Industrial Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) that “defence matters” and that the EDTIB should be at the heart of boosting European defence. A Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was considered essential for Europe, but the changing geopolitical environment was challenging these aspirations and limited defence budgets and disparity in defence technologies was seen posing a real challenge for the European defence industry<sup>157</sup>. The topoi of reality and threat were employed in this argumentation, as well. Proposed action plans for realising this were, among others, focusing on the

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<sup>157</sup> The European Council’s statement on EDTIB 2013, 2

improvement of defence capabilities by increasing cooperation between Member States in using the resources efficiently and enabling interoperability<sup>158</sup>. Here, the Member States' cooperation through utilising structures offered through the European Defence Agency were considered as key and these structures should be further developed<sup>159</sup>. Moreover, the major development needed was seen as "...more integrated, sustainable, innovative and competitive defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB)" for a more sustained defence industry<sup>160</sup>. This includes creating more openness and opportunities for European businesses in the industry and more concerted efforts from the EU and the Member State level to enable this.

Practical actions were proposed as enhancing research and technology expertise in critical defence technologies and in dual-use technologies, and exploring whether existing instruments such as Horizon 2020 could give opportunities to this. Also, standardisation was seen as a way to strengthen the defence industries, as well as improving small and medium-sized enterprises' access in the defence technology supply chain. Security of supply was also listed by the European Council as a way to include more innovative technologies in European defence and the structures to do this were to be opened up. Security of supply was an equally important element in defining and enabling a stronger European defence<sup>161</sup>.

The European Council considered threats and new phenomena rising in the horizon for Europe and more active stance from European leadership was to be called for. The European Council emphasized the role that the Member States can have in this development, but also benefitting on such structures as the funding instruments coordinated by the Commission, i.e. cooperation with supranational structures, was seen as a positive and even essential for developing the security structures.

In its communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector" released in 2013 the Commission outlines the need for paying a closer attention to strengthening the defence sector and the identified challenges in the process.

Disparity in technologies and decreasing public spending amidst the increasingly volatile geopolitical context were seen as hampering the European security readiness. Reductions in defence budgets as

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<sup>158</sup> The European Council's statement on EDTIB 2013, 5

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. 6-7

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. 8

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 10

well as technological complexities and reduced production increasing the costs of defence technologies created a conundrum for European countries that requires swift action. Also, the negative impacts on defence industry were seen to undermine the European economies in general. The European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) is considered as a major opportunity to strengthen the European defence sector and provide a concerted effort in building a common baseline in defence technologies:

The European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) constitutes a key element for Europe's capacity to ensure the security of its citizens and to protect its values and interests. Europe must be able to assume its responsibilities for its own security and for international peace and stability in general. This necessitates a certain degree of strategic autonomy: to be a credible and reliable partner, Europe must be able to decide and to act without depending on the capabilities of third parties<sup>162</sup>.

In the communication the surrounding geopolitical world is depicted in turmoil and the repercussions to European idea and way of life are seen as very drastic. This is considered to render the European citizens in danger and at the mercy of the turmoil surrounding them. Europe is described as a unity which needs to be protected and as well as having agency in taking its power back and securing its future. Topoi of reality and threat are the central argumentative tools in this narrative: the reality of Europe in need for taking ownership of its citizens' security and the foundation of its values call for more actions. Likewise, the topoi of threat from the surrounding geopolitical realities demand a decisive stance in the institutional structures; on policy, financial and regulative levels to be able to maintain an independent Europe. Europe needs to take ownership of its own security and ability to function in favour of its security without being dependent on other parties. This framing of uncertainty surrounding Europe and installing an active agency for the EU to take back the ownership of its security can be considered as identifiable argumentative means to build the perceived need for a stronger European defence industrial base.

It is in the 2013 communication that the EDTIB is given a lot of spotlight to introduce a more strategic thinking to European defence sector. As its strategy, the Commission seeks ways to strengthen the European defence sector and emphasize synergies between military and civilian fields in this regard. The two critical steps here are seen as strengthening the internal market for defence and supporting

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<sup>162</sup> European Commission: COM(2013) 542 final, 3

the competitiveness of the EDTIB by developing a defence industrial policy, as well as exploiting civil-military synergies<sup>163</sup>.

Also, addressing identified supply risks to defence industry and provide policy actions in securing critical raw materials for European defence manufacturing, as well as enhancing the small and medium-sized enterprises' standing in the defence market<sup>164</sup> are seen as relevant actions to take in ensuring the defence industries' competitiveness. With these proposed actions the Commission is proposing tangible means to answer the identified shortcomings in the existing European defence landscape and takes thus a forward-leaning stance in attempting to solve and move forward from the shortcomings, underlining the need for European autonomy in the matter, and thus reducing dependencies from outside parties. In the communication's narrative the Commission is presented as taking a leading position in defining as well as guiding the development of the defence industrial collaboration. The complex and dangerous times require more decisive actions and as can be understood from the 2013 communication, the Commission is presented as actively taking the position for steering this work.

In the Commission's "Communication on launching the EDF" released in 2017 the need for a stronger and strategically autonomous Europe are underlined again as the prime movers for building a stronger defence industry: the security of European citizen's is essentially a European responsibility<sup>165</sup>. To enable European technological leadership and build defence collaboration and defence capabilities for Member States the European Defence Fund was introduced in 2017 as a major tool and a "key enabler"<sup>166</sup> to make this possible.

Following the utilising of topoi of burdening in the argumentation, the reasons for strengthening the European defence industrial base centre around the weak state of the industry: lack of and poor quality of investments, sparse collaboration between Member States and defence development activities being executed mainly on national levels, fragmentation of several different weapons systems and capabilities (according to the communication there are 178 different weapons systems in Europe<sup>167</sup>) and minimal coordination in defence planning resulting in duplication, as well as weak management

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<sup>163</sup> European Commission: COM(2013) 542 final, 4

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 9

<sup>165</sup> European Commission COM(2017) 295 final

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. 2

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. 3

of public tax money in the process and uncoordinated deployment of defence resources<sup>168</sup>. With the EDF and other means listed in the communication, the Commission seeks an active role in enabling the actions designed to remedy these shortcomings by providing wide-reaching methods in strengthening the defence collaboration and industry, from e.g. supporting the identification of defence capability priorities based on the Global Strategy, providing direction and aiding coordination for defence planning through CARD and investment and funding framework through EDF and thus providing necessary financial means to realise defence capabilities' development over a multi-annual basis<sup>169</sup>. Furthermore, the communication foreshadows the possibility of a more unified European approach to defence, namely the development towards a European Security and Defence Union:

...contributing to the creation of a European Union that protects and that defends. An ambitious European Defence Fund will support the competitiveness of the European defence industry. It will be the engine powering the development of a European Security and Defence Union<sup>170</sup>.

The communication on launching the EDF provides thus a detailed overview on the Commission's plan how to strengthen the European defence collaboration. With a detailed approach to research and development and ultimately supporting industrial investments in the tangible end-products, the Commission is shown as capable of deploying significant resources and provide a framework for addressing European defence needs.

In its communication on the "Roadmap for critical technologies for security and defence" released on February 2022, the Commission further underlines the need for European sovereignty on technologies central for its security. The arguments for furthering the cooperation are in line with statements from the Commission's statements from prior years:

The fragmentation of Europe's security and defence capabilities has led to economic inefficiencies, reduced operational capacity and increased strategic dependencies. The ongoing revolution in security and defence technologies and the new EU defence cooperation instruments give the EU an opportunity to avoid the mistakes of the past, to build on its existing capacities and preserve its economic prosperity and security. The future European security and defence technological and innovation landscape should be developed under EU cooperative frameworks from the outset<sup>171</sup>.

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<sup>168</sup> European Commission COM(2017) 295 final, 3

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 17

<sup>171</sup> European Commission COM(2022) 61 final, 1

The topos of burdening in the form of existing economic inefficiencies as well as dependencies from outside resources is utilised to warrant the need for more focus on developing European defence industry. Furthermore, the topos of history can be found in the arguments, as a reference to mistakes having taken place in the past in Europe's attempt to develop its defence collaboration, and now the proposed new strategies and actions provide a way to remedy these past mistakes. The roadmap sets out to define practical steps on ensuring a more coherent approach by the EU towards critical technologies and ensuring their development and availability on the Union's level. This work ties into the "The Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries" from 2021, building on the policy framework by the Commission for ensuring strategic autonomy and technological independence in the Union. Commission proposes to set up an "observatory of critical technologies" to study and analyse the dependencies and vulnerabilities of the Europe's industries, as a response to the Action Plan's call for the need to better understand the current situation and to prepare a feasible technology roadmap for the Member States<sup>172</sup>.

The motivation for these actions is the previously somewhat weak coordination and management of European defence industry collaboration, and fragmentation of the industry as well as civil and defence sectors:

While the EU has tools of its own to strengthen its industrial capacity in compliance with EU rules, it is hampered by the still largely fragmented EU defence market demand, its historically strict separation of civilian and defence RTD&I at EU level, and comparative underinvestment by Member States in the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). Indeed, the collective spending on defence innovation by Member States (EUR 2.5 billion or 1.2% of defence expenditure) continues to lag behind a 15-year old EDA target of 2%<sup>173</sup>.

As can be analysed in the extract above, topoi of burden, history, as well as numbers are employed to build the argument for defence collaboration. The roadmap proposes both measures to capitalise on existing funding instruments and financial measures on the EU-level for building a stronger collaboration between civilian and defence research and development, as well as creating new financial instruments to encourage new innovations on the field and in this way bring new initiatives and disruptive technology approaches to a market which is otherwise dominated by a selection of big corporations. In this way, the communication is portraying the Commission's initiatives as forward thinking and invested in creating a strong technology base for the European defence industry:

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<sup>172</sup> European Commission COM(2022) 61 final, 4, 6

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 5

The EU needs to make better use of the full potential of its innovation community in support of security and defence. This will require assisting non-traditional players and existing innovative start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the two sectors with overcoming their high technological, administrative, regulatory and market-entry hurdles, complying with the high security standards, and accessing financing<sup>174</sup>.

Topos of authority is employed to showcase the EU's central role and responsibility to make the most of the innovation and knowledge available in the region for strengthening the European security. Furthermore, with a set of policy initiatives the Commission is further proposing to reduce strategic dependencies and thus strengthening the European defence industry<sup>175</sup>.

These considerations are listed to cover different alliances, funding instruments, standards, foreign investments, infrastructures and trade policies to better device a structured framework for ensuring the development and advancement of critical technologies and vitality for the European defence industry. The actions cover thus a wide array of initiatives which enable a strengthened technology domain in Europe and the Commission is portrayed as exerting considerable influence in defining the steps and taking action to ensure this.

The Commission's communication on "Comission contribution to European defence" was released together with the roadmap for critical technologies in 2022<sup>176</sup>. In this communication, the Commission reiterates the need for independence and European knowhow in critical technologies in defence and security, but it also proposes many more policy initiatives to help Europe be prepared for the volatile geopolitical turmoil, also tying the work to the Strategic Compass which was to be released in March 2022<sup>177</sup>.

By employing topos of threat, the changing nature of the threats from the outside demand that Europe is better prepared and develops its own capabilities not dependent of outside parties:

At the same time, the EU needs to step up its own preparedness, capability and resilience to better protect its citizens. Threats to the EU's security are increasingly not only of a military nature... In this rapidly changing environment, the European Union needs to further strengthen

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<sup>174</sup> European Commission COM(2022) 61 final 9

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. 12

<sup>176</sup> European Commission COM(2022) 60 final

<sup>177</sup> Ibid. 2

its preparedness, capabilities and resilience, notably by enhancing shock absorption mechanisms and building its toolbox across all relevant sectors<sup>178</sup>.

Topos of authority warrants the EU as responsible for its own and the region's security and a stronger Europe can only be achieved together with the EU leadership and Member States:

Achieving our goals is only possible by developing, procuring, and operating military equipment together. The EU has put in place new tools and instruments<sup>1</sup> to reverse the long standing fragmentations that hamper the efficiency of Europe's defence sector and diminish the ability of the EU and its Member States to build the next generation of defence capabilities that will be critical for Europe's future security and its ability to provide security in its neighbourhood and beyond<sup>179</sup>.

The communication showcases Commission's determination to expand the measures available for European actors to strengthen the defence industry, as well as giving the Member States roles and responsibilities in this work, but also portraying itself in a leading role in enabling and initiating this work.

In the joint communication on "Defence Investment Gap Analysis and Way Forward" published in May 2022 the Commission underlined the need for more robust European defence cooperation and investments<sup>180</sup>. According to the communication critical capability gaps exist across different defence domains and technologies in the European defence industry and fragmentation of the industry itself was a reality in Europe<sup>181</sup>. The communication emphasized the various instruments crafted to support the defence cooperation and enable a stronger European defence base, where Member States would not develop their defence capabilities in silos but rather through collaboration and joint procurement, and investments. The joint communication emphasized the objectives of Member States combining forces to invest jointly to defence capability development, improving the targets for their investment, hence supporting EU's capability priorities as well as emphasizing European investments in the defence sector and strengthening the EDTIB and a competitive European defence industry<sup>182</sup>. A clear message was given calling for more cooperation among the EU Member States for strengthening the EU defence industry, and to shift the Member States' thinking from focusing on national solutions and procurement strategies to joint undertakings and European solutions in the defence domain.

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<sup>178</sup> European Commission COM(2022) 60 final, 3

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. 3

<sup>180</sup> European Commission JOIN(2022) 24 final, 1

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

### **6.1.1.2. Implementation plans and strategies**

In 2014 the Commission published a report called “A New Deal for European Defence” in which the strategic approach for reinforcing European defence industry was presented as a roadmap of actionable steps for bringing the strategy into practice. The Commission presented as its objectives, based on the Council’s Conclusions from 2013, creating internal markets for defence, operating openly and unimpededly in the Member States; improving security of supply for Member States’ armies; enhancing research activities exploring also synergies between civil and defence research, as well as supporting the creation of industrial policy to enable better competitiveness of European defence industries<sup>183</sup>.

The listed actions include market monitoring, clarification of exclusions, and addressing national offset rules. By addressing these mechanisms, the Commission is taking a role in building favourable conditions for defence industry cooperation, although consulting and working together closely with the Member States. The Commission also sets out to enable security of supply through extensive consultations with the Member States, creating a roadmap for improved security of supply and enabling defence transfers for enabling movement of defence products in the Internal Market<sup>184</sup>. Standardisation and certification as well as access to raw materials were also seen as ways for the Commission to alleviate the hurdles in defence industry cooperation. Small and medium-sized enterprises are encouraged to cooperate more through networks and cooperation structures proposed by the Commission<sup>185</sup>. Dual-use technologies are also identified as of central importance in broadening the defence industry cooperation, mainly by exploring synergies with civil research under the Horizon 2020 programmes and more defence-oriented research under the EDA, capitalising on the existing structures for cooperation in these fields and finding new common ground.

Identifying Key Enabling Technologies, KET, is proposed as an action step for the Commission to find critical technologies for the defence industry. This and proposed Preparatory Action in Defence Research PADR, i.e. research instrument complementing the CSDP-related civilian research<sup>186</sup> are seen as important steps in the process. The Commission proposes also to look into strengthening the European defence industry players’ positioning vis-à-vis third countries, and the challenges and obstacles for European industry actors in these markets. By defining these actions in the report the

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<sup>183</sup> European Commission COM(2014) 387 final, 2

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. 10

Commission portrayed itself as a proactive actor leading the industry development in multiple fields but keeping a close eye on the Member States' guidance and views how to navigate the changing defence landscape, considering national requirements and surrounding geopolitical and market realities.

As argumentative strategy, topos of threat is employed, as the security landscape is painted as volatile for Europe. In the description that follows in the report, the steps to take the European security and defence industrial capacities seriously are clearly defined: security of supply and market transactions for the European defence industry must be enabled to have more stability, and policy processes must be steered in support of this. More collaboration and joint development work is encouraged across civilian and defence research as well as technology sectors to weave the two sectors closer to each other and to create a robust network of collaboration to strengthen the industrial base. Collaboration and determination to build an independent or at least more or less self-driven defence industry collaboration are depicted as the essential steps forward. Topos of burdening, i.e. disparity and lack of collaborative initiatives on the EU's institutional and policy levels have hampered the defence industry development in Europe, and topos of authority. i.e. the Commission is depicted as having the capacity and resources to realise this change can be identified in the analysis of the report. With providing a set of defined action steps, the Commission is positioning itself in a leadership role for building the defence collaboration strategy.

“The Defence Action Plan” by the European Commission from 2016 sets out a more articulated policy guidance for building the defence industry. This Action Plan was preceded by President Juncker's State of the Union speech where defence was given a more prominent role than before and the EU's capabilities to act both as a provider of “hard as well as soft security, addressing calls for greater solidarity in security and defence”<sup>187</sup> were clearly stated. The Action Plan provides practical solutions to answering the lack of resources and cooperation in European defence and makes direct references to the idea of strategic autonomy and the need for a European approach in the defence field. The solutions proposed by the Commission in its Action Plan include the launching of the European Defence Fund, enabling investments to defence supply chains and strengthening the single market for defence<sup>188</sup>.

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<sup>187</sup> European Commission COM(2016) 950 final, 2

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. 5

The Action Plan provides a structured analysis to the weaknesses of the European defence industry, as understood by the Commission as well as proposed tools for answering these weaknesses and challenges for creating a more robust defence industrial base together with the Member States' support. In the Action Plan, Europe's observed weaknesses are underlined with detail and the operating environment is riddled with competition that is threatening to overshadow Europe. The discourse in the Action Plan considers the need for a change as time critical, and the prevailing situation as unbearable. The central aspects defining the need for change and outline the promise for future success centre around budgetary actions, strategic autonomy, and competitiveness. The weaknesses commented in the Action Plan concern overlapping and outdated capabilities, underspending in defence in Europe resulting the region falling behind in comparison to the global powers such as the United States, China, Russia and Saudi Arabia. Further, lack of investment, collaborative programmes and shrinking defence budgets are all seen as prime reasons for a stalling defence industrial base in Europe<sup>189</sup>. Topos of burdening can be analysed being employed in defining the conundrums the EU is facing with the current industrial challenges and external competition, and even topos of urgency can be identified in the text as an argument for the timely need for a more unified approach and the need for increased resources for building the European defence industry.

The Action Plan is thus seen as providing practical tools for boosting the European defence collaboration, albeit the responsibility for the capability programmes and actually investing in defence is still considered the Member States' responsibility. By proposing the Action Plan and extensive R&D programme under the EDF, the Commission is nevertheless taking a proactive stance in initiating the cooperation which is seen crucial in boosting the defence sector and enabling Europe to stay onboard in the global developments. Topos of authority can be thus analysed being employed in legitimising the Commission's role in the strengthening of the European defence sector. Notions on strategic autonomy, competitiveness and robustness of the European defence sector are central in the motivations presented in the Action Plan to take forward the defence industry development in Europe.

The "Implementation Plan for Defence and Security" drafted based on the Global Strategy was delivered to the Council by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice President of the European Commission and the Head of the European Defence Agency to give proposals for action steps in developing European defence and security<sup>190</sup>. It was drafted based

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<sup>189</sup> European Commission COM(2016) 950 final, 3-4

<sup>190</sup> Council of the European Union, 14392/16

on Member States' inputs, underlining their role in the Union's defence and security landscape, but it is still identifiable as a collection of the EU institutions' action steps, supporting the European Defence Action Plan and also connecting to the EU's and NATO's Joint declaration from 2016<sup>191</sup>. The priority area of Protection of the Union and its Citizens in the implementation plan is considered as strategic priority, as the Member States and their security is interconnected. Argument is made for Member States working together for security of the citizens<sup>192</sup>.

Indeed, the Implementation Plan presents a "New Level of Ambition" for the EU with three focus points: 1) responding to external conflicts and crises, 2) building the capacities of partners, and 3) protecting the Union and its citizens, the latter which is perhaps the most central for the purpose of this analysis. The Implementation Plan outlines several practical steps to strengthen defence and security domain in Europe, which the EU together with the Member States must take. European strategic autonomy is mentioned as a factor in this agency, necessary to implement with partners and independently, thus making Europe a credible partner<sup>193</sup>. Concreteness is called for in realising this Level of Ambition, and both internal and external security are to be accounted for. With topoi of threat and urgency, arguments are also presented on the importance of protecting networks, critical infrastructure and energy security as basis for stable security in the Union, as the security environment is seen as deteriorating and becoming more unpredictable<sup>194</sup>.

Part of this process is thus seen as strengthening the security of supply, protecting the networks and infrastructure as well as promoting technological innovation and defence investment<sup>195</sup>. The action steps are presented as concrete and manifold means to address the weakening security environment around the Union, as well as by employing topoi of authority, it is argued that the EU has the means and capabilities to maintain credibility and robustness in the changing security landscape. Indeed, Member States are called upon to take action, and for example increase their defence spending and financing as well as improve their use of resources, but the EU is also reminded on strengthening the availability, flexibility and eligibility of EU financial instruments in support of the European security, thus calling for structural support for improved security structures from the Union's level<sup>196</sup>.

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<sup>191</sup> Council of the European Union, 14392/16, 7

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. 14

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. 4

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. 14

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 15

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. 18

## As concrete actions to implement the Level of Ambition

...identifying the related capability development priorities” as well as “deepening defence cooperation and delivering the required capabilities together<sup>197</sup>.

are provided as central actionable steps. Based on the Level of Ambition and the EU’s Global Strategy, the Member States are called to contribute to relevant defence capabilities based on the Union’s Capability Development Plan, CDP, as well as revise the CDP for further capability priorities. The EU Defense Research Programme and the future European Defence Fund are defined as the instruments for financing this capability development priorities defined by the Member States with “recognised EU added value”<sup>198</sup>. For developing “economies of scale and use resources more efficiently<sup>199</sup>”, also the deepening of defence cooperation is argued as important for the Member States. By arguing this, topos of numbers can be analysed being utilised, aiming to give factual and numerical justification of the arguments calling for increased defence collaboration. The heightened costs of defence equipment, as well as need for a full spectrum of armed forces are examples of warrants for this argument, as well as the evidence from prior positive experiences of Member States cooperating on defence matters bilaterally and regionally. It is also considered essential to make this defence cooperation a norm, and incentives, transparency, convergence and top-down political commitment are set as the key aspects for this, with EDA seen as assisting Member States in this development and being a link between them and the Commission<sup>200</sup>.

As actionable steps forward, instruments such as the Coordinated Annual Review are proposed as ways of collaborating to further these ambitions and developing the identified capabilities with transparency and increased commitment from Member States. Additionally, the CDP is suggested to be developed to be more output-oriented to bring the capability priorities into capability development and even procurement processes, with Member States involved and funding provided from the EU-level instruments<sup>201</sup>. Other concrete measures are listed as Key Strategic Activities based on capability priorities, and active collaboration with Member States and the defence industry in support of European strategic autonomy; aligning research and technology efforts in different fora and to support the CDP priorities; provide concrete models for European cooperation as well as develop

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<sup>197</sup> Council of the European Union, 14392/16, 17

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. 20

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. 21

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. 22

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. 22

standardisation, certification, testing, evaluation and training approaches in the security domain as well as developing European-level security of supply structures<sup>202</sup>.

The Implementation Plan thus provides concrete proposals for addressing the need for strengthened security collaboration on a European level, calling for Member States active role and acknowledging their centrality in the implementation of the plan, but also presenting the EU institutions as the active drivers of this transformation. Arguments are warranted with notions of threat and urgency, but also topos of authority in the European institutions' ability to steer the developing of the defence industry collaboration and even employing further notions with topos of numbers to provide factual data to support the arguments in favour of building a stronger European defence industrial base.

In the “Action Plan on Synergies between civil, defence and space industries” from 2021 the Commission underlines the need for links between the civil, space, and defence technology sectors. It acknowledges the need for synergies between different EU programmes and instruments for reaching complementarity and efficiency between investments and results; spin-offs from the research to the business, thus increasing European defence technology development and European security; and spin-in solutions from civil industries to defence technology, providing cross-fertilisation and reducing expensive duplication in the defence sector<sup>203</sup>. In the Action Plan the Commission proposes 11 actions to obtain a diversified and interconnected technology collaboration between the three different sectors, also announced as critical points of collaboration in the Industrial Strategy for Europe one year earlier. In these action points the Commission presents itself as an active agent for furthering the synergies and transformation of the different technology sectors' collaboration, with the action steps spanning from including different sized businesses to the defence field through awareness raising on funding and other opportunities in the field, business training and supporting market entry, creating roadmaps and plans for capitalising on further collaborations between different sectors, and other means. These actions are seen as concrete ways in strengthening Europe:

Facilitating civilian-space-defence cross-fertilisation (spin-ins and spin-offs) will address the current fragmentation of the civil-defence innovation landscape. It can further strengthen innovation and lead to European economic growth, further develop the Single Market and improve security for European citizens<sup>204</sup>.

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<sup>202</sup> Council of the European Union, 14392/16, 22-24

<sup>203</sup> European Commission COM(2021) 70 final, 4

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. 14

Disparity of technologies and lack of collaboration is seen hampering the EU's ability to strengthen its defence industry, thus topos of burdening can be analysed as the underlining warrant for the arguments for employing a set of actions to advance the defence industry's strengthening in Europe. The Action Plan is comprehensive in its coverage of different technologies seen vital for European security and strengthening the region's position globally, and the Commission is shown as a proactive player in advancing the cause with maintaining close collaboration with the Member States, the industry and policy actors in this regard.

In the "European Defence Industrial Strategy", EDIS, published on 5 March 2024 the Commission takes an articulated and strong position in building the grounds for European defence industry. The actions to be taken are argued as being of utmost importance and of a timely relevance, building on the previous years' initiatives to bring more concrete solutions and frameworks for long-term collaborations for the industry actors and Member States for creating a robust EDTIB. Topoi of threat and urgency are at the centre of warranting the developments for a strong European defence industry. As the basis for increased defence collaboration more readiness is called for by the Commission:

Defence industrial readiness must be strengthened across the Union, paying particular attention to the specific implications that this has for those Member States most exposed to the risk of materialisation of conventional military threats...Defence readiness therefore calls for more cooperation and collective action<sup>205</sup>.

The EU is seen as a prime actor taking initiative in this development, and the action is not expected to rise from the Member States but rather facilitated and steered by the Union<sup>206</sup>. Topos of authority, referring to the EU's role as securing its citizens and taking care of its own defence is present in the argument. This development of defence capabilities is seen beneficial and crucial on the Union's level and bringing benefits to EU citizens alike. The Commission is also addressing a potential for industry model that is akin to wartime economy thinking:

A competitive EDTIB contributing to the security of Union's citizens means an industrial sector capable of maintaining its technological excellence while delivering what is needed, when it is needed, without restrictions stemming from excessive external dependencies or bottlenecks. An industry investing in new capacities and ready to shift to a 'wartime' economic model whenever needed, is essential<sup>207</sup>.

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<sup>205</sup> European Commission JOIN(2024) 10 final, 2

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. 6

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 7

What is interesting is how an active of a role and authoritative stance the Commission is portraying for itself in the process of advancing the European defence cooperation. As evident in the strategy, Commission is taking initiative on several strategies to create a framework in terms of collaborative structures, investments, regimes, and instruments to enable a closer cooperation with the Member States and the defence industry. This work is not only envisioned being completed by the Commission, but it is done in cooperation with relevant partners, especially the High Representative's office and EDA, to give the actions more traction and gravitas. A particularly interesting notion is Commission's objective to create production facilities for long-term defence capacity building:

The Commission will also explore with Member States measures to rapidly mobilise production lines from civilian industry for defence production purposes, and to ensure that the requisite qualified workforce is available under such scenarios (e.g. preparing staff in terms of security clearance and training). These effective, practical solutions will enable the EDTIB's production to be ready to adapt without delay to a fluctuation in the demand expressed by Member States<sup>208</sup>.

The Commission is also taking a forward-leaning approach in reaching out investors for more access for private and public investments for a robust defence sector, utilising its leveraging power to open access to a rather hard to reach sector for the industry, thus portraying a new-found sense of initiative to address root causes of a weak defence industry development<sup>209</sup>. As described in the strategy's concluding remarks, the EDIS is seen as an essential step for a more robust, capable and resilient Europe:

The implementation of the strategy will help the European defence industry to be more responsive to urgent needs without sacrificing the future. From earlier and more cooperative investment planning to greater support to industrialisation and joint acquisition; from a more effective incorporation of innovation to greater continuity in the efforts deployed to develop high end capabilities and strategic enablers; from stronger security of supply to greater freedom of action, this strategy will serve as a catalyst of what it takes to restore and preserve peace in the European continent<sup>210</sup>.

The Commission thus presents practical policy and economic steps to strengthen the European defence industrial base and in the overarching geopolitical situation, with war in Ukraine showing no signs of ending, provide a legitimation for these actions through topoi of threat and urgency, but also topos of authority, as it is argued that it is the EU's and its leaderships' responsibility to ensure the security of the citizens. The proposed measures would take the described collaboration into much

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<sup>208</sup> European Commission: JOIN(2024) 10 final 17

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. 25

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. 32

more concrete levels than before, with more investments available and the capability development work subsidised even further. Notions of wartime economy thinking in the strategy are striking, albeit not absolute, and perhaps meant as a call to action warranted due to the urgency of the matter. What is important to notice is the active role Commission is taking in proposing these new action steps and the leadership it is confident enough to show in encouraging the Member States to follow suit in their actions for strengthened defence industry collaboration.

### **6.1.1.3 Regulations**

The Regulation on the EDF serves as the legal basis for enabling the functioning the European Defence Fund, as well as setting the basic terms and conditions for funding joint European defence industrial research and development projects. The justifications presented in the document for increased collaboration and joint funding are based on the current needs and insufficiencies identified in the European defence capabilities:

The defence sector is characterised by increasing costs of defence equipment and by high research and development (R & D) costs that limit the launch of new defence programmes and have a direct impact on the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB)<sup>211</sup>.

The Commission launches the EDF in order to foster synergies and cost-effectiveness, by supporting investments in joint research and joint development of defence technologies and also to promote Member States' joint action in this regard. As stated in the Regulation, the Commission has:

...committed itself to supporting the creation of a more integrated defence market in the Union and fostering the uptake of European defence products and technologies in the internal market, thus increasing the non-dependency on non-Union sources<sup>212</sup>.

This action is also directly seen benefitting the strategic autonomy and indeed the strengthening of the single market of the Union, increasing innovativeness and collaboration in the European defence industry and reducing its dependencies on third countries and non-Union sources<sup>213</sup>.

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<sup>211</sup> EDF Regulation 2021/697, 1

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. 2

The role of the Commission is also defined as evaluating how the actions are aligned with objectives of increasing cross-border industrial collaboration and competition through the supply chain<sup>214</sup>, monitoring the projects and whether they fulfil the requirements of receiving the funding payments<sup>215</sup> and adopting the annual work programmes for calls for proposals (assisted by the committee comprising of national defence and security experts), avoiding duplication of technologies in the projects, and ensuring appropriate coherence throughout technology lifecycles through the work programmes<sup>216</sup>. Commission is also mandated in the Regulation to establish a roster of independent expert evaluators. With the help of expert evaluators having reviewed the project proposals for funding, the Commission is mandated to make the selection of which programmes shall be awarded the funding<sup>217</sup>.

The EDF Regulation also gives the Commission the power to implement the programme in terms of adopting the work programmes and awarding the selected projects for funding, as well as the power to adopt changes to the implementation of the Fund, as seen necessary<sup>218</sup>. The Regulation thus gives significant responsibility and capacity for the Commission to manage and implement the EDF, in consultation with the Member States, industry and relevant EU institutions, such as the EU Parliament and the European Council, of course.

On July 20, 2023, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted the regulation 2023/1525 on supporting ammunition production (ASAP). The regulation enabled a creation of an instrument and dedicated budget for supporting and reinforcing ammunition production in Europe, encompassing the production of artillery and ground-to-ground ammunition and missiles. The purpose was to help to ramp-up the European production capacity in these dedicated defence products and fast-track the replenishing of the ammunition inventories of the Member States as well as Ukraine. Analysis of the regulation reveals a topos of threat as warrant for the needed action. Russia's war in Ukraine has revealed Europe's unpreparedness for ensuring the necessary defence products and capabilities in reasonable time for the Member States. Moreover, Ukraine's ongoing defensive battle against Russian troops and its need for ammunition are calling for expedited measures to ensure the sufficient stocks of e.g. artillery rounds.<sup>219</sup> The regulation enables funding for

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<sup>214</sup> EDF Regulation 2021/697, 4

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. 4

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. 8

<sup>218</sup> Ibid. 7-8

<sup>219</sup> ASAP regulation 1525/2023, 1

these efforts to be deployed through the European Peace Facility, EPF, instrument. The regulation states, that as the European production capacity is rather outdated and built for very different conditions, than the current precarious situation in which the need for defence products is imminent, a new approach is needed through which also the Union's dependence on external suppliers could be reduced. As argumentative strategies, EDTIB's resilience and competitiveness are seen as the prime movers for actions on the Union's level and production supply chains in the Union should be strengthened<sup>220</sup>.

The argumentative means used in the regulation refer to "current emergency context"<sup>221</sup> and "crisis resulting from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine"<sup>222</sup>, thus portraying Europe needing to act fast to ensure its ability to defend itself and support Ukraine in a war-torn environment with uncertain times continuing possibly far into the future. The ASAP initiative is in line with earlier levels of ambitions expressed in e.g. the Strategic Compass, thus aligning with the long-term views and initiatives to strengthen European defence capabilities and also giving especially the Commission a strong implementing role in carrying out the ASAP programme and reaching its objectives<sup>223</sup>.

Proposed by the Commission in July 2022 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted the regulation on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement, EDIRPA in September 2023. The regulation aligns with the previous statements and strategies on building a stronger European Defence Industrial Technological Base, and the phrasing in the regulation portrays the initiative as a continuum of the work on strengthening Europe's capability to defend itself. EDIRPA is a short-term instrument to reinforce common defence procurement and by introducing EU funding to defence material production, it is intended to strengthen the Union's defence industrial capabilities<sup>224</sup>. As in the regulation on ASAP, also in the regulation for EDIRPA the heightened danger in Europe's neighbouring area serves a strong warrant for increasing efforts in strengthening defence industry:

In the current defence market context, marked by an increased security threat and the realistic perspective of a high-intensity conflict, Member States are rapidly increasing their defence budgets and aiming to carry out similar purchases of defence products<sup>225</sup>.

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<sup>220</sup> ASAP regulation 1525/2023, 2

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 4

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. 6

<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>224</sup> EDIRPA regulation 2023, 4

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. 5

The instrument is thus answering the urgency and the shortfalls currently identified in European defence industry. Its purpose is to support Member States collaboration on defence procurement, and in this way also support interoperability and strong national defence industrial capabilities<sup>226</sup> and, ultimately, a stronger European defence industry. Again, the topos of threat serves as a warrant for justifications for increased collaboration on defence industrial capabilities but also for the building of new institutional structures for facilitating this collaboration, initiated by the EU institutions and mainly managed by the Commission. EDIRPA is designed in such a way that it is coherent with other defence industry initiatives from the EU institutions, such as the Capability Development Plan, European Defence Fund and Permanent Structure Cooperation<sup>227</sup>, building on the selection of strategies and instruments supporting the building of a common European defence industry, and placing the EU institutions, especially the Commission on the driver's seat in steering this transformation.

### **6.1.2. Analysis on the role of the concept of strategic autonomy**

The content analysis on the role of the concept of strategic autonomy in the analysed body of text reveals that the concept is quite widely used. With categorising the unit of analysis as strategic autonomy and coding of key words indicating this (defence, resilience, industry, capability/capabilities) it is possible to understand the role which the concept of strategic autonomy plays in the narratives. Annex 1 to this thesis provides a matrix where the appearance and frequency of codes in the analysed text is listed for informative purposes. The following analysis provides an overview of the central findings on how strategic autonomy has been discussed in the material. In the communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector" from 2013 the underlining arguments for a stronger defence industry in Europe dealt with the importance of taking responsibility over Europe's security and its citizens, and this requires strategic autonomy:

Europe must be able to assume its responsibilities for its own security and for international peace and stability in general. This necessitates a certain degree of strategic autonomy: to be a credible and reliable partner, Europe must be able to decide and to act without depending on the capabilities of third parties. Security of supply, access to critical technologies and operational sovereignty are therefore crucial<sup>228</sup>.

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<sup>226</sup> EDIRPA regulation 2023, 6

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 8

<sup>228</sup> European Commission COM(2013) 542 final, 3

With the concept of strategic autonomy, the Commission refers to ability to act and decide without dependencies from third actors. Practical aspects to realising this are e.g. security of supply, ability to access critical technologies as well as sovereignty in operations. All of these are also aspects of the Commission's strategy in strengthening the defence industry: practical actions in establishing a better security of supply, enabling Members States to enhance their own processes in fostering security of supply (which is the responsibility of the Member States first, but the Commission sees ways in which this could be supported from supranational level)<sup>229</sup>.

This trend is also present in the document "New Deal for Defence and Security", albeit strategic autonomy can be considered replaced by a notion of "European autonomy in defence and security" in the document<sup>230</sup>. As an overview to the analysed research material, it can be stated that strategic autonomy is mentioned multiple times in the analysed texts. For example, in the "Defence Action Plan" it is stated three times<sup>231</sup> from 2016 and it states, for example, that the strategic autonomy is the ultimate goal for increasing defence research in Europe<sup>232</sup>. Moreover, in the "Roadmap for critical technologies" from 2022, the Commission states that the developing and strengthening of the defence industrial capacity through R&D programmes and instruments is key in reducing dependencies and strengthening e.g. resilience as well as ensuring technological capabilities, and many of these instruments are already available for the Union<sup>233</sup>.

Analysis reveals that based on the evaluated use of identified codes, strategic autonomy is indeed an important concept in the argumentation in the Commission's communications. In the Commission's communication on its "Contribution to European Defence" the defence industry is especially referred as contributing as a driver for the Europe's open strategic autonomy<sup>234</sup>.

In the Commission's "Communication on the Defence Investment Gap analysis", identified codes can be seen used multiple times, and in general the identified steps to boost the European defence industry are considered necessary for the overall future of Europe:

Such steps are critical to ensure that Europe can field stronger and more interoperable defence capabilities while enhancing the European defence industrial and technological base (EDTIB),

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<sup>229</sup> European Commission: COM(2013) 542 final, 7

<sup>230</sup> European Commission: COM(2014) 387 final, 5

<sup>231</sup> European Commission: COM(2016) 950 final, 3 and 7, respectively

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>233</sup> European Commission: COM(2022) 61 final, 12

<sup>234</sup> European Commission: COM(2022) 60 final, 3

which are both essential for Europe's long-term security and strategic autonomy<sup>235</sup>.

The identified coding is also present in the "European Defence Industrial Strategy" published in 2024. Strategic autonomy is not implied explicitly, but the use of identified codes indicates the concept's presence and relevance. The strategy provides especially a future-oriented view to the European defence industrial development, implicitly entailing notions on strategic autonomy:

From earlier and more cooperative investment planning to greater support to industrialisation and joint acquisition; from a more effective incorporation of innovation to greater continuity in the efforts deployed to develop high end capabilities and strategic enablers; from stronger security of supply to greater freedom of action, this strategy will serve as a catalyst of what it takes to restore and preserve peace in the European continent<sup>236</sup>.

## **6.2. State of the Union addresses and other declarations**

The following chapter includes analysis on the discourses used in State of the Union Addresses and other declarations and statements by the EU leadership. In particular, my analysis focuses on how the need for a stronger European defence industry is stated in these addresses and statements and also, how is the concept of strategic autonomy used in this justification. Chapter 6.2.1 includes discourse analysis using the CDA (especially DHA) as a methodology and chapter 6.2.2. includes overview to the findings of the content analysis on the addresses and how the concept of strategic autonomy can be considered utilised in the argumentation.

### **6.2.1. Analysis on the discourses**

The State of the Union Addresses provide an overview to the Commission's and the EU leadership's priorities and key development areas which are considered central in the Union's development at the time of the address. In this subchapter I will discuss the findings from the selected State of the Union Addresses which are relevant for the chosen time period of the analysis of my research. Additionally, I will also study a few selected statements and declarations addressing European defence. As my research method I have utilised CDA, and more specifically DHA in considering the ways the arguments have been constructed through discussive strategies and warrants (topoi), as well as considering through content analysis what role strategic autonomy plays in these arguments. I have divided this chapter into two sections: 6.2.1.1. will discuss my findings provided by the discourse

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<sup>235</sup> European Commission COM(2022) 24 final, 2

<sup>236</sup> European Commission JOIN(2024) 10 final, 31

analysis and 6.2.1.2. will discuss findings from notions on the concept of strategic autonomy derived through content analysis.

#### ***6.2.1.1. State of the Union Addresses***

In his State of the Union Address from 2017, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker presented his vision for building a stronger Europe: “a Europe that protects, a Europe that empowers, a Europe that defends.”<sup>237</sup>. He expressed also his clear wish for a stronger union, for a union that is a “stronger global actor”, making foreign policy decisions faster and enhancing its defence matters, a process in which the European Defence Fund and PESCO were seen as key steps in achieving this. Furthermore, in the speech the creation of the European Defence Union was proposed: “By 2025 we need a fully-fledged European Defence Union. We need it. And NATO wants it.”<sup>238</sup>.

Juncker’s State of the Union Address paints a picture of Europe re-emerging from the financial crisis that it was struck with ten years prior, this process being described as “winds back in Europe’s sails”<sup>239</sup>. In the State of the Union address Juncker also reminds the audience that Europe is a Union of freedom and equals, and rule of law, and these are the three principles on which a more united, stronger and democratic Union should be built<sup>240</sup>. Together with fiscal and social policy actions, also security and defence policy actions are discussed as reasonable means to build the Union’s future. Analysis of the discourse reveals especially topoi of history and authority as warranting the change towards stronger structures for defence and security collaboration; Europe has weathered through challenging times and in order to stand the future tests, more attention should be given to also defence and security in the policies and institutional structures. Furthermore, in the narrative the Commission is portrayed as an active agent in this progress, in close cooperation with Member States, and together the EU leadership can carry the responsibility for introducing these new policies in the Union. The address is thus building a picture of a joint effort for a stronger and unified Union, despite the looming UK exit from the Union in 2019<sup>241</sup>. Despite the challenges and changes in its constitutional fabric, the EU is portrayed as a steadfast Union that is weathering through internal and external turmoil and changes unified and ready to take more agency on its security and defence.

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<sup>237</sup> Juncker 2017, 1

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. 8

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. 2

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. 6

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. 10

In his State of the Union Address from 2018 Juncker calls for tireless efforts in seeing that EDF and PESCO become a reality<sup>242</sup>. The speech was coined as “The hour of European sovereignty”, topoi of threat and urgency being employed as the warranting factors in the arguments for a stronger defence collaboration in Europe. As stated in the address, the continent must answer to the changes in its geopolitical surroundings and become a sovereign actor in international arenas, by combining its Member States’ and institutions’ powers:

The geopolitical situation makes this Europe's hour: the time for European sovereignty has come. It is time Europe took its destiny into its own hands. It is time Europe developed what I coined “Weltpolitikfähigkeit” – the capacity to play a role, as a Union, in shaping global affairs. Europe has to become a more sovereign actor in international relations. European sovereignty is born of Member States' national sovereignty and does not replace it. Sharing sovereignty – when and where needed – makes each of our nation states stronger<sup>243</sup>.

In 2020 President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen’s State of the Union Address can be seen addressing especially new challenges raised by the global pandemic as well as realising green economy to fight climate change as well as positioning Europe more actively in global affairs<sup>244</sup>. In the State of the Union Address from 2021 the focus on the rise of the digital changes and how Europe should take an active stance in reacting and managing that. President Von Der Leyen emphasized the need for interoperability and improved cyber domains in European defence, as well as supporting ways to encourage defence procurement and thus reducing “dependencies” identified in Europe<sup>245</sup>. One segment in the address clearly identifies a need for a more forward-leaning approach from the Union towards defence and security matters and taking a more independent approach to its security:

Secondly, we need to improve interoperability. This is why we are already investing in common European platforms, from fighter jets, to drones and cyber.

But we have to keep thinking of new ways to use all possible synergies. One example could be to consider waiving VAT when buying defence equipment developed and produced in Europe. This would not only increase our interoperability, but also decrease our dependencies of today.

Third, we cannot talk about defence without talking about cyber. If everything is connected, everything can be hacked. Given that resources are scarce, we have to bundle our forces. And

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<sup>242</sup> Juncker 2018, 5

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. p.5

<sup>244</sup> Von Der Leyen 2020

<sup>245</sup> Von Der Leyen 2021, 8

we should not just be satisfied to address the cyber threat, but also strive to become a leader in cyber security<sup>246</sup>.

The address included calls to take practical approach in ensuring defence collaboration and more concerted efforts on improved defence by European actors. Also, more focus on strategic autonomy was called for in putting more efforts in enabling the buying of European defence equipment, and thus decreasing dependencies on third countries. Topoi of threat and urgency of the surrounding and changing security environment and a world battling pandemic, climate change and economic turmoil can be analysed being employed, but the address also depicts Europe as resilient and resourceful community emerging through the challenges.

President Von Der Leyen's State of the Union Address from 2022 portrays a new-found sense of urgency towards defence in Europe. The offensive against Ukraine started by Russia on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February of the same year brought power politics and defence back to the daily agenda of the European states. Energy and resource independence as well as enabling a stronger economy were at the forefront, portraying the importance of strategically independent Union. In the speech European Critical Raw Materials Act was announced, to ensure critical rare earth elements' and supplies' flow to the Union's area:

...We will identify strategic projects all along the supply chain, from extraction to refining, from processing to recycling. And we will build up strategic reserves where supply is at risk. This is why today I am announcing a European Critical Raw Materials Act. We know this approach can work. Five years ago, Europe launched the Battery Alliance. And soon, two third of the batteries we need will be produced in Europe. Last year I announced the European Chips Act. And the first chips gigafactory will break ground in the coming months. We now need to replicate this success<sup>247</sup>.

In the State of the Union Addresses from 2020 through to 2022 the surrounding geopolitical environment and challenges faced by, not only Europe, but the world as a whole can be analysed as topos of urgency, even threat, and Europe's leadership is needed in steering the way through these challenges for its citizens. The changing times warrant also for new policy initiatives such as increased independence on critical technologies and cyber readiness and better interoperability in defence capabilities. In the State of the Union address 2023 President Von Der Leyen reiterated her

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<sup>246</sup> Von Der Leyen 2021, 8

<sup>247</sup> Von Der Leyen 2022, 9

vision for a green, digital and geopolitical Europe, which had been introduced already in 2019. Security of supply and reducing Europe's dependencies on the critical technologies' domain are essential for the continent's future. To maintain its technological edge, European industrial policy also was considered in need for common funding:

It is an economic and national security imperative to preserve a European edge on critical and emerging technologies. This European industrial policy also requires common European funding<sup>248</sup>.

Analysis considers a topos of urgency warranting the arguments for reducing dependencies on critical technologies and increasing strategic autonomy. Answering these challenges was thus considered a part of Europe's fate, in a changing world and increasing global competition, Europe could not be seen as falling behind in the development and becoming dependent on third country products. Europe's own security and existence required that these technology domains would remain in European control and that there would be concerted efforts in maintaining European "edge" in the digital age. Common efforts and funding were called for. By the time of the State of the Union address the EDF had already been initiated with first projects already underway. The remarks made in the speech could be seen also as calling for continuous efforts in building the strategic autonomy and the work would not be considered as finished, but rather only as starting especially in the changing geopolitical context. Further, as stated in the address, artificial intelligence and advanced digital technologies are seen as central parts of Europe's future, but it is also essential that Europe claims ownership in these technologies for maintaining fair and lawful approaches to how technology and data are used in the Union.

#### ***6.2.1.2. Other speeches and declarations***

In a joint declaration by the European Council, the Commission and NATO released in July 2021, concerted and effective actions were called upon from European countries to answer to the challenges posed by the surrounding regional power competition. The statement is signed by the President of the Council, President of the Commission and Secretary-General of NATO, to underline the unanimity and resolute approach to defending European and the Euro-Atlantic security. The statement calls for more ambition in security collaboration in a changing world and can be analysed as utilising the topos of threat and topos of reality considering the surrounding geopolitical conditions. Thus, more ways of cooperating in the security domain are needed in order to face the demanding times together. Not

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<sup>248</sup> Von Der Leyen 2023, 7

only is the EU's security important, but also that of the NATO member countries, and strengthening the collaboration between the EU and NATO is seen crucial in answering to the demands posed by the changing dynamics in the security environment<sup>249</sup>. In their statement, citizens and the requirement to maintain their security is an explicit supporting argument for the industry development as well as maintaining European security. This can be also seen as utilising topoi of authority to argue for legitimization of a set of strategies and activities to strengthen defence collaboration. In the statement, the concrete means to achieve this are mentioned as increased operational collaboration, developing interoperable capabilities and multilateral projects, enabling a stronger defence industry and RDI cooperation in Europe but also over the Atlantic, among others. This is seen as a strategic imperative and the leaders urged for increase in political means and resources in all organisations to enable this<sup>250</sup>.

Two weeks after Russia launched its unprovoked attack on Ukraine, the EU Member States' Heads of State held an informal meeting in Versailles on 10-11 March 2022 and issued a statement condemning the attack and expressing their countries' commitment to support Ukraine in defending its freedom. Also, the declaration expressed that a "tectonic shift"<sup>251</sup> had taken place in Europe's history and that Europe needs to take more responsibility for its security. Topoi of reality and threat can be found used as warrants in explaining the changed reality around Member States and the need for stepping up the building of European defence capabilities. One of the key dimensions to address in this new reality was bolstering Europe's defence capabilities, and the declaration explicitly stated that:

In view of the challenges we face and in order to better protect our citizens, while acknowledging the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, we must resolutely invest more and better in defence capabilities and innovative technologies<sup>252</sup>.

In the declaration several action steps were proposed by the heads of Member States, among these actions were e.g. increasing defence expenditure, also in terms of investments as well as collaborative defence projects; creating more incentives for Member States' collaborative investments in joint projects; investing in strategically important areas such as cybersecurity as well as finding synergies

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<sup>249</sup> Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2016, 1

<sup>250</sup> Ibid. 2

<sup>251</sup> Versailles Declaration 2022, 3

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. 4

between different industry fields as well as investing more on critical and emerging technologies. Other key dimensions mentioned in the declaration were reducing energy dependency<sup>253</sup> as well as building a more robust economic base, including the reducing of strategic dependencies on e.g. critical raw materials<sup>254</sup>. The declaration states thus the Member States's commitment to Europe's security and sets forth action steps and steadfast ambitions on how to build a more secure region for Europe's citizens amidst a geopolitical turbulence threatening Europe's security.

In her speech to the European Parliament on 28 February 2024 President Von der Leyen further underlined the sense of urgency and time criticality in Europe's efforts for creating more robust defence industry and joint collaboration in defence and security. The "European illusions have been shattered<sup>255</sup>" during the last few years as the global realities have shifted and the geopolitical context has become more volatile. By employing topoi of urgency and threat, President Von Der Leyen discusses how instead of calming down, the power and economic competition around Europe is becoming even more demanding and challenging the core values of European ethos:

And we are also seeing the continued rise of aggressive economic competition and distortion, which brings with it some very real European security risks. So, to put it as bluntly as outgoing President Niinistö of Finland did last month: 'Europe has to wake up.' And I would add: urgently<sup>256</sup>.

The speech paints a picture of Europe having to take a definitive turn to protecting its interests and way of life against oppressive and totalitarian regimes, and to be able to do this it needs to take its strategic future in its own hands. This action is called taking the initiative to building Europe's security architecture, against the threats that endanger the European way of life<sup>257</sup>. At the same time Europe has already shown it can stay united and take action in strengthening its support to Ukraine as well as strengthening its own sovereignty. This sovereignty is shown as central part of Europe's strength internally but also in forging partnerships:

At this point let me be clear: European sovereignty will make our partnerships stronger. It will never affect the importance and the need for our NATO alliance. In fact, a more sovereign Europe, in particular on defence, is vital to strengthening NATO... At its core, European sovereignty is about taking responsibility ourselves for what is vital, and even existential, for

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<sup>253</sup> Versailles Declaration 2022, 6

<sup>254</sup> Ibid. 7

<sup>255</sup> Von Der Leyen 2024

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

us. It is about our ability but also about our willingness to defend our interests and values ourselves<sup>258</sup>.

Sovereignty is thus central ingredient in holding Europe together and being able to maintain its way of life and traditions. It is indeed in Europe's responsibility to maintain its sovereignty and values. Many initiatives such as the EDF and other increased cooperation in defence are strongly applauded in the speech but it also recognises that more work is needed:

“But there is a lot more to do. And we need to move fast. The threat of war may not be imminent, but it is not impossible. The risks of war should not be overblown, but they should be prepared for. And that starts with the urgent need to rebuild, replenish and modernise Member States' armed forces... That means turbocharging our defence industrial capacity in the next five years”<sup>259</sup>.

After successfully implementing the industrial programmes over the years, it is time to switch gears and build even more enabling structures to have tangible benefits from the R&D programmes and upgrade the defence capabilities of the Member States. By announcing these and a new European defence industrial strategy, where at the heart of it is the idea of “Europe must spend more, spend better, spend European<sup>260</sup>” as well as suggesting a defence Commissioner's position, President Von Der Leyen is proposing decisive actions to be taken in furthering Europe's defence industrial ambitions and calling for Member States to take part in this process. The speech calls for unity in building defence industry, just as has been done in other undertakings (vaccines, and natural gas are mentioned as examples) in order to build a stable defence industrial base in Europe and thus enabling Europe to take responsibility of its own future, and not leaning on others to do it for it<sup>261</sup>.

### **6.2.2. Analysis on the role of the concept of strategic autonomy**

The content analysis on the role of the concept of strategic autonomy in the analysed material reveals that the concept is notably present also in the addresses and other statements and declarations studied. As analysed previously also in the communications and policy documents, by categorising the unit of analysis as strategic autonomy and coding of key words in exemplifying this (defence, resilience, industry, capability/capabilities) it is possible to understand the role which the concept of strategic autonomy plays in the narratives. Annex 1 to this thesis provides a matrix where the appearance and frequencies of codes in the analysed text is listed for informative purposes. The following analysis

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<sup>258</sup> Von Der Leyen 2024

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

provides a brief overview of the central findings on how the concept of strategic autonomy has been discussed in the analysed State of the Union Addresses and other statements and declarations.

The analysed addresses, declarations and addresses carry a message of the need for a stronger Europe, that thinks strategically and maintains its independence in an interdependent world. There is a need for being more strategically autonomous, and for Europe to ensure its own resources are sufficient for its citizens and for the Union to be able to defend itself and ensure its integrity. The matrix on use of codes reveals how the identified elements of strategic autonomy appear in the speeches (see Annex 1 for details). However, when analysing the State of the Union addresses it is evident that among the codes “resilience”, “capability/capabilities”, “defence”, “industry” the first two codes are scarcely present in these addresses<sup>262</sup>. The codes “defence” and “industry” appear more frequently, but they are also used in a broader context, such as referring also to car industry and Europe’s industrial potential at large. This is partly certainly explained by the nature of State of the Union Addresses, which have to discuss a broad range of topics across the Union. But it is nevertheless interesting to see, that the tone of the studied State of the Union Addresses is more rounded and less pinpointed to defence topics or explicitly considering the concept of strategic autonomy.

However, as the analysed addresses and statements cover also other industries and sectors of society that are essential for Europe as strategic autonomy, and the concept of “sovereignty” is often mentioned in the speeches throughout the observed period. In this sense the concept of strategic autonomy could be considered understood also in much broader sense than just defence industrial capabilities, but rather a cross-sectoral theme piercing through and joining each sector of the society into a coherent and robust entity.

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<sup>262</sup> See listing of frequencies of each of the codes in Annex 1

## 7. DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

In this master's thesis I have studied the EU leadership's discourses on strengthening the European defence industrial base and the justifications for building a robust defence industrial collaboration. As the geopolitical reality around Europe has become increasingly volatile, the shortcomings in Europe's ability to maintain its defence capabilities as well as its ability to defend itself have become a recurring topic in the national and EU-level discussions. During the 2010s and early 2020s the arguments in favour of creating more support structures and incentives for defence collaboration have gained more prominence, even though this topic was sidelined for a number of years prior to this. In my thesis I have studied how the EU leadership, especially the Commission and the European Council, has constructed the arguments calling for more robust defence industrial collaboration in Europe. The primary research question in my thesis has been: how does the European leadership argue and justify the need for the strengthening of the European defence industry cooperation? As secondary research question I have employed the following: in particular, what role does the concept of strategic autonomy play in this process? My hypothesis for my research has been that there is evidence and indications in the official narratives that support the notion of the EU leadership advocating a unified European defence industry. Furthermore, the concept of strategic autonomy and strengthening it in Europe can be seen playing a role in this narrative process as a supporting argument for increasing the defence industry collaboration.

The European defence industrial collaboration, its different dimensions and the motivations for the cooperation have become an increasingly interesting research topic in the academic field during the recent years. Several studies, articles and academic research papers have been published on this topic and the number of these research papers continues growing. For example, Raluca Csernatonu has discussed the intertwining of the European institutions and industries in the defence collaboration and the emergence of European Defence Technological and Industrial Complex, EDTIC<sup>263</sup>. Furthermore, for Souverbie et al. the Commission's growing role in the EU's defence collaboration landscape is providing avenues to consider the interplay between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism rather than seeing them as opposing processes<sup>264</sup>. In terms of the reasoning behind the defence industrial developments in Europe, Ondrej Ditrych and Tomas Kucera have looked at the historical developments of the European defence industry cooperation and transnational defence integration.

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<sup>263</sup> Csernatonu 2021, 7

<sup>264</sup> Souverbie et al 2024

According to their findings, it can be argued that the European security community developments and the defence industrial collaboration have fortified each other over time, with the defence integration providing productive gains for the security community, and ultimately strengthening the community and the trust between its members<sup>265</sup>. My research is thus taking part to this broader discussion on the characteristics and nature of the European defence industrial collaboration by analysing especially the EU leadership's discourses on the need for a strengthened defence industrial collaboration in Europe.

Integration theories, the interplay between intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist debates, and in particular the neofunctionalist notions on supranationalism have formed the theoretical framework in my research. Viewing the policy developments using a supranational framework helps in understanding the tendencies within the process of building a common European defence industry, and sheds light on the EU institution's, especially the Commission's, and the EU leadership's role in favour of this development. My research thus has its context in the ongoing academic discussions on comparing the intergovernmentalist versus neofunctionalist (supranational) tendencies of Europe's defence collaboration developments. Especially Pierre Haroche's and Tine Brøgger's respective works on understanding the supranational nature of this defence collaboration have had relevance as the theoretical discussion and framing for my study. For Pierre Haroche, the European Defence Fund and its implementation is a clearly supranational endeavour. This is especially evident in the role which the Commission has in the coordinating and implementing the multi-billion euro fund, a development that for Haroche can be explained with the EDF's close connection to the single market policies, which are within the Commission's domain<sup>266</sup>. For Brøgger introducing the need for building stronger European defence capabilities is a clear step towards more supranational domain and even expanding the "idea of Europe" to include elements of hard power<sup>267</sup>. Moreover, also Raluca Csernatoni has discussed the particularly supranational tendencies of building the current structures for defence collaboration especially evident in the European Defence Fund and the Commission's role in implementing it. Csernatoni considers that the Commission has had a central role together with high-level policy decision-making bodies in defining the EU's role as defence actor whereas the European Parliament and national decision-making bodies have been sidelined in this process<sup>268</sup>. Interestingly, for example Souverbie et al call for the importance of finding avenues for combining

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<sup>265</sup> Ditrych and Kucera 2023, 133

<sup>266</sup> Haroche 2019, 856

<sup>267</sup> Brøgger 2024, 12-13

<sup>268</sup> Csernatoni 2021, 4-5

intergovernmental and supranational processes and policies for a better functioning defence industrial base in Europe, rather than considering the process as a simple dichotomy<sup>269</sup>. The ongoing academic and theoretical discussion on the motivations and characteristics of this defence industrial collaboration in Europe shed light on the dynamisms and multidimensionality of the topic.

My research has participated to this broad academic discussion by providing a viewpoint on how the EU institutions, in particular the Commission, and the EU leadership at large have taken a proactive and forward-leaning approach in their communications and narratives calling for a more coherent European defence industry. The results of the analysis provide indication for a decisive approach by especially the Commission in explaining the need for strengthened defence industry collaboration in Europe and identifying different tools that would need to be created for this. These observations can be considered also providing evidence on the supranational tendencies in the Commission's approach in defining the path for European defence collaboration.

The analysis of my research focused on understanding the arguments used for supporting and underlining the need for a stronger European defence industrial base, as communicated by the European Union's leadership, mainly the Commission and the European Council. This analysis was conducted by utilising critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology, or more specifically discourse-historical approach (DHA). In CDA, the narratives and how language is used in the construction of shared reality are studied in detail. The research methodology sees language and narratives as contest and struggle, as different discourses and value systems are competing to prevail over one another to give meaning and define the shared social realities<sup>270</sup>. By employing CDA (DHA) as research methodology, I have studied the warrants utilised in the EU leadership's communications as arguments justifying the need for stronger European defence industry. As an auxiliary method for my studies, I have utilised content analysis to understand how the concept of strategic autonomy has been utilised in this process of justification. The theoretical framework of my research justifies the choice of methodology in critical discourse analysis and content analysis. My analysis was structured in two parts: the first part of the analysis focused on analysing the communications and policy guidelines especially by the Commission and the European Council, and the second part analysed the State of the Union Addresses and other statements by the EU leadership. Both parts were further divided into two sub-sections: the first sub-section included discourse analysis of the research material, and the

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<sup>269</sup> Souverbie et al. 2024

<sup>270</sup> Wodak 2011, 35

second sub-section provided overview to the findings of the content analysis. The analysis reveals several arguments used in justifying the defence collaboration, as well as the role which the concept of strategic autonomy has in the process of justifying a stronger defence industry in Europe.

Overall, the development in the rhetoric and arguments can be seen growing only stronger over the observed period of time for the analysis conducted in my research, namely from 2013 until early-2024. As the avenues for strengthening the influence of defence industry players through various collaborative bodies as well as research and development actions have grown in numbers, so has the need for more pin-pointed, well-defined actions for defence industry collaborations also increased. The industry players, the Member States as well as the EU institutions, most notably the Commission, seem to have become more adamant on the needs to improve and strengthen the European defence collaboration.

The analysis of the discourse over the observed time period reveals European leadership's ambition to strengthen the defence industries and the European defence capabilities growing stronger and more unified than what it has been accustomed to being over the years. The arguments are largely based on the changing geopolitics and the near existential urgency that Europe faces as a consequence of these changes. The proposed solutions and instruments to mend this are practical and aim to building a solid industrial base for the European defence, and the concept of strategic autonomy is portrayed as one of the key issues that is to be addressed through these means. Argumentation to support a stronger European defence industrial base and the consequent actions to enable this emphasise the existing realities and threats, but also the rationale on how to credibly defend against the deterioration of these realities.

The analysis of the Commission's and the European Council's policy papers, communications, strategy papers, regulations, as well as the EU the leadership's addresses and statements focused especially on understanding the arguments the EU institutions, mainly those that the Commission employed in portraying the need for a stronger European industry collaboration. This need is argued on the basis of deteriorating and volatile security situation that Europe faces, outdated and overlapping defence capabilities that should be streamlined, lack of investment and long-term planning in terms of joint procurements and acquisitions of European defence capabilities, dependencies on raw materials and critical technologies from third parties and consecutive need for strengthening the European security of supply in this regard.

The narratives which were studied can be analysed as framing Europe surrounded by uncertainty and installing an active agency for the EU to ensure the ownership of its security. The arguments for stronger defence collaboration in the Union are backed with a rather fatalistic picture of the evolving security environment the Union and its citizens are facing, should the Union not do anything. Technological supremacy, security of supply, critical technologies, skills, investments, and a Europe that is capable of taking care of its citizens' security are all key aspects in providing the grounds in Europe's leadership's arguments for increased defence industry collaboration and building of European defence capabilities – even a Defence Union<sup>271</sup>. All this is notably different from the rhetoric that has historically associated the EU as a peace project (this is a notion that has been discussed e.g. by Brøgger). Nevertheless, a change in tone is indeed evident in the material analysed and the rationales provided. This remark also served as an encouragement for the title of this thesis: the EU institutions' and leadership's narratives on the need for a stronger European defence industry as well as the subsequent policy actions to support this can be even considered as acts of reimagining and reconstructing the European project with a stronger defence policy and defence industrial dimension.

In the communication and policy guidelines the changing geopolitical context, threats rising from this and the need for the EU to take strategic responsibility for its and its citizens' security can be seen as prime movers for the arguments calling for a robust European defence industry. The analysis found that sense of urgency and threat stemming from the outside geopolitical context, technological rivalry, power politics as well as Europe's increasing dependencies on critical technologies create imperatives to seek for European solutions to ensure that the sovereignty, European values and way of life is safeguarded in the changing world. In order to make this possible, Europe must take responsibility for its own security and become a stronger actor in this regard. In many of the analysed communications, the EU institutions are called to take action to safeguard the citizens and especially the Commission can be seen taking a forward-leaning leadership position in this argumentation.

In the Commission's and the European Council's communication and policy guidelines emphasizing the need for a stronger European Defence Industrial Base topoi of reality and threat are used extensively to describe the current, steady rise of threats surrounding Europe, and its position being undermined by the geopolitical instabilities and technological advancements by competing regional actors. The answer to this challenge is to have a strong European leadership as well as ownership

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<sup>271</sup> Juncker 2017, 8

over the security and future of the continent and its citizens. Concreteness is called for through emphasizing concepts such as strategic autonomy to underline the need for Europe's independence of third countries. Also, security of supply and securing critical technologies and their development capabilities are listed as important actions to take to enable Europe being able to stand its ground in a changing world. As an example of the more assertive argumentation calling for the EU's agency over its own security, in the European Council's statement from 2013, for the first time in Union's communications, "defence mattered" for Europe<sup>272</sup>.

The language of the analysed communications and policy papers is increasingly heavy on arguments calling for improved security and defence capabilities as well as enhancing Europe's financial and technological capabilities in a world that seems to be growing ever darker. The arguments are thus strong in advocating for a stronger and more secure Europe, and in these narratives the Commission together with the European Council exemplify the kind of proactive leadership these times require. The changes and new initiatives are made in collaboration with the Member States, but analysis of the research material shows a steadfast view to especially Commission's leadership and its abilities to bring forth significant solutions and instruments for improved defence collaboration and joint understanding for what is in the Union's best interest. Furthermore, it can be said that the EDF instrument was argued to introduce extensive and structural measures to support the European defence industry to innovate and collaborate more extensively than before<sup>273</sup>. This was seen answering the problems of long-term underinvestment, lack of collaboration, and outdated technologies hampering the European defence capabilities, as well as increasing its autonomy from third countries. The EDF was presented as a practical solution to long-standing problems the industry has been facing in Europe, and a means to bring segmented and siloed European capabilities together for a stronger Europe, which is essential also for reaching a more strategically independent and strong Union.

As an auxiliary research method, content analysis was employed to the body of analysed text to understand how the concept of strategic autonomy was utilised in the argumentation for more robust European defence industry collaboration. Helwig has discussed the concept of EU's strategic autonomy and defined it through two dimensions: conventional and global strategic autonomy. The perspective of conventional strategic autonomy is of specific relevance with reference to my study,

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<sup>272</sup> The European Council's statement on EDTIB 2013, 2

<sup>273</sup> For example: European Commission COM(2017) 295 final, 3

as it looks at Europe's capabilities in defending itself without relying to third country support and observes the industrial, operational as well as strategic capabilities the region must have to prevail and defend itself<sup>274</sup>. Through categorising the units of analysis and coding key words (defence, resilience, industry, capability/capabilities) and analysing these in the communications and policy papers it was possible to determine that the concept of strategic autonomy was rather well present in the arguments and narratives studied. The concept of strategic autonomy was included in several communications and policy papers as an argumentative tool in justifying and explaining the reasons for the need of more robust defence industrial collaboration. Also, especially associated key words of "defence" and "capability/capabilities" could be identified having high frequency in the analysed texts<sup>275</sup>.

Warrants of threat and urgency were present in the State of the Union Addresses and other statements analysed in the second part of the analysis of this thesis. The exceptional circumstances warranted also for new means of building stronger defence industry in Europe and enable the region's strategic autonomy. Many of the analysed addresses and statements depict Europe in the middle of turmoil, but the perseverance, resilience, and courage were also depicted as the ethos of the region, and the new initiatives in defence and security sectors were testimony to the region's resourcefulness and resilience in the face of threats. The speeches also presented the EU's leadership as fully behind these initiatives and calling for swift actions in these fronts. Content analysis of the State of the Union Addresses, and other statements also found evidence of the concept of strategic autonomy having a strong role in building of the arguments for a stronger defence industry in Europe<sup>276</sup>.

The arguments and narratives analysed in my research portray Europe answering to the challenges arising from a changed world order and security dynamics. The discourses employed in the narratives show the surrounding world in turmoil, and the changes in the balance of power and international relations are considered long term and in Europe's detriment, if nothing is done. To answer my original research questions, it can be said that the material analysed for my thesis presents evidence that there are several ways how the EU's leadership is arguing and justifying the need for the strengthening the European defence industry cooperation. These justifications come from describing the current, dangerous geopolitical context around Europe, Europe's need for protecting its citizens and their way of life, as well as the region's need for strategic independence and ability to maintain

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<sup>274</sup> Helwig 2020, 5

<sup>275</sup> For more details on frequencies, please see Annex 1

<sup>276</sup> For more details on frequencies, please see Annex 1

its defence capabilities, by addressing investment and technological shortfalls identified and accumulated over the course of many years. As for my second research question, what role does the concept of strategic autonomy play in this process, it can be said that codes indicating the concept of strategic autonomy were well represented in the analysed material. This is thus an indication that the concept of strategic autonomy plays an important role in the analysed texts and in the arguments and justifications calling for a robust European defence industrial collaboration.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

In my thesis I have studied the EU's official communications from the EU institutions and leadership, largely by the Commission and the European Council, discussing the need for a stronger defence collaboration and defence industrial base for Europe over the observed time period from 2013 to 2024. The changing geopolitical context, war in Ukraine and the need for finding strategic independence on e.g. critical technologies for Europe can be considered as central motivators for this development, which was frowned upon for years prior both by many EU leaders and Member States. The EU is, however, reacting rapidly to the surrounding geopolitical and economic realities, and a number of policy initiatives and financial incentives to support a more unified defence industry have been launched, with the aim of also lowering thresholds for Member States' collaborations in the defence industrial domain.

In the recent years it has become evident that there has seen a significant shift in the European leadership's mindset towards the need for European defence industry cooperation and acknowledging the need for developing critical technologies and defence capabilities in a collaborative manner on the Member States' level, as well as enabling structures for this collaboration on the EU's institutional level. Moreover, based on the analysis of the research material for this thesis, it is evident that the EU institutions, especially the Commission, are taking a forward-leaning approach in steering this development, also when it comes to creating viable financial incentives for this.

As also evident in my analysis, the arguments for a more unified and capable European defence industry have become stronger over the observed time period from 2013 until early 2024. During the past decade especially, the Commission has also introduced several new policy mechanisms and financial instruments for incentivising a stronger collaboration between defence industry actors as well as Member States in this regard, aiming for more joint efforts on a sector which has traditionally been dealt with mainly on national levels. One of the central arguments for this development, besides strengthening European security, has been to ensure Europe's strategic autonomy in an increasingly unstable geopolitical context. By building its defence industry and defence capabilities, Europe is portrayed as being able to credibly and decisively protect its citizens against forces that seek to undermine the European identity, values, and way of life.

These developments in strengthening the European defence industry are historical and taking even more institutional forms with the likely implementation of European Defence Industry Programme in the near future. These developments have been long in the making, but the future will tell how the Member States will negotiate these changes and whether the collaborations in the field will bear fruit in the long term, and what are the practical effects not only for the security of supply and capability development but also to Europe's internal markets. As this thesis was written, the discussion on the developing the European defence industry has continued and, for example, the EDIS has taken more concrete forms, the new proposed College of Commissioners now includes a Defence Commissioner position, there are practical actions taken to join Ukraine closer to European defence industrial collaboration and the EU as a whole, and the EDIP is anticipated to move forward in early 2025.

Whether there will be even more institutional structures enabling the creation of a defence union in Europe is a development that will be better understood in the months and years to come, but certainly the policy discourse supporting a robust defence industrial collaboration in Europe is more acceptable and mainstream today than during the years prior. As strengthening of the European Defence Technology and Industrial Base continues to grow its importance and the selection of different policy and financial instruments to enable the defence industrial collaboration keeps growing, these developments maintain their relevance as a subject of academic study also in the future. The point of interest for the research is undoubtedly the transformation and strengthening of the European defence industries but also the impact this has on the European project as a whole.

My objective has been to take part to the ongoing discussion on the topic of developing European defence collaboration with my thesis. In this study I have analysed the EU leadership's arguments and justifications for building the European defence industrial collaboration published over the observed time period from 2013 to 2024. With my research I have participated to the thematical discussion on European defence, and I see the topic warranting a need also for further research as the institutional developments and the defence discourse move forward in Europe.

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## ANNEX 1

Content analysis of the research material.  
Appearance and frequency of codes.

Table 4 Frequency of codes in analysed material

Nr.	Material	Codes							
		Resilience		Capability / capabilities		Defence***		Industry	
		Occurrence*	Frequency*	Occurrence*	Frequency*	Occurrence*	Frequency*	Occurrence*	Frequency*
<b>Communications</b>									
1	European Council's statement calling for a stronger European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) 2013	NO	N/A	YES	16	YES	45	YES	16
2	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector 24 July 2013	YES	1	YES	44	YES	128	YES	20
3	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Launching the EDF, 6 June 2017	NO	N/A	YES	64	YES	181	YES	25
4	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF	YES	30	YES	57	YES	156	YES	5

	THE REGIONS Commission's contribution to European defence, 15 February 2022								
5	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence, 15 February 2022	YES	14	YES	13	YES	149	YES	10
6	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward, 18 May 2022	YES	4	YES	62	YES	188	YES	16
<b>Implementation plans and strategies</b>									
7	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A New Deal for European Defence 24 June 2014	NO	N/A	YES	13	YES	70	YES	19
8	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Head of the European Defence Agency: Implementation plan for defence and security, 14 November 2016	YES	15	YES	64	YES	85	YES	4

9	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS European Defence Action Plan, 30 November 2016	YES	3	YES	62	YES	219	YES	29
10	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Action Plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries, 22 February 2021	YES	8	YES	19	YES	122	YES	21
11	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A new European Defence Industrial Strategy: Achieving EU readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry, 5 March 2024	YES	21	YES	40	YES	315	YES	64
<b>Regulations</b>									
12	REGULATION (EU) 2021/697 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092	YES	3	YES	17	YES	168	YES	18
13	REGULATION (EU) 2023/1525 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE	YES	8	YES	7	YES	113	YES	27

	COUNCIL of 20 July 2023 on supporting ammunition production (ASAP)								
14	REGULATION (EU) 2023/...OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA)	YES	1	YES	13	YES	84	YES	7
<b>Addresses</b>									
15	State of the Union Address by President Juncker, 13 September 2017	NO	N/A	NO	N/A	YES	7	YES	4
16	State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary, 16 September 2020	NO	N/A	NO	N/A	NO	N/A	YES	12
17	State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen, 15 September 2021	YES	2	NO	N/A	YES	8	NO	N/A
18	State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen, 14 September 2022	NO	N/A	NO	N/A	YES	1	YES	6
19	State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen, 13 September 2023	NO	N/A	NO	N/A	YES	1	YES	15
<b>Other statements and declarations</b>									
20	JOINT DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, 8 July 2016	YES	2	YES	1	YES	6	YES	1
21	Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government Versailles Declaration, 10-11 March 2022	YES	1	YES	7	YES	18	YES	1

22	Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on strengthening European defence in a volatile geopolitical landscape, 28 February 2024	NO	N/A	YES	2	YES	24	YES	7
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\* Appears in material YES/NO

\*\*Number of time mentioned in the material

\*\*\* Frequency also includes appearance in official institutional names, such as European Defence Agency, European Defence Fund, etc.

