RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE AS A TURNING POINT: THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION INTO A SECURITY ACTOR IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER

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Abstract. The process which started with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 has caused a deep stress in the European security order. Russia has not only threatened the European security architecture, but for the first time, Russia has openly challenged it through its actions. As such, the war in Ukraine was a turning point in both international relations and European security policy. Accordingly, the European Union (EU) has altered its foreign and security policy. Until then, the EU had acted within the framework of its responsibility to protect the security of its members through a normative structure and peaceful methods, representing a multilateral world order as a peace project. However, post-February 2022, it has adopted a power-oriented policy. Increased cooperation with NATO, the will to break all kinds of existing dependencies, strict sanctions ranging from economy to energy policy, and the increase in the use of military force have been indicators that Europe has entered a transformation. After 2022, its attempt to influence international relations and the international system with more solid means has demonstrated that the EU is an actor that does not completely abandon its liberal and constructivist identity but reacts realistically. This article analyzes how Russia's attack on Ukraine entailed a change for Europe within the debate of the realism and constructivism

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frameworks. In this context, the authors attempt to reveal the transformation of the EU after 2022, which has now been accepted as a turning point, and how the process of building a common foreign and security policy has shaped the future of Europe.

Keywords: European Union, Russia, Ukraine, Security Policy, Strategic Autonomy

Introduction

The annexation of Crimea virtually marked the end of an era. Developments have revealed the fact that Vladimir Putin's Russia will tolerate the sovereignty and border integrity of its neighbors in the post-Soviet geography only as long as these countries remain within the Russian sphere of influence. Similarly, Russia has also revealed that it will recognize the freedom of these countries to choose allies and take part in any alliance only if they choose to side with Russia, as in the case of Central Asia. This situation has left not only the former Soviet republics but also Europe with a constant lack of rules and trust concerns.[1] While Russia does not recognize European values, anything against its interests has now become a motivation for Russia not to recognize the current rules. Therefore, the crisis in Ukraine in 2014 showed that the liberal order, which is represented by the European security architecture in the field of security, is no longer valid.

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 was the manifestation of Russia's aggressive and revisionist foreign policy, and also revealed the invalidity of a values-oriented foreign and security policy. This is how the idea that security and stability can only be re-established by using force against an actor using force came to the fore.[2] The EU's breaking of existing taboos and resorting to military methods as well as economic sanctions has shown that the already rising realist tendencies are accepted on both sides.[3] Russia's attack on Ukraine triggered a tectonic

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[1] Andreas Heinemann Grüder, "Gefährliche Unschärfe: Russland, die Ukraine und der Krieg im Donbass" [Dangerous Blur: Russia Ukraine and the War in Donbass], *Osteuropa* 64, no. 10 (2014): 80.

[2] Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, (London: Rovman & Littlefield, 2022): 54.

[3] Birkan Ertoy, "Uluslararası İlişkilerde Realist Geleneğin Dönüşümü ve Neoklasik Realizm" [Transformation of Realist Tradition and Neoclassical Realism in International Relations], *Anadolu Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (2019): 3.

change, and Europe moved from a solidaristic security order to a confrontational one. It has become clear that the current European security order, which means increasing insecurity, instability and growing costs, no longer suits the conditions of the day.[4] For this reason, the West had to reposition itself. Because it is now realized that the important thing is not to accept the conflict with Russia, but to have the power to shape the conflict. In this context, Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership, Germany created a special budget to adapt the federal army to current conditions, the EU shipped arms to Ukraine, and Denmark declared its will to take part in EU defense.[5] Recent developments have also shown that values related to the global security order, such as national sovereignty and respect for fundamental rights, have been changed, and in this context, the Euro-Atlantic cooperation, as well as the relationship between the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), need to be reconsidered. The EU has changed its stance, by taking clearer and more important decisions and implementing them. The EU has implemented power-based policies, especially after Russia attacked Ukraine on February 24, 2022. In other words, it has started to play the game according to the rules of the United States of America and the Russian Federation, rather than according to the identity it had been representing. Accordingly, the EU adopted a realist stance, but without completely abandoning its constructivist identity.

As a result, the EU has undergone a radical change in its principles after Russia attacked Ukraine which is a turning point in EU's security policies. So far, the EU, as a peace project in a multilateral world order, has acted within the framework of its responsibility to protect the security of its members by peaceful means. However, with the sanctions imposed after the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022, the USA, with the support of the United Kingdom, has now taken a much more determined stance. For the first time in a long time, the EU member states, which had previously been deeply divided, were able to reach an

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4   Claudia Major and Jana Puglierin, "Eine Neue Ordnung" [A New Order], *İnternationale Politik* 6 (November/December 2014): 63.
5   Claudia Major and Christian Mölling," Europas Neue (Un-)Sicherheit" [Europe's New (in)Securty], Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 72 (28): 22,

agreement and impose consecutive sanctions against Russia.[6] While Germany, which had close economic and commercial relations with Russia in the past, was the pioneer of this change, even Hungary, which had a more oppositional attitude to the EU's changing Eastern policy, supported the sanctions and had to cooperate with the EU. While the majority of EU members supported the change in foreign policy strategy, the increasing pressure on Hungary, which retained its veto on aid to Ukraine, and the suspension of €10 billion[7] in financial aid to Hungary on the grounds of violations against liberal democracies were indicators of the EU's determination and resolve.[8]

As of 2022, the EU has started to support Ukraine militarily through weapon deliveries, in addition to determined and rigid economic sanctions. In particular, the military measures taken, the military support and the arms supplies to Ukraine can constitute indicators that the EU is now in a paradigm change. This fact has forced the EU to develop a policy against Russia. Simultaneously, it has also displayed that it is ready to confront Russia, despite all the protests against the migration flow from Ukraine to the West and the potential public discontent that might occur as result of the energy bottleneck. The EU, which used to have a normative approach and intended to build European stability and peace through common values, realized that this approach was inadequate in a case such as the Ukraine attack.[9] Trade and economic relations and transformation are no longer tools that will contribute to Russia's approach to the West, moreover, it has been realized that the future of Europe cannot be built together with Russia. In addition, the quest to be more autonomous in security policy, to increase military competence

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6   Nicolai von Ondarza, "Härteprobe für die Europaische Union" [Hard Test for the European Union], *SWP* (2022), accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publicatio n/zeitenwende-fuer-die-euro-atlantische-sicherheit.

7   Euronews, "Brüssel gibt nach.Ungarn erhält eingefrorene 10 Millarden Euro" [Brussels gives in. Hungary receives a frozen 10 billion euros], https://de.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/12/13/brussel-gibt-nach-ungarn-erhalt-eingefrorene-10-milliarden-euro.

8   Ulrich Ladurner, "Mehr als nur ein Spieler" [More than Just a Player], *Die Zeit* (2023), accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2023-12/viktor-orban-ungar n-eu-ukraine-veto-finanzierung.

9   Yonca Özer, "The European Union as a Civilian Power: The Case of the EU's Trade Policy," *Marmara Journal of European Studies* 20, no. 2 (2012): 70, https://doi.org/10.29228/mjes.120.

and to seek strategic sovereignty has also come to the fore. While cooperation with NATO was supported as much as possible, efforts were made to create room for action in national budgets for the necessary military investments.

The EU has gradually begun to create a balance of power as defined by realist theory, and to act with the unity of forces developed by status quo states that protect the existing values, norms, and structures, rather than act with individual actors who cannot provide security on their own against a revisionist actor. The aim was not to return to power-centered policies, but to take a common stance and defend European values against a state that sought to change the balance of power. Europe's response to the war in Ukraine essentially revealed the emergence of a position which prioritizes the future of Europe over short-term interests. In this new period, Europe feels the need to reconstruct itself, and in this context, this study evaluates how the European security policy has transformed in the process that started with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and has extended on Ukraine in 2022. Therefore, it will examine how Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, as a turning point, brought about a transformation to the EU's security policy.

The Liberal World Order and Its Transformation

The foundations of the liberal world order were laid in the aftermath of World War II with the United Nations Charter and numerous conventions of international organizations.[10] This world order, which includes the European security order, is based on four fundamental pillars. First, the principle of equal sovereignty of states and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The second one is human rights, respect for the principles of the rule of law, and the right of nations to self-determination. The third pillar is free trade, the international movement of capital, the opportunity for direct investment, and the fourth and last pillar is the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the establishment of cooperation on

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[10]   Thomas Risse, "Zeitenwende" [Turning Point], *İnternationale Politik*, no. 3, (May 2022): 106.

human rights, climate and environmental health issues within the framework of multilateralism.[11] The European security and peace order also forms a part of this liberal world order. However, Russia's attack on Ukraine has fundamentally changed the European security architecture. Structures such as NATO, the EU and the OSCE, as well as individual states, have had to recognize this reality and build a new security order accordingly.

The common view in the post-Cold War period was that security could only be built with Russia. However, this view has been replaced by the understanding of "providing security against and despite Russia, not with Russia."[12] However, after 1991, the European security order was based on the principles of inviolability of borders, avoiding the use of violence, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and recognition of the sovereignty of national states, and attempts were made to integrate Russia into the European order as much as possible.

Realism essentially argues that anarchy and the relative distribution of power are the most important elements in the functioning of world politics.[13] Constructivists argue that whether a system is peaceful or conflictual is not a function of anarchy and power, but it is based on the common culture formed as a result of social practices. Anarchy has no defining condition; it is just a result of different cultural environments, because each actor's perception of his own identity and interests is affected by the behavior of others. If the parties display new behaviors, for example, an understanding in which others are more respected and operate peacefully, the structure or system can be reshaped.[14] An example of this is Europe's expectation that Rusia will undergo democratization, and that it will gradually transform into a democratic actor by adopting Western values through economic and commercial relations. According to constructivists, by acting together, states can change this intersubjective

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[11]   Ibid., 107.

[12]   Franziska Davies, "Ende der Ostpolitik. Zur Historischen Dimension der Zeitenwende" [The End of the East Policy. A Historical Dimension of the Turning Point], *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 23, (2023): 29.

[13]   Faruk Sönmezoğlu, Hakan Güneş and Erhan Keleşoğlu, *Uluslararası İlişkiler* [International Relations] (Istanbul: DER Press, 2022), 46-47.

[14]   Alexander Wend, *Social Theory of International Politics*, trans. Helin Sarı Ertem & Suna Gülfer Ihlamur Öner (Istanbul: Küre Press, 2012), 310.

system and, over time, make a non-selfish understanding dominant in interstate relations and ensure the formation of a peaceful system in the long term. In other words, anarchy exists because states want the system to be anarchic, and if they want otherwise, a more peaceful order can be established.[15] Europe's efforts over many years not to see Russia as a threat and to include it within Europe, and the understanding of building European security with Russia rather than despite Russia, have also served this idea. The foundations of this rule-based, normative order accepted by all parties are based on the 1990 CSCE Final Document, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, as well as the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Document.[16]

The EU has pursued a foreign policy based on universal values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. As constructivists point out, the identity of the EU is built with these values. Moreover, this identity has become a requirement for expansion and for neighborhood policy as well as for the members. Economic reforms, democratization processes, and the expansion of human rights have been the foundations of the EU's influence and identity-building. By developing cooperation with other countries, the EU has carried its norms and values to a wider level, thus trying to build an identity at the international level. However, by 2014, this order was gradually weakened and has become irrelevant today.[17] Afterwards, Russia, an uncertain actor, has gradually implemented its intentions contradicting the European order. According to realism, one of the fundamental variables of international relations is the uncertainty in the current and, above all, future attitudes of others. It is difficult for a state to foresee this risk, since other states cannot be sure of its aims. In other words, there is no guarantee that a state which currently appears moderate will not become aggressive as its power increases.[18] Realism sees this natural uncertainty in interstate relations as the root of anarchy and argues that the structure will remain anarchic as long as this is not eliminated.

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[15] Ibid., 311.

[16] Claudia Major and Christian Mölling," Europas Neue (Un-)Sicherheit" [Europe's New (in)Securty], Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 72 (28): 24.

[17] Major and Puglierin, "Eine Neue," 62.

[18] Jack Donnely, "Realizm," in *International Relations Theories*, eds. Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, trans. Muhammed Ağcan and Ali Aslan, (İstanbul: Küre Press, 2014): 53.

Putin's attack on Ukraine in 2022 has therefore become a turning point for the liberal world order, and it has intensified debates about the need to change this order and its constituent parts, which have been damaged once again. At the same time, it has also revealed the fact that Russia is not a part of this system as long as *Putin's Russia* or Putin himself exist. Russia shook its international image with the Ukraine attack and confirmed that it had turned into a rogue state by not recognizing this order.[19] This development has confronted the other actors with the fact that there is no longer a place for Putin's Russia in this framework, and that it must be pushed out of the system. In this way, constructivist hopes that states could act together to create a peaceful system in the long term have disappeared. The dominant view is that a "cooperative" alternative security approach can be created, in which states can increase their security without negatively affecting the security of others, or a "collective" alternative security approach, in which states define the security of other states as valuable to themselves.[20] With this in mind, the EU has sought dialogue with Russia. However, Russia's aggressive stance has undermined this understanding. Ultimately, anti-Russian sentiment grew among all member states except Belarus, Syria, North Korea and Eritrea, which led to the forming of an anti-Russian bloc in the UN General Assembly, to the marginalization of the Russian Federation from international trade, financial markets and investments, and to its exclusion from the liberal economic system.[21]

Approaches that explain Russian foreign policy from a realist perspective argue that the policies followed by the West in the past have shaped Putin's perceptions and led Russia to adopt an aggressive attitude.[22] However, the developments have also triggered Putin's aggressive stance

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[19] Risse, "Zeitenwende," 107.

[20] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 391.

[21] Julia Grauvogel and Christian von Soest, "Erfolg und Grenzen der Sanktionspolitik gegen Russland" [Success and Limits of Sanctions Policy Against Russia] *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 73, (2023): 34.

[22] Tatiana A. Romanova, "Neoclassical Realism and Today's Russia, Russia in Global Affairs," *Russia in Global Affairs* 10, no. 3 (July/September 2012), accessed January 12, 2023, https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/neoclassical-realism-and-todays-russia/.

today, which will shape his perception of the EU and, unlike in the past, follow a military and political power-centered attitude. The state's concentration of power has finally become legitimate to protect national interests. Nevertheless, it is difficult to explain the content and morality of these national interests, and which one to follow when it is necessary to choose between interests and political morality.[23] This situation is reminiscent of constructivism, which argues that national interests are also constructible, and ensuring the morality of national interests helps to eliminate the hesitation experienced by realism. Therefore, is the Ukrainian war essentially a return of the EU to realist policies and methods, a return to realism by developing realist reflexes that can be called a renaissance of realism? The question has been raised whether this is a complete break with constructivism.

The EU's more effective approach, *i.e.*, the development of a membership perspective for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the increased use of military methods, the radical change in energy policy, are originating in the determination to distance autocratic regimes and to protect democracy. It has turned into a common struggle of the EU, which defines itself as a liberal democratic actor, against external forces that periodically contain this ideal. Although the attack on Ukraine seems to have created a sphere of influence in its immediate surroundings, Putin has declared war on Western democracy, which he sees as a threat. His perception of human rights and democracy as the biggest threat to the "Putinist System" justified the main reason behind the attack on Ukraine, which was not to defend security interests.[24]

The EU was late in realizing this fact and thought that since the end of the East-West conflict, maintaining the liberal security order would serve world peace. Thus, even after Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, which was aggressive against the West and the Western security system, the EU remained silent, and even insisted on continuing the partnership with Russia.[25] Consequently, it could not

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[23] Samuel J. Barkin, *Realist Constructivism. Rethinking International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 217.

[24] Risse, "Zeitenwende," 109.

[25] Leo Ensel, "Die zweite rede des Wladimir Putin's" [The second speech from Vladimir Putin], *Osteuropa* (2022), accessed December 12, 2023, https://ostexperte.de/die-zweite-rede-des-wladim

be effective. Former German President Joachim Gauck drew attention to this issue at the 2014 Munich Security Conference when he stated that, "Germany and Europe must now take responsibility in world politics," and pointed out that both individual member countries and the EU as a collective body should assume an active role.[26] Thus, in addition to the notion that identity, norms and beliefs play a role in international relations, together with power and structural factors, and the power struggle in inter-state relations, the states' identities and these identities' power to shape international relations had been taken into account, giving a realist constructivist reaction. The speech made by the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Bundestag on February 27, 2022, and the new national security strategy that laid the groundwork for it, have also been an indication that this idea is now put into action. What is meant by an active role is not only to establish a military presence, but also not to remain a spectator to the developments taking place all over the world.[27] Consequently, the developments in Ukraine in 2022 became a turning point and, for the first time, served to eliminate the illusion that world peace could be maintained with the existing liberal order, and determined Europe to take responsibility again. At the same time, it allowed EU members such as Germany and France, which played a leading role in the reconstruction of European security policy, to strengthen their positions in European politics.[28]

The Crimean Crisis and the EU's Stance

During this period, Russia displayed a semi-official and covert military presence in Ukraine through the "little green men," by providing personnel

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ir-putin/; Matthias Platzeck, *Wir Brauchen eine Neue Ostpolitik. Russland als Partner* [We Need a New East Policy: Russia as Partner] (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 2020): 96.

[26] Marcus Kaim, "Wie weit reicht deutsche verantwortung" [How Far Does Germany's Responsibility Extend] August 14, 2014, *Tagesspiegel* (online), accessed December 12, 2023, https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/wie-weit-reicht-deutsche-verantwortung-3579877.html.

[27] Risse, "Zeitenwende," 108.

[28] Susan Stewart, "Die Deutsche Russlandpolitik starken" [Strengthening the German Russia Policy], *SWP-Aktuell*, no. 34, (2023), 6.

and material support to the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, unlike the developments in Georgia in 2008.[29] Conventional forces were also included in this process, and the 40,000 Russian soldiers deployed on the Ukrainian border acted as an intimidating factor and shield, and undertook the task of reinforcing the unconventional forces fighting in Ukraine.[30]

In this way, Putin has pursued a power and interest-oriented policy through the strategy he followed in the annexation of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 and has made it clear that he will resort to the use of all kinds of force, including military methods, and that he will defend Russian interests in this way. Moreover, this is not a result of the impasse of diplomacy and peaceful methods; it was the method used from the very beginning, albeit implicitly. However, the West ignored this or did not take it seriously enough. Ultimately, by 2022, Putin removed this cloak or camouflage of military power and launched a direct attack. It is important to note, however, that this attitude put forward by Putin also forms the basis for the transformation of the EU. As Russia increasingly emphasizes the use of military force and methods, this would cause the EU to negotiate more effectively on the issues of armament, military methods and interventions, and a transformation in this direction would eventually lead to a discussion about transforming its current identity. While very few EU member states demonstrated a will in this direction in 2014, an agreement within the EU could have been reached as late as 2022. Subsequently, the EU members accepted with a realistic perspective that they could rely only on themselves for security.

However, Western countries could not give a common reaction to the developments that occurred in 2014 leading to the annexation of Crimea (the first Ukrainian crisis), due to the impact of economic and energy dependencies. Consequently, they did not resort to military methods at all. The existing dependencies have been the EU's weakness, and have caused a lack of consensus on economic sanctions, which are its most effective and dominant tool. Consequently, the biggest problem

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[29] Brink Nana, "Schattenarmeen auf dem Vormarsch" [Shadow Armies on the Rise], *İnternationale Politik* (Januar/ Februar 2022): 87.

[30] Major and Puglierin, "Eine Neue," 63.

of the EU in 2014 was the reluctance of its members to act together. When the third round of economic sanctions was put on the agenda in September 2014, very few EU members supported them. While France canceled the delivery of the modern-technology Mistral Class Helicopter to Russia only as a result of the pressure of many members, and before the NATO Summit,[31] some EU member states, especially Slovakia and Hungary, have taken an exaggerated position toward Putin. They created a different front within the EU. Hungary stopped shipping natural gas from Ukraine at the end of September 2014, and the economic crisis and economic concerns for many southern EU member countries overcame concerns in Ukraine. In the face of these developments, Poland, which felt the Russian threat within the EU to the biggest extent, insisted that military methods should be used within the EU, and it was virtually abandoned with its concerns during this period. Even in Western public opinion, suspicion and criticism of Russia had almost been replaced by understanding and empathy in some circles. During this period, the Front National in France, Jobbik in Hungary, and Die Linke in Germany did not see Putin as an aggressor, but as a leader who was being cornered by the West and provoked by NATO and the EU.[32] This fact demonstrates that regarding the 2014 Ukraine crisis, not only the official circles and EU member states in Europe, but also the Western public opinion did not have a common attitude towards Russia. When it comes to Russia and the reaction against Russia, Europe could not reach an agreement in 2014, as if two different fronts were formed regarding Russia. Moreover, the USA saw what happened in Ukraine in 2014 as a purely European issue.[33]

One of the obstacles to the EU's joint action at that time was the rising "renationalization" within the EU. The actors of the negotiations were not the EU, OSCE, or NATO, but individual national states.[34] In this

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[31]   Kai Olaf Lang, "Auf dem Weg zu Mehr Resilienz" [On the Way to More Resilience], *SWP-Studie* 3 (2020): 40 https://doi.org/10.18449/2020S03.

[32]   Major and Puglierin, "Eine Neue," 66.

[33]   Max Bergmann, "Europa allein zu Haus" [Europe Alone at Home], *İnternationale Politik-İPG* 22, no. 1, (2022): 4.

[34]   Wolfgang Richter, "Die Ukraine Krise. Die Dimension der Paneuropäischen Sicherheitkooperation" [The Ukraine Crisis. The Dimension of Pan-European Security Cooperation], *SWP Aktuell*, no. 23 (2014): 4.

context, while Germany, France and Poland came to the fore, it was not the EU itself that guided Yanukovych's resignation process in February 2014, but these EU member countries and their Ministers of Foreign Affairs.[35] While Angela Merkel has had numerous meetings with Putin on this issue, the EU and its leadership have played only ineffective roles, and consensus has been achieved only on economic sanctions.[36] However, the tendency towards re-nationalization is not meaningful and developments have shown that neither the European states nor the USA can stand alone against Russia. Events have revealed the fact that nation states alone cannot play an effective role in economic and military terms. Therefore, increasing security concerns have brought NATO to the forefront and, at the same time, demonstrated the need to improve intra-EU co-operation. The Northern and Northeastern wings of NATO, especially Poland and the Baltic countries, have frequently brought up to the agenda the classical collective defense approach, especially the use of Article 5, drawing attention to the security concerns in the region and trying to implement their security policies against Russia under the umbrella of NATO.[37]

The 2014 Ukraine crisis revealed the weaknesses of European security and confirmed the bankruptcy of Russia's policy, which was built based on common rules, cooperation and integration.[38] While Russia is no longer a stabilizing partner in the European neighborhood policy, Europe has been dragged into an environment of increasing insecurity, and the security order has become increasingly unstable, conflictual and unpredictable.

A Turning Point in the European Security System

Until 2022, the common belief was that the Kremlin's single target was Crimea, that it would be content with just that and would not intervene in other territories of Ukraine. There was no intervention in the conflicts between pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian army in eastern

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[35] Major and Puglierin, "Eine Neue," 67.

[36] Ibid., 69.

[37] Major and Puglierin, "Eine Neue," 68.

[38] Claudia Crawford, "Ein jahr nach der Krim Annexion-Russlands Kampfjets kommen näher" [One Year After the Annexation of Crimea by Russia], *KAS-Auslands İnformationen*, no. 6, (2015): 12.

Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk. This is because the current situation was not seen as an open war, but as a conflict on a gray area that makes the EU's intervention difficult.[39] The EU failed to realize that Putin, who dreams of reviving Tsarist Russia, sees himself as the new czar of Russia.

Only with the 2022 attack has it been accepted that the current security order has no future. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's speech titled "Turning Point" was the beginning of a new era; increasing the private assets of the Federal Army was considered to be a necessity.[40] Thus, Europe began to reveal realist reflexes in the anarchic environment caused by an uncertain actor engaged in a power struggle. Similarly, while NATO was strengthening its military presence in the east of Europe, the will of Sweden and Finland, which had been neutral until then, to join NATO, and the support given by others in this direction indicates that the identity that Europe had represented until then was transforming. The EU, which has kept its distance from military support and methods, militarily supported Ukraine with the European Peacebuilding fund after the 2022 attack. The oppositional stance regarding Ukraine's membership in the EU has been abandoned, and doors have been opened in this direction. The EU and its member countries have begun to use force to defend democracy and its normative structure. In other words, they started to impose the existing identity, norms and beliefs by using force. Moreover, they exposed this determined attitude not only against Russia but also against Hungary, which jeopardized the strategy and cooperation they had built.

Viktor Orban, the Hungarian Prime Minister who had opposed for a long time the planned €50 billion support for Ukraine, lifted his veto and an agreement was reached to provide this support to Ukraine until 2027.[41]

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[39] Claudia Major and Christian Mölling, "Zusammen mit Russland, das geht nicht mehr" [Together with Russia, That's no Longer Possible] March 24, 2023, *Die Zeit* (Online), accessed December 22, 2023, https://www.zeit.de/zustimmung?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zeit.de%2Fpolitik%2Fausland%2F2022-03%2Frussland-kooperative-sicherheitsordnung-krieg-ukraine-deutschland.

[40] Risse, "Zeitenwende," 110.

[41] Albrecht Meier, "Orban gibt Blockade auf" [Orban Gives Up the Blockade], *Tagesspiegel* (online), February 1, 2024, accessed March 12, 2024, https://www.tagesspiegel.de/orban-gibt-blockade-auf-eu-beschliesst-neue-ukraine-hilfen-uber-50-milliarden-euro-11144245.html.

With this support, it is planned to maintain the restructuring of Ukraine, and to pay the salaries of employees and retirees. In this way, the EU not only supported Ukraine's democratic transformation and reconstruction, but also helped to increase the Ukrainian people's trust in Europe and to increase their pro-Europeanism. While the pro-European view has strengthened its appeal, steps have been taken for the European identity and the values it represents to reach and be adopted by wider segments, and the EU has increased its power of influence. However, the EU has also demonstrated that it would not allow its strict and uncompromising attitude towards Hungary to hinder cooperation within the EU. Hungary through Viktor Orban, known for the closeness to Putin, although tried not to act by the values represented by the EU, especially the rule of law, has been forced to act by this identity. In case the veto continues, sanctions such as cutting off all payments to Hungary, and excluding Hungary from the EU decision-making process are indicators of the EU's uncompromising attitude. In this way, an incorrigible EU member was left to fulfill the requirements of the identity of which it is a part, with a strict and determined attitude. The EU had to adopt a power-oriented attitude to defend its interests, democracy and identity. The EU showed a realistic reflex here due to balance of power, interests and security concerns. In this way, the EU acted for the security and stability of both Ukraine, a strategic partner, and its own. At the same time, it has taken a step forward in this direction by ensuring that a member country that is close to Russia and thus casts a shadow on intra-EU cooperation acts in line with the EU's interests.

The EU, in its attitude towards Hungary, has acted within the framework of the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and it has shown in the Ukraine crisis that it would act with the motivation of protecting these norms and values, and that it would impose sanctions on a member acting contrary to these values. Hungary's opposition to the EU's Ukraine policy (which gives Ukraine both financial support and the prospect of membership) contradicts the identity shaped by the values defended by the EU. At the same time, it hinders the spread of this identity and the process of social construction, as well as intra-EU and regional solidarity. For this reason, the constructivist images behind the determined attitude of the EU towards Hungary cannot be ignored.

The good intention that the rapprochement policy of trade and economic relations would serve the democratic transformation of Russia has now been abandoned, and the EU's granting of candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova is a sign of this transformation.[42] This development was followed by the initiation of accession negotiations with the two countries. The expansionist policy aims to restrict Russia's mobility in the region as much as possible, and an attempt is made to counter a realistic threat through liberal norms and values. Samuel J. Barkin argues that policy can be directed by a liberal or self-interested logic and that this movement explains the changes in policy and identity.[43] It should be expected that the expansionist policy will soon include the Western Balkans.[44] German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's suggestion that the membership of the candidate countries should be decided by majority and not by unanimous vote, is a sign that the path to membership may be opened for the Western Balkan countries of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Albania, which have been kept waiting for a long time. Approaching with a membership perspective the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, and Moldova, whose reform demands on Germany have long been kept on hold by the opposition of France, is an effort to break Russia's influence in the region. In this way, the EU has further demonstrated its influence as a geopolitical actor. For Germany, this was a necessity to defend the principle of reaching decisions by majority vote, especially on foreign policy, budgetary and financial issues.

The effort to build influence and identity through EU candidacy/ membership, which requires democratization processes in the region,

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[42] Hans Dieter Heumann, "Der schlüssel liegt nicht mehr in Moskau" [The Key Is No Longer in Moscow], May 31, 2022, *Die Zeit* (online), accessed December 12, 2023, https://www.zeit.de/zustimmung?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zeit.de%2Fpolitik%2F ausland%2F2022-05%2Fsicherheitspolitik-europa-russland-ukraine-krieg-wladimir-p utin-diplomatie; Alexandra Brzozowski, "Wie der Ukraine Krieg die insitutionelle Balance der EU verändert" [How the Ukraine War is Changing the EU's Institutional Balance], *Euroactiv.com* (online), February 27, 2023, accessed December 12, 2023, https://www.euractiv.de/section/europa-kompakt/news/wie-der-ukraine-krieg-die-in stitutionelle-balance-der-eu-veraendert/.

[43] Barkin, *Realist Constructivism*, 138.

[44] Brzozowski, "Wie die Ukraine."

raising human rights standards, and economic reforms, thus continues. The balance of power in the region began to be established with this type of identity construction, with Putin now aware of this fact. That Sweden and Finland have displayed a cautious attitude during the NATO membership process is an indication that they are now aware of the changing discourse and attitude of the West.[45]

NATO-EU cooperation has also come to the fore in this way: strengthening NATO's Northern and Northeastern wings has been accepted as a factor that will increase the EU's bargaining power against Russia. The prominent characteristic of the Eastern Policy, which was agreed upon after the attack on Ukraine and is now being reshaped, is that it is more inclusive than exclusive. Poland, which felt left out of the Normandy Format, is being given greater consideration, and the expectations of the Baltic countries, traditionally threatened by Russia, are being met. By acting together, as the constructivists advocated, a peaceful system was built in the long term with a non-selfish understanding in interstate relations.[46] Germany's support for the idea of strengthening NATO's eastern and northeastern wings and its recent military cooperation with Lithuania, which has developed into a kind of security partnership, confirm this.[47] Germany has now redefined its national interests and demonstrated that it would not allow economic interests to turn into dependency.[48] In this way, an effort was made to establish a balance of power with a realistic perspective. At the same time, constructivist reflexes were maintained, arguing that national interests are also constructible.

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[45] Heumann, "Der schlüssel liegt."

[46] Christian Reus Smit, "Konstruktivizm," in *International Relations Theories*, ed. Scott Burchil and Andrew Linklater, trans. Muhammed Ağcan and Ali Aslan, (Istanbul: Küre Press, 2014), 305.

[47] Kail Olaf Lang, "Deutschland und Litauen: Von der Verteidigungskooperation zur Sicherheitspartnerschaft" [Germany and Lithuania: From Defense Cooperation to Security Partnership] *SWP-Aktuell* 39, (2023): 3.

[48] Stewart, "Die Deutsche," 4-5.

An Effective Defense Policy and Strategic Sovereignty

The process that started with the conflicts in Georgia, continued with the annexation of Crimea, and Russia's stance in Syria has shown that the security policy of "building a permanent and equitable peace order extending from Vancouver to Vladivostok" has now degenerated.[49] In this new period, the OSCE and the Council of Europe have lost their meaning, and the NATO Russia Basic Charter and the NATO Russia Council have completely lost their influence.[50] On the other hand, the EU and NATO had to redesign their expansion processes and perspectives within the framework of the conditions required by a competitive security order. The new constellation that emerged has had an impact on the shaping of the idea of European strategic sovereignty, and this discussion covered a wide range from defense policy to economy, technology, energy policy and institutional structure.[51] Those who argue that Europe should be strategically dominant share the view that, in the context of security policy, US dependency should be minimized, and its interests and priorities should be determined autonomously from third parties.[52] While France was the pioneer of this view, Central and Eastern European members, especially Poland, who saw the US as a security guarantor, opposed this view. For this reason, this issue has brought the future of the Europe-NATO relationship and the position of the US into discussion.

Although strategic sovereignty highlights defense-oriented topics such as improving military capability, coordinating increased defense expenditures, maintaining nuclear deterrence and continuing the alliance with the USA, it covers all policy areas that will increase the security and competitiveness of the EU and its member states.[53] For this reason, after Russia attacked Ukraine, three topics outside the military field have gained meaning in terms of the EU's strategic sovereignty. The first of

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[49] Nicolai von Ondarza and Marco Overhaus, "Strategische Souverinität neu denken" [Rethinking Strategic Sovereignty] *SWP Aktuell* 29, (2022): 2, doi:10.18449/2022A29.

[50] Ondarza and Overhaus, "Strategische Souverinität," 3.

[51] Ibid., 4.

[52] Barbara Lippert, Nicolai von Ondarza and Volker Perthes, "Strategische Autonomie Europas" [Strategic Autonomy of Europe], *SWP Studie* 2, (2019): 30, doi: 10.18449/2019S02.

[53] Ondarza and Overhaus, "Strategische Souverinität," 5.

these is an autonomous trade policy, breaking economic dependence on Russia by developing commercial relations with third parties, apart from economic sanctions. The second topic is the international role of the Euro and thus the expansion of sovereignty in financial policy. The third topic is breaking Europe's dependence on energy imports and other strategic resources. The past years have shown how weak Europe is when it comes to competing for energy resources with the power politics of actors such as the US and China, or when it is dependent on a single state when establishing the supply chain.[54] In addition to these topics, technological and digital autonomy is also an important dimension of strategic sovereignty, the aim being to break all kinds of unilateral dependence of Europe, not only to Russia, but also to China and to other authoritarian regimes that contradict European values.[55] But Europe's strategic sovereignty also depends on the institutional framework for action and institutional bargaining power. Complex institutional structures often create problems in European transatlantic security, at the same time leading to the deepening of gaps within the EU, and the formation of minilateral[56] or ad hoc coalitions (namely, small groups of states collaborating due to shared interests, and not because of shared values). In this context, it is aimed to ensure democratic legitimacy and to be able to make comprehensive decisions and implement sanctions and policies by improving the institutional structure.[57]

Although Europe's quest for strategic sovereignty in the field of defense is aimed at increasing its defense capacity and strengthening its strategic independence, the war in Ukraine has deepened EU and NATO cooperation. Thus, the inclusion of non-EU states in the European internal market and European programs and their rapprochement with

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[54] Ibid., 6.

[55] Hans Jürgen Wittmann, "EU will Sanktionsumgehung unter strafe stellen" [EU Wants to Make Sanctions Evasion a Criminal Offence], Germany Trade & Invest, March 24, 2023, accessed December 12, 2023, https://www.gtai.de/de/trade/russland/wirtschaftsumfeld/eu-will-sanktionsumgehung-unter-strafe-stellen-982348.

[56] Kai Olaf Lang and Nicolai von Ondarza," Minilateralismen in der EU" [Minilateralism in the EU], SWP-Aktuell, (2018/A 07): 8. Nickolay Mladenov, "Minilateralism A Concept that Changing the Word Order", accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/minilateralism-concept-changing-world-order,

[57] Ondarza and Overhaus, "Strategische Souverinität," 5.

Europe are supported. In this context, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and the countries of the Western Balkans were allowed to integrate into Europe, and a security guarantee was offered to them against third parties with a new dimension being added to the EU and NATO expansion policy. Russia's attack on Ukraine and the extension of conflict and security concerns to the EU borders have revealed that Europe's Achilles heel is the common security and defense policy. In this context, the EU and NATO member countries have relatively increased their individual and collective defense capacities. Germany's decision to increase its defense expenditure to €100 billion both strengthened Germany's EU leadership position and it constituted a sign of Europe's new strategy that emphasizes military methods.

The support given by NATO to the idea of strengthening the Northern and Northeastern wings, and the cooperation developed by Poland and the Baltic countries shows that Germany and the EU are in a paradigm shift.[58] Similarly, Germany's first liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal, which was completed in a record time of ten months (194 days) and put into operation in December 2022, in order to break energy dependence, is another initiative in this direction. Germany initiated the construction of two LNG Terminals in February 2022, and it is planned to import thirty billion cubic meters of gas annually. A private tanker docked at the LNG terminal that started operating in Wilhelmshaven can meet the gas needs of fifty thousand households per year. After Wilhelmshaven, Germany will supply Russia's gas by building other terminals on the North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts, especially in Lubmin and Brunsbüttel. In this way, the EU has shown that it will not allow Russia to use natural gas as a means of pressure and bargaining and it has shown its determination to break its unilateral energy dependence. However, efforts to break existing dependency relationships can pave the way for new dependency relationships. According to US geo-strategist Georg Friedmann, alienating Russia from Europe will allow the US to increase its influence in Europe. For this reason, the idea of creating a new *cordon sanitaire* that would extend from Saint Petersburg to Rostow and separate Russia from Europe, together with a buffer zone

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[58]   Lang, "Deutschland und Litauen," 7.

(Ukraine) in the region served this purpose. In this unknown game, a special geostrategic meaning was given to Germany. One of the most important concerns of the US in the past was the combination of German technology and capital and Russian raw materials and manpower. For this reason, just as an iron curtain stretching from the Baltics to the Black Sea would be in the interest of the US to cut Russia off from the region, a neutral Ukraine was also seen as parallel to the interests of the USA.[59] With the pacification of Nord Stream II and the war in Ukraine, the US concerns in this regard have in a sense been eliminated, and Europe has become increasingly dependent on the US. At the same time, Europe is somewhat restrained by a strong and autonomous Germany.

However, the US and NATO are still indispensable for European security.[60] This understanding, which can be summarized as "Together we are strong, and we can increase our bargaining power together," has forced the EU and its leaders to make more definitive decisions. Another point to be noted is that Germany should take a more active role in this process. France was the spokesperson for the idea of strategic sovereignty, and Germany remained in the background. However, as the EU's largest economic power, Germany is in a special position. The biggest criticism against Germany was that it turned a blind eye to Russia's aggressive foreign policy for a long time for the sake of its economic interests and encouraged Putin. Therefore, the view that Germany should take a more active role in the field of defense policy has found support.[61] In this context, Germany's supply of military equipment and weapons, and its increasing military presence in the region after 2022 are a necessity of its efforts to rebuild its own European identity within the framework of these concerns. The European Sky Shield initiative, which was implemented

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[59] Ulrike Guérot and Hauke Ritz, *Endspiel Europa. Warum das Politische Projekt Gescheitert ist und Wie Wir Wieder Davon Träumen Können* [European Final. Why the Political Project Failed and How We Can Dream About It Again] 3rd ed. (Frankfurt/Main: Westend Verlag, 2022), 125-28.

[60] Ondarza and Overhaus, "Strategische Souverinität," 8.

[61] Anna Lena Trümmpelmann, "Die EU als sichherheitpolitischer Aktuere und die NATO wiedererlebt" [The EU as a Security Policy Actor and NATO Revived], Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, accessed March 24, 2022, https://www.freiheit.org/de/deutschland/die-eu-als-sicherheitspolitischer-akteur-und-die-nato-wiederbelebt.

under the leadership of Germany and supported by fifteen countries, is a prominent example of EU-NATO cooperation in this context.[62] Germany's shipment of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine (anti-aircraft systems IRIS-T, armed tanks Howitzer 2000, and Patriot air defense systems) is not only a broken taboo in defense policy, but also the outcome of Europe's efforts to protect the balance of power and strategic interests.

The aim is not only to have more power or to act as a decisive actor in the international system, but also to enforce the identity that Europe ascribes to itself. The desire for strategic sovereignty is essentially the will of Europe to determine its own priorities and to take independent steps on its own path. That Germany increased its military presence by breaking some taboos, disabled Nord Stream II and turned to alternative energy supplies, developed cooperation with the countries of the region, and attempted to establish a balance between France-Germany-Poland due to the revival of the Weimar Triangle are also indicators of this shift. In this manner, Europe has opened up the initiative of building its foreign policy more independently for discussion. The attempt to revive the idea of establishing a European Political Community in 2022, which was brought to the agenda by the French President Emmanuel Macron, is another indicator of Europe's desire to reconstruct itself. Although it remains to be seen whether the European political community will be able to take concrete decisions in the future, it is useful to read the attempt to create such a broad platform and to put forward a common political will as an effort to rebuild the European identity with realistic tools.

Strategic Compass

Another variant of the effort to transform the European Defense Policy is the new Strategic Compass adopted by the EU in March 2022. This fifty-page document, aimed at accelerating European defense policy and

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[62] Amina Vieth, "European Sky Shield-die İniaative im Überblick" [European Sky Shield – The Initiative at a Glance], Bundegsministerium der Verteidigung, accessed July 12, 2023, https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/european-sky-shield-die-iniative-im-ueberblick-5511066.

increasing Europe's bargaining power in this field, essentially pointed out the construction of a new understanding of security.

In response to changing geopolitics and increasing security concerns in its immediate surroundings, the EU sought to implement an action plan that will strengthen its security and defense policy until 2030. The Solana Doctrine (2003), the Global Strategy (2016), and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (2017) have been steps in this direction, as have been also the Final Declarations of the Cologne (1999) and Lisbon (2009) Summits.[63] However, while the war has returned to Europe with Russia's attack on Ukraine, this development enabled European nations to act jointly on security and defense with the construction of a common strategic culture. The aim of the Strategic Compass is to develop an initiative in which the EU can best realize its interests on land, at sea, in the air and in the cyberspace, and to protect the security of EU citizens by increasing its bargaining power to intervene in times of crisis. In this sense, despite the existing doubts, the Strategic Compass is different from previous initiatives and is a step forward in a common security and defense policy. In the Solana Doctrine, EU member states first had to come to a consensus on what they were aiming for individually, and then on how to achieve this goal. In other words, they sought answers to a series of ontological questions to clarify their goals of creating a common EU Defense Policy. However, similar efforts to date and the fact that the goal has not yet been achieved have shown that they are struggling to find answers to some basic questions, and the EU has not been able to offer any complete answers to these questions to date.[64] This has shown that the EU did not know what kind of identity and role it appropriated for itself in the international arena for a long time. Each time Europe despaired and did not know what to do, it developed several new strategies.

In the first phase, the Compass outlines the threats that Europe faces. In this context, the following measures have been developed in order to increase the EU's bargaining power and realize its security

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[63] Federico Santopinto, "Strategischer Kompass Das EU Sicherheitspapier weckt Erwartungen die es nicht erfüllen kann" [Strategic Compass. The EU Security Paper Raises Expectations that It Cannot Fulfill], *İnternationale Politik-IPG*, no. 1/3, (2022): 14.

[64] Santopinto, "Strategischer Kompass," 16.

interests: (1) creating a rapid response unit of five thousand people that are capable to respond to all kinds of threats by 2025, and (2) by mobilizing two hundred fully equipped experts in civilian Joint Security and Defense missions within thirty days at the latest, including in turbulent regions; (3) organizing regular LIVEX exercises on land and at sea, while increasing military mobility. They are complemented by the goal of strengthening civilian and military Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) missions and operations by encouraging a fast and flexible decision-making process and providing greater commitment and financial support. Subsequently, targets have been set to increase the European Peace Fund in order to support partners and equip them militarily.[65]

In its strategic compass, the EU also aims to develop an effective partnership policy to counter common threats and overcome common challenges. To this end it supports: (1) the strengthening of cooperation with strategic partners, in particular NATO and the UN, the OSCE and ASEAN; (2) the development of bilateral relations and partnerships with like-minded countries such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Norway and Japan; (3) the improvement of relations and cooperation with the Western Balkans, the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbors, Latin America, Africa and Asia through enhancing their capacity and participation in ESDP missions and operations.

Increasing the EU's leadership and control capacity is also among the goals set in the Compass. It was also aimed to establish trans-EU cooperation on intelligence, on internet-related topics, on space technology, on the fight against disinformation and hybrid threats. The fourth headline aims to realize joint investments in the field of military capacity. The increasing and targeted use of resources in the field of defense and the military planning of EU member states at the EU level are also noteworthy. The last title of the Strategic Compass focuses on the necessity of developing the EU's strategic cooperation with international organizations, especially the UN and NATO. This title once again confirms the importance of EU-NATO

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[65] Ministere de L'Europe Et des Affaires Etrangeres, "Handelspolitik und Strategische autonomie der EU" [Trade Policy and Strategic Autonomy of the EU], accessed May 27, 2023, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/de/aussenpolitik-frankreichs/frankreic h-und-europa/franzosische-prasidentschaft-im-rat-der-europaischen-union/article/ha ndelspolitik-und-strategische-autonomie-der-eu.

cooperation, which came to the fore after the war in Ukraine. With the Strategic Compass, the EU has given the message that it has adapted its security and defense policies to eliminate crises.[66] These goals can be read as an attempt to increase the effectiveness of the EU in its desire to become a security actor. However, the EU has also been the target of some criticism due to the battle groups it created in 2007, but never used. Although many threats are listed in the document, a reform package was not created to eliminate them, and there were no regulations regarding urgent defense expenditures. Instead, the common security and defense policy mainly included armament projects that had not made any progress for years.[67] According to those who are skeptical about the developments, the EU aims to increase its mobility and defense capabilities within the framework of a defense alliance, but the Strategic Compass is far from making a concrete contribution in this direction.[68] The main weakness of the Strategic Compass is placing the effort to adapt the strategy to meet the set goals on the member countries. Therefore, the success of the Compass depends on the EU member states. The member states must decide concretely what they want and whether they want to strip defense policy of its autonomous structure and shape it on a common platform. Otherwise, the Strategic Compass will not mean anything for the future of Europe.

The Strategic Compass is broad enough to include the view that Russia is trying to destabilize European Neighborhood Policy, as well as the view that the public is facing an increasing security threat through cyber-attacks, and technological or economic overlords. The EU has prioritized the fight against hybrid threats, and for all its shortcomings, it has responded to Russia as a strategic compass. Re-establishing the supply structures of fossil fuel and energy resources, increasing cyber security measures, combating disinformation and propaganda, six-sanction packages against Russia, and broadcast bans on Russian media channels Sputnik and Russia Today at the EU level are indicators that

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Annegret Bendieck and Raphael Bossong, "Hybride Bedrohungen: Vom Strategischen Kompass zur Nationalen Sicherheitsstrategie" [Hybrid Threats: From Strategic Compass to National Security Strategy], *SWP-Aktuell* 40, (2022): 3.

[68] Santopino, "Strategischer Kompass," 17.

the Strategic Compass is being implemented.[69] The Strategic Compass, which aims to intervene in crises and conflicts faster, stronger and more flexibly, has achieved this by providing political, military, and financial support to Ukraine. The Ukrainian Military Training Mission (EUMAM) was immediately implemented and the training of 40,000 Ukrainian soldiers was carried out. The number of soldiers planned to be trained in Germany, Poland and other EU member countries was first determined as 15,000, then increased to 30,000, and finally reached 40,000, of which 10,000 were trained in Germany. The European Peace Instrument was created to increase the EU's competence in the fields of security and defense and world peacebuilding. The European Peace Instrument has been the key to the financial support given to Ukraine. Member countries largely finance their arms and material shipments to Ukraine through it.

The EU has also demonstrated a more effective presence in the Sahel region, and the EU Common Security and Defense Policy has been able to demonstrate a more stringent and flexible approach through the EU Military Partnership Mission established for the needs of Niger. Agreement has been reached on the procedures for using Article 44 of the EU Treaty to enable faster and more flexible decisions regarding common security and defense policy missions or operations in the future. This article has made it possible to confer the authority to plan and conduct a joint security and defense operation to a group of EU member states that are willing and able to undertake this task. Within the framework of the cooperation envisaged by the Strategic Compass in the cyber and information technology domain, maritime and space dimensions, the European Commission and the EEAS proposed to update the EU Maritime Security Strategy and the EU Space Strategy in March 2023. They also proposed that their member states defend against hybrid threats through the developed EU Hybrid Toolbox, through which coordination has been enhanced.[70]

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[69] Bendieck and Bossong, "Hybride Bedrohungen," 5.

[70] Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Ein Jahr Strategischer Kompass der EU-Kurs auf mehr Handlungsfähigkeit" [Federal Ministry of Defense, "One Year Strategic Compass of the EU Course Towards More Ability to Act], accessed April 11, 2024, https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/ein-jahr-strategischer-kompass-der-eu-5601628.

Conclusion

Russia's attack on Ukraine showed that the European security and defense policies do not comply with today's conditions and need to be transformed. During this period, the EU has started to act in a much more coordinated and effective manner against security threats. During this period, the cooperation between the EU and NATO was strengthened, and the idea of "Together we are strong" was confirmed to be feasible. In this context, the prominent view was that Europeans should take more responsibility for the Alliance and for European security, and that the EU's competence should be enhanced so that it can assume a leading role in a possible security crisis. Increased European-NATO cooperation was also seen as a requirement for this. The most concrete indicator in this direction was the idea of EU member states, especially Germany, to strengthen the Northern and Northeastern flank of NATO and to support NATO expansion. The military cooperation developed by Germany with Lithuania has almost turned into a kind of defense partnership, which shows that the parties now want to take more responsibility for European security as members of both NATO and the EU.

As peaceful and normative approaches are seen to be insufficient against common threats, the EU, which has built its identity on the foundations of diplomacy, negotiation, solidarity, and cooperation, has increasingly developed power-oriented measures and strategies (military, economic). The attitude followed until 2022 had not prevented Russia's aggressive foreign policy, and the existing dependencies had encouraged Putin's Russia. For this reason, the new argument of the changing security policy for the EU, which saw that the understanding of building European security together with Russia was a mistake, was to build European security *despite* Putin's Russia. The paradigm shift in question here is related to the parties' perception of each other and confirms that one now sees the other as *the other*. For the West, the possibility of Russia turning into a democratic state of law in the near future has been destroyed by the 2022 attack on Ukraine. Europe, which had to respond to this actor who resorted to the use of all kinds of force due to its interests, only with his methods, felt that it had to display a realist reflex without completely abandoning its normative aspect.

In this context, Russia's attack on Ukraine should be interpreted as a conflict between parties who perceive each other with different identities or who do not consent to assume the identity envisioned by the other. While the parties to this conflict were Russia and the West, the values represented by the West became the biggest threat to Russia itself. In this context, the EU broke its stance of not providing arms shipments and military support to conflict zones, which it had kept its distance until then, and showed a strong will to increase its own defense and military capacity. The attack on Ukraine has also showed the EU how relations based on a type of unilateral dependency negatively affect its bargaining power. In this framework, the view that not only energy dependency but all kinds of relations based on a form of dependency such as that of energy and that restrict EU's mobility and competitiveness should be broken has increasingly been a topic of debate. The fact that the issue of strategic autonomy is back on the agenda is an indicator of this changed reality.

The guarantees of border security have been increased military power and armament. The progress achieved in the field of common security and defense policy in the last twenty years, the experiences of civilian and military missions, the work of the European Defense Agency, the quest for strategic sovereignty, and the adoption of the Strategic Compass have now enabled the EU to strengthen these without compromising its democratic and normative identity that gives realist constructivist reactions. It confirms that it wants to guarantee the future of Europe by supporting it with centered policies. Beyond the construction of a new Russian and Eastern policy, the attack on Ukraine also offered the opportunity for Europe to influence international relations through both material and intellectual factors and rebuild its identity accordingly. For this reason, it would be wrong to read the EU's transformed foreign and security policy after 2022 only from a realist or constructivist perspective. While attempting to create a new balance of power, this effort is not carried out independently of the norms and values defended until that day. On the contrary, a new identity is sought by defending values such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law with material elements. On the one hand, military support and arms shipments are provided to Ukraine and support is given to NATO

expansion. On the other hand, the effort to include them in the identity it represents through the adoption of the values and norms it represents by the neighboring countries continues. In this way, the view that actors' perceptions are affected by the behavior of others is maintained, and at the same time, constructivist factors are defended by using material power factors against an actor who tries to prevent this transformation by producing anarchy.

Moreover, as the Hungarian example shows, it maintains this attitude against actors who do not comply with the common identity and its requirements, which cast a shadow on the establishment of the balance of power that serves common interests and tries to create it by acting contrary to solidarity and cooperation. In this context, developments show that in the world we have built, it is possible for our norms and values to be liberal or realistic, or to be on a spectrum between the two.

However, the EU's military capacity is still limited, and Europe still relies on the US in its security concerns, as dependency relations continue in different ways. Conflicts in Europe, World War I, World War II and the Yugoslav Civil War, always ended with US intervention, and developments have shown that this reality continues today. For this reason, European countries, especially Germany, must act with the awareness that overcoming regional conflicts in Europe requires increasing defense expenditures improving their military capacities, and developing a less dependent security policy within and outside of NATO. EU member states have the economic and technical power to enable them to pursue an independent security policy. Their current strength is multiplied by the non-EU NATO partners, the UK and Norway. Similarly, the EU member states need to overcome the differences of opinion that exist and increase from time to time. While France is willing to send troops to Ukraine, Germany opposes any initiative that would lead to a direct conflict with Russia. Similarly, the US green light for the $60.8 billion aid package to Ukraine eased the EU's burden and allowed it to stay in the background. According to those who oppose this view, this development requires the EU to be even more effective, and the EU, which has received US support, must build a more determined Eastern policy with this development. Such weaknesses of Europe not only dim the process of

building a European identity based on common values but also continue to encourage revisionist actors such as Russia.

Nevertheless, developments show us that Europe has demonstrated a significant will to become a security actor, albeit limited, after 2022. The European Union has now developed a more effective attitude than in the past towards maintaining international peace and security in and outside its region and has been able to learn from some of its past mistakes.