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THE NEED FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION ARMY/ON ARMED FORCES

ABSTRACT

The Joint European Army has been a topic of discussion in the European Union in recent months. The idea of a common European army goes back to the beginnings of European integration within the mainstream of integration, which resulted in its current form of the European Union. After the end of World War II, the idea of creating a joint forces do defend Europe became very topical. The result was a proposal to sign the Brussels Treaty (its signatories were France, Great Britain, and the Benelux coutries) in March 1948, in response to the growing influence of expansion of the Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern Europe. Subsequently, it was the Schuman Declaration of 1950, which resulted in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The idea of creating a joint European army was renewed at the highest political level under the influence of several factors, in the form of speeches by a top German politician (former German Chancellor Angela Merkel), France (French President Emmanuel Macron), and the European Commission (former European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker), who, however, did not offer its specific form or time interval. Therefore, the idea remains abstract. The authors of the article, based on a historical analysis of the needs for building a joint European army and the requirements of the present, also in relation to the current Russia-Ukraine conflict, point to the need to create an institution in Europe (e.g., a joint European military forces) ensuring peace and security. In general, the

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authors of the article are of the opinion that the need to address the problem of the European Union's defence integration is highly topical and could help Europe by becoming a major global player in ensuring peace and security in the world.

Keywords: European Army; European defence integration; joint European Armed Forces; European Battle Group

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the Joint Armed Forces of the European Union is a topic currently being discussed in the European Union. The idea of a common European army dates back to the beginnings of mainstream European integration, which has resulted in the current shape of the EU. This idea was renewed at the highest political level under the influence of several factors, such as the unstable security environment caused by the conflict in eastern Ukraine, hybrid threats, the migration crisis and the pandemic caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the form of speeches by leading politicians in Germany, France and the European Commission. However, it should be emphasized that they have not offered its specific form or the time interval for its creation; therefore, it remains an ongoing subject of discussion.

The issue of a common European army is a complex topic. It is closely linked to the integration efforts of European states in the field of defense.

The aim of the article is to point out, from a historical and contemporary perspective, the efforts to create an institution that would constitute the foundation for ensuring peace and security in Europe.

1. THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION EFFORT IN THE FIELD OF DEFENSE SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II

After World War II, Western Europe definitely lost its sovereign position in the world. It was replaced by the United States and the Soviet Union. These great powers soon found themselves in a state of tension and rivalry known as the Cold War. In these geopolitical conditions, mutual cooperation was the only solution for Western European states to ensure their own security and prosperity.

On March 17, 1948, the United Kingdom, France and the Benelux countries concluded the Treaty of Brussels. The reason for its creation was the fear of the expansion of the sphere of the Soviet Union influence.[1] The result was the creation of a military-political organization known as the Western Union, which aimed to provide mutual assistance in the event of an attack.[2] It largely lost its legitimacy with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949 which established the North Atlantic Alliance. In May of the same year, ten European states founded the Council of Europe. The first speeches calling for the creation of a Euro-

[1] Countries such as Finland and the former Czechoslovakia can be given as an example.

[2] The Brussels Treaty, Article V: If one of the Contracting Parties becomes the victim of an armed attack in Europe, the other Contracting Parties shall provide, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the UN Charter, all necessary military and other assistance and cooperation.

pean army appeared on the ground of this intergovernmental organization, initially focused on European integration.

A significant impetus for the process of European integration became the so-called Schuman Declaration of May 9, 1950. The declaration contained a proposal by the French Government addressed to Germany to maintain European peace by removing the historical contradiction between France and Germany and contained two basic objectives:

1. Immediate – Franco-German reconciliation, starting with the joint control of coal and steel production in France and Germany under the control of the Joint Supervisory Authority-High Authority, the mutual recovery and integrity of these countries' coal and steel markets as strategic raw materials, the uncontrolled production and exports of which could lead to possible conventional wars between these countries,
2. Strategic – the gradual creation of a political union that would prevent armed conflicts and increase Europe's political weight at international level.

However, the primary aim of these initiatives was to make an urgent effort to establish a mechanism for multilateral control of coal and steel production as the primary raw materials for potential weapons production supporting a further possible armed conflict on the European continent. This process was also in the interests of Germany itself (RUSIŇÁK, 2006). The plan presented by Schuman became the subject of further negotiations in individual European countries. Germany first gave its consent to a joint administration in the coal and steel sector, for which the project provided an opportunity to gain an equal status in international relations and, in addition to participating in the political construction of postwar Europe, also certain economic benefits arising from the common market. Germany, like France, believed in the rapid development of these sectors of the economy and in the recovery of the entire industry. Other countries willing to join the Community were Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy, which, in addition to economic benefits, expected their political situation to improve. The negative position was taken by the United Kingdom, which was more interested in strengthening its cooperation with the USA. This view may have been influenced to some extent by the alliance of the United States and Great Britain during the World War II and by differences in comparison with European countries in the economic and political spheres. In addition to these factors, Britain's position was influenced by the belief in the disadvantage of transnational unification. Britain was interested in creating a free trade organization with intergovernmental ties. The attitude of Britain was also supported by the Nordic countries, but their disagreement stemmed from their belief in the incompatibility of the principle of supranational governance and their traditional understanding of sovereignty (RUSIŇÁK, 2006). Schuman and Monnet's initiatives resulted in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the so-called Montana Union, established by the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, signed in Paris on April 18, 1951. The agreement entered into force on July 23, 1952. The ECSC was set up by six countries – Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy – for a period of 50 years as an international organization with legal personality. The ECSC Treaty expired on July 23, 2002. The ECSC became an example of sectoral integration. In the postwar period, the ECSC was seen primarily as a way of securing peace by bringing together winners and losers within an institutional structure that would allow them to work together on an equal footing. The political goal of the new international organization was to secure peace in Europe and in the world. In Article 2 of the ECSC Treaty, the Member States set themselves the objective of contributing, in economic and social fields, to economic expan-

sion, increasing employment and raising living standards within the framework of the common European market, the creation of which was envisaged in Article 4 of the ECSC Treaty. In order to achieve these objectives, joint ECSC bodies – the High Authority, the European Parliament, the Council, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the Advisory Committee – were established, to which the Member States transferred part of their sovereignty in the fundamental economic sectors. In fact, assessing the significance of the establishment of the ECSC is not easy. The European economy recovered in the early 1960s. Countries that did not participate in the project also noticed an improvement in the economy. However, the establishment of the ECSC brought the Member States an increase in their coal and steel production in the common market and the development of their trade. The improved economic indicators also resulted in consequent improvement in working and social conditions for heavy industry employees. In addition to the economic sphere, the establishment of the ECSC also had a significant impact on the political scene. Through the supranational organization, there was mutual cooperation among 37 countries that fought against each other during the World War II, and this cooperation also affected the surrounding countries outside the ECSC member countries (RUSIŇÁK, 2006). The member countries had to implement their trade relations through the bodies of the High Authority and did not develop them directly with the individual member countries.

The change in the security environment and the high risk of conventional conflict in Europe led to the need to rearm Germany and integrate it into NATO. The Americans also had this idea. This proposal encountered a negative reaction in France, which had to face two invasions by German troops in recent decades. The starting point for France in this situation was the Pleven plan.

The plan was based on the creation of a European Ministry of Defense, which would oversee the recruitment, mobilization and integration of the multinational army and be accountable to the Council of States and the Assembly. The Treaty establishing the European Defense Community ("EDC") was signed on May 27, 1952, based on the Pleven Plan. The aim of this organization was to provide mutual assistance in the event of an attack and the controlled remilitarization of Germany.[3] The EDC was to be organizationally subordinate to NATO.

The European Armed Forces were to consist of conscripts and professional personnel on a voluntary basis, to have a common uniform and to be organized according to the military protocol. The basic units of the European Defense Forces were to be nationally homogeneous. The NATO Commander-in-Chief had the power to make sure that they were organized, trained, equipped and ready for use in a satisfactory manner (European Defense Community Treaty, 1952).

France, which was the initiator of the whole project, found itself in a domestic political crisis and the new political forces were not in favor of a multi-ethnic EDC. As a result, on August 30, 1954, the French National Assembly refused to ratify the Treaty establishing the European Defense Community (The organization of post-war defense in Europe, 2016).

The replacement for the unsuccessful EDC project and at the same time the expansion of the Western Union[4] was the creation of the Western European Union (hereinafter referred to

[3] The participants were the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy.

[4] This concerned the expansion of the Brussels Pact to Germany and Italy.

as "WEU") on October 23, 1954, on the basis of the Paris Agreements. The Paris Agreements ended the occupation of the Federal Republic of Germany, enabled rebuilding of the army, and prohibited West Germany from producing and acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The issue of German rearmament was finally resolved in May 1955, when the Federal Republic of Germany became a full member of NATO (The organization of post-war defense in Europe, 2016).

The second phase of French diplomacy's efforts to build a European defense began in the early 1960s. Firstly, in 1961 and 1962, the so-called Fouchet's plans were initiated by President de Gaulle. Fouchet's plans proposed the creation of a union of European states with a common foreign and security policy. However, they were rejected by France's European partners. Moreover, this project did not take into account the United Kingdom, which officially reflected the antagonistic attitudes of France and the United Kingdom in the construction of European defense and foreign policy, which are not losing their relevance even today.

European security policy was subsequently undermined for many decades until the end of the Cold War, and NATO undoubtedly became the most important guarantor of the security of European countries. The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, launched in 1973 in Helsinki, played an important role relieving the tensions between the East and the West. The conference ended with the signing of the document by 32 European countries, the United States and Canada. The document adopted the principles of peaceful coexistence of European countries and agreed on forms of cooperation to improve trust among the countries of the two political blocs in Europe. The so-called "Helsinki Process" continued with subsequent conferences in Belgrade 1977–1978, Madrid 1980–1983, Stockholm 1984–1986, Vienna 1986, Paris 1990 and Copenhagen 1993. At the last conference, it was decided that the form of the conference for the new situation after the fall of communism was not sufficient, and therefore the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe was established on January 1, 1995.

Taking into account the above, it can be concluded that neither external nor internal conditions for European integration in the political field were created during the Cold War. The bipolar system did not allow Western European countries to act on the international stage as an active and independent actor. By accepting the United States' offer to guarantee their security through NATO, Western European countries on the one hand avoided the excessive military spending which they would have to count on in case of any other option of ensuring their security, and on the other hand, they had to accept US leadership and indirect subordination of partial European interests to American preferences. For this reason, the Cold War can be described as a period in which European states had to accept the rules of the game of the bipolar world, leaving no room for the formation of a European security identity.

2. COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

The Union began to develop its security and defence policy only in the 1990s, driven by events following the end of the Cold War, in particular, the experience of the limited influence of the European Communities on the course and end of ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia. European security and defense policy can therefore also be understood as the result of the European Union's political independence from the United States. The EU thus became

a major political actor, aware of its own political responsibility for its security role in the system of international relations (Frank, 2002).

The very establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was preceded by European political cooperation established in 1970 in response to the need for coordination of the foreign policies of the Member States of the European Economic Community, stemming from the deepening economic cooperation between these countries (Lipková, 2011). European political cooperation became the basis for the CFSP.

Member States' attitudes to deepening integration in the areas of foreign activities and security changed in the early 1990s, when the European Community was involved in resolving the conflicts in the Balkans and the Persian Gulf and several efforts were made to propose the necessary reforms.

In 1992, the EU Treaty was adopted, establishing a new organization called the European Union, with a separate pillar for the common foreign and security policy. In the same year, it was decided that the WEU would, on the basis of the Petersberg Declaration, engage in crisis resolution. The Petersberg missions are essentially the WEU's tasks defined at the Petersberg Summit (1992):

- humanitarian and rescue operations,
- peacekeeping operations,
- crisis management of combat operations, including peace-making operations.

The Petersberg missions are complementary to NATO's mission. Examples of such missions are:

- 1993 – Operation "Sharp Guard" – Monitoring of compliance with the embargo on the former Yugoslavia in the Adriatic,
- 1993 – Operation "Dannube" – Monitoring of compliance with the embargo against the former Yugoslavia on the Danube,
- 1994–1996 Police contingent in Mostar – Mostar Police Mission and Administration,
- 1997–2001 PM Albania – Police Mission in Albania, training of law enforcement officers,
- 1999–2001 Demining Assistance Mission to Croatia – Diposal of mines and mine-contaminated areas.

The ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 created the three-pillar structure of the EU, in which the CFSP was the second pillar. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is intergovernmental in nature, and its decision-making framework depends on the unanimous decision-making of the Council which sets strategic objectives. The European Parliament and the European Commission are involved in its development and implementation to a very limited extent. The Maastricht Treaty mentions the CFSP in a preamble, in several articles, in Title V and in the accompanying declarations. Title V sets out the objectives and instruments of the CFSP, which include peacekeeping, promoting international cooperation, protecting the common interests, protecting the EU's independence, strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations (UN), the Helsinki Final Act as well as Charter of Paris and, last but not least, the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, as well as respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The civil war in Yugoslavia showed that the EU was not able to produce a proactive response to help resolve the crisis. The changes enhancing the capacity of the CFSP resulted from the Treaty of Amsterdam, which entered into force in May 1999.

The Treaty of Amsterdam provides for the progressive framing of a common defense policy (CDP), which could lead to a common defense if the European Council so decides. The treaty specified that the CDP was to cover the Petersberg tasks and allowed for the possibility of the then WEU integrating into the EU.

Further changes were introduced by the Treaty of Nice, which entered into force in February 2003. The Treaty introduced the possibility of closer cooperation in the implementation of the Joint Action and the Common Position, which, however, cannot be applied in the field of defense and military matters.

The Maastricht Treaty considered the Western European Union to be an integral part of the Union's development and delegated defense decisions and actions to it (Article J.4, Treaty on European Union). The Treaty of Amsterdam even outlined the possibility of integrating the Western European Union into the EU as a potential fourth pillar. The Western European Union played an important role in crisis management operations in the early 1990s, while serving as a forum for discussion and a mediator between NATO and the EU. At this level, it made it possible to borrow NATO military assets for EU-led missions (Bailes and Messervy-Whiting, 2011). Finally, the EU took on the agenda of the Western European Union in the framework of the European Security and Defense Policy.

3. EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) itself evolved from the European Security and Defense Identity, which has its roots at the 1994 NATO Summit in Brussels. At its meeting, the Alliance agreed that the European Security and Defense Identity would be a pillar of NATO using the organisation's operational structures, but at the same time it would be possible – in the absence of NATO's mission – to separate these forces and conduct operations independently. The European states were thus given a greater responsibility for common security and defense (Bouška 2003).

The foundations of the ESDP were laid at the summit in St. Malo in 1998, where representatives of France and the United Kingdom met. The summit itself was preceded by a debate to address the shortcomings of the CFSP (the ratification process of the Amsterdam Treaty was under way), taking into account the EU's inability to respond adequately to the situation in Kosovo.

A milestone in the development of the European Security and Defense Policy was the EU summit in Nice, at which documents were adopted concerning the institutional structure of the ESDP and the fulfillment of the military objective. The ESDP thus became an official part of EU primary law. The summit also addressed the issue of NATO's relationship and the EU's approach to the Alliance's planning capabilities. The definition of common interests in this area was hampered by the fact that not all Member States were members of NATO or they were members of the WEU responsible for organizing security activities.

At the Helsinki summit in December 1999, the so-called Helsinki's main goal was adopted, according to which the EU should have been able to deploy 50,000–60,000 troops in 60 days by 2003 and keep them for a period of 1 year. The Helsinki Summit also decided on

the establishment of specific structures within the CFSP/ESDP, namely the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS).

The subsequent ESDP development was focused on resolving relations with NATO.

In March 2003, several EU-NATO framework agreements, known as Berlin Plus, were concluded, which allowed for the mutual exchange of classified information, access to NATO's planning capabilities and military assets (Berlin Plus agreement, 2003). These circumstances enabled the first Petersberg-type operations such as EUFOR Concord in Macedonia, the EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Operation Artemis in the RD Congo.

In June 2003, the summit of the European Council took place in Thessaloniki. At the summit, the satisfaction with the progress made in military capabilities and the fulfillment of the Helsinki Headline Goal was expressed. The European Council instructed the relevant Council bodies to take steps in the course of 2004 to establish an intergovernmental agency in the field of defense capabilities, armaments and research, thus laying the foundations for the future European Defense Agency.

The Lisbon Treaty[5] aimed to modernize and reform the EU in relation to economic globalization, security threats, the need for a more coherent and effective approach in several areas and a fivefold increase since 1958. ESDP provisions, renamed by the treaty as the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) became an integral part of the CFSP. The purpose of the CSDP is to ensure the Union's operational capability, using civilian and military assets provided by Member States for missions outside the EU.

Another important provision contained in the Treaty of Lisbon is the establishment of a permanent structured cooperation among Member States meeting stricter criteria in the field of military capabilities which took greater commitments in order to carry out the most demanding missions (Article 42, Lisbon Treaty). Article 42 also contains important provisions in the field of defense. According to the article, the CSDP includes the gradual definition of a common EU defense policy, which will lead to a common defense, if the European Council decides unanimously. The treaty thus opens up the possibility of creating a joint army but does not provide for the immediate creation or limit any period of time in which this should happen. The Lisbon Treaty also contains a mutual defense clause, "where a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall be obliged to assist and support it by all available means, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations" (Article 42, Treaty of Lisbon). This cooperation is to be in line with the potential obligations arising from NATO membership, which remains the basis for the Member States' collective defense.

Permanent Structured Cooperation is a tool to strengthen cooperation in the fields of defense and military capabilities, investment, research and development, and the deployment capabilities of the participating Member States (MO SR). The establishment of PESCO followed up on other complementary EU activities, namely the Coordinated Annual Defense Review (CARD) and the European Defense Fund. The CARD is a permanent activity aimed at providing a better overview of defense spending, national and defense research at EU lev-

[5] Signed by Member States' representatives in December 2007 and entered into force in December 2009.

el. The European Defense Fund (EDF) is part of the planned Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027. According to the Commission proposal, €13 billion should be set aside, of which €4.1 billion will go to funding defense research and €8.9 billion will be provided to co-finance Member States' projects, with PESCO projects receiving 10% bonus (EU budget for the future, 2018).

The initial initiative leading to the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) arose from mutual negotiations and preparations between Germany, France, Spain and Italy, which resulted in a compromise between the French position, driven mainly by military efforts and favoring a more ambitious and smaller group of states, and Germany's attitude motivated mainly by political reasons, aimed at integrating the maximum number of Member States.

Another 19 countries joined the efforts of the original four countries, which signed the Joint Communication on PESCO on November 13, 2017, which they forwarded to the EU Council and the High Representative. Ireland and Portugal joined the initiative on December 7, 2017.

The PESCO activation itself came with the adoption of the EU Council Conclusions on December 11, 2017. Denmark has been exempt from EU defence cooperation since 1992. Malta is not involved, as some aspects of PESCO could be contrary to the neutrality clause contained in its constitution. The UK will not participate because of its withdrawal from the EU.

PESCO is legally anchored in the Lisbon Treaty in Articles 42, 46 and Protocol no. 10, in which the commitments defined in Article 2 are divided into five areas. Within these five areas, the participating states have decided to make a further 20 more stringent and ambitious commitments common to all participating states, focusing on building defense capabilities, eliminating capability gaps, implementing multinational projects, increasing force deployment, increasing national defense spending and strengthening cooperation on harmonizing the defense planning of participating states (MO SR, 2018).

Figure 1. PESCO Participating members

Source: PESCO.

4. DEVELOPING EU MILITARY CAPABILITIES

4.1. EU BATTLE GROUPS – EUBGS

Initial reflections on the establishment of small, land-based, highly mobile combat units capable of dealing with crisis situations emerged at the Franco-British Le Touquet summit in February 2003. It was in response to growing problems in failing African countries, where both countries expressed the need for a rapid deployment forces to conduct operations under a UN mandate. In November 2003, a bilateral British-French summit in London outlined the concept of rapid reaction forces in its specific contours, using the very concept of "Battle Groups". The aim of the use of battle groups, as they were proposed, was to intervene through military intervention in non-European conflicts (especially in Africa) until the arrival of operational forces with the capacity to resolve the conflict, e.g., UN peacekeeping force. In 2003, Operation Artemis took place, which became a reference model for combat groups. Experience from the operation led to the intention to build ground units of rapid deployment with a strength of about 1 500 people (Kulíšek, 2007).

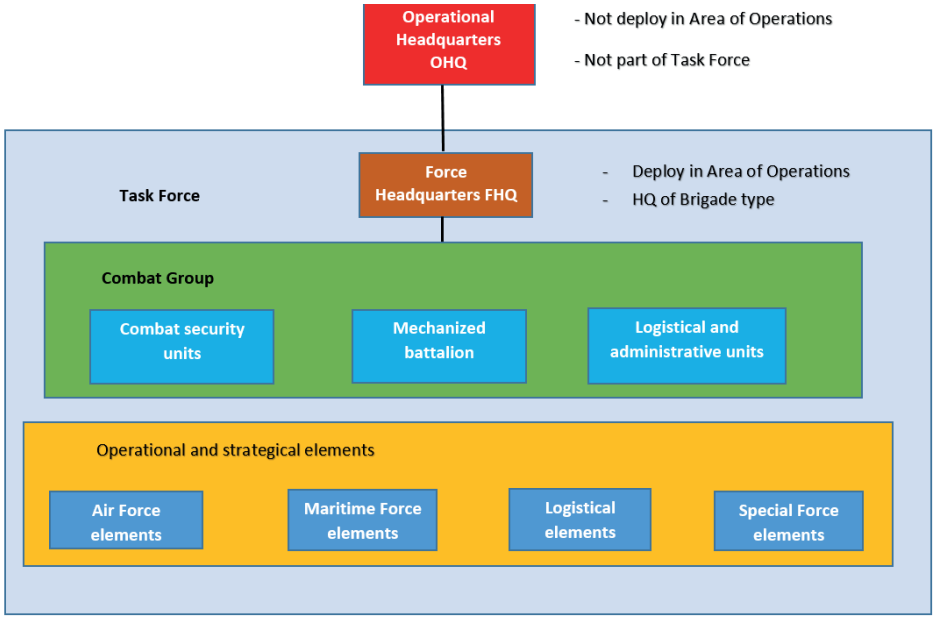
Germany joined the French and United Kingdom initiative in February 2004. In the same month, these countries submitted a draft concept of battle groups to the Political and Security Committee and, in April, to the EU Ministers of Defense. In June 2004, the concept was approved by the Military Committee, and in the same month the European Council adopted the Headline Goal 2010, of which the battle groups were a key element. In November 2004, at the Conference on Military Capabilities Commitments, Member States made initial commitments to form 13 battle groups. In January 2005, EUBGs reached their initial operational capacity. During this period, until January 2007, when the battle groups had reached full operational capability, at least one EUBG was on standby for six months. After 2007, the EU is to have two battle groups on standby, which theoretically means that the EU is capable of conducting two parallel rapid reaction operations.

EUBGs were originally designed as nationally based units. The EUBG's initiative document also emphasizes their multinational nature. Battle groups can thus be formed as national and multinational military units, with mainly EU Member States, but also European third countries that are members of NATO and candidate countries to join the EU (Hoscheková, 2011). In the case of multinational units, one EU member state acts as the main builder of the battle group as the so-called "Framework nation", while other states supplement other required capabilities (Kulíšek, 2007).

Within the structure of one battle group, the approximate size of the core is approximately 1 500 people. The core is made up of battalion-sized ground forces, which are armed with combined weapons that complement combat support units and combat security services.

However, the structure of the EUBG is not fixed, it depends on the specific requirements of the operation and on the participating Member States, which decide how to set up their battle group. This flexibility facilitates the creation of the EUBG and allows for a wider range of capabilities. Air, sea, logistics and other special means may be incorporated into the structure, e.g., The Nordic Battlegroup, led by Sweden, consists of more than 2 400 soldiers (Nordic Battlegroup NBG15, 2015).

Figure 2. Battle group within the EUBG



Source: Nad', R. Development of EU military capabilities.

High demands and requirements are placed on the carrier state, which is responsible for the certification of the entire multinational battle group. Member States are responsible for the certification of individual battle units. If the units of a state did not meet the set criteria and did not reach a certain standard level, they would not be able to be put on standby. Member States are encouraged to use existing NATO methods and standards in the certification process. It will ensure complementarity and interoperability with the NATO Rapid Deployment Force and avoid duplication (Hoscheková, 2011).

All EU BGs are prepared to perform tasks in the following 5 basic scenarios:

1. stabilization, reconstruction and support of security sector reform,
2. conflict prevention,
3. support for humanitarian operations,
4. evacuation operations,
5. separation of hostile parties.

The same rules apply to the financing of battle groups as to CSDP missions and operations. The Athena mechanism manages the common costs of the operation. Individual costs such as transport of troops to operations, location and maintenance of EUBG in standby mode, etc. are borne by the participating Member States. Significant financial costs are one of the reasons why battle groups have not yet been deployed. The cuts in Member States' budgets have even led to only one battle group on standby in the first half of 2012. Other reasons include the lack of a common consensus, as Member States tend to agree more easily on launching missions or operations than on deploying battle groups. The lack of a strategic

vision of the EU and its Member States for the national interests of the Member States, which differs from the EU's position on crises, are further reasons for not deploying battle groups, e.g., in the case of a crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany refused to deploy a Franco-German battle group due to the absence of direct national interests. The deployability of EUBGs is also affected by the lack of military equipment, aircraft and other resources needed for effective deployment where a crisis is taking place.

Figure 3. Previous participation of Slovakia in EUBGs

- CZ-SK EU BGs
  - Readiness in the second half of 2009,
  - CZ like FN (2045 pers.),
  - SK 399 pers. + 23 in OHQ

- PL-DE-SK-LT-LV EU BGs,
  - readiness in the first half of 2010,
  - PL like FN,
  - SK 200 pers. + OHQ + NSE

Source: Naď, R. Development of EU military capabilities.

On November 13, 2006, five EU Member States – Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania – signed a Memorandum of Understanding, a framework document establishing a battle group led by Poland. The Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic contribute to this formation with transport helicopters, an engineer unit and a platoon of the military police. Our contribution should not exceed 250 people, including personnel assigned to the FHQ (e.g., Naď, R. EU military capability development).

The third and most important participation of Slovakia in the EUBG project was achieved just at the end of the first semester of this year. The Slovak Republic, together with 3 other V4 partners and Ukraine, built a joint V4 + UA EUBG, which was on standby during the first 6 months of 2016. The standby period was simpler compared to the preparation and certification phase.

5. EU ARMY PERSPECTIVE

Although the EU has in fact existed for a long time, the EU did not agree on the need to create common European defense structures until the Nice Summit in 2000, where one possible solution to the insufficient military capabilities of EU countries seemed to be the creation of a joint European force. However, this fact encounters many problems. The effective functioning of a potential European army currently faces two fundamental problems:

1. The reluctance of individual Member States to allocate their troops to a common European army and to invest sufficient funds in this project.

2. The inability of European states to agree on a common EU foreign policy. Foreign policy, security and defense are matters over which individual states retain control.

The future European army should have a different character and structure than the national armies of today. The debate on its creation was reopened by Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission. It was done in response to the Ukrainian crisis, with Juncker arguing that NATO was not enough to ensure peace in Europe because not all NATO members were also members of the EU. In Juncker's view, the EU military could serve as a deterrent in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. However, a common European army that is not created for immediate deployment should send a "clear signal to Russia that we are seriously defending our European values", while "with its own army, Europe could respond more credibly to threats to peace in a Member State or a neighbouring country" (Juncker: NATO is not enough, EU needs an army, 2015). According to Ursula von der Leyen, it would strengthen the European wing of the North Atlantic Alliance and the overall security of Europe, but the creation of a joint army will not take place in the short term. On the contrary, the British attitude towards Juncker's statement was very negative. Its essence is the promotion of national defense solutions.

At an informal meeting of EU defense ministers in September 2016, Federica Mogherini said most EU members were not considering creating a common European army, but making more efficient use of the EU's resources (TASR, 2016). Three years later, the top political leaders of Germany and France, the two most economically and militarily strong EU member states, also joined Juncker's vision, as the United Kingdom withdrew from the EU in a referendum in June 2016, significantly changing the EU's balance of power. French President Emmanuel Macron said in November 2018 "we must be able to defend against a possible aggression of China, Russia but also the USA. We cannot achieve this unless we have a single European army" (Macron calls for a European army, 2018).

The speech of German Chancellor Angela Merkel during the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg in November 2018 provided a significant impetus for the creation of a European army. In her speech, she called for the creation of a "real, genuine European army" (Merkel called for the creation of a "real" European army, 2018).

It followed the previous statements of Jean-Claude Juncker and Emmanuel Macron, while the discussion about the creation of a joint army reached its peak on the international scene. In Merkel's view, the European military would work closely with NATO. She argued mainly for the greater effectiveness of the joint army, as there are currently more than 160 different defense, mentoring, administrative and training systems in defense in Europe. According to Angela Merkel, in order to increase efficiency, it is important to cooperate in the field of the development of common armaments systems. It was also revolutionary to design a structure within which the European army would fall under the European Security Council, which would operate on the principle of a rotating presidency (Telesca, Caliva, 2018). The European Security Council should be set up in line with the United Nations Security Council or the U.S. National Security Council and its objective should be to strategically monitor developments in the world and to guide policy makers (Merkel called for the creation of a "real" European army, 2018).

The EU Joint Army is currently in the process of reflections. This is a possible project of the EU's common foreign and security policy, which is limited mainly by the willingness and ability of individual Member States to agree on joint steps. We can say that this is not about

higher defense spending, but rather about its effective use. Europe does not lack money, but rather its efficient use, which is a long-term problem.

5.1. EUROPE IN 2025, THE ROAD TO SECURITY AND DEFENSE UNION

On March 1, 2017, the European Commission presented a White Paper on the Future of Europe and later began publishing discussion papers on topics that are crucial for the future of the European Union of 27. This material on the future of European defense is the fourth discussion paper in a row. In it, the Commission outlines the main trends and challenges that will underpin the future shape of European security and defense, and against this background proposes options in three different scenarios for moving towards a security and defense union. Although these scenarios are not mutually exclusive, they are based on variously high ambitions for a common, Union solution to security and defense issues (Europe in 2025, Towards a Security and Defense Union, 2017).

Figure 4. Europe in 2025, the road to security and defense unions

Source: Discussion document on the future of European Defense.

- SECURITY AND DEFENSE COOPERATION

In this scenario, the EU-27 Member States would work together on security and defense more systematically than in the past. This cooperation would remain largely voluntary and

build on ad hoc decisions taken in response to emerging threats or crises. Although increasingly difficult and unstable situations in the world would lead to intensified cooperation than in previous decades, Member States would not be politically or legally bound to take a common direction in security and defense. Solidarity would be interpreted and expressed by individual Member States on a case-by-case basis.

- SHARED SECURITY AND DEFENSE

In this scenario, the EU-27 Member States would move towards shared security and defense. In the field of defense, they would show much greater financial and operational solidarity, based on a broader and deeper understanding of the threats perceived by individual countries and on the approximation of strategic cultures. As a result, the European Union would be better able to demonstrate military force and fully engage in resolving external crises and building its partners' security and defense capabilities. It would also improve its ability to protect Europe in areas where borders between internal and external are blurring, such as the fight against terrorism or hybrid and cyber threats, border protection or maritime and energy security. EU-NATO cooperation would be further deepened.

- COMMON DEFENSE AND SECURITY

In this scenario, Member States would further deepen cooperation and integration to make defense and security a common theme. Such a security and defense union would be based on global strategic, economic and technological factors and would also reflect the political pressure of European citizens to ensure a common European security and defense. Solidarity and mutual assistance among Member States in the field of security and defense would become the norm. It would build on the full use of Article 42 of the Treaty on European Union, which provides for a gradual definition of the Union's common defense policy, leading to a common defense. In this scenario, the commitments of the Member States implementing their common defense in NATO would be fully recognized and the protection of Europe would become a shared obligation between the EU and NATO, which would support each other in fulfilling it. A common EU security and defense, complementary to NATO, would increase Europe's resilience and protect the Union from various forms of aggression (Discussion document on the future of European Defense, 2017).

5.2. THE FUTURE – A STRATEGIC COMPASS

A strategic material is currently being prepared – a Strategic Compass that sets the direction and objectives of the European Union in the field of defense and security in the current decade until 2030. It will be more specific material than the EU Global Foreign and Security Policy 2016 – the Strategic Compass will focus more intensively on security and defense, and as regards setting goals, it will go deeper. It will approach the strategic planning documents at the national level. They are, of course, unbeatable in detail, specificity and ambition, as the EU has only supporting and coordinating powers in the field of security and defense. However, it is an obvious inspiration from the "NATO Strategic Concept", a similar document from the provenance of the North Atlantic Alliance. Finally, the EU Strategic Compass was

originally intended to be referred to as a "strategic concept" and was replaced by a "compass" mainly to differentiate it from the Union's North Atlantic material.

The Strategic Compass will be divided into the following four thematic areas: crisis management, resilience, skills development and partnership.

1. Crisis management – one of the most visible and tangible components of the common security and defense policy. The coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted the importance of this area. The area of crisis management includes, for example, response to external conflicts and crises in the EU's neighbourhood.
2. Resilience – the ability to respond to the various types of threats that European countries and their societies may pose. Flexibility, adaptability and solidarity among countries and the associated ability to effectively assist the Member State most affected by this threat will be important in this process.
3. Skills development – an area with more unfulfilled ambitions and expectations from the previous period, from which lessons need to be learned in the future.
4. Partnership – in an increasingly complex international environment, relations with world powers with often conflicting interests need to be coordinated and coordinated so that the Union can promote its values and objectives in its external action.

The Strategic Compass will be based on four pillars. Crisis management is considered to be one of the most visible and tangible components of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted the importance of this area. The area of crisis management includes, for example, the response to external conflicts and crises in the neighborhood of the EU-27. Within this category, the Strategic Compass will focus on specifying the purpose and tools of the CSDP as well as on coordinating with NATO. The Strategic Compass will set out the EU's security and defense goals by 2030. Capability development is also a very important pillar of the Strategic Compass. The creators of the Strategic Compass are therefore expected to focus on such areas of capacity in which Europe is most lagging behind. On this basis, the Strategic Compass will set targets that will ensure that the countries of the European Union have sufficient capacity in terms of their capabilities and capabilities using state-of-the-art technology in the defense industry (Novotný A., EU Common Foreign and Security Policy). Partnership, i.e., relations with countries outside the European Union and international organizations, is the last, fourth pillar of the Strategic Compass. Over the last two decades, the European Union has entered into a large number of cooperation agreements with third countries (on a bilateral basis), with groups of third countries (e.g., the Eastern Partnership) or with international organizations (e.g., ASEAN or the African Union). In an increasingly complex international environment, there is a need to coordinate and reconcile relations with a large number of powers with often conflicting interests so that the Union can promote its values and goals in its external action. The Strategic Compass will also provide guidance.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this work was to examine the issue of a common European army in a historical and contemporary context, pointing out the various aspects of the multinational model of a common European army.

After the end of World War II, several activities aimed at creating a European collective defense system took place in Western Europe, but due to external circumstances, the autonomous security and military integration of Western Europe was unsuccessful.

It was only after the end of the Cold War that there has been a sharp rise in foreign and security policy, and the EU has thus become not only an economic but also a security actor in Europe and in the world.

Both external and internal EU factors have provided a new impetus to European defense cooperation. The annexation of Crimea and Russia's destabilization of eastern Ukraine have raised concerns among European countries, which under the pressure of the financial crisis have underfunded their armed forces. The existence of NATO, in which the United States is the main guarantor of European security, leads some European countries to prefer the North Atlantic Alliance over building their own independent collective ways of ensuring defense.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the European Union has defined itself as a global player in the field of security. The EU has been developing specialized policies and tools for their enforcement (EUBG, EDA, etc.) and is active outside the territory of its Member States.

Today, the EU functions as a collective security organization, but in the future its transformation into a continental collective defense organization cannot be excluded.

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