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## **For a transformative dealing with „security threats“**

This paper consists of two major parts: Theses and an appendix.

The *first* part contains theses to be discussed. They are divided into three groups:

- a) reflects EU activities starting with the publication of the European Green Deal,
- b) deals with the myth of the peace project EU and shows an ongoing complex militarisation process and
- c) offers a few conclusions from these reflections.

The *second* part illustrates the problem underlying the theses by an argumentation explaining especially the first group of theses more deeply. By so doing, we hope that it will also help to understand and to discuss the second group of theses – and, of course, the conclusions we try to offer.



## A) Theses for a discussion

1. The German EU presidency is aimed at
  - a) implementing and improving the already existing complexity of military tools which should be used and work more effectively,
  - b) connecting the stressed strategies of the European Commission with defence policy,
  - c) exploiting the Coronavirus pandemic for militarisation,
  - d) forcing the cooperation with NATO which is also using the pandemic for forcing its own strategies.
  
2. The more general issue of the militarisation of the EU has three dimensions, intertwined between themselves:
  - a) the reproduction of societal and international hierarchies, also and especially in the economic sphere of the societal life,
  - b) a more narrow economic one,
  - c) a rather political one.

It should be made clear that there are two points which are crucial for understanding these problems: Capitalist accumulation is about producing and appropriating surplus value as much as possible and about primitive accumulation of capital (which includes fraud, conquest, robbery, and brutal slavery) at the same time. The capitalist mode of production produces tendencies to aggression and conquest. And when the emancipatory-solidarity actors/agencies, especially the workers, do not use their possibilities to build up a revolutionary and transformative counter-power, capitalist oligarchies will determine the development of the society on a global scale, reproducing violence against human beings and nature, and produce further global problems.

3. Specifically, the European Green Deal (EGD) is aimed at managing urgent threats from global warming, but not at overcoming the ecological crisis as a global one, as it is closely intertwined with all of the other global problems. Accordingly, the EGD



ignores the issue of pandemics like COVID-19, as well as that of wars and their ecological consequences. The EGD is a growth strategy oriented on a successful global competition drive making use of the most effective High Tech technologies. The EGD is certainly not a peace project, but only a peace project could help to fully overcome the global ecological problem – also by a structural transformation of technologies in the context of a deeper transformation of society, to be brought about by a radical peace movement, tackling the very causes for war as violence against human beings and their natural living conditions.

4. The Digital Strategy of the European Commission (EC) does not mention the issue of defence, but it is crucially intertwined with the military dimension. This is also and especially true for Artificial Intelligence AI. Moreover, the EC's Communications on industrial policy from March have a strong military dimension, also referring to small and medium sized enterprises (SME). The military dimension is planned to be further institutionalized by the creation of specifically military institutions. This is not a new phenomenon in the EU, but it is being reinforced, while gaining complexity.
5. The new Security Strategy covering the period 2020-2025 drafted by the EC continuously pursues three general objectives:
  - a) „building capabilities and capacities for early detection, prevention and rapid response to crises“,
  - b) „focusing on results“,
  - c) „linking all players in the public and private sectors in a common effort“ also by using public private partnerships (PPP).

It thereby focuses on the cooperation between military and civil spheres, on the interrelations of internal and external security, and on areas, where the military technological and strategic dependencies seem to be most pressing.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This urgency also extends to the issues raised by the trade with strategic materials.



6. While dealing with the dangers of a „defence winter“ (threats to military plans by effects of the COVID-19 pandemic like reduced budget expenditures, more detailed in thesis 8), the new heading in the long-term EU budget (MFF) 2021-2025 „Security and Defence“ clearly expresses the collective will for a further deepening of defence cooperation between the member states and the EU institutions involved or created for this purpose.<sup>2</sup>
7. The specific problem of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU with its 27 member states – 21 NATO members and 5 NATO partners –, has not changed fundamentally since the foundation of NATO and EU – as it can be seen from the programmatic statements of George F. Kennan in 1947<sup>3</sup> and Jens Stoltenberg in 2020<sup>4</sup>. The underlying problem of the discrepancy between the EU's share of the „world's wealth“ and its share in world population has even clearly sharpened.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The issues of neutrality of EU member states should not be forgotten, but it is to be expected that they will not constitute a real obstacle to the specific form a militarization of the EU is going to take.

<sup>3</sup> „We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6% of its population. This disparity is particularly great as between ourselves and the people of Asia ... our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world benefactor.“ (Kennan 1948; quoted according Bhagwat).  
<https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-weaponization-of-space-corporate-driven-military-unleashes-pre-emptive-wars/21432>

<sup>4</sup> „COVID-19 has changed our lives in ways we could barely imagine..And it has magnified existing trends and tensions when it comes to our security. Russia continues its military activities unabated. ISIL and other terrorist groups are emboldened. Both state and non-state actors promote disinformation and propaganda. And the rise of China is fundamentally shifting the global balance of power. Heating up the race for economic and technological supremacy..Multiplying the threats to open societies and individual freedoms. And increasing the competition over our values and our way of life.“ „... and the NATO leaders, heads of state and government, when they met in London in December, they, for the first time in NATO's history, agreed that NATO has to address the consequences, the security consequences, of the rise of China ... we see that the fact that China soon will have the biggest economy in the world, ... they already have the second largest defence budget. They are investing heavily in modern military capabilities, including missiles that can reach all NATO Allied countries. They're coming closer to us in cyberspace. We see them in the Arctic, in Africa. We see them investing in our critical infrastructure. And they are working more and more together with Russia. All of this has a security consequence for NATO Allies. And therefore, we need to be able to respond to that, to address that. And we need to do that by forging NATO as a stronger political Alliance. We need to do that, we're working together with partners, not least in the Asia Pacific, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, which are very close and like-minded partners to NATO.“ [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natoq/opinions\\_176197.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natoq/opinions_176197.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>5</sup> Since the end of the Second World War, this discrepancy has been growing. At the end of 2019 the share of the USA in the world's population has reached 4,4 per cent and that of the European Union 7,1 percent. In contrast, about 60 percent of the world population lives in Asia. The USA account for almost 20 percent of global energy consumption and currently for about 16 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Historically, they account



8. The broader prehistory of the EU starts with wars: the world wars since 1914, the Cold war and the wars linked to the forced retreat of the European colonial powers. Colonialism, neocolonial policy and practice, wars, cold war, national or more or less collective western egoism created or sharply promoted problems and conflicts which became occasions of wars and military missions. However, in fact, the member states have secured peace among themselves. More specifically, the direct EU prehistory begins in framework of a "pattern of relationships" (Kennan) that does not exclude contradictions and even conflicts among their member states, between member states and the US, and between the European organisations and the US. Today, Brexit, a US administration working against any multilateral order, threats to the internal security of the EU – organised crime, terrorism and political radicalisation, or crimes in a digital age – are regarded as obstacles to all demands increase security efforts of member states and EU. The developments in the geographical neighbourhood of the EU – especially in its Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods – are often quoted in support of arguments for a „stronger role“ for the EU in security and defence. But the dangers of a „European defence winter“ are also under discussion: EU budget constraints by Brexit, proposed budget cuts of expenditures on security and defence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, intergovernmental obstacles, and simple nationalist reflexes. Fundamental attitudes are in conflict here: Some EU member states fear either that the defence of the EU will be decoupled from Washington, or that defence related industrial policy will be captured by others, especially by French and German agencies with their vested interests.
  
9. There are three interconnected reasons for the fact that since 1990/91 activities of the European Community resp. the European Union in the fields of industry security and military and armaments policies have been not only increasing but also becoming ever more interrelated and complex, while more and more defined as shared and common tasks:

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for 30 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. At the end of 2019, these values came to 12,5 and 10 percent for the European Union (Great Britain included). Even the scientific and political mainstream recognise that since 1971, the global demand for natural resources has been exceeding the supply of regenerated resources. So the socially divided world population consumes more and more natural resources in one year than the earth can regenerate in the same period. In 2019, July 29th was the earliest "earth congestion day" in human history.



- the strategic orientation on gains from globalisation and, therefore, on exacerbating global competition has been accepted by the EU and its member states;
- the activities of the most powerful groups to make use of crises, international conflicts and other major problems in order to solve their problems at the expense of, others and to strengthen their own position of power, especially within the strong hierarchy of international relations
- such reactions of the ruling forces to global change, especially the end of the so-called state socialism, have brought about
  - \* a new constellations of forces in and between global regions;
  - \* a new dynamics in gender and generational relations, in hierarchies referring to ethnic and social origin, cultural and ideological affiliation, overlying and often masking relations of class domination;
  - \* new and exacerbating global problems, also and especially ecological ones;
  - \* scientific discoveries and technological developments with strong effects on the socialization of labor and the development of individual personalities.

10. The history of the wars, military missions, different „responses“ EU member states participated in, resp. the EU have been related to, have been indistinguishable from the general history of the member states of the EU and of NATO. The problems which have lead to concrete wars or military missions in the past continue existing, and they are capable of generating new ones, which then again will be used as arguments for new military and repressive measures and the ‚required‘ armaments.<sup>6</sup>

In 2011 EU Member States spent more on defence than China, Russia and Japan together. In 2012 the president of the European Commission declared: "The world needs a Europe that is capable of responding with military missions to stabilize situation in crisis areas."<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, the Communication "Towards a more competitive and efficient European defence and security sector" from 2013,

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<sup>6</sup> The Lisbon treaty has been signed before Russia's invasion of Georgia as a destructive, imperial answer to the permanent violation of its security interests by NATO.

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\\_12\\_596](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_12_596)



published before Russia's separation/occupation of Crimea, has marked a clearly militarizing course.

11. The continuity of the military in the development of the EU has been experiencing various stages and intensities: Since 2002, the European Commission has been working systematically on managing relations between technologies, industrial policy, defence industry, internal and external security policy to increase the global role of the EU. These efforts, on the one hand, were connected to wars and since 2003 linked to specific military missions: The Second Gulf war, the war in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, the war against Iraq. In parallel, the EU treaties, especially the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties have been reinforcing this continuity, also the Lisbon Strategy adopted by the European council in March 2000 (which tried to make the EU "the most dynamic global economic region until 2010"), or its successor "Europe 2020", and the European Green Deal, or of the recent program 'Next Generation EU – the recovery' have promoted resp. do promote just this continuity.

12. Since the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty, a growing diversity, an increasing complexity and intensity of the military has been developing within the EU. This can be seen in

- binding commitments and their implementation to establish and expand military capacities and capabilities,
- infrastructure projects oriented on military purposes,
- foreign and security policy,
- free trade agreements, especially in association agreements and agreements on deep and comprehensive free trade areas (AA/DCFTA),
- the European Neighbourhood Policy and in development policy,
- the trade and export licensing policy,
- the common resp. single market strategy,
- industrial and digitization policy,
- training, science, research and technology development policy,
- the direct defence industry policy,



- the supply of energy and strategic raw materials and other strategic materials,
- the creation of according institutions and agencies, even beyond the control of the European Parliament,
- the use of EU budget funds and EU budget policy,
- the use of resources of the European Investment Bank.

13. In 2016, a new stage in the development of the CFSP started building reinforcing a permanent military dimension of the EU which was then concretized year by year:

- EU Global Strategy, Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, European Defence Action Plan (2016),
- Preparation Action on Defence Research, Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and Defence (2017),
- Revised Capability Development Plan on Defence (2018),
- European Defence Industrial Development Program (2019),
- Set of actions to force the complex approach to foreign, security, defence, technological, industrial policies to strengthen especially defence effectivity<sup>8</sup>, start of working on „strategic compass“ (2020),
- European Defence Fund (2021-2027).

Six CFSP military missions/operations are going on, eleven rather civilian. EU military cooperation has not ended own military activities of member states. The list of PESCO projects is rising. The „philosophy“ behind all this is clearly spelled out: „To our east, countries are facing military, economic, political and energy-security related threats and vulnerabilities. Across the Mediterranean and parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the spread of ungoverned spaces and conflict has left a vacuum for terrorists and criminals to thrive. Regional rivalries are escalating and we have witnessed a dramatic rise in civilian victims and refugees across the world, with more than 60 million people displaced. Greater connectivity is blurring the boundaries between internal and external security. And climate change and resource scarcity, coupled with demographic growth and state fragility can also

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<sup>8</sup> Especially <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/at-the-heart-of-our-european-union>



drive conflict and instability around the world.”<sup>9</sup> (p. 7) Consequently it is postulated: „Moving forward, effective European security and defence will rest on efficient coordination of major research and development investments made by the EU and its Member States. This will help keep pace with new trends and generate the technological and industrial capabilities Europe needs to ensure its strategic autonomy.“ (ibid, p.10) As EU cyber preparedness is seen as central to the Digital Single Market, as well as to the Security and Defence Union, enhancing EU cybersecurity and addressing threats to the civilian and the military targets are seen as challenges of highest priority.

14. In balancing the struggles about the creeping militarization of the EU in the past decades, the conclusion imposes itself that a combination of incapability to really address the EU level of politics, combined with an unwillingness to react to the structural changes concerning the relation of war and peace has been the cause for an ever increasing defensive situation of pacifist and emancipatory forces in Europe. This presents a challenge of identifying, understanding and radicalizing new forms of resistance and new forms of creating alternatives, as they are emerging in the real struggles of our times.

15. The most urgent challenges are today:

- To analyse and to explain the complex of recent developments (cf. thesis 13), and especially the dynamic development of technologies connected with defence and security and their relation to energy, transport, food/water, technologies with according materials, and finance,
- To discover and to explain the vulnerability of „the complex“ of the ruling forces, reflecting crises and even crashes,
- To analyse and to discuss why the democratic and progressive forces have not been able to make use of crises (such as the collapse of the „socialist“ system, the global financial crisis, or the present pandemic) in order to change the course of development,

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<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-defence\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-defence_en.pdf)



- To search for possibilities to deal with the problems clearly identified and, while making use of these possibilities, to grow stronger and build an ability to overcome the domination of this complex. Such a „transformative dealing with security threats“, will have to address the tasks (and solve the problems) of sustainably changing the very agencies of the on-going reproduction of the dominant structures of production, consumption, and ideological domination.

16. Specifically relating to „defence“ or „peace“ there are some more specific challenges:

- To analyse and to explain the genesis of the on-going conflicts in a global perspective, while analysing the role of the EU and its member states in their development,
- to establish a monitoring program for armed conflicts with special relevancy for the EU or its member states,
- to learn to analyse concrete conflicts from the perspective of the weakest, the most vulnerable victims, and to formulate proposals and demands starting with the question: what would help them under present conditions.

This would be the starting point for developing concepts for the resolution of conflicts which could be really implemented

- in order to resist specific military plans
- in order to give support to specific demands for disarmament, to a reduction of military capacities, and to boycotting initiatives regarding any purchases, sellings, investments, credit, agreements/treaties with a military dimension,
- to make clearly visible the connections that exist between the issues of peace, health, and climate/biodiversity, „translating“ them into specific demands, proposals, and concepts.

To begin to build an alternative, constructive network of global relations of the EU to the entire world which will function as an attractive constellation for all major powers, especially for the USA, for China, and for Russia.

17. Since the first celebration of the European Green Deal (EGD) in December 2019, the military dimension in EU policy has been on the rise, thereby continuing a general



process, reinforced as such especially since 2016, and, even more recently, on the pretext of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem to be addressed is a deeply anchored structural one: Neither the predecessors of the EU, nor the EU itself, have been a peace project at any time. The task of developing alternatives to their policies, opening the way for a radical emancipatory-solidarity peace policy, has to address, and to cope with, the complexity of the problematique of EU politics, lying beyond and yet strongly at stake in national political arenas, and to overcome the weakness of the left wing forces in this problem area.

18. The EuroMemorandum 2021<sup>10</sup> should focus on

- a clear exclusion of means for military purposes from all recovery programs of the EU and the member states,
- the establishment of a common health policy on the financial basis of CSDP,
- supporting the existing initiatives for a international moratorium of modernising and
- proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>10</sup> The proposal of a thematic workshop could function as a starting point for the establishment of a competent network of economists, ecologists, peace and health activists to discover connections, stressed in this text, to formulate common demands, positions, concepts and initiatives.



## **B) A first illustration of the main thrust of our theses: relevant initiatives taken by EU institutions since the publication of European Green Deal**

### *The stated goal of the EU*

The European Commission describes the „European Green Deal“ (EGD) as „a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.“ (European Commission 2019, 2). „Growth strategy“ here means to continue the general policy and some concrete policies to protect (and to increase) the EU’s own share in the global markets and global economy. This means, by way of consequence, that it does not allow to reduce the own share of the EU in the global consumption of resources significantly. This is tightly connected with the underlying aim of a competitive economy (i.e. an economy that solves its own problems on the shoulder of weaker ones). The result is an increase in social and also in ecological problems<sup>11</sup>. The commitment to the postulate of „No net emissions of greenhouse gases“ has to be read as a promise that some greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced, while some fossile fuels will be continued in use. The emissions should be „balanced“/“offset“ by an „equivalent“ amount of „carbon removal“. This may include storing carbon produced underground (carbon capture and storage CCS) and preserving or planting forests to „sequester“ the carbon. As we know, the technological problems of all of this are not really solved and, certainly, will not be solved in the future. The production and use of these technologies cannot avoid the high environmental risks involved and, not the least problem, they cannot prevent highly negative democratic, social, ecological and global impacts from emerging (see also Corporate Europe 2020<sup>12</sup>). It is not just by coincidence that the declared objective of the EGD does not focus on the crucial issue of biodiversity. Furthermore, the commission knows very well, that half of total greenhouse gas emissions and more than 90 per cent of biodiversity loss and water stress come from

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<sup>11</sup> Economic concentration and centralisation processes tend to cause additional transport and, again, enlarged production, i.e. growing use of resources.

<sup>12</sup> <https://corporateeurope.org/en/a-grey-deal>



resource extraction and processing, but does not address the problem in the necessary extent and in its complexity.

Consequently, the declared aim of „transforming the EU into a fair and prosperous society“ does not really provide an orientation towards a society (or group of societies) of people being free, socially equal living in an intact nature and, consequently, in solidarity among themselves, neither on the European, nor on the global level. As a consequence, it is not surprising that the communication from the European Commission on the „European Green Deal“ does not include the terms „peace“ and/or „war“. What it does instead, is to make ample use of the term „security“, related to „security of supply“ (ibid 6), „access to resources“ (ibid 8), or „resource security“ (ibid. 22), as well as to the more complex issue of „stability“:

**“The EU also recognises that the global climate and environmental challenges are a significant threat multiplier and a source of instability.** The ecological transition will reshape geopolitics, including global economic, trade and security interests. This will create challenges for a number of states and societies. The EU will work with all partners to increase climate and environmental resilience to prevent these challenges from becoming sources of conflict, food insecurity, population displacement and forced migration, and support a just transition globally. Climate policy implications should become an integral part of the EU’s thinking and action on external issues, including in the context of the Common Security and Defence Policy.” (ibid 21)

In the context of the text of this communication “stability” is to be understood as avoiding impacts from social, ecological, economic, technological, societal and global changes, generally by managing the impacts of these changes and by protecting the own positions of power, and the own societal and global privileges. It simply means that the societally and globally ruling forces should remain societally and globally ruling. Violence against people, which includes situations of poverty, and violence against nature should not be strategically tackled and structurally overcome. Monitoring, observing, manipulating, oppressing, exploiting, repressing and even killing people are not excluded by the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The dramatic ecological consequences of the military are already well-known: The US-American Department of Defence flatly states: “DOD is the world’s largest institutional user of petroleum and correspondingly, the single largest producer of greenhouse gases (GHG) in



the world.” (Crawford 2019, 1-2) But this is “only” one important fact<sup>13</sup> of a huge complex of problems. A recent UN report details environmental degradation in West Bank and Gaza<sup>14</sup>. Likewise, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan have had a terrible destructive impact on the natural living conditions in these countries<sup>15</sup>. Herbicides like Agent Orange sprayed by US forces on Vietnam’s forests, decimated about 4,5 million acres in the countryside. Some regions are not expected to recover for many decades. Even at our time, malformations and terrible human misery result from the use of these chemical weapons. During the Rwandan massacres in 1994 also local populations of animals like the roan antelope and the eland became extinct<sup>16</sup>. “If we had invested the \$3.9 trillion that the war in Iraq will ultimately cost, we would generate nearly 40% of our electricity with new renewables”<sup>17</sup>, wrote an US-American author.

#### *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the digital perspectives of the EU*

When the EGD was finalised, the COVID-19 pandemic has been already going on. Already years ago, when facing diminishing biodiversity, scientists warned of pandemics caused by infections from animal viruses<sup>18</sup>. This issue, as well the ecological consequences of military missions in general, are simply missing in the communication of the European Commission. The communication orients the European industry towards a “transition to a sustainable model of inclusive growth” (European Commission 2019, 7) and announces an industrial strategy of the EU, defined by the EU commission, “to address the twin challenge of the green and the digital transformation” (ibid). In February, the European Commission published its packet of activities on the EU’s digital future. The COVID-19 pandemic is simply not mentioned. But the issue of being vulnerable to malicious cyber activity is referred to. “To tackle this growing threat, we need to work together at every stage: setting consistent rules for companies and stronger mechanisms for proactive information-sharing; ensuring operational cooperation between Member States, and between the EU and Member States; building synergies between civilian cyber resilience and the law enforcement and defence

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<sup>13</sup> <https://ceobs.org/how-does-war-damage-the-environment/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://ceobs.org/un-report-details-environmental-degradation-in-west-bank-and-gaza/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social/environment>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-effects-of-war-on-environment-1708787>

<sup>17</sup> <https://grist.org/climate-energy/for-the-price-of-the-iraq-war-the-u-s-could-have-gotten-halfway-to-a-renewable-power-system/>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.ufz.de/export/data/global/30752\\_Spangenberg-et-al\\_Scenarios\\_GEB-2012.pdf](https://www.ufz.de/export/data/global/30752_Spangenberg-et-al_Scenarios_GEB-2012.pdf)



dimensions of cybersecurity; ensuring that law enforcement and judicial authorities can work effectively by developing new tools to use against cybercriminals; and last but by no means least, it means raising the awareness of EU citizens on cybersecurity.” (European Commission 2020a, 5) The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence (AI)<sup>19</sup> and the European data strategy<sup>20</sup> are meant to show that “Europe can set global standards on technological development while putting people first”<sup>21</sup>. These documents are the first pillars of a new digital strategy of the Commission. According to it, digitalisation benefitting the EGD would need to undergo a green transformation of the very sector of the information and communication industries. Data centres and telecommunications have to become more energy efficient, make use of more renewable energy, and should become climate neutral by 2030. The declared aim of the strategy is to create a genuine single market for data, where personal and non-personal data are secure and where businesses and the public sector have good access to large amounts of high quality data. This single market should become a space where all data-driven products/services respect EU rules. This would ensure the technological sovereignty in a globalised world and unlock the huge potential of the technologies. According to this strategy, the Commission announced a Digital Services Act package in June 2020. The Institute for Security Studies ISS refers to another aspect of the same issue: “... the competition to control new technologies (both hardware and associated software and algorithms), and the willingness to use them to gain an advantage over other states, underlines the growing importance of ‘digital power’. It is for this reason that the European Commission has stated that it is imperative for the EU to establish ‘technological sovereignty’ in areas of key strategic importance such as defence, space, mobile networks (5G and 6G) and quantum computing.”<sup>22</sup> Without the technological command of digital technologies, the EU would lose international influence and political autonomy. It needs to spend \$120-\$140 billion on the modernisation and digitalisation of its armed forces in the coming years (or \$20-\$30 billion annually) (ibid). The documents of the Commission from February do not directly mention defence. But the new EU Industrial Strategy clearly does. “Nevertheless, these initiatives do beg two interrelated questions: 1) how might digitalisation affect the way Europe’s armed forces plan and act? and 2) what should

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<sup>19</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust_en)

<sup>20</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age_en)

<sup>21</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/building-european-data-economy>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/digitalising-defence>



defence planners in Europe do to benefit from digitalisation while also managing the inevitable risks?" (ibid). The ISS declares:

1. "Digital technologies can improve the operational readiness, effectiveness and technological sovereignty" of the armed forces of the EU. For defence to benefit from.
2. There is a lack of statistical clarity of the digital state of the armed forces in the EU. Action is needed to bring this clarity by the reporting mechanisms under CARD<sup>23</sup> and PESCO<sup>24</sup>.
3. A forthcoming "strategic compass" is needed. The EU needs "better foresight capacities to understand the link between digital capability development and digital vulnerabilities and how digitalisation should be included in any future European threat analysis and defence strategy." (ibid).

While military communications, sensing, logistics and maintenance/control are nearly fully computerised and interconnected, cyber defence is of vital and growing significance. As military equipment, processes and informatics systems are becoming more and more intertwined, the potential for cyberattacks is increasing. But the ISS needs a supplement: "As Vladimir Putin declared in September 2017, 'Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world.' AI has benefited from the convergence and industrial maturity of big data, machine learning, and increased computing capacity. Given the strategic, political, and economic stakes, it should be the subject of sustained attention by state actors who can build effective partnerships with private actors – something that could lead to 'an overall trend toward the centralization of power in the hands of a few actors'. Concentration and dispersion lead to the concept of 'digital power' ... With the merging of the economic and military spheres, we will observe digital power both on the chessboard and the web.

It is very often said that the Covid-19 crisis mainly accelerated existing trends. Two of them should be underlined. First, it reflects the escalation in the Sino-American rivalry. Second, it reflects the crucial interplays of digital platforms, and the emergence of a cognitive

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<sup>23</sup> Coordinated Annual Review on Defence: a process of monitoring the defence plans of European Union (EU) member states to coordinate spending and identify possible collaborative projects

<sup>24</sup> Permanent Structured Cooperation: part of the EU Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in which 25 member states's forces pursue structural integration.



competition. What would be the consequences for Europe and the Middle East?” (Gomart 2020, 90). And of course, AI allows the development and implementation of new kinds of arms which seem to make war a technological game and thereby increases the danger of war.

### *An industrial strategy*

As planned, the European Commission presented its industrial strategy in March 2020. At that moment, the COVID-19 pandemic had reached dramatic dimensions in some EU member states. Yet, the issues of public health and the complex situations of the pandemic in the member states are not really addressed in the communication. There is only the following statement “Access to medical products and pharmaceuticals is equally crucial to Europe’s security and autonomy in today’s world. A new EU pharmaceutical strategy will be put forward, focusing on the availability, affordability, sustainability and security of supply of pharmaceuticals.” (European Commission 2020b, 14) Often the terms “security”, “autonomy” and “sovereignty” are used and this forms the focus of the communication: “New and ever-changing geopolitical realities are having a profound effect on Europe’s industry. Global competition, protectionism, market distortions, trade tensions and challenges to the rules-based system are all on the rise. New powers and competitors are emerging. More established partners are choosing new paths. Coupled with a period of global economic uncertainty on the horizon, these trends pose new challenges for Europe’s industry as it sets off on the twin ecological and digital transitions.” (ibid, 3) But whereas global competitiveness and the ability to act globally to protect one’s own interests, i.e. one’s own global privileges or “security”, the digital transition cannot constitute (nor enable) a ecological transition which is socially and globally just (we refrain, for the time being, from closer examining the term “transition” here). Two points are decisive here: First, these strategies are oriented towards growth as such (and we have already stressed the underlying understanding of “growth” which excludes the necessary significant absolute reductions in the use of material and energetical resources). Second, digitalisation needs electricity, rare earths, and specific metals. Digitalisation might, indeed, become a much greater threat to ecology than its capacities for enabling more resource and energy efficiency (Bieser et al., 2020). The production of hydrogen which is claimed to be an essential solution is energy-



intensive and therefore more inefficient and expensive than a direct use of electricity<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, reducing energy consumption and expanding renewable energies must remain a priority. Green hydrogen is particularly energy-intensive and therefore only makes sense for very special applications. Hydrogen strategies are in fact introduced in order to open backdoors for a further use of fossile energies. The terrible working and living conditions of people in the countries producing and delivering rare earths are being often referred to<sup>26</sup>, but not often enough and in no sustainable way. The same must be said about the trade and the military conflicts which are related to the rare earth materials needed for digitalisation<sup>27</sup>. As even the ISS has explicitly stated, the industrial strategy of the commission has a strong military dimension. “The European defence and space sectors are essential for Europe’s future defence and digital applications. However, the fragmentation of the defence industry puts into question Europe’s ability to build the next generation of critical defence capabilities. This would reduce the EU’s strategic sovereignty defence and and its ability to act as a security provider.” (European Commission 2020b, 13) And the defence and space industries face global competition, in “a changing geo-political context, and new opportunities with the emergence of rapidly evolving technologies, and the emergence of new actors. By seeking synergies between civil, space and defence industries in EU programmes, the EU will make more effective use of resources and technologies and create economies of scale.” (ibid., 15)

Here the demand for raw materials is projected to double by 2050. This makes “diversified sourcing essential to increase Europe’s security of supply. Critical raw materials are also crucial for markets such as e-mobility, batteries, renewable energies, pharmaceuticals, aerospace, defence and digital applications.” (ibid) In March 2020, in connection with the industrial strategy, the European Commission also presented the communication “An SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe” and its “Circular Economy Action Plan. For a cleaner and more competitive Europe”. The “security”/military dimension is also strong here: “In the diverse industrial landscape, the space and defence sectors are key for the EU’s strategic and technological sovereignty and offer great potential for European SMEs. However, the defence sector supply chains have been predominantly built on a national basis. The Commission will thus boost cross-border cooperation and entry of new players by

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<sup>25</sup> <https://republicofmining.com/category/mining-slave-labour-historical-and-current/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rare-earths-next-element-trade-war>

<sup>27</sup> <http://l.duh.de/p200428> <https://www.presseportal.de/pm/22521/4619352>



maximising the potential of the European Defence Fund. In particular this will include calls for proposals targeted at SMEs, the dedicated SME bonus and award criterion, and connecting SMEs with the wider defence community. The Fund will help to open up the defence supply chains, linking the large system integrators with the entire defence SMEs ecosystem across the Union. The Commission will also map the strengths of relevant Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) and universities which can support innovative start-ups and SMEs in the sector. The Commission also aims to increase the number of successful start-ups and scale-ups in the space sector, which are commercialising EU space technologies. It will promote, through the EU Space Programme, the emergence of a European New Space eco-system to foster entrepreneurship. The new Space Entrepreneurship Initiative "CASSINI" will regroup services such as acceleration, business incubation, seed-funding and pre-commercial procurement." (European Commission 2020c, 9-10).

### *Military and civil technologies*

The blurring of the boundaries between military and civil technologies and building of bridges and networks between both spheres are not a new phenomenon. The efforts and interests of political and institutional actors to secure strategic raw materials for technologies in both of the spheres are also not new on the EU level. But the present complex approach to competitiveness, "security" and military, autonomy and sovereignty of the EU, as it is now more energetically implemented in a green garb is rather new. This finds its reflection, not least, in the present proposal for the EU budget.

"Germany should use its upcoming EU Presidency to lead the effort to shield key European defence and industrial capabilities. It could propose a pragmatic redesign of instruments like the European Defence Fund and PESCO." (German Council on Foreign Relations 2020, 1) The German Council of Foreign Relations recommends the Germany government to propose adapting the European Defence Industrial Development Program and the European Defence Fund to enable countries to safeguard critical capabilities. Both instruments should also be considered for developing and deploying innovative 'means of conflict' on the basis of the comprehensive conflict strategy outlined above. As Germany during its presidency has been leading the work on PESCO, it should also come up with ideas for adapting PESCO to the new



realities of the post-COVID-19 world. The COVID-19 crisis is causing cuts in budget expenditures on military objectives, but this should not destroy the plans for working on the Security and Defence Union, as they had been agreed on before. Innovative financing models should be developed with the EU covering the cost for maintenance or lease of systems. The EU should even become the operator, e.g. for routine transport planes and some infrastructure. All measures should be open to non-EU Europeans. The recommendations of the German Council are taken seriously on government level, especially by the German defence minister Kramp-Karrenbauer<sup>28</sup>.

On 29 May 2020, the defence ministers of France, Germany, Italy and Spain jointly signed a letter for the attention of their counterparts from the other 23 EU member states of the European Union, as well as the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The letter initiated by Kramp-Karrenbauer is especially interesting for four reasons: It shows a) the already existing complexity of military tools which are asked to be implemented more effectively and improved, b) the link of the strategies of the European Commission, as highlighted, to a defence policy in “our common security interests”, c) the will to exploit the Coronavirus pandemic for further militarisation, d) the focus on the cooperation with NATO which is also bent upon making use of the pandemic for reinforcing its own strategies<sup>29</sup>. The signatories of the letter want to strengthen and to deepen the tools and processes launched in 2016 in the strategic, capability and operational domains in order to enhance “freedom of action” and to develop “necessary capabilities”. The event of the pandemic is seen to highlight that “we have to significantly intensify our efforts and to strive towards a more integrated, effective and capable European Union in the international sphere.”<sup>30</sup> Especially in the light of the current pandemic, available defence capabilities should be shown to be effective in the support of existing civil crisis management mechanisms. Accordingly, the already ongoing debate on a more efficient crisis management system should be intensified. PESCO as the key framework for European defence cooperation should be mobilised and PESCO projects further enhanced. The 2020 Strategic Review is seen as a critical opportunity to reflect achievements and identify where more has to be done: “In the second phase of PESCO (2021-2025) we must deliver, both on commitments and on projects, in particular

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.euractiv.de/section/europakompakt/news/verteidigungs-und-sicherheitspolitik-im-herbst-neue-initiativen-und-zankende-verbuendete/>

<sup>29</sup> e.g. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_176197.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_176197.htm?selectedLocale=en)  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions\\_176480.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_176480.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/at-the-heart-of-our-european-union>



regarding military operations, where significant progress has to be done.” (ibid) The projects agreed upon will have to be implemented, above all the operational ones and those related to the European Defence Technology and Industrial Base (EDTIB). For evaluation of this process the respective annual National Implementation Plans should remain the central tool. It is postulated that the open issue of Third States’ participation in PESCO projects should be solved urgently. It is argued that the ongoing COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the need for a stronger control of key technologies and production capabilities: “According to the New Industrial Strategy for Europe, this implies the reduction of dependencies, filtering of foreign direct investments, support for disruptive technologies, strengthening of synergies between defence and civil industries and enhanced use of financial tools. Building Europe’s industrial, technological and digital sovereignty requires us to link our economic policies even stronger with our security interests.” (ibid.) This should be accepted as another argument for an ambitious European Defence Fund EDF, supporting the European economy and the EDTIB, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Furthermore, Cooperation has to be strengthened to increase efficiency. The role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) should remain central as a cooperation platform in the field for defence contributing to the reinforcement of the EDTIB. This year’s first official CARD cycle should, accordingly, identify critical areas where Europeans should develop common capabilities: “... a political guidance should be coordinated within the Council structures, taking into account the military expertise. Coherence between EU and NATO capability processes should continue to be pursued ... We are convinced that we need a greater common strategic understanding of what we want to be able to do as Europeans in security and defence. We are therefore committed to the development of a ‘Strategic Compass’, which will further specify and operationalise the level of ambition defined by the EU Global Strategy.” (ibid) It is argued that it would help to improve ambition and consistence in using different tools and so increase efficiency of the use of resources, which also would be in the interest of NATO. NATO as the core partner should gain, in this perspective, from an improved working of the EU in these fields and from a clearer statement of its respective missions. Building on the experience from past EU missions, military CSDP should be reinforced. “This could range from the chain of command to the implementation in the field and to enhancing CSDP missions and operations’ resilience. This is key for the security of our armed forces and for our credibility.” (ibid) Strengthening the European Command and Control structures would



be fundamental to tackling the threats and challenges to be faced. This is seen to need a sound EU military expertise on the side of the EU Military Staff (EUMS)<sup>31</sup>. Such an expertise should also support the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee and the institutions. The Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) as part of EUMS are planned to be further developed, with an explicit reference to taking into account the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis, alongside with non-executive military missions and two executive military operations<sup>32</sup>. The EU C2<sup>33</sup> should be similarly reviewed regarding its suitability across the operational spectrum of the EU Level of Ambition<sup>34</sup>. “The European Peace Facility should be available from January 2021, enabling us to provide our partners with the full spectrum of military equipment they need for their armed forces, providing a solid financial mechanism for the common costs of CSDP operations and missions and overcoming the geographical limitation of the African Peace Facility wherever is deemed necessary by the Council. This will make our support to partners even more effective and enhance our credibility, also in view of future immense crises like COVID-19.” (ibid) And, finally, “A strong European defence is critical in this process and adequate internal communication is vital to explain its relevance to our citizens.” (ibid)

### *The security union strategy*

Accordingly, the European Commission has published its new communication on the security union strategy covering the period 2020-2025. As it explicitly declares: „It sets out a whole-of-society approach to security that can effectively respond to a rapidly-changing threat landscape in a coordinated manner ... Its goal is to offer a security dividend to protect everyone in the EU.” (European Commission 2020d, 2) This strategy is supposed to continually realise three general objectives:

1. „Building capabilities and capacities for early detection, prevention and rapid response to crises“
2. „Focusing on results“

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<sup>31</sup> A directorate-general of the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the Director General of the EUMS also serves as Director of the MPCC - exercising command and control over the operations.

<sup>32</sup> EUAM RCA, EUNAVFOR MED Irini

<sup>33</sup> European Command and Control structures

<sup>34</sup> Agreed strategic aim of military ability to protect EU interests



3. „Linking all players in the public and private sectors in a common effort“ (ibid, 5) – also and especially by using public private partnerships (ibid., 9)

„Assertive industrial policies by third countries, combined with the continued cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, are changing the strategic paradigm for protecting and advancing European interests. This is accentuated by the rise of dual-use applications – making a strong civilian technology sector a strong asset for defence and security capability. Industrial espionage has a significant impact on the EU’s economy, jobs and growth: cyber theft of trade secrets is estimated to cost the EU €60 billion. This calls for a thorough reflection of how dependencies and the increased exposure to cyber threats affect the EU’s capacity to protect individuals and businesses alike.“ (ibid, 5) Cybersecurity, cybercrime, [cyber-]attacks, as well as hybrid and terrorist activities, and organised crime, are seen as most critical for EU security. While security threats are not respecting borders and the inter-connection between internal and external security is continuously increasing, it is seen as important for the EU to cooperate with international partners and to maintain a close coordination with EU external action in the implementation of the strategy (ibid, 26). However, due to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed expenditures from the long-term EU budget 2021-2027 (MFF) to actions under the heading of „Security and Defence“ – including actions in relation to internal security, crisis response, nuclear decommissioning, and the area of defence – have been cut by agreement of the European Council in July: the budget for the European Defence Fund by 39 per cent and the European Peace Facility by 46 per cent. The military mobility contribution was reduced by 74 per cent. But the resolution of the European Parliament which has to agree to the MFF mentioned the EDF as one of the flagship programmes where it seeks to negotiate an increased budget. The EP demanded also more means for actions related to the future – education, research, development of new technologies/digitalisation. Also these fields have a military dimension, as already touched upon – which could be used to further strengthen „security and defence“ policies. Moreover, reduced financial means increase the role of the prioritisation of defence initiatives. Most certainly, the Commission will develop a set of priorities that could build up a momentum already in the preparation of the post-2027 budget. This would focus on those areas where the technological and strategical dependency seems to be most pressing. An example of this is the Eurodrone project, as a building block for achieving the proclaimed goal of strategical autonomy. Another such



example is the ESSOR project<sup>35</sup> aiming at developing common technologies for European military radios, and defence initiatives that reinforce the development of artificial intelligence.

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<sup>35</sup> It is supposed to provide a secure military communication system, improving voice and data communication between Member States' Armed Forces on a variety of platforms.