



# The Nordics and the New European Security Architecture

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## Summary

There has been a rapid development of forums and mechanisms for security cooperation in Europe in recent years. Novelties such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), the Joint Expeditionary Forces (JEF), Framework Nation Concept (FNC) and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) have been added to a field already dense with acronyms. This study summarizes recent developments in European security cooperation, analyses the added value of the new structures and discusses what these might mean for Nordic security and the Nordic states.

From a Nordic perspective, it is striking that Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland – which differ considerably on European Union (EU) and NATO membership, as well as on EU defence policy and euro participation – have all adopted fairly similar positions on Europe’s new security formats. From different positions, and with somewhat different arguments, all of these states are trying to reap the benefits of the new EU structures and have joined “mini-lateral” groupings focused around big players such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

This alignment of institutional choices should not, however, be interpreted as a surge of “Nordism” – the Nordic states as a political force. On the contrary, the report illustrates how Nordic cooperation and cohesion are formed within specific frameworks, such as bilateral links and Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO), but rarely leave these formats. Joint Nordic positions and interests are thus rarely leveraged in wider European platforms for security cooperation.

Regarding cooperation formats with one dominant leader – such as France’s EI2, the UK’s JEF and Germany’s FNC – the Nordic states to a large extent seem to be driven by national ambitions to build strong bilateral relations with Europe’s larger powers, while the other cooperative benefits of these frameworks are secondary.

One perceived benefit of all the Nordic states participating in the new platforms for cooperation is the increased levels of interoperability and enhanced habits of cooperation. Regardless of whether cooperation platforms add value to crisis management, deterrence or defence, there is a clear added value in increased levels of cooperation with the actors already present in your geographical neighbourhood in a time of crisis.



## Introduction

The first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have seen remarkable but uneven development of European security cooperation. Following its failed attempt to attach a military dimension to European integration through the 1952 European Defense Community, the European Union (EU) stayed clear of any direct security and defence role throughout the Cold War. Since the early 1990s, however, it has been developing gradually as a security forum and actor with various leitmotifs.

The first is on European **actorness**. The Balkan wars of the 1990s illustrated how unprepared European states were for managing issues in their own region. At the same time, the new orientation of NATO was still unclear following the demise of its traditional adversary. The capacity of Europeans to act and respond to crises was first channelled through the Western European Union (WEU) but transferred to the EU around the turn of millennium. Under the lead of High Representative Javier Solana, the EU increased its capacity as a crisis management actor during the early years of the century.

A second leitmotiv in the development of European security cooperation was that of **austerity**. The effects of the lending and banking crisis of late 2008/ early 2009 hit almost every European state and also affected military spending. Investing together and making the defence sector more effective were championed as the only way for European states to remain credible actors on the international security stage. As the then HR/VP, Catherine Ashton, suggested in 2012: "It's the only pragmatic way forward".<sup>1</sup>

Following Russian hostility in Georgia and later in Ukraine, the leitmotif of austerity was challenged by that of **protection**. This chimed with the more general level of conflict in the neighbourhood following the Arab Spring and the effects it had on migration to Europe. Europeans and their societies were to be protected against hybrid warfare and terrorism, but also from the dark undercurrents of globalization and even migration. For much of the 2010s, the activities of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) were geographically focused along the borders of Europe or its periphery, and often had as their aim to shield Europe from what were perceived as malign flows of goods or persons. "A Europe that protects" was a lead theme in Commission President Jean Claude Juncker's 2016 State of the Union and subsequent comments in the years that followed.

By the end of the 2010s, however, the mainly defensive focus on protection had been supplemented by that of **power**. The rise and increasing assertiveness of China and the America First policies of President Trump opened European eyes to a new game of geopolitical and geo-economic competition and conflict. The departure of the UK demanded action by the remaining 27 to showcase that integration was not dead, but more importantly also removed barriers to what could be achieved. The effect has been a rapid development of the instruments and mechanisms for security cooperation within the EU, strongly supported by an enthusiastic HR/VP, Federica Mogherini. Recognizing the centrality of power and power projection, the newly appointed HR/VP, Josep Borrell, stated in his European Parliament confirmation hearing that "the EU has to learn to use the language of power", and

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<sup>1</sup> Opening address by High Representative Catherine Ashton at the EDA annual conference (2012).



has repeated the point in his communications since.<sup>2</sup>

While the main leitmotif by which cooperation has been communicated – and to some extent also the output of European security cooperation – has shifted, the idea that Europe should undertake security tasks with some level of autonomy from other actors has been a recurrent theme. Whether in pursuit of actor capabilities, economic rationality, protection or the ability to project power, the aim has been to accomplish these ambitions with less reliance on external actors in general and the USA in particular. There has been a dramatic increase in ambition concerning autonomy in recent years. For example, the initial ambition for an autonomous capacity for small-scale interventions has developed into an ambition for full-blown strategic autonomy, or technological sovereignty in key sectors when applied outside of the military domain. Possibly the broadest concept of self-sufficiency, European sovereignty, has even been suggested spanning a wide array of societal fields.

The development of security cooperation within the EU, however, has not just added to cohesion among European states. Different threat perceptions, strategic cultures and senses of urgency to act in the new security landscape have incentivized individual countries as well as mini-lateral groupings to pursue security cooperation outside of EU structures.

The Nordic states have long been separated by their divergent geopolitical choices on how to provide security, how to deal with European affairs and what currency to trade in. By the end of the 2010s, however, it was possible to identify a trend towards an increasing level of cohesion. Sweden and Finland are now close partners of NATO. Norway is keen to make use of the new mechanism for security cooperation within the EU, and Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland have joined the main hubs of cooperation established outside of formal institutions: the France-led European Intervention Initiative (EI2), the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the German-led Framework Nations Concept (FNC). The question is of course whether they want the same out of these engagements, and whether there is any ambition to turn this cohesion on institutional preferences into political influence.

This report investigates the increasingly dense European security architecture with a focus on novel platforms for cooperation. Section 2 offers an overview of formats for cooperation and analyses what role they play for the Nordic countries. Section 3 offers country-specific contributions from national experts on how Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark are navigating and positioning themselves within the new European security architecture.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190926IPR62260/hearing-with-high-representative-vice-president-designate-josep-borrell>



## Part I – The New European Security Architecture

By Gunilla Herolf (UI) and Calle Håkansson (UI)

### The Initiatives

#### Joint Expeditionary Force

The British-led JEF is a high readiness expeditionary force built up around the rapid deployment capability that already exists within British forces, and which its partners are able to join. The JEF can respond quickly to a variety of threats across a full spectrum of military activities.<sup>3</sup> It can act independently or as part of an operation led by an organization, and it can include units from all the armed forces, mobilizing up to 10 000 troops. The JEF was launched in 2014 as a NATO framework concept, which initially comprised seven states. Among these were Denmark and Norway, while Finland and Sweden joined in 2017.<sup>4</sup> It was formed as a group of like-minded states, initially with a global focus but now increasingly centered on Russian threats.

All the Nordic states are positive about the JEF and see it as having several functions. As an expeditionary force, the JEF is appreciated for providing interoperability and training. A Norwegian viewpoint is that it provides opportunities for scenario planning and developing joint situational awareness, as well as improving lines of communication. In Denmark it has been noted that the JEF will be important for creating a coalition that is capable of simulating scenarios far above what the Danish armed forces would be able to do on their own.

The four Nordic states also see the JEF as contributing to deterrence and collective

defence activities, even including bridging operations since such an operation might be an important first response in a crisis. As is stated in the Danish analysis in part II, Denmark expects the JEF primarily to pursue collective defence tasks along NATO's eastern border. Similarly, in Norway it is seen as an important deterrent that increases the threshold for aggression against its members. In Finland, which sees a deterrent aspect in all initiatives, because it binds the leading powers closer to the north, the JEF is described as the most important of the three initiatives. The Baltic Protector exercise gave Finland welcome evidence of British commitment to the area. Swedish interlocutors, finally, underline that the signal of British interest in Sweden's neighbourhood is the most important aspect of the JEF, which summarizes for all four the importance they attribute to their relations with the United Kingdom.

#### European Intervention Initiative

According to the French Ministry of Defence, the aims of the French-led EI2 are: “fostering the emergence of a European strategic culture” and particularly “reinforcing the ability Europeans have to act together”. The aim is to conduct military operations across the whole spectrum of crises that could affect the security of Europe. The EI2's declared aim is not to duplicate but to complement NATO and the EU, and to have strong compatibility with both. Furthermore, it has a clear European focus but is not limited to EU member states. The EI2 claims to address “blind spots” in order to be able “to intervene,

<sup>3</sup> UK Ministry of Defence, *The Joint Expeditionary Force*, booklet, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The other participants are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Netherlands.



among Europeans, with a better reactivity and enhanced efficiency whenever necessary”.<sup>5</sup>

When the EI2 was launched in 2018 it initially comprised Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Finland joined in November 2018 and Norway and Sweden in September 2019. All the Nordic countries apart from Iceland are therefore participants, even though their reasons for participation differ somewhat.

The EI2 is unique among the initiatives mentioned here in that it has no connection to either the EU or NATO. The lack of an association with the EU has been mentioned as a reason for Sweden’s initial reluctance to join. For Norway and Denmark, however, this has positive effects since it means that they can be full members. The participation of the UK is an additional bonus.

Like other EU states the Nordic ones have commented on the EI2 focus on the global South. For Sweden and Denmark, this is not seen to be a problem. Both have an interest in Africa and a military presence in the Sahel region. The Nordic component is, however, appreciated, Denmark having worked for its inclusion and Finland seeing it as decisive in its decision to join.

There are other similarities among the Nordic states in their attitude to the EI2. All of them see the strengthening of relations with France as the most important aspect of the initiative. As expressed in Denmark, not joining might even harm relations with this key state. In Finland, apart from seeing the closer relationship with France as an addition to Finnish collective defence capability, the fact that one of the major

states has a Nordic aspect to its initiative is considered to be an added value.

Other comments refer more to the EI2’s role as an intervention initiative. The Norwegian interviewees see the EI2 as important since it improves coordination and crisis management preparation, the Swedish ones similarly refer to the advantages of acting together with others and Danish sources are of the view that in time it might come to play an important role in facilitating more efficient European interventions abroad. Both the Norwegian and the Danish sources allude to NATO, but in different ways. In the Norwegian case, the fact that the EI2 is only a complement to NATO is underlined (a *sine qua non* for Norway) whereas in the Danish one the EI2 is seen as important by Denmark because of the uncertainty around US commitments to NATO.

Another issue on which all states agree is the benefits to each of them in participating and, in particular, the beneficial aspects of having all the Nordic states (apart from Iceland) as members. Denmark, one of the original members, is mentioned as having actively sought to accomplish this.

### **The Framework Nations Concept**

Like the JEF, the German-led FNC was launched at the NATO Wales summit in 2014. Unlike the JEF and the EI2, however, its primary aim is increased capability. It gathers more than 20 states in northern, eastern and south-eastern Europe, including all the Nordic states except Iceland. Denmark and Norway joined in 2014, Finland in 2017 and Sweden in 2018. The FNC has 24 capability clusters, which together provide a full range of capabilities. Like the JEF, the lead state provides the military backbone while partner states fill gaps with their specialised assets. As

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<sup>5</sup> European Intervention Initiative, 26 Feb. 2019, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/dgris/international-action/l-ieii/l-initiative-europeenne-d-intervention>





declared by Germany, not only NATO but also EU shortfalls are to be addressed, and the FNC is seen as a link to unite the two in their efforts to build common capacity.<sup>6</sup>

Among the Nordic states, Norway seemingly attaches the most weight to the FNC, seeing it as a particularly functional and promising way to pursue defence cooperation, and especially beneficial to the research community. For Denmark, on the other hand, the FNC is said to be viewed as more bureaucratic than the other initiatives, and Germany as less of a strategic partner than France and the UK. Finland, it has been stated, also sees the FNC as less important than the JEF and the EI2, first and foremost because German activity in the area is considered low but also because relations between the FNC and PESCO are unclear. Swedish interviewees, finally, expect the FNC to have little effect on Swedish military capability, and therefore seek areas of cooperation that are already connected to PESCO and to Swedish shortfalls. Nonetheless, the FNC is important for Sweden due to its increased links with Germany, a view that is also expressed by representatives from the other countries.

### **PESCO and the European Defence Fund**

PESCO was introduced in the Lisbon Treaty as a process to deepen defence cooperation between those EU member states that were willing and able to do so. It was not established, however, until December 2017. The objective is to jointly arrive at a coherent and full spectrum of defence capabilities, while also being able to serve CSDP operations and missions.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to

the text of the Lisbon Treaty, once PESCO was established it issued an open invitation to all EU members to join. This was the result of an ambition by Germany and others (opposed to that of France) to avoid excluding smaller member states from the project. PESCO currently has 25 members and the number of PESCO projects has increased to 47.

PESCO complements and is closely connected to two other current initiatives. One of them is the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), a voluntary process which seeks to promote common development by identifying shortfalls among the participating states. The other initiative closely connected to PESCO is the European Defence Fund (EDF), which has two strands. One of these offers grants directly from the EU budget for collaborative research in innovative defence technologies and products. The other is about joint development and acquisition of defence equipment and technology through co-financing from the EU budget.<sup>8</sup>

Among the Nordic states, only Finland and Sweden are currently members of PESCO and the EDF. Sweden is positive about both but finds it necessary to link them to national processes. On the EDF, much is still undecided. All members have to contribute to the budget, which is not yet decided but likely to constitute a large contribution. It is therefore of high importance for Sweden to get a share of the EDF projects. Furthermore, the Swedish defence industry has been totally privatized, and is now partly owned by companies in the UK, the USA and Norway. It is therefore crucial that third

<sup>6</sup> Hagström Frisell, E and Sjökvist, E, *Military Cooperation around Framework Nations; A European Solution to the Problem of Limited Defence Capabilities*, FOI, FOI-R-4672-SE, Feb. 2019, p. 17 and 23; and *Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 20 July 2018, p. 8

<sup>7</sup> PESCO scope and ambition, <https://pesco.europa.eu/about/>

<sup>8</sup> A European Defence Fund: €5.5 billion per year to boost Europe's defence capabilities, Press release, 7 June 2017, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_17\\_1508](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_17_1508)



countries will be able to participate. Also Finland, with a smaller defence industry, welcomes both PESCO and the EDF. The latter will possibly provide a boost to Finnish R&D in the defence sector.

For Denmark and Norway the situation is more complicated. The Danish opt-out prevents participation in PESCO but not in the EDF, the reason being that the EDF takes place under the aegis of the European Commission, which is not covered by the Danish opt-out. Thus far Denmark has not participated in either and its future involvement is described as uncertain. Norway, which is excluded from the EDF under the terms of the programme, continues to seek entry, primarily through bilateral contacts with other states. Access to both parts of the EDF is seen as crucial, due to the positive effect it would have on the Norwegian defence industry and research community.

### **Nordic defence cooperation**

The merging of Nordic defence cooperation, which took place in 2009 under the label of NORDEFECO, has been accompanied by a deepening of efforts and, particularly following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, an increasing emphasis on territorial defence. The NORDEFECO Vision 2025 describes how deepening cooperation “will take place in peace, crisis and conflict”. Moreover, cooperation continues to cover a wide area, such as multinational operations, defence-related security sector reform, efforts to strengthen national defences and the ability to work together, a search for technological benefits and promoting the competitiveness of the defence industry. All the Nordic states participate in NORDEFECO, although Iceland only participates in the political aspects of cooperation.

As the situation in the Baltic Sea region has changed, so have also the Danish priorities.

While previously less involved in Nordic defence cooperation than the other states, following the war in Ukraine, Denmark is now thought to see the Baltic Sea region as more important than before. It is believed that as Danish threat perceptions move closer to those of the other Nordic states, NORDEFECO cooperation may also become more appealing. Finland, while seeing new possibilities in NORDEFECO, differs from Denmark in its geographical focus. For Finnish policymakers, trilateral cooperation between the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish armies is believed to have a great deal of potential. In addition, all the Nordic states seem to believe that in coming together they can have an impact on other states, be that in order to promote Nordic interests and culture or to join forces to promote the interests of one or more of the Nordic states.

### **Value added – Crisis Management, Collective Defence and Capacity Building**

Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have all found it to be in their interest to participate in the new initiatives. They have joined when invited, and continued through various means to seek to participate when not. Their reasons for joining largely coincide, even if the individual states sometimes differ when it comes to the importance they give to the various projects. It is also obvious that the reasons why the Nordic states are attracted to these initiatives does not only concern the tasks related to them. There are other benefits that the Nordic states hope to reap from cooperation.

The analysis in this section focuses on the various functions of the initiatives: crisis management, collective defence and capacity building. It describes how the new initiatives fit into the present structure of European cooperation on these three



functions and the likely impacts for the Nordic states.

### Crisis management

In spite of the ambitions of the EU Global strategy, few new CSDP missions have been initiated since 2016. Similarly, the Battle Group concept has been operational since 2007 but never used. This lack of activity has been criticized by France, which argues that the EU needs to deal much more proactively with problems such as terrorism, drugs, international organized crime, corruption and a growing population that, among other things, has led to large unemployment among young people. These problems are particularly serious in Africa and will ultimately have effects on Europe. The ongoing CSDP missions in Mali and Niger, which are dealing with capacity building and internal security, as well as the EU training mission and the UN Minusma in Mali, are seen as far from sufficient for managing these problems. In 2014 France launched Operation Barkhane, which aims to help the five Sahel states<sup>9</sup> maintain control of their territory and to counter Islamist terrorist groups. Barkhane will now be extended to a new mission, Task Force Takuba, in which national forces will be trained to fight terrorism and insurgencies. France is seeking European troop contributions, but thus far only Denmark and Estonia have joined, whereas the UK has promised to send helicopters. In addition, Sweden's preparations for possible participation are advancing.

The EI2 naturally fits into this context. There is an increasing understanding in Europe of the need to address the problems of the Sahel as a way to preventing them from reaching Europe, but not always to do so under French leadership. Germany, for example, is among those states that have

said no to Takuba. EI2 is different, however, as it is not connected to direct interventions and participation in any activity would be on a voluntary basis. The EI2 makes it possible for France to get a large number of states more involved in issues of the global South, while the other participants are able to be involved in a region which they also see as important and perhaps also influence France in another way than when participating in purely military French-led operations.

The JEF is an intervention initiative like EI2, but they differ in many respects: (a) the JEF is currently focused mainly on the North, while the EI2 focuses to a high degree on the South; (b) the JEF has a rapid response capability, while the EI2 as yet has no forces to rely on; and (c) the JEF – while able to act independently – also has a link to NATO, whereas the EI2 is totally in French hands. They may to some degree complement each other, one for northern threats and the other for southern, but not even together can they replace the CSDP which needs to develop a wider geographic frame. Nor is the CSDP likely to be sufficient for the EU: in many cases it is unlikely that all EU member states will vote in favour of a given mission. Instead, a coalition of the willing will be needed to take on a certain task, such as in the case of Libya in 2011. This is not to say that there are not strong links between PESCO and the CSDP. There are some PESCO projects planned that will contribute to crisis management missions and CSDP competences, such as the *European Medical Command* and the *EU Training Mission Competence Centre*. Furthermore, co-basing a project in PESCO could be seen as the EI2's contribution to PESCO, since this was discussed and developed in EI2 meetings, and it is therefore a way to link the EI2 and PESCO.

<sup>9</sup> The five Sahel states, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, are part of Barkhane and the

operation is also supported by the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and Denmark.



Both the JEF and the E12 fulfil important roles for the Nordic states in that they make it possible to exercise and cooperate with others, and especially the major defence spenders. The importance of this demonstrates the Nordic states' need, which is particularly important for those not in NATO, to connect with other, larger states, especially the E3 – France, Germany and the UK.

### **Collective defence/deterrence**

The JEF and E12 initiatives are formally unrelated to collective defence or deterrence (except when the JEF is leading the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, VJTF, for NATO). In recent years, however, as a consequence of Russian aggression in Europe, the JEF has changed from a global focus to an increased emphasis on northern Europe. The Nordic perception of this has been to see the JEF as a contributor to increased deterrence in the North.

The EU Military Mobility project has an important role to play in relation to collective defence – in both PESCO and the project led by the European Commission. There are currently several practical, legal and infrastructural barriers to the effective reinforcement of forces in case of a crisis in Europe. For instance, parts of Europe's transport infrastructure cannot withstand the traffic of heavy military vehicles, and there are several legal problems with and long bureaucratic procedures for moving forces within Europe. Thus, the PESCO project should help to "simplify and standardize cross-border military transport procedures", while the Commission project should help to finance projects to reinforce, improve and build European infrastructure. In the end, these projects should further enhance the EU's cooperation with NATO.

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<sup>10</sup> See e.g. "Europe's military mobility: latest casualty of EU budget battle", EURACTIV, 25-02-2020 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global->

However, the funding for the Commission's military mobility project is still to be agreed.<sup>10</sup>

Considering the different political situations in the Nordic states, it might be expected that their evaluations of this aspect would differ. In line with its view that all military cooperation increases deterrence and the chances of military help, Finland probably attaches most importance to this effect. The same should be the case for Sweden, which is in a somewhat better geographical location but also non-aligned. However, the fact that the deterrent effect is also highlighted by Denmark and Norway indicates that NATO membership is not an answer to all their security concerns. Of particular importance in this context is the role as a bridging mission in a scenario where the JEF and its rapid reaction capability could be present before forces under NATO command could gather.

There may, however, be other scenarios evolving in the North. It might be the case that US interest in Europe will weaken and that NATO reinforcements in the High North are not only delayed but also substantially weaker than expected. This would give not only the JEF (hopefully present or about to arrive) but also the Nordic states present in the area a more crucial role. A further consideration is the role of the Lisbon Treaty's Article 42.7 in a situation of a less engaged NATO. Would this formulation then live up to its words?

### **Capacity building**

For PESCO, the EDF and the FNC, the main ambition is to increase military capability in Europe. While PESCO and the EDF emanate from a perceived need not only to increase European capability vis-à-vis potential

[europe/news/europes-military-mobility-latest-casualty-of-eu-budget-battle/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-)



threats but also to reach what is called a higher level of “strategic autonomy”, the FNC is a NATO initiative. In practice, however, when delegated to Germany, it will answer to German as well as NATO needs and, according to Germany, also the EU’s shortfalls.

Due to the considerable amount of money involved, PESCO and the EDF are likely to be major determinants of the future of European defence companies and to have a huge impact on the capacity for defence-related research. Since the EDF projects are financed through the EU budget, the relation between budget costs and projects allocated will also have a crucial impact on the defence economies of Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

For Swedish-based defence companies, which employ 30 000 people in an industry at a very advanced technological level, the impact of the exclusion of third countries would be extremely negative. For Norway, where the defence industry is also of considerable importance, not being included in the EDF would have a similar impact. Denmark would also suffer from not being recognized by others as a possible EDF partner.

All the Nordic states, however, are similar in being small compared to states such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The large states have the upper hand in their ability to promote ideas for projects and consequently to receive the funds to develop them. The Nordic states should, however, derive good opportunities from their increasingly close NORDEFCO and the willingness of the defence and security industry associations to act together to build a common front.

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<sup>11</sup> Von der Leyen: “Europe must learn the language of power”, *Deutsche Welle*, 08112019,

## The Future and the Nordic States

As the introduction to this report notes, the concepts of territorial defence, power and assertiveness have become increasingly prevalent, first on a global basis and now also in Europe. The European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, has presented the Commission as geopolitical and asked that Europeans should now “learn the language of power”.<sup>11</sup> She wants the EU to assert itself on the world stage with other major powers, mentioning China, the USA and Russia, and to realize that soft security is not always sufficient. Similar expressions have also been used by the new High Representative, Josep Borrell, who argues that Europe has to defend its interests harder against China and the USA.

In spite of these statements, few things can be said with certainty about the future policy of the EU as a whole and therefore on its effects on the Nordic states. This goes for future relations with the currently unpredictable USA, given that the USA is sometimes an adversary in trade matters but at the same time – and for the foreseeable future – the guarantor of European security. A further complicating factor is that EU member states have very different views on the USA. Denmark, Finland and Sweden are among the “Atlanticists”. On Africa, it is not certain that the policy of President Macron will receive the full support of the EU. On Russia, the views of the Nordic, Baltic and many Central and East European states are not shared by all EU member states, which for various reasons, including business interests, see sanctions as too costly. There are other examples of the complicated relationship between the EU and its member states. This study has shown that the new initiatives are controlled by the major states, whereas the EU as an organization shapes the

<https://www.dw.com/en/von-der-leyen-europe-must-learn-the-language-of-power/a-51172902>



preconditions for much of the defence industry. The implications of this, and more generally of what PESCO and the EDF will mean for the division of power between states, on the one hand, and the EU, on the other, are as yet unclear. In this context, it should also be kept in mind that the line between the two should not be perceived as too strict, since national interests are also represented within the EU.

Several other processes are also under way. An EU “Strategic Compass”, initiated by Germany, seeks to operationalize the ambitions of the EU Global Strategy, while at the same time the EU Military Staff is working on a military contribution to EU strategic thinking. According to Sven Biscop, “what is needed is a clear expression of which security and defence responsibilities the EU must be ready to assume, through the CSDP and other policies, for which purposes, through which types of operations (high and low intensity), at which scale and with which concurrency”.<sup>12</sup> The new Strategic Compass is expected to be approved by the Council in May 2020. A common threat analysis will then be conducted by the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) in November 2020, and the Strategic Compass will finally be adopted during the French presidency in 2022.<sup>13</sup> The overall ambition for the Compass is not only to develop a “common understanding of threats and challenges leading to a common strategic culture”, but also to identify more specific goals to fulfil the EU’s level of ambition.<sup>14</sup>

This will be a tall order and it is difficult to estimate the outcome for the individual Nordic (EU and non-EU) states. One

important issue that should be considered – even if at this stage it does not affect security – is whether President Macron will get support for his plan for deeper integration of the members of the eurozone. This would give Finland, as a member of the euro, a privileged position, while Denmark and Sweden would be far from decision-making circles. For Denmark, on the other hand, closer EU involvement in the new initiatives might lead to an activation of the Danish opt-out, thereby also weakening the possibility of Nordic unity.

Another idea, supported by France and Germany, is that of a European Security Council, involving only a few states. The UK would be among them, which would be one of the main benefits of the plan. Its future shape, however, has not yet been finalized and is likely to be strongly contested by the smaller states, as some suggestions give the largest states a much more influential role than today.

Making EU foreign policy decisions subject to qualified majority voting has recently been discussed, and France and Germany are among the main proponents. Some see the size of the EU, combined with the need for unanimity, as a problem for its role as an actor. Another argument used to make the case is that China and Russia have on occasions influenced some EU member states to vote against the interests of the wider EU. Others have been less positive, believing that this could lead to less cohesion and that the states that end up in the minority would have little incentive to implement the decision. Generally, smaller states are more reluctant and fear that such

<sup>12</sup> Biscop, Sven, “From Global Strategy to Strategic Compass: Where Is the EU Heading?”, *Security Policy Brief*, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations,

<sup>13</sup> Interview EEAS, February 2020

<sup>14</sup> EEAS, Strengthening EU security and defence, 05/03/2020.

[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/75577/strengthening-eu-security-and-defence\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/75577/strengthening-eu-security-and-defence_en)



a reform might lead to dominance by the large ones.

The future of Europe will, of course, not only be determined by the EU. Future US policy, NATO's role and the relationship between NATO and the EU will be of great importance for the whole of Europe, including the Nordic states. There has been growing EU-NATO cooperation in recent years, along with an increasing awareness of their complementarity and of the many areas, such as cyber and hybrid warfare, that are common to both. In addition, a typical feature of northern Europe is that other states, including both NATO and EU members, are engaged in the security of the region.

As the four Nordic contributions to this report show, Nordic cooperation has not thus far been a strong factor in the reaction to the new initiatives. It is possible that as the EU seeks to create a new assertiveness for its member states, so too will the Nordic states. Most likely the Nordic influence will be strongest in connection with issues related to the Baltic Sea region. In order to pursue common interests or to gather their forces behind one of the Nordic states,

however, they will first need to unite around a single policy. Their ability to do so will be a reflection of their desire to have an impact.

In some respects, the preconditions for the Nordic states aligning more closely already exist. Russian policy has, as mentioned above, led Denmark to move closer to the views of the others. Furthermore, again due to Russian policy, cooperation has become more focused on territorial defence while, at the same time, there is an awareness that no conflict in the Nordic area will affect one state solely. Above all, insecurity is growing. It is obvious that no Nordic state, regardless of affiliation, feels as secure as before, and all of them are seeking further assurances. The JEF may have a role in a critical and fast developing situation but, as demonstrated by the Norwegian-Swedish-Finnish cross-border training that takes place almost every week in the north, so will the Nordic neighbours that are already there. The impact of their presence and the many large exercises taking place in the area will not just be relevant in a crisis but should also have a general deterrent effect on anyone with adversarial intentions.



## Part II – Nordic perspectives on European security

### Norway

By Maren Garberg Bredesen (NUPI) and Karsten Friis (NUPI)

How does Norway relate to the various new European defence cooperation formats? Which states are Norway coordinating with when engaging in these projects? Is there unexploited potential for common Nordic initiatives within the European formats? Or do traditional security relationships still take precedence?

Norway is welcoming of and supports the EU's increased role as a security and defence actor in Europe. In May 2018, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ine Eriksen Sørreide, and the Minister of Defence, Frank Bakke-Jensen, wrote a joint op-ed in support of the EU's ambitions in this regard, while also outlining its significance for Norway and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>15</sup> A 2017 white paper on the future course of Norway's foreign and security policy describes strengthening the European and Nordic dimensions as one of three main priorities.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the government's EU strategy for 2018–2021 emphasises three strands of cooperation in the field of security and defence: to deepen security dialogue and coordination with the EU; to strengthen practical cooperation; and to ensure good terms for the Norwegian defence industry.<sup>17</sup> Norway has also joined most of the new European defence cooperation formats, such as the

Framework Nations Concept (FNC), the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), and as a non-EU member state even the preparatory phase of the European Defence Fund (EDF), while it has declared an interest in joining the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

However, while Norway is definitely jumping on the European bandwagon, at the strategic level the Norwegian position on enhanced European defence cooperation is still characterised by concern about maintaining the transatlantic relationship and prioritising NATO.<sup>18</sup> More specifically, Norwegian security and defence policy is largely shaped by its proximity to Russian military bases and strategic capabilities in the north. Russian military exercises and increased activity close to Norwegian territory are felt on a daily basis. For this reason, NATO and the United States remain an indispensable and primary security guarantee for Norway. The government is very anxious to avoid duplication of effort or anything that might undermine these links. Norwegian engagement in the European initiatives should therefore be regarded as supplementary to NATO. This also means that Norway is less concerned about European "strategic autonomy" and more with using these new formats to channel Norway's traditional security priorities.

<sup>15</sup> Ine Eriksen Sørreide & Frank Bakke Jensen (2018). 'Økt sikkerhet gjennom EU', *Dagens Næringsliv*, 9. May.

<sup>16</sup> See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017). 'Veivalg i norsk utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk'. White Paper 36, 2016-2017.

<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-36-20162017/id2549828/>

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018). 'Norge i Europa. Regjeringens strategi for samarbeidet med EU 2018-2021'.

[https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/eustrategi\\_2018/id2600561/](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/eustrategi_2018/id2600561/)

<sup>18</sup> Ine Eriksen Sørreide & Frank Bakke Jensen (2018).





### **The European Defence Fund and Permanent Structured Cooperation**

The most pressing question regarding Norway's participation in European defence cooperation currently concerns access to the EDF and PESCO. As a non-EU member state, Norway is forced to seek alternative arrangements to gain access. This pursuit does not come without diplomatic, political and legal challenges.

The Norwegian reading of the EDF is that its main purpose is to be an economic policy tool for rationalising the European defence industry. In other words, for Norway, the initiative is mainly a matter concerning the European Single Market – and, thus, the European Economic Area (EEA).

Norway was a participant in Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) in the period 2017–2019. Its participation was facilitated by a temporary modification of a protocol to the European Economic Area agreement.<sup>19</sup> However, Norway did not participate in the most recent call for proposals for the commencement of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), due to the terms and conditions set out in the programme. Nonetheless, based on the generally positive experience with PADR, Norway continues to express strong interest in the EDF and is lobbying to join on a permanent basis as of 2021.

More specifically, the wish to participate in the EDF stems from the added value it is expected to have for the Norwegian defence industry. This industry is not insignificant: it has about 5000 employees, an annual revenue of €1.5 billion, and over 75 per cent

of its sales are outside of Norway. Of this, one-third of its exports go to EU member states. Norwegian defence companies, including subsidiaries, are present in several EU member states, such as Sweden, Finland, Poland, Germany, Spain, Ireland and the UK. The industry has a turnover of approximately €1 billion through its Nordic and European subsidiaries. A report commissioned by the Norwegian ministry of defence (MoD) in 2019 confirms that while it would cost Norway approximately NOK 200–400 million per year to participate in the EDF, the economic trade-off for Norwegian industries makes it cost-effective. As one interviewee put it: “it will be expensive for Norway to join, but it would be even more expensive not to”. Access to the EDF is also intended to benefit the Norwegian defence research community, as well as branches of civilian research, given the prospective synergies between the EDF and Horizon 2020/Europe. Nonetheless, the main concern for Norway is the prospective loss of market share should it not be granted full access. The latter point is critical to Norway; it seeks an opportunity to participate in *both* the research (DR) and the industrial development phase (EDIDP), as it would make little sense to join only the former.

However, a couple of reservations prevail. One issue regards sourcing the approximately NOK 3 billion required to sustain Norway's financial commitments to the EDF until 2027. The MoD is currently in the middle of developing a new long-term plan for its Armed Forces, which will influence defence budget allocations for the next four years. In terms of the structural arrangements, Norway is quite resolute that its participation should continue within the

<sup>19</sup> Norway's participation in PADR is facilitated by an amendment to Protocol 31 of the EEA Agreement, which extends the cooperation to include participation by the EFTA states in the EU's Preparatory Action on Defence Research. Thus far, however, this has not permanently extended the

scope of the EEA Agreement to include defence matters beyond the participation of the EFTA states for the limited timeframe of this specific preparatory action. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017PC0582&from=EN>



framework of the EEA, making it a matter also for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its budget. The EEA preference has been reinforced by a wish to be disentangled from the inflamed discussions about other third countries' access to the fund – notably the UK post-Brexit, but also the USA – fearing that Norway could become “collateral damage” in the quest for an alternative agreement for third countries.

In terms of security policies, Norway's official priorities within European and Nordic security cooperation are to develop closer security and defence dialogue with select EU allies – notably with Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore interesting to note in this context the reported lack of policy coordination or a joint Nordic argument in the discussion on access to the EDF. While Sweden has been making a strong case for third country participation and been sceptical of anything suggestive of “EU protectionism”, this has been interpreted mainly as an advancement of Sweden's interest in granting access first and foremost to the UK and to US-owned industries located in Sweden. Finland has also remained fairly pragmatic and not very actively involved in the discussions, as Matti Pesu explains in his contribution. At the same time, Norway has also used the opportunity to strengthen its bilateral relationships with bigger European players. Thus, the lack of a coordinated Nordic policy approach may not come from an unwillingness to adopt one, but simply

because other relationships and national concerns are taking precedence.

The competing interests of the Norwegian and Swedish defence industries may be another reason why it has been challenging to develop a Nordic approach. The Nordic states have undoubtedly had some notorious experiences when it comes to joint acquisitions and procurements in the past.<sup>21</sup> On the flipside, however, the EDF could offer a renewed opportunity for a more structured and mutually beneficial involvement of Nordic industry. The requirement that EDF projects must involve at least three participants from three member states or associated countries should make it attractive to industry to build a Nordic consortium. However, the fact that the EDF makes no formal requirement for joint acquisitions and that the procurement of capabilities remains a sovereign decision should be encouraging. Here, Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) would be a relevant framework for identifying, proposing and coordinating collaborative projects between the Nordic states that could help to fill European and/or Nordic capability gaps. This could be facilitated by NORDEFECO's Concept for Industry Dialogue,<sup>22</sup> as was previously proposed by the Joint Nordic Defence Industry Cooperation Group (JNDICG) in 2018.<sup>23</sup> In terms of PESCO, Norway's access alongside other third countries remains subject to the ongoing EU discussions about the legal framework for third party participation. For Norway, the question of

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019a). ‘Norge i Europa. Regjeringens arbeidsprogram for samarbeidet med EU 2019’. [https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/arbeidsprogram\\_eu2019/id2631053/](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/arbeidsprogram_eu2019/id2631053/)

<sup>21</sup> See Maren G. Bredesen and Karsten Friis (2019). ‘Governance Entrepreneurs as Spoilers in Nordic Defence Cooperation’, *Journal of Regional Security* 14:2, pp. 77-100.

<sup>22</sup> NORDEFECO (2015). ‘NORDEFECO Concept for Industry Dialogue’.

<http://www.nordefco.org/Files/2015-01-22%20NORDEFECO%20Concept%20for%20industry%20Dialogue%20ver%202.0.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Joint Nordic Defence Industry Cooperation Group (2018). ‘Food for Thought Paper – Considerations on the European Defence Fund and the EDIDP Work Programme’. <https://soff.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/20180821-EDF-letter-to-NORDEFECO-and-Nordic-NADs.pdf>



PESCO remains intimately tied to the EDF. Again, Germany is mentioned as one of the most prominent advocates of Norway's bid for access, as well as the Netherlands. The Northern Group has also proved to be an important venue in which to informally discuss Norway's interests.<sup>24</sup>

Norway is interested in joining PESCO due to its potential to meet operational and capability needs. Thus far, Norway has identified five or six relevant projects it would be interested in joining should it be invited, among which is the Military Mobility project – most importantly because this project is seen as strengthening NATO,<sup>25</sup> but also because it dovetails with NORDEF's work on Easy Access. Hybrid threats is another Norwegian priority in the PESCO context.<sup>26</sup>

Political party perspectives on Norwegian participation in PESCO and the EDF have been fairly unanimous, highlighting the benefits for the Norwegian defence industry and the importance of Norway as a contributor to European security. However, some centrist and leftist political parties remain critical and have called for a wider parliamentary debate about Norwegian participation in these formats, due to the perception that this will tie Norway more closely to the EU's common security and defence policy.<sup>27</sup>

Another risk with PESCO, as seen in defence circles, is the high number of projects that is being generated. The fear is that the high

ambitions and focus on outputs may come at the expense of structure and coordination – and, ultimately, PESCO's strategic impact. For Norway, it is critical that PESCO does not overlap with NATO efforts. Norway's level of interest in participating in PESCO projects is likely to be determined by the extent to which they are benchmarked against the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the extent to which they meet Norway's national operational and capability needs.

### **The Framework Nations Concept**

The FNC is held in high regard in Norwegian defence circles as a particularly functional and promising way of pursuing defence cooperation. Norway has sought to deepen its bilateral relationship with Germany – one of Norway's 'selected allies' when it comes to military cooperation.<sup>28</sup> This special relationship is reflected in the Norwegian Government's "Germany strategy for 2019", which clearly states that Norway is seeking to promote its interests in the EU through consultations with Germany, including potential collaboration in the EDF.<sup>29</sup> Thus far, Norway has only joined the FNC's capability development work but not the larger formations, due to so-called overstretch problems. Limited military resources prevent the Norwegian Armed Forces from committing troops beyond existing arrangements such as NATO's Response Force (NRF) and NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The only exception is the FNC's Multinational Medical Coordination Centre (MMCC, also known as

<sup>24</sup> Alexandra Brzozowski and Alicia Prager (2019). 'Northern Group aims to step up regional security cooperation', *Euroactiv*, 26 June.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/northern-group-aims-to-step-up-regional-security-cooperation/>

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019b). 'Redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker 24. oktober'.

[https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/redegjorelse\\_191024/id2675142/](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/redegjorelse_191024/id2675142/)

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019a).

<sup>27</sup> Stortingstidende Referat fra møter i Stortinget Nr. 81. 24. mai Sesjonen 2017–2018.

<https://www.stortinget.no/globalassets/pdf/referater/stortinget/2017-2018/refs-201718-05-24.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017).

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019c). 'Regjeringens Tyskland-strategi 2019'.

[https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/tysklandstrategi\\_no2019.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/dokumenter/planer/tysklandstrategi_no2019.pdf)



the European Medical Command), to which Norway is currently a contributor and regularly deploys liaison officers from the Armed Forces Joint Medical Services.

Norway actively participates in four of the FNC capability clusters and acts as an observer in another seven. The decision to join these clusters was based on the expected benefits they will have for specific but small Norwegian defence communities, including in research which will benefit from the international exchange and development of expertise within the FNC.

### **The Joint Expeditionary Force**

Norway has been a member of the JEF since its inception at the Wales NATO Summit in 2014.<sup>30</sup> Emphasising the JEF's rapid deployment capability, it is considered a tool that fulfils important aspects of Norway's operational needs and thereby strengthens Norwegian military robustness and readiness. At the strategic level, the multilateral nature of the JEF is seen as an important deterrent that increases the threshold for aggression against its members. In the event of a crisis or in the early phases of a military attack on Norway, the rapid deployment of the JEF is also seen as an important first response and potential "gap-filler" – or as a "bridging mission", as Gunilla Herolf argues in the case of Sweden – during a crisis and/or while awaiting a broader NATO response. Other practical benefits include joint exercises, and opportunities for scenario planning and to develop joint situational awareness, improve lines of communication and strengthen security policy relations.

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Defence (2019). 'Norge blir med i europeisk forsvarssamarbeid'. 20 September 2019. <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/norge-blir-med-i-europeisk-forsvarssamarbeid/id2669547/>

For Norway, it is important to push the JEF's compatibility and complementarity with NATO, and to strengthen Norway's bilateral relationship with the UK. The potential to forge stronger links between the JEF and the USA is also a motivating factor. For example, Norwegian officials have highlighted the positive experience of the US-led BALTOPS 2019, where the JEF led an Amphibious Task Force command, which included Norwegian support vessels.<sup>31</sup> Norway's chairmanship of two of the JEF's five working groups provides further indication of Norway's commitment to this format.

However, Norway has no concrete registered force contributions. As is the case with most JEF members, Norwegian force elements are situational and contingent on availability. While the "overstretch" problem may lead to a level of unpredictability regarding the exact commitment to and composition of the JEF's future deployments, this is not perceived as a big risk in Norwegian defence circles. It is likely that a high premium will be put on the bilateral relationship with the UK and the British lead element should the JEF be activated.

### **European Intervention Initiative**

Last but not necessarily least, Norway joined the EI2 in September 2019. The rationale for joining was based on a general recognition of the increased role of Europe in security and defence. More specifically, improved coordination and preparedness for crisis management were presented as the major advantages of joining, as well as the EI2's supplementary role vis-à-vis NATO.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, during the run up to Norway's bid for participation, it was careful to consider

<sup>31</sup> Navy.mil (2019). 'BALTOPS 2019 Wraps Up in Kiel', US 2nd Fleet Public Affairs. 6 June 2019. [https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=109983](https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=109983)

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Defence (2019).



whether EI2 might in any way undermine NATO or the transatlantic link.

The flexible and highly pragmatic nature of the initiative adds to its benefits. Norway currently participates in a handful of the eight existing working groups, including one on legal questions such as Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) and one on situational awareness in the Sahel. It is noteworthy that all the Nordic states apart from Iceland now are members of the EI2, which might over time allow for a stronger Nordic dimension. However, the EI2 is still very much in its initial phase and it is difficult to predict how it will evolve, and thus Norway's engagement with it.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, Norwegian interest in the EDF, PESCO and the FNC is primarily national and shaped by the expected returns for the Norwegian defence industry and specific defence communities, including in research, as well as its perceived significance for and complementarity with NATO. Participation in the JEF is driven mainly by Norway's own security needs and by a desire to strengthen its relationship with like-minded states – most of all the British and transatlantic partnerships. The EI2 is regarded as an interesting and useful forum to engage in without too many commitments and resource requirements. Bilateral relations

with major NATO members, such as Germany, the UK and the USA, take precedence across all the initiatives.

In terms of Nordic synergies and complementarities, the new European formats are perceived in defence circles as potential *enablers* of enhanced Nordic cooperation. Developing a Nordic approach to European defence cooperation would require not just planning but action, including political will, initiative and leadership. Nonetheless, there is currently little thinking, coordination or concrete action being undertaken to advance a common Nordic/NORDEFECO approach to the new European formats. When it comes to NORDEFECO, the experience of some in defence circles in Norway is that despite the possible synergies, it has thus far been kept largely separate as a parallel avenue of cooperation.

In sum, Norway's recent positioning within European security and defence cooperation reflects well-established principles of Norwegian security policy, in which NATO and the transatlantic relationship continue to be the cornerstone. Increased European security and defence cooperation is welcomed and valued as a way to buttress these priorities.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018).



## Sweden

By Gunilla Herolf (UI)

All European states, regardless of institutional affiliation, today find themselves in a situation of insecurity as a variety of threats and problems are facing them. Russia is using military force in Ukraine and, by several means, seeks to divide the European Union (EU)–NATO area and to destroy the liberal world order, the basis for our societies. Europe is also facing increased insecurity for other reasons. Various statements by US President Donald Trump have made European states less confident that NATO's Article 5 can always be trusted and Brexit will mean a serious weakening of the EU.

As a non-aligned country, Sweden relies primarily on its own civilian and military capabilities in order to defend itself. A strong and united EU is another essential element of its security. Sweden is furthermore a close partner of NATO and has entered into a number of bilateral and trilateral agreements with European states and the United States. Nordic cooperation plays an increasingly important role, as can be seen in Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF), and particularly in Finnish-Swedish cooperation.

The European defence initiatives that have been launched in recent years, and which are the focus of this article, all differ from one another. The British Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the French European Intervention Initiative (EI2) are intervention forces, whereas the German Framework Nations Concept (FNC), the European

Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF) primarily deal with the build-up of capabilities. This paper focuses on how Sweden, as a member of all of them, perceives and works within them.

### Intervention Initiatives

The British *Joint Expeditionary Force* was launched in 2014 as a NATO framework concept. Originally, therefore, it included only NATO members, all from the northern part of Europe, until Finland and Sweden joined the initiative in June 2017.<sup>34</sup> Discussions had been taking place between the UK and Sweden since 2015 but without involving any parliamentary scrutiny, which led to some parliamentary discontent about the procedure. However, apart from the Left Party, which saw the JEF's connection to NATO and, in particular, its role in leading the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) as unacceptable for a non-aligned country, no parliamentary disagreement was voiced.<sup>35</sup>

In its report, *Värnkraft*, the Parliamentary Defence Commission endorsed deeper involvement in the JEF and saw cooperation as important not only because it increased the Swedish Defence Forces' capability to cooperate with British forces, but also since it gave a signal that the UK, regardless of its EU membership status, continued to take an interest in Sweden's neighbourhood.<sup>36</sup> This view was mirrored by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, who highlighted the importance of the JEF for Swedish security – Sweden's geographical position stays the same and Sweden has many reasons to maintain close relations with the UK, not least in the field of security.<sup>37</sup> There are, however, several

<sup>34</sup> The original members were Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK (lead nation).

<sup>35</sup> Interpellationsdebatt 2015/16, [Debate, Swedish Parliament], 13 Oct. 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Ds 2019:8, Försvarsberedningen [Swedish Parliamentary Defence Commission], *Värnkraft*, p. 303, 14 May 2019.

<sup>37</sup> EU-nämndens uppteckningar 2019/20:7, [Protocol, Committee on EU Affairs], 15 Oct. 2019, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.



other positive aspects. One of these is its rapid deployment capability, which means that the JEF can serve as a bridging mission in a crisis. In addition, the JEF creates opportunities for Sweden to participate in crisis management tasks, including those that take place within the NATO Response Force (non-Article 5 tasks). The training and exercises carried out within the JEF are also seen as beneficial for the Swedish Armed Forces.<sup>38</sup> It has been pointed out, however, that Sweden is already relatively well integrated into NATO exercises, and the two corvettes first registered for the JEF are already certified by NATO's NRF Pool and took part in NATO's Trident Juncture in November 2018.<sup>39</sup>

The French *European Intervention Initiative*, launched by President Macron in September 2017, is not related to NATO or the EU. Sweden joined in September 2019 together with Norway.<sup>40</sup> For some time, Sweden was somewhat dubious about the EI2, because it was not connected to the EU, but eventually decided that membership would be of value. A further delay was caused by the fact that Sweden had an interim government between September 2018 and January 2019 and was therefore unable to make a decision. The EI2 was finally endorsed by the Defence Committee on 13 June and 19 September 2019.<sup>41</sup>

Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist has declared that Swedish membership of the

EI2 provides opportunities to act together with important cooperation partners and to strengthen Swedish influence on European security and crisis management.<sup>42</sup> According to Hultqvist, the initiative should be seen as complementary to the other defence cooperation projects in which Sweden participates.<sup>43</sup>

The main reasons for Sweden joining the EI2 are similar to those for the JEF, the most important one being bilateral relations with France. In addition, as in the case of the JEF, cooperation with other states is useful for Sweden. In general, it is also seen as better to be inside a group than outside, since this makes it possible to influence its further development. This is important in the case of the EI2, which is still at a very early stage of its development. Some have questioned the fact that the EI2 is mainly focused on Africa, to which it has been pointed out by Swedish officials that Sweden also has interests in Africa, above all in Mali. Furthermore, there is also a working group on the Nordic region.<sup>44</sup>

### **Projects Aimed at Increasing European Capabilities**

The EU's *Permanent Structured Cooperation* was established in December 2017. In the government bill recommending Swedish participation PESCO is seen to give Sweden increased possibilities to influence the structure and implementation of EU policy

<sup>38</sup> Interview at the Ministry of Defence, November 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Hagström Frisell, E. and Sjökvist, E., *Military Cooperation around Framework Nations, A European Solution to the Problem of Limited Defence Capabilities*, FOI, FOI-R-4672-SE, Feb. 2019, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> Present members are Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK,

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, written questions to and answers from ministers: "Skriftlig fråga till statsråd, 2018/19:857 'Svenskt deltagande i European Intervention Initiative', till försvarsminister Peter Hultqvist (S) från Hans Wallmark (M) 22 juli 2019";

"Svar på fråga 2018/19:857 av Hans Wallmark (M), 'Svenskt deltagande i European Intervention Initiative', Peter Hultqvist 5 Aug. 2019" and "Svar på fråga 2019/20:105 av Hans Wallmark (M), 'Förankring av Sveriges deltagande i European Intervention Initiative', 16 Oct. 2019".

<sup>42</sup> "Sverige deltar i försvarssamarbetet European Intervention Initiative" Regeringskansliet, ["Sweden participates in the defence cooperation project 'European Intervention Initiative'", Government Offices], 20 Sep. 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Interviews at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, Nov. 2019.



in this area. It was also noted that PESCO was intergovernmental in nature and thus compatible with Swedish non-alignment. For Sweden, it was furthermore important that the invitation to join PESCO was open, meaning that it took the German rather than the French approach.

The government bill furthermore notes that the EU should have an ambition to cover the whole crisis management spectrum, even the most demanding tasks, on its own. Sweden will continue its active engagement, participating in international peace support missions, both civilian and military. These are important for Swedish national security and a way to show solidarity and to deepen cooperation with states and organizations.<sup>45</sup>

Swedish interests have also been underlined. Defence minister Hultqvist has declared that implementation of PESCO must be in coordination with national processes and national planning, and that there must be coherence between the different defence initiatives.<sup>46</sup>

The process of adding new projects is still ongoing. As of November 2019, Sweden was participating in seven of the 47 projects.<sup>47</sup> The selection of Swedish projects was made according to the needs of the Swedish defence forces. The emphasis will now be put on implementation, which means that no new projects will be adopted in 2020.

The *European Defence Fund* is another initiative within the EU's current emphasis on defence and is strongly linked to PESCO. First launched by the European Commission

in 2017, the aim of the EDF is that it should contribute to Europe's strategic autonomy by coordinating, supplementing and amplifying national investments. For the period 2021–2027, a large amount of money will be allocated to the EDF for research and to develop military capabilities. In contrast to PESCO, all EU member states must contribute to the EDF, which makes the issue of how much funding states will receive back both important and sensitive. It is already obvious that large states, in particular France, have superior resources for devising proposals for the development and implementation of projects.

Sweden is positive about the aims of the EDF. Nonetheless, the government and the Defence Committee have emphasised that the competences of member states must be protected, and that individual states must be free to pursue the activities necessary to protect their own national defence. In view of Sweden's restrictive policy vis-à-vis the EU budget, Sweden also sees it as important to limit the economic consequences of the EDF for both the EU's and member states' budgets. The Defence Committee has furthermore underlined that there should be no duplication of NATO assets and that it supports the NATO-EU declaration on strengthening their strategic partnership.<sup>48</sup>

The Defence Commission sees it as very important that the EU's capability is strengthened and that Sweden more actively influences its further development. An important part of this will be to ensure third country participation. It will also be of particular importance that competition for

<sup>45</sup> Regeringens proposition 2017/18:44, Sveriges deltagande i det permanenta strukturerade samarbetet inom Europeiska unionen, [Government bill 2017/18:44, Sweden's participation in the European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation] 22 Nov. 2017, pp. 10-11.

<sup>46</sup> Försvarsminister Peter Hultqvist, EU-nämnden 2018/19:30, [Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist, Committee on EU Affairs] 10 May 2019, p.11.

<sup>47</sup> Military mobility, European Medical Command, European Union Training Mission Competence Centre, EU Test and Evaluation Centres, Maritime Unmanned Anti-Submarine System, Airborne Electronic Attack and EU Collaborative Warfare Capabilities.

<sup>48</sup> Försvarsutskottets utlåtande [Statement by the Defence Committee] 2017/18:FöU10, Start för Europeiska försvarsfonden [Launch of the European Defence Fund], 26 Oct. 2017.





funding is transparent and fair, in order to avoid harming Swedish research and development or the defence industry in Sweden.<sup>49</sup>

Third country participation, which is relevant to both PESCO and the EDF, is still under discussion. This is extremely important for Sweden due to the privatisation of its defence industry, as part of it is now owned by companies in non-EU member states. The states mentioned by Swedish officials are the UK, the USA and Norway.<sup>50</sup> The Swedish Security and Defence Industry Association (Säkerhets- och försvarsföretagen, SOFF) sees the UK and the USA as central to cooperation, mentioning the Meteor missile (with the UK), which is now operational on the Gripen aircraft. Overall, dependence on these two states is very high. At the same time, also according to SOFF, allowing European Economic Area states, in this case Norway, to take part is “very important for Sweden and Swedish industry, since Nordic cooperation in a wide sense, and especially Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) can be an excellent tool and group for cooperation in order to prepare joint Nordic proposals to the EDF”.<sup>51</sup> The Swedish defence and foreign ministers have also emphasised the importance of Norwegian participation.<sup>52</sup>

Like the JEF, the German *Framework Nations Concept (FNC)* was launched within NATO in 2014. Unlike the JEF, however, its

primary aim is capability creation. Germany provides the military backbone, whereas smaller nations plug in their specialised capabilities. More than 20 participating NATO members and partners cooperate in 24 capability clusters, which seek to address identified NATO shortfalls but also those of the EU. Germany sees the FNC as a link that unites NATO and the EU. Sweden was invited to join with Austria, Finland and Switzerland in 2017, and did so in June 2018.<sup>53</sup>

From a Swedish perspective the FNC is primarily an important way to deepen relations with Germany. It can be seen in connection with the declared ambition to deepen the Swedish-German dialogue on defence, specifically concerning the Baltic Sea.<sup>54</sup> It is not thought that the FNC will increase Sweden’s operational capability in the short term and cooperation is still at an early stage, in which Sweden has so far only forwarded its preferred cooperation projects to Germany. Sweden is most likely to participate in the capability clusters related to ongoing Swedish projects within PESCO.<sup>55</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

A striking feature is that the links to France, Germany and the UK are invariably seen as the most important elements of the three respective national initiatives. This shows how important it is for a non-aligned state to create security by forming bilateral links

<sup>49</sup> Ds 2019:8, Försvarsberedningen [Swedish Parliamentary Defence Commission], *Värnkraft*, p. 307, 14 May 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Interview at the Ministry of Defence, Nov. 2019.

<sup>51</sup> “SOFF:s remissvar på EU-kommissionens förslag till Europaparlamentets och rådets förordning om inrättande av europeiska försvarsfonden [SOFF’s statement of opinion regarding the Commission staff working document, Impact Assessment, accompanying the document ‘Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Fund’] COM (2018) 476”, Sep. 2018

<sup>52</sup> Schmidt-Felzmann, A., PeSCO: The Swedish Perspective/March 2019, pp. 11-14.

<sup>53</sup> Hagström Frisell, E. and Sjökvist, E. (2019),9, p. 17 and *Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 20 July 2018, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Schmidt-Felzmann (2019), p. 22 and Government of Sweden (2017), Peter Hultqvist, “Anförande vid invigningen av Berlin Security Conference 2017” [Speech at the inauguration of the Berlin Security Conference] 28 Nov. 2017, <https://www.regeringen.se/tal/2017/11/anforande-vid-invigningen-av-berlin-security-conference-2017/>

<sup>55</sup> Hagström Frisell, E. and Sjökvist, E (2019), pp. 21-22.



to major states, but can also indicate a level of insecurity about the future of formal organizations. The generally positive view of all the initiatives is shared by most political parties.<sup>56</sup>

The JEF is special in having a distinct Nordic-Baltic character. Officials point out that, together with the Northern Group and NORDEFECO, a strong Nordic voice can be formed in cases where the Nordic states agree. With regard to the EI2, while it does not have the same geographical focus as the JEF, there are still advantages associated with all the Nordic states apart from Iceland being members, since the chances of influencing it when promoting Nordic interests are greater.

The parliamentary Defence Commission agrees with the government when stating that international military missions are part of a Swedish security policy based on solidarity and that they make Sweden stronger. They are, however, also seen as demanding in terms of resources and require prioritisation. Sweden must therefore consider in which constellation the country can best use its limited resources. The Defence Commission has furthermore referred to the view of the Defence Forces, according to which cooperation with NATO, the EU and the UN should be prioritised, in that order.<sup>57</sup>

Sweden has in general a positive view of the initiatives which is much based on the notion that these initiatives are addressing serious deficiencies in Europe. Cooperation

within PESCO and the EDF is also regarded as of great importance for the Swedish defence forces, its defence economy and its defence industry. It might provide huge benefits for Sweden but, in a worst-case scenario, it could lead to much increased costs with few of these benefits, and it would have severe consequences if the non-EU owned defence industry were to be excluded.

A final remark concerns the synergy and integration effects of new initiatives, including a group of states, in which individual states are either lead nations or have a strong impact. It is not yet possible to estimate the effects of these initiatives. It is possible that small groups of states may serve the purpose of closer cooperation and integration in a way that big groups cannot accomplish. At least these initiatives may serve to plug gaps in current forms of cooperation. One example of this is the inclusion of the UK, Denmark and Norway in the EI2. These groups may also be of value in adding to European capabilities in a way that will further their future integration into other forms of cooperation.

Undoubtedly, however, small and medium-sized EU states would be better off if all the initiatives were part of the EU, with its rules on transparency and co-decision, than participating under a lead nation. That said, for smaller states it is even more important than for major ones to be represented at all and, working wisely with others, they can also have an impact on cooperation.

<sup>56</sup> The exceptions to this are the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats. They oppose these initiatives either because they claim that the initiatives will lead to a militarised EU or, in the case of the JEF, it is too closely associated with NATO's article 5 tasks. Only PESCO and the EDF, which are seen as the two most

important, were subject to a vote in parliament. The others were dealt with at committee level.

<sup>57</sup> Ds 2019:8, Försvarsberedningen [Swedish Parliamentary Defence Commission], *Värnkraft*, Ds 2019:8, 14 May 2019, p. 290.



## Denmark

By Mikkel Runge Olesen (DIIS)

Several new frameworks for defence cooperation have emerged in Europe both inside and outside of the European Union (EU). Like other European states, Denmark must determine how to prioritise these different frameworks in relation to each other and to existing defence structures. Denmark's circumstances when it comes to European defence cooperation, however, have a unique component—the Danish opt-out from defence cooperation in the EU.

### Defence cooperation within the EU

The Danish attitude to EU security and defence policy is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, Denmark generally supports a stronger EU common security and defence policy because the strengthening of an institution that shares many core values with Denmark is deemed to be a key Danish foreign and security interest. On the other hand, Danish policy on EU defence is structured around the Danish opt-out from defence cooperation in the EU.<sup>58</sup>

By way of brief background, four Danish opt-outs on European integration were negotiated after a majority of the Danish electorate voted no to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. These made Danish ratification of the treaty possible in 1993. One of the opt-outs was on EU defence cooperation. The

importance of the opt-out has fluctuated over the years. One notable example is that in 2008 the Danish opt-out prevented Denmark from participating in the Nordic EU Battlegroup and, by extension, prevented the Nordic Battlegroup from being tied to Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO).<sup>59</sup> Since 2016, however, there have been a plethora of new defence initiatives within the EU, of which the European Defence Fund (EDF) and EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) on defence issues, both primarily focused on capacity-building, are the most important. This has caused the importance of the opt-out to grow. For instance, the Danish opt-out completely prevents Danish participation in PESCO. By contrast, the opt-out does not prevent Denmark from participating in the EDF, as the EDF takes place under the aegis of the European Commission, which is not covered by the Danish opt-out. Nonetheless, even Danish participation in EDF is not without its challenges. The Danish defence industry complains that it must expend energy on convincing non-Danish partners that Danish companies are entitled to bid for EDF defence industry projects.<sup>60</sup> The defence opt-out plays a less prominent role in the Danish relationship with the new frameworks that exist outside both the EU and the NATO framework, of which the French European Intervention Initiative (EI2), the British Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the German Framework Nations Concept (FNC) and Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) are the most

<sup>58</sup> Petersen, Nikolaj (2004). *Europæisk Og Globalt Engagement. Dansk Udenrigspolitik Historie bn. 6*. In: Carsten Due-Nielsen, Ole Feldbæk and Nikolaj Petersen, eds. København: Danmarks nationalleksikon, 2004. s. 535-539; Olsen, Gorm Rye (2007), "Denmark and ESDP", in: Brummer, Klaus (ed.). *The North and ESDP*

*The Baltic States, Denmark, Finland and Sweden*, Gütersloh. s. 22.

<sup>59</sup> Udenrigsministeriet, "Konsekvenserne af det danske forsvarsforbehold", 7. november 2005: <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20051/almdel/fou/bilag/25/216703.pdf> (15.

oktober 2019); Fugl, Mette og Uffe Ellemann-Jensen (2009), "Det nordiske område kan blive en farlig skueplads". I: *Én for alle, alle for én. Nyt nordisk forsvarssamarbejde?*, s. 19-23. København: Norden. s. 19.

<sup>60</sup> Banke, Nissen, Schmidt, Olesen, Mouritzen, Rahbek-Clemmensen, Pedersen, Butler og Andersen (2019), *Europæisk Forsvarssamarbejde og det danske forsvarsforbehold: Udredning om udviklingen i EU og Europa på det sikkerheds- og forsvarspolitiske område og dens betydning for Danmark*, København, DIIS: s. 38-39.



prominent. However, the mere possibility of future EU involvement in these frameworks, and the possible subsequent activation of the Danish opt-out, has been the source of considerable worry in Danish political circles.<sup>61</sup>

### **The new initiatives for European defence cooperation outside of the EU and NATO**

When France launched its *European Intervention Initiative* in 2018, Denmark was a founding member.<sup>62</sup> While EI2 remains untested in practice, the reasons behind the Danish desire to join were twofold: first, to be part of a new framework with a focus on strategic culture and information sharing that could in time play an important role in facilitating more efficient European interventions abroad, be that in the context of NATO, EU, UN or ad hoc coalitions; and, second, because successive Danish cabinets have desired closer security relations with France at a time of uncertainty about the US commitment to NATO and the British commitment to European defence cooperation. On this basis, saying no to such a high-profile French initiative would clearly have been detrimental to established Danish interests.<sup>63</sup>

So, what has Denmark been doing in the EI2 since it joined? Denmark expects France to want to prioritise interventions in the global South, such as the Sahel region where Denmark has already provided support for French operations. However, it is also clear that Denmark has actively prioritised trying

to embed a strong Nordic element into the EI2. As a founding member, Denmark has worked to support the efforts of the other Nordic states to join the initiative. These were successful when Finland became a participant in 2018, and Norway and Sweden followed suit in 2019. The Danish rationale for doing so was the belief that its fellow Nordic states would probably be important like-minded partners for Denmark within the EI2.<sup>64</sup>

Although presented as a British contribution to the NATO framework nations concept at the Wales Summit in 2014, the *Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)* is not directly integrated into NATO. The British JEF more closely resembles a concrete force than the EI2. National units are not fully pledged to the framework, but they do constitute part of a broader pool of forces that can be activated through the JEF and attached to a British core.<sup>65</sup> On that basis, the JEF has focused on concrete military exercises. For Denmark, this means that the JEF plays an important role as a venue for participation – along with its Nordic neighbours – in exercises with one of the key European military powers in a coalition capable of simulating scenarios far out of reach of what the Danish armed forces would be able to do on their own. At present, the expectation in Denmark is that the JEF will focus primarily on collective defence tasks along NATO's eastern borders. This currently limits the fear of overlap with the EI2, giving Denmark a relatively free hand to prioritise both the EI2 and the JEF. Finally, like the EI2,

<sup>61</sup> For example, the Danish opt-out is directly mentioned as a caveat in the letter of understanding about EI2 signed by the nine founding members, "Letter of intent concerning the development of the European Intervention Initiative (EI2)", 25. juni 2018. <https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/25706/099f1956962441156817d7f35d08bc50/20180625-letter-of-intent-zu-der-europaeischen-interventionsinitiative-data.pdf> (28. november 2019).

<sup>62</sup> EI2, "Letter of intent concerning the development of the European Intervention Initiative (EI2)", 25. juni

2018.

<https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/25706/099f1956962441156817d7f35d08bc50/20180625-letter-of-intent-zu-der-europaeischen-interventionsinitiative-data.pdf> (28. november 2019).

<sup>63</sup> Banke and Nissen et al (2019): s. 52.

<sup>64</sup> Banke and Nissen et al (2019): s. 50-51.

<sup>65</sup> Frisell and Sjökvist (2019), "Military Cooperation Around Framework Nations", s. 29.



participation in the JEF also serves the key purpose of maintaining strong Danish relations with the UK – a country that Denmark has a history of working with in the field.<sup>66</sup>

Compared to the EI2 and the JEF, the German Framework Nations Concept (FNC) – launched at the same 2014 Wales NATO Summit as the JEF, and like the JEF not directly integrated into NATO – is arguably the least prioritised framework of the three from a Danish perspective. It is viewed as more bureaucratic than the other two and also suffers from the fact that Germany is further down the list of strategic partners on defence and security than is the case with France and the UK. That is not to say that Denmark does not value cooperation with Germany. Danish participation in the FNC, although less pronounced than its participation in the EI2 and the JEF, is also influenced by the Danish wish to maintain good relations with Germany. While Denmark might prefer to undertake interventions or planning for article 5 operations with France and the UK, it has a genuine interest in cooperating with Germany, especially in the maritime domain.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, a few remarks on NORDEFECO is also in order. Formed in 2009 by merging several different Nordic defence initiatives, NORDEFECO was not always given the highest priority in Denmark.<sup>68</sup> This may be changing, however. Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, the Danish armed forces have begun to give greater priority to the Baltic Sea region compared to earlier, naturally increasing the importance of cooperation with the Nordic neighbours. Additionally, the Ukraine crisis has also led with it a greater degree of convergence between the

Nordic countries when it comes to threat perception and to their policies towards Russia, making it less difficult than previously to manage defence cooperation between Nordic members and non-members of the EU and NATO. From a Danish perspective, these factors make more active participation in NORDEFECO more appealing than previously.<sup>69</sup>

### Concluding remarks

Overall, the new European defence initiatives have generally been welcomed in Denmark. For the moment, they are seen primarily as an indication of an emerging European will to do more in defence matters rather than as any indicator of a renationalisation of European defence. Should such elements of renationalisation emerge in the future, however, this could be highly detrimental to Danish commitments to the new initiatives, as such a development would probably be viewed in Denmark as a threat to NATO. Furthermore, while Danish policymakers, like most of their European colleagues, are quick to insist that duplication must be avoided, it is not seen as too great a concern at the moment. Participating in more initiatives does mean a small increase in administrative costs in the form of increased coordination efforts and an increased number of recurring meetings and military exercises. However, this is deemed to be more than offset by the fact that Denmark would otherwise have needed to coordinate with the states participating in the various initiatives through other channels, and would have needed to seek other frameworks for exercises that the Danish military is not capable of conducting on its own. Furthermore, the initiatives are generally seen to have adopted different niches,

<sup>66</sup> Banke and Nissen et al (2019): s. 53.

<sup>67</sup> Banke and Nissen et al (2019): s. 54.

<sup>68</sup> Saxi, Håkon Lunde (2019). "The rise, fall, and resurgence of Nordic defence

cooperation". *International Affairs* 95 (3): 659–680, s. 666-667.

<sup>69</sup> Banke and Nissen et al (2019): s. 54-55.



thereby limiting fears of duplication. However, the possibility that future closer links between the new initiatives and EU defence cooperation (especially the Common Security and Defence Policy or in PESCO) might lead to an increased number of activations of the Danish opt-out on defence cooperation remains a concern in Denmark.<sup>70</sup>

Nonetheless, for all their potential usefulness, none of these initiatives are seen as potential replacements for Danish membership of NATO or the transatlantic bond with the USA, which remain the cornerstones of Danish security policy. However, if evaluated on a more moderate scale of whether these new defence frameworks have something to offer by way of increasing Danish security and facilitating more effective European defence cooperation, the initiatives have been largely welcomed in Denmark.

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<sup>70</sup> Banke and Nissen et al (2019): s. 58.



## Finland

By Matti Pesu (FIIA)

### Introduction

Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014 led to a major transformation of Finnish security and defence policy. The change was most notable in the international dimension of the policy. As the main priority in Euro-Atlantic security began to turn towards deterrence and territorial defence – that is, in the direction of the existing Finnish approach – Finland was eager to capitalise on the dividends of the sudden turn. Thus, Finland established new defence partnerships and intensified the existing ones. From the Finnish perspective, the leitmotif of defence cooperation is to enhance Finland's capability to defend its territory. Another related motivation is to forge and intensify relationships with militarily capable actors that are interested in Northern European security.

The tapestry of Finland's defence networks consists of bilateral, mini-lateral and multilateral forms of cooperation. The focus of this analysis is on Finland's European partnerships. Thus, the text explores the Finnish approach to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), most notably to the novel initiatives such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF). Furthermore, it scrutinises Finnish views on mini-lateral defence initiatives such as the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the Framework Nation Initiative (FNC), the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), and Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO). The piece thus factors out important partnerships such as Finnish-Swedish and

Finnish-US cooperation and the NATO partnership.

### Defence cooperation: from crisis management to territorial defence

The paradigm of Finland's defence cooperation changed after the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine. Prior to the crisis, defence cooperation mainly focused on crisis management. The deterioration in the security landscape redefined Finnish priorities as national defence capabilities and territorial defence became the centre of cooperative efforts.

The Finnish Government's 2017 defence report states the objectives of Finnish defence cooperation as:

Defence cooperation strengthens defence in normal and emergency conditions. It also enhances deterrence and improves the chances of receiving political and military assistance when needed. However, defence cooperation does not provide any security guarantees to Finland akin to those given to a member of a military alliance. Peacetime cooperation lays the foundation for cooperation during crises. Trust, a necessary requisite for defence cooperation, is established through tenacious and enduring action. By means of a wide network of partners Finland develops such arrangements that can be utilised to receive all possible assistance already at the onset of a potential crisis.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Prime Minister's Office (2017), "Government's Defence Report". *Prime Minister's Office Publications* 7/2017.

[https://www.defmin.fi/files/3688/J07\\_2017\\_Government's\\_Defence\\_Report\\_Eng\\_PLM\\_160217.pdf](https://www.defmin.fi/files/3688/J07_2017_Government%20Defence_Report_Eng_PLM_160217.pdf), p. 16.



In other words, the report clearly communicates that the aim of defence cooperation – including the various European formats – is to enhance deterrence and to increase the likelihood of receiving military assistance if push ever comes to shove. Importantly, to make the objective more credible, the Finnish Parliament enacted new legislation in 2017 that enables the provision of military assistance by combat forces. Thus, according to Charly Salenius-Pasternak, Finland has adopted “ambiguous extended deterrence” as its policy.<sup>72</sup> In other words, Finland has recently redefined the substance of military non-alignment, making the policy of military non-alignment practically a dead letter.

#### **Finland and the European Union: new trends and interests**

There are interesting features in Finland’s approach to the CSDP and defence cooperation within the European Union. First, in the early and mid-2000s, Finland was sceptical about the mutual assistance clause of the nascent European Constitution, which eventually entered into force as Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty. Moreover, one of Finland’s key objectives regarding the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)/CSDP was to exclude territorial defence from the remit of the common policy. Now, however, Finland’s approach is different. It is perhaps the most active proponent of Article 42.7, and Finland

would readily accept the EU assuming a greater role in territorial defence matters.<sup>73</sup>

The second interesting trend – or even a paradox – is the fact that the CSDP’s relative role in the tapestry of defence networks has decreased, although the EU has more recently taken significant steps in its defence policy. Other defence cooperation formats, such as bilateral cooperation with Sweden and the United States, and the NATO partnership, have gained in importance, outstripping EU defence efforts in significance.

Although Finland has welcomed the new EU defence initiatives, Finland’s core interests appear to be elsewhere. The country has continually urged the EU to step up as a security community that can take care of the security of its citizens.<sup>74</sup> However, as noted above, when it comes to EU defence, Finland’s priority is the Lisbon Treaty. As President Sauli Niinistö pointed out in 2018:

the true core of European defence lies in the basic treaty of the European Union. Article 42(7) of the Lisbon Treaty states that if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power. The language is very strong. Yet so far there is no certainty over what its implementation might mean in the event of a crisis.<sup>75</sup>

Motivated by this underlying view, Finnish officials have advocated the inclusion of

<sup>72</sup> Salenius-Pasternak, Charly (2018), “Finland’s ambiguous deterrence: mixing deterrence by denial with ambiguous extended deterrence”. In Vanaga, Nora & Toms Rostoks (eds.), *Deterring Russia in Europe. Defence Strategies for Neighbouring States*. New York & London: Routledge.

<sup>73</sup> see e.g. Pesu, Matti (2017), *Koskiveneellä kohti valtaviirtaa: Suomen puolustuspolitiikka kylmän sodan lopusta 2010-luvun kiristyneeseen turvallisuusympäristöön*. Helsinki: Ministry of Defence.

<sup>74</sup> Prime Minister’s Office (2016), “Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy”. *Prime*

*Minister’s Office* 7/2016.

<https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/1986338/VNKJ092016+en.pdf/b33c3703-29f4-4cce-a910-b05e32b676b9>, p.19.

<sup>75</sup> Niinistö, Sauli (2018a), *President of the Republic’s speech at the opening of the 227th National Defence Course*. November 5, 2018.

<https://www.presidentti.fi/en/speeches/president-of-the-republic-sauli-niinistos-speech-at-the-opening-of-the-227th-national-defence-course-on-5-november-2018/>





Article 42.7 in the key EU security documents, such as the Global Strategy and the PESCO blueprint. Finland does not see Article 42.7 as a substitute for Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty. Instead, according to the Finnish view, the Lisbon Treaty could be the basis for solidarity and mutual assistance should any EU member state encounter hybrid threats.

As to other aspects of the CSDP, Finland has welcomed the launch of PESCO. In fact, the Finnish Government's Security and Defence report called for the inauguration of the initiative back in 2012.<sup>76</sup> Finland is currently a member of five PESCO projects, and the initiative has received significant attention domestically. The same cannot be said of the EDF, however, let alone of CARD. Unlike in Sweden and Norway, for example, the interests of the defence industry are not a key driver of Finland's policy vis-à-vis the EU. The size of the Finnish defence industry, for instance, is roughly one-tenth of the size of Sweden's defence industry. Therefore, the introduction of the EDF has been viewed as rather unproblematic. The Finnish defence industry sees the EDF fairly positively, since it could give a considerable boost to Finnish R&D resources in the defence sector, which are currently quite small. A central concern is how small and medium-sized enterprises will succeed in competing for the resources linked to the EDF.<sup>77</sup>

### **The role of mini-lateral initiatives: attention on Northern Europe**

Finland is participating in the three most noteworthy initiatives: the JEF, the E12 and

the FNC. While the initiatives certainly have independent potential to strengthen European defence, participation in the initiatives consolidates Finnish relationships with the UK, France and Germany, which are all capable and important security actors in Northern Europe. In other words, through participation in these initiatives, Finland is striving to bind the UK, France and Germany to Northern Europe. Moreover, within the initiatives and also bilaterally, Finland is able to communicate its defence-related concerns to major European capitals.

Finland signed the documents on joining the UK-led JEF in June 2018. The JEF currently has the most prominent role among the initiatives. Not only is it operational, but the Baltic Sea region has also emerged as a priority for the JEF, and the initiative's role in Northern Europe might be increased in the future.<sup>78</sup> The Baltic Protector exercise brought 3000 soldiers and 17 vessels to the region in May–June 2019. The exercise also demonstrated the UK's commitment to Baltic Sea security, which was welcomed in Finland.<sup>79</sup>

Finland expressed an interest in joining the E12 in August 2018, and was among the signatories of the founding document in that year. The process that led to Finland's accession was surprisingly fast. Although Finland does not necessarily share France's ideal vision of European strategic culture, it appreciates the ambition. The key factor that persuaded Finland to join the initiative was the inclusion of Northern Europe as one of the topics of dialogue. A strong Northern European representation in the E12 is

<sup>76</sup> Prime Minister's Office (2012), "Finnish Security and Defence Policy 2012". *Prime Minister's Office Publications* 1/2013.

<https://vnk.fi/julkaisu?pubid=2205>

<sup>77</sup> Kekonen, Aleksanteri (2019), "Uusi puolustusrahasto avaa ovia puolustusteollisuuden yhteistyölle". *Ruotuväki*. October 17, 2019.

<https://ruotuvaki.fi/-/uusi-puolustusrahasto-avaa-ovia-puolustusteollisuuden-yhteistyolle>

<sup>78</sup> Kennedy–Pipe, Caroline & Duncan Depledge (2019), "Britain, Estonia and the Wider North". *RUSI Commentary*. November 27, 2019.

<https://rusi.org/commentary/britain-estonia-and-wider-north#.Xd7S51uiTpY.twitter>

<sup>79</sup> Kuusela, Janne (2019), "Puolustusyhteistyö hyödyttää Suomea". *Helsingin Sanomat*. May 22, 2019. <https://www.hs.fi/mielipide/art-2000006113613.html>



therefore in Finland's interests, because it magnifies the concerns arising from the regional security situation.

Interestingly, although Finland has been a member of the FNC since 2017, the German-led framework has so far been overshadowed by the initiatives described above. There are two main reasons for the limited attention. First, Germany continues to struggle with its role in European defence, which affects the level of resources and effort that it is willing to put into European security. Second, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the FNC's relationship with PESCO, as both aim to generate capabilities in Europe. If Germany decides to step up its efforts, Finland is more than willing to enhance its cooperation with Germany.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to the three initiatives described above, Finland is also participating in NORDEFECO, already a well-established bilateral defence cooperation format. In fact, some commentators argue that NORDEFECO is currently undergoing a renaissance.<sup>81</sup> Optimism is also increasing in Finland. Policymakers in Helsinki see a great deal of potential in tri-lateral cooperation between Sweden, Norway and Finland under the framework of NORDEFECO. Finland has advocated for more intensive cooperation between the respective armies of the three states.<sup>82</sup> Such collaboration meets concrete security needs, particularly when it comes to the defence of the northern parts of not only Finland, but also Sweden and Norway.

<sup>80</sup> Pesu, Matti & Santtu Lehtinen (2018), "A willing partner in the North. Finnish perceptions on Germany as a Baltic Power". In Sprüds, Andris & Elizabete Vizgunova (eds.), *Perceptions of Germany in the Security of the Baltic Sea Region*. Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs.

<sup>81</sup> Saxi, Håkon Lunde (2019), "The rise, fall and resurgence of Nordic defence cooperation". *International Affairs* 95 (3), 659–680.

<sup>82</sup> Uosukainen, Riikka (2019), "Suomi, Ruotsi ja Norja saattavat aloittaa yhdessä maavoimien säännöllisen

### **Finland's vision of European defence: between France and Germany**

Although there are high hopes for European defence in Finland, Finnish policymakers have not yet articulated a clear Finnish vision of the ideal direction of European defence. This is curious given the fact that Finland has enthusiastically joined European initiatives and actively built bilateral defence relationships with major European players. Moreover, Finland is known to be one of the most active advocates of the CSDP.

The lack of an articulated vision is somewhat problematic. There are no illusions that any Finnish vision could be realisable. Rather, outlining a vision would help Finland to develop European partnerships and to maximise the potential these relationships entail for enhancing its national security. Moreover, the limited debate means that crucial questions, such as the possible fragmentation of the Euro-Atlantic defence efforts, remain unaddressed.

Certain elements of the Finnish vision, such as the centrality of the Lisbon Treaty, are nonetheless discernible. Currently, it seems that in terms of its vision of European defence, Finland stands somewhere between France and Germany. It commends French ambitions and interest in developing the EU's – and Europe's – role in security and defence, and has cautiously endorsed the idea of strategic autonomy.<sup>83</sup> However, it does not share its threat perceptions or interventionist strategic culture. In terms of

harjoittelun lähivuosina". *Yle Uutiset*. January 14, 2019. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10596046>

<sup>83</sup> See Niinistö, Sauli (2018b), *Keynote Address by President of the Republic of Finland at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C.* September 27, 2018. <https://www.presidentti.fi/en/speeches/keynote-address-by-president-of-the-republic-of-finland-sauli-niinisto-at-the-brookings-institution-in-washington-d-c-on-27th-september-2018/>



threat perceptions and decision-making culture, Finland is perhaps closer to Germany, although Finland does not treat security and defence policy as a vehicle for promoting deeper European integration.



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