

Interview on migration, border security and asylum

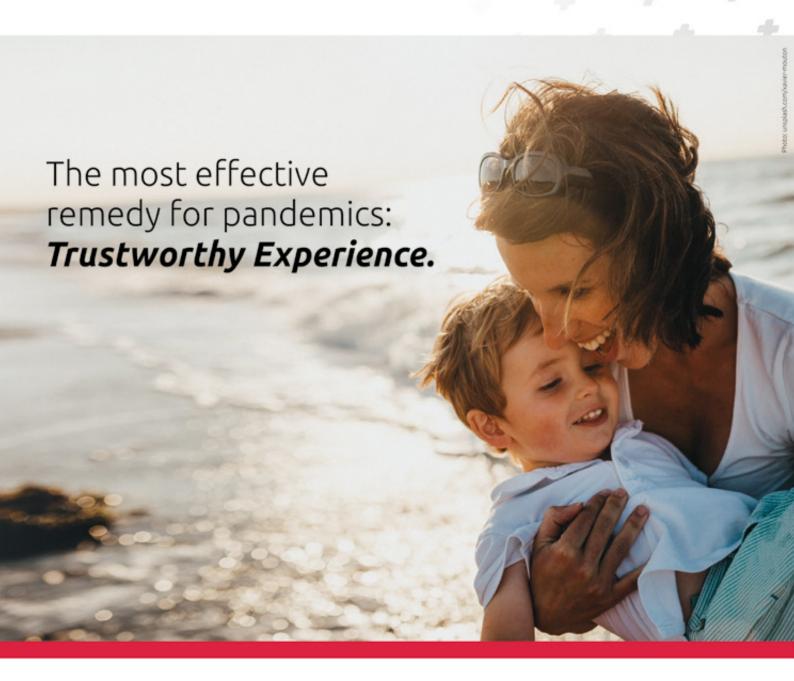


Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Luxembourg



Gerald Knaus,
Founding Chairman of the
European Stability Initiative (ESI),
Berlin





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Humane aspects of border security

 ${\sf A}_{\sf cuted}$ for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion should be protected by the Geneva Refugee Convention which celebrates its 70th anniversary on 28th July 2021. Any person meeting these universal criteria is a refugee and should never be pushed back into a situation where they risk persecution and serious harm. This radical new idea of protecting refugees was born of the experiences of the second world war and, over the years, it has become a universal value. The non-refoulement principle - no-pushbacks-rule - is the core of this convention and also applies to people who face torture and inhumane treatment, the death penalty and indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict. The implementation of this global system to protect refugees has always been patchy and its rules have been violated continuously since it entered into force in 1951. However, in spite of its deficiencies, the non-refoulement principle has saved millions of lives across the world and will continue to do so.

nyone who has a well-founded fear of being perse-

We know only too well, however, that pushbacks are still being carried out everywhere, even by Member States of the European Union. Harrowing scenes showing the Spanish border police roughly pushing back thousands of people at the border between Spain and the enclave of Ceuta were broadcast around the world after the Moroccan government opened the border in order to put pressure on Spain because of its policy towards the Polisario movement. Pressuring Spain in this way is tantamount to pressuring the European Union, in the same way that Turkey's President Erdogan is blackmailing Europe. Is this twin strategy about to destabilise the European Union?

Nations need borders and it is for them to determine the kind of borders they want. Societies in general want secure borders, but they also have a feeling of empathy, the basis for responsible and humane border control. Throughout the world, nations have problems with their border regime. The reasons are manifold but there is one common issue: how to strike an appropriate balance between humanity at their borders and the legitimate desire to protect their security?

Member States of the European Union have shared competence on immigration and must abide by its principles. There are

precise rules concerning, for instance, the free movement of people (blue card). Member States do not have much leeway in applying these rules, but they have much more leeway on irregular immigration. And there lies the problem.

The proposal for a New Pact on Migration and Asylum was launched last September by the Commission. Its aim is to forge consensus among Member States and put an end to their current divergences on migration policies.

The Commission's proposal is very ambitious with, firstly, the challenge imposed by the Council to achieve consensus, and secondly, the call on nations to agree to a package approach on the main issues of the pact, like the compulsory border procedures, which are refused by most of the States in the South, and the solidarity mechanism with its concept of return sponsorship, vigorously rejected by the Visegrad States in the East. The continuing divergences of Member States on migration and asylum is not only a question of humanity and solidarity, it touches on the very credibility of our Union. It seems to me that the Union is not yet ripe for this great leap forward, and there will inevitably be further intense discussions, including moratoria. However, what each Member State might at least do in the meantime is verify if people in danger are being treated with humanity at its borders.



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Covid-19 vaccination

The European Civil Protection Mechanism supports countries in need

(Ed/nc) Through the European Civil Protection Mechanism, the European Commission has so far supported the sharing of over 3m Covid-19 vaccines by Member States with countries outside the EU. The delivery is coordinated by the Commission which finances up to 75% of the costs of transport.

Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management said: "EU Member States continue to support global vaccination efforts. 3m vaccines have al-ready been facilitated via the European Civil



photo: ©Near - stock.adobe.con

Protection Mechanism. I thank all countries for showing their solidarity. Vaccination for all is essential to beat this pandemic."

To date, EU Member States have pledged over 159m vaccine doses with countries outside the EU via Covax, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, or bilaterally.

Member States have also delivered millions of masks, protective suits, disinfectants, and other support such as ambulances and ventilators to countries in need.

Web https://bit.ly/3Bp3ZNn

EU - Hungary

Next round in the ring

(Ed/nc) In response to criticism from the European Union, Hungary's far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced a referendum on the new anti-LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer) law on 21st July. It is just another uppercut in Orbán's fight with the EU that has reacted against his new law banning homosexual and transsexual people from being featuring in educational materials or prime TV, in shows



ohoto: ©European Union,

and films aimed at children. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen officially stated that "this Hungarian law is a shame." Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte even suggested that Hungary should leave the EU.

Orbán hit back on 21st June, warning of the "sovietisation" of the EU and declaring that the European Parliament (EP) is only respecting its ideological and institutional interests. EP President David Sassoli commented: "Only those who don't like democracy think of dismantling parliaments."

On 2^{nd} July 2021 the Hungarian Prime Minister went into the next round, calling leaders of far-right parties in 16 countries to join forces to make their voices heard in the context of the current EU debate on the future of Europe.

Finally, on 15th July, the European Commission launched legal action against Hungary over the new anti-LGBTIQ legislation and on 20th July, the second EU-wide rule-of-law report was published, highlighting the deteriorating situation of democratic standards in Hungary. Budapest is still awaiting the EU executive approval of its €7.2bn recovery plan...

Cyber security

Josep Borrell criticises China

(Ed/nc) On 17th July, EU High Representative **Josep Borrell** made a declaration on behalf of the EU urging China to take action against cyber-attacks undertaken from its territory. He announced that EU Member States, together with partners, were exposed to malicious cyber activities that significantly affected their economy, security, democracy and society and that the EU assesses these attacks to have been carried out from the territory of China. Borrell also stated that malicious



HR/VP Josep Borrell

photo ©European Union

cyber activities with significant effects that targeted government institutions and political organisations in the EU and Member States as well as key European industries have been detected. He declared that these activities, conducted from China, can be linked to the hacker groups known as Advanced Persistent Threat 40 and Advanced Persistent Threat 31.

The High Representative declared: "The EU and its Member States strongly denounce these malicious cyber activities, which are undertaken in contradiction with the norms of responsible state behaviour as endorsed by all UN member states. We continue to urge the Chinese authorities to adhere to these norms and not allow its territory to be used for malicious cyber activities, and take all appropriate measures and reasonably available and feasible steps to detect, investigate and address the situation."

Climate

New EU Forest Strategy



The Forest Strategy foresees the planting of 3bn trees accross Europe by 2030

photo: @Panumas - stock.adobe.com

(Ed/nc) On 16th July, the European Commission adopted the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030, which contributes to the "Fit for 55" package of measures aimed at achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 55% by 2030 and climate neutrality in 2050 in the EU.

In the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, forests are essential as they help to reduce the impacts of climate change, for example by cooling down cities, protecting from heavy flooding, and reducing the impact of drought. Europe's forests suffer from many different pressures, including climate change. The EU Forest Strategy for 2030 promotes the most climate and biodiversity friendly forest management practices, encourages resource efficient wood use, and announces a legal proposal to step up forest monitoring, reporting and data collection in the EU.

The strategy is accompanied by a roadmap for planting 3bn additional trees across Europe by 2030.

- \rightarrow See also our documentation on the Green Deal, p.17
- Web Forest Strategy: https://bit.ly/2UxrG5F
- Web 3bn trees: https://bit.ly/2UYtnJd

Floods

Brussels ceremony for flood victims



photo: ©European Union, 2021 / François Lenoir

(Ed/nc) On 20th July, the President of the European Council, **Charles Michel**, together with 27 EU ambassadors, held a minute of silence for the victims of the floods that took place in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherlands.

Sahel

Operation Barkhane - change of strategy

(Ed/hb, Paris) In mid-June 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that the French military engagement in the Sahel

would be reduced. The reasons are two large losses (50 soldiers) and nearly €1bn a year without visible results in combating terrorism in the Sahel region.



One month later, at the end of a virtual G5 Sahel meeting, Macron announced more details: France will reduce the number of soldiers engaged in Barkhan operations from 5,100 to less than 3,000 by closing three bases in the north (Kidal, Tassalit and Timbuktu) at the beginning of 2022. This goes hand in hand with a change of strategy from accompanying local forces to strongly engage directly against terrorists.

The parallel EU engagement "Tabuka" led by France (500 personnel) with contingents from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, and Sweden at the Menaka base in Mali will continue focussing on the training of local special forces.

Web https://bit.ly/36K9Te1

NATO

Space Pitch Day winner

(Ed/nc) On 17th June, the NATO Communications and Information (NCI) Agency hosted a NATO Space Pitch Day in partnership with the NATO Space Centre, located in NATO's Allied Air Command. At the event, six teams pitched their proposals aimed at improving space situational awareness. The winner, chosen by a selection board, is the French company **Safran Data Systems**. The winner will have the opportunity to interact closely with the NATO space operational community, in order to provide further demonstrations and to increase the common understanding of requirements and capabilities.



In the Spotlight +++ Transatlantic Relations +++

Washington's call to action has not yet been answered

Stepping up: a stronger Europe for stronger transatlantic security and defence

by Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, Chairman of the Munich Security Conference, Munich

n Europe, the sigh of relief was noticeable when President Biden stressed the renewed US commitment to NATO at the beginning of his tenure. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference (MSC) Special Edition in February 2021, he made it crystal clear that the United States is "fully committed" to the NATO Alliance; article V - the assurance that an attack on one is an attack on all – is an "unshakable vow." Since then, the Biden administration has repeatedly reaffirmed and followed up on this firm commitment to NATO and the transatlantic partnership – be it in the context of Secretary of State Blinken's participation in the NATO Summit in March, the US decision to not withdraw but increase troops in Germany, or President Biden's eight-day trip to Europe in June.

This alliance-based approach, however, goes hand in hand with greater US expectations of its partners. This was highly visible at the G7 summit in Cornwall when President Biden urged the European allies to support US efforts in boosting democracy more strongly. The communique published after the NATO leaders' meeting sets an ambitious agenda. It is now time for Europe to show that the transatlantic alliance is not a one-sided love affair, but that Europe is willing and capable to step up and fulfil its international commitments.

The European part of the equation

To make Europe a more valuable partner and to improve the shared transatlantic security architecture, the following four points should be guidelines for a European to-do list.

1. Enhancing the coherence of the EU's foreign policy and formulating a joint approach towards China and Russia

The European Union will only be able to assume international leadership when speaking with one voice. To prevent the EU abolished. As the path towards qualified majority voting will be long, member states should start by giving up their veto rights voluntarily and by raising the costs for veto use.

Formulating a joint European strategy is also urgently needed

from being "held hostage by those who hobble European foreign policy with their vetoes", as German foreign minister Heiko Maas put it in a recent speech,² the current unanimity requirement in EU foreign and security policy needs to be

to address the challenges arising from China and Russia, and essential for being a strong partner of the United States in developing a powerful approach towards the two countries. An important component of the Biden administration's expectations is that the EU step up its efforts to counter the rise of authoritarianism.

2. Deepening European defence and security cooperation from paper to action

A European Defence Union, deepening military cooperation, pooling and sharing resources, and reconciling different strategic cultures, is not a new idea. Since 2016, a number of initiatives have been launched, including PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and Defence) and the EDF (European Defence Fund). However, so far, the results have been weak, especially in terms of real military capacity to act. While much ink has been spilled on concepts like "strategic autonomy" or "sovereignty" and while calls for a "European army" are highly present in the public discussion, European defence is nowhere near that. Facing the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic that will put additional pressure on Euro-



Munich Security Conference

For nearly six decades, the strengthening of transatlantic ties has been at the heart of the MSC's mission. While the ongoing pandemic has forced



the MSC to not hold the 57th Munich Security Conference in 2021, we remain committed to providing a platform for transatlantic exchange on security policy challenges in these critical times. Therefore, the MSC has initiated the series 'Beyond Westlessness: The Road to Munich' with several events between February 2021 and February 2022 to prepare the ground for the next Munich Security Conference.

Web https://securityconference.org/



pean defence, European states need to make sure that they do not turn inwards - as they did after the 2008/2009 financial crisis resulting in "bonsai armies" across Europe – but use the pandemic as additional incentive to expand and deepen cooperation within the EU and NATO.3

3. Renewing the commitment to increase defence spending

The signal that Europe is willing to invest more in the security of the Alliance starts with a renewed commitment to a higher defence expenditure and to long-term financing. While it is widely agreed that the spending target of 2% of the country's GDP is no adequate benchmark for a country's actual contribution and capabilities, a significant increase in defence spending is needed. More importantly, as NATO states have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to the 2%, the target has become a central symbol of Alliance solidarity. Any efforts to improve the framework for assessing the contribution of NATO members thus need to take it as a starting point and build on it. Secretary Blinken just signaled his openness to do so, reaching out to NATO partners by stressing: "The full implementation of these commitments [2%] is crucial. But we also recognize the need to adopt a more holistic view of burden sharing. [...] We must acknowledge that because allies have distinct capabilities and comparative strengths, they will shoulder their share of the burden in different ways".5

4. Moving from burden-sharing to burden-shifting

Finally, Europe needs to understand that today, it is not just about classic burden-sharing - meaning increasing ones' contribution to collective security and defence – but more and more about burden-shifting.6 As the United States are increasingly moving their focus to the Indo-Pacific, Europe will need to assume greater responsibility in its eastern and southern

Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger

has been the chairman of the Munich Security Conference since 2008. A German career diplomat, he was State Secretary (Deputy Foreign Minister) from 1998 to 2001. From 2001 to 2006, he was Germany's Ambassador to the US, and from 2006 to 2008, to the Court of St James's. He is a Senior Professor at the Hertie School, Berlin, and serves on the boards of companies as well as non-profit institutions, including Atlantik-Brücke, Berlin, the American Academy, Berlin, and the Atlantic Council of the United States, Washington D.C.

neighbourhoods. While the US will continue to support its European partners, Europe will have to take the lead in crisis management operations, including in the Sahel region.

We need a proactive Europe

Rather than waiting for proposals and calls to action from its transatlantic partner, Europe should come up with its own initiatives. It needs to sketch out how it sees its role in the future transatlantic security and defence partnership, what it is willing to invest politically and economically, and what it expects from the United States. So far, Washington's call to action has not been answered.

- ¹ Remarks by President Biden at the 2021 Virtual Munich Security Conference | The White House (https://bit.ly/3vSYGSn)
- ² Speech by Foreign Minister Heiko Maas at the opening of the 19th Ambassadors Conference "Build back better - Foreign policy for the post-COVID world" Federal Foreign Office (auswaertiges-amt.de) (https://bit.ly/3dcYg2M)
- ³ Saving European Defense From the Coronavirus Pandemic Carnegie Europe Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Toward a New "Lost Decade"? Covid-19 and Defense Spending in Europe | Center for Strategic and International Studies (csis.org) (https://bit.ly/3h1hj1f)
- ⁴ Zeitenwende | Wendezeiten Special Edition of the Munich Security Report on German Foreign and Security Policy | Munich Security Conference (https://bit.ly/3wUuSpS)
- ⁵ Reaffirming and Reimagining America's Alliances: Speech by Secretary of State Blinken following NATO Foreign Ministerial | U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (usmission.gov) (https://bit.ly/3wVzaor)
- ⁶ Seizing Biden's Pivot to Europe: Time for Responsibility-Sharing | The German Marshall Fund of the United States (gmfus.org) (https://bit.ly/3x8uAM4)



In the Spotlight

+++ United States +++

The country must care for the wounds in its society

America is back to world policy

Interview with Michael Singh, Managing Director, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C.

The European: Mr Sing, during the last year we saw pictures of America, which shocked all those who believed in the democratic values the United States has always defended. We saw the murder of a black citizen, George Floyd, by a white police officer in Minnesota in July 2020. We couldn't believe what was reported from Washington in January 2021: the attack on the US Congress, the cradle of democracy, encouraged by a former US president, who wanted to return to power after having lost democratic elections. America's society seems to be in turmoil. Can one speak of a divided nation?

Michael Singh: There can be little doubt that we are enduring an era of significant political polarisation. While there are gaps within each party – based on age, education level, etc. – it is the partisan gap between Republicans and Democrats that is most pronounced. What's more, this polarisation is deepest with regard to some of our most difficult issues – for example, racism, gun policy, and climate change – and increasingly seems to affect Americans' views not just of politics and political leaders, but of one another. Combined with what seems to be an increasingly tribalised media and a declining regard for institutions – whether religious, social, or governmental – this polarisation has made compromise and problem-solving difficult.

The European: Yet we should not forget that there are still things on which Americans agree!

Michael Singh: You are right. For example, large majorities want the United States to maintain its leadership role in the world and lead through diplomacy and alliances. Sustaining

There can be little doubt that we are enduring an era of significant political polarisation."

our leading role on the world stage requires us to maintain our vigor and prosperity as a country, which in turn demands that we find ways to overcome our polarisation.

The European: The new president has been very busy in his first 100 days. He has been active in international policy, reversing most of his predecessor's decisions concerning relations with Europe and NATO, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the World Health Organisation. He also defined the directionof his foreign policy and the future US relations with China and Russia. But how will he deal with the domestic crisis, which at the same time is a public health, economic, and, most importantly, a social crisis?

Michael Singh: It is irrefutably the case that the Biden administration's top priorities are domestic – the United States, like much of the world, has been plunged into a public health and economic crisis for more than a year, though thankfully we seem to be through the worst of it thanks to the combined efforts of the current and previous administrations and of the American society as a whole. But difficult challenges remain: getting Americans back to work, for example, and tackling deeply divisive challenges related to racism, immigration, and other issues.

The European: But isn't there a cleavage between domestic and international policy?

Michael Singh: I think that it is a mistake to think that we cannot tackle domestic and overseas challenges at the same time – we can, and we must. Indeed, the two can reinforce one another – foreign policy may be an area where Republicans and Democrats can begin to find common ground, and conversely, the more successful and prosperous we are at home, the stronger we will be on the world stage. But we must begin with a conscious decision to seek and find common ground with our domestic political opponents, and to work jointly toward our mutual success – bipartisanship is a choice.

The European: There is a certain optimism in your answer, but do you believe that President Biden will be able to achieve reconciliation between the rural and traditional America and the urban population living in cities which are often more open to progress and societal change as we see it in Europe?

Michael Singh: In my view, discussion of a "rural-urban divide" in the United States is often more caricature than reality. While



President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris walk from the Oval Office of the White House to the Rose Garden to deliver remarks on the American Rescue Plan, 12th March 2021

there are real differences between rural and urban areas in the United States, they are not as stark as our friends overseas imagine. One of the first pieces of advice I give to diplomats from Europe and elsewhere posted to Washington is to go around the United States and develop a real understanding of the country and its people, in all their diversity. As someone who is from the Midwestern United States but has lived his entire life in and around cities, I think it is important to recognise that rural areas are not monolithic, but are more diverse and vibrant – and frankly essential to the American economy – than is often recognised. I think that rather than focusing on fixing a supposed rural-urban divide, we need to instead seek to help both rural and urban areas address their local problems and promote worker mobility so that individuals can more easily move between different locations.

The European: Let's continue on the subject of the economy: the new president found a worrying situation with the pandemic stirring up numerous sectors. Does Biden see himself as a new Roosevelt, who led the US out of the 1930s economic crisis? Could the huge investment programme he launched this spring help to bring people together and give America new breath?

Michael Singh: The Covid-19-induced economic recession in the United States was indeed the sharpest since the Great

Depression, but will be much shorter, thanks to the pandemic's decline and aggressive fiscal and monetary policies by Congress, the current and previous administrations, and the Federal Reserve. Significant questions remain – how long, for example, it will take the US GDP and unemployment to return to their pre-pandemic trajectories, and whether, as well as which groups of workers will suffer long-term disadvantages. But as things stand today, the US economy appears set to rebound in 2021.

The European: But in the longer run, significant internal questions face US economic policymakers...

Michael Singh: Indeed. To name just a few challenges, US policy has to reflect how and whether to expand the social safety net, how to cope with the effects of climate change, and to what extent federal debt, poised to reach its highest level ever in proportion to GDP, is a problem demanding action. And we must grapple with these questions in an environment in which Americans of both parties are increasingly skeptical of trade and other forms of international economic integration. These are issues that will demand leadership from the White House. And, most importantly, they will require a revival of Congress' ability to forge bipartisan compromise for the common good.



+++ United States +++

The European: Politically the domestic situation isn't easy for Biden. The Democrats have a razor-thing control of the Senate and apparently, Trump's voters continue to believe in the former president. This Right – protectionist, isolationist, profoundly mistrustful and open to conspiracy theory – is completely hostile to Biden. What are the consequences for the President's agenda?

Michael Singh: As I already noted, American society is more polarised today, and those on the ideological fringes more confident and influential than at any point in recent memory. Yet at the same time, and perhaps a bit paradoxically, polls suggest that Americans dislike this polarisation and would like to see their leaders work to overcome it. I think this is especially the case after what has been an enormously difficult couple of years for Americans and for much of the world. But amid this polarisation, it can be easy to forget that there is plenty that unites Americans.

The European: Could you please develop this point?

Michael Singh: We share both concerns – for example, over the rising challenge from China, or deepening economic inequality – as well as aspirations – to remain the strongest and most economically vibrant country in the world, and to devise a foreign policy that prioritises peace and diplomacy over conflict. These common concerns and aspirations present an opportunity both for President Biden, who campaigned as a centrist able to work across party lines, and Republicans, who need to outline a positive agenda to broaden their appeal going forward.

The European: So, can we conclude that Joe Biden and his Vice-President Kamala Harris form a future-oriented presidential team capable to overcome the last four last years and energetically tackle the huge challenges in the country, with a diplomacy directed to the US middle class?

Michael Singh: In my view, middle-class Americans want a foreign policy that delivers prosperity and security, plain and simple. And polls suggest that they have a good grasp of what is needed to accomplish that – according to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, for example, two-thirds of Americans want to see the US maintain a leading role in world affairs,

Michael Singh



photo: Lloyd Wolf

is the Lane-Swig Senior Fellow and managing director at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and a former senior director for Middle East affairs at the White House from 2005 to 2008.

nine in 10 favour maintaining existing alliances.
And according to Gallup,
Americans' views of trade actually grew more positive over the past several years. It is up to the United States' political leadership – the Biden administration, Democrats and Republi-

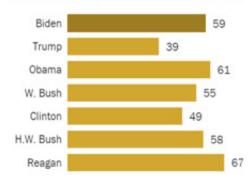
cans in Congress, and leadership at the state and local levels – to work together to deliver on these things and to create the conditions that allow the creativity and self-confidence that have always defined the United States to be fully realised. I continue to believe that for all of our troubles and divisions, we remain eminently capable of coming together to accomplish great things.

The European: Mr Singh, I thank you for this conversation. Our readers will be grateful to follow your ideas and insightful views.

The interview was led by Nannette Cazaubon.

100-day mark: Biden's job approval

Presidential job approval in April of first term (%)



Notes: Past presidents' approval ratings from surveys with most comparable field dates. Data for Obama and prior presidents come from telephone surveys. Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush data come from surveys conducted by Gallup.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

I continue to believe that for all of our troubles and divisions, we remain eminently capable of coming together to accomplish great things."

NATO Summit 2021

(Ed/Hartmut Bühl, Paris) On 14th June, at the 2021 NATO Summit in Brussels, NATO leaders discussed a wide range of political and military issues as well as the future of NATO. The agenda included nine main decisions and the support of the NATO 2030 initiative.

Key decisions

- NATO 2030 was at the heart of discussions. Based on a variety of inputs from experts, civil society and the private sector, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg presented recommendations which formed the bedrock of the NATO 2030 agenda.
- US President Joe Biden succeeded to re-establish lost confidence of NATO leaders in the US ally by underpinning the US' full commitment to NATO's Article 5 (defence).
- Furthermore, there was no doubt about reinforcing the Alliance's unity, broadening its approach to security and contributing to safeguarding the rules-based international order.
- 4. NATO leaders took decisions to prepare NATO for the challenges of today and tomorrow, including Russia's pattern of aggressive behaviour and the rise of China, terrorism, cyber-attacks and disruptive technologies, and security implications of climate change.

NATO leaders agreed on 9 proposals:

1 - Deepen political consultations in NATO by broadening them, including an additional yearly meeting of foreign ministers and more consultations with Allied capitals in different formats.

2 - Strengthen deterrence and defence

by reaffirming their strong commitment to Allied deterrence and defence. Allies will continue to aim to meet, by 2024, the NATO-agreed guideline of spending 2% of Gross Domestic Product on defence and 20% of annual defence spending on major new equipment.

3 - Improve resilience by agreeing to take a broader and more coordinated approach to it, including through a strengthened resilience commitment, developing resilience objectives to guide nationally tailored goals and implementation plans.



Official portrait of NATO Allies

nhoto: © NATO

"By agreeing on the NATO 2030 initiative, leaders have made the decision to make our Alliance stronger and better fit for the future."

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General

4 - Preserve the technological edge by launching a Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) to boost transatlantic cooperation on critical technologies and to establish a NATO Innovation Fund to invest in startups working on emerging and disruptive technologies.

5 - Uphold the rules-based international order by strengthening NATO's relationships with like-minded partners and international organisations – including the European Union – and to forge new engagements, including in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

6 - Boost training and capacity-building

by stepping up NATO's efforts to assist its partners' capacity-building in areas like counter-terrorism, stabilisation, countering hybrid attacks, crisis management, peacekeeping, and defence reform.

7 - Combat and adapt to climate change by endorsing an ambitious new NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan to help NATO and its Allies develop clear awareness, adaptation and mitigation measures, and committed to significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from military activities and installations.

8 - Develop the next Strategic Concept

by inviting the NATO Secretary General to lead the process to develop it. This key document describes the overarching security environment in which the Alliance will operate.

9 - Invest in NATO by ensuring the Alliance has the right resources, both through national defence expenditure and NATO common funding.

Web

Communiqué https://bit.ly/2TlzfvL Factsheet https://bit.ly/3euxi7u



In the Spotlight

+++ Lebanon +++

Lebanon case study

The role of third states in guiding the EU's security policy

by Christopher Eid, PhD student on European policy, France

The search for closer relations between the European Union and the countries of the Mediterranean basin has taken the form of a Mediterranean partnership agreement (Gomez, 2018) which provides for cooperation in various fields and establishes an open global level of interaction, which includes integration. This agreement was signed with each country separately, including Lebanon, in 2002.

The Mediterranean area is today a major part of the world where geopolitical instability is present. According to several notions and in the context of public policy narratives, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), through which Europe seeks its strategic presence, constitutes a policy necessary nowadays to ensure and achieve the maximum geopolitical stability in this region.

Lebanon and the EU security approach

With the increasing political and security tensions and problems in the Middle East, the need for a complete structured EU security and defence architecture is highly necessary to face the threats on all levels. The ENP¹ towards some countries in the Middle East, such as Lebanon, tends to strengthen prosperity, human rights and security by applying (theoretically) EU principles and views to establish a common and shared base between the EU and the country. The door for third state participation in tailoring the EU security architecture is open, yet the extent of participation remains to be determined.²

Christopher Eid

is a Ph.D. student in Political Science on International Security and Defence Policies in France. He holds a master's in Diplomacy and International Security from the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik. In June 2018 he participated in courses in international defence acquisition negotiations at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. He was a speaker for the Doctoral Module on European policies, Jean Monnet Erasmus programme in February 2021.

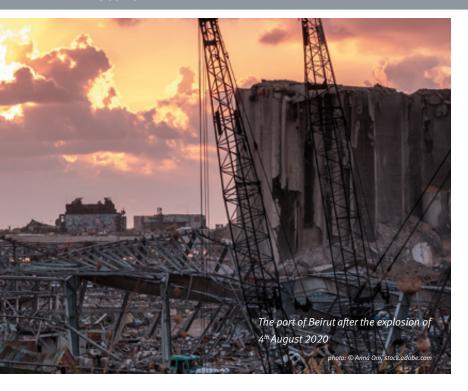
In early August 2020, Lebanon became the centre of attention for many international actors such as the EU, the United Arab Emirates (IJAF) and the





The EU Institute for Security Studies, in collaboration with the French Permanent Representation to the EU, shared a report at the end of a high-level conference that was held on 12th March 2021. The report focused on the ways in which the EU can strengthen its capabilities in sea, air, space, and cyber. By connecting all these domains, the EU will enhance its ability to protect its own territory and can ultimately project security towards EU partners. This Strategic Compass will ultimately lead the EU to become a stronger global partner. The EU security and defence vision as it is shown in the Middle East is after all a micro-level approach and the successful application of this orientation has to imply all EU countries.





With the increasing political, security tensions and problems in the Middle East the need of a complete structured EU security and defence architecture is highly necessary."

Lebanon - a perfect case for the EU

Let us focus on the Lebanese case, aiming to link the ENP and the 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS) to show the importance of third states such as Lebanon on the EU security level. The EUGS promotes the idea of protecting the interests of European citizens by applying concepts such as peace and security, prosperity and partnership towards partners where the EU will be a responsible global stakeholder investing in EU partnerships as it laid down in the text of the European External Action Service (EEAS/2016). Working with partners on a regional approach to address common challenges is a key point in the EUGS.

The ENP towards Lebanon, which entered into force in April 2006 as the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement,³ promoted Lebanon as a stable, democratic, and politically open country with a strong economy. The revised ENP with the Southern Neighborhood published on 9th February 20214 mentioned that the EU should help and support Lebanon's efforts to resolve ongoing domestic, economic, political, and social crises and thereby lacking the security approach gaps filled within the EUGS. The EU, through the Strategic Compass, compiled some of the EU capabilities to achieve maybe the most needed objectives today, ensuring the security of EU borders internally and externally as a common nexus. At the due date of 2022, as well as during its process, the Strategic Compass will allow external threats to be neutralised in order to establish internal security.

The door to Europe

The Strategic Compass is a way of putting together all capabilities in one common EU toolbox, mainly depending on defence, whereas foreign affairs create a pragmatic vision of what Europe is facing today. Lebanon is the door to Europe and it is in the EU's interest that terrorists do not infiltrate through it. The preservation of a safe Lebanese border is a critical issue in the fight against terrorist groups, as said James Cleverly, the UK minister of Middle Eastern Affairs. Lebanon, close to the EU, can ensure optimum results of such a security focused EUGS.

The EU must improve its cooperation mechanism with third states like Lebanon to cover large parts of the security gaps.

The article was written in collaboration with Sylvie Ollitrault, DSP, Political Sciences School, University of Rennes 1, France and Francisco Barroso, Political Sciences Department, School Of Law, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), Lebanon

The positions and ideas in this article express the viewpoint and opinion of the author and do not obligate any other party.

- 1 The ENP includes countries that are subdivided into two partnerships. The Eastern Partnership consists of states that were previously part of the Soviet Union (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia Moldova, and Ukraine), while the Southern Partnership includes countries of the MENA region (Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and the Palestinian Authority). In this chapter, references to the ENP would apply solely to the MENA countries.
- 2 Kinga Bruzenska/Lucia Rybnikarva, Reinforcing European defence by deeper and wider partnerships, The European Security and Defence Union, N° 38 page
- 3 European Commission, European Neighborhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/lebanon_en
- 4 European Union JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Brussels 2021
- 5 Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cleverly-ends-visit-to-lebanon-economic-reforms-a-must



In the Spotlight

+++ Afghanistan +++

Commentary

Afghanistan - a loss of Western credibility

by Hartmut Bühl, Publisher, Paris

On 11th September (9/11) all American soldiers will have left Afghanistan. Joe Biden, the new US President, has followed the policy set out by his predecessor and his countrymen will surely thank him for it.

Britain's top officer however has voiced dismay at the announcement by the US President that Americans troops are to be withdrawn from Afghanistan. Nick Carter said in an interview with the BBC on 16th April 2021, that while he respected the view taken by the Biden administration, it is "not the decision we hoped for".

The other allies will now hurry to withdraw their civil and military forces, as their protection depends on US state-of-the art systems; they therefore have no option but to follow the US lead. It is a bitter disillusion for Europe! The European Union, whose ambition is to promote stability and peace worldwide, will have to take account of this setback in resetting its strategic compass.

To me, it would have made sense for the U.S to maintain operations at its airbase in the North of Kabul, where drones and airpower could have been deployed to protect Afghan forces as well as those of NATO and other partners. Joe Biden's decision to leave Afghanistan, based on the Doha Agreement of 29th February, 2020, will leave behind 170,000 Afghan soldiers, an army that is still not fully formed and not well enough trained and equipped to hold its own in military operations.

From Petersberg to Doha

The Petersberg Afghanistan Conference near Bonn in Germany in 2001 created some euphoria, after the Taliban pullback, about the possibility of launching reforms in the country and introducing democratic standards. Education would be revolutionised, schools built and girls, deprived of education until then, would be able to attend them. Billions of dollars were spent, modern telecommunications were installed, streets and schools were built across the country. The economy was stimulated and GDP reached unprecedented levels. Unfortunately however, the democratisation of society soon reached its limits. Repeated terrorist

attacks caused big losses among NATO's civil and military contingents and created serious doubts within member countries about the sense of their engagement. French socialist President Hollande withdrew his combat troops

at the end of 2012, leaving behind, as a sign of solidarity with the Afghans, only a small contingent for logistics and training purposes.

Big losses inflicted on the US military led to initiatives for a political solution under President Obama in 2011. Under President Trump, who promised in his 2016 campaign to bring US troops home from Afghanistan, the negotiations in Doha culminated on 29th February 2020 in the "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America".

A decision with risks

The agreement charts a course for the withdrawal of American troops, a central Taliban objective. Washington achieved a division of power in Afghanistan and reached its goal that the US would never again be attacked by terrorist organisations based there. But the US didn't oblige the Taliban to cohabit without resorting to force, one of its initially declared objectives. After nearly 20 years of conflict, the Afghan government came face to face with Taliban leaders to shape the country's future!

But believing in the good intentions of the Taliban runs contrary to all the experience of their policy and conduct in Afghanistan over the last three decades. I am sure that in the short term the Taliban will strive to govern the country alone. They will bomb themselves into power and row back every bit of societal and economic progress that has been achieved by international aid. The Americans are surely not so naïve that they couldn't foresee this development. They know what happens when foxes and the lambs are put into the same stable!

Will Biden come back to his decision to keep the Taliban from power? If not, we will see a humanitarian disaster.

The Commission's "Fit for 55" package

(Ed/Hartmut Bühl, Paris) On 14th July, the European Commission adopted a package of proposals to prepare the EU climate, energy, land use, transport and taxation policies to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. In its Communication "Fit for 55": delivering the EU's 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality", the Commission proposes the legislative tools to deliver on the targets agreed in the European Climate Law and to enable the necessary acceleration of greenhouse gas emission reductions in the next decade.

The Commission's package combines a large set of interdependent measures:

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)

puts a price on carbon and lowers the cap on emissions from certain economic sectors every year.

The Effort Sharing Regulation assigns strengthened emissions reduction targets to each Member State for buildings, road and domestic maritime transport, agriculture, waste and small industries.

The Regulation on Land Use, Forestry and Agriculture sets an overall EU target for carbon removals by natural sinks, equivalent to 310m tonnes of CO₂ emissions by 2030.

The Renewable Energy Directive will set an increased target to produce 40% of our energy from renewable sources by 2030.

The Energy Efficiency Directive will set a more ambitious binding annual target for reducing energy use in the EU through stronger CO₂ emissions standards for cars and vans with a revised Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation to complement emissions trading.

The Berlaymont building, headquartres of the European Commission, lit in green to mark the European Green Deal photo: European Union, 2021/EC – Audiovisual Service/Lukasz Kobus

The ReFuelEU Aviation initiative will

oblige fuel suppliers to blend increasing levels of sustainable aviation fuels in jet fuel taken onboard at EU airports, including synthetic low carbon fuels, known as e-fuels.

The FuelEU Maritime initiative will

stimulate the uptake of sustainable maritime fuels and zero-emission technologies by setting a maximum limit on the greenhouse gas content of energy used by ships calling at European ports.

The revision of the Energy Taxation Directive proposes to align the taxation of energy products with EU energy and climate policies, promoting clean technologies and removing outdated exemptions and reduced rates that currently encourage the use of fossil fuels.

A new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism will put a carbon price on imports of a targeted selection of products to ensure that ambitious climate action in Europe does not lead to 'carbon leakage'. This will ensure that European emission reductions contribute to a global emissions decline, instead of pushing carbon-intensive production outside Europe.

The Commission has also proposed a new **Social Climate Fund** that will support EU citizens most affected or at risk of energy or mobility poverty. The objective is to help mitigate the costs for those most exposed to changes. The fund will provide €2,2bn over 7 years in funding for renovation of buildings, access to zero and low emission mobility, or even income support. Furthermore, public buildings must also be renovated to use more renewable energy and to be more energy efficient.

This is the make-or-break decade in the fight against the climate and biodiversity crises. The European Union has set ambitious targets and today we present how we can meet them."

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal

Web https://bit.ly/3BjPkTP



In the Spotlight

+++ Digitalisation +++

Supporting care givers by synchronising all processes

Defeating Covid-19 through worldwide common digital procedures

Interview with Dr Dirk Wössner, CEO, CompuGroup Medical, Koblenz

The European: Dr Wössner, you became the Chief Executive Officer of CompuGroup Medical (CGM) in 2021, at a time when the company's state-of-the-art software is supporting Covid-19 vaccinations worldwide. Even more than before the pandemic, the whole world is now calling for connections between people, facilities, and processes for an optimised impact of diagnoses and therapies. Is this pandemic a real breakthrough for digitalisation in the health care sector in Europe and worldwide?

Dirk Wössner: Absolutely. This pandemic has made us aware of how crucial well-functioning and efficient healthcare is, as well as the opportunities that

arise from digitalisation of processes, data processing and information exchange. Many services were useful before the pandemic, but since the worldwide spread of COVID-19, there has been a big leap forward and everyone has seen and experienced video consultations, telemedicine, personal health records, digital vaccination records and so on.

The European: CGM has benefited greatly from this dynamic growth of digitalisation. But at the same time, medical care has only benefitted to a limited extent so far from information technology and telematics. The greater part is yet to come. What are your value creating goals?

Dirk Wössner: There are indeed many growth opportunities driven by digitalisation, which is only just beginning to develop its strengths in many areas.

We always focus on the so-called "patient journey", i.e. the course of treatment for a patient, for example from the family doctor's office to the hospital, the rehabilitation clinic, etc. Often, many care givers are involved in one healthcare process and our goal is to support them by synchronising all the processes.

The European: Thus, you are enabling the patients themselves to participate.

Dr Dirk Wössner

has been the CEO of CompuGroup Medical in Koblenz since 2021. He holds a doctorate in chemistry. From 1997 to 2002 he worked for McKinsey & Company in Munich and Madrid before holding various management positions at Deutsche Telekom until 2015. He was then responsible for mobile and cable business consumers in Canada, before becoming a member of the management board of Deutsche Telekom until 2020.

Dirk Wössner: Indeed, you are right. We are also fostering learning from data and providing more and more clinical decision support for all those involved in care processes.

The European: Many countries have already passed laws to further digitalise their healthcare sectors. Do states or governments need to do more to nudge the process forward?

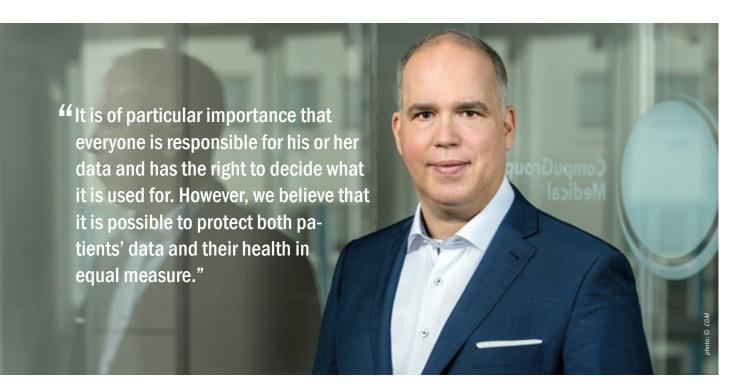
Dirk Wössner: Numerous governments have recognised the urgent need for action and have adopted large investment programmes, worth billions in some cases – for example, in Germany with the "Krankenhauszukunftsgesetz" (Hos-

pital Future Act) and in France with the "Ségur de la Santé" package of measures. All Member States of the EU should follow suit so that the European Union can become the global leader in the digitalisation of healthcare.

The European: Certainly, one of the major digitalisation projects in European healthcare is the German Telematics Infrastructure. What can you tell us about the status and future of this project in Germany?

Dirk Wössner: While in the past, the Telematics Infrastructure mainly involved access and administrative processes, it is now starting to support medical care itself. This includes a medication plan, emergency data set, physicians' letters – real support for secure and coordinated healthcare. Within this project, our company is committed to creating a broad basis for a digitally supported patient journey. Hundreds of thousands of healthcare professionals and millions of patients will benefit from these achievements.

The European: Let me come to data security and turn to your conviction that digital health is a win/win situation, because secure data and secure digital technologies are key responses to sudden health threats. But these exchanges are not without risk and danger. They need to be ultra-secure, especially if data



is exchanged across EU borders. Does data security hinder efficiency in your sector?

Dirk Wössner: Data security is of great importance and must be taken seriously. That is exactly what we do, and it is crystal clear that especially medical data must be protected strongly, which will also help people to look at these solutions optimistically. Also, the GDPR can help European companies in competing with ones from e.g. the US.

The European: CGM is reputed for its scrupulous observance of the EU Global Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)...

Dirk Wössner: ...yes, for CGM, we can state that all medical data from patients in the EU will be processed only within the EU borders. Nevertheless, we find ourselves in a difficult area here. In Germany for instance, the premise of data economy still applies. At the same time, data is seen as one of the most important sources of future innovation. A little more openness in the – voluntary – utilisation of existing data would be desirable.

The European: Let me come to the end of our conversation and ask you to respond to the reactions from two readers of the latest edition of our magazine. One says: "My health has pre-eminence over data protection" and the other claims that: "my data is more important than health". Would you be so kind as to give our readers your advice?

Dirk Wössner: Both positions are reasonable, and at CGM we are strongly convinced that data protection must always play an important role in any e-health solution. It is particularly important that everyone is responsible for his or her data and has

the right to decide what it is used for. However, we believe that it is possible to protect both patients' data and their health in equal measure. My advice is to encourage everyone to use an electronic health record for example. Health is everyone's most valuable asset, and that is why CGM has always emphasised that no one should suffer or die because at some point medical information was missing. That is the crucial point where digitalisation can really make a difference.

The European: Dr Wössner, I thank you for this conversation and wish you and your company every success in making health care continuously more efficient.



CompuGroup Medical (CGM)

CGM is one of the leading eHealth companies in the world. Its software products are designed to support all medical and organisational activities in the health care sector. The company, based in Koblenz, Germany, has locations in 18 countries worldwide with more than 8,000 specialised employees.

The primary thrust of CGM's ambitions: developing software to optimise the medical and administrative processes of healthcare providers, including digital communication with the patient, while observing the highest standards of security.

Web www.cgm.com





Gerald Knaus: Welche Grenzen brauchen wir? Zwischen Empathie und Angst – Flucht, Migration und die Zukunft von Asyl

Piper Verlag, München, 2020, ISBN 978-3-492-05988-6, 336 pages, € 18.www.grenzen.eu

SPIEGEL Bestseller



(Ed/Hartmut Bühl, Paris) The dream of a world without physical borders will remain an illusion. Exploring the future of borders requires finding answers to two questions:

- 1. Should borders be open in order to facilitate trade and allow neighbours to live together in harmony? Should they be closely supervised to ward off threats like invasions or criminal activities? Should they be strictly policed so as to prevent uncontrolled flows of people?
- 2. Can they be declared obsolete by a group of countries sharing a similar outlook (Schengen) or should they, on the contrary, be closed for reasons of national sovereignty?

In his book Welche Grenzen brauchen wir? Zwischen Empathie und Angst – Flucht, Migration und die Zukunft von Asyl ("Which borders do we need? Between empathy and fear – flight, migration and the future of asylum")
Gerald Knaus explores various solutions to these fundamental problems, which, he believes, are obscured by overly ideological debates and contradictory human emotions. If it were possible to devise politically acceptable solutions focusing primarily on people, it could become possible in the 21st century to consider only the objective facts. And although this would not lead to a world without borders, it could create the kinds of



Gerald Knaus (right) presenting his book to Martin Schulz MdB, former President of the European Parliament, Berlin, November 2020

borders that Knaus, an expert on migration and founder and Chief Executive of the European Stability Initiative (ESI) in Berlin, describes as the "humane borders". Understandably, the author bases his analysis of the problems of flight, asylum and migration on the post 1945 migration dramas and makes a plea for the non-pushback of those seeking protection. Knaus' proposals to solve the endless drama of migrants fleeing across the Aegean sea culminated in the Merkel plan of 2015 and the EU-Turkey statement of 2016.

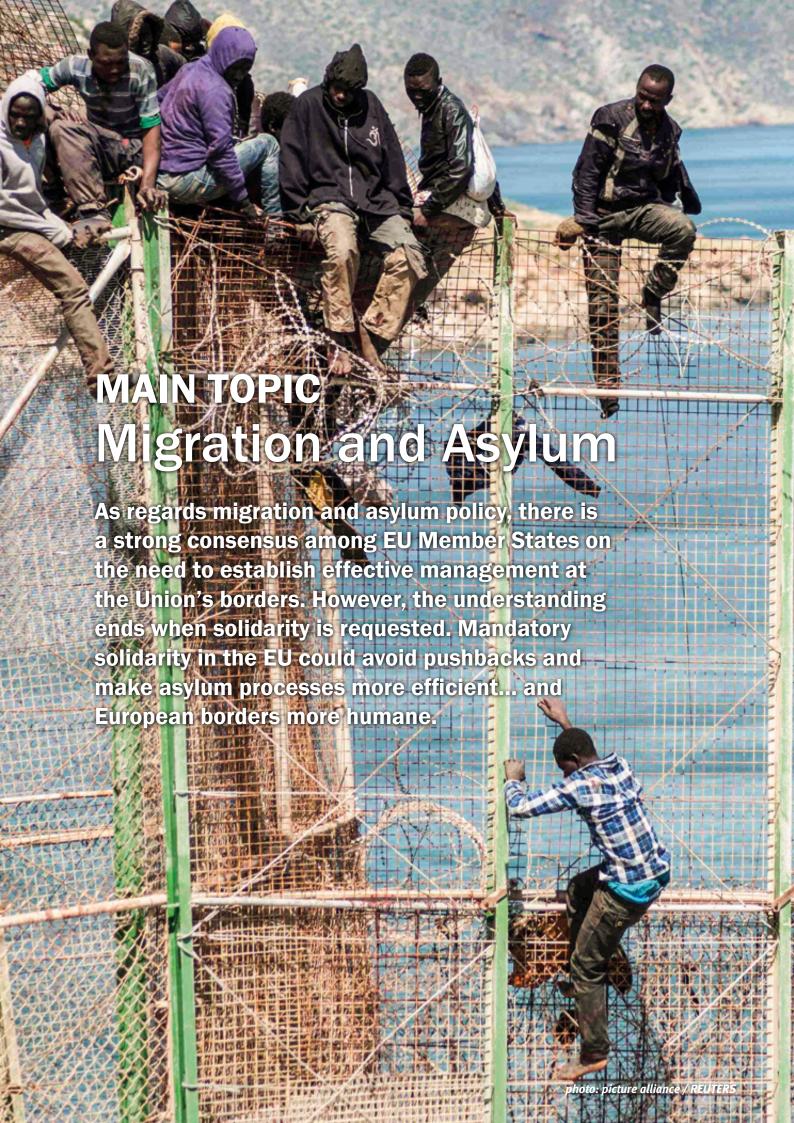
Gerald Knaus, who is an expert on areas of crisis like the Balkans, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa, and who has also lived there for some time, proves in his rich and well documented book, that Europe has every possibility of devising a border regime for its external border that combines supervision with humanity. It is Europe's duty, he considers, to develop a model that other regions can follow.

In his fascinating and commendable book, praised by the German media, the author combines his own personal story with the essence of his subject. He weaves a skilful narrative around the Swiss border regime from 1938 until after the second world war and describes how the commitment of one man, Paul Grüninger, the Head of the Cantonal Police in Saint Gallen, introduced a measure of humanity into the Swiss border regime and was thereby able to save lives.

Considering this example in the light of today's situation, he concludes that Europe needs a robust asylum procedure that can be effectively implemented by national asylum authorities for the benefit of the people most directly concerned.

Conclusion: Gerald Knaus' book is both a thought-provoking and worthwhile input to the current, often confused, debate on migration and asylum, that it helps push in the right direction.

 \rightarrow see also the interview with Gerald Knaus and Minister Jean Asselborn, pp 22-25





Interview with Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Luxembourg, and Gerald Knaus, Founding Chairman of the European Stability Initiative (ESI), Berlin

While the European Commission is proposing a fresh start on migration and asylum policy, striking a new balance between responsibility and solidarity of EU Member States, the current problems at the borders of the EU need to be tackled urgently. We invited Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg's Minister in charge of migration and asylum, and Gerald Knaus, a well-known expert on the Mediterranean region, to a two-way conversation on this subject.

Hartmut Bühl: Minister Asselborn, Mr Knaus, we are grateful to you for having accepted our invitation to discuss these issues. May I ask Nannette to start our conversation?

Nannette Cazaubon: Minister, the urgency of the situation at the borders of the EU is clear for all to see: leaving aside the refugees rushing to Ceuta, people are still risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean, there are still overcrowded refugee camps in Greece, and the EU-Turkey statement is about to be put to the test again. Why is the European Union (EU) still so reluctant to propose ad hoc solutions?

Jean Asselborn: Ad hoc solutions exist and are currently being implemented, like the "Valetta arrangements" on solidarity after saving lives at sea or the ad hoc relocation after the Moria disaster. Unfortunately, these are only small examples of solidarity that cannot address the global issue of migration in Europe.

Nannette Cazaubon: But we have known since 2015 that the EU needs a sustainable, holistic and fair migration policy....

Jean Asselborn:yes, but Member States are deeply divided on the design of such a policy. Some do not want to receive

migrants at all, their leaders want to invest only in fortress Europe and are not afraid to advocate a system that allows for dissuasive pushbacks. Others stick to their international obligations, such as the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, and are prepared to share the burden in a spirit of solidarity.

Hartmut Bühl: Could you sketch out the broader picture? **Jean Asselborn:** The South of Europe is looking for automatic and reliable solidarity. The East argues that their societies cannot integrate migrants. The North is, in reality, the chosen destination for most migrants and therefore is under pressure from secondary movements. All these groups expect the others to adjust their positions so that their interests are met. Violating EU law with impunity is no incentive to change one's position!

Hartmut Bühl: Unfortunately, that is the reality! It was you, Mr Knaus, who suggested to German Chancellor Angela Merkel the idea of the EU-Turkey statement. Could you assess Turkey's current attitude towards this deal?

Gerald Knaus: Let me start with the EU. When a boat sets out from Turkey to a Greek island, the government in Athens has three choices. Option one: the boat arrives, everyone is registered and is moved within days to the mainland. That was the situation in January 2016, before the EU-Turkey statement, when 67,000 people arrived from Turkey in one month. Option two: the Greek authorities use force and push back the boat and its occupants into Turkish waters. That is the situation now. In the first six months of 2021, only 1,300 people arrived on the Greek islands.

Nannette Cazaubon: Violating EU law!

Gerald Knaus: Yes, it is a violation of EU law, but it has also been effective and popular and so it continues. But there is a third option at sea: humane control in line with EU law and without pushbacks, through cooperation with neighbours like Turkey or Morocco. The goal is still to reduce irregular arrivals, but without illegal expulsions. For this, the EU must offer third countries credible incentives. To answer the question why Turkey, currently hosting 3,7 million Syrian refugees, has an interest in helping the EU.

Hartmut Bühl: But the 2016 EU-Turkey statement pledged considerable financial support for four years, didn't it?

Gerald Knaus: Yes, but when the promise of substantial help for refugees in Turkey was not renewed in early 2020, the arrangement broke down. Alas, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, currently being discussed in Brussels, is largely silent on this central issue of what to offer neighbours like Turkey, Morocco or Tunisia in exchange for their essential cooperation in reducing irregular arrivals without violating the Refugee Convention.

Nannette Cazaubon: Minister, I would like to take up Mr Knaus' remark on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum of September 2020. Does this pact really have a chance of being implemented?

Jean Asselborn: Indeed, negotiations on the Pact risk failing again. Currently, the most disputed issues are the compulsory border procedures, rejected by the South, and the solidarity mechanism, including the new concept of return sponsorship, rejected by the Visegrad countries (V4+)². Their blocking positions, in combination with the need for consensus and the package approach, give no window of opportunity for the Pact.

Nannette Cazaubon: What conceptual mistake has been made and how can the Union rectify it?

Jean Asselborn: It was the European Council that made the mistake by asking for consensus and the package approach. Now, it is almost impossible to get individual instruments agreed for operational purposes. Frustration is accumulating in the Parliament because of blocking positions in the Council.

Hartmut Bühl: Minister, you regularly intervene in favour of upholding the principle of non-refoulement and the implementation of a strong human rights monitoring mechanism at the external borders....

Jean Asselborn: ...yes, but unfortunately, I feel more and more isolated!

Gerald Knaus: Indeed, the no-pushback position is on the defensive worldwide. Pushbacks have been a popular policy in Australia, Israel and the US under Donald Trump. Once democratic majorities conclude that the only choice is between control and the Refugee Convention, the latter will lose out.

There is, however, a third way that could work: humane control through cooperation.

Nannette Cazaubon: Mr Knaus, both refugees and migrants have few chances of entering the Union legally. So, what kind of cooperative border regime should we have in the EU?

Gerald Knaus: Humane borders are borders where thousands do not drown. 2016 was the deadliest year in history for irregular migrants crossing to the EU, with more than 4,500 dead only in the Central Mediterranean. There is a strong moral case for discouraging dangerous departures of irregular migrants from Africa. At humane borders, the dignity of anyone arriving is respected through humane reception, which requires the capacity to determine refugee status reliably and expeditiously. The EU does not need more Frontex at its borders, it needs more asylum case workers. More EU border guards do not reduce the number of arrivals.

Hartmut Bühl: *Minister, is this idea consistent with existing needs?*

Jean Asselborn: A mid-term assessment is foreseen in order to



We desperately need a functioning, humane and efficient EU migration policy, based on a healthy balance between solidarity and responsibility of all Member States." Jean Asselborn



establish whether a permanent corps of 10,000 agents is consistent with existing needs. We should not forget that, in its initial proposal of September 2018, the European Commission aimed to deploy those 10,000 agents as early as 2020. That would have meant a massive and immediate impact on the capacities of the Member States' border forces and an enormous logistical challenge! A progressive build-up is therefore key.

Hartmut Bühl: Border management is a shared responsibility between the EU and individual Member States. Minister, what is the role of each?

Jean Asselborn: The main role of Frontex is to act as a readily available additional source of manpower if a Member State comes under intense migratory pressure. Frontex can only become operational at an external border with the explicit agreement of the host Member State, and it discharges its duties under the operational control of its hosts.

Gerald Knaus: What we need for humane control is not Romanian border guards in Greece or Danish border guards in Ceuta, but better migration diplomacy, more orderly resettlement of refugees, a realistic return policy with cut-off dates and faster, high quality, asylum decisions. The massive expansion of Frontex since 2015 was an act of desperation on the part of the EU.

Nannette Cazaubon: Gentlemen, shouldn't the EU put more effort into its development policy by helping African countries to combat drought and water scarcity, for instance, in order to make people stay?

Jean Asselborn: The EU is currently implementing Team Europe Initiatives, which are specifically aimed at strengthening policy coherence in the field of development cooperation. Luxembourg is strongly in favour of such policies. As stated in the EU treaties, the primary and long-term objective of EU development policy is the reduction, and then the eradication, of poverty. The Grand Duchy is one of only four EU Member States that honour their commitment to spend at least 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on development cooperation.

Hartmut Bühl: Which regions are you focussing on?
Jean Asselborn: Currently, Luxembourg spends 1% of its GNI on development cooperation with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. We have been active for many years in the sectors you mention: water and sanitation, sustainable energy as well as education and vocational training, among others.

Gerald Knaus: It is in the EU's interest to reach out to its African neighbours, as Luxembourg does. This should also include more legal mobility. Today almost every Latin American, whether from Honduras or Venezuela or Chile, can travel visa free to the EU, but nobody from Africa can, not even from Tunisia. Putting visa liberalisation on the agenda in talks on cooperation with Tunisia would be a strong signal that the EU is serious about a partnership with African democracies.

Hartmut Bühl: Some EU Member States are advocating an outsourcing of EU migration policy, by, for instance, transferring migrants to third countries to examine their asylum claims. Mr Knaus, is this realistic?

Gerald Knaus: Not in the way it is being discussed at the moment in the UK or Denmark, to stop all asylum seekers at the expense of other countries. This would simply be a cover for pushbacks, learning the wrong lessons from the Australian Nauru policy, which has produced a lot of human misery. However, if asylum applicants were safe in a third country, had access to a credible UNHCR asylum status determination there, and if this were verified individually before any transfer, such a policy could be in line with the Refugee Convention. It would save lives at sea and, combined with more resettlement of refugees, would increase rather than reduce, the space for protection in the world. This would be a lot better than the status quo.

Hartmut Bühl: Minister, would you be willing to push this issue?

Jean Asselborn: Viewing our partner countries in North Africa as the refugee camps of Europe would be self-destructive for the EU! Our relations with North African countries are complex, deep and historically charged. We need a broad dialogue and

to listen to each other's needs. The pandemic has worsened the economic situation in the region. This is why we talk today in terms of countries of origin, transit and destination. And it is also why a discussion of legal and circular migration to the EU must be part of our approach. We desperately need a functioning, humane and efficient EU migration policy, based on a healthy balance between solidarity and responsibility of all Member States.

Nannette Cazaubon: And what about the point that regular migration can be beneficial, as set out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants of 18th September 2016?

Jean Asselborn: I agree absolutely that regular migration is beneficial if it's well designed. But I wish I could also say that the UN Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the Global Compact on refugees are the milestones they set out to be when the process was launched with high hopes by the New York Declaration in 2016. A number of sizeable political stumbling blocks, most of them related to national, not to say nationalistic and inward-looking agendas, have prevented the Global Compacts from becoming the international success story it was meant to be. Nevertheless, it does provide a basis for future, and hopefully more dispassionate, discussions.

Hartmut Bühl: Mr Knaus, in your recent book on borders "Welche Grenzen brauchen wir?" ("Which borders do we need?")³ you discuss asylum issues in detail. What is the meaning of asylum and what can be done when asylum is reduced to a farce?

Gerald Knaus: The core idea of protection in the 1951 Geneva Convention is that it should apply to anyone in need of it, based on universal criteria. This is a radical idea and far from globally accepted. States in East and South-East Asia, for instance, home to 4 billion people, granted asylum to fewer people in 2019 than Austria alone. Since 2013, Luxembourg has taken in as many refugees through UNHCR resettlement as all of South America. Whether this idea of protection survives therefore depends very much on us, this generation of Europeans. We need to show pragmatically how control and a humane approach can be combined. Then I am convinced that majority support for humane border policies is possible in our democracies.

Hartmut Bühl: Minister, would you like to comment on Mr Knaus' arguments?

Jean Asselborn: I admit that Mr Knaus' pragmatism offers a refreshing and informed perspective on the issues that institutional actors seem unable or unwilling to adopt. I agree with many of the solutions offered in the book. However, the political reality in Europe today is that some Member States have adopted a very cynical attitude towards asylum...

Hartmut Bühl: You are referring to the very doubtful interpretation of the non-refoulement principle?

Jean Asselborn: Yes, because we cannot outsource this responsibility to our neighbours. Article 31 of the Geneva Convention stipulates that those refugees entering the territory of a third country illegally shall not be penalised. We should be in a position to quickly identify those in need once they arrive in the EU, and rapidly offer them material and diplomatic protection. It is unacceptable that people with a recognised status are left in limbo, without housing or access to healthcare, for months and even years in Greece. It is our Union's historic duty to solve these problems through agreement, not repression.

Gerald Knaus: I agree with Minister Asselborn that leaving people in limbo in bad conditions, thereby sending a message to others that they are better off outside the EU, is shameful. It also violates EU laws, and it offends a core value: that human dignity is inviolable. But regretting this is not enough. Governments that reject brutal deterrence need to form a coalition to show how humane control is possible, how it saves lives while offering more people protection through orderly resettlement. A policy based on moral realism.

Hartmut Bühl: Michel Barnier has raised the idea of a "Memorandum on Immigration", a three to five-year moratorium with the aim of allowing time for discussions on the problem and a change to legislation. Gentlemen, what is your view of this idea? Gerald Knaus: We must not confuse migration with asylum. Migration is not a right. It is up to each country to determine its own policy on legal migration. There is, however, a right to protection in the EU treaties. If Europeans today turn their back on the principle of non-refoulement and on the concept of asylum, that right is removed.

Jean Asselborn: For me, the moratorium proposed by Michel Barnier is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Everything we have discussed here indicates that the reforms under consideration today can only lead to a dead end. The logical consequence is to wait for political changes in some Member States before making a further push for reform. Such a moratorium would be really useful, however, if the European Commission were to be stricter in the implementation of EU law and show greater determination on infringement proceedings. The slightest error from a Member State in competition law leads almost automatically to drastic sanctions. Why should there be different treatment in the field of migration?

Hartmut Bühl: Let me thank you both for this fruitful and very enlightening conversation.

¹ (All notes are from the editor) At the Valletta summit on migration of 11th-12th November 2015, European and African heads of state and government agreed on efforts to strengthen cooperation and address the current challenges but also the opportunities of migration.

²A new framework for the relationship between Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland known as the Visegrad Group or the V4, was established in 1991 (after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia became independent members of the group). The objective at the time was to promote the European integration of the four countries. One of the political objective since 2015 has been the refusal of EU migration policy.

³ See our book review, page 20



EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

Between solidarity and responsability

by Stefanie Buzmaniuk, Head of Publications, and Ramona Bloj, Head of Studies, Robert Schuman Foundation, Paris



In terms of migration policy, the EU has a shared competence. Its intervention depends on the application of the principle of subsidiarity and is closely linked to the creation of the Schengen area.

The events since 2015 and the subsequent lack of solidarity between Member States have revealed the unsustainability of the European asylum policy. Despite two reforms of the Dublin III Regulation (2003 and 2013), the most divisive aspect has not been addressed: the country of entry of an asylum seeker is responsible for examining the asylum application, representing a tremendous burden on border states such as Greece, Italy and Spain. It was to tackle these difficulties and shortcomings that a New Pact on Migration and Asylum was presented on 23th September 2020.

Obligatory but flexible solidarity

Solidarity, a principle enshrined in the European treaties, is at the heart of the new approach. However, the new system will be less binding and more flexible as it does not provide for fixed relocation quotas but integrates several forms of cooperation and responsibility sharing.

If relocation remains an option, states refusing to receive migrants on their territory would have other possibilities to show solidarity: they could choose to "sponsor" the return of migrants to their countries of origin. This mechanism could prove to be extremely long and difficult and limited by international law, as there is, for example, at present no common European list of "safe countries of origin". Another option open to Member States refusing asylum seekers would be to assist countries on the front line with expertise or practical help. States refusing either option could be sanctioned.

The Commission hopes to avoid the deadlock between compulsory relocation and no solidarity by proposing a flexible approach, so that all States can participate and take on clear responsibility. This mechanism would be adapted to three types of situations: rescue at sea, migratory pressure and migratory crisis. Depending on the nature of the situation, the European response could be calibrated and adapted, placing the Commission in an important position of assessment and management.

Criteria of first country of entry and returns

According to the proposal, the first country of entry would remain one of the criteria for deciding which country is responsible for handling asylum applications. Nevertheless, these criteria would be prioritised differently: the country responsible for the asylum application could be the one in which an asylum seeker has a sibling or his "nuclear family" (contrary to the current situation, where the presence of the nuclear family is the only valid criterion), or in which he has worked or studied. The project maintains the possibility – seldomly used so far –

of filing an asylum application in a Member State which has already granted the migrant a residence permit or visa. Otherwise, first-arrival countries will still be responsible for managing applications, but in the new hierarchy proposed by the Commission, this is now the fifth criterion. The emphasis on better management of external borders and returns further strengthens the security dimension, which has been the main approach to migration management² over the years (i.e. introduction of the Schengen Information System – SIS, Eurodac, the Integrated System of External Vigilance). According to the Commission, migrants should learn more quickly whether they have the right to stay. This should be achieved through compulsory



Figures on migration and asylum in Europe

22.9 million people (4.7% of the total population of the European Union) were non-European citizens in 2019. According to the European Commission (https://bit.ly/3gTq7rf), in the same year, Member States granted 3m first time resident permits to third country citizens. Asylum requests decreased from 1.28m in 2015 to 471,300 in 2020. Figures vary from one European country to another: in 2019 (https://bit.ly/3xOuFVj), Germany took in the most migrants with 13.4 million (15.7% of its population), followed by France (8.3 million), Spain (6.5 million) and Italy (6.2 million). Poland was the top destination (https://bit.ly/3d9ktPl) of temporary working migrants, ahead of the US, delivering more than a million (new permits to extra-European workers in 2018).



"screenings" (identification, health checks, fingerprinting, recording of data in Eurodac database). Returns should be executed more quickly and efficiently. But the fact that the question of returns is linked to the issue of solidarity is a bitter marriage for some observers. Collaboration with third countries in terms of returns is complex. Often, they are neither ready, willing nor able to facilitate the return of their nationals making the process slow and frequently impossible, with extremely harmful effects for migrants who often live in illegal conditions, without social protection for a long time.

To solve these difficulties, the Commission proposes to create a new role of European coordinator for returns under the aegis of Frontex, as well as a network of national experts who would ensure consistency across the EU. Furthermore, the Commission presented an EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration³ in April 2021, complementing the new pact and putting the emphasis on smoother return processes and better cooperation between origin countries and migrants themselves.

New partnerships with third countries

The Commission underlines the importance of considering migration in a more comprehensive way. This is most evident in the section concerning cooperation with third and/or partner countries. Migration and asylum should be taken into account in all areas of the Union's external policy (development aid4, economic cooperation, areas of science and education, digitisation, energy transition, etc).

Furthermore, the Commission wants to cooperate more closely with third countries in the judicial and policing fields, notably with the help of Europol, to combat human trafficking, but it remains to be seen how this could be effectively implemented. The EU Blue Card⁵ on which the Council and Parliament reached a provisional deal in May 2021, should facilitate the entry of highly skilled migrants into the EU and create more legal pathways for migration.

Improvements of migrants' rights

Some NGOs regret the focus on returns. Regarding the new sponsorship system, Judith Sunderland, Acting Deputy Director of the Europe and Central Asia Division at Human Rights Watch,

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is the Head of studies of the Robert

said: "It's like asking the school bully to walk a kid home"6. Jon Cerezo of Oxfam France would have preferred solidarity to crystallise through the protection of asylum seekers. Caritas Europa regrets the focus on returns, but it recognises several positive developments concerning children's rights and preservation of family unity upon arrival, as well as the attempt to pay more attention to the protection of fundamental rights at borders and in cooperation with third countries. Changing the period of time after which refugees are eligible for long-term legal status from 5 to 3 years is also a point that could facilitate integration.

Conclusion

The New Pact on Migration and Asylum will strengthen existing tools and instruments, but also the security aspect of European migration policy. While it seems more realistic in terms of sharing responsibilities and solidarity, it needs a considerable amount of political will. Migration is a human, structural fact; asylum is a fundamental right for persecuted people and a legal obligation under international law for the signatory states to the Geneva Convention. Migration policy will therefore remain crucial for Europe in the future and a new European approach is needed. This Pact could then be a good basis to move forward, but it remains to be seen how it can be adapted to different political and migratory realities.

This text is based on the study "Understanding the new pact on migration and asylum" by the two authors published by the Robert Schuman Foundation in November 2020.

- ¹ Category of country whose citizens cannot benefit from the status of refugee.
- ² https://bit.ly/3xLXv80
- 3 https://bit.ly/3h6FStQ
- 4 https://bit.ly/350fYFQ
- 5 https://bit.ly/3xOys4Z
- 6 https://bit.ly/3x5Chmc
- 7 https://bit.ly/3zT55QK



by Mariam Traore Chazalnoel, Senior Policy Officer, and Dina Ionesco, Head of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Division, International Organization for Migration (IOM)¹, Geneva

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration are felt on every continent. The linkages between migration, environment and climate change are complex. People might migrate directly due to climate and environmental impacts, such as when natural disasters like storms and floods strike. In 2020, over 30 millions of people (https://bit.ly/3xmbGSa) were internally displaced by disasters in 145 countries.

The decision to migrate

The decision to migrate can also be indirectly influenced by environmental conditions – for instance when ocean acidification in small island states or land degradation in sub-Saharan African countries negatively affect the ability of households relying on farming and fishing to make a decent living. Climate impacts on the physical and mental health of population is another driver of migration, made even more relevant by the Covid-19 crisis. Developing countries are not the only ones experiencing population movements linked to environmental impacts, with the US recording 1,714,000 disaster displacements (https://bit.ly/3xrVNtA) in 2020 and nearly one million people displaced by weather-related disasters in Europe between 2008 and 2020. Looking ahead, 143 million people (https://bit.ly/3AHgX96) could migrate because of climate change by 2050.

Governments cannot afford to delay taking decisive action to address these challenges. There is still time to create the policies and develop initiatives to avoid the worst possible scenarios. Over the last decade, UN member states have showed increasing political will to discuss and tackle the issue. The willingness of many developing and developed nations to

engage in multilateral policy discussions has resulted in the development and adoption of instruments that have reshaped the global governance of environmental migration. Chiefly among them are the **Recommendations** (https://bit.ly/3hM-qsuT) of the Task Force on Displacement, a text mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change and adopted by the states party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2018. Another crucial development were the negotiations and adoption of the first multilateral agreement on international migration, the **Global Compact** (https://bit.ly/36oF2n0) for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in 2018.

Applicable policy measures

Environmental migration is a very contextual phenomenon – countries' experiences are so diverse that a one size fits all approach is inadequate. Yet, these two instruments outline guiding principles that can help states determine what policy measures could be applicable in their national contexts to

Increased solidarity, joint action and significant financial investments are all needed to ensure that countries most vulnerable to climate impacts address challenges and seize opportunities".

Dina Ionesco



is the Head of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) Division at the United Nations Migration Agency (IOM) in Geneva. She authored the Atlas of Environmental Migration (2016 - Routledge) and is a frequent speaker on these issues worldwide.

Dina was awarded an "Inspirational woman working to protect the environment" prize as part of the International Women's Day 2016, at the initiative of UNEP, the Geneva **Environment Network and the Swiss Confederation.**

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thored several papers and regularly speaks at conferences on this emerging theme.

address environmental and climate impacts on migration. Priority should be given to addressing the adverse climate and environmental drivers of migration (https://bit.ly/3qV1OfF). This means increasing investments in climate mitigation and adaptation, and in interventions that reduce the risk of natural disasters and improve environmental conditions, such as land rehabilitation. Most people wish to live productive and dignified lives at home and avoid migrating out of necessity. Policy options should help them reach this goal.

However, in some cases, it is not possible for people to remain in or return to areas that are irreversibly damaged by climate impacts. This means that states would benefit from looking at legal and policy options that facilitate migration, both within countries and across borders, and provide protection to vulnerable migrants. The applicability of legal principles in such situations, such as **non-refoulement** (https://bit.ly/3k2SLrA), is increasingly debated. In 2020, a UN Human Rights Committee Decision outlined that states might have an obligation not to return people to areas where climate change impacts violate people's right to life. Other migration management options include offering special visas, expanding regional free movement agreements, or considering planned relocation options to move entire communities out of harm's way.

Countries most vulnerable to climate impacts should be supported in their efforts to translate global policy principles into national policy and legal frameworks that address environmental impacts on migration. Many countries already have policies relevant to environmental migration (https://bit.ly/3y3xUsH) but increased technical assistance is often needed to build national knowledge bases, collect sound data and evidence, review existing frameworks and create policies that address environmental dimensions of migration. Different kinds of sectoral policy interventions can help address major issues, from rural development to disaster management. It is vitally important that migration policymakers and climate policymakers work together to ensure that migration management measures on the one hand, and climate adaptation and mitigation planning on the other, feed one another.

The development of programmes and policies should strive to include migrants. In many European countries, migrants living in urban areas are likely to be exposed to environmental stressors such as poor indoor air quality, heat and cold. Climate action can also help promote migrant integration and inclusion in Europe, as shared urban green spaces can promote increased **social cohesion** (https://bit.ly/3xpHxBC). Migrants can also be actor of climate action, notably by supporting initiatives in their countries and regions of origin through investments and financial and social remittances.

We need increased solidarity worldwide

Looking at the future, we are facing immense policy and legal challenges we do not yet have the tools to fully address, from the risk of disappearance of small island states due to the sea level rise to the long term impacts of slow onset environmental degradation on migration. In an interconnected world, no country can address environmental and climate impacts on migration in isolation. Increased solidarity, joint action and significant financial investments are all needed to ensure that the countries most vulnerable to climate impacts address challenges and seize opportunities. In the last decade, we have seen increased political will to handle these difficult questions. Political leaders need to step up to ensure that global policy principles are turned into concrete action on the ground that protects and supports environmental migrants.

¹ The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



by Fabrice Leggeri, Executive Director of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Warsaw

Over the last five years Frontex has become one of the most dynamic EU agencies. The scale and speed of Frontex growth has no precedent. When the agency started to operate in 2005, its budget was of just €6m with about 30 staff members. This year, the budget is estimated at €543m with 1,350 employees. Such an evolution was marked by two successive amendments of its founding regulation.

The "Europeanisation" of border management

In 2016, the agency was given more powers and was transformed into the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, dealing not only with border control, but also with border management, which entails greater responsibility for combating cross-border crime. Therewith Frontex became a structural and strategic partner with a larger presence in the Member States, making a significant step in furthering the "Europeanisation" of border management.

Among the noticeable changes, the agency has started conducting vulnerability assessments of the ability of each EU Member State to face challenges at their external borders. In emergency situations, Frontex can quickly deploy border and coast guard officers from the rapid reaction pool of at least 1,500 officers. Frontex has put in place a network of liaison officers in the individual countries. Finally, the agency received a mandate to conduct operations on the territory of non-EU countries and a greater role in returns.

The 2019 Regulation paved the way for the creation of the first European uniformed service. By 2027, Frontex will count on

10,000 border and coast guards to support member states and Schengen associated countries in border control and migration management. Among them will be 3,000 officers employed by Frontex and 7,000 officers seconded by the national authorities for short or long-term deployments.

European Border and Coast Guard standing corps

The standing corps, the operational arm of Frontex, for the first time includes officers who are working directly for the agency and wear dark blue European uniforms. They represent the whole European Union, not individual member states. This European formation is fundamentally changing Frontex and soon it will have more staff working in the field than in the headquarters. The number of new staff members that Frontex must employ in a span of just a few years is unprecedented. Despite all the challenges, by the end of this year, the agency will reach its ambitious goal of hiring 1,000 standing corps officers. It is important to make sure and we take care of it, that the officers, who represent all of Europe, are properly trained and ready, both in terms of operational knowledge and from the fundamental rights perspective, before they are deployed. So far, Frontex has recruited more than 600 officers of the European Border and Coast Guard standing corps. Half of them already work at the external borders of the European Union to assist the national authorities. The rest are undergoing an obligatory six-month training.

The deployed officers support the member states in border checks, screening and fingerprinting activities, conducting voluntary interviews to collect information about smuggling networks and detection of fraudulent documents or other type of organised crime. In the coming months, travellers will be seeing more and more of them at the borders.

The standing corps, the operational arm of Frontex, for the first time includes officers who are working directly for the agency and wear dark blue European uniforms."

Frontex makes EU borders more secure

Vulnerability assessments are another example of the strategic and sensitive nature of the new tasks entrusted to the agency. The first strategic risk analysis was delivered last year to EU institutions and member states with the intention of providing foresight on the future threats and challenges. The findings will be included in the strategic policy documents of the European Commission.

Operational capabilities: Frontex is gradually strengthening its situational awareness and its 24/7 monitoring capacity of EU external borders. It receives information from a wide array of sources and, increasingly, relies on its own border surveillance means – in particular, aerial surveillance. Last year alone, the agency conducted more than 1,000 surveillance flights. Moreover, border surveillance activities have been significantly reinforced over the last years thanks to Eurosur and its fusion services integrating capabilities from other EU programmes, such as Copernicus.

Deployment: The agency is increasing its presence in the Balkan countries. In May 2019, Frontex launched its first joint operation outside the EU in Albania, which was followed by two operations launched in Montenegro the following year and a second operation in Albania this year. In June, Frontex also has started an operation in Serbia. These would not have been possible without status agreements concluded by the EU with the Western Balkan countries.

Law enforcement: In recent years, the agency has continu-

ously invested in strengthening the law enforcement dimension of its work and becoming a much more important partner for other EU and national law enforcement agencies. A more robust partnership with Europol has also been established based on new opportunities for operational cooperation.

European cooperation: European cooperation on coast guard functions is also being reinforced with the European Maritime Safety Agency and the European Fisheries Control Agency and a network of national coast guard experts. This type of cross-sector and cross-agency cooperation will help the agency to further

develop the much-needed European dimension of coast guard functions.

Post-return activities: Another important and sensitive area of the agency's work is return - the repatriation of people illegally staying in the EU. The decision of who should be returned lies solely in the hands of national authorities, but Frontex provides support in this field. In recent years, the agency has been expanding its support to member states in pre-return activities such as identification and documentation of migrants as well as digitalisation of national return case management. While specific charter flights for return operations are still needed, Frontex has also invested much in returning third country nationals on commercial flights and aided with voluntary returns. In the future, the agency will be involved in post-return activities.

The future of border management

Border management will undergo a profound transformation underpinned by a large digitalisation process. In cooperation with eu-LISA and national authorities, Frontex will establish the next generation of EU information systems for borders, migration and security.

The launch of the Entry Exit System, scheduled for next year, will be this first major milestone followed by the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), the new Schengen Information System, the new Visa Information System and also the new interoperability framework for EU

information systems.

Frontex will play an important role in the implementation of ETIAS, a system for granting authorisation to travel into the EU from visa-free countries. When it comes into effect in 2022, Frontex will run the 24/7 Central Unit, where it will verify applications from travellers.

The stronger, more operationally active Frontex, relying on law and with Europe's first uniformed enforcement service, is an essential actor to protect the EU's external borders, shoulder-to-shoulder with national authorities. It brings the highest standards in border guarding everywhere its officers are deployed.

Fabrice Leggeri



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by Andrea Quaden, humanitarian aid worker, Syria

have been working to the best of my abilities with and for the displaced children, women and men of this world for more than a decade now. From Germany to Turkey and Syria to Iraq, the Mediterranean Sea and back to Syria. There is one ultimate truth in the suffering of people which the "coat" of humanitarian aid cannot cover up: committed and collective political willingness is missing to end the suffering of human beings, to save people's lives, to ensure dignity, humanity, and freedom to each and every one of us, to establish peace and stability and to get societies back on their feet after a man-made or natural catastrophe. Political willingness – nothing more, nothing less.

No equal access to a peaceful and dignified life

The jurisdiction to uphold human rights, to mitigate and end conflicts and wars, to support the most vulnerable, to offer refuge and grant asylum, to ensure all human beings – regardless of their origin, gender/sex, age or faith – have equal access to a peaceful, dignified, safe and sustainable life has existed since even before the horrors of the two world wars, but even more so in their aftermath.

Nevertheless, to name a few examples: to date, 79.5 million people have been forced to flee their homes, a trend which is

rising; millions of them live in camps like settlements or other forms of inhuman shelter conditions around the world, including in Europe; by May 2021 the limited data we have revealed that 1,346 people have lost their lives at sea across the world, 743 of them have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea under the watch of the EU and its member states; 690 million people still go hungry every day.

Between hope and deception

I started my "career" as a humanitarian aid worker in the context of the Syrian war in 2014. As "expats" unable to access large parts of the country due to the unfolding war and extreme violence, we could only operate across the Turkish border under the UN Security Council Resolution 2165, witnessing the neighbouring country on the other side of the fence (by now a fully fledged, patrolled and armed concrete wall) falling apart and civilians fleeing for their lives. Seven years later, the context has changed. Frontlines and areas of control in Syria have shifted hundreds of times and to date, we witness a stalemate, a fragile status quo. However, after ten years of war and an additional financial crisis in Lebanon, the Syrian economy is shattered and in freefall. People cannot make ends meet anymore, slipping one by one under the poverty line with all the horrid consequences, such as child labour, child marriage, high school dropout rates, families skipping meals, a rise in

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Norwegian Refugee Council in Erbil, Iraq, before joining SOS Mediterranée Germany in Berlin in 2018. She is currently working as an inter sector coordinator in Syria.

gender-based violence and mental health issues, and ultimately a rise in criminality driven by despair.

If decision makers do not care about humanity and human rights, let me just remind everyone that this is a perfect breeding ground for the rise of radicalism, extremism and terrorism – the trigger for "the west" to step up and act. But why only act when "the west" feels threatened, when the damage is already done for the affected communities? When it takes so much for time to rebuild and recover?

Mosul versus Raqqa

Iraq and Syria have made it clear where the focus of the socalled international community lies. When the "defeat" of the common enemy ISIL was declared in both countries, the focus of the powerful media and politicians immediately shifted away and so did the funding priorities of institutional human-

itarian donors. Right in the moment where a window of opportunity opened up to work on more durable solutions for displaced populations, returnees and host communities, both UN agencies and NGOs had to cut budgets, close down projects, take national colleagues off their payrolls

and people in need off their beneficiary lists.

In Iraq at least, development actors stepped up for more

mid- and long-term solutions, but in Syria, due to the political context there is no World Bank to work on ways to rebuild the crippled economy, no UNDP and alike with funding to rebuild people's homes or at least public services, like hospitals, schools, water stations. That becomes ever clearer when one compares Mosul, Iraq and Raqqa, Syria, both heavily bombed by the Coalition Forces in the fight against ISIL. While in Mosul international money is supporting the reconstruction, in Raqqa people are largely left alone to rebuild with the means they and their relatives abroad have. A political decision.

A continuous failing of the global community

The looming global climate change already hit the region years ago. This year the FAO declared a drought in Syria while the water crisis including along the Euphrates River starts show-

ing additional destructive effects on the drinking water, agriculture, food security, electricity, public health and livelihoods of millions of people. I will not even start with the Covid-19 pandemic. As one Syrian displaced family told me recently "Habibti (My

dear), we have suffered through so much and we know there is yet more to come. We cannot afford to think about and frankly we do not care about Covid-19."

Governments and their humanitarian departments turn to us humanitarians on the ground to receive briefings on needs, gaps and context updates and with their limited financial envelopes they try to do their best to finance what is most needed and raise concerns to their politicians. But it is neither the job nor the mandate of humanitarian action to "fix" a country. Frankly, it is not in our capacity either. However, we are here, on the ground, with our national colleagues and I can see every day that the world is collectively failing to really support the affected population – talk to my colleagues in other contexts around the world, they witness the same. Restoring humanity, dignity, hope and peace – a future – requires the collective, committed and long-term efforts of every stakeholder involved.

**Restoring humanity, dignity, hope and peace – a future – requires the collective, committed and long-term efforts of every stakeholder involved."

The decisions to do so are made at the capital level: Brussels, Washington, Moscow, Beijing – to name only a few. It was hard to realise in my work that it is indeed a political decision to ensure that no child has to work for US\$1 a day at a dumpsite, no mother has to lose her children in aerial bombardment, no family has to "live" in a tent in the bone-chilling cold or scorching heat, no human being has to drown at sea on the journey to safety, no one has to starve to death. This list is much longer, but everyone is very well aware of it. So why is there no political willingness to truly and sustainably dismantle this list across the globe so that one day humanity and human rights are not empty shells anymore? You might not believe it, but I am fond of my work and I will continue to support people who were forced into inhumane conditions. The disappointment of political decision-making is constantly on my mind, but I also have the hope that one day humanity will prevail. It is a decision.



The castaways of hell



by François Thomas, President of SOS MEDITERRANEE France, Marseille

n 1st May 2015, the cover page of The Economist displayed a photo of an overcrowded rubber boat with the comment: "Europe's boat people – A moral and political disgrace". Where do we stand today? Since 2014 and the end of operation Mare Nostrum led by the Italian navy, more than 20,000 people have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea.1 In the face of such a tragedy in this sea, where European history has been built over millennia, we could expect a strong reaction from European countries. Various operations have been implemented: Triton, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia then IRINI from March 2020. Unfortunately, the mission is not to save peoples' lives as a priority, as it should be according to the Law of the Sea; but rather to protect European borders and fight against illegal trafficking.

SOS MEDITERRANEE was created in March 2015 by European citizens as a response to the tragic situation in the Central Mediterranean Sea and of the failure of European states to take proper measures. They ignored their duty to render assistance to all persons found at sea in danger of being lost, which is a legal obligation for states or any ship close to the distress zone. At the same time, while EU Member States have step by step removed their naval assets from the Central Mediterranean, which is the deadliest migration route worldwide, they have strengthened Frontex and financed Libyan coast guards. Besides this, criminalisation of NGO vessels is becoming a trend for several European states.

The sad truth on the Libya deal

Libyan authorities are intercepting and sending back to Libya thousands of people who are then jailed in detention centres where they face severe abuse and human rights violations: torture, rape, extortion, ransom, and all kind of acts of violence. To be freed, they must pay human traffickers time and time

François Thomas



has been the president of SOS **MEDITERRANEE** France since June 2019. He holds a master's degree in international transport and is a certified captain and chief engineer in the French Merchant Navy. Acting as marine consultant, he has

spent over 40 years in the maritime sector, holding various positions of responsibility at sea and ashore.

again, who let them embark on flimsy boats until they are intercepted again at sea and returned to the hell they just escaped from. By subsidising Libyan coast guards to intercept migrants' boats, the European Union is thus participating in this tragic vicious circle. Instead of fighting efficiently against human smuggling, this policy contributes to fuel it.

This is the sad reality in Libya. This country cannot be considered as a port of safety for migrants and refugees, nor can it effectively manage migration challenges on and off its shores. European states are aware of the situation which has been properly documented and witnessed for years already. After CNN released a report on Libya's slave market released in November 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron denounced the "crimes against humanity" committed against migrants in that country.

The situation in the Central Mediterranean

As summer is starting, SOS MEDITERRANEE ascertains that there is currently an alarming absence of effective coordination in the Libyan Search and Rescue (SAR) zone, and a concerning lack of assets to answer to humanitarian needs in the Central Mediterranean. Libyan authorities have officially been given the responsibility to coordinate SAR activities off Libyan shores since June 2018. However, Libya is currently a failed state that

Reported deaths:

(during the same period)

2021: **632** 2020: **160** 2019: **331**

Reported arrivals:

(during the same period) 2021: About 13 500

2020: 6 374

Reported attempted crossings:

(during the same period)

2021: **20 321** 2020: **10 354**

photo:Source: SOS Mediterran

is under an international conflict resolution process after years of civil war. As a matter of fact, Libyan authorities are not able to effectively coordinate the Search and Rescue Region (SRR) off their coasts in the spirit of maritime and international law. On 22^{nd} April, SOS MEDITERRANEE teams onboard the Ocean Viking witnessed one more tragic failure.

On 21st-22nd April, the Libyan Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) failed to coordinate a rescue operation, and neither Malta nor Rome took over. A Frontex airplane only arrived and took action 10 hours after the first alert, in the evening of Wednesday 21st. As shown in the timeline of events properly recorded onboard, in the more than 24 hours that elapsed between the first alert and the tragedy, our rescue vessel Ocean Viking received no proper answer to her request for intervention from the maritime authorities to coordinate operations. Unfortunately, this circumstance is not an exception – instead, it became the new rule since June 2018. This failure was fatal. With proper coordination and timely action, 130 lives could more than likely have been saved.

European states must take decisions where humanity and common sense are at the centre of the measures taken."

SOS MEDITERRANEE has observed an increased number of departures since the beginning of 2021, despite the low, if any, rescue capacities offshore.

Indeed, during winter, reported figures² (see table) are alarming. In 2021, reported deaths have increased by 295% compared to 2020, and almost 100% compared to 2019. Also, reported attempted crossings in 2021 have doubled from 2020. At the sight of these figures and in the current context, as the 22nd April shipwreck sadly demonstrated, there are not enough SAR capacities in the Central Mediterranean. This situation makes us fear the worst for the coming weeks as summer, and better sailing conditions, are coming.

The EU needs to step up and act jointly

In the face of these severe failures and this tragedy taking place at our borders, European countries have a responsibility to step up and act jointly:

- 1. To put human lives first and prioritise rescue before any political consideration.
- 2. Italy and Malta, as part of a European agreement including material support and a resettlement system, should be a relay to Libya. Moreover, with the European resources already available in the Central Mediterranean, support for this coordination can be quickly put in place. For example, Frontex operations could be readjusted, and resources allocated to support maritime rescue coordination through transparent involvement in the process.
- 3. In a longer-term process, this responsibility could be taken over by the European Union, among other things through the shaping of a European MRCC.
- 4. EU Member States should immediately reallocate current resources in the Central Mediterranean, as per the IRINI operation, for SAR operations. Summer is coming. Shipwrecks will happen again. EU Member States are responsible for addressing the needs of search and rescue operations.
- 5. EU Member States should collaborate to set up transparent, legal, safe and enhanced maritime rescue operations with states-led rescue assets in the Central Mediterranean: they must re-establish a European search and rescue programme for the Central Mediterranean in accordance with international (maritime and humanitarian) law.
- 6. To reach this point, the European Commission should enshrine SAR questions in the European New Pact on Migration and Asylum, involving SAR NGOs in open spaces such as the working groups in which we are willing to take part and share our expertise.

Finally, European states must take decisions where humanity and common sense are at the centre of the measures taken. Solidarity with frontline countries in Europe must be the common language of all Member States. It should be the DNA of European values. I believe in and stick to what our European Parliamentarians have proclaimed: "The European Union's fundamental values are respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law³."

¹ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has reported that more than a dozen recent shipwrecks off the coast of Libya and elsewhere have pushed the death toll in the Mediterranean Sea since 2014 to over 20,000.

 $^{^2}$ IOM, Missing Migrants Project, https://missingmigrants.iom.int/, last update $26^{\rm th}$ of May 2021

³ https://tinyurl.com/44ju8rwe



Humane and in solidarity with Greece

The EU migration policy we need

by Panagiotis Nikas, Founding Director of ZEUXIS, Athens

On 28th July, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Refugee Convention (the Convention). Its core concept is the protection of every human being who fears persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Non-refoulement is a legal obligation

In 1999, the EU, while planning the creation of a "Union of Freedom, Security and Justice", expressed without reservations its commitment to the obligations of the Convention. This was included in the Council Conclusions (Tampere) in article 3: the common policies (for asylum and migration) must be based on principles which ".... offer guarantees to those who seek protection in or access to the European Union". The commitment to the Convention is deemed as a milestone (article 4) and as a basis for the Common European Asylum System - CEAS (article 13), concluding: "thus ensuring that nobody is sent back to persecution, i.e., maintaining the principle of non-refoulement" (no returns). This protection and guarantee of constitutes a legal obligation for states. Furthermore, with the Council Conclusions the EU emphatically declared that the concept of European security and freedom is not contradictory to the concept of international protection. This is critical to bear in mind. As Europe seems unable to affirm a clear and consistent migration and asylum policy, more and more the Convention looks like an obsolete document: returns, asylum procedures denying the right to protection (long lasting restriction of

applicants in questionable conditions, unfounded decisions), lack of integration policies for the recognised refugees etc.

In the same line, Member States disregard the Convention's provisions and openly deny the right to asylum to those in need. Hungary's Prime Minister Orban said "We don't see these people as Muslim refugees. We see them as Muslim invaders".² Poland's Prime Minister Morawiecki does not want to take refugees from Syria

Panagiotis Nikas



photo: © ZEUXI

is the founding director of ZEUXIS (2018), a non-profit organisation based in Greece, implementing projects that protect and support vulnerable people, mainly minors, refugees and migrants. He has studied theology and law and holds

a master's in public policy and public management. Mr Nikas was the first director of the First Reception Service (FRS) in the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection. He was then appointed Coordinator of the National Action Plan for Asylum and Migration in Greece and represented the country in various fora and organisations.

or other EU Member States⁻³. Denmark recently passed a law to relocate asylum seekers from Danish soil to a third country where the applications will be processed and protection will be granted. The government party's immigration speaker Rasmus Stoklund said "we hope that people will stop seeking asylum in Denmark". How is this compatible with the Convention and the EU's asylum policy?

A growing tendency to externalise the problem

One month ago several of the EU's most powerful countries (Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands) along with Switzerland sent a letter to the Commission, complaining that Greece does not do enough (mainly it does not integrate refugees) to stop or prevent secondary movement. Last year, on World Refugee Day (20th June 2020), the European Commission and the High Representative released a joint statement which concluded: "The European Union is founded on democratic values and respect for human rights. To that end, we will continue to play a leading role in guaranteeing the protection of refugees".

It seems that international protection needs protection in the EU. Instead of trying to formulate an asylum policy that is compliant with the Geneva Convention and aligned with the basic principles of the EU (solidarity, responsibility sharing etc) we see a growing tendency to enforce external borders, build walls, hire guards, deter people from seeking protection in the EU and externalise the problem.

Externalisation aims to shift the problem not only to countries outside the EU, but also to other EU member states, like Greece. But how is it possible when the rich and powerful of

the EU seem unable or unwilling to take a share of the responsibility and ask Greece to carry all the responsibility alone? And how it is possible to play pass the buck with human beings in need?

Greece: saving Europe's honour

Greece is not only at the south-eastern European border, making it an ideal entry point into Europe, but it also neighbours Turkey, which hosts 3,6 million refugees, almost one fifth of refugees globally (the total number of refugees is 20,4 million according to UNHCR).⁷ Due to its geographical position, Greece has received thousands of asylum seekers and irregular migrants, whom it



"The EU has to demonstrate its solidarity in practice, with operational and institutional support."

accepted and hosted, "saving the honour of Europe", despite the economic crisis it went through in the last decade. Europe's contribution has mainly been financial, whereas other tools were used sporadically and without consistency or success. But is money all it takes for Europe to stand in solidarity with Greece? And what direction is this solidarity taking? Collectively building a wall to keep "invaders" out, blocking every and any entry, even for those that need protection, paying or giving other incentives to third countries to accept asylum seekers and irregular migrants on their soil?

Of course not. First, there can be no sustainable and "European" asylum and migration policy without full respect to the protection of human rights and to the principles of the Geneva Convention. By adopting such a migration policy, the EU stands in solitary with Greece. Europe must assume responsibility and demonstrate global leadership. In times when human rights are at stake, Europe must lead the way and prove that there cannot be shortcuts or deserters when it comes to their protection. What is really the message that rich democracies send when they make people in need of protection suffer just to make a point to others?

Second, Greece cannot become the Nauru⁸ of the EU where asylum seekers will be held indefinitely "stored" and forgotten.⁹ It cannot be Europe's exile.

The way forward is twofold: the EU must understand that this is a challenge that concerns all its members, and, on the other hand, Greece must fulfil its obligations.

It is true that Greece's reception and asylum systems need improvement. The reception conditions in the islands are often questionable. The asylum system (first and second instance) has changed but interventions are still needed, especially in the second instance (appeals). An efficient asylum system has to be both fair and fast.

The integration of refugees is a challenge in Greece. How can there be no secondary movement if they do not have any support to start a new life, get a decent job and have access to education and healthcare? This is not about a welfare system that subsidises refugees forever; it is rather about a system

that will force them to integrate smoothly. Greece calls for solidarity, but it also has to assume its responsibility and prove it is a reliable partner. Creating "push" factors that enhance secondary movement cannot be a viable solution.

Funding is not enough

Still, the EU has to demonstrate its solidarity in practice, with operational and institutional support. Greece could benefit from the experience accumulated in other EU states. Asylum caseworkers, interpreters, experts in psychological health, forensic experts, etc, are just some of the ways that states or EU agencies (EASO) can really help and support.

Funding, as much as it is necessary, is not enough. There need to be institutional changes that will regulate things on a new basis, for instance, the mechanism of permanent and obligatory relocation for all EU member states, as well as resettlement directly from third countries and agreements for regulated movement to Europe for specific categories and scopes (students, seasonal workers, etc). Funding is needed as reception and integration are costly and this cannot just be the responsibility of one member state. Sustainable multi-annual projects have to be supported financially as well, to achieve long-term benefits both for refugees and the states.

Often the discussion about the Common European Asylum System is limited to money and legal frameworks. But it is important to include concepts such as morality and compassion. It is human beings that we are talking about and there can be no progress or good if the most vulnerable and those in need are left behind.

- 1 https://bit.ly/3hAnSt8
- ² https://bit.ly/3AWHlfj
- 3 https://bit.ly/36PhFDD
- 4 https://bit.ly/3yY9MaY
- https://politi.co/3raFkHZ
- 6 https://bit.ly/3ker8fv
- ⁷ https://bit.ly/3efnkHa
- Small island nation used as Australia's controversial offshore processing centre.
- 9 https://bit.ly/3rgHk1d



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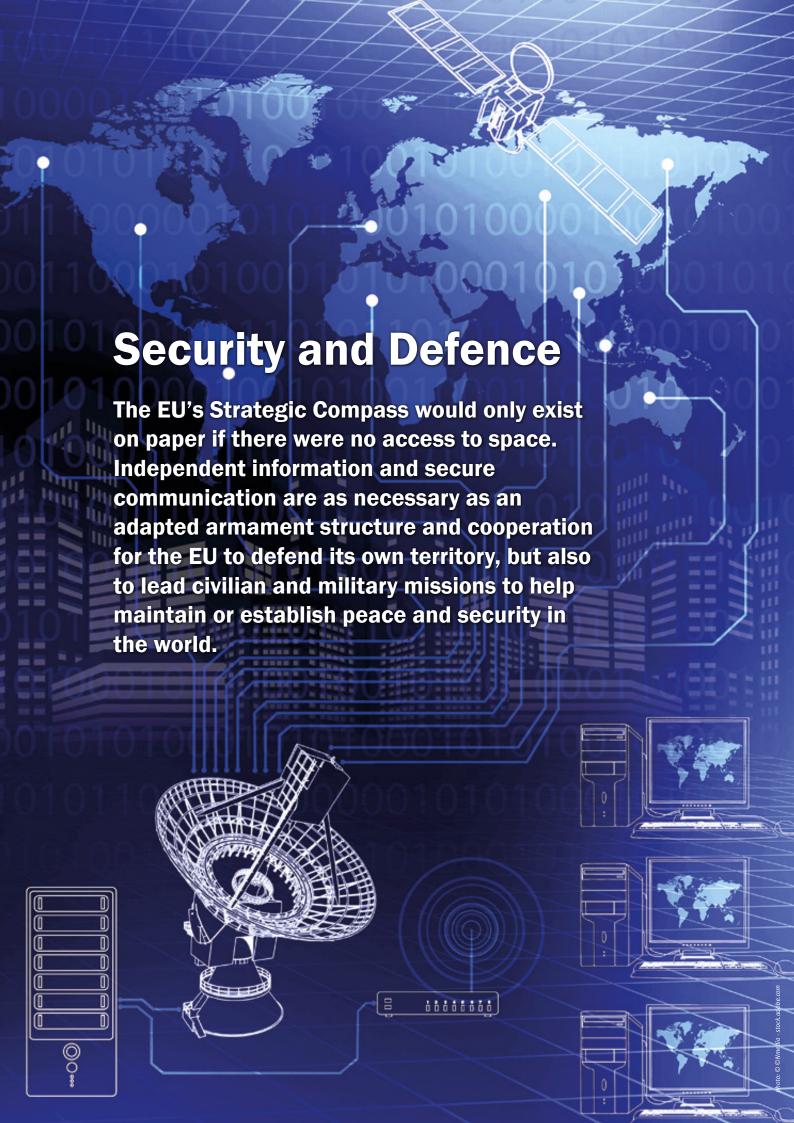
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by Sorin Ducaru, Director of the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen), Madrid

With nearly 30 years since its foundation, the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen) has established itself as the prime provider of geospatial intelligence analysis for EU external action. The Centre in Torrejon near Madrid supports the collective decision making in Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as well as EU missions and operations. The agency is tasked with providing products and services, namely from the exploitation of spacebased earth observation imagery data and relevant collateral data.

Operational EU ambitions

SatCen services respond to the EU requirements described in the 2016 Global Strategy for the Foreign and Security Policy. Its operational readiness has just been officially confirmed by the first-ever SatCen board meeting at ministerial level, held on 6 May 2021. The EU ministers provided a strong political impulse to align the Centre's evolution with the EU's increased level of ambition in the fields of space, security and defence. SatCen analysis covers military capabilities, humanitarian aid, support to evacuation operations, monitoring of weapons of

mass destruction, critical infrastructures, and climate change related security, to name just a few.

The Centre also contributes directly to the forthcoming Strategic Compass. The core of SatCen's mission is to support EU crisis management through its geospatial analysis. The agency strengthens European resilience, reflected in its operational lessons learned during crises like the ongoing pandemic, as well as through its role in the Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) activities. The Centre helps to reinforce EU partnerships through the mandated support for the UN, OSCE and OPCW. In addition, SatCen continuously invests in capability development to remain at the cutting edge of relevant technological developments, like with Artificial Intelligence and Big Data from space. SatCen's primary source of satellite data are commercial providers. The share from European sources has steadily increased from a mere 6% in 2010 to around 75% today. The Centre also benefits from agreements with Member States allowing access to high-quality governmental satellite imagery. Collateral data complementing the imagery analysis is acquired from open sources and provided by users of SatCen services.

The Centre operates under the political supervision of the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the operational direction of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign



Ambassador Sorin Dumitru Ducaru

has been the Director of the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen) since June 2019. He has previously held the position of NATO Assistant Secretary General and Head of the NATO Emerging Security Challenges Division, as well as the positions of Romania's ambassador to NATO, USA and to the UN in New York. He also assumed various positions in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



SatCen is a very important asset for our institutions and agencies, for Member States, for our missions and operations, because it provides us with critical geopolitical intelligence analysis. It also provides our partners with an invaluable view of what is happening on the ground"

HR/VP Josep Borrell during the SatCen board meeting on 6th May 2021

and Security Policy. In a world of information overload and disinformation, SatCen provides fast and reliable information services across the whole spectrum, from political planning to operational decision making. It does so by answering to the needs of its various users, especially the crisis management and intelligence structures of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and EU operations and missions. Within the EEAS, the main users are the EU Military Staff (EUMS), the Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN), the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), and the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC). Additionally, SatCen supports EU Member States, the European Commission, as well as EU agencies like Frontex and international organisations.

The monitoring of crisis areas

The Centre regularly provides its essential services in the context of crises and heightened political attention. A striking example is the monitoring of migration and management of refugee flows, often related to violent conflict, a topic at the top of the agenda for EU leaders during much of the past decade. Our continuous monitoring of such crisis areas provides invaluable situational awareness and thus strengthens EU autonomy for political action.

As an operational agency in the field of CFSP/CSDP, SatCen is mandated to maximise synergies and complementarities with other EU activities in the field of security, defence and space. This is reflected in the highly effective cooperation with the Commission, in particular through SatCen's key role in the security dimension of Copernicus, the flagship EU space programme. Here, the Centre acts as the coordinator of the Copernicus Service in Support of EU External Action. Collaboration with Frontex has been continuously extended over the past six years, steadily supporting the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency in its efforts to monitor coastal activity and external border activity related to the migration crisis.

SatCen also cooperates with other initiatives in the field of space and security, like through its function as Front Desk to

the EU Space Surveillance and Tracking Support Framework (EU SST). This activity, in close cooperation with EU Member States, provides security in space, complementing the main geospatial intelligence mission of providing security from space. Additionally, the Centre is closely involved in various targeted Research & Innovation (R&I) activities, mainly funded through Horizon 2020, as well as through cooperation with partners like the European Defence Agency (EDA), the European Space Agency (ESA), and other actors in the common field of interest strengthening SatCen's core activity.

Looking to a challenging but bright future

The Centre's operational success rests on the professional capability and dedication of its team of highly skilled and multidisciplinary experts. My staff has developed a unique expertise in analysing heterogeneous data at various classification levels in the agency's secure environment with the aim of delivering top-level decision support services to the EU, its Member States and partners. The user demand for the Centre's products and services has multiplied over the past decade, a trend which is expected to continue in the future. Furthermore, the pandemic has highlighted the specific value of space assets and geospatial analysis capabilities in times of crisis, especially when ground mobility is severely impacted. At the same time, the Centre managed to use this crisis to adapt and further improve its modus operandi, while further increasing the quality, complexity and delivery speed of its products and services. This evolution is driven by the requirements of its users, in order to provide services with a high level of resilience, versatility and adaptability.

With its 30th anniversary in 2022, SatCen is looking to a challenging but bright future: the growing demand for high-quality geospatial analysis services for EU external action is strongly correlated with the increasing complexity of our security environment as well as the growing EU level of ambition in the field of security, defence and space, as reflected in the Strategic Compass debate.



by Vice Admiral Hervé Bléjean, Director General European Union Military Staff / Director Military Planning and Conduct Capability, Brussels

The security situation faced by Europeans today can be increasingly characterised by evolving threats, complexity and uncertainty. On a global scale, contested norms, strategic competition, climate change, terrorist, cyber and hybrid threats can potentially increase instability and volatility in already fragile social and political situations. It is apparent to Member States that failing to ensure security and stability beyond EU borders will affect its society, security and economy. There is an expectation that the EU and Member States must be able to protect its citizens as well as uphold European values. However,

given the scale and complexity of global security threats, no Member State can tackle them alone. For this reason, the EU is addressing its current and future security and defence needs by enhancing its strategic autonomy and its capability to act as a credible global security provider.

The requirement that the EU 'have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces' gives the EU the possibility to intervene outside its territory through civilian and military crisis management missions and operations. Through a unique blend of soft and hard power,

using security and defence instruments alongside diplomacy, sanctions, development, cooperation and trade, the EU applies an integrated approach to sustainable security. This enables the EU to take a leading role in peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security.

The role of the EU Military Staff

A key enabler of EU hard power is the EU Military Staff (EUMS), established 20 years ago to provide 'military expertise and support to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), including the conduct of EU-led military crisis management operations'. The EUMS had a role primarily focused on supporting the planning and launch of operations outlined in the Helsinki declaration. The Political and Security Committee (PSC),

responsible for the shaping of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and CSDP, and the EU Military Committee who provide, inter alia, military advice and recommendations to the PSC, were also created at that time. Another key development was the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU's diplomatic service, in 2011. It helps the EU's foreign affairs chief - the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy carry out the Union's CFSP. The EU currently deploys over 5,000 personnel in 17 CSDP missions

Vice Admiral Hervé Bléjean



photo: © EUM.

has been the Director General of the EU Military Staff and Director of the Military Planning Conduct Capability since 2020. Born in 1963, he joined the French navy in 1984. He participated in the Golf operation "Enduring Freedom"

as commanding officer of the frigate VENDEMIAIRE. He also served as Deputy Commander of the French naval maritime force and was appointed EUNAVFOR ATALANTA force commander in December 2013. In 2014 he became the head of international relations at the French ministry of defence.

and operations across three continents. These missions and operations contribute to the stabilisation efforts in neighbouring regions and promote a more stable and secure international environment. As an integral component of the EU's Integrated Approach to conflict and crisis, and acting under the direction of the EUMC, the EUMS continuously monitors all military aspects of the EU's CSDP military operations, namely Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, IRINI in the Mediterranean and ATALANTA in the Indian Ocean.

These operations have an executive mandate and as such are authorised to conduct governmental or executive tasks in support of a government, or in the absence of a governmental authority.

The EUMS also supports the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) for the EU's CSDP non-executive military training missions, presently in Central African Republic, Somalia and Mali. These missions concentrate on capacity building, mentoring, monitoring and training; they have no specific power to undertake activities that are the legal and rightful responsibility of the government and its ministries. This are a total of six military missions and operations and over

The CSDP continues to develop

2,700 military personnel deployed.

The EU continues to ensure that it has the right capabilities, structures, financial instruments and cooperative frameworks to deliver on its CSDP. These include the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund (EDF), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), and a new set of EU Capability Development Priorities. A new off-budget instrument, the European Peace Facility (EPF) will also enhance the capacity of the EU to react faster and more efficiently to a conflict or crisis and facilitate capacity building.

Regarding the CSDP missions and operations, the establishment of the MPCC, with the capability to plan and conduct simultaneously one executive operation and up to five non-executive military missions, has enhanced and improved the crisis management structures of the EU.

Finally, the Strategic Compass – to be delivered in early 2022 – will help strengthen a common European security and defence culture, show greater operational clarity, enhance EU resilience, develop high-tech capabilities and work closer with partners. All of which will help define the right objectives and concrete goals of the EU's CSDP.

These structures and capabilities are designed to streamline and improve the EU's Crisis Management ability. Supplementing these developments, the EU conducts simulations to exercise and evaluate its response procedures and mechanisms, such as the EEAS Crisis Response Mechanism and the Joint EU

"The EU continues to ensure that it has the right capabilities, structures, financial instruments and cooperative frameworks to deliver on its CSDP."

Consular Crisis Preparedness Framework, to address a crisis with an external dimension. Most recently, the EU successfully completed Exercise Integrated Resolve, a training exercise designed to assess the EU's ability to coordinate and respond to external conflicts and crises. This exercise focused on the CSDP planning processes and operational conduct in a hybrid threat environment. The exercise had a simulated executive mandate and was conducted in coordination with an EU delegation. The scope of Integrated Resolve was an exter-

nal dimension crisis not just focused on the CSDP planning of the mission and operation, but in the management of a crisis affecting EU assets abroad, such as the military operation and civilian mission deployed together with the EU delegation in the affected country. Even more remarkable and a measure of the EU's CSDP commitment and resolve was the safe conduct of the exercise amid a pandemic.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that Member States remain in the driving seat when deploying security and armed forces to CSDP missions and operations, or that they must work closer with one another if they are to successfully address the security and defence challenges of the future. The EU can facilitate and reinforce this cooperation, and, through the evolution of its CSDP structures and the development of its people, make the collective effort greater than the sum of its parts.

Therefore, 20 years after the establishment of the EUMS and 10 years after the establishment of the EEAS, the EU has never been more prepared for CSDP missions and operations.

Web The European Union Military Staff (EUMS): https://bit.ly/3B6UbYm



Ongoing military CSDP missions

The EU currently deploys more than 5000 personnel in 17 missions, 6 of them are military:

- 2004 EUFOR ALTHEA, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton)
- 2008 EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA, Indien Ocean/ Horn of Africa (Piracy)
- 2010 EUTM SOMALIA, Somalia (Training)
- 2013 EUTM MALI, Mali (Training)
- 2016 EUTM RCA, Central African Republic (Training)
- 2020 EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI, Mediterranean (UN arms embargo Libya)

Web https://bit.ly/3Abw1vp



A decision still premature but on its way

Shaping the role of the EU in armament cooperation and export

by Maria Camello, Analyst, and Federico Santopinto, Senior analyst at GRIP*, Brussels



In 1951, the coal and steel industries were still the lifeblood of the war. The idea of entrusting the administration of this strategic sector of the European nations' economy to a supranational entity did not seem at all realistic at the time. When Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet proposed the creation of the ECSC (the European Coal and Steel Community), only six years had passed since the end of the second world war. Europe was still licking its wounds.

The ECSC project was kept hidden until the last minute by its promoters. Schuman and Monnet were not so much afraid of public opinion, but rather that of their colleagues in government. They wanted to avoid the latter considering their ambition as a fantasy and rejecting it.

This is how the history of the European integration process began: with a surprising and at first sightly unrealistic act.

The EU becomes a defence industrial player

Relatively speaking, Jean-Claude Juncker did not do otherwise in 2016 when he launched the European Defence Fund (EDF). Prior to that date, the idea that the European Commission would ever interfere in Research and Development (R&D) programmes of complex weapon systems was considered unthinkable by many. Indeed, the military industry has always been at the heart of national sovereignty and, as such, it had until then escaped the European integration process. When Juncker proposed to launch the EDF, suggesting that it would be funded from the European Union (EU) ordinary

budget and administered through the community method, he was bound to create a surprise. Member States were the first to be surprised. However, they did not hinder the Commission's ambitions. The international context at the time did not lend itself to this. It was September 2016, the British had just voted for Brexit,

**Today, the European Defence
Fund is considered one of the
most relevant and promising
initiatives in European
defence."

the Americans were about to elect Donald Trump as their new president and, two years earlier, Russia had invaded part of Ukraine. European leaders had good reason to be concerned. In such a troubled context, defence integration suddenly appeared more relevant than ever. Thus, between the second half of 2016 and the end of 2018, a window of opportunity opened and Juncker took advantage of it. By announcing the creation of the EDF in September 2016 and formulating a first concrete proposal on 30th November, just a few weeks after Trump's election, the President of the Commission was able to ride the wave. Juncker went fast: he asked his services to work hard to adopt concrete legislative proposals in record time to exploit the temporary alignment of the stars. As long as the current political situation was favourable, he had to place the Member States before a fait accompli, which he managed to do. This is how the EDF came to life.

Today, the EDF is considered one of the most relevant and promising initiatives in European defence. Its path is strikingly similar to that of the ECSC: with a bit of audacity and surprise, what was perceived as unrealistic has suddenly become indispensable.

What about exports?

Once the EDF was adopted, another challenge arose for the EU. The EDF inevitably stimulated the debate on arms transfer controls, raising a simple question in this regard: if the EU budget is to finance the development of military equipment, should

the time not come to increase the EU's competences in the field of arms exports? The EDF is not the only European instrument that has made this question relevant. Other initiatives, such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO, 2017) or the European Peace Facility (EPF, 2021), could be cited as examples of the EU's growing role in the armaments sector.



Control of arms export: In the context of a military-industrial scene that is set to become more europeanised, the idea that the Union should strengthen its capacity to control arms exports has become obvious, even to the Member States. It should not be forgotten that an increasing number of defence systems produced in Europe now incorporate components from several EU countries. Bilateral, mini-lateral or EU-led cooperation has become common practice. However, these arms development programmes are often blocked by disagreements between states on exports.

Binding regulations: The question is therefore not whether Brussels should increase its role in this sector, but how to do it. At present, the EU has limited competences. In 2008, it adopted a Common Position which sets out eight criteria to be taken into account by Member States in their export policies. However, these criteria are often not respected and there is no system of sanctions in case of non-compliance. The EU must therefore improve its arms exports control system. To do so, it has two options: it can either hold on to the intergovernmental route, or it can take the community route by adopting a binding regulation that would incorporate the criteria of the Common Position.

Communitarisation: Instinctively, Member States tend to be reluctant to use the community method, especially when it comes to defence issues. However, once they recognise that the EU needs to strengthen its competences on arms control, the option of communitarisation could prove to be more attractive to them than it might first appear. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, because Europeans often tend to compete fiercely against each other in the arms trade. Therefore, strengthening the EU's intergovernmental action in this field could be much more problematic than opting for the community route. In the latter, indeed, supranational and impartial EU institutions would come into the equation in order to ensure greater clarity and objectivity in the interpretation of

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photo: private

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the common rules. Secondly, it should not be forgotten that the community system is not federal and leaves the states with decisive room for maneuver. A misunderstanding must be cleared up in this regard. Communitarising arms transfer controls does not mean giving an EU entity the power to grant export licences instead of national governments. As in the case of dual-use goods, European capitals would retain the power to decide when to export and when not to. But this time, unlike the current arrangement, the Commission and the EU Court of Justice would be able to ensure that specifically prohibited situations are respected. They would only intervene in these limited circumstances.

In the light of these considerations, the community path does not seem so unreasonable. Yet, at this stage, it remains taboo. It is considered unrealistic or premature, as were the ECSC and the EDF before they were created and appreciated.

- * GRIP = Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité
- ** Picture (from left to right): Paul Van Zeeland, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs; Joseph Bech, Luxembourgish Minister for Foreign Affairs; Carlo Sforza, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs; Robert Schuman, French Minister for Foreign Affairs; Konrad Adenauer, Germand Federal Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Dirk Uipko Stikker, Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs



France-Germany: frictions on armamer

(Ed/hb, Paris) With its mastery of cutting-edge technologies, including in armaments, Germany is a sought-after partner in cooperation projects. However, current cooperation on armament projects, particularly between France and Germany, is subject to considerable friction. France, used to the rapid decision making inherent in its centralised and presidential system, is unhappy with the pace of progress on large-scale projects like the future fighter aircraft or joint combat tank. It is critical of Germany's painstaking and therefore slow parliamentary procedures on matters affecting the Bundeswehr and armaments.

Conservative political circles in Paris are even going so far as to question the whole concept of Franco-German cooperation on armament projects and claim that France's independent decision-making capacity is being undermined. There is often little knowledge of the deeply rooted reasons for the parliamentary procedures the newly created German forces, the Bundeswehr, were subjected to after the second world war. The notion of a "parliamentary army", that Germans consider essential because of their past history, does not always elicit much sympathy in Paris.

Our partners partners need reliability

Specificities of German parliamentary democracy in armaments policy

by Dr Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann MdB, member of the Bundestag and the federal board of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), Berlin

The model of the German Armed Forces, the Bundeswehr, as a "parliamentary army" has always been viewed on the French side with suspicion, as a factor hampering Franco-German cooperation. Our French friends, accustomed to a centralised presidential system with rapid decision making, see the German system as slow and subject to blockages, unable to make quick decisions and take immediate action. The fact that our armaments industry is privately owned and not organised by the state, is seen as an additional obstacle to rapid decision making.



A parliamentary army..

Although it is quite understandable that the French side would like to see greater speed in decision making in Franco-German cooperation, I see our Bundeswehr as having a unique status in terms of democratic legitimacy that is imperative to preserve, and not only with regard to German history.

The same applies to the privately owned defence sector.

There are good reasons why we in Germany discuss every Bundeswehr mandate for foreign engagements and also raise questions about their military equipment. As Members of Parliament, we have responsibility for our soldiers.

The status of German forces is enshrined in our constitution.

Operations are not approved lightly or planned at the stroke of a pen, but must be well thought out, intensively discussed and approved by Parliament. This prevents rapid deployments by the heads of government – but that is precisely the purpose

of our parliamentary army: to protect and have due respect for

the people who risk their lives for our peace and freedom in missions around the world. Such operations must never again

...and a privately owned arms industry

be decided lightly.

In the interests of quality and to encourage competition for the best possible equipment, it is also logical for the arms industry to be privately owned – the best should prevail here as well. Clear rules on arms exports are also needed. However, it is true that our partners, like France, need dependability. Restrictions on arms exports are one thing, but our partners must be able

t projects



to rely on the fact that our rules are strict and clear and are not subject to frequent changes according to taste and circumstances. It is preferable to have tough restrictions, which one knows and can adhere to, rather than soft export conditions, which are thrown overboard at the slightest change in circumstances. In addition, we need reliability in government. What regularly causes irritation in France, and rightly so, is the erratic behaviour of part of the Federal Government on equipment issues relating to Franco-German projects. The future of the Eurodrone, for example, was hanging by a thread after leaders of the Social Democrats made the arming of the Heron drones dependent on the outcome of a future nationwide debate and possibly on international agreements too! 10 years of debate in Germany is an affront to our partners. Only under the greatest pressure did the coalition committee reach a partial compromise, although the question of final armament has still not been resolved.

We need a strong European defence

It is also clear that Europe, and Germany in particular, must come of age. Even under Joe Biden, it is not possible within Europe and NATO to stand on the side lines and rely on the US to do the heavy lifting! Those days are over. Europe must become stronger in order to hold its own in a changed, multipolar

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Parliamentary supervision of the Bundeswehr

(Ed/hb, Paris) When the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949, it was not intended to have an army. It was only in 1955 that armed forces ("Bundeswehr") were established, but as a result of the experience from 1933 to1945, they were subjected to strict supervision by Parliament ("Bundestag"). The German constitution ("Grundgesetz") stipulates that the Bundestag has ultimate control over the country's budget; this means that it must approve the defence budget, through which it exercises its supervision over the armed forces. In addition to the Bundestag Defence Committee, a defence specific Ombudsman ("Wehrbeauftragter) is elected by parliament to whom the military can turn directly on any issue.

Parliamentary supervision is particularly strict in respect of foreign deployment of the Bundeswehr: no forces can be stationed abroad before the Bundestag has approved their mission. This approval is limited to a period of twelve months; any extension deemed necessary must also be approved once the initial period has expired.

Decisions on the procurement of military equipment costing over €25 million must be taken by parliament on the basis of a proposal from the government.

Source: German Federal Ministry of Defence

world. The USA is increasingly focusing its power on a political confrontation with the People's Republic of China. Europe's responsibility for its own affairs is increasing. The focus here is, for example, the German-French-Spanish fighter aircraft system, FCAS. Here, too, our partners need reliability. It will be the task of us all, and not only after the upcoming Bundestag elections, to fully restore this reliability. Because it is also clear to us that friendship between Germany and France and Franco-German cooperation in the defence sector are of fundamental importance and must be based on dependability. They must not be put at risk lightly. The French need to under-

stand the unique characteristics of the parliamentary army and the privately owned armaments sector, which guarantees the quality of equipment through competition. The French must also recognise the lead of the respective countries in joint armaments procurement projects, but they naturally expect reliability. What is needed in cooperation is open and regular communication as well as clear and rigorously observed export guidelines to which everyone can adapt, and quick decisions by the Budget and Defence Committees as well as the Federal Ministry of Finance – and no party-political intrigues to the detriment of the military!



France and Germany must be able to open their cooperation to other European partners

The French-German armament cooperation: difficult but essential for Europe

by Patrick Bellouard, former Président EuroDéfense France, Paris, and Cyrille Schott, Préfet (h) de Région, member of EuroDéfense France, Strasbourg

The Franco-German engine is essential for Europe, including in armament cooperation. However, this engine, in the field of defence, stumbles upon difficulties.

Different strategic objectives

In Germany, the tradition of strategic restraint, coupled with close control of the Bundestag, hinders external military interventions; in France, the possibility of external operations, decided by a president able to implement them without delay, is an old tradition. The Atlantic partnership is more important for Germany, whose army was built within NATO, when Europe's strategic autonomy is more clearly claimed by France. French foreign policy is traditionally oriented towards the world, while Germany looks more towards the continent. These differences are neither to be overlooked nor exaggerated. Strategic restraint did not prevent Germany from engaging with fire in Afghanistan or from

being present in the Sahel region. The search for autonomy does not prevent France from relying on American military assistance, today in the Sahel region like yesterday in Libya. Exporting power, cultural influence and strategic interests like France is doing lead Germany – still with hesitation – to consider planetary space.

"If cooperation is established on reasonable and sound bases, it will create a strong win-win situation for both parties."

Political uncertainties can also be considered, but the interests of our countries are beyond them. Both countries want a Europe with a capacity to act, able to lead its own interventions and defend its values and interests. They know that tomorrow they will only continue to weigh significantly in world affairs if Europe is strong. To exist as a power, Europe must have the capacity to develop its own weapons systems and have sufficient autonomy in this area, by not depending for example on US International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) restrictions. This development can only happen through the armament cooperation between France and Germany, because neither can claim to remain alone at the forefront of technological progress and for financial reasons.

Errors and successes

French-German armament cooperation has existed for more than sixty years. It has produced extremely useful capacities

for the French and German armies, for example the Transall transport aircraft in the sixties, the combat helicopter Tiger in the eighties and more recently the A400M transport aircraft in partnership with other Europeans, including the United Kingdom. These programmes would not have existed without cooperation. The main driver for it is the programme cost reduction for each partner, particularly through the development costs share. However, this cost reduction objective can only be obtained if the partners reach a reasonable compromise on different issues which are often linked, first on the military needs, second on the industrial organisation and the workshare principles, each partner trying to get the highest possible benefit in terms of industrial return.

As France and Germany have pursued different strategic objectives since the last world war, for historical reasons, harmonisation between the military needs of their respective

armed forces and the interests of their respective industrial bases has never been easy. And it is still the case for the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) and the Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) programmes, although the political will in favour of cooperation seems to increase. In the past, the "juste retour" principle has always created huge difficulties in cooper-

ative programmes: useless duplications, increased delays and costs. When they created the Organisation for Joint Armament Co-operation (OCCAR) twenty years ago, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom signed a convention, like a treaty, which banned the "juste retour" principle.

The poison remains active in the back seat of all negotiations, and it is important to continue to fight against it and to establish a real confidence between the partners at all levels. If cooperation is established on reasonable and sound bases, it will create a strong win-win situation for both parties. Finally, France and Germany must also be able to open their cooperation to other European partners to increase the global benefit for Europe and avoid future internal European competition. The new tools recently decided at the EU level, such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), constitute strong incentives to extend European armament cooperation in the future.



by Israel Rafalovich, Journalist, Brussels

Defence strategists and planners are confronted to a rapidly approaching future with a new war fighting regime where unmanned and autonomous systems play central roles. For politicians and military strategists with tight budgets, robots are popular especially with military interventions in foreign countries becoming less popular. Military experts see robotics as part of an asymmetric warfare in which an opponent whose overall capabilities are regarded as technologically inferior can defeat a superior one. We should begin to prepare now for this not so distant future of war in the robotic age.

Man versus machine?

A warfare regime based on unmanned and autonomous systems will change our basic concepts of defence strategy. It might be a constraint on the ability of democratic states to use lethal autonomous weapon systems, but authoritarian peer adversaries may not face similar constraints, equipped with autonomous weapons and willing to use them in an unconstrained manner. The military advantage might shift to our opponent.

Furthermore, systems have already profoundly reshaped strategy and procurement priorities and are growing increasingly important in armed forces worldwide. Unmanned systems have been employed extensively in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

These largely remotely piloted air and ground vehicles will soon be replaced by increasingly autonomous systems across the full range of military operations.

Increasingly autonomous systems will be able to take on roles humans simply cannot, such as undertaking more dangerous missions or reacting with greater speed, precision and coordination than humans are capable of: autonomous cargo drones could drop off supplies to the front line, self-driving machines could remove land mines, and artificial intelligence can be used to develop precision models. These characteristics will make robots of all shapes and capabilities more and more attractive to force designers, and more central to tactics and operations.

Future lethal autonomous weapon systems will be capable of both independently identifying, engaging and destroying a target without manual human control. We should be careful before we relinquish such moral decision-making to machines. Even if they had the sophistication, relinquishing the decision to kill to machines crosses a fundamental moral line.

Internationally accepted ethical standards

Technologies such as these are no longer confined to the realm of science fiction. They have reached a point where the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) is feasible within years, not decades.

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**Technology does not make war more clinical – it makes it more deadly. Lethal autonomous weapons once developed will permit armed conflicts to be fought at scales greater than ever."

If the international community does not take steps to regulate the critical functions of LAWS, then regulation will continue to lag behind the rapid technological advances in the field of robotics, artificial intelligence and information technology. Countries with vested interest in the development of LAWS like the US, the UK, Israel, China and Russia have shown little interest in establishing binding regulations. Weapon development should meet internationally accepted standards of ethics, attenuating an individual soldier's ability to misuse a weapon for an immoral act.

Technology does not make war more clinical – it makes it more deadly. Lethal autonomous weapons once developed will permit armed conflicts to be fought at scales greater than ever, and at time scales faster than humans comprehend. Nothing about technology or robots alters the fact that war is a human endeavour, with decidedly deadly consequences for troops and civilians once the forces of war are unleashed.

A war between robots no longer an illusion war planning. It will become a reality in the near future, and some are already on the battlefield. Pandora's box is already open, and it will be hard to close it, if even possible. There is a significant and legal dilemma that emerges as a result. The concept of roboethics (also known as machine ethics) brings up fundamental ethical reflection that is related to practical issues and moral dilemmas.

Roboethics will become increasingly important as we enter an era where artificial general intelligence (AGI) is becoming an integral part of robots. The objective measure for ethics is in the ability of an autonomous system to perform a task as compared to the same act involving a human. A realistic comparison between the human and the machine is therefore necessary.

Can robots be moral?

With steady advances in computing and artificial intelligence, future systems will be capable of acting with increasing autonomy and replicating the performance of humans in many situations. So, should we consider machines as humans, animals, or inanimate objects? One question in particular demands our attention: should robots be regarded as moral machines or moral agents with responsibility delegated to them directly rather than to their human designers or minder?

Mankind has struggled to define moral values throughout history. If we even cannot agree on what makes a moral human, how could we design moral robots? Artificial intelligence researchers and ethicists need to formulate ethical values as a base for qualified parameters and engineers

need to collect enough data on explicit ethical measures to appropriately train artificial intelligence algorithms. A debate has to be held on developing trusted autonomy in future systems and defining how far to go in allowing fully autonomous weapons and platforms:

- 1) Should robots be regarded as moral machines or moral agents with responsibility delegated to them directly rather than to their human designers or minder?
- 2) How would we design a robot to know the difference between what is legal and what is right? And how would we even begin to write down those rules ahead of time, without a human to interpret in the battlefield?
- 3) Does international humanitarian law imply that humans must make every individual life-or-death decision?
- 4) Can we program robots with something similar to the Geneva Convention war rules, prohibiting, for example, the deliberate killing of civilians?

Human machine interaction is central to the judical and ethical questions of whether fully autonomous weapons are capable of abiding by the principals of international humanitarian law. Artificial intelligence developers are representatives of future humanity.

But autonomous weapon systems create challenges beyond compliance with humanitarian law. Most importantly, their development and use could create military competition and cause strategic instability.

We should be worried of the widening gap between knowledge and the morality of mankind. As the world is past the point of considering whether robots should be used in war, the goal is to examine how autonomous systems can be used ethically. There is a high probability that it will be a relationship of man and machine collaboratively living and working together.



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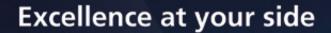
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