EU-Ukraine 2035

Strategic foresight analysis on the future of the EU and Ukraine

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This analysis looks at the future of the EU and Ukraine, using a time horizon of 2035. It was launched in June 2022 as a Strategic Foresight Conversation, a few months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The ensuing war has drastically changed all aspects of life in Ukraine, affects the EU in many significant ways and shifted pre-war geopolitical and geo-economic paradigms. The European Council decision of 24 June 2022 to give candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova added to the need for a long-term perspective on EU-Ukraine relations.

The analysis is based on foresight methodologies, including a multi-stage stakeholder consultation and scenario building. Four scenarios examine future developments along two main axes: the Ukraine-Russia relationship, addressing the development and possible outcome of the war, characterised by the level of hazard; and the EU-Ukraine relationship, characterised by the level of integration.

The resulting policy considerations address four areas of future EU action: firstly, the transition from military support towards a new European security architecture; secondly, the process of EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine; thirdly, the development of an effective, green and sovereign European Union; and fourthly, continuity and review of EU relations with five countries which are key to the conflict: Russia, Belarus, Türkiye, China and the US.

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Executive summary

The Strategic Foresight Conversation (SFC) on the future of the EU and Ukraine was a multi-stage stakeholder consultation in which more than 50 experts from various backgrounds participated between June 2022 and June 2023. The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and the ensuing war has not only changed all aspects of life in Ukraine, but is also affecting the EU in many significant ways and has shifted geopolitical and geo-economic paradigms. The SFC investigated future relations between the EU and Ukraine across a range of cross-cutting domains. Against the backdrop of the European Council decision of 24 June 2022 to give candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, a rather long time horizon of 2035 was chosen, to allow to look beyond the war and include views on reconstruction, EU enlargement and EU external relations.

The process consisted of **three phases**. Phase one explored the EU-Ukraine relationship and considered the impact of possible developments. Phase two identified drivers of change and developed **four scenarios**:

1. **Fair Stability** assumes that Ukraine would regain all of its territory and join the EU and NATO, while a new cooperative Russian regime signs a peace agreement.
2. **Cold War II** assumes that the front would get stuck without agreement between the parties, leading to a bipolar world and partial Ukrainian integration into the EU and NATO.
3. **Frozen Conflict** assumes that the parties would negotiate trade-offs after the front got stuck, leading to Ukrainian neutrality and a stagnant EU accession process.
4. **Devastated Europe** assumes that Russia would escalate the war, leading to NATO involvement in the war and a stronger and enlarged NATO, but a disunited, weak EU.

Scenarios are not predictions but a tool to imagine possible futures – both desirable and undesirable ones. They served as stepping stones to formulate policy considerations in phase three of the SFC; these policy considerations were put in the political context of European Parliament resolutions. The **actionable conclusions** of these considerations were clustered into **four areas for EU action**:

1. **From military support towards a new European security architecture**: the EU could transition from the coordination of and public support for short-term military and economic aid to Ukraine towards developing a future security architecture for wider Europe, which may involve diplomatic efforts.
2. **Towards EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery**: Ukraine should address reforms needed for EU accession, in particular those regarding the rule of law. The EU could prepare for shifts in distribution of political power and financial means and develop a coordinated position on enlargement for several accession candidates, balancing the principle of individual merit and a group approach. Parallelism between Ukraine's EU accession and its reconstruction is important. Reconstruction requires coordination, financing and the contribution of returning refugees.
3. **Building an effective, green and sovereign European Union**: the EU could prepare its institutions for enlargement, while addressing the double challenge of achieving strategic autonomy in its energy, raw material and agricultural needs and delivering on the European Green Deal. It could draw lessons from earlier enlargements.
4. **Reviewing the EU's external relations**: the EU could prepare for different possible future relationships with Russia and Belarus, facing more antagonistic or cooperative governments. It could carefully calibrate its relations with Türkiye and China, taking into account US-China relations and the need for de-risking economic relations.

Although certain elements of the scenarios and policy considerations have already materialised, there are still many open questions that are relevant for future policymaking.

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1. Process: The strategic foresight conversation

1.1. Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and the ensuing war has not only drastically changed all aspects of life in Ukraine, but is also affecting the EU in many significant ways, not least by shifting pre-war geopolitical and geo-economic paradigms. The European Council's decision to grant Ukraine the status of candidate country for EU membership on 24 June 2022 intensified developments in the relationship between the EU and Ukraine, building on the 2014 EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which has been fully applied since 2017. While the situation in Ukraine is still evolving and many international and EU efforts are focusing on the immediate effects of the war, the long-term implications of the war are of an unprecedented magnitude and pose complex challenges to decision-makers.

Strategic foresight can help to address the implications of the war and its two-way consequences on both Ukraine and the EU from a long-term perspective. Therefore, the EPRS Policy Foresight Unit (PFOR) decided in June 2022 to launch a Strategic Foresight Conversation (SFC) on investigating future relations between the EU and Ukraine across a range of cross-cutting domains, seen from various angles of the developing relationship. The conversation process involved more than 50 experts, who mainly looked at possible developments and challenges from an EU perspective, while also taking the impact on Ukraine and the global environment into account. It used an anticipatory governance[1] approach to develop considerations for policymakers on the EU-Ukraine relationship against the backdrop of the ongoing war.

As the name indicates, the SFC was organised as a conversation process, involving regular consultations with experts (multi-stage stakeholder engagement approach) on the various topics. These consultations took different forms, ranging from online surveys and online expert consultations to workshops with groups of participants. Experts from EU-wide and national think tanks, universities, EU institutions and various Ukrainian stakeholder organisations participated. All surveys, workshops and online interviews were done under Chatham House rules, in order to create a trusted environment in which participants could speak their mind freely. As a consequence, none of the remarks made are linked to any specific person.

From the start, it was a challenge to look beyond the immediate concerns of the war towards potential futures for the EU and Ukraine. Structuring the process into three distinct phases helped to accommodate this challenge:

Phase 1: the first phase focused on gathering as many elements as possible about the EU-Ukraine relationship through a **360° exploration** and by considering their impacts over the next 1-5 years. Phase 1 thus allowed participants to develop their thinking beyond immediate and short-term events towards possible medium-term futures. It was launched with a survey in June 2022 and concluded with an in-person workshop in Brussels on 29 September 2022.

Phase 2: in the second phase, all findings were summarised and uncertainties and drivers of change were identified, which formed the basis for **building scenarios**. Scenarios are imaginations of possible futures in the form of narratives leading from the present to a particular future. Scenarios

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[1] The OECD defines 'anticipatory governance' as the 'systematic embedding and application of strategic foresight throughout the entire governance architecture, including policy analysis, engagement, and decision-making' (Foresight and anticipatory governance: Lessons in effective foresight institutionalisation, OECD 2021).

are therefore not predictions but rather a tool to help visualise the possible consequences of decisions or developments. The development of the war and the level of integration of Ukraine into the EU were identified as two main drivers of change. Following the methodology of building scenarios along two axes on a 2 x 2 grid (see Section 4.2), four scenarios were developed. Draft scenarios were discussed with participants in a second workshop on 26 January 2023 and then developed into four consistent narratives. Building scenarios is like climbing a hill in order to have a better view from the top. The scenarios therefore constitute a tool to elevate thinking beyond the medium term towards possible long-term futures.

Setting the time horizon for the scenarios involved the challenge of taking account of both the development of the war in the medium term and post-war political and economic developments, including EU enlargement, the reconstruction of Ukraine and the future security architecture of Europe, in the long term. The war and post-war elements were also used to structure the scenarios. Whereas initially a time horizon of 2040 was envisaged (focusing on post-war developments), some experts preferred a shorter horizon up to 2030 (focusing on the war). Finally, 2035 was chosen as a compromise date. Taking into account the 2024 elections for the European Parliament, this time horizon corresponds to two more parliamentary mandates and related EU institutional cycles.

Phase 3: having reached a long-term outlook into four possible futures, the conversation process descended the hill again towards considering the medium and short term in the third phase. Based on a second survey and a final workshop on 30 March 2023 – and on remarks made in earlier phases – a set of **policy considerations** was drafted. This was done systematically by asking experts to imagine the steps necessary to achieve (or avoid) each scenario, a process known as 'back casting'.

Figure 1: The three phases of the Strategic Foresight Conversation
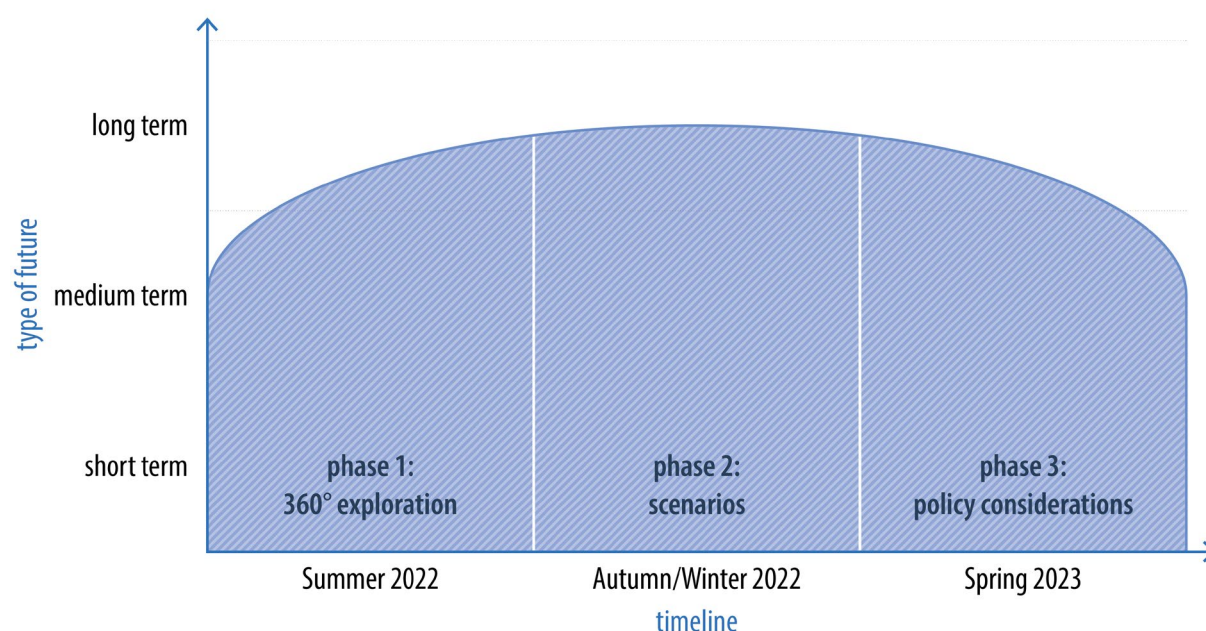
Source: Author, EPRS.

Policy considerations are triggers for decision-makers to be aware of the challenges, opportunities and actions that lie ahead, and of the complex interrelationships between these. Policy considerations do not prescribe what should be done, and are therefore not recommendations. However, they aim to focus on what the EU could do about a particular issue, and are therefore not merely descriptive either. The policy considerations were compared to elements of existing policies

and European Parliament resolutions related to Ukraine, adopted in 2022 and 2023. The overview of findings is presented in the next chapter of this report. The broad scope of the scenarios and policy considerations reflects the wide variety of views expressed.

This is not the only foresight exercise on the war and the future of Ukraine, and we mention some examples of similar projects in Section 1.3.4. What distinguishes this study from other foresight exercises on Ukraine is the combination of a comprehensive approach, a focus on the EU and a relatively long time horizon. Finally, and inevitably given the dynamics of events, certain elements of the scenarios and policy considerations presented as possibilities have already materialised. For instance, a coordination structure for the reconstruction of Ukraine under the umbrella of the G7 was decided upon in December 2022, Finland joined NATO in April 2023 and an agreement in principle with Türkiye on Sweden's NATO membership was reached in July 2023. Furthermore, the June 2023 revolt of the Wagner group confirmed the possibility of internal rifts inside Russia, and NATO decided in July 2022 to provide Ukraine with certain security guarantees. While this confirms the correctness of certain expert views, there are still many open questions that are relevant for future policymaking.

1.2. Phase 1: 360° exploration

Phase one consisted of **expert consultations on five policy areas and five cross-cutting perspectives** important for the EU-Ukraine relationship. Initial opinions about the future were gathered from experts through an online survey over the summer of 2022 in five policy areas: security and defence, energy and resources, agriculture and food, economy and finance, and migration and refugees. The survey asked experts inter alia about their least desired, most desired, and expected future outcome in their policy area. A series of online meetings per policy area with these experts served to clarify the views expressed and identify blind spots.

These results were used to prepare a series of 'what if?' questions which were discussed at a full-day workshop with a wider group of experts on 29 September 2022 (the annex contains the list of the 'what if' questions used). Participants conducted a series of impact analyses, aiming to answer the question 'What could happen if a certain event were to occur?' In the morning, they explored the five policy areas mentioned above. In the afternoon, they explored five cross-cutting perspectives: the EU-Ukraine cooperation and accession process, reconstruction of Ukraine, democracy and the rule of law (including impunity and international justice), the impact on the functioning of the EU, and the EU's strategic autonomy and global role. Phase one resulted in lists of possible impacts and sometimes actions related to the 'what if' questions, as well as first indications of what the experts considered to be the main drivers of change of future developments in the EU-Ukraine relationship. These findings were consolidated and formed the basis of scenario building during phase two.

Not surprisingly, experts considered the development of the war to be the main driver of events. These discussions led to a first set of elements for building scenarios, regarding the potential **outcome of the war, possible post-war international agreements and the role of international actors**. These can be summarised as follows:

‒ Experts noted that a Ukrainian victory could consist of recapturing most or all of its territory. If Russia were to keep control over parts of Ukraine, it could entrench itself behind a 'new iron curtain', which could be the start of a frozen conflict or another Cold War. Russia could also escalate the war. A defeat of Russia in such an escalated conflict could even lead to fragmentation of the country. Defeat could also lead to regime change, which could mean the emergence of a more democratic political system, but equally of a possibly even more autocratic system (or a mix if Russia were to break up).

- Experts considered the options of a ceasefire agreement or a more comprehensive peace agreement that would settle territorial questions and reparations. A ceasefire agreement seemed to entail more risks of recurring conflict (as, for instance, shown by the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh). Nevertheless, history provides examples of lasting situations without a peace agreement (Germany before reunification, Korea and Cyprus). A peace agreement suggests a more stable outcome in which both parties come to terms with new territorial realities and reparations, but history equally provides examples where this was not the case and feelings of resentment led to renewed conflict (the Versailles Treaty after World War I).

- Experts mentioned the role of third countries in the conflict. This included the role of the US as the one of the main providers of financial and military support, of Türkiye as a possible mediator between Ukraine and Russia, of Iran as a provider of weapons to Russia, and of China, which, on the one hand, supports Russia and, on the other hand, might pressure the country to avoid further escalation.

As regards **EU accession, the reconstruction of Ukraine and developments in several policy areas**, experts came to further initial conclusions, which would become elements of the scenarios and later of the policy considerations. These can be summarised as follows:

- Experts identified the relationship between the reconstruction of Ukraine and its possible EU accession as particularly important. This raised the question of how the EU could cooperate and coordinate with other important donors such as the US, the UK or the G7. Experts discussed how reconstruction could ideally enhance the Ukrainian economy ('build back better'), or how a failed effort due to lack of funds might lead to economic loss, poverty and further migration. Ukraine's integration into the single market might work out positively for its economy, or increased competition might lead to the closure of non-competitive Ukrainian industries and businesses. Experts also discussed the roles of countries and private investors, and potential Russian war reparations contributing to Ukrainian reconstruction.

- A long war or frozen conflict entails various risks and could make Ukrainian politicians and society feel less urged to improve the rule of law and to focus on the military effort instead. 'War fatigue' in EU countries might undermine support for accession, which could reinforce Ukrainian allegations of 'unfulfilled EU promises', thus further diminishing support for democratic reforms. The EU seems to lack a clear narrative on why supporting Ukraine is in the interest of the EU. While Ukraine is suffering destruction of its energy infrastructure and farmland, the EU could suffer further energy supply disruptions and high energy prices could affect the willingness of EU citizens to support the war. Food shortages could shift the focus of EU agricultural policy back from quality to quantity, thereby undoing some of its environmental achievements.

- Experts concluded that the influx of refugees into EU countries has put pressure on their already tight housing markets and education systems, which might lead to 'solidarity fatigue' among EU citizens. Refugees staying in EU countries could further absorb EU values regarding democracy, sustainability and the fight against corruption and repatriate these to Ukraine upon return. Money and skills transferred home from the 'Ukrainian diaspora' could contribute to reconstruction of the Ukrainian economy. However, post-war migration might lead to a loss of skilled workers for the Ukrainian economy, including farmers.

- Experts discussed negative loops in which the war causes economic loss, energy poverty, food scarcity and migration flows, which in turn become drivers of further economic loss (inflation) or further negative impact. However, they also discussed 'positive loops' in which, for instance, economic recovery and increased trade could be beneficial for both the EU and Ukraine or the possible spreading of EU values through returning refugees.

1.3. Phase 2: Scenario building

1.3.1. Developing the scenario grid

Apart from an initial exploration of impacts, phase 1 also initiated the search for the **main drivers of change of possible futures for the EU and Ukraine**. As stated above, experts clearly identified the development and outcome of the war as the main driver of change. For reasons explained in the annex, it was decided to build four scenarios along an X-axis and a Y-axis that constitute a 2 x 2 grid. The development and outcome of the war would constitute the driver on the X-axis of this grid. Having considered several alternative options, the final X-axis indicates the level of hazard in the Ukraine-Russia relationship in the long term, ranging from low hazard on the left end of the X-axis to high hazard on its right end.

X-axis: Level of hazard in the Ukraine-Russia relationship in the long term

Low hazard ----------------------------------Medium -------------------------------High hazard

It was clear from the discussions that, once the Ukraine-Russia relationship had been addressed on the X-axis, the Y-axis should address the Ukraine-EU relationship. After considering several options, it was decided that the Y-axis would indicate the level of EU-Ukraine integration. Therefore, the Y-axis ranges from minimal integration at the bottom to maximum integration at its top.

Y-axis: Level of EU-Ukraine integration in the long term

Minimal integration-------------------------- Medium ------------------------- Maximum integration

Putting the two axes together results in a cross of the Ukraine-Russia relationship, characterised by the level of hazard, and of the EU-Ukraine relationship, characterised by the level of integration. This creates four quadrants which each 'host' a scenario that corresponds to the values on both axes for that quadrant. The scenarios were given names that reflected their main characteristics.

Table 1: Initial scenario grid

Fair Stability	Cold War II
Low hazard, high EU-Ukraine integration	High hazard, high EU-Ukraine integration
Frozen Conflict	Devastated Europe
Low hazard, low EU-Ukraine integration	High hazard, low EU-Ukraine integration

Source: Author, EPRS.

To make the four scenarios comparable, they were structured according to the same set of points. After discussion of preliminary scenarios in a series of online expert interviews and a second workshop on 26 January 2023, the following **10 points were selected**:

War and geopolitics

1. The **level of EU and US support to Ukraine** in terms of weapons delivery and financial aid: the scenarios consider options of strong and steady support, and of 'limited' support.

2. The **outcome of the war**: the scenarios consider two options in which Ukraine regains all of its 1991 territory and two where parts of it remain under Russian control. One scenario describes nuclear escalation and direct NATO involvement. In no scenario does Russia conquer the whole of Ukraine, because no expert considered this plausible. In two scenarios, Russia is part of a post-war international agreement.

3. The political and economic **situation of Russia**: the scenarios consider options in which the Russian regime is replaced by a more constructive one, continues on a similar path of autocracy and power consolidation, or collapses, leading to a fragmentation of governance structures.

4. Role of **China and Türkiye**: apart from Russia and the US, the scenarios consider the role of these two countries more specifically, as they were the most mentioned by experts.

5. **Developments in Belarus**: the scenarios give special attention to Belarus, because of its close involvement in the war, its geographical proximity to the EU (Belarus has been part of the Eastern Partnership since 2009) and the effects of its developments on the future European order.

European development trajectory

6. The future **European security order and the role of NATO**: based on experts' views, it is assumed in all scenarios that NATO will remain the key pillar of a future European security order, but the scenarios consider variations in new NATO members and the scope and nature of NATO's involvement in the post-war order.

7. The future of **EU enlargement**: the scenarios consider several options for Ukraine's possible EU accession: one option of full accession of five countries after negotiations, one of an open-ended, staged approach, one with a small enlargement not including Ukraine, and one without any enlargement.

8. **Internal decision-making in the EU and the consequences for EU support for Ukraine**: the scenarios describe two cases of positive decision-making dynamics regarding EU relations with its neighbours (of which one includes EU reform), and two negative ones.

9. The **reconstruction and economic recovery of Ukraine and the EU's role in it**: the scenarios consider four different ways of coordinating Ukraine's reconstruction – two leading to the recovery of its economy, and two not doing so. They also link these to the possible contribution of returning refugees.

10. **EU strategic autonomy and normative power**, related to the implementation of the **Green Deal**: one scenario leads to successful implementation of the Green Deal and a more autonomous EU, another to the EU sharing transatlantic autonomy with the US, and two others to partial or failed implementation of the Green Deal and a loss of EU autonomy.

It was important to draft each scenario as a long-term future projected in 2035. However, many elements of each scenario also address steps towards that end-picture, taking place in a medium-term future. Structuring the 10 points in two groups – those mainly addressing the development of the war in the medium term and those addressing enlargement, reconstruction and future policies in the longer term – accommodated this internal tension in the time horizon.

1.3.2. Scenarios

Table 2 below shows the summary grid of all four scenarios. It contains very short indications of each scenario along the 10 selected points. This is followed by four succinct descriptions of each scenario. Although all scenarios point to possible futures and are, in that sense, equal to each other, they are obviously not equally desirable. From an EU perspective, the two scenarios above the X-axis (Fair Stability and Cold War II) are more desirable, because they show strong internal EU cohesion, whereas the two scenarios below the X-axis show a disunited and ineffective EU. The Fair Stability scenario represents the outcome that is most desirable from both an EU and Ukrainian point of view.

Table 2: Summary of EU-Ukraine 2035 scenarios

Fair Stability

War and geopolitics

1. Strong EU and US support to UA
2. UA recaptures all 1991 territory
3. New, cooperative Russian regime accepts comprehensive peace agreement (territory, reparations, war crimes) in exchange for end of sanctions and economic reintegration
4. CN and TU balance relations with UA and RU
5. Regime change in Belarus

European development trajectory

6. UA becomes key NATO member; MD joins later; GE blocked by Russian presence in Abkhazia/S. Ossetia
7. UA, MD, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro would join the EU by 2033
8. EU reforms itself to absorb new members, who get long transition periods for EU acquis
9. EU coordinates reconstruction of UA in line with accession and Green Deal; economic recovery, many refugees return
10. Green Deal on track: renewables replace fossil fuels; UA is a showcase of green agriculture; progress towards EU strategic autonomy

Cold War II

War and geopolitics

1. Steady EU and US support to UA
2. Front gets stuck, RU entrenches itself in post-2014 Crimea/Donbas territory behind new iron curtain
3. Antagonistic, autocratic Russian regime continues hybrid actions against UA and West, while orienting eastward
4. CN sides with RU; TU remains close NATO ally
5. Belarus increasingly integrates with RU

European development trajectory

6. UA and MD get security guarantees without NATO membership, GE does not; Ireland joins NATO
7. UA, MD, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro enter a staged EU accession process
8. Staged approach gives time for EU reforms
9. G7 leads reconstruction of UA without Chinese investment; slow economic recovery; some refugees return
10. EU struggles with Green Deal; US restrictions on Chinese raw materials; concept of transatlantic strategic autonomy gains influence

MAX

LOW — UA-RU Hazard — **HIGH**

EU-UA Integration

Frozen Conflict

War and geopolitics

1. Limited EU and US support to UA
2. Exhausted RU and UA negotiate trade-offs: creation of 'Donbas republic', with the presence partly of UN blue helmets, partly of Russian troops; elections in Donbas and Crimea in 10 years; neutrality for UA
3. Semi-cooperative Russian regime survives and focuses on internal recovery
4. CN balances RU/UA relations, TU mediates
5. Belarus loosely aligned with RU

European development trajectory

6. UA neutral; no NATO enlargement after Finland/Sweden
7. No EU appetite/urgency for accession of UA and MD, but accession of Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro; UA and MD disillusioned
8. Disunity in EU increases over support to UA, enlargement, financial means and reforms
9. Private investors drive reconstruction of UA; recession in UA; some refugees return
10. Recovery in EU without focus on Green Deal or on strategic autonomy; continued use of (even Russian) gas; trade with CN continues

Devastated Europe

War and geopolitics

1. Strong EU and US support to UA
2. UA initially wins back territory, provoking a desperate Russian (nuclear) escalation, drawing NATO into the war, pushing RU out of 1991 UA
3. Fragmentation of Russian power structures creates a failed core state
4. CN supports remaining Russian core state in return for influence in Siberia; TU is strong NATO ally
5. Civil war in disintegrating Belarus

European development trajectory

6. UA, MD, GE, Ireland join NATO to counter unstable security situation in Belarus and RU
7. War-damaged EU members block enlargement and prioritise reconstruction at home
8. Disunity in EU increases; humanitarian problems and security dominate the EU agenda
9. IMF and World Bank lead partial reconstruction of UA with US influence; few refugees return
10. EU in permanent poly-crisis: inflation, lack of energy, housing, healthcare; Green Deal fails; EU not capable of developing strategic autonomy

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Source: Author, EPRS.

Note: to save space, the following country abbreviations have been used in the grid:

CN = China	EU = European Union	GE = Georgia	MD = Moldova
RU = Russia	TU = Türkiye	UA = Ukraine	US = United States

Fair Stability

War and geopolitics

In this scenario, the EU and the US would give strong and steady military and financial support to Ukraine, irrespective of the political party in power in the US. Due to the robust military actions of the Ukrainian army, constant deliveries of Western heavy weapons and strict economic sanctions, Ukraine would win the war and Russia be driven out of Ukraine. Victory would also be enabled by the fall of Putin's regime in the final phase of the war, before it could have escalated. A new Russian government would adopt a more constructive approach to Ukraine and its Western partners, resulting in a comprehensive peace agreement, including (partial) payment of reparations and an international tribunal for the prosecution of war crimes. In return, Western countries would lift their sanctions and allow Russia to gradually reintegrate into the global economy. China and Türkiye would have played a role of mediator, facilitating this outcome. The EU and the US would co-sign the agreement between Russia and Ukraine. Russia would be more cooperative, but not develop true democracy. Most Russians would cope with the consequences of a lost war, ranging from lost relatives and feelings of humiliation to poverty. Belarusian President Lukashenko, lacking Putin's support, would lose power and Belarus would embark on a more independent course from Moscow.

European development trajectory

Sweden and Finland would join NATO during the war and Ukraine would join immediately after. As the most experienced army in NATO, Ukraine could assure a leading role on NATO's eastern flank. Crimea would return to Ukraine, Russian troops would leave Transnistria as part of the peace agreement and Moldova would abandon neutrality and join NATO. However, Russia's continued presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia would block Georgia from joining NATO. With peace and stability regained, neutral EU countries Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta would not apply for NATO.

After the war, Ukraine would focus on complex EU accession negotiations. It would have to solve certain issues regarding governance and the rule of law, for instance reintegrating Donbas and avoiding a new oligarch system. Long transition periods for implementing the EU's environmental and agricultural legislation would allow for demining and fulfilling all accession obligations. In this scenario, the EU would embark on internal reform (voting in Council, smaller European Commission, number of European Parliament seats) to allow for enlargement involving several countries. Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia (the Western Balkan countries that fulfil all criteria), would join the EU with Moldova and Ukraine by 2033. Ukraine would become the main recipient of EU regional and agricultural funds. Enlargement would lead to labour mobility and economic growth.

The EU and Ukraine would coordinate reconstruction with input from the US, other G7 countries and China. This would facilitate linking investments to the accession process and the EU Green Deal. Many refugees would return and contribute to accession and reconstruction. 'Building back better' a modern, sustainable and digital Ukrainian economy, together with local citizens and civil society, would attract foreign investors. In most EU countries, Green Deal implementation would be on track. Renewables would increasingly replace fossil fuels and green agriculture emerge as a new standard, Ukraine being a showcase example. The new European order would be based on multilateralism, with a strong EU being an essential pillar in NATO, wielding its value-based regulatory power, and making substantial progress towards strategic autonomy in its defence and its economy.

Cold War II

War and geopolitics

In this scenario, the EU and the US would also give steady military and financial support to Ukraine. However, although EU and US support would strengthen Ukraine enough to drive Russia back to the areas of the Donbas region captured in 2014, it would not be able to recapture all of its territory. Russia would entrench itself in Crimea and the occupied parts of Donbas, building a modern version of the iron curtain along this frozen frontline. From behind this 'new wall' and based on an antagonistic understanding of opposing blocks, Russia would continue cyber-attacks and other forms of hybrid warfare against Ukraine and its Western allies. A future successor to President Putin would not change this policy and the underlying narrative of Russian exceptionalism. Because Western sanctions stayed in place, the Russian economy would re-orient itself towards the East. China and Russia would be driven increasingly into each other's arms, also because of ever more US economic restrictions on China. In spite of their differences, Russia and China would be considered as representatives of a competing world order. The EU would increasingly share this view originating from the US, leading to a bipolar world. Türkiye would have to give up its mediating role and, possibly under pressure of US sanctions on trade with Russia, cement its Westward orientation. Belarus would enter into a formal union with Russia, in which Russia would have the decisive vote.

European development trajectory

Sweden and Finland would join NATO and the increasing tension of a bipolar world might also push Ireland to abandon its neutrality. Neutral EU countries Austria, Cyprus and Malta would not take that step. NATO membership would not be an easy option for a divided Ukraine, which would instead get security guarantees from its Western allies. This would encourage Moldova to abandon its neutrality and sign a similar security compact, which would not cover Transnistria. Ukraine and Moldova would de facto progressively integrate into many of NATO's structures, but a stronger Russian presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia would deprive Georgia of similar guarantees.

The EU would discuss how to integrate a divided Ukraine into the 'European family' and finally allow accession of its free territories, referring to the precedent of Cyprus, because EU integration would be seen as a political imperative in a bipolar world. Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia (the Western Balkan countries fulfilling all criteria) and Moldova would also accede. All new members would follow a staged or 'step-by-step' integration process into the various EU policies; this arrangement would allow the EU to postpone institutional reforms. As most EU Member States are also NATO members and part of the security compacts with Ukraine and Moldova, EU-NATO cooperation would increase, creating a true transatlantic security architecture. The OSCE, once meant as a pan-European security structure, would increasingly lose importance and focus on non-military tasks.

In this bipolar world, China would not participate in Ukraine's reconstruction, which would be led by a special G7 task force. Following subsequent packages of US restrictions on exports to China, the US and the EU would cooperate more on trade and industrial policy with a view to controlling the global flow of technology and raw materials. Changing supply chains and energy flows would make the EU struggle to implement its Green Deal. In a world of geopolitics, the concept of European strategic autonomy would be replaced by transatlantic strategic autonomy.

❄ Frozen Conflict

War and geopolitics

In this scenario, the EU and the US would be increasingly hesitant about their support to Ukraine. After 2024, a Republican US President could prioritise domestic growth and the geo-economic confrontation with China over financial and military aid to Ukraine, while EU Member States would increasingly differ in the level of support they give. Russia could initially profit from the situation by making some territorial gains on the battlefield. However, the front would be stuck. Both Russia and Ukraine would conclude that they could not win the war and would look for a way to end the conflict and prioritise economic and social recovery. Negotiations, possibly facilitated by Türkiye and/or the United Nations, would lead to a cease-fire agreement and the creation of a provisional independent Donbas republic. UN blue helmets would be stationed in those parts of Donbas conquered by Russia since February 2022, while Russian troops would withdraw to the areas captured in 2014. Parties would agree on holding internationally supervised elections in 10 years to decide on the final status of Donbas and Crimea. Ukraine would remove the aim of NATO membership from its constitution and pledge neutrality. Belarus would continue its alignment with Russia, but might have some more room for an independent course. China could continue trading with both Russia and the EU, knowing that trade with the US would be decreasing.

European development trajectory

Ukraine would no longer aspire to NATO membership, knowing that the new American foreign policy would focus on potential conflict with China and push for a solution to end hostilities. The only new countries joining NATO would be Sweden and Finland. Now that peace had returned to the European continent, most EU Member States would feel less urgency to push forward with the EU accession of Ukraine and Moldova. The EU would have opened accession negotiations, which would be stuck on a combination of issues. Member States would point to weaknesses in Ukrainian democracy and the application of the rule of law, while less vocally admitting that the financial costs of enlargement and reconstruction did not resonate with EU voters. This would lead to disappointment in Ukraine, particularly if the EU agreed on EU accession for a few countries in the Western Balkans. Different views on EU accession would lead to a serious deterioration in relations between Member States. Internal reform of the EU would not take place.

The divisions inside the EU would be reflected in the preference of Ukraine for inviting only 'friendly countries' and their companies to contribute to the reconstruction of its free parts. Private investors, not the EU, would be the main drivers of Ukraine's reconstruction. Most of them would come from the US, Poland, Türkiye or China. They would invest in the best parts of the Ukrainian energy and agriculture sector, while many small and medium-sized Ukrainian enterprises would go bankrupt. Without the full benefit of the EU internal market, and facing the huge costs of reconstruction and demining, the Ukrainian economy would slip into recession. Whereas some Ukrainian refugees would return to rebuild their country, others would stay abroad due to better opportunities. Most EU Member States would slowly recover from the impact of the war. The EU would prioritise growth over greening in its internal recovery plans and the Green Deal would be 'adjusted' to low growth perspectives. EU strategic autonomy would be difficult to achieve, with imports from China under pressure from American sanctions and energy hard to secure.

Devastated Europe

War and geopolitics

In this scenario, strong EU and US military and financial support to Ukraine would create a Ukrainian military superiority that would push the Russian army swiftly out of Donbas. However, contrary to the Fair Stability scenario, this would not lead to the fall of President Putin. When Ukraine launched its attack on Crimea, Russia would escalate the war, for instance with a counter-offensive from Belarus, which would join the war actively. Escalation might involve Transnistria or countries in the region, for instance Armenia, Azerbaijan or Iran. In this scenario, Russia would be under so much pressure that it would launch nuclear missiles on western Ukraine to interrupt Western supplies and cut Ukraine off from its allies. This would lead to NATO invoking Article 5, once nuclear fallout reached nearby NATO countries. Targeted NATO airstrikes would destroy most of the Russian army in Ukraine, the Black Sea fleet and (nuclear) launching sites in Russia. In the ensuing chaotic situation, parts of the Russian army could surrender, while other parts and private mercenaries could continue fighting. The war might escalate further if Russia were to launch (nuclear) attacks against NATO countries, which would draw NATO further into the war. A military coup against Putin could follow, but this scenario assumes that a new military government would not be able to control the situation or lead successful negotiations. This would lead to a rather chaotic fragmentation of Russia into diverse power centres, and regional entities might increase their independence. This would redesign the power balance in the Black Sea basin, with regions formerly under Russian control (Crimea, Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia) reintegrating into the countries to which they belong under international law. All these countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) would join NATO. China would take advantage of the situation and bring parts of central Asia and parts of Siberia (further) into its sphere of influence. At the same time, China would make sure that what remained of Russia would not be defeated completely. The Russian defeat in Ukraine would split the population and army of Belarus up to the point of civil war.

European development trajectory

The devastating war would change the mood in Europe, especially if NATO countries were attacked after escalation. Although this could lead to a sentiment of collective resilience, this scenario assumes that enthusiasm about Ukraine's liberation would be overshadowed by multiple crises in the EU and fear of an upcoming war with China. In Russia, feelings of resentment and humiliation would prevail. Western powers would focus on a strong new security architecture in Europe, most likely with NATO as its central pillar. However, the question of EU enlargement would split EU Member States even further between those advocating fast-track accession of Ukraine and Moldova and those who would prefer no enlargement at all. The IMF and the World Bank would coordinate the reconstruction of Ukraine under strong US guidance. Although EU standards would apply in some sectors, based on the Association Agreement, the need for further alignment with EU standards would decline without a perspective for accession. Few Ukrainian refugees would return without economic prospects. EU countries hit by the war would focus on reconstruction and social issues at home. Inflation in the Eurozone would be high, poverty widespread and housing and healthcare serious problems. Networks of opportunistic and sometimes criminal enterprises would flourish, fostering corruption inside the EU. The EU would be ineffective in managing this poly-crisis, the EU Green Deal would fail, and its international influence would be negligible.

1.3.3. Links between scenarios – Pathways

It is important to note once again that scenarios are imaginations of possible futures and not predictions. Although the methodology applied leads to four scenarios on a 2 x 2 grid, this does not mean that these are the only possible scenarios, nor that the narrative of events in each scenario is the only possible option within that scenario. Scenarios are a tool to help visualise the possible consequences of decisions taken under certain conditions. Both the conditions and the decisions may be different in the real future, leading to **different 'pathways' of events**. The purpose of having several scenarios is to reflect a broad range of possible futures, to show policymakers the various implications of different conditions and decisions. At the same time, the number of scenarios must stay limited in order to be practical.

Each scenario needs certain conditions to be fulfilled in order to unfold. If these conditions are not fulfilled, other scenarios become more likely, particularly regarding the outcome of the war. We have visualised some of these conditions in an arrow diagram below. For example, the arrows in the clockwise direction could be summarised as follows: strong Russian resilience in the war makes a Ukrainian victory (Fair Stability) less likely and an entrenched front (Cold War II) more likely. If, however, that front collapses, this increases the chances for escalation of the conflict (Devastated Europe). If Russia is not defeated in such an escalated conflict and switches to a strategy of negotiations, the option of a ceasefire agreement (Frozen Conflict) becomes more likely. If, however, due to Ukrainian resilience and strong Western support, Russia is defeated, this might reopen the road towards a Ukrainian victory and a comprehensive peace agreement (Fair Stability). Similar considerations can be made for the arrows in the counter-clockwise direction. This diagram does not necessarily cover all possible relations between conditions and scenarios. However, it illustrates the fluidity between scenarios and possible pathways, particularly while the war is ongoing.

Figure 2: Links between conditions and scenarios, pathways
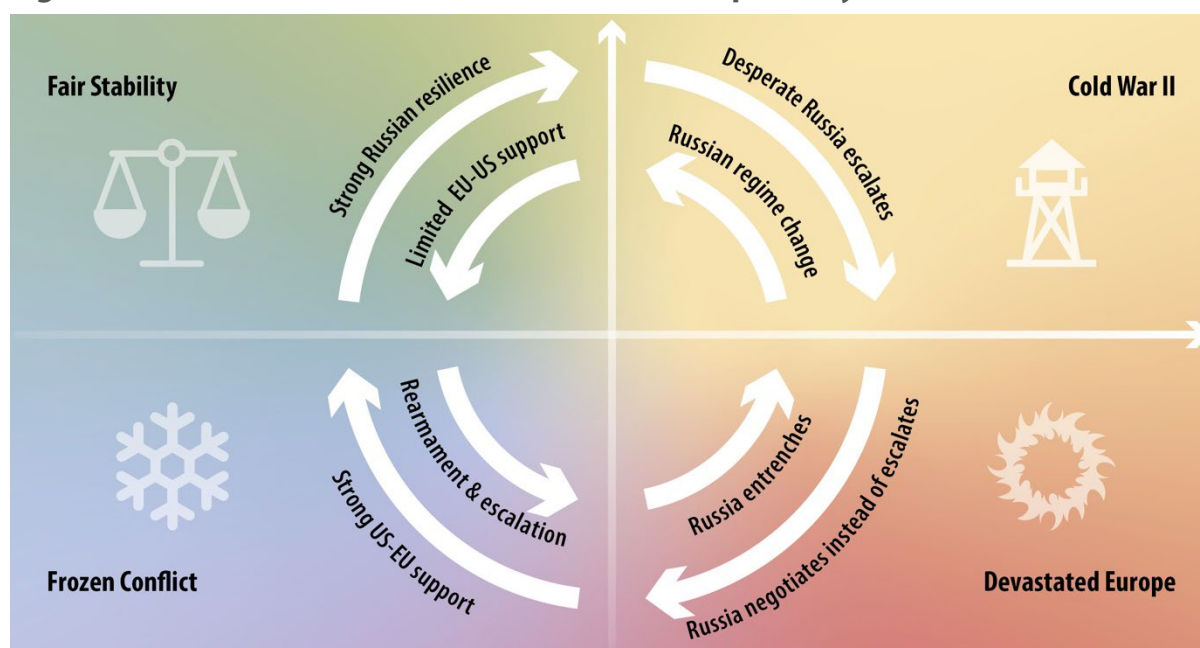
Source: Author, EPRS.

Furthermore, **alternative pathways do not always lead towards another scenario, but can also lead to different outcomes within a scenario** – a 'subscenario'. Every stage of the process involves 'junctions' in the sequence of events, which can lead to different futures. The real future can

therefore consist of elements from different scenarios. One could, for instance, imagine that in the Devastated Europe scenario the impact of nuclear attacks not only leads to confusion and chaos, but possibly also to increased feelings of unity in the face of a common enemy. This could change the outcome of the scenario towards a more united European stance on enlargement and better prospects for common solutions to the poly-crisis. Equally, one could imagine that in the Fair Stability scenario the war is won by Ukraine and its reconstruction and accession happen as described, but without Russian agreement to all aspects of the suggested peace agreement, for instance without agreement on the settlement of reparations.

The scenarios developed in phase 2 of the process have served as narratives that draw the attention to multiple important elements that will play a role and have to be addressed in many EU and national policies for the coming years. From this point, the process moved towards formulating policy considerations.

1.3.4. Comparison with available scenarios

While developing the scenarios, the project team had access to a few other publicly available scenarios. One of the first set of scenarios published was by Matthew Burrows and Robert A. Manning from the **Atlantic Council**. Their first version, published in April 2022, consisted of four scenarios, named 'A frozen conflict', 'A double cold war', 'A nuclear apocalypse' and 'A brave new world'. Although these names show some similarity to the four scenarios of this Strategic Foresight Conversation, they differ in two essential ways: firstly, they have no clear time horizon but mostly envisage developments for a limited number of years from 2022; secondly, they focus on the outcome of the war and do not include considerations on EU accession and very few on the reconstruction of Ukraine.[2] One month later, the authors published an updated version, called 'Three possible futures for a frozen conflict in Ukraine'. They concluded that a frozen conflict had become the most likely scenario and presented three variations with a time horizon of only two years. The main difference between these three scenarios is the territory regained from Russia by Ukraine, varying from nothing, to the 24 February 2022 status quo, to all but Crimea. These three scenarios also highlight concerns about the economic impact of the war and the possibility of increasingly different approaches between the US and the EU.[3]

Another set of scenarios was published in July 2022, coming from the French think tank **Futuribles**.[4] The Futuribles foresight exercise also differs from this Strategic Foresight Conversation because it has a short time horizon until 2025 and therefore focuses more on the development and possible outcome of the war itself. Nevertheless, Futuribles started by also analysing non-military trends in areas such as energy and infrastructure, agriculture and food, macroeconomics and finance and the humanitarian dimension, calling this 'the framework in which the scenarios unfold'. The paper presented six scenarios, starting with three 'most plausible' ones ('stalemate and instabilities', 'high intensity conflict in Ukraine – towards a world of blocs', and 'fears, national self-interest and territorial expansion of the conflict'). These were followed by three 'less plausible' ones ('Russian territorial objectives achieved', 'return to the pre-conflict status quo' and 'third world war'). The plausible scenarios were presented as narratives of 2-3 pages, while the less plausible ones were presented in only one paragraph.

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[2]   See: M. Burrows and R. Manning, How will the Russia-Ukraine war reshape the world? Here are four possible futures, Atlantic Council, April 2022.

[3]   See: M. Burrows and R. Manning, Three possible futures for a frozen conflict in Ukraine, Atlantic Council, 26 May 2022.

[4]   See: F. Bourse, M. Segur, A. Lebec and C. Louis, What scenarios for the war in Ukraine?, Futuribles, 12 July 2022.

Similar to our considerations at the end of Section 1.3 on possible pathways within and between scenarios, both Atlantic Council and Futuribles consider options of shifts from one scenario to another or within a scenario. Futuribles has partly visualised these in so-called 'bifurcations'. The three Atlantic Council scenarios from May 2022 and the six Futuribles scenarios were not constructed along axes on a 2 x 2 grid, and could be read as gradual variations along one or more dimensions. For the three Atlantic Council scenarios, this appears to be the dimension of the level of territory that Ukraine can keep under its control. For the six Futuribles scenarios, the situation is more complex. Nevertheless, the scenarios could be put on a scale from most favourable to Ukraine (return to the pre-conflict status quo), via various in-between situations (stalemate, bipolar world, multipolar world of self-interest), to the least favourable scenarios (Russian territorial objectives achieved and third world war). Neither the Atlantic Council nor Futuribles develop policy considerations based on the scenarios, although several of these are implied in the text.

In the course of the SFC, the project team has been in contact with a third group pursuing a foresight exercise regarding the future of Ukraine, whose report was published shortly before this one. This foresight exercise was requested by the Ukrainian parliament (**Verkhovna Rada**) shortly after the outbreak of the war and conducted as a joint project between the Inter-factional Union of Members of Parliament 'Strategic Foresight of Ukraine' in the Verkhovna Rada and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Future Generations in the United Kingdom, with strong organisational support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).[5] This scenario exercise is similar to ours in terms of methodology (using various forms of stakeholders analysis) and long-term view (using 2040 as the time horizon), but differs mostly because of its focus on internal developments in Ukraine, rather than EU-Ukraine relations. As the title suggests, the focus of the report is on scenarios. It develops four scenarios 'for the recovery and development of Ukraine', which are not placed on a 2 x 2 grid, but rather stand next to each other as independent possible futures. Three of the scenarios paint a rather negative view of Ukraine's future, called 'Slow slide to world war', 'Drift to autocracy' and 'Decentralised digital survival'. In the fourth and positive scenario, called 'The hard work of unity', Ukraine regains all of its territory, including Crimea, and joins the EU and NATO. Nevertheless, and bearing in mind that the report was requested by the Ukrainian parliament, the report looks beyond the scenarios to what it calls 'strategic implications', which are similar to our policy considerations. These are divided into general implications for all scenarios and specific ones for each scenario. Examples of general strategic implications are: 'tackle corruption as key to effective recovery and development', 'develop international partnerships and innovations for the military industry', 'develop digital skills and the digital economy' and 'continue the de-oligarchisation movement'.

Our report distinguishes itself from these three other scenario exercises by combining a long time horizon and a broad approach in terms of topics and geography, with a focus on policy considerations.

1.4. Phase 3: Towards policy considerations

Policy considerations are triggers for decision-makers to be aware of the challenges, opportunities and actions that lie ahead, and of the complex interrelationships between these. Policy considerations do not prescribe what should be done, and are in that sense not recommendations. However, **policy considerations highlight what the EU could do about a particular issue**. The policy considerations address similar categories as the scenarios, but they have been structured in seven sections according to the EU's capacity to act.

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[5]   See: C. Baylon and I. Kylymnyk, Scenarios: Ukraine 2040, Kyiv, 2023.

The policy considerations derived from the dialogues with experts were put in a political context by opening each section with a short factual description of the issues at stake and a summary of views expressed in European Parliament resolutions related to Ukraine, adopted between the autumn of 2021 and June 2023. The complete overview of findings is presented in Chapter 2. To make the policy considerations more useful for EU policymakers, each section in Chapter 2 ends with a set of considerations which could serve as guidance for EU action, presented in a blue box.

The policy considerations are structured into three blocks:

1. A brief description of the main issues, including references to important decisions of the (European) Council and Commission regarding the topic.
2. An extract of key elements of European Parliament resolutions regarding the topic.
3. The views of the experts consulted in the SFC, structured according to subtopics.

The expert views were gathered in two main ways:

a. The collective outcome of the survey of June 2022, the workshop of 29 September 2022 and the online consultations conducted from October 2022 until February 2023. These consultations consisted mostly of online interviews with one expert in a particular domain. In a few cases, they were held as group interviews with up to four experts. Experts were first asked to react to the preliminary scenarios, followed by a free conversation in which they could express their views on the challenges, opportunities and possible actions ahead.

b. Responses from participants who took part in a survey in March 2023, designed specifically to gather policy considerations. This survey consisted of 10 groups of questions, structured along the 10 points of the scenarios (see annex). Participants were asked to identify policy considerations, thinking back from the possible futures presented in the scenarios. This method is known as 'back-casting'. By back-casting future scenarios into the present, we ask ourselves: What actions should we take (or not) in order to come to this scenario, or conversely, to avoid it? This survey was sent to 62 experts and returned by 15 of them, a response percentage of 24 %.

An initial set of policy considerations in the form of bullet points per topic was discussed with those participants that took part in the March 2023 survey in an online workshop on 30 March 2023. After the workshop, they were transformed into flowing text and structured into subtopics.

To present the findings in Chapter 2, the structure of the 10 blocks of questions has been replaced by a structure of seven sections, according to the EU's capacity to act in various domains. The first section is directed at medium-term actions related to the war, such as military and financial support and diplomatic initiatives. The subsequent sections address long-term issues, such as the future security architecture of Europe, EU enlargement and the reconstruction of Ukraine. Although the accomplishment of these objectives is likely to happen in the long term, actions to achieve them could start earlier; this is particularly the case for the strategic autonomy of the EU and its normative power. Achieving the goals of the EU Green Deal by 2030 and ultimately 2050 needs policy decisions starting from today. Finally, the policy considerations address EU relations with five countries that play an important role in the war.

2. Findings: Policy considerations

The following seven sections of policy considerations each start with a description of the topic, often mentioning key European Council decisions or Commission documents related to it. To further put the considerations in a political context, an overview of European Parliament positions as adopted in plenary resolutions follows; quotes from these resolutions are always accompanied by a footnote indicating the relevant point(s) of the resolution. The sections on Parliament positions are followed by the views of our experts. These represent a wide variety of policy considerations, which may complement or sometimes even contradict each other. All considerations mentioned in the 'expert views' sections express only the views of one or more experts and do not reflect the position of the EU institutions, the European Parliament or the SFC project team. Sometimes they are exact quotes, but more often they are condensed summaries of what has been said. The project team has added footnotes to several considerations for the purpose of clarification or as additional background information. This has not been done systematically but in places where the project team considered it useful. Each of the seven policy sections ends with a blue box of considerations for possible EU action. These sets of key considerations lay out common denominators for EU action amongst the diversity of expert views.

2.1. EU support related to the war and diplomacy

The EU has reacted coherently and rapidly in condemning the Russian invasion, deciding on multiple packages of sanctions against Russia[6] and providing considerable military, humanitarian and financial support to Ukraine. Sanctions were coordinated with international partners, such as the US and the UK, as were decisions on (financing) the delivery of weapons and ammunition.

In the first stage of the war, diplomatic efforts by the EU and key Member States, notably France and Germany, involved both Russia and Ukraine, with a view to possibly ending the hostilities soon. In later stages, diplomatic efforts focused mostly on supporting Ukraine, expressed, for instance, through several visits by Commission President von der Leyen and European Council President Michel to Ukraine. In March 2023, the European Council expressed support for the 10-point peace plan of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy.[7]

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[6]   For an overview and evaluation of the various EU sanctions against Russia, see: A. Caprile and A. Delivorias, EU sanctions on Russia: Overview, impact, challenges, EPRS, European Parliament, March 2023.

[7]   See European Council Conclusions of 23 March 2023, point 2.

2.1.1. European Parliament resolutions

In its first resolution regarding the war, adopted on 1 March 2022,[8] the European Parliament strongly condemned the Russian invasion and called for a diplomatic solution to the conflict, while welcoming the sanctions against Russia and suggesting more targeted sanctions. Parliament also called for 'strengthening Ukraine's defence capacities' and supported the 'historic decision to allocate significant additional funding to provide Ukraine with defensive weapons through the European Peace Facility'.[9] It also welcomed EU support in the area of cybersecurity and called for economic and financial support to Ukraine.[10] The call for support to Ukraine was reiterated and developed – adding humanitarian aid, for instance – in subsequent resolutions, such as those adopted on 9 March, 7 April and 5 May 2022.[11] The latter addressed the logistical challenges of replacing blocked sea routes by land routes for trade, calling for better rail connections with the EU and liberalising road, rail and inland waterway transport, welcoming the 'Getreidebrücke' initiative.[12]

Parliament (indirectly) addressed possible war fatigue in EU countries by calling to fight Russian disinformation in the EU and support citizens and enterprises suffering economically from the consequences of the war. On 19 May 2022, it called for 'solidarity with those affected by this new severe crisis, in order to help households and companies, in particular SMEs', because 'a determined, coordinated and solidarity-based European response is essential to limit the spread of the crisis by identifying, preventing and mitigating its economic and social consequences, and therefore maintaining European citizens' support for the actions taken against Russia and for the other actions needed in supporting the Ukrainians in their defence'.[13]

Almost a year after the start of the war, Parliament focused more strongly on military support. On 2 February 2023, for instance, it called 'on the Member States to increase and accelerate their military assistance to Ukraine, in particular the provision of weapons, in response to clearly identified needs' and urged them 'to speed up the delivery of military support and equipment to Ukraine', while welcoming 'the decision of the governments of several EU Member States, the US, the UK and Canada to deliver modern main battle tanks to Ukraine'.[14] On 16 February 2022, Parliament stated that 'the main objective for Ukraine is to win the war against Russia, understood as its ability to drive all the forces of Russia, its proxies and allies out of the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine; [and that Parliament] considers that this objective can be met only through the continued, sustained and steadily increasing supply of all types of weapons to Ukraine, without exception'. Parliament reaffirmed its support for providing military aid to Ukraine 'for as long as necessary' and called 'for

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8   Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

9   Ibid, point 27. For more information on the use of the European Peace Facility, see: B. Bilquin, European Peace Facility: State of play as of 31 March 2023, EPRS, European Parliament, April 2023.

10   Ibid, points 30 and 34.

11   Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation; Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation; Resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on the EU transport and tourism sectors.

12   Ibid (5 May 2022), in particular points 28, 29, 32 and 39.

13   Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act, point 5.

14   Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 7.

serious consideration to be given to supplying Ukraine with Western fighter jets, helicopters and appropriate missile systems and to substantially increasing munitions deliveries'.[15]

As regards diplomatic efforts, Parliament initially focused on reducing the threat of Russian espionage, calling 'on the Member States to lower the Russian Federation's level of representation and reduce the number of Russian and Belarusian diplomatic and consular staff in the EU, in particular where their actions involve espionage, disinformation or military matters'.[16] Ten months later, it called on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to 'support the 10-point peace plan presented by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy[17] and to work towards establishing an international coalition to implement that plan'.[18] Parliament also called on others to take a clear position on the conflict. In October 2022, it called 'on all countries and international organisations to unequivocally condemn Russia's war of aggression and its attempts to acquire territory by force and through its sham referendums' and 'for the EU and its Member States to actively engage with the many governments which have adopted a neutral position regarding Russia's aggression against Ukraine'.[19] In the same vein, in February 2023 Parliament called on 'the EEAS and the Member States to increase their engagement with world leaders from other regions with regard to support for Ukraine and to strengthen international pressure on the Russian regime'.[20]

2.1.2. Expert views

EU support to Ukraine and the development of the war

Experts acknowledged that the EU and its Member States have already given considerable support to Ukraine in the form of weapons and other equipment, humanitarian aid and the introduction of sanctions. They noted that 2023 may be a decisive year on the battlefield for the question whether the war is to become a protracted conflict or could lead to a clear outcome in the foreseeable future. So far, there has been a gap between military and economic resources promised to Ukraine by its allies and those delivered. Lack of (timely) delivery of these, particularly advanced weapons systems to control the airspace, would delay the Ukrainian counter-offensive and drag out the war. In the long term, experts noted, an unresolved conflict would drain the resources of Ukraine and its allies and lead to more militarisation and corresponding budgetary consequences. A protracted low-intensity conflict could benefit Russia, which could use the time to replenish its resources and resume active hostilities once ready.

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[15] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, points 8 and 18.

[16] Resolution of 7 April 2022, point 32.

[17] After presenting a 'formula for peace' at the UN General Assembly of September 2022, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy presented a 10-point peace plan at the G20 leaders meeting in Bali on 15 November 2022. It combines sectoral issues – such as calls for nuclear safety, food and energy security, and environmental protection – with conditions related to ending the war, such as the release of prisoners, restoration of territorial integrity, withdrawal of Russian troops, justice for war crimes, security guarantees and 'a document confirming the end of the war signed by the parties'. The European Parliament called for supporting the plan on 2 February 2023 and the European Council did so on 23 March 2023; the EU has not presented peace plans of its own. At a press conference on 18 January 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said: [the Ukrainian peace plan] 'cram[s] everything together: food, energy and biological security, the withdrawal of Russian troops from everywhere, repentance of the Russian Federation, a tribunal and condemnation. Negotiations with Zelensky are out of the question, because he adopted a law that banned talks with the Russian Government', and added, on the prospects for talks between Russia and the West: 'We are ready to consider serious proposals and to decide on what we do next. So far, there have not been such proposals.'

[18] Resolution of 8 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 8.

[19] Resolution of 6 October 2022 on Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine, point 3.

[20] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 28.

A war of long duration would also increase pressure on the unified support of the EU and its Member States, as well as other allies, for a variety of reasons. The fact that Ukrainian infrastructure, in spite of being continuously rebuilt after destruction, keeps being exposed to new destruction, does not encourage continued economic support. If the global economy experiences recession or another (banking) crisis, negative feelings about economic support to Ukraine could further increase. In general, a long conflict could lead to a kind of 'war fatigue' among politicians and the population of Ukraine's Western allies. This could result in or come along with changes of leadership in these countries. In the EU, this could increase the heterogeneity of Member States' positions with respect to military and economic support and possibly on sanctions, ultimately breaking EU unity through internal differences and disputes. One expert noted that private (commercial) interests could play a role in such developments.

At the same time, experts acknowledged that Western allies are reaching their own limits, for instance in terms of the non-availability of military equipment or other materials. So apart from accelerating and enhancing decision-making on military support, EU countries should also increase production of ammunition and agree on a better strategy for their defence industries and procurement, according to these experts. Besides military support, a few experts suggested that the EU could better enforce existing sanctions.[21] One expert suggested that, in case of long-term occupation of parts of Ukraine (as in the Frozen Conflict or Cold War scenarios), the EU would need to develop a strategy aimed at keeping Ukrainians in the occupied territories within the information space of the EU and the Ukrainian government, to ensure they are protected to some extent from Russian propaganda.

EU diplomacy

Experts first explored challenges and opportunities for a possible diplomatic role for the EU as mediator in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Such challenges could emanate from Ukraine, Russia or the EU itself. Experts considered, for instance, that the strength of EU diplomacy is often linked to its high reputation in matters of ethics and the rule of law, and that this could be challenged by candidate countries such as Ukraine if they see that Member States have different views on rule of law issues inside the EU.[22] Ukraine could also challenge the credibility of EU diplomacy if it felt that the EU gave in on principles regarding territorial integrity and respect for international law. This would also send the wrong signal to Russia regarding territorial integrity. Opposite to such views from Ukraine, experts noted, would be the view from Russia that the EU was discredited as a potential mediator in the conflict because of its unequivocal support for Ukraine in the war and for the Ukrainian 10-point peace plan, as well as the prospect of Ukraine's EU membership. Finally, an EU diplomatic mediation effort could fail due to differing opinions within the EU on how to deal with Russia,[23] on what would be an acceptable outcome of the war in territorial terms, or on the goal of Ukrainian EU membership.

Apart from these challenges, experts saw opportunities for EU diplomacy. A proactive and united EU would strengthen its role on the world stage and its effectiveness as a supranational actor. Experts noted that the war had already pushed the EU to act more as an independent international

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[21] One expert referred to the Commission proposal of 2 December 2022 for a [Directive on the definition of criminal offences and penalties for the violation of Union restrictive measures](#), currently being examined by the [co-legislators](#).

[22] Experts referred to different views on the role the Commission should play as guarantor of rule of law principles vis-á-vis Member States in the cases of Poland and Hungary. The Commission launched proceedings against [Hungary and Poland](#) for violations of the rights of LGBTIQ people in July 2021 and against [Poland](#) for violations of EU law by its Constitutional Tribunal in December 2021, which were contested by these Member States.

[23] A few experts referred to remarks by French President Macron in the early stages of the war that 'Russia should not be humiliated'.

leader on security, building on the principles laid down in its Strategic Compass and operating in coordination with NATO. A few experts did see a potential role for the EU or some of its Member States in possible negotiations of a post-war agreement. They referred to the 'Normandy Format' in which the EU had, since 2014, delegated negotiating power to France and Germany combined with a reporting obligation to the European Council. Experts noted that, if there were negotiations after the current war between Russia and Ukraine, probably other Member States would wish to be included in such a format, particularly eastern and Nordic Member States.[24]

Finally, some experts considered that EU diplomacy should not so much focus on potential mediation, but should reflect unequivocal EU support for Ukraine. Such a policy would fit in a scenario like Fair Stability, in which the interests of Ukraine and its allies coincide and reinforce each other, possibly leading to a new level of security and cooperation in Europe and globally. In this respect, some experts saw a particular role for the EU to mobilise partners across the world, including in UN fora, with a focus on so-called 'swing states' from the Global South, to mobilise support for Ukraine and its peace plan. This could help to counter Russian and Chinese narratives in Africa and Latin America in particular. According to these experts, the EU should reject conditions put forward by Russia, strengthen sanctions and crack down on the circumvention of sanctions. Communication within the EU should explain why peace on Russian terms would not be beneficial to either Ukraine or the EU. These experts also considered that the EU should monitor Russian influence and stability in Moldova and the Balkans to avoid a spillover from the conflict or manipulation by Russia. In the Cold War and Frozen Conflict scenarios in particular, the EU should be aware of and combat disinformation and other Russian hybrid threats. These experts also emphasised that the EU should support Moldova's European ambition more actively.

**EU support related to the war and diplomacy –
Key policy considerations for EU action**

- Continuing humanitarian and economic aid to Ukraine and enforcing sanctions on Russia.
- Enhancing decision-making on and delivery of military equipment to Ukraine to avoid the war turning into a frozen conflict, leading to lower public support for the war effort in EU countries.
- Fostering convergence between Member States' positions on what can be considered acceptable and possible outcomes of the war and EU accession.
- Strengthening EU diplomacy through united positions, particularly regarding the rule of law and international law, and using its potential to convince other countries in international fora.
- Anticipating possible participation by the EU or a group of its Member States in possible negotiations for a post-war agreement.
- Keeping up principles of international law and not compromising on these to achieve a solution to the conflict.
- Monitoring Russian influence beyond Ukraine, particularly in Moldova and Western Balkan countries, with a view to avoiding spillovers from the conflict.

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[24] The Normandy format is a diplomatic meeting format, established in June 2014, that brings together France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine with the aim of finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The Normandy format facilitated the Minsk agreements, which were never fully implemented. See, for instance: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 9 February 2022, Understanding the Normandy format and its relation to the current standoff with Russia. One expert suggested that a new format called P5+3 could consist of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, UK, US) plus Germany, Poland and Türkiye.

2.2. The European security architecture and defence

Developing a future European security architecture should be based on lessons from the ongoing war. The EU has acknowledged that the current world is more driven by geopolitics and that security and defence policies should be higher on the European agenda. The Versailles Declaration,[25] adopted by the EU Heads of State and Government on 11 March 2022, is a guiding document in this respect. It condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, noting that it violates international law and undermines European security. The declaration's section on 'bolstering our defence capabilities' states that European leaders 'decided that the European Union would take more responsibility for its own security and, in the field of defence, pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously'. This intention is followed by a list of concrete actions, such as a substantial increase in defence expenditure, incentives for joint projects and joint procurement, and investment in capabilities, including cybersecurity and strengthening the EU defence industry. At the European Council of 24-25 March 2022, European leaders endorsed the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence,[26] which outlines the European security policy up to 2030. These European decisions were followed by national action, of which the decision of the German government to fundamentally change its defence policy ('Zeitenwende') and create a €100 billion fund for investment in military procurement is one of the most remarkable.[27]

The new attractiveness of NATO as a security provider – reflected in the membership applications of Sweden and Finland, the forward presence of NATO in eastern Europe and the central role of the US and NATO in coordinating military support to Ukraine – is another indicator of the direction in which a future European security architecture could develop. Whereas NATO membership is aspired to by, but may not be possible in the short run for, Ukraine and Georgia, the international community has come up with alternative proposals to grant security to Ukraine, in particular, in a more structured way. The plan for a Kyiv Security Compact, presented by former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Head of the Ukrainian Presidential Office Andrii Yermak has gained much attention. Presented in September 2022, it envisages long-term security support to Ukraine by a group of mainly Western countries.[28] NATO decided at its 11 July 2023 Summit in Vilnius

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[25]   The Versailles Declaration was adopted at the informal meeting of the European Council in Versailles on 10 and 11 March 2022.

[26]   Strategic Compass.

[27]   For an overview of important European and national decisions regarding security and defence in the first months of the war until May 2022, see: S. Clapp, Russia's war on Ukraine: reflections on European security, neutrality and strategic orientation, EPRS, European Parliament, May 2022.

[28]   Its key recommendations include 'a multi-decade effort of sustained investment in Ukraine's defence industrial base, scalable weapons transfers and intelligence support from allies, intensive training missions and joint exercises under

to provide Ukraine with certain security guarantees, presenting these as a transition towards NATO membership.[29] Considerations regarding the future security architecture of Europe should also include the role of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which did not succeed in monitoring the situation in Donbas and avoiding escalation of the conflict, but is nevertheless one of the few platforms where Russia and Western countries could still meet.

Experts discussed all these elements, which are structured below by starting with lessons from the war, then looking at the possible roles of NATO, the OSCE and security guarantees in a possible future security architecture, and finally reflecting on the role of the EU and its defence industry.

2.2.1. European Parliament resolutions

From its first resolutions after the Russian invasion, Parliament has emphasised the central role of NATO and the EU-NATO relationship for guaranteeing security in Europe. At the same time, it has made multiple calls for further developing (elements of) the common security and defence policy (CSDP). On 1 March 2022, it stated 'that NATO is the foundation of collective defence for the Member States who are NATO allies' and it welcomed 'the unity between the EU, NATO and other like-minded democratic partners in facing the Russian aggression'. At the same time, it reiterated its call for the Member States to 'increase defence spending and ensure more effective capabilities and to make full use of the joint defence efforts within the European framework, notably the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund, in order to strengthen the European pillar within NATO, which will increase the security of NATO countries and Member States alike'. [30] On 9 March 2022, Parliament adopted a resolution which focused on foreign interference and the need to fight disinformation.[31] In May 2022, Parliament called for more ambition on the EU's project for military mobility, also in terms of infrastructure, and regretted that the European Council cut financing for it under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF II) for 2021-2027.[32]

Parliament addressed the need to develop the CSDP and implement various elements of the Strategic Compass in particular in its resolution of 8 June 2022.[33] It called for progress in foreign policy and defence cooperation at Union level, as expressed in the Versailles Declaration, and in establishing a defence union and a regular EU defence minister council. It called for enhancing and upgrading intelligence sharing and cooperation among the Member States and with like-minded partners, for instance by improving the resources and capabilities of the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre and the European Union Military Staff Intelligence Directorate. It also called for implementation of the most urgent aspects of the Strategic Compass, including operationalising the proposal for a rapid deployment capacity instrument. Parliament also encouraged the Member

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the European Union and NATO flags'; security guarantees that are 'binding based on bilateral agreements, but brought together under a joint strategic partnership document – called the Kyiv Security Compact' and supported by 'a core group of allied countries' which could include 'the US, UK, Canada, Poland, Italy, Germany, France, Australia, Türkiye, and Nordic, Baltic, Central and Eastern European countries'. See the full text of the Compact.

[29] See: Vilnius Summit Communiqué of 11 July 2023, in particular point 11 (reaffirming the 2008 commitment that Ukraine will become a member of NATO and an invitation to join 'when Allies agree and conditions are met'), point 12 (agreement on a substantial package of expanded political and practical support for Ukraine and a NATO-Ukraine Council), and point 13 (continued delivery of non-lethal assistance as a multi-year programme, helping Ukraine rebuild its security and defence sector and transition towards full interoperability with NATO).

[30] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, points 24 and 25.

[31] Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation.

[32] Resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on the EU transport and tourism sectors.

[33] Recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

States to increase their defence budgets and investment and acknowledge the NATO target to spend 2 % of GDP on defence.[34] That same day, Parliament adopted another resolution on the CSDP, this time related to security in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) area. In it, Parliament supports 'closer defence and security coordination and cooperation with some EaP countries' and called, inter alia, for closer coordination with the OSCE and coordination between CSDP missions and NATO actions.[35] Parliament also mentioned the OSCE in relation to common values and democratic capacity-building and as a platform to build political support for a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. Parliament also urged the Member States to 'explore every option to re-establish the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine mandate'.[36]

In October 2022, Parliament addressed Russian threats of a nuclear strike, calling on Russia to cease such threats and on the Member States and international partners to prepare a quick and decisive response should Russia conduct a nuclear strike on Ukraine.[37] Parliament called on the Council, the Commission and the Member States 'to engage with Ukraine on the topic of future security guarantees, such as those proposed in the Kyiv Security Compact'.[38]

2.2.2. Expert views

Lessons from the war: EU intelligence and geopolitical realism

Experts considered that the EU could draw two particular lessons from the war: firstly, the EU and its Member States should reinforce their intelligence capacity, to know and better understand what the drivers and plans of non-EU countries are; secondly, they should acknowledge geopolitics and power as drivers of international relations and should adapt their own policies accordingly.

As regards reinforcing intelligence capacities, experts noted that, since the UK has left the EU, the EU is no longer linked to important intelligence systems of the Anglo-Saxon world, in particular the UK's Secret Intelligence Service (also known as MI6), the US Central Intelligence Service (CIA) and the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance between the intelligence services of the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[39] They also noted that no similar arrangement exists for sharing intelligence information among EU countries, nor does an agreement on sharing intelligence between the EU and NATO. Referring to the aim of the Strategic Compass to strengthen an EU Single Intelligence and Analysis Capacity (SIAC) and boost capacities to detect and respond to hybrid threats,[40] these experts considered that the EU should invest in active intelligence and counter-

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[34] The NATO guideline that its members (called 'allies' in NATO terms) should spend 2 % of their GDP on defence was reiterated more strongly in the NATO Vilnius Summit Declaration of 11 July 2023, point 27: 'Consistent with our obligations under Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, we make an enduring commitment to invest at least 2% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually on defence'.

[35] Resolution of 18 June 2022 on security in the Eastern Partnership area and the role of the common security and defence policy, in particular points 5, 10 and 17.

[36] In, respectively: Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation, point 149; Resolution of 19 January 2023 on the establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine, point 4; Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the fight against impunity for war crimes in Ukraine, point 30.

[37] Resolution of 6 October 2022 on Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine, point 16.

[38] Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 8.

[39] For more information on SIS and CIA, see their websites at www.sis.gov.uk and www.cia.gov. For information on the Five Eyes alliance, see, for instance, this informative blog of the UK Defence Journal.

[40] For a short description of EU intelligence bodies and activities, see, for instance: N. Delcroix, Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) and its role in supporting EU decision making, pp. 10 and 11 of Impetus #28 of autumn/winter 2019. For the plans of the EU Strategic Compass on SIAC, see: European External Action Service, 24 March 2022, A strategic compass for security and defence – for a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security, Chapter 3 pp. 33-41, in particular the following quote from page 33:

intelligence. This could include designing tools to infiltrate the information spheres of threatening actors. These could be state actors or non-state actors, which might become a growing threat in the future. Experts noted that this would require substantial investments in specialised personnel with specific skills, for instance regarding languages and information technology. They also pointed to the need to map weaknesses in Member States' national intelligence services (mentioning recent revelations in Germany) and suggested that such a 'counter-intelligence protective umbrella' should also cover non-EU countries in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

As regards geopolitics, all experts concluded that the war has shaken the existing system of European security and has shown that the EU was unprepared for such a challenge. They therefore considered that the EU should develop its security strategy and its understanding of the geopolitical landscape. In doing so, the EU should address aspects of conventional war and weapons, such as tanks and ammunition, as well as hybrid warfare, including cyber-attacks. The EU should develop long-term plans for investment in research and development (R&D), the forging of international partnerships and defence procurement. Some experts suggested that the EU should, in particular, strengthen its capacities in the maritime, air and space domains. This could include a maritime presence in other areas of the world, such as the Indo-Pacific. One expert concluded that the current war has not only shown the weakness of the current European security system, but also indicated the ineffectiveness of an approach based on international agreements and the peaceful coexistence of countries and peoples, fostered by trade.[41] Another expert said, in this respect, that EU countries should, in their relations with Russia, focus less on intentions laid down in international agreements and more on realities happening 'on the ground'.

Several experts discussed the possible position of Russia in a future European security architecture; this would obviously depend on the outcome of the war. A few experts dwelled upon the role of Crimea in security terms. One expert noted that the annexation of Crimea is a central element in the success of Putin's regime and it can therefore not be treated like any other occupied part of Ukraine. Another expert pointed to the strategic importance of Crimea for controlling the Sea of Azov, while another considered that the liberation of Crimea by Ukraine might cause Russia to use nuclear weapons. More generally, most experts called for long-term vigilance in relations with Russia. They argued that, as long as Russia has nuclear weapons, NATO should be ready to respond to possible aggression. One expert envisaged a security order in which Russia should be deprived of nuclear weapons or even be demilitarised. Other experts considered that no future Russian government would agree to such conditions, even after a Russian defeat, and that, combined with feelings of resentment after a Russian defeat, this would be unlikely to lead to a stable security environment in Europe. Some experts therefore suggested that new efforts should be made to include Russia in a future European security architecture – an opportunity that was missed in the 1990s. This could most likely only happen after a Russian defeat, in a scenario similar to Fair Stability. Other experts considered outcomes like Cold War or Frozen Conflict to be more likely and suggested that the EU and NATO should develop a new strategy of deterrence towards Russia.

Future security architecture: Roles of NATO and OSCE, security guarantees

Experts discussed various options for a future security architecture in Europe. Most experts pointed to the leading role of the United States and NATO in coordinating military support to Ukraine, for instance through the meetings of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, better known as the

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'We will strengthen our intelligence-based situational awareness and relevant EU capacities, notably in the framework of the EU Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity, as well as the EU Satellite Centre.'

[41] The latter conclusion would question some fundamental principles of value-based EU foreign policy and this discussion was not further developed by the experts.

'Ramstein format'.[42] A few experts considered that the role of the US could be decisive for the outcome of the war and many considered that the US and NATO would most likely play an important role in any future security architecture for Europe. Some experts noted that the war had increased the attractiveness of NATO as a security provider, illustrated by the membership applications of Sweden and Finland, but experts were more cautious about possible future NATO membership for Ukraine. Most experts considered that this would only be possible after the war, because Ukraine joining NATO during the war would trigger Article 5 of the NATO Charter and draw NATO into the war.[43] Several experts considered it likely that Ukraine would join NATO, with one expert suggesting that Ukraine would probably demand and possibly obtain a leading role on NATO's eastern flank, based on its achievements in the war. Once it had acceded, Ukraine might be a vocal member of NATO in putting forward its national interests, similar to France or Türkiye. Only one expert expressed the view that Ukraine would probably not join NATO, either because of opposition by one or more NATO allies, or because the war would end in a scenario similar to Frozen Conflict or Cold War. A few experts addressed the possibility of other countries in the region joining NATO. Some of them suggested that, in the event of a Ukrainian victory, Moldova and Georgia would most likely also join. Others suggested that, particularly without a clear victory, Russia might prevent one or both of these two countries from joining NATO.[44]

Because NATO membership may not be easily and rapidly obtainable for Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova, several experts deemed proposals for security guarantees to these countries a good solution, either as transitional or permanent measures. Some of them referred to the proposals for a Kyiv Security Compact mentioned above. Some experts mentioned the security guarantees promised to Ukraine in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994,[45] when it refrained from keeping nuclear weapons, adding that a new memorandum should give better guarantees honoured by the guarantors. One expert compared future security guarantees to those given by the US to Taiwan[46] and also compared these to US military assistance to Israel.[47] Although in the scenarios security

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[42] The Ukraine Defence Contact Group comprises more than 50 countries and held its first meeting on 26 April 2022 at the US military base in Ramstein, Germany.

[43] Article 5 is the cornerstone of the NATO alliance and states that an armed attack on one NATO member will be considered as an attack against them all.

[44] Georgia applied for NATO and was given the perspective of membership at NATO's summit in Bucharest in 2008. For more information on NATO-Georgia relations, see: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm. Moldova is, according to its constitution a neutral country and has not applied for NATO membership. Experts suggesting that Moldova would join NATO therefore imply that a combination of a pro-Western government and decreased Russian influence in the country would pave the way for abandoning neutrality and applying for NATO membership. For more information on NATO-Moldova relations, see: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49727.htm. The four scenarios cover various options of Georgia and/or Moldova joining NATO.

[45] The Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances was signed on 5 December 1994 by the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the US, who promised to respect the sovereignty and existing borders of Ukraine, when giving up its nuclear weapons. Although Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine had already committed in the Lisbon Protocol of 23 May 1992 to return their nuclear weapons to Russia and accede as Non Nuclear Weapon States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Non Proliferation Treaty or NPT), Ukraine only did so after obtaining the additional security assurances of the Budapest Memorandum, because many Ukrainian officials continued to view Russia as a potential threat. To Ukraine's frustration, these guarantees were not honoured during the conflict in Donbas since 2014 and the Russian invasion of 2022.

[46] US relations with Taiwan are guided by the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979. In 1982, the US agreed on six assurances to Taiwan, including conditions for arms sales and not recognising Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. The TRA was amended in 2022 by the Taiwan Policy Act, allowing the provision of arms not only in a 'defensive manner', but also to deter 'acts of aggression by the People's Liberation Army'. The further development of security guarantees for Taiwan is a subject of debate in the US – see, for instance, a comment from 7 March 2023 on the US-Taiwan business council website.

[47] According to the US State Department, US security assistance to Israel, given since 1948, has 'helped transform the Israel Defense Forces into one of the world's most capable, effective militaries and turned the Israeli military industry

guarantees are only part of the Cold War scenario, experts considered they could also apply to alternative versions of the Frozen Conflict scenario.

Some experts made positive mention of the OSCE.[48] One called it a very interesting development of the Cold War, attuned to managing a block-on-block confrontation and supporting confidence-building measures. However, these experts agreed that the OSCE has unfortunately proved incapable of avoiding a return to war on the European continent. They suggested that Russia might have hoped after 1991 that the OSCE would become the main European security structure, making NATO obsolete, but that this did not happen due to – as one expert put it – 'Western arrogance or Russian revisionism'. One expert pointed, in this respect, at the US for missing the opportunity to create such a pan-European security structure after 1991 and a few experts said that the US had mainly focused on addressing the risk of nuclear proliferation via the Budapest Memorandum.[49] Experts agreed that the OSCE initially had a role in monitoring the situation on the ground in Donbas since 2014, but had failed to do so successfully, mainly because Russia prevented this.

As for a possible future role for the OSCE, experts mentioned various scenarios. On the one hand, if Russia continued its confrontational approach to the West, the OSCE would have little chance of playing a constructive role and might become obsolete. On the other hand, if a more constructive approach between the West and Russia were possible (as in the Fair Stability scenario), the OSCE might become relevant again. One expert considered that the foundational idea of the OSCE as a mediator between blocks should inspire the post-war situation and the OSCE could be the right venue for cooperation. However, even in such a positive scenario, these experts considered that the OSCE would probably play only a limited or no role in hard security matters such as arms control. They saw most potential for the OSCE as a discussion platform, an observer (of elections, for instance) or a facilitator of cultural cooperation. In this respect, one expert said that the OSCE might help Russia reflect on it recent past after a defeat, which might trigger 'rewriting its history books'.

Future security architecture: Role of the EU, EU-NATO relations, defence industry

As regards the possible role of the EU in the future security architecture of Europe, experts noted that most EU countries are also members of NATO. They considered that the US has a leading position in NATO and that the EU as a whole derives its military strength mainly and indirectly from NATO and less from defence cooperation efforts within the EU. The future role of the EU as a security actor would depend in the first place on how the EU envisages its own future. If a more military future were envisaged, this would increase the significance of a united front within the EU and a united position among its Member States. In such a case, some experts noted, the EU would need

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and technology sector into one of the largest exporters of military capabilities worldwide' (see: US State Department factsheet). On the eve of the 11 July 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, US President Biden referred explicitly to Israel as a model for security guarantees for Ukraine in an interview with CNN on 9 July.

[48] What started in the early 1970s as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), culminating in the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, was renamed the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1994 to mark its potentially increased role in managing post-war security matters. For more information on the OSCE, see the OSCE website.

[49] Shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union on 8 December 1991, the US recognised the Russian Federation on 25 December 1991 as successor state to the Soviet Union. However, there were widespread concerns that the nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union were dispersed over several successor states. According to the National Security Archive – which bases its information on released diplomatic documents – the Bush Administration was, in 1992, 'reluctant to embrace the relations of deep mutual trust and alliance proposed by the newly independent Russian Federation and its leader Boris Yeltsin' and 'focused primarily on command and control of the remaining Soviet nuclear weapons that were scattered over 15 republics'. By way of explanation, the Archive adds that 'Bush faced a difficult re-election campaign in 1992, including primary opposition from his own party in the spring, and ultimately a third party challenge as well – all accusing him of spending too much time on foreign affairs'.

to perceive itself as a singular strategic entity and not only as an 'adjunct to NATO'. This would call for European strategic autonomy in defence matters, based on a credible and varied defence industrial base, significant R&D investment, and a certain level of European preference for defence procurement, directing EU money towards an EU industrial base. Without such a preference, according to one expert, 'evisceration' would occur, because political and technical expediency would lead to an increase of currently practiced massive purchases from the US. The expert added that many nations have a legitimate interest in acquiring materiel from the US, but that this should not be done at the expense of a long-term EU defence policy and further development of the European defence industrial base. According to this expert, the EU should then also address the major imbalance with the US, especially by 'squelching' the so-called extraterritorial reach of discriminatory US law.

However, no expert considered that the EU should compete with NATO. Most experts considered NATO to remain the main provider of security for the Euro-Atlantic area and EU-NATO cooperation and complementarity to be essential. The EU could, for instance, contribute to the NATO forward presence with the 5 000 Rapid Deployment Capacity envisaged in the Strategic Compass. It could also boost its coordination potential for EU military mobility as part of EU-NATO cooperation. EU Member States could ensure they fulfilled the commitment to dedicate 2 % of their GDP to defence spending. Some experts noted that the degree of EU-NATO cooperation would also differ according to the scenario. In the Frozen Conflict scenario, political unity in the EU and in NATO would be crucial and could be maintained through common understanding of competitors and risks for Euro-Atlantic security, a common strategy, and reinforcement of defence capabilities and capabilities to counter hybrid threats. In the Devastated Europe scenario, EU defence projects and prospects could possibly strongly align with NATO to benefit from protection of full security capabilities, including non-EU NATO allies like the US and the UK. In the Fair Stability scenario, the EU could further develop CDSP instruments and possibly envisage EU military missions in Ukraine.

Independent of the degree of EU-NATO cooperation, all experts considered that EU Member States should boost the development of their capabilities, including via joint procurement. A few specified this by mentioning concrete goals. They considered, for instance, that the EU should meet the benchmarks agreed in the European Defence Agency (EDA) framework[50] and that the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM) in support of Ukraine should be enhanced.[51] This would, inter alia, require implementing the European Defence Fund (EDF), as well as adopting and implementing the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA).[52] One expert considered that the EU could invest in learning from military innovations in Ukraine, for instance on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs or drones) and establish joint EU-Ukraine military enterprises. One expert considered that investing in an EU defence industry might initially compete with investing in Ukraine's reconstruction by draining finite resources, but that this would be

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[50] The EDA sets several benchmarks regarding defence equipment procurement and research and technology (R&T), with the aim of fostering collaboration between Member States as well as ensuring better value for money. For example, the benchmark for 'European collaborative defence equipment procurement' was set at 35 % of Member States' total defence procurement expenditure. In 2021, EU Member States conducted only 18 % of their defence equipment procurement jointly. The same is valid for defence R&T, where the benchmark was set at 20 % of total cumulative EU Member States' R&T expenditure, while joint spending remained at 7 % in 2021.

[51] The EUMAM is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Ukrainian armed forces and includes 24 EU Member States that have offered training modules and personnel. Launched in November 2022 with the aim of training 15 000 Ukrainian troops by May 2023, an increase in the number of troops to be trained to 30 000 was announced on 2 February 2023.

[52] ' EDF and EDIRPA are instruments intended to strengthen the European defence industry and support the development and procurement of defence capabilities. On the European defence industry, see this EPRS briefing of 28 June 2023.

beneficial in the long run. One expert pointed to the fact that, currently, the EU Green Deal taxonomy and the effort sharing regulation on emission reduction[53] discourage private investment in defence. If the EU deems rebuilding an industrial base really important, it should focus less on greening the military[54] and change tack by providing a blanket agreement to exonerate the defence industry from a number of environmental norms, such as the prohibition of lead as a component in explosives.

> **The EU security architecture and defence –**
> **Key policy considerations for EU action**
>
> - Reinforcing the EU's intelligence capability by strengthening intelligence cooperation, including through the EU Single Intelligence and Analysis Capacity (SIAC) and boosting capacities to detect and respond to hybrid threats.
> - Implementing the EU's Strategic Compass, for instance by increasing defence capacities and international partnerships, and continuing to develop a better understanding of the geopolitical landscape.
> - Developing new security relations with Russia, considering defence and relying on NATO deterrence in the short term and vigilance not excluding cooperation in the long term.
> - Developing a strategy for possible next steps in EU-NATO relations, including a strengthened EU pillar within NATO; considering the growing attractiveness and centrality of NATO in the future European security architecture, including by sharing the burden of transatlantic security costs.
> - Considering whether and how the EU could or should contribute to security guarantees for Ukraine and other countries in the region.
> - Considering what the future role of the OSCE in the European security architecture could be and how that would relate to EU efforts.
> - Further developing the EU defence technological industrial base, among other things by enhancing joint procurement, implementing the European Defence Fund and adopting and implementing the EDIRPA regulation; considering defence industry-specific exemptions to environmental legislation on security grounds.

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[53] See the EU taxonomy for sustainable activities and the effort sharing regulation.

[54] The European Defence Agency highlighted several options for greening the defence industry, for instance by publishing a leaflet.

2.3. EU enlargement

The European Council decision of 24 June 2022 to give candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova[55] has reignited the discussion on EU enlargement in all its facets. About a year later, on 30 June 2023, the European Council acknowledged 'Ukraine's commitment and substantial efforts to meet the required conditions in its EU accession process' and encouraged 'Ukraine to continue on its path of reforms', stating that the EU 'will continue to work closely with Ukraine and support its efforts to fully meet all conditions'.[56]

We asked experts about their expectations for Ukraine's EU accession and how this would relate to the accession process of other candidate countries. Currently, eight countries have the status of EU candidate country (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine) and two countries have a perspective to become a candidate (Georgia and Kosovo[57]).[58] Experts raised issues about public and political support for enlargement in the EU and the expectations and options ahead of candidate countries. They also discussed whether the focus should be on individual merits or a group approach and the meaning of a 'staged approach' to accession, while referring to the new accession methodology of the European Commission.[59] Finally, they made suggestions for EU assistance to candidate countries. Since 2007, EU assistance to candidate countries has been coordinated through a single instrument – the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, or IPA.[60]

2.3.1. European Parliament resolutions

As early as 1 March 2022, the European Parliament called 'for the EU institutions to *work towards granting* EU candidate status to Ukraine in line with Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union and

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[55] See: European Council conclusions of 23-24 June 2022, point 11. The European Council expressed its readiness to grant the status of candidate country to Georgia 'once the priorities specified in the Commission's opinion on Georgia's membership application have been addressed', point 13 of the same European Council Conclusions.

[56] See: European Council conclusions of 30 June 2023, point 11.

[57] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[58] See: European Commission webpage on Joining the EU, consulted on 19 April 2023.

[59] See: European Commission, Enhancing the accession process – a credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans, COM(2020) 57 final of 5 February 2020. It envisages, inter alia, thematic clusters of negotiation chapters to be opened after fulfilling certain benchmarks and more predictability via positive and negative compliance conditionality.

[60] IPA replaced former pre-accession instruments such as Phare, ISPA, SAPPARD and CARDS: see European Commission webpage, consulted on 6 July 2023.

on the basis of merit', reinforcing this on 19 May 2022 by calling 'to *grant* EU candidate status'. [61] On 8 June 2022, [62] Parliament addressed enlargement in general terms in relation to the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries. For instance, it recommended to 'recognise that the European integration of the Western Balkans is essential for the long-term stability and security of the European Union'[63] and to develop 'proposals on how to continue to strengthen ties with the Eastern Partnership countries […], including for the European aspirations of Moldova and Georgia'. [64] In that respect, it recommended to 'reinforce the Union's diplomatic presence and engagement in countries that show an interest in enhanced cooperation with the Union, in particular the Eastern Partnership countries and those in the Western Balkans' and 'urgently strengthen the Union's enlargement strategy'. [65]

On the day before the European Council's decision to grant candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova[66], Parliament welcomed the Commission's formal recommendation to grant EU candidate status to these two countries and a European perspective for Georgia and reiterated its call for granting candidate status in stronger and more explicit terms. It stated that 'in order to retain the credibility of the EU enlargement process and unlock its transformative power, the long-standing commitment towards the Western Balkan countries must be maintained and their parallel track needs to continue unaffected with more dynamism on the basis of merit, political alignment, solidarity in international matters and agreed commitments'. [67] At the same time, Parliament invited 'the authorities of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia to unambiguously demonstrate their political determination to implement the European ambitions of their people by significantly enhancing progress with substantial reforms in order to effectively fulfil the criteria for EU membership as soon as possible'. [68]

About a year after the Commission had presented its new accession methodology in February 2020, Parliament stated that it welcomed 'the revised methodology from the Commission and its stronger emphasis on the political nature of the enlargement process'. [69] Once Ukraine had acquired candidate status in June 2022, Parliament came back to the methodological aspects of accession. On 23 November 2022, Parliament called upon the Council and the HR/VP to 'acknowledge the need for the EU to enhance the effectiveness of its enlargement policy, upgrade its enlargement strategy and undertake a thorough critical assessment and revision of the EU's enlargement capacity and perspectives, and enhance it through the new EU strategy for enlargement'. It called to 'overcome the enlargement gridlock by revamping the accession process to clearly define political and socio-

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[61] In, respectively: Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, point 37, and Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act, point 5; italics by the author.

[62] Recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

[63] Ibid, point 1 an.

[64] Ibid, point 1 ao.

[65] Ibid, points 1 ap and aq.

[66] Resolution of 23 June 2022 on the candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

[67] Ibid, point 6.

[68] Ibid, point 8.

[69] Resolution of 20 January 2021 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy, point 20; Parliament had already debated the new accession methodology on 10 February 2020, shortly after its presentation by the Commission, but without adopting a resolution.

economic aims, making full use of the new enlargement methodology to increase its credibility' and to 'offer membership-oriented roadmaps for each individual accession country'.[70]

It also emphasised 'that the democratic transformation and the rule of law have a central role in the EU accession process, in line with the new methodology'.[71] On 2 February 2023, Parliament underlined that accession to the EU must be 'based on respect for the relevant procedures and conditional upon the fulfilment of the established criteria, in particular the so-called Copenhagen criteria for EU membership'. Accession, according to the resolution, 'remains a merit-based process that requires adoption and implementation of relevant reforms in particular in the areas of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, a market economy and implementation of the EU acquis'. Parliament also called on 'those attending the forthcoming summit between the EU and Ukraine to work towards the start of accession negotiations and to support a roadmap outlining the next steps to enable Ukraine's accession to the EU single market', saying this should be 'based on a step-by-step approach'. In that respect, it called 'on the Commission to present a bold and ambitious plan for these negotiations and for Ukraine's rapid, stepwise integration into EU policies and programmes, accompanied by a roadmap for each step in the process'. This should include 'an innovative, complementary and flexible interaction between the ongoing work on the implementation of the Association Agreement in force and the accession negotiation process'. It also called on the Commission and Member States to 'strengthen strategic communication and provide relevant information on the mutual benefits and opportunities of enlargement […] in order to further increase support and improve understanding of the accession process' and 'improve the visibility of EU funding and its tangible results in Ukraine'.[72]

On 16 February 2023, Parliament drew particular attention to the situation in Moldova, 'which is constantly facing Russian political blackmail, security threats and provocations aimed at destabilising the government and undermining democracy and that threaten to derail the country's European path' and called for the EU and its Member States 'to continue supporting the Republic of Moldova, as its vulnerabilities could weaken Ukraine's resilience and affect Europe's security'. It also reiterated its 'call for innovative, complementary and flexible interaction between the ongoing work on the implementation of the Association Agreement in force and the accession negotiation process, thus allowing for Ukraine's gradual integration into the EU single market and sectoral programmes, including access to EU funds in the respective areas, so that Ukrainian citizens can reap the benefits of accession throughout the process and not only upon its completion'. After reiterating its support for Ukraine's candidate status, Parliament called 'on Ukraine, the Commission and the Council to work towards the start of accession negotiations *this year*'.[73]

2.3.2. Expert views

Expectations, acceptance, timing

Currently, although there are variations between countries, public and political endorsement of the EU's support to Ukraine is rather high across Member States.[74] However, experts cautioned that support might weaken over time and lead to divisions between Member States for several reasons.

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[70] Resolution of 23 November 2022 on the new EU strategy for enlargement, points 1(f), 1(o) and 1(r).

[71] Ibid, point 1 ak.

[72] Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, points 13, 17 and 21.

[73] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, points 9, 15 and 16, italics by the author.

[74] According to the Spring 2023 Eurobarometer, 88 % of EU citizens are in favour of humanitarian support, 86 % of welcoming people fleeing the war, 75 % of financial support, 72 % back sanctions against Russia and 64 % support financing the purchase and supply of military equipment and granting EU candidate status to Ukraine.

Apart from general 'war fatigue' or an economic backlash related to the war, as mentioned earlier (high energy prices, inflation), specific concerns related to Ukraine's EU accession and/or other candidates might emerge as an issue only when accession negotiations become concrete. These could include a loss of political or economic power by existing Member States, such as a loss of voting power in the Council and Parliament. Based on its population size, Ukraine would become the fifth largest Member State, after Germany, France, Italy and Spain, and just before Poland. Furthermore, it would most likely become the main recipient of EU agricultural and structural funds, altering the existing equilibrium. Experts expected that this might diminish popular support primarily in western EU countries, which, apart from paying increased financial contributions, might also experience an 'eastward shift of the centre of gravity of the EU' in a negative way. Nevertheless, they assumed that support might also decrease in central and eastern EU countries – where support is currently high – particularly in Hungary and Czechia, where euroscepticism is already generally high.[75] However, experts did not expect this to lead to a substantial decrease in support in Poland – currently the biggest recipient of EU funds – because they assumed that Polish citizens and politicians would continue to prioritise geopolitical and historical narratives for Ukraine's accession over economic ones.[76] In general, proponents of accession point to the expected economic benefits (new markets, labour mobility, new access to raw materials), whereas opponents point to the costs (reconstruction, EU funds). Experts indicated that highlighting the positive experiences of earlier enlargements could influence public opinion in favour of Ukraine's EU accession.

Experts also signalled a particular dilemma in terms of expectations if Ukraine acceded before candidates that have been longer in the waiting room for EU accession. They expressed both sides of this dilemma, sometimes making a case for the speedy accession of Ukraine, sometimes cautioning against 'fast track accession'. Those in favour of speedy accession highlighted Ukraine's added value to the EU in terms of security and economy. Some experts mentioned the need for the EU to see the country not as a competitor, but as a partner that has been aspiring to join the 'European family' and been willing to defend the EU and its model on the frontline. Dragging out the accession process for too long could result in disappointment among the Ukrainian people, while not granting accession could ultimately undermine the Ukrainian state. Therefore, these experts called for meaningful accession negotiations to start rather soon (some experts indicated that this could be within the next 1-3 years), with a view to accession before 2035. They added that Ukraine should be a 'viable state where reconstruction has started' when starting these negotiations.[77]

Experts who cautioned against 'fast track accession' said that this could cause feelings of disappointment and resentment in other candidate countries, as well as feelings of resistance in current EU countries, if people see accession as a 'reward' for a country suffering exceptionally in a war rather than an objective decision. Fast-track accession could also imply challenges for the Ukrainian government, which might have to allow strong guidance from the EU for an extended period of time to compensate for the short transition phase to accession. Therefore, these experts argued for taking time over the accession process and linking it to other candidate countries,

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[75] On Euroscepticism in the Visegrad countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), see, for instance: Z. Vegh, From pro-European alliance to Eurosceptic protest group? The case of the Visegrad group, Swedish Institute for Policy Studies, June Issue, 2018.

[76] This assumption was challenged when Poland temporarily closed its borders for Ukrainian grain in response to farmers' complaints about the effect of falling prices on the domestic Polish market in April 2023.

[77] As of July 2023, there are indications that accession negotiations might be opened before the war has ended and full reconstruction has started. For instance, Oliver Varhelyi, Commissioner for Enlargement, stated in June 2023 that Ukraine could satisfy the seven conditions (set in the European Commission report endorsed by the European Council of June 2022) by October 2023, despite the ongoing war.

particularly those in the Western Balkans. They considered accession before 2035 to be too optimistic and that even 2040 might not be a viable target date. One expert expressed the view that, once the war is over, a long accession process might stall completely – similar to the case of Türkiye – and Ukraine's accession might not happen at all. One other expert assumed that, if Ukraine does not accede to the EU, none of the other candidate countries will either. If Ukraine accedes to the EU, a few experts noted, it might – similarly to its possible NATO accession – enter as a country that is very conscious of its achievements in wartime, its sovereignty and its interests, and would therefore most likely be a vocal Member State.

For the particular case of the Cold War II scenario, in which parts of Ukraine might disappear behind a new kind of iron curtain, experts also expressed mixed views. On the one hand, they emphasised the importance of including the free parts of Ukraine in Western institutions like the EU and NATO; on the other hand, they cautioned that this might not be feasible. In that respect, they noted that comparisons with Cyprus' EU accession are fundamentally different in at least two ways: the size of the country, and the nature and intensity of the conflict.

Individual merits versus group approach

Experts acknowledged that different countries would require different approaches for accession, but also emphasised that these different approaches should maintain objectivity and adherence to uniform essential entry criteria for all candidates, particularly the Copenhagen criteria. Like the European Parliament, they underlined that enlargement is a merit-based individual process. Countries' success in making actual reforms would increase the incentive for other countries to step up their efforts. They pointed to the risk of assigning countries to accession groups, which might prove counterproductive, if, in the end, not all countries in that group accede at the same time. In that respect, one expert made a comparison with the recent debates on enlargement of the Schengen regime, leading to the accession of Croatia only and leaving out Romania and Bulgaria.

As regards other candidate countries, experts noted that a merit-based approach would also differentiate between Western Balkan countries. Some of these were mentioned as making actual efforts in their reform process (North Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro) and others as stalling and therefore having fewer prospects for speedy accession (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo). Experts also pointed to Russian influence on media and politics in Western Balkan countries, which could sway preferences in these countries against EU accession. In Moldova, experts considered Russia's military presence in Transnistria to be a complicating factor for EU accession, but not as a determining factor for the development of the war in Ukraine. Moldova has, for many years, been in a frozen conflict situation. Some experts expected parallels between the accession processes for Moldova and Ukraine, because they acquired candidate status at the same time, are geographical neighbours, have both experienced Russia's capacity to influence the course of their country and have protagonists inside the EU (Poland for Ukraine, Romania for Moldova). Fulfilling the accession criteria might be easier for Moldova, being a smaller country not actively engaged in an ongoing war, but it has its own complicated political dynamics and relations with Russia. One expert noted that Moldova currently has 'the most pro-European government ever', and considered this a circumstance the EU should use to proceed with accession.

Having affirmed the importance of objective criteria, some experts nevertheless suggested a group approach might be necessary, particularly to mitigate the impression of preferential treatment for Ukraine, mentioned above. Aiming for enlargement with a group of countries would also incentivise the EU to work on its own internal reform (see Section 2.5). These experts compared an upcoming group accession in the 2030s with the 2004 accession of 10 new members, which fundamentally changed the character of the EU.

One expert pointed to specific challenges that could arise if states applied for EU membership that have not been recognised by all EU countries or by the country from which they have seceded (the example of Kosovo). Such challenges would also apply if regions in which a part of the population is striving for independence secede from their mother country and aspire to EU accession (the example of Scotland was mentioned). Although, at first sight, these issues do not relate to the situation of Ukraine, they might become relevant if Ukraine does not come out of the war with its entire 1991 territory and if regions of Ukraine (for example, Crimea or Donbas) acquire special status.

Accession methodology

Experts acknowledged that the way in which accession negotiations will be conducted depends, on the one hand, on strategic considerations from the side of the EU and, on the other, on practical aspects. One expert summarised this by stating that the EU must make the fundamental decision as to whether it considers accession primarily as a strategic objective, or primarily as an extension of its common market. In a strategic approach (preferred by the expert), the EU should be demanding on principles such as the rule of law and democracy, but less so on technicalities, considering that they are likely to sort themselves out in the long term. In a common market approach, the EU could insist on legislative and technical harmonisation, but should lower its ambitions as a geopolitical power.

Some experts considered that the EU has failed to make a clear decision in this respect and has thereby weakened its diplomatic credibility. They called upon the EU – whichever strategy it chooses – to translate that strategy into time-bound operational targets and show that it is serious about enlargement, for instance by setting a date and a clear road map for each of the candidate countries. For Ukraine, these experts advocated a combination of constant support on the one hand, and a strict requirement to fulfill all the conditions and agreements on the other. This could be a gradual process that ensures an economic balance and takes the interests of the EU Member States into account.

Several experts referred to the new accession methodology presented by the European Commission in 2020. Experts considered that the Commission should develop a concrete plan on how to progress with the concept of accelerated/gradual integration of candidate countries as proposed under this enhanced enlargement methodology. The EU should, for instance, identify concrete sectoral policies where deeper integration would be possible. One expert pointed to the specific position of the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Up to now, alignment with EU CFSP policy has been advisable but not mandatory until full membership. The expert suggested applying strong conditionality in the enlargement progress to CFSP alignment for candidate countries, especially for the Western Balkan countries.

However, experts also expressed the view that the new methodology, which can be applied under the current EU Treaties, is not really revolutionary. More fundamental reforms of the accession process with a staged or step-by-step approach, in which a candidate country could already be fully admitted to sectoral policies while other parts of the acquis are still under negotiation, would demand Treaty change, according to these experts. On the one hand, experts considered this desirable to enable candidates' gradual accession and to give the EU leverage by linking, for instance, progress on anti-corruption policies to access to certain internal market policies. On the other hand, experts noted that such a new step-by-step approach might create additional problems for the EU's relations with, for instance, Türkiye, Switzerland, the UK or the countries of the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), some of which have requested this kind of treatment but have been denied it.

EU assistance for accession

Experts acknowledged that, depending on the outcome of the war and the internal situation in Ukraine, which could involve reintegration of formerly occupied areas, the EU could provide support for reconstruction, reform and post-war transition towards EU accession. The more practical and immediate forms of assistance will be addressed in Section 2.4 on reconstruction. Experts considered the EU could intensify expert-level cooperation with regard to specific policies between the government of Ukraine and EU Member States. The EU could also support capacity-building efforts in Ukraine to ensure that it is better equipped to handle future crises.

Apart from the financing needed for Ukraine's reconstruction, the EU could make funds available to candidate countries in general to bridge the widening economic and developmental gap with the EU. In that respect, the EU could consider establishing a special fund. One expert suggested applying this approach already (or first) to the three Western Balkan countries with whom accession negotiations are ongoing.

Experts also suggested that the EU could take certain steps before accession to facilitate the accession process and the integration of new Member States. They considered that DG NEAR, the service in the Commission responsible for EU enlargement and neighborhood policy, would need more capacity, possibly including the creation of special task forces. They also suggested granting observer status to Members of Parliament from accession countries in the European Parliament at an early stage of the accession process, as well as involving government officials in other EU bodies.

> **EU enlargement – Key policy considerations for EU action**
>
> - Managing the accession process inside the EU, taking into account public support and economic or other factors that could undermine support, in the context of Ukraine's and Moldova's newly acquired candidate status.
> - Addressing expectations of countries which acquired candidate status before Ukraine and Moldova in order to maintain the EU's credibility and attractiveness.
> - Fostering convergence between Member States' positions on EU enlargement.
> - Agreeing on a roadmap for accession with a revamped accession methodology, for instance at the start of the 2024-2029 institutional cycle.
> - Preparing EU assistance to candidate countries in specific policy areas, possibly including dedicated funding, based on the assessment of previous enlargements.
> - Taking practical and organisational steps to facilitate integration of candidate countries into the EU, for instance through giving early observer status in the European Parliament or other EU bodies and adequate staffing of EU services dealing with enlargement.

2.4. Reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine

The Ukrainian government and several international actors, notably the EU, the World Bank and the G7 have dealt with the organisation and costs of reconstruction. The European Commission published a communication as early as May 2022,[78] in which it proposed to develop a 'RebuildUkraine plan' and establish a 'Ukraine reconstruction platform'. The platform would be co-led by the Commission and the Ukrainian government and bring together supporting partners and organisations, including EU Member States, and international financial institutions. It would act as a single-entry point for all actions on the reconstruction of Ukraine. A central role for the EU in the coordination process would guarantee synergy with the EU accession process of Ukraine.[79]

Ukraine published its own National Recovery Plan in July 2022.[80] Recovery over a 10-year implementation period in three steps would cost up to US$750 billion. Ukraine, the World Bank and the EU made a joint assessment in August 2022, in which they estimated damages and other economic losses caused by the war by 1 June 2022 at US$97 billion and US$252 billion respectively, leading to a total of US$349 billion in financing needs for reconstruction.[81] Reconstruction was also discussed at the international Ukraine Recovery conferences, in Lugano in July 2022 and London in June 2023.[82] The leaders of the G7[83] decided in December 2022 to establish a 'multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform' with a view to supporting Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction. Although the platform, which first met in January 2023, may not exactly concur with the Commission proposal of May 2022, it largely fulfils the intended purpose and satisfies the EU's wish for a central role in the coordination of efforts by having the Commission hosting its secretariat.

Our scenarios, which were drafted before or in parallel with the international decisions on reconstruction, reflect the various options for coordination, which will remain relevant in the implementation phase. Apart from discussing coordination issues, experts addressed the need for

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[78] Communication from the European Commission of 18 May 2022 on Ukraine relief and reconstruction, COM(2022) 233 final; the European Council endorsed the plan in its conclusions of 30 May 2022, point 12.

[79] Synergies between reconstruction and EU accession is also a central theme of a book co-authored by Member of the European Parliament and former prime minister of Lithuania Andrius Kubilius (see: A. Åslund and A. Kubilius, Reconstruction, reform, and EU accession for Ukraine, Frivärld – Stockholm Freeworld Forum, 2023).

[80] National Recovery Council, Ukraine's National Recovery Plan, July 2022.

[81] World Bank, Government of Ukraine, European Commission, Ukraine – rapid damage and needs assessment, August 2022.

[82] The Ukraine Reform conferences, held since 2017, were renamed Ukraine Recovery conferences in 2022. They took place on 4-5 July 2022 in Lugano, Switzerland and 21-22 June 2023 in London, UK.

[83] G7 leaders discussed Ukraine at their summits of 27 June 2022 in Elmau, Germany and 12 December 2022 online.

the EU to start reserving financial capacity for reconstruction, plan for the long term and coordinate with the private sector and civil society.

However, reconstruction and recovery is much more than directing money at the right moment to the right recipients. It is also about the governance of financial transactions, the inclusion of various stakeholders, transparency and avoiding corruption. Furthermore, reconstruction involves finding enough skilled workers inside or outside Ukraine. This is linked to the question of how many refugees will return to Ukraine and their possible role in the reconstruction and recovery of the country. Experts addressed all these issues and also pointed to the societal aspects of reconstruction and recovery, ranging from dealing with wounded and traumatised people to reintegrating formerly occupied areas, including issues of language and culture.

2.4.1. European Parliament resolutions

As early as 1 March 2022, Parliament addressed the future reconstruction of Ukraine, by calling for the EU and its Member States 'to prepare a multi-billion euro assistance and recovery plan for Ukraine to support the Ukrainian economy and the reconstruction of its destroyed infrastructure'. It emphasised that Russia bears responsibility for the destruction and 'will be required to compensate the damage'. The same resolution also called for an assessment of the environmental impact of the war on the region.[84] On 7 April 2022, Parliament called for 'a Marshall Plan-like fund (the Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund) to rebuild Ukraine after the war, launch a massive investment programme and unleash the country's growth potential', which should be financed 'inter alia by the EU, its Member States, donor contributions and Russia's compensation for war damages, including Russian assets which were previously frozen as a result of sanctions'.[85]

On 5 May 2022, Parliament urged the EU to 'deliver financial assistance to Ukraine to help it rebuild its transport infrastructure' and requested 'international support for the demining efforts of littoral countries' because of floating sea-mines.[86] On 19 May 2022, Parliament called for debt relief for Ukraine and requested that 'the Commission and the Member States lead the work on a Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund and the strategy to rebuild Ukraine after the war' with the full involvement of Parliament.[87] A few weeks later, Parliament recommended to 'prepare to contribute as much as possible to rebuilding the country post-war, as democracy and freedom are dependent on prosperity and economic stability' and to 'establish a legal instrument allowing frozen Russian assets and funds to be confiscated and used for reparations and the reconstruction of Ukraine'.[88] In October 2022, Parliament called for the protection of Ukraine's cultural heritage during the war and to support Ukrainian cultural actors and civil society in developing a roadmap for reconstruction, recovery and the restoration of cultural sites.[89]

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[84] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, points 35 and 50.

[85] Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation, point 22.

[86] Resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on the EU transport and tourism sectors, in particular points 4 and 24.

[87] Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act, point 7.

[88] Recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, point 1a.

[89] Resolution of 20 October 2022 on cultural solidarity with Ukraine and a joint emergency response mechanism for cultural recovery in Europe, points 4, 5 and 6.

On 2 February 2023, Parliament called on the upcoming EU-Ukraine Summit to 'prioritise the need for an EU comprehensive recovery package for Ukraine, […] and further help to strengthen the growth of the economy once the war is over'. It recalled 'that the recovery package should be jointly led by the EU, international financial institutions and like-minded partners, with the substantial involvement of the G7' and recommended that Ukrainian local self-government representatives and civil society contribute to the design of recovery measures. It underlined 'the importance of environmental and transparency conditions for the reconstruction effort' and 'the implementation of the most relevant environmental reforms'. Parliament addressed the financial implications by calling for the recovery package 'to be supported by the necessary EU budget capacity'. Furthermore, Parliament reiterated its call 'to identify a proper legal base to allow the use of frozen Russian Central Bank assets, as well as assets of Russian oligarchs, to finance the reconstruction of Ukraine'. In that context, it supported 'the establishment of a special international monitoring mission to record the environmental consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine with a view to establishing a basis upon which to obtain specific compensation from Russia'.[90]

The situation of refugees and the vulnerable situation of women and children in particular was addressed by Parliament in resolutions as early as March, April and May 2022.[91] In these resolutions, Parliament, inter alia, welcomed the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) for refugees in the EU,[92] called for educational support to child refugees and welcomed police coordination against human trafficking.[93] In the resolution of 2 February 2023 mentioned above, Parliament addressed some societal aspects of the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. For instance, it called on the EU and its Member States 'to extend the opportunities for Ukrainian officials to study and observe the work of the EU institutions' and 'to continue to provide educational opportunities for Ukraine's young people, civil servants and diplomats' and 'the establishment of the Eastern Partnership Academy for Public Administration'.[94]

On 16 February 2023, Parliament called on the Ukrainian Government 'to continue to strengthen local self-government […] and to embed the success of the decentralisation reform in the overall architecture of Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction processes'. In the same resolution, it called for 'continuous and increased support from the EU and its Member States for the treatment and rehabilitation of injured defenders of Ukraine' and for 'the EU and host countries of women and girls who have fled Ukraine to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, particularly emergency contraception, including for survivors of rape, and to support the provision of these services in Ukraine'.[95]

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[90]   Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, points 11 and 12.

[91]   See, in particular: Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine; Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine; Resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the war against Ukraine on women.

[92]   Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 'on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof' was applied to refugees from Ukraine by Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection.

[93]   Parliament came back to the situation of children, in particular their forced transfer and prosecution in its Resolution of 15 June 2023 on the torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation.

[94]   Ibid, point 23.

[95]   Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, points 4, 13 and 17.

Finally, on 15 June 2023 Parliament adopted a comprehensive resolution on 'the sustainable reconstruction and integration of Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic community'. As the title indicates, this resolution combines EU accession with NATO accession and with reconstruction. Apart from new specific elements, such as condemning the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, the resolution reiterates many elements of previous resolutions, though in a more comprehensive form. For instance, the resolution '[u]nderlines that the peace brought by Ukraine's victory must be secured by integrating Ukraine into the EU and NATO', '[h]ighlights the importance of linking Ukraine's reconstruction with the country's EU accession preparations and ongoing domestic reforms', and calls for developing 'a temporary framework for security guarantees, to be implemented immediately after the war, until full NATO membership is achieved'.[96]

2.4.2. Expert views

Coordination with international partners, business and civil society

Experts acknowledged that national and supranational coordination among donors could be a challenge, pointing to the risk of separate tracks. They therefore supported the creation of a single structure uniting all major donors, which would communicate with the Ukrainian side. They emphasised that international aid needs to be aligned with national Ukrainian priorities. Most experts saw a substantial role for the EU in the coordination of aid and in ensuring a coherent approach with its own policies and those of other donors. They emphasised the need to align recovery with the accession process and the importance of other donors understanding and accepting this logic. Nevertheless, experts also acknowledged the role of other important donor countries, notably the US. They assumed that, in return for its substantial military and financial aid, the US would most likely want to have a substantial role in the reconstruction and recovery process. Experts mentioned Türkiye and China as other countries who were also likely to have an interest in participating in the reconstruction.

Furthermore, experts underlined that the reconstruction process would only be effective and mutually beneficial if there were opportunities for private initiatives to participate in the reconstruction. This could include European businesses, who would need protection for foreign investment, equal access to resources and information, and possibly some form of insurance against the risks of recurring political instability or conflict. This could possibly mean developing new instruments to scale private finance and hedge private investments. At the same time, experts emphasised that it would be important to dedicate sufficient funding to national implementing partners, be they governments or non-governmental organisations. By facilitating partnerships between donors, NGOs, and other stakeholders, the EU would not only ensure that aid efforts are coordinated and effective, but also develop capabilities on the ground in Ukraine.

EU financial planning

Experts pointed to the need for the EU to start early with long-term financial planning for its contribution to the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. They called for a holistic approach, which should go beyond existing macro-financial assistance and would mean that the EU should have the courage to set priorities. This could mean treating investments related to the future security of Europe with higher priority than those that are not. In the event of a long conflict, the EU would, for instance, need to secure the financial sustainability of the European Peace Facility and weigh this against financial means for reconstruction.

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[96] Resolution of 15 June 2023 on the sustainable reconstruction and integration of Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic community, in particular points 6, 11 and 23.

On an operational level, the EU would need to include these financial needs in the upcoming mid-term review of its multiannual financial framework (MFF) until 2027 and in the planning for the next MFF 2027-2033. Most probably, the EU would have to develop innovative new financing mechanisms, for instance an extraordinary and temporary increase in Member States' contributions to the EU budget, a dedicated facility or new EU own resources. Public private partnerships (PPPs) might be necessary, for instance for major infrastructure works. Finally, the EU could continue, together with the international community, work on the legal aspects of a possible use of frozen assets from sanctioned individuals and entities in support of Ukraine's reconstruction.

Governance and fighting corruption

Experts pointed to the risk of weak control over the use of the funds by recipients and the possibility of corruption. Avoiding this would also be important to maintain a high level of support among EU citizens for aid to Ukraine. Experts noted that corruption is a complex phenomenon that can originate from the recipient or the donor country. Corruption in Ukraine could originate from the role of oligarchs, imperfections in the judiciary, from new conflicts of interest linked to the war, such as connections between government officials and the weapons industry, or from the uncontrolled availability of arms in the country. Referring to corruption originating from donor countries, one expert mentioned the US-led reconstruction in Afghanistan, where allegedly much corruption originated from American contractors diverting US public money towards private interests.[97]

Therefore, experts called for particular attention to be paid to oversight and accountability mechanisms, including the parliamentary dimension. The use of EU and international funding should be transparent, with clear reporting mechanisms.[98] A dedicated structure or the EU could be tasked to monitor and control the use of allocated funds and serve as a guarantor of a transparent and fair investment process. Throughout the reconstruction process, governments and the EU in particular should focus on governance issues, the rule of law, and anti-corruption mechanisms, for instance by guaranteeing sufficient ways for legal redress in case of alleged incorrect use of donor aid. The actual investment should mostly be done by private parties, although donor governments could be directly involved, for instance in certain state infrastructure projects. One expert suggested establishing a 'joint platform for a democratic Ukraine' to finance civil society and free media.

Possible return of refugees and availability of skilled workers

Experts noted that private and public efforts in EU countries in the first year of the war focused on absorbing a considerable number of Ukrainian refugees. Most benefit from the EU's TPD, which has been prolonged until March 2024 and could be extended until March 2025. If the war continues much longer, many might try to stay in the EU for a longer period or seek permanent residence. Experts suggested that the EU and its Member States could start considering options, such as a new form of temporary admittance, eased access to asylum or long-term residence, or pathways to naturalisation. One expert noted that Member States may not be prepared for increased applications for asylum and should therefore accelerate the development of alternative options.[99]

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[97] For a critical article on US involvement in corruption in Afghanistan, see, for example: S. Chayes, Afghanistan's corruption was made in America, Foreign Affairs, 3 September 2021. For comparison, according to Transparency International, in 2021 Afghanistan had a Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of 16 out of 100 and ranked 174th out of 180 countries, while Ukraine had a CPI of 32 out of 100 and ranked 122nd out of 180 countries.

[98] See also: T. Peters, Financing Ukraine's recovery – consequences for the EU budget and budgetary control, and principles for success, EPRS, European Parliament, June 2023.

[99] On options for refugees after TPD, see, for instance: M. Siger, What happens next, scenarios following the end of the temporary protection in the EU, 9 March 2023; on refugees' own outlook, see, for instance: UNHCR, Lives on hold, intentions and perspectives of refugees from Ukraine #3, February 2023.

Experts also considered the downside for Ukraine of refugees staying longer in EU countries. Ukraine would not only have to deal with separated families over a longer period, but would also miss qualified personnel for the reconstruction effort, which most likely requires a large number of workers. If the war developed towards a frozen or stalled conflict, experts foresaw various negative effects for Ukraine. On the one hand, many Ukrainians would not be available for reconstruction because they would still be in the army or would be convalescing from injuries. On the other hand, once released from military duties or recovered, they could be tempted to reunite with family abroad, leading to an additional migration of (qualified) people out of the country. If reconstruction started in a situation where few refugees return, Ukraine could invite labour immigrants, possibly from central Asia. This could have various consequences on social cohesion or wages. One expert compared such a situation to labour immigration in Qatar for the Football World Cup, which has led to discussions about financing and ethical issues.

Opposite to these scenarios, experts also considered the option that – in the event of lasting peace and stability – many refugees would return to Ukraine. They suggested that, if Ukrainians have a place to return to in terms of jobs and a projected future, they would willingly do so. For such a large-scale return, EU Member States might want to call on competent international organisations for assistance. [100] Experts considered that, in this case, positive effects might reinforce each other. Refugees that have stayed in EU countries might have absorbed EU values regarding democracy, sustainability and the fight against corruption and repatriate these to Ukraine upon return. They might also have acquired money and skills that could contribute to the reconstruction and economic recovery and innovation. This might be particularly welcome for Ukraine's intention to create a better society and economy after the war, referred to as 'build back better'.

EU assistance for reconstruction

Experts considered that the EU could assist, for instance, in demining, depolluting of fields, or repurposing land, such as turning battlefields into forests. The EU could be well positioned for demining or raising 'mine awareness' in view of its experiences elsewhere. One expert noted that demining could become an area of innovation and an upcoming market.

The EU could, furthermore, provide technical assistance to Ukraine in areas such as financial management, procurement and project implementation to ensure that aid resources are used effectively and efficiently. Clear and participatory support planning (including NGOs/CSOs) would be required to ensure progress on recovery.

Experts also pointed to challenges related to particular sectors. Upgrading nuclear safety and the electricity net would be challenges in the energy sector, while a shortage of machinery and 'land-grabbing' would be specific challenges for the agricultural sector. One expert noted that reconstruction might be hampered by a lack of security, for instance in areas bordering Russia. Particularly in a Cold War scenario, the EU could develop projects for cities in the west of Ukraine that are hosting large numbers of refugees.

Societal aspects of reconstruction and recovery

Experts acknowledged that the social recovery of Ukraine would be a considerable challenge, both if the country did not regain all of its territory and if formerly occupied regions had to reintegrate into the country. In all cases, Ukraine would have to address issues of physical and mental health (post-traumatic stress). Policies could include programmes regarding re-education for wounded

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[100]   In this respect, one expert pointed to potential assistance from the IOM, UNDP or UN OCHA.

people, treating people who had suffered from gender-based violence, or feelings of dissociation between local areas and the capital.

If Ukraine did not regain all of its territory, reintegration of families from occupied areas would be more difficult. If Ukraine's EU accession stalled, as in the Frozen Conflict and Devastated Europe scenarios, experts considered that it could also have a negative impact on EU commitment to the reconstruction of the country. Apart from a lack of practical assistance in the recovery of damaged and polluted areas, this could have negative social effects in the form of migration out of Ukraine or inside the country or negative attitudes and violence due to a lack of prospects.

If Ukraine regained all of its territory, as in the Fair Stability scenario, the reintegration of the formerly occupied areas would pose considerable challenges of a social and cultural nature. Experts noted that, throughout the war, a dichotomy between the free and occupied areas has developed, which could be particularly problematic for areas occupied since 2014 (Crimea and Donbas). Narratives about diversity, including language and religion, are likely to influence societal integration and – possibly in the long term – future relations with Russia. Experts warned of a negative approach to the past that could lead to the locking-in of vicious circles of conflict and enduring trauma. The issue of minority languages, in particular Russian, could return once the war is over and be important for the acceptance of minorities.

One expert suggested using best practices from other societies that have dealt with internal conflict, such as South Africa or Rwanda, which included Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. Such efforts would probably need to focus on local programmes and include education of new generations. They could complement the legal prosecution of injustice during the war. One expert said that Ukraine could focus on affirming its own identity and independence, instead of rejecting Russia and its culture. Some experts suggested that the EU and its Member States could offer expertise based on experience in dealing with other post-war societies, for instance in former Yugoslavia. One expert suggested that, for reintegration of occupied areas, lessons could possibly be learned from German reunification.

Reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine – Key policy considerations for EU action

- Coordinating reconstruction aid with other international donors, business and civil society, in close cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and in coherence with the EU accession process.
- Starting multiannual EU financial planning for investment in the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine as soon as possible, in particular by integrating it into the current and upcoming multiannual financial framework, while considering innovative financing mechanisms.
- Developing oversight and accountability mechanisms for the delivery of aid and integrating the principles of fighting corruption and legal redress against abuse into the process.
- Considering options for the long-term perspectives for Ukrainian refugees in EU countries, while providing those who want to return with education, skills and assistance.
- Offering expertise for sectoral reconstruction – for instance, demining of land, rebuilding the energy grid or financial management – and for dealing with post-traumatic stress and reconciliation and reintegration of formerly occupied areas.

2.5. Internal functioning of the EU

As with the 2004 EU enlargement, the prospect of enlarging the EU with several new Member States has reignited the debate about deepening the EU before enlarging. The assumption is that the more members the EU has, the more difficult decision-making could become, hence the greater the need to redistribute the seats in Parliament, reduce the number of EU Commissioners, and review the use of unanimity voting in the Council. The current EU Treaty envisages a maximum of 751 seats in Parliament and allocates the decision of the distribution per country, within certain conditions, to the European Council. The European Commission should consist of a number of members corresponding to two thirds of the number of Member States. However, as allowed by the Treaty, the European Council has until now decided to allocate one Commissioner per Member State.[101] A sensitive issue is the reduction of cases in which unanimity can be applied for voting in the Council. Although currently most decisions are taken by qualified majority voting (QMV), unanimity still applies to certain policy areas, notably foreign and security policy. The European Council decides as a general rule on the basis of consensus, although in a few cases it can decide by unanimity (for instance, on altering the number of Commissioners) or QMV (for electing its president).[102]

Institutional revisions to the internal functioning of the EU are only one aspect of the broader notion of 'absorption capacity' of the EU in view of enlargement. Absorption capacity can also refer to political acceptance or financial capacity, which have been dealt with in the previous sections. Some modifications to the internal functioning of the EU that could facilitate decision-making in an enlarged EU, in particular increasing the cases of QMV in the Council, would require modification of the EU Treaties. Following the Conference on the Future of Europe, which concluded on 9 May 2021, the European Parliament has called for revision of the EU Treaties. However, there is currently no majority of Member States in the European Council supporting this. Therefore, the political and academic debate has shifted focus to steps which are possible without modification of the Treaties.

2.5.1. European Parliament resolutions

In its resolutions of 2022 regarding Ukraine, Parliament made a few references to the internal functioning of the EU in order to be ready for enlargement. In its resolution of 8 June 2022, it recommended 'that the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of

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[101] Treaty on European Union (TEU): Article 14 stipulates that each Member State shall have between six and 96 seats in the European Parliament and the representation of its citizens shall be digressively proportional. Article 17(5) TEU stipulates that the European Council can decide by unanimity to alter the number of Commissioners.

[102] Ibid, Article 15-5: 'The European Council shall elect its President, by a qualified majority'; in practice, the European Council will also look for consensus on its President.

the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy introduce qualified majority voting for certain foreign policy areas, as already provided for in the Treaties, for example the adoption of EU personal sanctions regimes, and strive to extend qualified majority voting to foreign policy in the Council, in order to increase the effectiveness of EU foreign policy'.[103] In its resolution of 23 June 2022, on the candidate status of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, Parliament reiterated its call for the EU institutions 'to speed up the necessary steps to make EU decision-making more efficient'.[104] On 23 November 2022, in its resolution on the new enlargement strategy, Parliament called upon the Council and the HR/VP to 'enhance the EU's capacity to act by reforming decision-making, including through the introduction of qualified majority voting in areas relevant to the accession process, and ensuring the effective functioning of an enlarged union as a whole'. It called in particular for abolishing 'the requirement for unanimity when deciding on the start of the negotiation process as well as the opening and closing of individual negotiating clusters and chapters'.[105]

Apart from its resolutions regarding Ukraine, Parliament adopted a specific resolution on 9 June 2022 calling for a Convention for the revision of the Treaties, in response to the final outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe, which had been presented on 9 May that year. Without explicitly referring to the war in Ukraine or to enlargement, Parliament pointed out in this resolution that 'especially following the most recent crises', 'the Treaties need to be amended urgently to make sure the Union has the competence to take more effective action during future crises'. More specifically, Parliament submitted to the Council proposals for amending the Treaties, inter alia to:

− enhance the EU's capacity to act by reforming voting procedures, including allowing decisions in the Council by qualified majority voting instead of unanimity;
− adapt the competences conferred on the Union in the Treaties, especially in the areas of health, energy, defence, and in social and economic policies;
− support strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of the EU economy, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, and to promote investments focused on the just, green and digital transitions;
− provide Parliament with full co-decision rights on the EU budget, and with the right to initiate, amend or repeal legislation;
− strengthen the procedure for the protection of the values the EU is founded on and to clarify the determination and consequences of breaches of fundamental values.[106]

2.5.2. Expert views

Institutional reform for EU accession

Several experts considered the current set-up of the EU outdated and not fit for a growing membership. A few were of the opinion that unanimity voting has, in the current EU, been abused by certain Member States for national interests, sometimes even under the influence of third countries. Several experts suggested that the EU should launch a Convention on internal EU reform aimed at Treaty revision, as requested by the European Parliament and endorsed by the Commission in the State of the Union Speech of 2022.[107] This could include moving away from unanimity voting in the Council towards a generalisation of QMV. One expert referred to new concepts, such as

[103] Recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, point 1d.

[104] Resolution of 23 June 2022 on the candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, point 14.

[105] Resolution of 23 November 2023 on the new EU strategy for enlargement, point 1(d).

[106] Resolution of 9 June 2022 on the call for a Convention for the revision of the Treaties, in particular points 4 and 5.

[107] See: Ursula von der Leyen, State of the Union speech of 14 September 2022 before the European Parliament.

'emergency brakes' or 'super QMV'. A 'blocking minority' option should be further explored – to force EU Member States to build coalitions instead of one Member State blocking a decision.[108] Another expert suggested that there could be a certain trade-off between countries opposing the increased use of QMV and those opposing enlargement – supposing these categories do not overlap.[109]

Preparing for accession without Treaty reform

One expert noted that innovative mechanisms to circumvent unanimity voting in the Council introduced in the Treaty of Lisbon (so-called 'passerelle clauses'[110]) have not been used until now. Several experts considered that an enlarged EU would probably develop in the direction of diversified integration or a multi-speed EU with groups of countries cooperating more closely in different areas. One expert suggested a development towards regional parliaments and commissions in addition to an EU-wide parliament and commission. The hierarchy and division of responsibilities and decision-making between these would, however, probably need to be settled by Treaty revision.

Some experts reflected upon the relationship between the European Political Community (EPC) and the accession process. They noted that proponents of EU enlargement had spoken out against the EPC, dismissing it as a 'surrogate for EU Membership' for candidate countries. They also acknowledged that the EPC summit of October 2022 had mostly facilitated unity among EU Member States, candidate countries and other European countries on their position vis-à-vis Russia, showing the usefulness of the EPC as a platform for high-level political debate on issues of common European interest.[111] Although the EPC has no formal role in EU accession, some experts considered that the EPC setting could offer occasions to leaders of accession countries to discuss accession-related issues in side meetings with EU leaders, get used to the multilateral way of working and, by their visible presence, help foster political will in EU countries for EU enlargement.[112]

One expert noted that, after all, complexity should not stop the EU from enlarging further, because even the minimal level of integration of all Member States would provide the EU with a stronger position globally in terms of security and economy. Enlargement would also promote stability and prosperity in the EU's neighbourhood, and one could imagine what the geopolitical consequences today would have been if the 2004, 2007 and 2013 enlargements had not taken place. In that sense, the 'cost of non-enlargement' might be bigger than the costs of enlargement.

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[108] 'Emergency brake' means the possibility for a Member State to oppose a decision by QMV for a vital and stated reason of national policy. 'Super QMV' means a qualified majority requiring a higher percentage of votes in favour than usual. For more information, see, for instance: SWP comment of October 2022; Engage working paper from April 2023; Blog of HR'VP Josep Borrell of 27 June 2023; C. Navarra and L. Jančová, with I. Ioannides, Qualified Majority Voting in Common Foreign and Security Policy, A Cost of Non-Europe Report, EPRS, European Parliament, August 2023

[109] According to the SWP comment of October 2022, 'the German government should suggest linking the demand for more QMV with the potential new eastward enlargement to form a package solution'. In May 2023, nine EU foreign ministers launched a 'group of friends on QMV in EU CFSP'. Slovenia is the only central European state in this group.

[110] For an explanation and analysis of passerelle clauses, see: S. Kotanidis, Passerelle clauses in the EU Treaties – opportunities for more flexible supranational decision-making, EPRS, European Parliament, November 2020.

[111] The idea for a European Political Community was launched on 9 May 2022 by French President Emmanuel Macron, and the EPC held its first summit in Prague on 6 October 2022. See also: S. Anghel, Outcome of the European Political Community and European Council meetings in Prague on 6-7 October 2022, EPRS, European Parliament, October 2022.

[112] For instance, at the second meeting of the EPC on 1 June in Moldova, although EU accession was not on the agenda, hosting Moldovan President Sandu and participating Ukrainian President Zelenskyy used the occasion to make a plea for opening EU accession negotiations by the end of 2023. See: S. Anghel and J. Ernault, Outcome of the European Political Community meeting in Bulboaca, Moldova on 1 June 2023, EPRS, European Parliament, June 2023.

Internal functioning of the EU – Key policy considerations for EU action

- Using all options available in the current EU Treaties to facilitate decision-making in an enlarged EU, such as the passerelle clauses or enhanced cooperation between groups of Member States.
- Considering revision of the EU Treaties in view of enlargement and making an inventory of the changes deemed necessary.
- Contributing to the development of the European Political Community (EPC) as a platform for high-level political debate on issues of common European interest; using the EPC setting or its side meetings to facilitate the integration of candidate countries into the EU before membership.

2.6. EU strategic autonomy and (green) normative power

The strong decline in the delivery of Russian fossil fuels, in particular gas, has triggered renewed discussion about economic dependencies of EU countries on various raw materials and the issue of the EU's (open) strategic autonomy.[113] The Versailles Declaration mentioned in Section 2.2, adopted by the EU Heads of State and Government on 11 March 2022, not only dwelled upon bolstering defence capabilities and increasing the EU's capacity to act autonomously in matters of security and defence, but also called for reducing the EU's energy dependencies and building a more robust economic base. It emphasised, for instance, the need to accelerate the reduction of reliance on fossil fuels, diversify energy supplies and speed up the development of renewable energy sources. It also identified sectors that are instrumental in addressing the EU's strategic dependencies, in particular critical raw materials, semiconductors, health, digital technologies, and food.[114] The Versailles Declaration has been followed up by a number of concrete proposals and decisions in these areas.

The debate on dependencies and EU strategic autonomy is linked to the EU's ongoing effort to undergo a 'twin transition' of becoming greener and more digital; the EU Green Deal is at the heart of this transition.[115] The question for this analysis is whether the various economic shocks of the war hamper the green transition and thereby the EU's normative power, or whether they can act as 'shock therapy' to increase the sense of urgency to achieve the goals of the Green Deal, thereby strengthening the EU's normative power. The Commission and the European Council aim to use the window of opportunity for systemic change, in particular for the energy transition. Experts acknowledged this, but also expressed concerns that security of supply and economic affordability may sometimes prevail over greening. Parliament resolutions and expert views shed quite some light on the EU's aims of increasing its strategic autonomy while achieving the goals of the Green Deal and thereby enhancing its assumed normative power inside and outside the EU.

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[113] 'EU strategic autonomy' can be defined as 'the capacity of the EU to act autonomously – that is, without being dependent on other countries – in strategically important policy areas'. For more information, see: S. Anghel, B. Immenkamp, E. Lazarou, J. Saulnier and A. Wilson, On the path to strategic autonomy – the EU in an evolving geopolitical environment, EPRS, European Parliament, September 2020; M. Damen, EU Strategic Autonomy 2013-2023 – from concept to capacity, EPRS, European Parliament, July 2022; M. Damen, Four challenges of the energy crisis for the EU's strategic autonomy, EPRS, European Parliament, April 2023.

[114] See Versailles Declaration point 7 and sections II and III.

[115] The European Green Deal of 11 December 2019 is a 'new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use'. The communication was followed by the EU Climate Law, adopted in June 2021, and a set of proposals called 'Fit for 55'. Measures go across economic sectors, with particular attention on the energy, transport and agricultural sectors.

2.6.1. European Parliament resolutions

Parliament's resolutions often referred to the EU's need to decrease dependencies and increase its strategic autonomy, particularly related to energy, security and food. The following quote, from 18 January 2023, can illustrate Parliament's stance in general: '[Parliament] underscores that the tectonic shift in the geopolitical landscape caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and other international challenges, including the continued rise of global authoritarianism, increasing Sino-Russian cooperation, the PRC assertive foreign policy, the climate emergency and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic call for a swifter implementation of the concept of strategic autonomy, solidarity and for a geopolitical awakening of the EU'.[116]

In March 2022, Parliament emphasised 'the need for Member States to acknowledge and accept that severe sanctions against the Russian Federation will unavoidably entail negative effects on their economic situation' and reiterated its 'previous calls to significantly reduce energy dependence'.[117] Strategic autonomy regarding energy was a recurring topic in later resolutions. In April 2022, Parliament stressed 'the importance of the diversification of energy resources, technologies and supply routes, in addition to further investing in energy efficiency, renewable energy, gas and electricity storage solutions and sustainable long-term investments in line with the European Green Deal'.[118] In early May that year, Parliament noted that 'making Europe energy independent from Russian energy sources […] can become at the same time an opportunity to accelerate the energy transition'.[119] Later in May, Parliament underlined the importance of 'ensuring energy sovereignty and independence from Russian supplies and more strategic autonomy and energy security, by upgrading and ensuring major investment in the EU's energy infrastructure, […], and energy efficiency'. It welcomed 'the plan outlined by the Commission under its new REPowerEU programme to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030' and called for 'the swift implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, particularly in the area of energy, at both national and European level', strongly believing 'that this should increase the EU's strategic autonomy'. Parliament acknowledged that these measures would require much investment, and therefore called 'for the establishment of a new dedicated European Fund (a Strategic Autonomy Fund for Europe) to finance cross-border energy infrastructure, avoiding lock-in effects on fossil fuels, and renewable energy production and energy efficiency, reinforcing the path towards the European Green Deal, as well as cybersecurity, industrial competitiveness, the circular economy, food security and sustainable development, thereby securing Europe's autonomy and protecting quality public services in the decades to come'. It stressed that, in parallel, 'additional new EU own resources are necessary to at least cover the repayment costs of NGEU (principal and interest) and to assure sustainable financing of the EU budget on a long-term basis in order to avoid the new EU priorities being financed to the detriment of existing EU programmes and policies', and highlighted 'the need to take further action if the proposed new own resources are not adopted or do not generate the anticipated level of revenue for the EU budget'.[120]

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[116] Resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022, point 4.

[117] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, points 18 and 22.

[118] Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation, point 18.

[119] Resolution of 5 May 2022 on the impact of the Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on the EU transport and tourism sectors, point 47.

[120] Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act, points 4, 37, 38, 44 and 45.

In terms of security, Parliament addressed economic resilience, cooperation with eastern partners and democratic interference. In March 2022, it recommended 'securing production and supply chains of critical infrastructure and critical material within the EU', believing that 'the EU's move towards open strategic autonomy and digital sovereignty is important and the right way forward'.[121] The resolution points to dependencies on various products, not necessarily linked to Russia. In June 2022, Parliament called for creating 'tools to counteract economic coercion and to achieve, as soon as possible, food sovereignty and full security of energy supplies to reduce energy dependencies'. It also called for strengthening 'the security and resilience of the EU's associated partners through utilising the possibilities opened by the Strategic Compass and increasing assistance to Georgia and Moldova within the framework of the European Peace Facility'. In the same resolution, Parliament called for making 'the Union's strategic autonomy an overarching aim in all areas and a fundamental and holistic approach to its foreign, security and defence policy and external action, to give it the ability to act alone when needed and with partners when possible and therefore enable it to play an important role on the international stage'.[122] In February 2023, Parliament called on the EU and its Member States 'to prevent Russia's interference in political, electoral and other democratic processes in Ukraine and beyond, in particular malicious acts aimed at manipulating public opinion and undermining European integration'.[123]

In March 2022, Parliament dealt with food security, showing the interrelationship between EU strategic autonomy and the Green Deal.[124] Parliament underlined 'that the EU is the world's biggest importer and exporter of agri- and aquatic food products' and, 'in order to increase the long-term resilience of the EU's agri- and aquatic food systems', the EU should decrease its dependency on imports and 'support technologies and practices that are less reliant on these inputs'. Parliament therefore called on the Commission to prepare an action plan to ensure functioning food supply chains and food security within the EU, 'taking into account the lessons learnt from the impact of the war in Ukraine and other possible disruptions'. Parliament noted 'that this action plan represents an opportunity to accelerate the achievement of the objectives of the Green Deal', reiterating 'that European strategic autonomy in food, feed and the agricultural sector overall must be reinforced, in line with the Green Deal objectives'.[125]

The resolution suggested trade-related measures, more resilient and sustainable agriculture and reduction of food waste. On trade, Parliament recognised that the EU must 'consider how to develop more autonomous agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture systems […], reducing the EU's dependence on imports and increasing domestic production', particularly for products which used to be imported from Ukraine, such as cereals, oilseeds, protein crops and fertilisers. This might require 'significant shifts in market and export models, as well as serious contingency planning […] such as autonomy in EU feed production, alternative outlets for exports, enhanced reactive capacity, strategic stocks of basic food, feed and other food products, autonomy in fertilisers and replacement products'. Concretely, Parliament called for the lifting of anti-dumping duties on fertilisers, more flexibility for imports of cereals, soybeans and fertilisers, and securing new import markets for

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[121] Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, point 79.

[122] Recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, points 1i and 1l.

[123] Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 31.

[124] Resolution of 24 March 2022 on the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

[125] Ibid, points 17, 51, 52 and 53.

livestock. Parliament stressed, however, 'that all imported food and feed needs to live up to the EU sustainability and food safety standards, including maximum residue levels of pesticides and antimicrobials', and therefore denounced 'proposals to misuse the current crises to weaken these requirements and commitments'. Equally, measures should 'avoid barriers to the free movement of goods' and guarantee 'the proper functioning of the single market'.[126]

In order to create more resilient and sustainable agriculture in the EU, Parliament made a plea to take away 'barriers identified by farmers to producing renewable energy'. It also called for reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers by using 'alternative organic sources of nutrients and nutrient cycling' through measures 'to enhance the use of organic fertilising products obtained from sewage sludge, processed manure, biocharcoal and frass in order to substitute chemical fertilisers'. Such measures should 'enhance circularity on farms and decrease dependence on third-country resources'. Further measures could include 'shifts in planting regimes to provide more home-grown food and feed', 'a comprehensive European protein strategy' and 'precision farming and developing and fast-tracking access to markets of alternative proteins, organic fertilisers, microbial protection of crops and agro-ecology'. Parliament also called for 'the acceleration and strengthening of actions to reduce food waste to maximise food availability and the use of the resources within the EU to improve food autonomy'.[127]

Parliament indirectly addressed the relationship between enlargement and strategic autonomy in June 2022, when it called enlargement 'a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united EU', strongly believing 'that the prospect of full EU membership for the countries striving to become Member States of the EU is in the Union's own political, economic and security interests'.[128] It reiterated this position in February 2023, when it underlined 'that the Russian war of aggression has fundamentally changed the geopolitical situation in Europe' and that it believed 'Ukraine's membership of the EU represents a geostrategic investment in a united and strong Europe'.[129]

Finally, Parliament's resolution of October 2022 on cultural solidarity with Ukraine and cultural recovery in Europe includes some references to European values and strategic autonomy. The resolution considered that 'Russia's war against Ukraine is an attempt to eradicate the identity and culture of a sovereign nation, also through strategic and targeted acts of destruction on cultural heritage sites' and is therefore 'also an attack against our common European identity, our values and way of life, characterised by open societies based on democracy, respect for human rights, dignity, the rule of law and cultural diversity'. This war and previous crises, such as the COVID pandemic, have – according to the resolution – 'challenged the Union's strategic autonomy, but have also revealed its great potential to forge a strong sense of belonging to Europe, to come up with joint responses to pressing needs and consolidate support behind European integration'. The resolution calls for cultural support of Ukraine and for 'post-crisis recovery of the EU's cultural ecosystem as a whole', for instance by 'focus[ing] on culture in all key EU policies and priorities such as climate action, the digital transformation, economic recovery and international relations'.[130]

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[126] Ibid, points 21, 40, 41, 42, 49, 58 and 67.

[127] Ibid, points 23, 26, 28, 31, 44, 45 and 68.

[128] Resolution of 23 June 2022 on the candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, point 15.

[129] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 16.

[130] Resolution of 20 October 2022 on cultural solidarity with Ukraine and a joint emergency response mechanism for cultural recovery in Europe, in particular considerations A and B and point 9.

2.6.2. Expert views

Experts noted that the war highlighted the EU's dependency on energy imports and thereby brought the debate on strategic autonomy back to the political agenda. A few experts considered that the EU should focus more on ensuring long term sustainability of the EU's decoupling from Russian energy resources. This could be done by better implementing agreed sanctions and penalties for violations and possibly agreeing on new sanctions on the Russian nuclear industry. The EU, in coordination with the US and/or G7 countries, could also introduce conditionality to energy cooperation with partners such as Türkiye or countries from the Global South, ensuring that such cooperation would not indirectly support Russian energy. One expert suggested that the EU should make a kind of economic grand bargain with the US, which should include gas supplies. Others spoke more generally of cooperation and interconnection with like-minded partners.

In more general economic terms, some experts considered it probable that the war would lead to structural changes in Western economies towards eliminating dependencies on raw materials and increasing the EU's strategic autonomy. They pointed in particular to the potential of EU enlargement for increasing EU strategic autonomy. Ukraine could, for instance, become an important supplier of EU security, food, green energy and other raw materials, which would be a form of 'smart re-shoring' or 'near-shoring' to the European region. One expert suggested mapping positive effects of former EU enlargements on the EU's strategic autonomy, also to 'win the hearts and minds of decision-makers and the population' for enlargement. A few experts said, however, that (economic) strategic autonomy should not be overstated as an objective of EU enlargement, because integrating new EU countries is not only about economic or industrial benefits, but also about broadening a democratic community based on values, principles and freedoms.

Experts also pointed to the reverse influence of EU accession on the economies of acceding countries, particularly in modernising them and making them more sustainable. Integration into the EU and adopting EU legislation could, for instance, enable them to speed up their energy transition. This would, however, require flexible thinking from the EU and openness to different paths to achieving the goals of the EU Green Deal. The EU should, for instance, consider nuclear power as an important zero carbon source.[131] The EU would need to take the different capabilities of (new) Member States to finance and profit from the energy transition into account and would probably need to explore trade-offs between ensuring energy supplies, affordable prices and green goals. Some experts noted that Ukraine, Moldova and Western Balkan countries already implement many EU energy laws, as they are members of the Energy Community.[132] This allows them to participate in some EU measures developed to cope with the energy crisis, such as common gas purchases. More generally, some experts considered economic risks for the EU related to the accession of these countries to be limited, because integration is a gradual process and would take many years.

As regards agriculture, a few experts noted possible future tension with the EU Green Deal if the agricultural sector in Ukraine went for maximum yields at the cost of the environment, to raise production sufficiently to alleviate food shortages and yield income for the country. They emphasised that agricultural production methods should be brought to the level required by the EU in terms of environmentally- and animal-friendly methods for EU accession. The use of precision agriculture, possibly supported by artificial intelligence, or organic farming could help achieve this. One expert drew attention to the fact that Ukraine adopted, just two weeks before the outbreak of

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[131] According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), in 2019 only 4 % of Ukraine's energy supply was produced from renewables (mainly biomass) and 24 % from nuclear energy.

[132] The Energy Community, founded in 2005, is an international organisation which brings together the European Union and its neighbours to create an integrated pan-European energy market.

the war, a 'food system transformation matrix', which is a road map for the transformation of food systems that can be considered as a kind of Ukrainian agricultural Green Deal. This reflected a green transformation in Ukraine's agricultural sector up to 2030, but will have to be adjusted to the new realities caused by the war for the agricultural sector.

Experts brought forward three general considerations regarding the relationship between EU accession, normative power and the EU Green Deal. Firstly, they emphasised that EU accession as a process based on the implementation of EU standards is, in itself, an example of the EU's normative power, because candidate countries undertake reforms and accept the acquis communautaire as a condition. The future reconstruction of Ukraine and its economy will, for instance, have to fulfil EU requirements and political reform should lead to democratisation. Several experts noted that conditionality was already part of the EU's Association Agreements, which contain clauses for applying, inter alia, elements of the EU's agricultural and trade policies. The EU can further help candidate countries comply with EU legislation through bilateral cooperation and by providing technical assistance, for which various EU-funded projects exist. [133] The Commission opinion of 2022 recommending candidate status for Ukraine contains guiding principles and concrete steps to achieve sufficient conformity before accession talks can start.

Secondly, experts noted that the destruction of Ukraine's existing industrial infrastructure, although terrible and causing economic loss, could also be a blessing in disguise. Because the main industries of Ukraine were built on old Soviet and post-Soviet technologies, their destruction avoids going through a probably cumbersome process of modernisation and opens the door to rebuild Ukraine's economy 'from scratch' according to the principles of the Green Deal. Experts noted, again, that this may require flexibility from the EU to achieve the goals of the Green Deal under difficult conditions for both EU Member States (facing energy, economic and security challenges) and Ukraine and other candidate countries (facing war damage or other specific challenges). They suggested that financial support from the EU for candidate countries in their green transitions may be necessary, because candidates have a double handicap of having less funds available for more fundamental measures that involve more costs than in existing Member States.

Thirdly, some experts argued that enlargement is also beneficial for the EU's normative power, because it means more countries in the world implementing EU legislation and more leverage for the EU in international fora. Even before enlargement, the application of sanctions as an instrument of its foreign policy has already contributed positively to the image of the EU as a normative power.

Taking the opposite view, some experts argued that, in today's polarised world, the EU should focus more on regional security and European competitiveness than on its role as a global standard setter. In a world where international law and territorial integrity are so easily neglected, the concept of EU normative power might not be suitable anymore as a characterisation of EU power. Instead, the EU should think about how to become more pragmatic in its approach to international cooperation, not only with partners like the US, but also with countries such as Türkiye and countries of the Global South, in order to achieve its own short- and long-term goals and prevent these countries from deeper cooperation with Russia or China. A few experts pointed at the fact that central and eastern EU countries tend to have a negative view of strategic autonomy, because they see it mainly as decoupling European defence from the US and thereby as a threat to NATO. Countries with a more positive view of strategic autonomy often focus more on its economic aspect, seeing it as a necessary exercise in reducing dependencies. According to these experts, the war has further constrained the possibilities of EU strategic autonomy, given the centrality of the US in support to

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[133]   Experts mentioned, for instance, U-LEAD, EU4Business, Pravo-Justice II, EU4DigitalUA and EU4Culture.

Ukraine. They considered that the strategic autonomy debate would most likely unfold primarily as a defensive economic exercise in what is called 'de-risking' of relations with third countries such as China.

Whereas the first group of experts, mentioned above, emphasised the coherence between strategic autonomy, the normative power of EU values and the Green Deal – particularly in the enlargement process, the second group of more critical experts emphasised the potential tension between pursuing normative power and autonomy versus focusing on security in cooperation with the US.

**EU strategic autonomy and (green) normative power –
Key policy considerations for EU action**

- Considering structural changes in the EU's economy towards eliminating dependencies on raw materials and increasing the EU's strategic autonomy, particularly in the sectors of energy, agriculture and food and raw materials.
- Mapping positive effects of former EU enlargements, for instance regarding military, energy and food security, on the EU's strategic autonomy and the potential effects of the accession of current candidate countries in the Western Balkans and of Ukraine and Moldova.
- Supporting candidate countries in their green transitions through expertise and financial means, while taking into account their particular challenges – such as Ukraine's reconstruction – and the need to apply the goals of the EU Green Deal flexibly according to needs and capabilities.
- Sustaining and possibly increasing the EU's normative power through the conditionality of EU legislation in the enlargement process and the indirect effect thereof in international fora. Creating synergies between increasing the EU's strategic autonomy and its normative power regarding standards, greening and democratic values.
- Considering risks and opportunities for EU open strategic autonomy in an increasingly bipolar world in which EU dependence on the US for security is critical and economic relations with China need 'de-risking'.

2.7. EU relations with key countries

2.7.1. Russia

EU-Russia relations have been strained since Russia's annexation of Crimea in February 2014, to which the EU responded with a (limited) set of sanctions and restrictive measures. In 2016, the EU's foreign affairs ministers adopted five principles guiding the EU's policy towards Russia: implementation of the Minsk agreements; closer ties with the EU's Eastern Partners; strengthening EU resilience to Russian hybrid threats; selective engagement on issues of EU interest; and support for people-to-people contacts.[134] On 23 February 2022, the day before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU's foreign affairs ministers adopted what became known as the first package of additional sanctions against Russia, in response to Russia's recognition of the non-government-controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine and sending of troops into the region.[135] The next day, in reaction to the invasion, the European Council met in a special session and adopted conclusions condemning 'in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine'. The European Council stated that 'Russia is grossly violating international law and the principles of the UN Charter and undermining European and global security and stability' and that 'Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it will cause. It will be held accountable for its actions'.[136]

Since then, the EU has adopted 11 packages of sanctions against Russia and also its ally Belarus.[137] Moreover, the European Council and the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament have met on numerous occasions for further decisions and steps regarding the war, its development and measures taken in this context.[138] As regards the implementation and circumvention of the sanctions, the European Commission appointed a Special Envoy for Implementation of EU Sanctions

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[134] See for instance: M. Russell, The EU's Russia policy – five guiding principles, EPRS, European Parliament, February 2018.

[135] See Council press release of 23 February 2022.

[136] For the full text, see: European Council Conclusions, 24 February 2022.

[137] For an overview, see: A. Caprile and A. Delivorias, EU sanctions on Russia: overview, impact, challenges, EPRS, European Parliament, March 2023; Infographic of EU sanctions against Russia over Ukraine since 2014 on the Council website.

[138] For an overview of (European) Council meetings, see: Timeline – EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine; for an overview of adopted European Parliament resolutions related to the war in Ukraine, see Annex 2 to this report.

in December 2022, who convened a sanctions coordinators forum of EU Member States and a broad coalition of international allies and like-minded partners.[139]

European Parliament resolutions

Since 2014, the European Parliament has adopted more than 10 resolutions related to Russia. The latest one on general EU-Russia relations before the war dates from 16 September 2021. Its preamble still contains positive references to Russia, recalling 'strong historical interdependencies, as well as cultural and human ties between Russia and EU Member States' and the fact that 'the EU is still Russia's largest trading partner' and 'the EU the largest investor in Russia'. It then introduced the crucial notion that 'Parliament distinguishes between the Russian people and President Putin's regime, which is a stagnating authoritarian kleptocracy'. The body of the resolution contained calls for the EU to deter Russia and press it not to interfere in the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods, countering the Russian threat by recognising the European aspirations of its neighbouring countries, and, inter alia, engaging with NATO and expanding current engagements in the Black Sea region. It still left room for 'conditional selective dialogue with the Kremlin authorities and regional governments, and on the other hand strategic engagement with Russian civil society'.[140] On 16 December 2021, Parliament condemned 'the current large Russian military build-up along the borders with Ukraine', demanding 'that the Russian Federation immediately and fully withdraw its military forces'.[141]

The first resolution since the outbreak of the war echoed the European Council conclusions in slightly different words, condemning 'in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against and invasion of Ukraine'. Parliament furthermore condemned the unilateral recognition by Russia of the occupied areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and called for sanctions against Russia and for collecting evidence of war crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine since February 2014 onwards.[142] Parliament warned against disinformation and welcomed the EU ban on Russian propaganda outlets such as Sputnik TV and RT, condemned 'the concept of the 'Russian world' aimed at justifying expansionist actions by the regime' and 'deplored Russia's attempts not to fully recognise the history of Soviet crimes and instead to introduce a new Russian narrative'.[143] Parliament furthermore called for 'ensuring full independence from Russian supplies as regards its critical raw materials' and energy,[144] for prosecuting 'the actions of Vladimir Putin and Aliaksandr Lukashenka as war crimes and crimes against humanity' and for excluding 'Russia from the G20 and other multilateral cooperative organisations, such as the UN Human Rights Council, Interpol, the World Trade Organization, UNESCO'.[145] Parliament repeated its support for (more) sanctions and the need to fight against the

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[139] The Commission nominated its former Secretary General David O'Sullivan on 13 December 2022, who convened the first meeting of the sanctions forum in February 2023.

[140] European Parliament recommendation of 16 September 2021 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the direction of EU-Russia political relations, in particular preamble A and B and points 1(b), 1(l), 1(q) and 1(y).

[141] Resolution of 16 December 2021 on the situation at the Ukrainian border and in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine, points 2 and 3.

[142] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, inter alia, points 1, 8, 15, 16, 17, 42 and 45.

[143] Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, in particular points 2 and 121.

[144] Resolution of 24 March 2022 on the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, points 22 and 24.

[145] Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation, points 3 and 11.

impunity of war crimes several times, underscoring in January 2023 the need 'for the creation of a special tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine'.[146]

In November 2022, Parliament called for the EU and its Member States 'to develop an EU legal framework for the designation of states as sponsors of terrorism and states which use means of terrorism' and 'consider adding the Russian Federation to such an EU list'.[147] In later resolutions, Parliament emphasised the need to 'ensure comprehensive monitoring of EU sanctions and their implementation',[148] and asked the Commission 'for an impact assessment on the effectiveness of sanctions on the Russian war effort and on the circumvention of sanctions'.[149] It dedicated a resolution to forced deportation of Ukrainian civilians and forced adoption of Ukrainian children in Russia in September 2022.[150]

Parliament also addressed the situation of Russians dissenting from their current government. In April 2022, it condemned 'the Russian regime's domestic repression, which has worsened in the wake of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine' and called for the release of opposition leader – and laureate of Parliament's Sakharov Prize – Alexei Navalny.[151] One year later, it drew attention to his health condition, as well as that of Russo-British opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza.[152] In October 2022, Parliament urged 'Member States to issue humanitarian visas to Russian citizens in need of protection, such as those subjected to political persecution',[153] and demanded that they 'protect and grant asylum to Russians and Belarusians being persecuted for speaking out against or protesting the war, as well as Russian and Belarusian deserters and conscientious objectors'.[154] Although Parliament called for 'further action to continue the international isolation of the Russian Federation, including with regard to Russia's membership of international organisations and bodies such as the United Nations Security Council',[155] it also called 'on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to start reflecting on how to engage with Russia in the future and how to assist it with a successful transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic country that renounces revisionist and imperialistic policies' and, in that respect, considered that 'a first step would be for the EU institutions to engage with Russian democratic leaders and civil society and mobilise support for their agenda for a democratic Russia' and supported 'the creation of a democracy hub for Russia, hosted by the European Parliament'.[156]

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[146] In, for instance: Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act; Resolution of 19 May 2022 on the fight against impunity for war crimes in Ukraine; Resolution of 19 January 2023 on the establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine, in particular point 3; Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit.

[147] Resolution of 23 November 2022 on recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism, point 4.

[148] Recommendation of 8 June 2022 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, point 1 bd.

[149] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 20.

[150] Resolution of 15 September 2022 on human rights violations in the context of the forced deportation of Ukrainian civilians to and the forced adoption of Ukrainian children in Russia.

[151] Resolution of 7 April 2022 on increasing repression in Russia, including the case of Alexey Navalny, points 1 and 7.

[152] Resolution of 20 April 2023 of 20 April 2023 on repression in Russia, in particular the cases of Vladimir Kara-Murza and Aleksei Navalny.

[153] Resolution of 6 October 2022 on Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine, point 12.

[154] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 30.

[155] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 21.

[156] Resolution of 6 October 2022 on Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine, point 20.

Expert views

Sanctions and international justice

Starting from the current situation, in which the EU has adopted several packages of sanctions against Russia, experts first considered the effectiveness of these sanctions. Several experts noted that there are indications that Russia is evading certain sanctions. They mentioned evasion in the field of financing and banking with the help of cryptocurrency and circumvention of sanctions in trade relations involving Türkiye. Türkiye was, for instance, said to buy Russian raw materials for metallurgy at reduced prices and, after transforming them into 'rolled products', export them to the EU as Turkish products. The EU should therefore develop an extended alliance with third countries on applying sanctions to Russia, promising them support if applying sanctions caused them harm in terms of, for instance, their economy, energy or food supply. In that respect, the EU could take (more) responsibility for Ukrainian grain exports to countries in need.

Experts furthermore noted that, although EU institutions are responsible for the preparation, review and renewal of sanctions, the EU lacks a mandate to monitor the impact of the sanctions. Implementation and enforcement of sanctions is left to the Member States. Experts therefore suggested introducing a common framework for an impact assessment of EU sanctions, better monitoring of sanctions, and measures against circumventing sanctions. The abovementioned EU envoy for sanctions and the sanctions coordinators forum (partly) address these issues. Some experts proposed further concrete measures, such as introducing tighter regulations on the use and tracing of cryptocurrencies, further limiting Russia's ability to finance the war, a secondary sanctions mechanism that would close any loopholes, and expanding human rights sanctions to all judges, police officers and prison directors involved in Russian political prisoners' cases.

As regards international justice for war crimes, experts considered that, although the arrest warrant of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is difficult to enforce, since Russia is not part of the Rome Statute, it nevertheless sends a powerful signal to the Russian regime that war crimes will be neither forgotten nor ignored by the international community.[157] Similarly, although the International Court of Justice (ICJ) may not be able to impose compliance, and Russia may not be willing to accept its judgments, its involvement nevertheless sends an important legal signal. Experts therefore suggested that prosecution of war crimes should be carried out through a special tribunal, even with an uncooperative Russia. The EU should continue to cooperate closely with the Ukrainian State Prosecution Office on investigative work, documentation and subsequent prosecution of Russian war crimes to that end. One expert suggested that EU diplomacy might possibly even lead to some form of apologies from the Russian state, if a more cooperative regime leads the country.

Internal developments in Russia

As expressed in the scenarios, experts held various views about internal developments in Russia during and after the war. Several experts considered a form of collapse of the Russian state likely. They noted that this would most probably not be as orderly as the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet

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[157] On 17 March 2023, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants against Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova for being allegedly responsible for 'the war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation'. According to Article 5 of the Rome Statute – the founding document of the ICC – the court's jurisdiction is limited to 'the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole', namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. The Rome Statute has currently been ratified by 123 countries. None of the five countries discussed in Section 2.7 of this study (Russia, Belarus, Türkiye, China and the US) have ratified the Statute. See: ICC factsheet 'Joining the International Criminal Court', consulted on 9 July 2023.

Union, but rather take the form of an 'implosion' of governance structures in certain parts of the Russian Federation, leading to chaos, partial secession and a redistribution of political power. Some spoke of Russia as a future failed state. One expert noted that Western experts tend to look at a possible dissolution of the Russian Federation mainly through the lens of the experiences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, focusing on the risks for the governance of Russia's nuclear weapons (which led to the Budapest Memorandum in 1994) and considering it as irreversible. However, according to this expert, if one compares it, for instance, to the events after the Russian revolution of 1917, dissolution could also be a temporary phase involving internal war, resulting in a new Russian entity that would be rather stable.

Most experts considered the transition of Russia into a Western-style democracy rather unlikely. They warned that positive experiences of transforming the communist regimes of central and eastern Europe into democracies and subsequent post-Cold War EU and NATO enlargements could not be projected to Russia. Russian political history and culture are different and regime change might take several forms, but not necessarily Western-style democracy. Experts therefore suggested to define any successor regime to the current one in terms of its attitude towards the West and to consider the options of a cooperative or an antagonistic regime. Several experts spoke in this respect about the effects a Russian defeat in the war would have on the population. There might be feelings of relief that the war is over, but also feelings of trauma and humiliation, similar to or even stronger than after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This could result in 'inner immigration' and focus on personal recovery (one expert spoke of a lost generation) or in renewed nationalism supporting a new autocratic regime.

Most experts suggested that the West should start to discuss more generally how it would see a possible 'end-game picture' for Russia, also in societal terms. Although most experts considered the chances for a real democratic transformation of Russia after the war to be rather low, there could nevertheless be a window of opportunity in the immediate post-war period to realise certain societal changes in Russia, leading to an end of Russian imperialism and a normalisation of relations with countries in its neighbourhood. EU institutions and Member States should start working on scenarios for using such a window of opportunity, for instance with exiled Russians who oppose the war. Any strategy in this direction should also include the work of historians and non-governmental organisations in order to – as one expert put it – 'de-ideologise and de-colonialise the writing of Russian history'. Another expert said that Ukrainians – and also people in the EU – should not ostracise the Russian population as such, but keep the door open for potential future cooperation.

Future EU-Russia relations

Some experts considered that, whereas cooperation with the current Russian government is not possible and supposing there might be a window of opportunity for political change later, the EU could try to engage with the Russian opposition. This could, for instance, consist of providing finance, legal support or an emergency exit out of the country to Russian activists from the political opposition, human rights defenders or journalists. They acknowledged that this may be difficult due to the loose structure of this opposition, and some experts warned that such cooperation might backfire, because the Russian government will consider this foreign influence in internal affairs and use it as an argument for taking further measures against opposition groups. A few experts therefore considered two alternative ways for the EU to exercise influence on opinions in Russia. On the one hand, the EU could support the Russian opposition outside Russia, for instance through political foundations establishing Russian discussion platforms on Russia's future, enhancing the creation of a united opposition coalition. In that respect, the EU could develop a smarter EU visa policy for Russian emigrants, in order to attract people that could work on these goals. On the other hand, the

EU could develop targeted information programmes for people inside Russia, for instance through broadcasting with free VPN access or influencing Russian media with pro-Western messages. These experts acknowledged that this would be a paradigm shift compared to the rather reluctant existing European policies, which tend to refrain from active interventions.

Some experts suggested that the EU could use its sanctions policy as leverage over Russia with the aim of ending the war. The EU, possibly with the US and other partners, could have leverage over Russian political and economic elites by offering a (partial) lifting of sanctions in exchange for significant financial contributions (for instance, as a percentage of their wealth) to Ukrainian reconstruction and the signature of a public manifesto against the war. One expert suggested the EU might have such leverage even over the Russian government, as the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had signalled that Russia is ready for peace negotiations if sanctions are lifted.[158] In any case, experts emphasised, in order to exercise effective diplomacy, the EU should speak with one voice and coordinate its positions. As acknowledged earlier, Russia most likely does not consider the EU to be a credible mediator in the war, due to its strong support for Ukraine and Ukraine's EU candidate status. In all scenarios, even one like Devastated Europe, experts considered it important for the EU to keep some lines of communication open with Russia, also via the US, and engage with Russia's friends, including China, or with countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Several experts expressed views on future security relations between the EU and Russia. For the short term, they considered it important to strengthen the military and economic position of the Baltic countries, to reduce their vulnerability to Russia or Belarus. They furthermore considered the EU should enhance its own military capacities, regardless of the outcome of the war. For the long term, experts suggested different scenarios, depending on Russia's future government. If there is a more cooperative Russian government, the EU could consider making Russia part of a wider pan-European security architecture, binding it more strongly to the EU politically, economically and in terms of security. A few experts considered that, if Russia wishes to reintegrate with Europe (not only the EU), new continent-wide institutions would have to be developed. NATO, the EU and the OSCE would not be able to provide such a framework, because they are 'all children of the Cold War' and cannot sufficiently provide the perception of security that all nations on the continent will desire. Possibly, the European Political Community could include Russia in the future. If Russia continues to have an antagonistic government, experts suggested that the EU will have to adapt to meet a generation-long challenge. In such a case, some experts suggested that the EU could mobilise its diplomatic resources to support Ukraine's claim that Russia should no longer have a seat in the UN Security Council. In military terms, and if Russia lost the war, a few experts suggested that the EU, in cooperation with the US and NATO, should consider options to reduce the size of the Russian army and possibly aim for the denuclearisation of Russia. Discussions on such long-term perspectives could already start at the level of think tanks and political groups, according to these experts.

2.7.2. Belarus

Belarus was, in 2009, one of the six countries with whom the EU created an 'Eastern Partnership'. However, EU relations with the partnership countries diverged soon afterwards. The EU could conclude an Association Agreement with three countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and a comprehensive and enhanced partnership agreement with Armenia. Relations with Azerbaijan and Belarus, however, did not develop substantially. The political and human rights situation in Belarus

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[158] On 30 April 2022, it was reported that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov had said that lifting of sanctions was part of peace talks with Ukraine, although Ukraine denied this. Peace talks stalled soon after and, at a press conference on 18 January 2023, Lavrov insisted on the unfair and illegal nature of sanctions without suggesting that lifting them might change Russian actions in or towards Ukraine.

did not allow close association with the EU and, particularly since the flawed elections of 2015, the EU followed a policy of 'critical engagement'.[159]

When Belarusian President Lukashenko claimed to have won a sixth term in office in the 2020 presidential elections, which had been preceded by strong campaigning by opposition candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and protests against the regime, the country experienced more protests and repression. Therefore, since October 2020 the EU has progressively imposed restrictive measures against Belarus for what it called unacceptable violence against peaceful protesters, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and detentions. The EU did not recognise the results of the elections in Belarus. In response, Belarus suspended its participation in the Eastern Partnership in June 2021. EU relations with Belarus further deteriorated following its role in the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. The EU condemned Belarus' involvement in Russia's invasion and adopted a variety of measures in 2022, including individual and economic sanctions.[160]

European Parliament resolutions

In March and April 2022, Parliament called for the adoption and application of similar sanctions (to those applied to Russia) to Belarus. Sanctions on Belarus should 'mirror those introduced against Russia in order to close any loopholes allowing Putin to use Lukashenka's aid to circumvent sanctions'. Concretely, Parliament stressed 'that all assets belonging to Russian officials or the oligarchs associated, their proxies and strawmen in Belarus linked to Lukashenka's regime, should be seized and EU visas revoked as part of a complete and immediate ban on golden passports, visas and residence permits'. It also called 'for the EU and its Member States to establish a global anti-corruption sanctions mechanism and to swiftly adopt targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for high-level corruption in Belarus'. In 2023, Parliament came back to the issue and called 'for the restrictive measures against Belarus to be strengthened'.[161]

Parliament furthermore addressed the application of international justice to the political and military leadership of Belarus regarding its responsibility in the war. In January 2023, Parliament deemed that 'the special international tribunal must have jurisdiction to investigate Aliaksandr Lukashenka and the political and military leadership in Belarus, as an enabling state from the territory of which and with the logistic support of which the Russian Federation is committing its war of aggression against Ukraine, as it falls under the description of a crime of aggression according to Article 8 bis of the Rome Statute'. One month later, Parliament underlined 'that President Putin, other Russian leaders and their Belarusian allies who planned and gave the relevant orders to start this war of aggression against Ukraine must be held accountable for the crime of aggression they have committed; [and] insist[ed] further that those accomplices enabling the Russian regime must also be held accountable for their role in Russia's war of aggression'.[162]

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[159] For more information on EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries, see, for instance: M. Damen, Diversifying Unity – how Eastern Partnership countries develop their economy, governance and identity in a geopolitical context, EPRS, European Parliament, November 2019.

[160] For more information on recent developments in EU-Belarus relations, see, for instance, EU relations with Belarus on the Council website.

[161] Parliament's position on sanctions against Belarus, quoted here, was expressed in its Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, point 17, its Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation, points 19, 21 and 28, and its Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 26.

[162] Resolution of 19 January 2023 on the establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine, point 7, and Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 10.

Parliament called several times to support anti-war movements, civil society and human rights defenders, mostly doing so for these groups in Russia and Belarus at the same time. This was, for instance, the case in its resolution of 1 March 2022, in which it also called for issuing emergency visas to people belonging to these groups and at risk of a severe crackdown by the Belarusian or Russian regimes.[163] Almost one year later, Parliament reiterated 'its solidarity and support for the courageous people in Russia and Belarus protesting Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine' and demanded 'that Member States protect and grant asylum to Russians and Belarusians being persecuted for speaking out against or protesting the war, as well as Russian and Belarusian deserters and conscientious objectors'.[164]

In November 2022, Parliament adopted a resolution specifically on the repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus. It recalled Parliament's non-recognition of the 2020 election results, reiterated support for the democratic opposition, demanded the release of political prisoners, and welcomed various forms of support for a democratic Belarus by the EU and its Member States.[165] In March 2023, Parliament adopted another resolution on repression against the people of Belarus, in which it reminded 'the Belarusian authorities of their obligations to respect the human rights of all Belarusian citizens' and condemned sentences given to opposition leaders and the persecution of trade unions and national minority groups. The resolution contains one point on the broader political relationship between Russia and Belarus, in which Parliament 'notes with concern the continuing so-called integration of Russia and Belarus in several fields, which amounts to de facto occupation, and in particular the progressive militarisation of Belarus and the region, including through the presence of Russian troops in Belarus, which represents a challenge for the security and stability of the European continent, and which goes against the will of the Belarusian people'.[166]

Expert views

Belarus as an opponent of the EU

Experts noted that Russia cannot afford to lose Belarus as an ally in the war because of its strategic importance as a transit route to Ukraine for military equipment and the armed forces. Even if the current Belarusian president were to be removed from power due to a public uprising or an internal coup, Russia would try to make sure that the new government was also Russia-friendly. Belarus will also continue to be important for Russia as a buffer zone with the West, and therefore, in a Frozen Conflict or Cold War scenario, Belarus risks disappearing behind the new iron curtain on the Russian side. In such a scenario, the EU should strengthen its borders with Belarus. Some experts therefore concluded that Belarus should be treated as a participant in the war and should be openly denounced as such. They considered that the EU could expand sanctions against the current regime and keep Russian and Belarusian sanctions regimes aligned. One expert stated that 'whatever retribution is meted to Russia, it should also apply to Belarus'. However, other experts considered that EU sanctions against Belarus could push the country even more towards Russia and could therefore be counter-productive. In the event of an escalating war leading to instability in Russia and Belarus (Devastated Europe scenario), parts of Belarus could join the war on the Ukrainian side.

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[163] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, points 41 and 44.

[164] Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 30.

[165] Resolution of 24 November 2022 on the continuing repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus.

[166] Resolution of 15 March 2023 on further repression against the people of Belarus, in particular the cases of Andrzej Pozcobut and Ales Bialiatski, in particular points 3-9 and 13.

Because Russia would consider this an existential threat, it might call on other countries – such as China – for military support and/or ultimately escalate the war towards a nuclear one.

Belarus as a future partner of the EU

Apart from such negative scenarios, several experts called for keeping the option of positive developments in Belarus open and also taking action in the direction of a Fair Stability scenario. A change in government in Belarus is most likely if Russia is defeated in Ukraine, because Russia would no longer have the capacity to intervene. If this materialises, opportunities for further EU engagement with Belarus would emerge. These experts therefore considered that the EU should increase its support to Belarusian civil society and students coming to the EU, and continue to support an inclusive and large democratic opposition. This would signal to the Belarusian people that the EU supports future democratic changes and demonstrate the EU's commitment to European values and EU leadership. The EU should not forget that, unlike in Russia, there is potential for democratic transition in Belarus, considering the massive protests against the outcome of the presidential elections in August 2020. These experts concretely suggested that the EU could help the Belarusian opposition cabinet to create a blueprint for good governance and transparent reform, delivering a clear position on Russian aggression in Ukraine and defining a vision of future relations with Russia. The EU could also seek opportunities to create informal but trusted relations between a Belarusian opposition in exile and the Ukrainian government. Ukrainian success in the war, in post-war reconstruction and in European integration, would send a strong signal to Belarusian citizens that close ties with the EU bring more benefits than maintaining a 'neutral' or openly pro-Russian position. If regime change happened, the Eastern Partnership framework could be used as a first platform to support Belarus.

2.7.3. Türkiye

The role and position of Türkiye in the war between Russia and Ukraine is difficult to assess.[167] On the one hand, Türkiye blocked the access of Russian warships to the Black Sea as early as 28 February 2022[168] and voted in favour of the UN resolution of 2 March 2022 condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.[169] On the other hand, Türkiye did not impose sanctions on Russia, allegedly circumvented EU sanctions[170] and initially blocked NATO membership for Finland and Sweden.[171] The non-alignment of Türkiye with EU foreign policy regarding sanctions is not only problematic for the sanctions themselves, but also contradicts Türkiye's status as a candidate for EU accession. Instead, Türkiye has chosen its own independent position in the conflict, sometimes acting as a

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[167] For articles giving an overview of Türkiye's position in the war, see, for instance: B. Jenkins, Consequences of the war in Ukraine: two areas of contention – Türkiye and the Balkans, TheRANDBlog, 6 March 2023; S. Ganaptay, Unpacking Turkey's non-binary Ukraine war policy, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 7 March 2023; R. Suleymanov, Trouble in paradise? New disputes cloud Turkey-Russia relations, Carnegie Endowment, 17 July 2023.

[168] Türkiye did so by invoking Article 19 of the 1936 Montreux Convention, which allows barring warships of designated belligerent states from transiting the Turkish Straits. In an article on Lawfare on 14 June 2022, Adam Aliano points to alleged circumvention of the blockade by using merchant vessels for transporting military goods.

[169] For a world map showing voting results on the UN resolution of 2 March 2022 by country, see: 10 points synthétique sur le vote a l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies on the website of Le Grand Continent.

[170] On Türkiye's non-alignment with EU sanctions, see A. Caprile and A. Delivorias, EU sanctions on Russia: Overview, impact, challenges, EPRS, European Parliament, March 2023, p. 7. In response to criticism on circumvention, Türkiye published a list of banned foreign goods that could no longer be transited to Russia; see Euractiv, Türkiye halts transit of sanctioned good to Russia, 20 March 2023.

[171] During a visit by Finnish President Niinistö on 17 March 2023, Turkish President Erdogan ended his resistance to Finland joining NATO, with Finland subsequently joining on 4 April 2023. Ahead of the EU-NATO Summit in Vilnius on 10 July 2023, Erdogan also agreed to no longer block Sweden's NATO membership in return for Swedish assurances that it would combat terrorism and not support certain Kurdish groups.

mediator, particularly when forging the agreement on the export of grain via the Black Sea[172] and facilitating prisoner swaps between Russia and Ukraine.

European Parliament resolutions

On 18 January 2023, Parliament expressed its 'appreciation for Türkiye's condemnation of the unjustified Russian invasion and military aggression against Ukraine and for its role as facilitator between Ukraine and Russia, including through its vital contribution to the important deal to export Ukrainian grain'. At the same time, it expressed 'serious concern at the continuing lack of alignment with EU sanctions against Russia, particularly on the free movement of goods derived from the current custom union and against the backdrop of its recently strengthened trade and financial relations with Russia'. Furthermore, and also linked to the accession process, Parliament stressed that 'Türkiye's geopolitical role does not override the serious shortcomings in the human rights situation in the country, which remain the main obstacle for progress in EU-Türkiye relations'.[173]

Several resolutions address the circumvention of sanctions, without specifically mentioning Türkiye. In April 2022, Parliament called 'for the establishment of a clear plan of action vis-à-vis non-EU countries that are facilitating the evasion of sanctions by the Russian Federation', and called in this context for 'financial institutions in non-EU countries that are engaged in or enable money laundering to be blacklisted'.[174] In February 2023, Parliament condemned 'those third countries that have helped Russia and Belarus to circumvent the imposed sanctions and asks the Commission and the Member States to consider measures against those third countries'.[175]

Türkiye was mentioned as one among several countries, and not specifically related to the war in Ukraine, spreading disinformation. In March 2022, Parliament said it was 'deeply concerned about the spread of foreign state propaganda, mainly originating in Moscow and Beijing, as well as in Ankara'. It furthermore expressed concern over 'the attempts of the Turkish Government to influence people with Turkish roots with the aim of using the diaspora as a relay for Ankara's positions and to divide European societies'. Parliament observed that foreign interference can also be pursued through influence in and the instrumentalisation of religious institutes, mentioning in this respect 'Turkish Government influence through mosques in France and Germany'.[176]

Addressing the overall EU-Turkiye relationship, Parliament called for the EU to 'urgently define an overall strategy for its short-, medium- and long-term relations with Türkiye, combining all aspects and policies, in order to foster a more stable, credible and predictable partnership, given that Türkiye plays a key role in the region and taking into account the country's continuous destabilising activities in the Western Balkans, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and South Caucasus and its ongoing democratic backsliding'.[177]

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[172] The agreement was welcomed by EU HR/VP Josep Borrell on 22 July 2022.

[173] Resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022, point 127.

[174] Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation, points 9 and 23.

[175] Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 27.

[176] Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, points 41, 122 and 133.

[177] Resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022, point 128.

Expert views

Similar to EU relations with Belarus, but to a different extent, experts' views ranged from critical views of the country, implying a tough stance, to more positive views, implying cooperation. One expert summarised the dilemma by stating that 'the problem is that Türkiye is trying to maintain more or less friendly relations with all parties of the conflict'. Experts put this in the broader perspective of Turkish foreign policy, considering it has always been very pragmatic and aimed at Turkish interests and 'the maximum benefit for itself'.

Türkiye as a spoiler

Critical views of Türkiye included the reproach that it circumvents economic sanctions against Russia, for instance in trade in steel and hydrocarbons (see Russia section). Circumvention could also take the form of replacing EU exports to Russia, for instance of fruits and vegetables. One expert suggested that the presence of a substantial Russian expat community in Türkiye played a role in its positioning towards Russia. Experts also expressed concern over the fact that Türkiye is, on the one hand, a member of NATO, but that, on the other hand, it maintains a complex security relationship with Russia in the Black Sea region.[178] Türkiye's recent rapprochement with Syria resulted from a Russian request, according to one expert. Türkiye's blocking of Sweden's NATO accession was also viewed critically. One expert therefore suggested that the EU should 'break a taboo' and apply secondary sanctions to Türkiye with clear red lines as to what would be allowed and what not (for instance, weapons or dual components) in its relations with Russia. A few experts suggested that NATO could apply more political pressure to Türkiye.

Experts also considered whether the EU accession process could help in aligning Türkiye more with EU and Western values and views regarding the war. Critical experts deemed this a futile effort, with one of them stating that 'nothing can be achieved under the current regime of President Erdogan, which goes against all accession criteria and has instrumentalised the EU for internal policy'.

Türkiye as a partner of the EU

Nevertheless, other experts were more positive and considered that the accession process with Türkiye could start moving again in the future, pointing to the fact that the new enlargement methodology envisages that a country may advance or backslide during the process. They suggested that the EU could commit to particular Turkish interests in return for fulfilling EU conditions. The EU could, for instance, make progress on the customs union and visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens, enhance youth mobility and mobility of researchers, or increase its contribution to the post-earthquake reconstruction, while conditioning the use of these funds with reforms. This would increase the positive visibility of the EU among Turkish citizens while making it clear that assistance and funds are dependent on the regime's willingness to abide by the rule of law and human rights. Similarly, the EU could offer Türkiye cooperation on trading in energy (gas and electricity) on the condition that Türkiye strictly apply EU sanctions against Russia.

In security terms, several experts considered that, if Russia started to lose the war (as in the Fair Stability and Devastated Europe scenarios), or disappeared behind a new iron curtain (as in the Cold War II scenario), there is a high probability that Türkiye would join the 'winning side' and take a more constructive approach in its relations with the EU, because it would bring the country more benefits than joining the Russian side. One expert spoke of Türkiye taking a 'wait and see' approach to the war and its outcome, although it might have a slight preference for Ukraine winning the war. Some

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[178] See, for instance: D. Isachenko and G. Swistek, The Black Sea as Mare Clausum, SWP comment, 21 June 2023.

experts recalled that Türkiye has, in the past, supported Ukraine's bid for NATO membership and that Türkiye would like to have a share in the reconstruction of Ukraine. Some experts expressed appreciation of Türkiye as a mediator facilitating the deal on the export of grain from Ukraine and mentioned that the country had also mediated in the exchange of prisoners of war between Ukraine and Russia. Positive experts therefore considered that Türkiye, as a NATO member, an active actor in the hydrocarbon trade, a neighbour to important South Caucasus and Middle Eastern countries, and an increasingly important regional power, could become an important partner for the EU, for instance in energy, security, foreign, economic and migration policies. In a Frozen Conflict scenario, in which Türkiye could play a role as a potential mediator, the EU might have less leverage over Türkiye, but EU-Türkiye relations would nevertheless continue to be important.

2.7.4. China

Similarly to Türkiye, the position of China in the war is not easy to assess and China openly presents itself as a mediator, although many in the West perceive China as being much closer to Russia than to Ukraine.[179] China abstained in the vote on the UN resolution of 2 March 2022 condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, together with 34 other countries, all of them in Central Asia and the Global South.[180]

Shortly after announcing a peace initiative at the Munich Security Conference of February 2023, China published a 12-point paper called 'China's position on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis'.[181] The paper was soon labelled as a 'peace plan' and received mixed reactions.[182] Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Moscow in March 2023 and had a phone call with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy in April. Special envoy for Eurasian affairs Li Hui visited Kyiv, Warsaw, Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and Moscow for exploratory talks in May 2023, without any concrete results.[183]

In March 2023, Commission President von der Leyen brought forward the notion of 'de-risking' EU relations with China.[184] This concept was considered mostly to refer to diminishing the risk of strong economic dependencies on China. The European Council conclusions of 30 June 2023 reaffirmed the EU's approach towards China as simultaneously a partner, a competitor and a systemic rival, and called upon China to press Russia to stop its war of aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine.[185]

European Parliament resolutions

Of the resolutions related to the war in Ukraine, only a few mention China by name. Several resolutions refer indirectly to China, for instance as an alleged source of disinformation or as a country circumventing – or not applying – sanctions against Russia. On 1 March 2022, immediately after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Parliament did call explicitly on China, 'as a permanent

[179] Several articles on China's position in the war can be found on the website of Foreign Affairs; an interview with EU HR/VP Josep Borrell under the title 'We must learn to live with China – a conversation with Josep Borrell' of 6 June 2023 can be found on the website of Groupe d'Etudes geopolitiques.

[180] See the world map showing voting results on the UN resolution of 2 March 2022 by country, 10 points synthétique sur le vote a l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, on the website of Le Grand Continent.

[181] See: China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis, released on 24 February 2023, exactly one year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

[182] See, for instance: China urges Russia-Ukraine cease-fire and peace talks, published on DW.com on 24 February 2023.

[183] On the visits of Li Hui, see, for instance: Reuters on the visit to Kyiv, China observers on the visit to Warsaw, the EEAS on the visit to Brussels and the Moscow Times on the visit to Moscow.

[184] See speech by President von der Leyen on EU-China relations, 30 March 2023.

[185] European Council conclusions of 30 June 2023, points 30 and 33.

member of the UN Security Council, to fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and to use its leverage on Russia to bring an end to the current aggression, which threatens international stability'.[186]

That same month, Parliament addressed the issue of disinformation spread by a number of countries, mentioning China several times, although not necessarily linked to the war in Ukraine. Parliament expressed, for example, deep concern 'about the spread of foreign state propaganda, mainly originating in Moscow and Beijing, as well as in Ankara, which is translated into local languages […] or Chinese Communist Party-sponsored media content disguised as journalism, and distributed with newspapers', maintaining 'that such channels cannot be considered real media and therefore should not enjoy the same rights and protection as democratic media.' The same resolution also recalled the 'Chinese counter-sanctions against five MEPs, Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, three MPs from EU Member States, the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the EU, two European scholars and two European think tanks in Germany and Denmark respectively'. Parliament encouraged 'the EU and its Member States to deepen cooperation with Taiwan in countering interference operations and disinformation campaigns from malign third countries' and supported 'intensified cooperation between relevant European and Taiwanese government agencies, NGOs and think tanks in the field'.[187] On 18 January 2023, Parliament specifically called 'for a strong EU strategic communication and outreach campaign to African countries in order to counter the harmful narratives, in particular those being spread in the region by the Russian Federation and PRC'.[188]

In April 2022, Parliament called for 'the establishment of a clear plan of action vis-à-vis non-EU countries that are facilitating the evasion of sanctions by the Russian Federation' and 'in this context, for any financial institutions in non-EU countries that are engaged in or enable money laundering to be blacklisted', which might also apply to China.[189]

Expert views

Geopolitics

Experts emphasised that the EU and its Member States should understand that China sees its policy regarding the war in Ukraine as part of a wider geostrategic competition (or systemic rivalry) with the US and the West. Its activity towards Russia, in particular the level of coordination and efforts to adjust the international rules-based order, are part of Xi Jinping's vision of a 'New Era'.[190] In that respect, experts noted that, although China is presenting itself as a neutral party that is willing to mediate in the war between Russia and Ukraine, it is in fact increasingly strengthening its ties with Russia. Experts pointed in particular to the three-day visit by Xi Jinping to Putin in March 2023, and to the Chinese government allegedly considering supplying military aid to Russia, as reported by US

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[186] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, point 47.

[187] Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, points 41, 125, 127, 128, 131, 132 and 152.

[188] Resolution of 18 January 2023 on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2022, point 163.

[189] Resolution of 7 April 2022 on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation, points 9 and 23.

[190] On the Chinese notion of a New Era, see, for instance: H. Jones, Forging the 'New Era': the temporal politics of Xi Jinping, The Diplomat, 1 October 2022.

intelligence.[191] Some considered that, if Russia tried to further dismantle the European security architecture, China would be likely to support this. Experts concluded that its closeness to Russia excludes China as a credible mediator between Russia and Ukraine, not only in the eyes of Ukraine and its Western allies, but also in the eyes of some Asian countries, such as Japan and South Korea. Therefore, some experts considered that the EU should closely follow security developments in Asia, particularly potential escalation of tensions in the Taiwan Strait or in the South China Sea, in which the US might become involved. If this were to happen, the EU would experience the economic consequences or, in a worst case scenario, those of military conflict.

Experts further noted that China's projected neutral position and readiness to mediate also seem to serve as a message of trustworthiness and reassurance to its (economic) partners in the Global South. They considered that it would not be easy for the EU to formulate a good response to China's efforts. If the EU dismissed the 2023 Chinese 12-point position paper, the EU would create the impression that it is unwilling to engage in peace efforts, while China does. On the other hand, if the EU endorsed the paper, it would support Chinese narratives on the war. Nevertheless, the EU should also consider the positive fact that it concurs with China on the importance of not escalating the war, particularly when it comes to avoiding the use of nuclear weapons. Even if China is not a credible mediator in the eyes of the EU, it could still be a kind of 'back channel' for EU communications with Russia, according to one expert. Furthermore, the EU could warn China not to provide (military) support to Russia, although the EU should not overestimate its influence on China's foreign policy line towards Russia. A few experts considered that the EU should forcefully show that it takes action against circumvention of sanctions against Russia. One expert considered that the EU should 'break a taboo' and follow the US by applying secondary sanctions to China[192] and that the EU should, in general, coordinate its approach towards China more with the US. Another expert considered, on the contrary, that, although the EU should form a credible deterrent to China providing weapons and ammunition to Russia, it should remain detached from the current US-China confrontation, for 'fear of fueling a self-fulfilling prophecy'. Nonetheless, according to this expert, China should be in no doubt that, if there were a conflagration, the EU would side with the US. Finally, one expert considered that Russia is likely to become weaker because of the war and the EU should therefore be prepared for an increasing role of China as a mediator and/or global actor.

Geo-economics

Experts noted that China's position on the Russian invasion has had a limited direct impact on the EU's trade policy towards China. Whereas the EU has been hit by an energy crisis and inflation and is facing US domestic subsidies challenging its competitiveness, they noted that the EU wants to maintain good economic relations with China. They also noted that, although the EU is economically dependent on China, China is equally dependent on the EU – even if it does not communicate this in such terms. China cannot afford to lose the world's two largest markets and trading partners: the EU and the US. This gives the US and particularly the EU a certain leverage over China and its geopolitical positioning. Such leverage is, however, likely to be limited, because China's economy is probably more resilient to the shock of economic decoupling from the EU than the other way round. Experts explained this by pointing to the fact that China's economy is still a developing one with more volatility and flexibility than most EU economies, and that, due to the influence of the state over China's economy, the government can better influence economic consequences.

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[191] In February 2023, ahead of the Munich Security Conference, US Secretary of State Blinken stated that 'new information' suggested that China would provide lethal support to Russia – which China denied.

[192] Under the 11th EU sanctions package, the EU is said to have already included three China-based companies in the sanctions list. See, for instance, Euronews of 21 June 2023.

Nevertheless, experts warned of a potentially considerable indirect impact, if China's policy towards Russia, its economic conflict with the US (sanctions) or even its possible involvement in a war in Asia (Taiwan) forced the EU to review its relations with China. In such a case, the EU would be forced to decouple from strong economic ties and dependencies on China. To be prepared for such a situation, the EU should start 'de-risking' its relations with China, a term that experts noted is not yet fully defined. Independently of whether the EU uses the term de-risking, decoupling or reducing dependencies, according to these experts, this would increase third market competition, since both the EU and China would in such a case start looking for alternative global value chains and end markets. If EU-China political relations turned sour because of geopolitics, experts considered that the EU might follow the US in imposing sanctions on Chinese industries directly or indirectly involved in military production, whether linked to the war in Ukraine or a future war in Asia.

Experts therefore concluded that reducing the EU's economic dependence on China might be the main challenge for the years to come. They considered that the EU should strongly reduce its reliance on China for strategic components and materials, while maintaining trade relations. The EU could do this by further developing its own industrial strategy, by engaging in a geo-economic dialogue with the Global South and by increasing trade ties with specific countries in the Asia-Pacific area. The EU should also communicate the option of using market access as leverage to China and have the willingness to apply it if needed.

As mentioned in Section 2.4 on the reconstruction of Ukraine, experts considered that China is likely to have an interest in participating in the reconstruction; Ukraine was already part of China's Belt and Road initiative as a gateway to Europe. Apart from investing directly in Ukraine, Chinese companies might also apply for tenders financed by European money transferred for the reconstruction. To what extent China would participate in the reconstruction would mostly depend on Ukraine's decisions. If Ukraine considered that China's relationship with Russia was a threat to its national security, it might reduce or even block China's participation in the reconstruction process. One expert took the view that this could happen rather soon and pointed in particular to the risk of China 'grabbing' good agricultural land in Ukraine on the promise of de-mining it.

2.7.5. The US

While the EU has had its Association Agreement with Ukraine since 2014 (which has been fully effective since 2017), the US and Ukraine signed a Charter on Strategic Partnership on 10 November 2021, a bit more than three months before the Russian invasion. Its four core principles are: support for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; a shared belief in democracy and the rule of law; cooperation on defence and security; and the notion that a strong Ukraine contributes to the security and prosperity of 'a Europe whole, free, democratic and at peace'. Its section on 'Security and Countering Russian Aggression' refers to the 2008 Bucharest summit declaration by NATO and reaffirms that the 'United States support Ukraine's right to decide its own future foreign policy course free from outside interference, including with respect to Ukraine's aspirations to join NATO'. In the section on economic transformation, both parties state that they intend to 'support efforts under the United States-Ukraine Trade and Investment Council to expand market access for goods and services and improve the investment environment'.[193]

The US has been imposing sanctions on Russia since 2014, which have become increasingly severe and far-reaching since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Sanctions have been coordinated with the EU and other allies and have targeted Russian assets, trade and the economic sectors

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[193] See: US-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, Sections I 'Principles of Cooperation', II 'Security and Countering Russian Aggression', and IV 'Economic Transformation' on the website of the US State Department.

involved in the war, as well as individuals and entities engaged in sanctioned activities.[194] According to the US State Department, by 14 June 2023 the US had invested approximately US$42 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, which includes a range of military equipment and weapons.[195] This makes the US the biggest provider of security support to Ukraine, followed by Germany, the UK and the EU, with more modest amounts between €5.5 billion and €7.5 billion each. US financial support to Ukraine amounted to €24.3 billion by 31 May 2023, which makes the US the second-largest donor of financial aid, after the EU (€27.3 billion) and before Japan (€5.59 billion) and the UK (€3.89 billion).[196] Apart from political support and various forms of aid, the US is also the coordinator of military support to Ukraine through the so-called 'Ramstein format' (see Section 2.2).

European Parliament resolutions

As is the case for China, only a few of Parliament's resolutions related to the war in Ukraine mention the US by name. However, several resolutions refer indirectly to the US as one of the 'international partners' or supporters of Ukraine. Most of these resolutions concern various forms of aid and assistance and finding a common stance on Russia, for instance through sanctions, addressing war crimes or relations inside international organisations, in particular the United Nations (UN). The role of the US in the reconstruction of Ukraine does not figure explicitly in Parliament's resolutions.

On 1 March 2022, Parliament called 'for the use of UN crisis resolution mechanisms' and called 'on the EU, its Member States and the United States to continue their diplomatic efforts to bring the war in Ukraine to an end', but at the same time welcomed 'the activation of NATO's defence plans as well as the activation of the NATO response forces and their partial deployment, in addition to troop deployments from NATO allies including the UK, the US and Canada, in order to strengthen the eastern flank and deter any further Russian aggression'.[197] On 9 March, Parliament underlined 'the importance of close cooperation with the US and other like-minded states for the modernisation of multilateral organisations' and welcomed 'the discussions between the US and the EU on multilateral export controls on cyber-surveillance items in the context of the Trade and Technology Council', while emphasising that 'the US is an important partner in countering foreign interference, disinformation campaigns and hybrid threats in those regions'.[198] On 2 February 2023, Parliament welcomed 'the decision of the governments of several EU Member States, the US, the UK and Canada to deliver modern main battle tanks to Ukraine', adding on 16 February that these countries should 'swiftly deliver on their pledge to provide Ukraine with modern battle tanks'.[199]

Expert views

US military support and security engagement

Experts expressed concern about opinion polls showing falling support among US citizens for financial and military aid to Ukraine and, in particular, about Republican politicians suggesting limits

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[194] For an overview of US sanctions, as of February 2023, see: M. Szczepanski, Russia's war on Ukraine: US sanctions, EPRS, European Parliament, February 2023. For later updates, see the websites of the US State Department and the US Treasury.

[195] See: US Department of State, US Security Cooperation with Ukraine, 14 June 2023, consulted on 24 June 2023.

[196] For regularly updated and comparative information on military, financial and humanitarian aid to Ukraine given by Western partners, see the Ukraine Support Tracker of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, consulted on 13 July 2023.

[197] Resolution of 1 March 2022 on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, points 19 and 25.

[198] Resolution of 9 March 2022 on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation, points 144, 147 and 151.

[199] Resolution of 2 February 2023 on the Preparation of the EU-UA Summit, point 7, and Resolution of 16 February 2023 on one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, point 18.

to the support the US could or should give to Ukraine. Experts considered that support to Ukraine is likely to become an issue in campaigns for the upcoming presidential and congressional elections in November 2024. Some experts therefore emphasised the need to speed up military assistance given by Western states – not only in view of the war itself, but also in view of a possible decline in US support after November 2024, particularly if President Biden loses to a Republican candidate. A few experts put this in the historical context of American isolationism, for instance in the period between World Wars I and II.

Several experts therefore saw an active role for the EU to work with the US Administration and Congress to maintain US support. Although some experts suggested that deepening EU-US economic relations could help to achieve this goal, they also stated that such cooperation does not guarantee consensus on foreign policy matters. These experts therefore also pointed to the need to work with the US in other frameworks, such as the Ramstein format, EU-NATO relations and the G7. One expert considered that EU-US cooperation on support to Ukraine should be deepened to make sure that it would depend less on individual politicians and become 'ingrained in the mind-set of people and institutions'.

A few experts pointed to the opposite scenario of a 'hawkish' US policy eager to defeat Russia 'once and for all', thereby risking escalation of the war. Such escalation could lead in the direction of a scenario like 'Devastated Europe', which, apart from devastation, also leads to a structural weakening of Russia and strengthening of the role of the US in Europe. Experts noted that various views exist in the US on how to approach the war and its possible outcome, including moderate views that aim to win the war through balanced steps of military support and increased EU-NATO cooperation. One expert suggested that the US might be open for a settlement in which Russia could keep Crimea if it left Donbas and settled for the trial of war crimes and payment of reparations. Several experts considered that limiting escalation of the war in Europe might be in the US interest, as the US might want to keep its main military power available for a possible conflict with China.

US investment and reconstruction

Experts acknowledged that the US is, besides the EU, the biggest financial supporter of Ukraine and that US companies have also made considerable investments in Ukraine. They considered, therefore, that US government agencies and private entities would play a leading role in the reconstruction of Ukraine.[200] As regards possible competition between EU and US companies for participation in the reconstruction, a few experts expressed the view that this was not likely to become a problem because of the vast amount of work ahead and because companies and countries might focus on particular sectors, leading to a kind of division of labour. Experts noted that, for the EU, the connection between reconstruction and accession is essential, including applying all EU Green Deal legislation in reconstruction projects (normative power). They noted at the same time that ongoing and possible future US investors may apply practices that do not necessarily align with EU views on sustainability. One expert pointed to substantial investment by big US companies from the agriculture and food sector in Ukrainian farmland, aimed at large-scale intensive production involving the use of pesticides and/or GMOs.[201] Other experts pointed to US investment in nuclear

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[200] This is, for instance, confirmed by President Zelenskyy's website, which indicates that he took advice from US investor Blackrock in September and December 2022 on how to organise Ukraine's reconstruction. The Ukrainian Ministry of Economy signed a Memorandum of Understanding for consultative assistance by Blackrock for developing a platform to attract private capital for investment in key sectors of the Ukrainian economy in November 2022.

[201] Even before the war, the privatisation and subsequent selling or leasing of Ukrainian farmland was the subject of political debate. A critical review of Ukraine's land reform shows involvement of not only US, but also EU and Ukrainian investors; see: F. Mousseau and E. Devillers, War and theft: the take-over of Ukraine's agricultural land, The Oakland

energy in Ukraine.[202] This may also be reflected at the political level by differing views between the EU and the US on the reconstruction process. Apart from differing views on sustainability, they could also differ on the role of digital companies and data policies.

A few experts suggested that this potential problem might be solved by deeper cooperation and policy coordination between the EU and the US, possibly involving a cross-sectoral 'EU-US package deal' including, for instance, a preferential trade agreement and cooperation on energy, climate and the economy. Such cooperation could counter visible tensions in EU-US relations on economic and industrial policies, such as those related to the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). It could also facilitate finding common political approaches towards third countries such as China or Türkiye and countries in Central Asia and the Western Balkans. Other experts considered that this problem would not occur, because, with a view to EU accession, Ukraine would orient its economic policies and legislative agenda more towards the EU than towards the US, thereby obliging all investors in the country – including American ones – to abide by EU laws and standards.

Institute, February 2023. During the war, US assistance has focused on improving Ukraine's export logistics, for instance though private sector partnerships to help Ukraine continue feeding the world.

[202] Before the war, the US signed an energy partnership with Ukraine in September 2021, which envisages the construction of five new nuclear power plants. During the war, according to the US Department of State, US aid is focusing on energy security by providing equipment and assisting Ukraine in integrating into the European electricity grid, ENTSO-E.

**EU relations with key countries –
Key policy considerations for EU action**

- EU-Russia relations: in the short term, working on implementation and non-circumvention of sanctions; in the medium term, facilitating international justice for war crimes; in the long term, preparing for different possible scenarios, ranging from a break-up of Russia, to dealing with an autocratic and antagonistic government, to cooperating with a more constructive Russia in a new pan-European security architecture. Developing relations with Russia's civil society and opposition.
- EU-Belarus relations: in the short term, applying and possibly expanding sanctions; in the medium term, facilitating international justice for complicity in war crimes; in the long term, preparing for either a continued autocratic and antagonistic government, or – possibly chaotic and violent – regime change; developing relations with Belarus' civil society and opposition and preparing options for future cooperation in the event of regime change.
- EU-Türkiye relations: in the short term, insisting on correct application of sanctions against Russia by indicating clear red lines for Türkiye-Russia relations; in the medium and long term, conditioning EU assistance and cooperation on alignment with accession criteria, taking into account Turkish interests and fostering visibility of EU assistance among Turkish citizens.
- EU-China relations: in the short term, warning China not to provide military support to Russia, while avoiding confrontation; in the medium and long term, understanding China's Russia policy as part of its systemic rivalry with the US and the West, and therefore 'de-risking' economic relations and reducing reliance on imports and developing an EU industrial strategy, combined with geo-economic dialogue with the Global South.
- EU-US relations: in the short term, working with the US Administration and Congress to maintain US support to Ukraine while avoiding the risk of escalation; in the medium and long term, bridging differing views between the EU and the US on the reconstruction process and sustainability, while emphasising the importance of approximating the reconstruction with EU legislation in view of Ukraine's EU accession. Being prepared for a shift in US priorities due to internal political changes.

3. Conclusions and way forward

3.1. Process: Overview and comparison

The three phases of the Strategic Foresight Conversation each had their specific merits and results. The **360° exploration** of the EU-Ukraine relationship (phase one) helped identify the main issues at stake and the key drivers of the relationship. It resulted in basic narratives from the working groups, which became building blocks for the four possible futures sketched out in the scenarios. Already in this phase, a distinction emerged between the development of the war and its possible consequences for the future European security architecture on the one hand, and possible integration between the EU and Ukraine through the process of EU enlargement and the reconstruction of Ukraine on the other hand. This resulted in the first considerations about the relations between the combined enlargement-reconstruction process and its consequences for the EU's implementation of the Green Deal and its open strategic autonomy.

The **scenario building process** (phase two) helped in creating long-term views of possible futures and looked more deeply at the role of non-EU countries as important international actors in the conflict and influencers of the post-conflict outcome. Consultations in phase two explored the role of five countries deemed to be of particular importance to the future of the region. These included two countries considered as 'aggressors' (Russia and Belarus), two considered as potential 'mediators' (China and Türkiye) and the EU's most important ally (the US). Expert views on the possible role of these countries were integrated into the scenarios, and also served as building blocks for the policy considerations in the next phase. The four scenarios or imaginations of possible futures covered the various possible outcomes of the war and different levels of integration of Ukraine into the EU. The time horizon of 2035 was the outcome of a compromise between a shorter horizon, focusing on the development of the war, and a longer horizon, looking at long-term reconstruction and EU enlargement. It covered the possibility of the EU enlarging to include Ukraine within 10 years in the most positive scenario (Fair Stability), as well as options in which the process would have stalled by that date. The possibility of a parallel conflict in the Indo-Pacific area was not actively explored, but considered as an option in the most negative of the four scenarios (Devastated Europe).

While developing the scenarios, the project team had access to a few **other publicly available scenarios**, in particular those published by Matthew Burrows and Robert A. Manning from the Atlantic Council and those from the French think tank Futuribles. Moreover, the project team had exchanges with staff from Futuribles and from a third group pursuing a foresight exercise regarding the future of Ukraine, requested by the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada). Staff from these two scenario exercises participated in a few sessions of this project and vice versa. **This report distinguishes itself** from these three other scenario exercises **by combining a long time horizon of 2035, a broad approach in topics and geography and a focus on policy considerations**. The Strategic Foresight Conversation has been looking beyond possible outcomes of the war towards EU accession and Ukraine's reconstruction, and their possible effects on EU strategic autonomy and the future of the Green Deal. A broad geographic approach meant involving future views on the five countries mentioned above, as well as those affected by possible EU or NATO enlargement (Moldova, Georgia, non-EU countries in the Western Balkans). Because of the focus on policy considerations, the scenarios were not the final product of the exercise, but played a role as stepping stones towards expert views on future EU actions. The resolutions adopted by the European Parliament provided the political context for the expert views.

To recall the metaphor from the introduction: building scenarios is like climbing a hill in order to have a better view from the top, while developing policy considerations is like descending the hill again and returning home with fresh ideas in mind for future action.

3.2. Findings: Towards four areas of action

Having reached a long-term outlook into four possible futures, the conversation process moved to developing the **policy considerations** (phase three). Some of these resulted from thinking what actions needed to be taken to achieve or avoid a particular scenario. Others developed as general considerations, regardless of the scenarios. We called policy considerations 'triggers for decision makers to be aware of the challenges, opportunities and actions that lay ahead, and of the complex interrelationships between these'. Although these do not necessarily prescribe what should be done, we have nevertheless ended each of the seven policy sections with a blue box of considerations for possible EU action. These sets of key considerations lay out common denominators for EU action among the diversity of expert views.

Throughout the whole SFC, a process of **clustering and grouping topical issues** has taken place. Starting from five sectoral and five cross-cutting issues in the first phase, we defined 10 slightly different and grouped elements for the scenarios in the second phase. By combining some of these, they were condensed into seven sections of policy considerations in the third phase. Coming to the conclusion of the process, the project team suggested one more step of clustering, leading towards **four 'areas of action'**.

All considerations regarding military aid, diplomatic efforts and an emerging future security architecture for wider Europe belong together. We call this '**From military support towards a new European security architecture**'.

Parallelism between the EU accession process and the reconstruction of Ukraine was deemed important by many experts and therefore constitutes another joint area of action. We call this area of action '**Towards EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery**'.

Sectoral EU policies such as energy and agriculture have an internal dimension – testing the internal resilience of the EU – and an external dimension – influencing the EU's strategic autonomy and normative power outside the EU. This relates to delivering on the ambitious goals of the EU Green Deal and to the EU's internal effectiveness to take decisions. We bring all these elements together as a third comprehensive area of action which we call '**Building an effective, green and sovereign European Union**'.

The remaining area of action refers to the EU's external relations, except matters relating to the European security architecture or EU accession. The EU Global Strategy and the Strategic Compass remain guiding documents for the coming years, but from a foresight perspective the EU should prepare for – possibly fundamental – changes in its relations with several countries, including Russia and China. We call this area '**Reviewing the EU's external relations**'.

Having created four 'areas of EU action' along these lines, we end this report by presenting all individual policy considerations in Chapter 2 according to these four areas of action. Although written in short sentences with broad margins of interpretation, these **actionable conclusions** of this SFC could inspire EU actions for the years up to 2035, comprising two more terms of the European Parliament and Commission. **Each area of action starts with a recommendation summarising the essence of the subsequent considerations.**

From military support towards a new European security architecture

The EU could transition from the coordination of and public support for short-term military and economic aid to Ukraine towards developing a future security architecture for wider Europe, which may involve diplomatic efforts.

Supporting Ukraine: Continuing humanitarian and economic aid to Ukraine and enforcing sanctions on Russia. Enhancing decision-making on and delivery of military equipment to Ukraine to avoid the war turning into a frozen conflict, leading to lower public support for the war effort in EU countries. Fostering convergence between Member States' positions on what can be considered acceptable and possible outcomes of the war and EU accession. Strengthening EU diplomacy through united positions, particularly regarding the rule of law and international law, and using its potential to convince other countries in international fora. Anticipating possible participation by the EU or a group of its Member States in possible negotiations for a post-war agreement. Keeping up principles of international law and not compromising on these to achieve a solution to the conflict. Monitoring Russian influence beyond Ukraine, particularly in Moldova and Western Balkan countries, with a view to avoiding spillovers from the conflict.

Future security architecture: Reinforcing the EU's intelligence capability by strengthening intelligence cooperation, including through the EU Single Intelligence and Analysis Capacity (SIAC) and boosting capacities to detect and respond to hybrid threats. Implementing the EU's Strategic Compass, for instance by increasing defence capacities and international partnerships, and continuing to develop a better understanding of the geopolitical landscape. Developing new security relations with Russia, considering defence and relying on NATO deterrence in the short term and vigilance, not excluding cooperation, in the long term. Developing a strategy for possible next steps in EU-NATO relations, including a strengthened EU pillar within NATO; considering the growing attractiveness and centrality of NATO in the future European security architecture, including by sharing the burden of transatlantic security costs. Considering whether and how the EU could or should contribute to security guarantees for Ukraine and other countries in the region. Considering what the future role of the OSCE in the European security architecture could be and how that would relate to EU efforts. Further developing the EU defence technological industrial base, among other things by enhancing joint procurement, implementing the European Defence Fund and adopting and implementing the EDIRPA regulation; considering defence industry- specific exemptions to environmental legislation on security grounds.

Towards EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery

Ukraine should address reforms needed for EU accession, in particular those regarding the rule of law. The EU could prepare for shifts in distribution of political power and financial means and develop a coordinated position on enlargement for several accession candidates, balancing the principle of individual merit with a group approach. Parallelism between Ukraine's EU accession and its reconstruction is important. Reconstruction requires coordination, financing and the contribution of returning refugees.

EU enlargement: Managing the accession process inside the EU, taking into account public support and economic or other factors that could undermine support, in the context of Ukraine's and Moldova's newly acquired candidate status. Addressing expectations of countries which acquired candidate status before Ukraine and Moldova in order to maintain the EU's credibility and attractiveness. Fostering convergence between Member States' positions on EU enlargement. Agreeing on a roadmap for accession with a revamped accession methodology, for instance at the start of the 2024-2029 institutional cycle. Preparing EU assistance to candidate countries in specific policy areas, possibly including dedicated funding, based on the assessment of previous enlargements. Taking practical and organisational steps to facilitate integration of candidate countries into the EU, for instance through giving early observer status in the European Parliament or other EU bodies and adequate staffing of EU services dealing with enlargement.

Ukraine's reconstruction: Coordinating reconstruction aid with other international donors, business and civil society, in close cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and in coherence with the EU accession process. Starting multiannual EU financial planning for investment in the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine as soon as possible, in particular by integrating it into the current and upcoming multiannual financial framework, while considering innovative financing mechanisms. Developing oversight and accountability mechanisms for the delivery of aid and integrating the principles of fighting corruption and legal redress against abuse into the process. Considering options for the long-term perspectives for Ukrainian refugees in EU countries, while providing those who want to return with education, skills and assistance. Offering expertise for sectoral reconstruction – for instance, demining of land, rebuilding the energy grid or financial management – and dealing with post-traumatic stress and reconciliation and reintegration of formerly occupied areas.

Building an effective, green and sovereign European Union

The EU could prepare its institutions for enlargement, while addressing the double challenge of achieving strategic autonomy in its energy, raw material and agricultural needs and delivering on the EU Green Deal. It could draw lessons from earlier enlargements.

Effective: Using all options available in the current EU Treaties to facilitate decision-making in an enlarged EU, such as the passerelle clauses or enhanced cooperation between groups of Member States. Considering revision of the EU Treaties in view of future enlargements and making an inventory of the changes deemed necessary. Contributing to the development of the European Political Community (EPC) as a platform for high-level political debate on issues of common European interest; using the EPC setting or its side meetings to facilitate the integration of candidate countries into the EU before membership.

Green and sovereign: Considering structural changes in the EU's economy towards eliminating dependencies on raw materials and increasing the EU's strategic autonomy, particularly in the sectors of energy, agriculture and food and raw materials. Mapping positive effects of earlier EU enlargements, for instance regarding military, energy and food security, on the EU's strategic autonomy and the potential effects of the accession of current candidate countries in the Western Balkans and of Ukraine and Moldova. Supporting candidate countries in their green transitions through expertise and financial means, while taking into account their particular challenges – such as Ukraine's reconstruction – and the need to apply the goals of the EU Green Deal flexibly according to needs and capabilities. Sustaining and possibly increasing the EU's normative power through the conditionality of EU legislation in the enlargement process and the indirect effect thereof in international fora. Creating synergies between increasing the EU's strategic autonomy and its normative power regarding standards, greening and democratic values. Considering risks and opportunities for EU open strategic autonomy in an increasingly bipolar world in which EU dependence on the US for security is critical and economic relations with China need 'de-risking'.

Reviewing the EU's external relations

The EU could prepare for different possible future relationships with Russia and Belarus, facing more antagonistic or cooperative governments. It could carefully calibrate its relations with Türkiye and China, taking into account US-China relations and the need for de-risking economic relations.

EU-Russia relations: in the short term, working on implementation and non-circumvention of sanctions; in the medium term, facilitating international justice for war crimes; in the long term, preparing for different possible scenarios, ranging from a break-up of Russia, to dealing with an autocratic and antagonistic government, to cooperating with a more constructive Russia in a new pan-European security architecture. Developing relations with Russia's civil society and opposition.

EU-Belarus relations: in the short term, applying and possibly expanding sanctions; in the medium term, facilitating international justice for complicity in war crimes; in the long term, preparing for either a continued autocratic and antagonistic government, or – possibly chaotic and violent – regime change; developing relations with Belarus' civil society and opposition and preparing options for future cooperation in the event of regime change.

EU-Türkiye relations: in the short term, insisting on correct application of sanctions against Russia by indicating clear red lines for Türkiye-Russia relations; in the medium and long term, conditioning EU assistance and cooperation on alignment with accession criteria, taking into account Turkish interests and fostering visibility of EU assistance among Turkish citizens.

EU-China relations: in the short term, warning China not to provide military support to Russia, while avoiding confrontation; in the medium and long term, understanding China's Russia policy as part of its systemic rivalry with the US and the West, and therefore 'de-risking' economic relations and reducing reliance on imports and developing an EU industrial strategy, combined with geo-economic dialogue with the Global South.

EU-US relations: in the short term, working with the US Administration and Congress to maintain US support to Ukraine while avoiding the risk of escalation; in the medium and long term, bridging differing views between the EU and the US on the reconstruction process and sustainability, while emphasising the importance of approximating the reconstruction with EU legislation in view of Ukraine's EU accession. Being prepared for a shift in US priorities due to internal political changes.

4. Annexes

4.1. European Parliament resolutions[203]

15 June 2023: the sustainable reconstruction and integration of Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic community

15 June 2023: the torture and criminal prosecution of Ukrainian minors Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov by the Russian Federation

20 April 2023: repression in Russia, in particular the cases of Vladimir Kara-Murza and Aleksei Navalny

15 March 2023: further repression against the people of Belarus, in particular the cases of Andrzej Poczobut and Ales Bialiatski

16 February 2023: one year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine

2 February 2023: preparation of the EU-Ukraine Summit

19 January 2023: the establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine

24 November 2022: the continuing repression of the democratic opposition and civil society in Belarus

23 November 2022: recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism

23 November 2022: new EU strategy for enlargement

20 October 2022: cultural solidarity with Ukraine and a joint emergency response mechanism for cultural recovery in Europe

6 October 2022: Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine

15 September 2022: human rights violations in the context of forced deportation of Ukrainian civilians to and forced adoption of Ukrainian children in Russia

7 July 2022: exceptional macro-financial assistance to Ukraine

23 June 2022: candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia

9 June 2022: the call for a Convention for the revision of the Treaties

8 June 2022: security in the Eastern Partnership area and the role of the common security and defence policy

8 June 2022: the EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

19 May 2022: the fight against impunity for war crimes in Ukraine

19 May 2022: social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act

5 May 2022: the impact of the war against Ukraine on women

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[203] This list contains European Parliament resolutions on the war in Ukraine and related topics adopted between the autumn of 2021 and June 2023 in reverse chronological order. The titles are hyperlinked to the resolutions.

5 May 2022: impact of the Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on the EU transport and tourism sectors

7 April 2022: on the increasing repression in Russia, including the case of Alexei Navalny

7 April 2022: conclusions of the European Council Meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation

7 April 2022: protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine

24 March 2022: need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine

9 March 2022: foreign interference in all democratic processes in the EU, including disinformation

1 March 2022: Russian aggression against Ukraine

16 February 2022: providing macro-financial assistance to Ukraine and position at first reading

16 December 2021: on the situation at the Ukrainian border and in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine

16 September 2021: European Parliament recommendation on the direction of EU relations

20 January 2021: resolution on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy

4.2. Methodology

360° exploration: Questions in the June 2022 expert survey

In a survey, experts in each of the five policy areas (security and defence, energy and resources, agriculture and food, economy and finance, and migration and refugees), were asked the following questions about the respective policy area. The results were further discussed during online meetings with the participants, consolidated in overviews and processed into 'what if?' questions.

1. Please briefly describe your expectations. What would you consider the most likely outcome of the war in Ukraine for [policy area]?

2. Considering [policy area], what would be the most desirable potential outcome of the war in Ukraine?

3. Considering [policy area], what would be the least desirable potential outcome of the war in Ukraine?

4. Please indicate the level of impact the war in Ukraine might have on the EU in the following areas: (on a sliding scale from 1. Negligible impact to 5. Huge impact, for each of the five policy areas).

5. In your view, what measures or key elements concerning [policy area] should be considered for Ukraine's potential accession to the EU?

6. In your view, what measures or key elements concerning [policy area] should be considered by the EU for Ukraine's reconstruction?

360° exploration: 'What if?' questions in the 29 September 2022 workshop

Out of a larger set of 'what if?' questions drawn from the survey results, participants in the various working groups decided to work on the questions below.

Security and Defence working group

What if Russia suffers a powerful defeat in Ukraine and resorts to nuclear escalation?

What if Russia significantly escalates its military efforts in Ukraine?

What if public support for the EU's assistance to Ukraine crumbles or the EU reconstruction/ assistance funds allocated to Ukraine are insufficient?

What if the war in Ukraine turns into a frozen conflict/ends in a stalemate?

What if Putin's regime collapses/becomes severely weakened domestically?

Energy working group

What if the EU faces structural energy supply interruptions?

What if energy prices stay very high for several years?

What if price compensation measures hamper investments in renewable energy?

What if other EU gas suppliers become unreliable as well?

What if the war in Ukraine ends with a peace settlement within a year?

Agriculture and Food working group

What if Russia controls southern Ukraine and all its ports?

What if the EU faces a further migration wave (not refugee-specific)?

What if EU citizens face shortages?

What if Ukraine's farmers leave their country *en masse*?

What if Ukraine joins the EU Common Agricultural Policy?

Economy working group

What if Western allocations for economic recovery are significantly lower and slower than promised?

What if integration into the Single Market leads to widespread closure of Ukrainian SMEs and larger uncompetitive enterprises in the short term?

Migration working group

What if the number of refugees increases over the winter?

What if Ukrainian migrants and refugees transfer EU values (i.e. anti-corruption, democracy, sustainability) and knowledge and skills (i.e. language skills, trade) back to Ukraine?

What if compassion/solidarity fatigue grows across Member States and/or the energy crisis provokes anti-refugee/extreme political movements in the EU?

What if the war worsens and there are even more refugees?

What if the Ukrainian diaspora mobilises towards reconstruction and accession efforts?

What if a large number of the Ukrainians who fled the war to the EU do not return home?

Strategic autonomy working group

What if a ceasefire agreement is reached between Russia and Ukraine?

What if the war in Ukraine ends with a peace settlement within a year?

Reconstruction working group

What if the EU manages to set up a new energy investment fund?

What if the war worsens and there are even more refugees?

What if there is a significant level of depopulation of eastern parts of the country because of Russian occupation and killings?

What if Ukrainian farmers leave Ukraine?

What if Bill Gates is granted the lead on reconstruction?

What happens in Russia in terms of regime change?

Democracy and Rule of law working group

What if the war in Ukraine turns into a frozen conflict?

What if public support for the EU's assistance to Ukraine crumbles?

EU-Ukraine cooperation and Ukraine's accession to the EU working group

What if EU citizens face food shortages?

What if the energy crisis provokes anti-refugee/extreme political movements in the EU?

What if Ukrainian migrants and refugees transfer EU values (i.e. anti-corruption, democracy, sustainability) and knowledge and skills (i.e. language skills, trade) back to Ukraine?

What if compassion/solidarity fatigue grows across Member States?

Impact on the functioning of the EU

What if public support for the EU's assistance to Ukraine crumbles?

What if European industrial or agricultural interests oppose the economic integration of Ukraine, for fear of losing market share?

What if the war in Ukraine ends with a peace settlement within a year?

What if the EU faces structural energy supply interruptions?

What if the war worsens and there are even more refugees?

A 'Futures Wheel' served as a tool to guide these discussions (Figure 3). Participants were asked to project themselves into hypothetical situations and reflect primarily on what the impacts of these 'what if?' projections would be. In addition, potential actions to be taken either towards or away from these situations were welcomed.

Figure 3: Example of a Futures Wheel used to identify impacts and possible actions
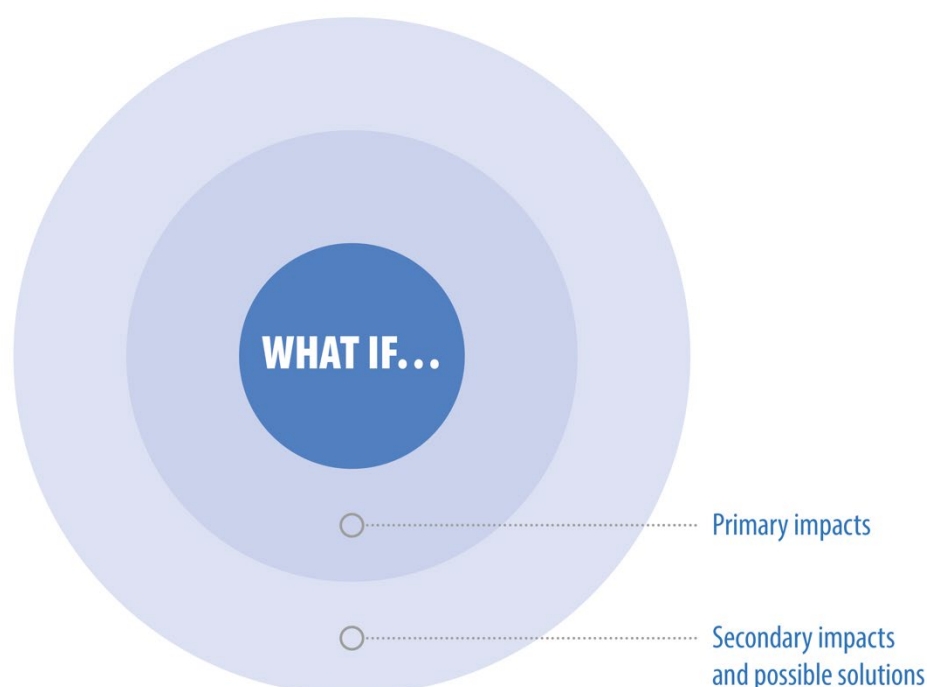
Source: Virginia Mahieu, EPRS.

Scenario building methodology

There are various methods to develop scenarios. Because scenarios should show different possible futures, their number should, by definition, be more than one. Most experts agree that a set of only two scenarios is suboptimal. Not only is the number of possible variations too small, they could easily be interpreted as simple opposites in terms of desirability or likelihood. Working with three scenarios is possible, for instance if scenarios are drafted according to the level of transformation, ranging from incremental change to complete transformation. However, working with three scenarios entails the risk that two scenarios are projected as extremes and only one 'middle' scenario is considered plausible or desirable. Working with many scenarios has the advantage of diversity, but the disadvantage of complexity, both in the process and in the presentation of the outcome. Therefore, the number of four scenarios has generally been accepted by foresight practitioners as optimal, especially if these are presented on a 2 x 2 grid. According to this 'best practice', the SFC has chosen to develop four scenarios.

In the methodology we employed, scenarios were built by 'drivers of change' which express an 'uncertainty' or variability. In a 2 x 2 grid, the drivers of change can be put on the X- and Y-axis. The organisers of the scenario exercise should explore drivers of change with the participants in the process and come to a logical and agreed solution for both axes. As mentioned in the main text, the development of the war was chosen by consensus as the main driver of change and therefore put on the X-axis. The uncertainty expressed on the X-axis was called 'hazard'. The term 'hazard' was selected over alternatives such as 'conflict', 'tension' or 'division', because it combines the notion of danger with the potentiality or chance that such a danger becomes effective. High hazard can therefore mean both a high risk of conflict as well as an effective conflict, taking place in the form of a war. During the Cold War, for example, there was a high hazard but no actual war going on between the main parties. Similarly, low hazard means a low chance of actual war, but not necessarily a state of peace. A frozen conflict combined with practical arrangements along the

'contact line' constitutes a situation of low short-term hazard but no final resolution of the conflict, for instance in the form of a peace agreement. For the Y-axis, which should express the EU-Ukraine relationship, four potential drivers or uncertainties were considered: the development of an accession process; democracy and the rule of law; the economic situation; and the degree of willingness of EU countries and their citizens to continue supporting Ukraine (solidarity). After discussing the various options, the general term 'integration' was chosen.

Based on the frame set by the two axes, the next step was to transform all the information gathered in the 360° exploration into scenarios. This was done in a few steps, starting by breaking down the sectoral information clusters into loose bits of information and looking for similarities and parallels with information in other clusters. This step is called 'unravelling complexity'. In the next step, these packages of information were loosely put together again in a new set of four clusters, which roughly corresponded to the outlines of the future scenarios. Based on these, preliminary scenarios were drafted and discussed in the second workshop on 26 January 2023. After the workshop, the elements were definitively assigned to the four scenarios, which were refined and developed. The figure below visualises this process.

Figure 4: Steps from exploration to scenario building
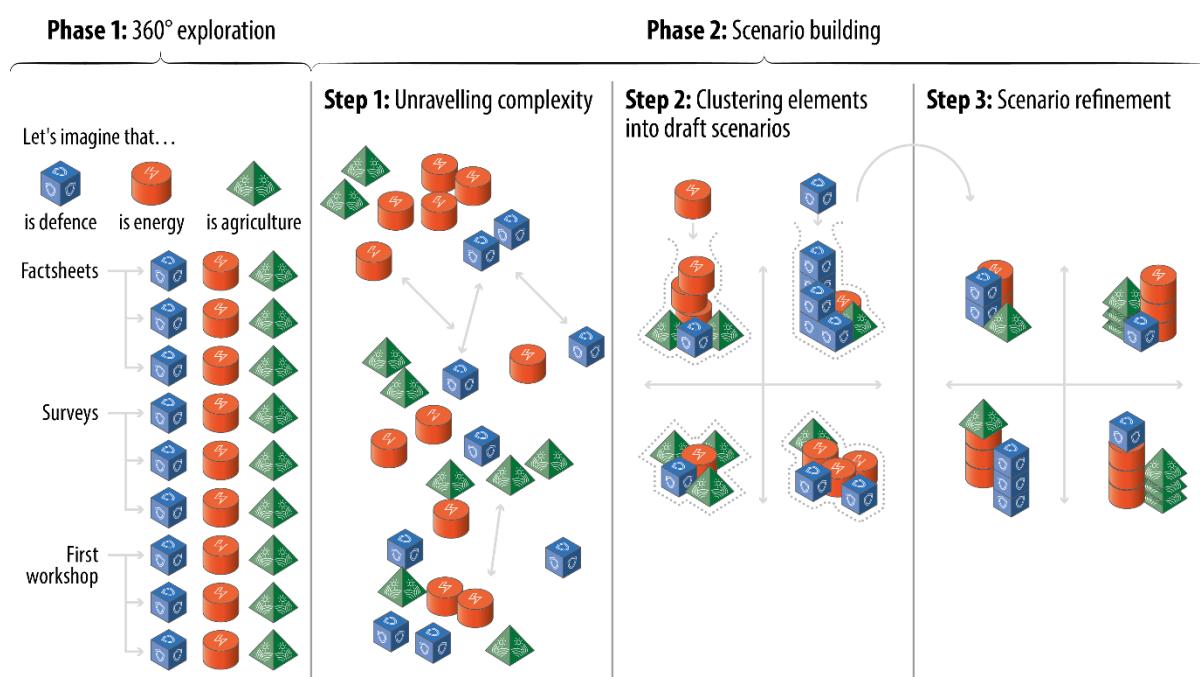
Source: Virginia Mahieu and Samy Chahri, EPRS.

The draft scenarios were further developed into two-page narratives, explaining how the scenario would come about and how this would work out in each of the 10 points. The scenarios were furthermore characterised by a pictogram and a colour. Following the logic of traffic light colours, the most desirable scenario, Fair Stability, was characterised by the colour green. The Devastated Europe scenario entails the highest level of escalation of the war and ensuing destruction and is therefore characterised by the opposite colour, red. The other two scenarios are 'in between' in terms of desirability and their colours have no specific meaning, although one could interpret yellow as a warning sign and cool blue as a reference to the frozen nature of the conflict. The full scenarios were working material to come to policy considerations and not designed for publication. In this study, the main elements of the scenarios are presented in shortened one-page narratives.

Policy considerations: Questions in the March 2023 expert survey

Based on the 10 points in the scenario grid, the second survey asked participants 10 blocks of questions. This allowed for the inclusion of all elements resulting from the SFC and for making the policy considerations comparable by grouping them under the same headings. As explained in the main text, the results from the survey were restructured in seven sections for the presentation of the policy considerations; all country-related considerations were put in section seven. The 10 blocks of questions were the following:

War and geopolitics

1. **How can the EU support Ukraine together with its key partners, in particular the US?** What are the potential fields of cooperation or coordination with the US? What are the differences in policies and how can they be addressed? This can include matters of financial aid, delivery of weapons, diplomacy or views on the future reconstruction of Ukraine.

2. **What can the EU do by itself to influence the outcome of the war?** What can the EU and its Member States do in terms of operational and strategic military support, financial aid or sanctions? How can the EU ensure sufficient multiannual planning for these various kinds of support? What role could the EU play in negotiations of a post-war agreement?

3. **How can a future EU policy towards Russia develop in the coming years?** What can or should the EU do next in terms of sanctions? What could the EU do as regards international justice and the possible seizure of Russian assets? What diplomatic options does the EU have in case negotiations were to take place? How can the EU prepare for the trials of war crimes? How can the EU develop long-term plans for dealing with a different Russia (more/less aggressive, fragmented, etc.)?

4. **How can a future EU policy towards China and Türkiye develop in the coming years?**

   a. **China:** How does the EU relate its trade policy with China to its position on the war in Ukraine? What options should the EU develop for different outcomes of the war as regards its relations with China?

   b. **Türkiye:** How does the EU develop its relations with Türkiye under the various scenarios? How could the EU deal with Türkiye's suspended accession negotiations if the accession process for Ukraine, Moldova and Western Balkan countries moves ahead?

5. **What options does the EU have in developing a future policy towards Belarus?** What options does the EU have to increase sanctions or exercise different forms of pressure on the Belarusian regime? What options does the EU have to support the population of Belarus in spite of its government's position in the war? How can the EU continue to develop a positive agenda for Belarus in case the situation changes? What diplomatic options does the EU have for relations with Belarus?

European development trajectory

6. **What options does the EU have in its cooperation with NATO while developing an EU security and defence policy of its own?** What can the EU do to achieve strategic autonomy in terms of its defence industry and capacities, while cooperating with non-EU NATO partners? What can the EU contribute to a future European security architecture? What kind of relations could the EU develop with other security organisations, such as the OSCE?

7. **What should the EU do to develop its accession policy for Ukraine and other candidate countries in a coherent and timely way?** What options does the EU have for the accession of single countries or groups of countries? How can the EU manage the expectations of the various candidate countries? How can it take differences between countries – for instance, regarding geopolitics, size, governance, and economy – into account? What can the EU do to prepare for the accession of each of these countries? What modifications to the current accession process could be implemented, how and when?

8. **What decisions can the EU take to adapt its internal functioning to an enlarged EU?** What kind of reforms to, for instance, decision-making in the Council, the number of seats in the European Parliament, or the size of the Commission should or could the EU take? What are possible pathways towards such reforms over the years to come? What are possible consequences for support in the EU for enlargement, if these reforms do take place? And what are the possible consequences if they do not take place?

9. **What should the EU do to be best prepared for a role in the reconstruction of Ukraine?** What should the EU do in terms of forward financial planning? What should it do in terms of coordination with other donors, for instance in the Lugano process? How can the EU enhance coherence between future reconstruction and recovery aid and an EU accession process? What can the EU do to prepare in operational terms for reconstructing areas heavily damaged by war and possibly contaminated or mined? How can the EU and its Member States plan ahead for the possible repatriation of Ukrainian refugees? How can it support Ukraine in strengthening its education and training its labour force?

10. **What can the EU do to enhance its strategic autonomy and normative power in the event of an enlarged EU, or of stalling accession and increased geo-economic tensions?**

   a. **Strategic autonomy:** [204] What effect would the possible accession – or non-accession – of Ukraine, Moldova and other candidate countries have on EU strategic autonomy? What would their accession mean, for instance, for the EU's energy situation, raw material situation, the overall economic situation in the EU and the role of the Euro? How would re-distribution of financial support inside the EU influence the EU's overall economic resilience? Once these effects are mapped, what could the EU do to generate and support positive effects of enlargement on its strategic autonomy and avoid or mitigate negative effects? How do EU efforts in this regard relate to the striving for autonomy of other world powers, in particular the US and China, and how can the EU position itself in this global context?

   b. **Normative power:** What can the EU do to maintain or increase its role as a global standard setter in view of possible enlargement? How can the EU maintain or further promote its normative power in a future reconstruction process for Ukraine? How, for instance, could the EU, in cooperation with Ukraine, integrate the aims of the Green Deal in Ukraine's reconstruction process? How can the EU anticipate Ukraine's accession to the Common Agricultural Policy in terms of striving for greener and more sustainable agriculture? How can the EU integrate the aims of the Green Deal in the accession process of other candidate countries? How can the EU best prepare and map possible challenges and opportunities?

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[204] Strategic autonomy in the area of security and defence is covered by point 6; therefore, point 10 focuses on economic and normative aspects of strategic autonomy.

Clustering topics for the four areas of action

A process of clustering and grouping of topical issues took place throughout the SFC process. Starting from five sectoral and five cross-cutting issues in the first phase, we defined 10 slightly different and grouped elements for the scenarios in the second phase. By combining some of these, they were condensed into seven sections of policy considerations in the third phase. We explain here how these clusters finally led to four 'areas of action'.

Table 3: Various ways of clustering topics throughout the SFC process

Phase 1 360°orientation	Phase 2 Scenarios	Phase 3 Policy considerations	Conclusions Areas of action
Security and defence	EU and US support to Ukraine Outcome of the war European security order and the role of NATO	2.1 Support to Ukraine and diplomacy	From military support towards a new European security architecture
		2.2 Defence and European security architecture	
EU-Ukraine cooperation and accession process Democracy and the rule of law	EU enlargement	2.3 EU enlargement	Towards EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery
Reconstruction of Ukraine Economy and finance Migration and refugees	Reconstruction and recovery	2.4 Reconstruction of Ukraine	
Impact on the functioning of the EU Energy and resources Agriculture and food	EU decision-making and support	2.5 Internal functioning of enlarged EU	Ensuring an effective, green and sovereign European Union
	Strategic autonomy, normative power and Green Deal	2.6 Strategic autonomy, normative power, Green Deal	
EU's strategic autonomy and global role	Situation of Russia Developments in Belarus Role of China and Türkiye	2.7 EU relations with Russia, Belarus, Türkiye, China and US	Reviewing the EU's external relations

Source: Author, EPRS.

From military support towards a new European security architecture: In phase 1, these issues were mainly discussed in the groups on security and defence and on strategic autonomy. In phase 2, strategic autonomy was discussed more in terms of economic dependencies, while diplomatic and security issues remained together with the question of military support. In phase 3, the policy considerations were split into support and diplomacy on the one hand and security and defence on the other hand. However, it made sense to bring these chapters on policy considerations together again because of the causality between the immediate military aid given to Ukraine, the kind of diplomatic efforts related to the war and the future security architecture of wider Europe emerging from there.

Towards EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery: In phase 1, a dedicated group on economy and finance looked into the costs of EU aid and reconstruction and the possible effects of Ukraine's EU accession on its own and the EU's economy. Although the influx of refugees has a strong humanitarian dimension, the subgroup on migration – taking a long-term foresight approach – discussed the issue of returns as a key component of the future reconstruction and reform of Ukraine. In phase 2 and 3, enlargement was dealt with as a separate issue, looking at the impact on Ukraine (need for reform, rule of law), on the EU (shifts in distribution of political power and financial means) and on other accession candidates (principle of individual merit versus group approach). Reconstruction was seen through the lenses of coordination, finance and societal aspects. Because many experts deemed parallelism between the EU accession process and the reconstruction of Ukraine highly important, it made sense to consider this as one reconstruction and recovery process.
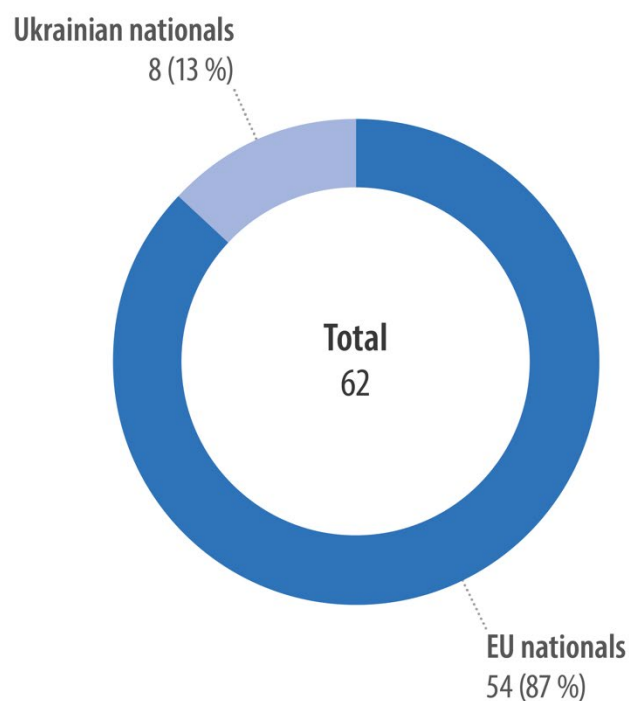
Ensuring an effective, green and sovereign European Union: In phase 1, a subgroup on 'impact on the functioning of the EU' dealt mainly with the impact of the war on EU citizens and the EU economy. This included the impact of the influx of refugees on housing and education in the EU and the impact of high energy and food prices leading to inflation and possible 'solidarity fatigue' among EU citizens. Subgroups on energy and on agriculture and food looked into specific impacts in these sectors. In later phases of the process, these issues turned into questions about the internal resilience of the EU to cope with large crises and therefore also questions about the EU's strategic autonomy, its normative power outside the EU as a standard setter and its internal capacity to deliver on the ambitious goals of the EU Green Deal. In the second and third phase of the project, the need for internal reform of the EU institutions and decision-making process were discussed. All these rather diverse issues can be brought together as a third comprehensive area of action which – although linked to external policies – focuses mainly on internal EU reform and EU resilience.

Reviewing the EU's external relations: The EU's external relations received limited attention in phase 1, but were discussed more extensively in the subsequent phases of the process. While the scenarios and the thematic policy considerations looked at the contribution of our five selected countries to the general developments of the war, the new security architecture and enlargement and reconstruction, the dedicated country sections in Section 2.7 look more specifically at their role as a country and at EU relations with each country. As an area of action, it makes sense to bring these together again under the heading 'reviewing the EU's external relations', knowing that the degree of review may vary by country and according to the future circumstances.
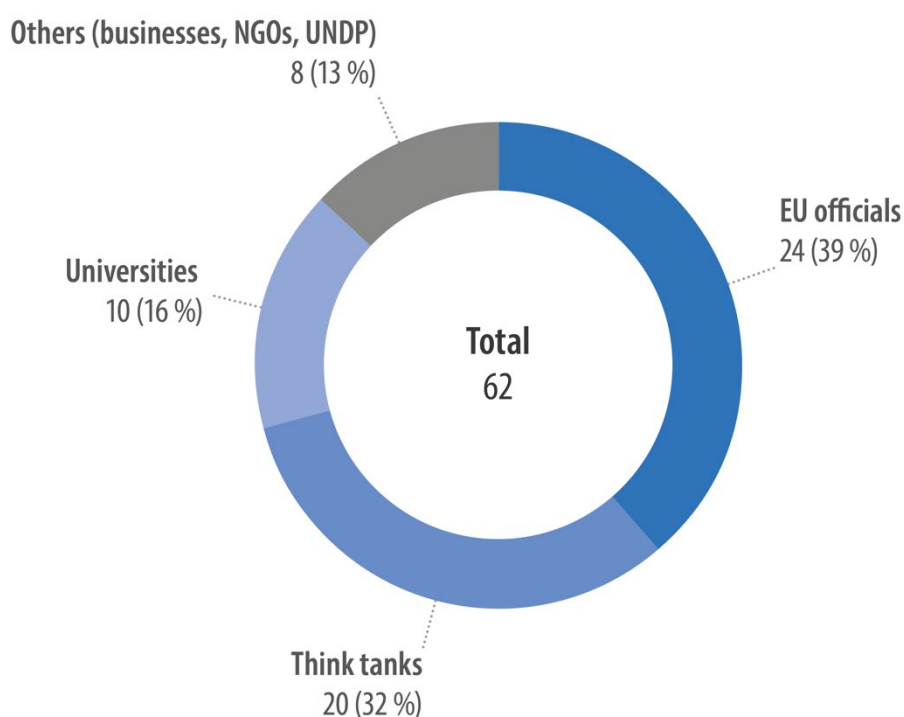
4.3. Background of the experts consulted

In the course of the project, 62 experts were consulted; for confidentiality reasons, none of them is mentioned by name. They participated in one or more of the workshops and surveys, with a small number participating in all three workshops. A few experts only took part in an online interview.

Figure 5: SFC experts by nationality

Ukrainian nationals
8 (13 %)

Total
62

EU nationals
54 (87 %)

Figure 6: SFC experts by affiliation

Others (businesses, NGOs, UNDP)
8 (13 %)

Universities
10 (16 %)

Total
62

EU officials
24 (39 %)

Think tanks
20 (32 %)

This analysis looks at the future of the EU and Ukraine, using a time horizon of 2035. It was launched in June 2022 as a Strategic Foresight Conversation, a few months after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The ensuing war has drastically changed all aspects of life in Ukraine, affects the EU in many significant ways and shifted pre-war geopolitical and geo-economic paradigms. The European Council decision of 24 June 2022 to give candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova added to the need for a long-term perspective on EU-Ukraine relations.

The analysis is based on foresight methodologies, including a multi-stage stakeholder consultation and scenario building. Four scenarios examine future developments along two main axes: the Ukraine-Russia relationship, addressing the development and possible outcome of the war, characterised by the level of hazard; and the EU-Ukraine relationship, characterised by the level of integration.

The resulting policy considerations address four areas of future EU action: firstly, the transition from military support towards a new European security architecture; secondly, the process of EU enlargement, reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine; thirdly, the development of an effective, green and sovereign European Union; and fourthly, continuity and review of EU relations with five countries which are key to the conflict: Russia, Belarus, Türkiye, China and the US.

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