Summary of the report

Europeiskt säkerhets- och försvarspolitiskt samarbete

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Introduction

The present European mood is one of insecurity and concern about the future. The British decision to leave the EU and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States have contributed greatly to this. In the south the war in Syria and the refugee situation seem impossible to end. Meanwhile, the struggle for power in the Middle East, Russia's new policy in Europe and the extended influence of China are creating threats of different kinds. Within the EU, terrorist attacks, populism and extremism constitute great threats to society. On top of this, the internal policies of some EU states are eroding fundamental European values.

This is, however, not the whole picture. Opinion polls in member states show increased support for the EU. For more than a year European security and defence policy cooperation has picked up speed and met with general support among the member states.

How strong is European security and defence cooperation when dealing with the external and internal threats? Will the unity of today remain when the new ideas are presented in more detail in concrete proposals? Will cohesion prevail in the future?

In order to answer questions such as these, this report will seek to identify the factors that jointly determine security and defence cooperation. The aim is to start off with the formative years of the 1940's and track developments during the following periods, thereby determining how different types of threats, conflicting and coinciding interests as well as norms and institutions shape this policy.

Upheavals and development

The original aim of the European Community, the EC, was to come to terms with the internal threat, the hostility between France and Germany. External threats have also been of major importance. The policy of the Soviet Union, such as the Prague coup of 1948, led to NATO being established. Thereafter, the Warsaw Pact was set up and a long period of cold war followed.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a period of great hopes and development was initiated. Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet republics that had once been free countries now stretched out to the west. Through the 1993 Maastricht Treaty the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) was established and the EC became the European Union (EU).

The Yugoslav wars of the 1990's served as a reminder that weapons still were being used to resolve conflicts in Europe. For France and the UK, the lesson learnt was that Europe needed to acquire the capability to act without the United States. Their meeting in the northern French town of Saint-Malo led to a compromise between the French view that the EU should act as independently as possible from the US, and the British

one, that emphasized the importance of NATO. Their initiative was supported by the other EU countries, which led to further development of the EU security and defence policy.

The world changed once more as terrorism struck the United States in 2001. Views differed, however, on how terrorism and other threats should be met. In March 2003, as a coalition led by the US attacked Iraq, relations between the US and a number of European countries were at a low point. Finally, in December 2003, the European Security Strategy was accepted. The strategy, adopted with unanimity by all EU countries, enumerates the threats to Europe: terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failing states and organized crime. As stated in the strategy, none of these threats were of a military kind: they could not be tackled by solely military means and they could only be met in cooperation.

The early 2000's were on the whole a positive period. Relations with Russia continued to be good and EU initiated a number of crisis management operations. Some of them were military, but the majority were civilian operations, such as border assistance missions to prevent smuggling and rule of law missions to support reform of the judicial system. During this period, the EU gained twelve new members and NATO seven. Membership gave these countries both security and the European identity that they had long sought. Within the EU, however, enlargement fatigue grew. The EU tried to solve that issue by giving partner countries closer relations with the organization, but without promises of membership.

The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 aimed at creating increased efficiency and continuity of the EU. Within the security and defence cooperation areas, the rotating chairmanship was suspended in favour of a strengthened position for the high representative for foreign affairs and secu-

rity policy, who now also became deputy chairman of the EU Commission.

The complicated situation of today

At the same time as the Lisbon Treaty came into force, problems started to pile up. The war in Georgia in 2008 had shown that Russia did not respect treaties. As Vladimir Putin returned as president in 2012, geopolitical thinking started to dominate Russian politics and the EU partner countries in Eastern Europe were put under heavy pressure. In March 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and a guerrilla war started in south-eastern Ukraine. In North Africa and the Middle East the so-called Arab Spring started at the end of 2010. This protest against oppression and bad conditions led to chaos and war, above all in Libya and Syria. As a consequence, large numbers of refugees have tried to reach Europe, which has tested the cohesion of the EU. In some cases, countries have bluntly refused to accept refugees. Some countries have also demonstrated that they do not share the fundamental values that Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty spells out, including the independence of courts and freedom of the media.

During 2016 an event never seen before took place: a member state decided to leave the EU. Together with the election of Donald Trump, Brexit has created insecurity as regards the future. As so many times before, a difficult situation led to a new initiative and, as often before, it came from France and Germany. The dominant initiative, which has received strong support, is however the European global strategy, written by the EU high representative, Federica Mogherini.

In a short period of time the EU has taken a number of decisions. One of the most talked about is PESCO, which stands for "permanent structured cooperation". This means that countries can form a group to cooperate with the aim of strengthening the operational capacity of the Union by developing and participating in common

defence-related projects. Another initiative concerns improving the civilian and military crisis management capacity by creating a civil/military operative planning unit (the latter only for training). There will also be increased financial support for the EU battle groups, which were established in 2007 but never used, in order to facilitate their use. Furthermore, an increased impetus to cooperation has been given by the agreements between the EU and NATO to cooperate on a range of issues.

The question now is whether the EU will be able to agree on the details. Where PESCO is concerned, France and Italy among others preferred that only a small group of countries should be included. In the decision taken in 2017, PESCO included 25 countries and was therefore formed according to German (and Swedish) wishes. However, many decisions remain to be taken within this major cooperation project.

One major discussion concerns a multi-speed Europe. The argument is that it is unlikely in such a large organization that all members will have the same view on integration; those who want more should therefore have the right to take additional steps. Germany and France, among others, have been positive towards this. It is, however, not clear what a multi-speed Europe should look like and there are differences of opinion also among those who support the idea.

Another question is how an EU in which some countries are part of an inner core will be able to unite efficiency with unity. Countries that have not acceded to an inner core will unlikely show solidarity when this is costly. There are already fears that a dividing line will appear between east and west if the conflict over fundamental values and migration issues between on the one side Brussels and on the other the Visegrad countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) deepens. Such a conflict would weaken the EU considerably. There is furthermore the risk that Russia would take advantage of the situation.

Overall, this report shows that European security and defence cooperation has been highly influenced by external turbulence and dramatic events. Originating from the goal of preventing war, the EU has developed to meet new threats and fulfil common goals. This has led to both a deepening and a widening of the EU. Cooperation has never been easy and has always been built on conflicting as well as common interests. The report also shows that cooperation is undergoing constant change. An increasing number of members and new types of problems continue to create new challenges, leading to new discussions and suggestions for solutions. We know little about future threats, but we do see an EU that, despite insecurity and concern, is seeking to master them.