EU-NATO relations through the lens of strategic documents

Michal Piechowicz, Justyna Maliszewska-Nienartowicz[1]

Abstract: The main goal of this study is to contribute to the academic debate concerning EU-NATO relations and to consider the main sources of difficulties in their relationship. In particular, this analysis takes into account the possible role of the strategic documents of both organisations in future cooperation. Consequently, the first part of the article concentrates on dilemmas related to EU-NATO relations referred to in the existing literature. The second part contains an analysis of the development of these relations, while the third describes the presumptive impact of the NATO Strategic Concept and the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy on cooperation between the two organisations. The conclusion underlines that the process of implementing the strategic documents should have positive effects on EU-NATO relations. However, the question arises whether and how this process is continued.

Keywords: EU-NATO relations, strategic partnership, NATO Strategic Concept, Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy, European security, transatlantic relationship.

Introduction

This article contributes to the academic discourse concerning the relations between the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This relationship has recently faced a number of organisational challenges. We agree that the complex nature of the formal, informal and operational cooperation between the two organisations warrants deeper investigation, both theoretically and empirically[2]. At the beginning of this analysis, it is worth noting that NATO has the collective defence concept at its core, benefiting from a significant military infrastructure and a transatlantic membership, with the United States of America (USA) being by far the most influential member. Decisions within NATO are made strictly on an intergovernmental basis within the North Atlantic Council (NAC)[3]. Meanwhile, the EU is a sui generis polity with

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[2] Simon J. Smith and Carmen Gebhard, 'EU–NATO Relations: Running on the Fumes of Informed Deconfliction', *European Security* 26, no. 3 (2017): 303-14.
[3] Margriet Drent, 'From effective to selective multilateralism', in *The EU and Effective Multilateralism: Internal and External Reform Practices*, eds. Edith Drieskens and Louise G. van Schaik (London: Routledge, 2014), 133.

mixed communitarian and intergovernmental decision-making procedures, whose core business is much more extensive and covers a variety of policy areas. Significantly, these differences define the natural limits of their relationship and scope of cooperation[4].

It should be noted, however, that the EU and NATO face similar security challenges, such as strained relations with an assertive Russia after its invasion of Ukraine, growing authoritarianism in Turkey, the migration crisis and the threat from global terrorism. Therefore, stronger cooperation is inevitable, which has always been emphasised in the strategic documents of both organisations. An analysis of their provisions seems to be relevant, as they may influence relations between the EU and NATO. Consequently, we have decided to join the debate on this rather complex relationship and to make suggestions with regard to future research in this field.

Therefore, the subject of this analysis is the relationship between the European Union (and more specifically its Common Security and Defence Policy – CSDP[5]) and NATO. The object of our research is an indication of the main difficulties in relations between the two organisations. The research outcome, however, will inspire further analysis of whether and how the NATO Strategic Concept, on the one hand, and the EU's Global Strategy, on the other, influence EU-NATO cooperation. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis is that **EU-NATO organisational cooperation inspired by strategic documents takes various forms and is conducted at three levels**. The second is that difficulties existing in the relationship spring from the fragmentary practical application of the organisations' strategic foundations.

This article adopts a historical institutionalist perspective. This method uses institutions to find sequences of political behaviour and its changes across time. In historical institutionalism approach, institutions take the shape of an official bureaucratic structure. The importance of this understanding is that this method denies that power and history are one-sourced. In emphasising the participation of i.e. agencies or international organisations, not just elites or the states, historical institutionalism presents a dynamic approach to the political international environment[6].

The analysis is based on a variety of primary and secondary sources, such as official declarations and documents adopted by both organisations (jointly or individually), official and non-official statements by their representatives and available literature on the subject. This source-based approach has provided important information concerning the discourse on the evolution of EU-NATO cooperation.

Dilemmas Related to EU-NATO Relations

It is worth noting that the EU-NATO relations have a long-standing tradition of debate within political science literature, and have been already analysed in several dimensions. Their evolution has been outlined by Croft[7], Richard[8] and Pop[9], just as

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[4] Ibid., 125.

[5] Michal Piechowicz, 'Intergovernmental Cooperation and the Idea of Community in the Institutional and Decision-making Sphere of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy', *European Review* 23, no. 4 (2015): 540-52.

[6] See Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984).

[7] Stuart Croft, 'The EU, NATO and Europeanisation: The Return of Architectural Debate', *European Security* 9, no. 3 (2000): 1-20.

[8] Martin Richard, 'Some Legal Issues Concerning the EU-NATO Berlin Plus Agreement', *Nordic Journal of International Law* 73, no. 1 (2004): 37-67.

[9] Adrian Pop, 'NATO and the EU: Cooperation and Security', Nato Review (2007), https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/Partnerships_Old_New/NATO_EU_cooperation_security/EN/index.htm (accessed October 25, 2019).

the European security architecture through the prism of security governance has also been studied by Erhart[10]. Furthermore, Smith attempts to explain the Cyprus-Turkey dilemma[11] and Fiott focuses on including the "Petersberg tasks" in the EU security sphere[12]. Howorth explains the dynamics and mechanisms of policy formulation, and distinguishes differences between development of the security sphere and other EU policy fields[13]. Additionally, Schmitt discusses the evolution of Euro-Atlantic expeditionary mode of security policy[14] and Csiki and Németh analyse perspectives on regional and multinational defence cooperation[15]. To go deeper into the specificity of the subject, some scholars concentrate on aspects of duplication, competition and rivalry in EU-NATO relations[16]. Moreover, the institutional field has always taken a prominent place in this debate. For example, the impact of the CSDP and the thorny issue of how institutions relate to the states that have created them has been examined by Bickerton, Irondelle and Menon[17].

Interestingly, Van Willingen and Koops distinguish few perspectives on the issue of EU-NATO policy overlap[18]. The first is the possibility of natural synergies between the two organisations. The key argument is that NATO still holds a comparative advantage in the field of intense, large-scale military operations and can therefore support the EU's lighter, more modest military ambitions. Closely related to that perspective, the second view has been to foresee a clear division of tasks; this view highlights a division based on the high intensity of crisis management (for NATO) and the low intensity of civil-military crisis management (for the EU). Recently, the authors have stressed the far-reaching potential for further cooperation, in response to the emerging security threats that both organisations face. However, they conclude that the future of stronger joint engagement in these fields depends on the general tendencies with regard to cooperation and rivalry[19]. Nevertheless, such a clear division of labour might be problematic, as it also refers to the crisis of civilian nature, where the military may find its role, same as it refers to the civil-military relations, which seems an unavoidable procedural aspect of any security/defence policy. In both cases, NATO is no less sensitive than the EU, since its policies and operational background are inconceivable without various tools of democratic civilian

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[10] Hans G. Ehrhart, H. Hegemann and M. Kahl, 'Towards Security Governance as a Critical Tool: a Conceptual Outline', *European Security* 23, no. 2 (2014): 145-62.

[11] Simon Smith, 'Are the EU and NATO Really Committed to the International Order?' *European leadership network – Commentary*, published 24 September 2015, https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/are-the-eu-and-nato-really-committed-to-the-international-order (accessed October 15, 2019).

[12] Daniel Fiott, 'Improving CSDP Planning and Capability Development: Could there be a Frontex Formula?', *European Foreign Affairs Review* 18, no. 1 (2013): 47-62.

[13] Jolyon Howorth, 'European Defence and the Changing Politics of the European Union: Hanging Together or Hanging Separately?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39, no. 4 (2001): 765-89.

[14] Olivier Schmitt, 'L'OTAN face à la fin du modèle expéditionnaire' (NATO facing the end of the expeditionary model), *Revue défense nationale* (2012): 125-29.

[15] Tamás Csiki and Bence Németh, 'Perspectives of Central European Multinational Defense Cooperation: A New Model?' in Panorama of Global Security Environment, ed. M. Majer and R. Ondrejcsák, (Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, 2013), 11-24.

[16] See Simon J. Smith and Carmen Gebhard, 'The Two Faces of EU–NATO Cooperation: Counter-piracy Operations off the Somali Coast', *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, no. 1 (2015): 107-27.

[17] Chris J. Bickerton, B. Irondelle and A. Menon, 'Security Co-operation Beyond the Nation-State: The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 1 (2011): 1-21.

[18] Niels van Willigen and Joachim A. Koops, 'The EU's relationship with NATO and OSCE', in *The SAGE Handbook of European Foreign Policy*, ed. Knud Erik Jorgensen and others (New York: SAGE Publications, 2015), 735-50.

[19] Ibid., 737-8.

control over the military. Furthermore, the Alliance also pays attention to disaster relief operations of largely civilian nature. Hence, some precautions are needed when assessing the initial Van Willingen and Koops findings.

Moreover, Koenig and Grigorjeva reflect that if NATO's primary raison d'être is to remain the world's strongest military alliance and Europe's key actor in terms of collective defence and deterrence, the EU should play a contrasting role as the world's most important civilian power, which has been continuously expanding its toolbox[20]. The authors assert that there should not be a strict hard-soft division of labour between the two organizations, because in a more connected and complex political environment, maintaining, strengthening and unifying the two key pillars of transatlantic security has to be a strategic priority. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing discussion in the literature about the aforementioned dilemma, whether limitations of cooperation and difficulties take precedence over the possibility of proximity between the two structures.

Additionally, some scholars argue that EU-NATO relations matter because of the strategic importance of transatlantic dialogue, not only because NATO remains the guarantor of Euro-Atlantic security[21]. This has made the EU's relations with NATO a much greater strategic and political challenge than the EU's interaction with any other international organisation. Accordingly, Krotz and Maher also add that the emergence of norms and other intersubjective understandings, including the convergence of national "strategic cultures" around a common European strategic culture, has been a significant factor in this evolution[22]. Interestingly, in a dilemma of a strategic culture also Grant and Milenski distinguish different styles, or models, of a defence system. Firstly, the proper understanding of the outlined framework is necessary for its improvement. Secondly, a comprehensive approach to other states or international organisations might succeed in better interoperability at the supranational level, where the EU and NATO operate. The suggested styles (or models) are the 'politically dominant', the 'militarily dominant' and lastly, more 'emotional', which is rather not entirely rational, where choices of the day used to dominate. They are mutually exclusive as each has to define factors that mark them out the other. Furthermore, they are hard to sustain and most countries tend towards one style being dominant with elements of the others[23].

The Development of the EU-NATO Relationship (on various levels of cooperation)

Granted, EU-NATO relations are not confined to one level of cooperation, as at least three are recognised in the dedicated literature. Some authors concentrate on different levels of actors working in EU and NATO institutions. Consequently, the state actors that work in both EU and NATO institutions, the international staff and the military actors are identified[24]. Flockhart also analyses various levels of cooperation, such as the

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[20] Nicole Koenig and Jekaterina Grigorjeva, 'Three arguments for an ever closer EU-NATO cooperation', 21 June 2016, http://www.delorsinstitut.de/en/publications/three-arguments-for-an-ever-closer-eu-nato-cooperation (accessed October 16, 2019).

[21] Daniel Keohane, 'ESDP and NATO', in *European Security and Defence Policy. The First 10 Years (1999–2009)*, ed. Giovanni Grevi, D. Helly and D. Keohane, (Paris: European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009), 129-37.

[22] Ulrich Krotz and Richard Maher, 'International Relations Theory and the Rise of European Foreign and Security Policy', *World Politics* 63, no. 3 (2011): 548-79.

[23] Glen Grant and Vladimir Milenski, 'Defence models uncovered: how to understand the defence style of a country', *Defense & Security Analysis* 35, no. 1 (2019): 82-94.

[24] Simon J. Smith, 'EU-NATO cooperation: a case of institutional fatigue?', *European Security* 20, no. 2 (2011): 243-64.

grand strategy level, the political-strategic level and the tactical/operational level[25]. The first reflects the positions accepted by both organisations' Member States and is presented in the field of security by decision-making bodies such as the European Council, the North Atlantic Council and the Political and Security Committee (PSC). The political dimension is more complex, as it includes cooperation between NATO's Secretary-General and the High Representative of the EU, but also a growing number of staff-level meetings between the two structures[26]. At this level, political visions and declarations are transformed into a list of concrete, practical steps. This is crucial for collaboration at the third level – the operational one[27], which takes place in locations where both organisations act simultaneously.

In the literature, there are also references to cooperation at the "political level," the "staff-to-staff level" and the "operational level" without further explanation of the meaning of those terms[28]. One can also find an approach according to which the political level is contrasted with the practical level, and formal cooperation with informal or practical cooperation[29]. Whatever opinion is expressed, the authors distinguish these levels in order to reveal "the double-faced nature of NATO-EU cooperation," which has its roots in the history of this relationship[30] and which continues because of the restrained implementation of the organizations' strategic documents. Undoubtedly, EU-NATO relations have gone through several phases, and this aspect is worth mentioning here. The first phase, covering the post-Cold War decade, highlights the search by the European Union and NATO for new roles in a fundamentally altered international environment[31].

Subsequently, the two organizations entered a phase of their relationship (1999-2004) referred to as "the golden age"[32]. Within institutional matters, actions were taken in particular at the grand strategy level – the best example is the adoption of the Declaration on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). It proclaimed the EU-NATO relationship to be a "strategic partnership" in crisis management and reaffirmed the EU's access to NATO's planning capabilities for its own military operations[33]. The next important step was undertaken when the "Berlin Plus" agreement was adopted in 2003. It has been the only structured and institutionalised form of cooperation between the EU and NATO since then[34]. Furthermore, it has also been seen as a way of tying the EU and

[25] Trine Flockhart, "NATO and EU: A 'Strategic Partnership' or a Practice of 'Muddling Through'?", in *Strategy in NATO. Preparing for an Imperfect World*, ed. Liselotte Odgaard (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 75-90.

[26] Ibid., 76.

[27] See Simon Duke, 'The EU, NATO and the Treaty of Lisbon: Still Divided Within a Common City', in *EU External Relations Law and Policy In the post-Lisbon Era*, ed. Paul J. Cardwell (The Hague: Springer, 2012), 341-342.

[28] Kevin Koehler, 'Enhancing NATO-EU Cooperation: Looking South and Beyond', Center for Security Studies, 2017, http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/57da453c-b94e-44dd-b1c2-a35d12eed6e2/pdf (accessed September 20, 2019).

[29] Nina Græger and John Todd: Still a 'Strategic' EU–NATO Partnership?", *Bridging Governance Challenges through Practical Cooperation – PISM Policy Paper* 21, no. 123 (2015): 3-5.

[30] Koehler, 'Enhancing NATO-EU Cooperation', 2.

[31] Joachim A. Koops and Johannes Varwick, 'The European Union and NATO: Shrewd Interorganisationalism in the Making?', in *The European Union and International Organisations*, ed. Knud E. Joergensen (London: Routledge, 2009), 102.

[32] Ibid., 81.

[33] See 'The EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP', 16 December 2002, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19544.htm (accessed October 12, 2019).

[34] Simon J. Smith, 'The European Union and NATO Beyond Berlin Plus: the institutionalisation of informal cooperation' (PhD diss, Loughborough University, 2013) https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/bitstream/2134/14341/3/Thesis-2014-Smith.pdf (accessed June 30, 2018), 13.

its actions closely to NATO[35].

Being more precise, in light of the discussions about the functional relationship between these two different organisations, the "Berlin Plus" agreement and Agreed Framework were created to ensure that if NATO could not – or would not – engage in a particular operational context, the EU could do so under its own political guidance and chain of command but via "presumed access" to NATO assets and capabilities. More broadly, this framework for cooperation provided the EU access to NATO planning (SHAPE), access to NATO assets and capabilities and a predesignated European-only chain of command under the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe[36]. Despite its importance, "Berlin Plus" was implemented only for Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lack of further implementation was largely due to a political stalemate arising from the so-called "participation problem"[37]. Importantly, the Agreement stipulates that only those EU Member States that have signed a security agreement with NATO can take part in the consultations between NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC). This de facto excludes Cyprus. The impasse results in disagreements and serious limitations in the coordination of NATO-EU missions and operations at the political-strategic level. At the operational level, however, there seems to be a certain understanding by both Cyprus and Turkey of the need for such coordination and cooperation where these interventions are running in parallel, as in Kosovo, Afghanistan or in the Horn of Africa[38].

Furthermore, during this phase of NATO-EU relationship which is called "the golden age" both organisations enlarged to include new members from Central and Eastern Europe. However, the subsequent enlargements of the EU to 25 and, respectively, to 28 Member States by 2013 have complicated EU-NATO relations[39]. The above mentioned "participation problem" has hampered political dialogue, coordination of strategy, institutional cooperation and, consequently, joint EU-NATO actions[40]. As a result, the next phase of mutual relations, which started in 2004, is characterised by "the end of the honeymoon." The growing critical attitude of the American administration towards the European Security and Defence Policy, as well as the heated debate over the Iraq invasion between Europe and the USA (2003) have gradually chilled the relationship between the USA and Europe, which also impacted negatively on EU-NATO relations, with growing competition between the two as a result. These factors undoubtedly had a negative impact on cooperation, and one can still find "Atlanticist" and "Europeanist" attitudes and cultural differences reflected within the two bureaucracies. Even though the EU High Representatives and NATO Secretary Generals have officially acknowledged the importance of cooperation between both organisations, the two path-approach still differs in national governments[41].

Nevertheless, these problems in EU-NATO cooperation at the grand strategy

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[35] Hanna Ojanen, 'The EU and NATO: Two Competing Models for a Common Defence Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44, no. 1 (2006): 69.

[36] Jolyon Howorth, *Security and defence policy in the European Union* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 78.

[37] Simon J. Smith and Carmen Gebhard, 'EU–NATO relations: running on the fumes.', 304.

[38] Thierry Legendre, 'NATO's Cooperation with the EU doesn't work and it doesn't really matter … yet!', in *Cooperative Security: NATO's Partnership Policy in a Changing World*, ed. Trine Flockhart, DIIS Report, 123.

[39] Keohane, 'ESDP and NATO', 132.

[40] Nina Græger and Kristin Haugevik, 'The EU's Performance with and within NATO: Assessing Objectives, Outcomes and Organisational Practices', *Journal of European Integration* 33, no. 6 (2001): 746.

[41] Legendre, 'NATO's Cooperation with the EU doesn't work', 123.

level have not influenced the slow development of cooperation at the staff level and at the tactical/operational level. Therefore, authors describing the EU-NATO relationship characterise it as "communities of practice in the making"[42], "bridging governance challenges through practical cooperation"[43] or even as the "institutionalisation" of informal cooperation"[44]. In recent years, such informal contacts at all levels have remained a defining aspect of the EU-NATO partnership.

The Organizations' Main Strategic Documents

In order to have a comprehensive approach to the research problem, it is necessary to confront these dilemmas, from a strategic background. Therefore, this part of the article is focused on an analysis of the two organisations' main strategic documents. It aims to verify the second hypothesis, namely that concrete difficulties in the organisations' relationship are based on the fragmentary practical application of their strategic foundations.

European Union strategies

To have a broader strategic-based perspective on the issue, it is important to note that the European Union has already adopted two strategic documents indicating the main goals to be achieved in order to strengthen its position as a global security actor. The first was the European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World (ESS)[45] adopted in 2003, partly in order to address the crisis in transatlantic relations caused by the war in Iraq. It was also intended to emphasise the role of the EU in ensuring the security and freedom of its citizens and to create a kind of "program basis" for the emerging European Security and Defence Policy[46]. As far as EU-NATO relations are concerned, it underlined the importance of the transatlantic relationship as "one of the core elements of the international system"[47]. The ESS also referred to the EU-NATO permanent arrangements, in particular "Berlin Plus", whose goal was to enhance the operational capability of the EU and provide the framework for a strategic partnership between the two organizations in crisis management. However, the political barriers mentioned above (in particular the disagreement between Turkey and Cyprus, also involving Greece) have hindered substantive EU-NATO cooperation.

Initially, the governments of the EU Member States rejected the idea of revision[48], fearing a possible renewal of the division over strategic questions such as transatlantic relations. But the latest turmoil in Europe's backyard has built up pressure for strategic

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[42] Nina Græger, 'European security as practice: EU–NATO communities of practice in the making?', *European Security* 25, no. 4 (2016): 478-501.

[43] Nina Græger and John Todd, 'Still a 'Strategic' EU–NATO Partnership? Bridging Governance Challenges through Practical Cooperation', *Policy Paper – Polish Institute of International Affairs* 123, no. 21 (2015): 1-8.

[44] See Simon J. Smith, 'The European Union and NATO Beyond Berlin Plus'.

[45] General Secretariat of the Council, 'European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World', 2009, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf (accessed September 20, 2019).

[46] Justyna Maliszewska-Nienartowicz, 'Założenia globalnej strategii na rzecz polityki zagranicznej i bezpieczeństwa – przełom czy stagnacja?', (EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy: Breakthrough or Stagnation?), *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 2 (2015): 46.

[47] General Secretariat of the Council, *'European Security Strategy'*, 9.

[48] For more Jan Joel Anderson et.al., 'The European Security Strategy - Reinvigorate, Revise or Reinvent?', *Occasional UI Papers*, no. 7 (2011), https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:470149/FULLTEXT01.pdf (accessed August 23, 2020).

repositioning[49]. During the work on the new strategy some Member States, while still keen on enhancing security and defence cooperation in general, wanted to ensure that it would not challenge NATO's supremacy on collective defence, nor would it question the national sovereignty of Member States on this issues. By contrast, others, notably the non-NATO Member States, felt uneasy about a strong NATO focus in the EU Global Strategy and wanted to make sure that their status and autonomy as non-NATO members would be fully respected[50]. Consequently, the EU's second strategic document, the Global Strategy for foreign and security policy adopted in June 2016 is a clear compromise for Member States. They seemed to be satisfied with the result, although critics might claim that the current approach to this document results in blurring its general tone.

First, the new strategy underlines that the EU should take greater responsibility for its own security, emphasizing the concept of 'strategic autonomy'. Although NATO's main role is to defend its members from external attack, the EU should be better prepared not only to contribute to collective efforts but also to protect Europe as such. To take responsibility for its own safety, autonomous actions "if and when necessary" are not ruled out. Second, it is noted that NATO cannot be the only security framework for the entire European Union, as there are the Member States which are not a part of the Alliance. The strategy takes these circumstances into account and emphasises that when it comes to collective defence, NATO created framework remains the primary for most Member States. At the same time, EU-NATO relations shall not prejudice the security and defence policy of those Members which are not in NATO. Third, the document calls for a deepened partnership with NATO "in complementarity, synergy, and full respect for the institutional settings, inclusiveness and decision-making autonomy of the two structures"[51].

The principles that govern the relations between the two organisations demonstrate that they are not intended to compete with each other. In particular, the emphasis on complementarity and synergy indicates that the "beauty contest" that has at times characterised the EU-NATO relations had been put to rest[52]. In other words, EU-NATO cooperation is given an important role in the Global Strategy, and the organisations are seen as complementing each other rather than as rivals[53]. Furthermore, these two entities need to respect their strategic objectives as each is the main international partner that the other must rely on. This is a largely legalistic argument (the two are indeed different legal entities), but with clearly substantial political connotations[54].

Although NATO is seen as an important partner, there is also a need for EU autonomy in the field of security and defence. Efforts in this area "should enable the EU to act autonomously while also contributing to and undertaking actions with NATO. A more credible European defence is essential also for the sake of a healthy transatlantic

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[49] Annegret Bendiek and Markus Kaim, 'New European Security Strategy – The Transatlantic Factor', *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Comments* 34 (2015): 2.

[50] Nathalie Tocci, 'The making of the EU Global Strategy', *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no. 3 (2016): 468.

[51] EEAS, 'EU Global Strategy', https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf (accessed September 11, 2019), 20.

[52] Koenig, Grigorjeva, 'Three arguments'.

[53] Jérôme Legrand, 'Does the new EU Global Strategy deliver on security and defence?', *Policy Department - European Union Directorate-General for External Policies*, 2016, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/570472/EXPO_IDA%282016%29570472_EN.pdf (accessed October 7, 2019), 14.

[54] Jolyon Howorth, 'EU-NATO Cooperation and Strategic Autonomy: Logical Contradiction or Ariadne's Thread?', *KFG Working Paper* 90 (2018): 8.

partnership with the United States"[55]. Thus, according to the strategy, a stronger Common Security and Defence Policy should reinforce the European pillar of NATO instead of undermining its role. Such a position has been maintained by the EU and its Member States since the Saint Malo Declaration[56] of December 1998, where the Heads of State and Government of France and the United Kingdom agreed that "the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action" and that "in strengthening the solidarity between the Member States of the European Union (…) it contributes to the vitality of a modernised Atlantic Alliance"[57]. The same approach adopted in the EU Global Strategy reveals that the EU (via the CSDP) aims to become a military actor, neither undermining nor questioning NATO's supremacy in the field[58].

In addition to autonomous actions, the EU is to undertake actions together with NATO. Therefore, the need for cooperation is expressed in many provisions of the strategic documents, including in relation to strengthening resilience in the EU's closest neighbourhood, together with enhancing its partners' capacities to deliver security within the rule of law, addressing conflicts and contributing to effective global governance. Moreover, the strategy, in the section concerning EU cooperation with diverse partners, again refers to "a solid transatlantic partnership through NATO". It is also explained how the EU is going to deepen this partnership: "through coordinated defence capability development, parallel and synchronised exercises, and mutually reinforcing actions to build the capacities of our partners, counter hybrid[59] and cyber threats, and promote maritime security"[60]. The list of issues on which cooperation ought to be undertaken is similar to the one provided by the EU-NATO Joint Declaration of July 2016[61]. As both organizations face similar security challenges[62] it would be astonishing, indeed incomprehensible if they did not cooperate closely on all these issues[63].

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Strategic Approach
The *Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*[64] reconfirms the commitment by members to defend one another against attacks and emerging threats. It commits the Alliance to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilise post-conflict situations. This approach includes closer cooperation with international partners, most importantly with the European Union. NATO's essential mission and core principle is to be a source of security and stability

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[55] - , "EU Global Strategy," 20.

[56] See Raik, Järvenpää, 'A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation', 4.

[57] Maartje Rutten, 'From Saint-Malo to Nice. European Defence: Core Documents', *Chaillot Paper* 47 (2001): 8.

[58] Howorth, 'EU-NATO Cooperation and Strategic Autonomy', 8.

[59] More about hybrid threats: Raik, Järvenpää, 'A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation', 11-16.

[60] - , 'EU Global Strategy', 37.

[61] - , "Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," 2016, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24293/signed-copy-nato-eu-declaration-8-july-en.pdf (accessed September 23, 2019). It predicts that the EU and NATO should, inter alia, take actions to counter hybrid threats, broaden their operational cooperation (including also with regard to maritime areas and migration), expand coordination regarding cyber security and defence, develop defence capabilities of EU Member States and NATO Allies, and facilitate a stronger defence industry and research cooperation.

[62] Andrea A. Stabile, Guillaume Lasconjarias and Paola Sartori, 'NATO-EU Cooperation to Project Stability', Instituto Affari Internazionali, 2018, https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iai1818.pdf (accessed September 25, 2019), 5.

[63] Jolyon Howorth, 'EU-NATO Cooperation and Strategic Autonomy', 7.

[64] -, 'Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation', 2010, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf (accessed October 15, 2019).

in an unpredictable world. Furthermore, the transatlantic link remains as strong and as important as ever to the preservation of Euro-Atlantic peace and freedom[65]. The Strategic Concept recognises that the modern security environment contains a broad and evolving set of challenges[66]. To ensure members' security, the Alliance continuously fulfils three essential tasks in accordance with the provisions of international law.

First, the principle of collective defence means NATO is ready to deter and defend against aggression. Today, the threat of a conventional attack is relatively low. That is a historic success for the policies of robust defence, Euro-Atlantic integration and active partnership, but still, conventional threats cannot be ignored. They include the proliferation of ballistic missiles, instability or conflict beyond NATO borders, fostering extremism, terrorism, and trans-national illegal activities such as trafficking in arms, narcotics and people.

Furthermore, crisis management is based on the assumption that NATO has a unique and robust set of political and military capabilities to address the full spectrum of crises. The Strategic Concept explains that the best way to manage conflicts is to prevent them, so NATO continually monitors and analyses the international environment to anticipate crises, and where appropriate takes active steps to prevent escalation. Where conflict prevention proves unsuccessful, NATO is to employ a mix of political and military tools to help manage developing crises that have the potential to affect Alliance security[67]. Nevertheless, increasing alliance security through crisis management and conflict resolution beyond NATO's borders can simultaneously pose a direct threat to the security of Alliance territory and populations. Due to the political geography, the EU territory is in the close neighbourhood of unstable regions where the Alliance actively operates. So any unpredictable repercussions of undertaken actions are more likely to affect European states than the USA itself, for instance.

Additionally, NATO's goal is to maintain an appropriate combination of nuclear deterrence and conventional forces, maintaining the ability to sustain concurrent major joint operations and several smaller operations for collective defence and crisis response, including at strategic distance. Furthermore, it is necessary to add that the Alliance must enhance intelligence-sharing among members to better predict when crises might occur and how they can best be prevented. Furthermore, developing doctrine and military capabilities for expeditionary operations, including counterinsurgency, stabilisation and reconstruction operations, create an appropriate but modest civilian crisis management capability. Nevertheless, capacity to interface more effectively with civilian partners must be developed, and this area cannot be ignored. In practice, it means Alliance investments in training local forces in crisis zones[68].

The third task is cooperative security, where the Alliance engages actively to enhance international stability, through partnerships with third countries and other international organizations, by contributing actively to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. However, this aspect should not be seen only through the lenses of a

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[65] Ibid., 6-8.
[66] See Trine Flockhart, 'After the Strategic Concept – Towards the NATO Version 3.0', *Danish Institute for International Studies - Report*, 2011, https://www.diis.dk/files/media/publications/import/extra/rp2011-06-nato-after-strategic-concept_web.pdf (accessed September 30, 2019), 13-24.
[67] -, 'Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation', 19-20.
[68] Ibid., 21-22.

joint EU-NATO crisis management. Cooperative security in the literature[69] is traditionally seen as cooperation mostly between NATO and non-member states on various (not only crisis management) aspects of security policy. Nevertheless, in this area, it is clear that the EU is an essential partner. NATO acknowledges the possibilities of enhancing European defence capability that flows from the Lisbon Treaty, which provides a proper framework for such actions (the best example is current development of the Permanent Structured Cooperation - PESCO in the area of CSDP). While complementing and mutually reinforcing its roles in supporting international peace and security, it is necessary to prevent duplication of effort and maximise cost-effectiveness by broadening political consultations on all issues of common concern. By sharing recognized assessments and perspectives both organizations should enhance practical cooperation in operations across the crisis spectrum, from coordinated planning to mutual support in the field[70].

While analysing the NATO strategic document, one might have an impression that it appeals to the partnership with the EU only occasionally. While having a broader overview of the situation with different strategic culture and focusing on NATO's mutual defence, it seems that it is more the EU which officially relates its common security and defence ambitions to the Alliance and Euro-Atlantic bonds. NATO is more focused on its main guidelines and treats the EU similarly to other supranational partners, but without pressing Brussels' substantial importance on the strategic level. However, this picture evolves when we reach the *Warsaw Declaration on Transatlantic Security*[71], *Brussels Declaration on Transatlantic Security and Solidarity*[72] or *Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation*[73]. There are clearly marked aspects such as interoperability, not duplicating activities, sharing resources, joint initiatives, communication not only at the strategic level but also at the tactical and operational level, creation of joint centres and cooperation of agencies and institutions. Nevertheless, these are non-binding documents of a rather declaratory character. Since they have been agreed by governments which co-create the EU and NATO we find them applicable and realistic, however, the difference between both strategic approaches is still visible.

Key Findings

First of all, it should be noted that the provisions of both the latest NATO Strategic Concept[74] and the EU Global Strategy are apparently in line with the objective of increasing EU-NATO cooperation. The importance of the relationship has been underlined in particular in the EU-NATO Joint Declaration adopted at the Warsaw Summit in July 2016[75]. However, this meeting was not an exception in proving the meaning of strategic guidelines, as recently each NATO summit has tried to move the Strategic Concept's assumptions forward. The analysis of strategic documents and current

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[69] Ole Waever, 'Cooperative Security: a New Concept?' in *Cooperative Security: NATO's Partnership Policy in a Changing World*, ed. Trine Flockhart, DIIS Report, 47-59.

[70] -, 'Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security', 26-32.

[71] Warsaw Declaration on Transatlantic Security, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133168.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed September 23, 2019).

[72] *Brussels Declaration on Transatlantic Security and Solidarity*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156620.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed September 23, 2019).

[73] *Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156626.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed September 23, 2019).

[74] See Karl H. Kamp, 'Why NATO Needs a New Strategic Concept', http://www.natofoundation.org/food/why-nato-needs-a-new-strategic-concept-karl-heinz-kamp-2/ (accessed October 12, 2019).

[75] 'Warsaw declaration on Transatlantic Security'.

actions proves that the EU and NATO share similar global threats and both structures are attempting to elaborate the basis for cooperating with each other. Consequently, our basic findings are in line with one aspect of Mayer's opinion, i.e. that enhancing cooperation is necessary mostly because the EU and NATO have 22 members in common and face similar security challenges, which require a reasonable division of labour and a well-structured communication sphere[76]. Nevertheless, even though such solutions seem reasonable, relations are still problematic, as NATO and the EU in theory offer competing models of security provision, with differences in culture, detailed functions, instruments and underlying institutional logic[77].

The EU has been referred to as a 'normative power'[78], nevertheless, a main and classical dichotomy to be mentioned, is between civilian and military power, according to which the EU performs the leading role concerning the former dimension, while NATO takes centre stage when it comes to military aspects. In particular, the EU has developed coherent approaches aiming at evaluating and addressing critical situations, especially in the field of institution-building. Conversely, on the military side, the EU lags behind NATO because it lacks structures devoted to ensuring collective defence and deterrence. Although this dichotomy suggests a complementary division of labour between the two organisations, in practice joint strategic planning and ex-ante NATO-EU coordination are challenged, among other things, by the lack of a shared concept of threat perception. This is true not only in the framework of NATO-EU relations but also within the realm of each organisation. In addition, recent developments in terms of defence integration among EU members (e.g. creation of the European Defence Agency, establishing the Permanent Structured Cooperation within security sphere) seem to have complicated the picture even further, demanding clarification of the EU's level of ambition in this domain[79]. However, both organisations should understand that without overcoming these obstacles no significant step forward is possible.

Undoubtedly, even though both the EU and NATO are co-creators of the 'transatlantic security community', coexistence of both structures is complex, not only because of the above-mentioned differences between the two, but also because cooperation takes place at different levels and engages a variety of decision makers[80] and institutions. This nexus does not simplify the situation, although it might also allow a reasonable division of tasks, in particular at lower decision-making and operational levels. Furthermore, it is important to note that the political visions and declarations formulated at the grand strategy level (with or without the participation of the Member States) are transformed into a list of concrete decisions at the political-strategic level. Unfortunately, for many years, EU-NATO cooperation has rather taken the form of informal contacts in the tactical/operational phases. These findings confirm that another reason why the overall picture of EU-NATO relations is complicated is that they take different forms at

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[76] Sebastian Mayer, 'Embedded Politics, Growing Informalization? How NATO and the EU Transform Provision of External Security', *Contemporary Security Policy* 32, no. 2 (2011): 308-33.

[77] Ibid., 309.

[78] See Ian Manners, 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 235-58; Ian Manners, 'Normative Power Europe reconsidered: beyond the crossroads', *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (2006): 182-199.

[79] Andrea A. Stabile, Guillaume Lasconjarias and Paola Sartori, 'NATO-EU ...', 9.

[80] For a decision to be made in favour of military action, NATO's decision-making process must pass through various stages involving the NAC, SACEUR, the Military Committee and the national parliaments of the NATO countries. See 'The Future of NATO and European Security', 21.

different levels. Therefore, there is a need for better coordination of all actions at the grand strategy and political-strategic levels, which has been discussed and formally increased after the 2016 Warsaw Summit. Fortunately, progress reports[81] on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on December 2016 prove that reasonable steps have already been taken.

Thus, despite the general criticism of the current stage of EU-NATO relations, it should be noted that there have been some positive examples of this cooperation in recent years. It cannot be forgotten that the respective NATO and EU Mission Staffs in Iraq have been coordinating their activities. The other example of cooperation is Ukraine, where, under the auspices of the EU Delegation, NATO chairs a donor coordination group for the defence and security sector. It closely cooperates with the EU Advisory Mission to Ukraine on issues such as strategic communications, communications capacity building, training, and reform of the Security Service of Ukraine[82]. Furthermore, the established practice of mutual invitations to ministerial meetings is continued. The EU High Representative participates in working dinners of NATO Ministers of Defence and meetings of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Deputy Secretary General of NATO attends the EU Foreign Affairs Council and the informal meetings of EU Ministers of Defence. With a view to enhancing transparency between EU and NATO on multinational capability development projects and programs, EU and NATO representatives have been invited to the NATO Conference of National Armaments Directors and the European Defence Agency Steering Board respectively. Meanwhile, the EU and NATO staff have established a dialogue on counter-terrorism issues. They have focused on cooperation regarding terrorist threats, collaboration in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, capacity building of partner countries and development of scenario-based discussions[83]. Importantly, since 2017 cooperation between the NATO-accredited Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Centre of Excellence and the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centres of Excellence Initiative has been developed[84]. It is also worth noting that one of the successful examples of positive EU-NATO cooperation is the creation of the Helsinki based European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE). The initiative was supported in the Common set of proposals for the implementation of the Joint EU/NATO Declaration, endorsed by the Council of the European Union and the North Atlantic Council in December 2016. The Hybrid CoE has been inaugurated in October 2017[85].

However, these positive examples are not enough to claim that the two biggest

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[81] *'Progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016'*, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_06/20170619_170614-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-EN.pdf (accessed October 24, 2019); *'Second progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016'*, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_11/171129-2nd-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-eng.pdf (accessed October 25, 2019); *'Third progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by EU and NATO Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017'*, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_06/20180608_180608-3rd-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-eng.pdf (accessed October 26, 2019); *'Fourth progress report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017'*, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_06/190617-4th-Joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-eng.pdf (accessed October 26, 2019).
[82] 'Third progress report on the implementation', 8-9.
[83] Ibid., 9.
[84] Ibid., 8.
[85] See Hybrid CoE, https://www.hybridcoe.fi/what-is-hybridcoe/ (accessed October 24, 2019).

creators of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture truly treat each other as strategic partners not only on the strategic but also on the practical level. The good examples also seem to be less significant because of the overall picture of poor ground-level daily cooperation, of which the greatest proofs are the organisations' missions in the Balkans[86] and recently on the coast of Somalia[87]. Furthermore, the Turkey-Cyprus issue remains unresolved, hampering EU-NATO cooperation, in particular common meetings and a reasonable exchange of bottom-level information.

Therefore, in our opinion, the practical application of the organisations' strategic foundations is still rather fragmentary. Our key finding in this field is that declarations and political decisions have not been followed up in a satisfactory way by formal tactical/operational cooperation. Although actions have been undertaken to make EU-NATO cooperation a reality, it seems that there is still a need for ongoing broadening political consultations between the two organisations, along with more coordinated planning of their operations. Moreover, the EU and NATO are to deepen their partnership through common actions to build the capacities of the member states in countering hybrid and cyber threats and promoting maritime security. This is a concrete program for future cooperation predicted in the strategic documents, in particular in the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy.

Conclusion

Our research has shown that the strategic documents of both organisations underline the need for complementarity instead of rivalry or decoupling, as well as their mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security. Undoubtedly, similar security challenges have been one of the most important factors that have driven the EU and NATO to strengthen their cooperation and to be more active in this field. The process of implementation of the main strategic concepts is now under way, and the overwhelming majority of the actions already undertaken have a mid-term perspective. In our opinion, only the continuation of this process can bring about a real change in the relationship between the two.

Therefore, one should keep in mind the fact that coordination between Brussels and Washington takes place at a number of policy levels: the intergovernmental, the transgovernmental, and the transnational. Such differentiation, also formulated by Pollack and Shaffer[88], has led to the conclusion that the transatlantic relationship is a "laboratory for new forms of governance". We still believe that this aspect requires further analysis, especially with regard to political theory, same as facets such as the problematic division of power and the emerging divisions within NATO (e.g. United States-Turkey-European members).

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[86] See Per Norheim-Martinsen, 'Beyond Intergovernmentalism: European Security and Defence Policy and the Governance Approach', JCMS 48, no. 5 (2010): 1358; Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 'Europe's Defence Dilemma' The *International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (2014): 90-91.

[87] EU NAVFOR 'Atalanta' and NATO's operation 'Ocean Shield' operate alongside each other with no formal links between the chains of command or at the organization-to-organization level. Given their very similar mandates, there is a unity of effort and ambition between the two organizations but formally no unity of command. See Simon Duke, 'The EU, NATO and the Treaty of Lisbon: Still Divided ...', 343; Nina Græger and Kristin Haugevik, 'The EU's Performance ...', 743-57.

[88] Mark Pollack and Gregory Shaffer, 'Transatlantic Governance in Historical and Theoretical Perspective' in *Transatlantic Governance in the Global Economy*, ed. Mark Pollack and Gregory Shaffer (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 5.

Moreover, the influence of the creation of PESCO[89] within the CSDP, a treaty-based process aimed at deepening the EU Member States' defence cooperation same as unknown outcomes of Brexit will be decisive in the nearest future. Against the backdrop of the EUGS and in line with Articles 42(6) and 46 as well as in Protocol 10 of the Treaty on EU, the ministers from the 23 EU Member States, willing to participate in differentiated PESCO projects on various levels, signed a joint notification on 13 November 2017 and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council. At the time of writing, a total of 25 Member States have decided to participate in this initiative. This permanent framework for defence cooperation will allow those Member States willing and able to jointly develop defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, or enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces. The difference between PESCO and other forms of cooperation is the legally binding nature of the commitments undertaken by the participating Member States[90]. This aspect is also important for the EU-NATO tough partnership as it might redefine the EU actions within the CSDP.

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[89] See Niklas Nováky, 'The EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defence: Keeping Sleeping Beauty from Snoozing', *European View* 17, no. 1 (2018): 99; Sven Biscop, 'European Defence: Give PESCO a Chance', *Survival* 60, no. 3 (2018): 166-8.
[90] Fact sheet, 'Permanent Structured Cooperation – Deepening Defence Cooperation among EU Member States', https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/pesco_factsheet_may_2019.pdf (accessed October 23, 2019).

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