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NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept.

Analysis and implications for Austria

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Executive Summary

Adopted at the Madrid Summit in June 2022, the long-overdue NATO's new Strategic Concept provides a clear set of guidelines for the Atlantic Alliance in a mid-term perspective. The war in Ukraine has provided the Allies with a powerful catalyst to reconsider NATO's identity, core missions, as well as their vision of Russia and China. NATO's new deterrence and defence-centric approach has already entailed a major shift in our security architecture, especially on Europe's eastern flank. Without undermining its historical neutrality, Austria might reinterpret it in light of NATO's "reset" and use this opportunity to reinvigorate its partnership with the Alliance.

Zusammenfasung

Das längst überfällige neue Strategische Konzept der NATO, das auf dem Madrider Gipfel im Juni 2022 angenommen wurde, bietet mittelfristig klare Leitlinien für das Atlantische Bündnis. Der Krieg in der Ukraine hat den Alliierten einen starken Impuls gegeben, die Identität der NATO, ihre Kernaufgaben sowie ihren Blick auf Russland und China zu überdenken. Der neue abschreckungs- und verteidigungszentrierte Ansatz der NATO hat bereits zu einer großen Veränderung unserer Sicherheitsarchitektur geführt, insbesondere an der Ostflanke Europas. Ohne seine historische Neutralität zu untergraben, könnte Österreich sie angesichts des „Neustarts" der NATO neu interpretieren und diese Gelegenheit nutzen, um seine Partnerschaft mit dem Bündnis neu zu beleben.

Contents

"We have endorsed a new Strategic Concept. It describes the security environment facing the Alliance, reaffirms our values, and spells out NATO's key purpose and greatest responsibility of ensuring our collective defence based on a 360-degree approach. It further sets out NATO's three core tasks of deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. In the years to come, it will guide our work in the spirit of our transatlantic solidarity."

NATO Madrid Summit Declaration, 30 June 2022

From 28 to 30 June 2022, NATO 30 Allies' Heads of State and Government met in the Spanish capital city to steer a course through current challenges and determine the Alliance's future direction. Against the backdrop of the most acute crisis for European security in the post- Cold War era, the Madrid event was described by President Biden as a "history-making Summit" (Biden & Stoltenberg, 2022). "We meet at a pivotal moment and our Madrid Summit will be transformative. The decisions we take will define our security for the decade ahead.", NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg further emphasized (Stoltenberg opening remarks, 2022).

The Summit's most important outcome was the adoption of a long-overdue NATO's new Strategic Concept.

The Strategic Concept, agreed upon by allied Heads of State and Government, is the highest-level agreement establishing the Alliance's strategic direction (Becker, Duda & Lute, 2022, 490). In the hierarchy of NATO documents, it sits one level below the North Atlantic Treaty (4 April 1949), which operational view it represents. The Strategic Concept outlines NATO's purpose, core tasks, and strategy to address fundamental security risks and challenges and exploit opportunities to promote Allies' interests in a changing security environment. It codifies past and piecemeal decisions and orientations (for instance ministerial communiqués and Summit declarations issued since the previous Concept, something which is observable when it comes to NATO's perception of China – see Kaim & Stanzel, 2022) and presents them to the public as a coherent whole, thus providing coherence and solidifying the Alliance's foundations (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2009, 5 & 7)**.** The process of negotiating such a statement is itself a useful internal exercise for the member states: NATO's Strategic Concepts facilitate compromise and unity of thought and purpose by compelling Allies to jointly address vexing strategic issues (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2021, 148; Shea, 2022, 2)**.** As T. Tardy underscores, the Concept is not an Action Plan, nor does it aim to offer policy options for Allies (Tardy, 2022, 1): "It is a strategic document that quite literally focuses on the big picture: NATO's key objectives." (Sillaste-Elling,

2022). Since its foundation in 1949, NATO has adopted seven Strategic Concepts (Becker, Duda & Lute, 2022, 490-491; Chiriac & Olariu, 2017; Ringsmose & Rynning, 2009, 6-15; Michaels, 2020). Since 1989, the Strategic Concept has been updated roughly every ten years, and the 2022 document is the fourth of its kind in the post-Cold War era.

Karl-Heinz Kamp, in a seminal paper, argued that the previous Strategic Concept, agreed at the Lisbon summit in 2010 and geared mainly to summarising changes in the strategic environment over the previous decade, was massively out of date. The Russian incursions into Ukraine; the chaos across the MENA region; the continuing destabilisation of the Asia-Pacific region, on which both the US and the EU depend for their commercial life-blood; and the election of Donald Trump, all implied that NATO had to adapt its strategic foundations to the new situation (Kamp, 2017). The much needed NATO's "strategic reset" actually began at the Wales Summit, in 2014, after Russia annexed Crimea (Olsen, 2020, 4), but the reflection over a new Strategic Concept started at the December 2019 leaders' meeting, when Allies invited the Secretary-General to present a "Council-agreed proposal for a forward-looking reflection process under his auspices, drawing on relevant expertise, to further strengthen NATO's political dimension including consultation" (London Declaration, 2019, 7). H. Larsen recalls that the publication of the Strategic Concept followed a long process of deliberation that was put on hold during former U.S. President Donald Trump's term due to his disdain for NATO (Larsen, 2022, 1), in anticipation of a period of more constructive internal politics. The drafting of the new Concept was officially launched at the 2021 Summit in Brussels. NATO leaders stipulated that while the Secretary-General should "lead" the process, the text "will be negotiated and agreed by the Council in Permanent Session and endorsed by NATO Leaders at the next Summit" (Brussels Summit Communiqué, 2021, 6h) The exercise benefited a lot from the work of the independent Reflection Group appointed by Secretary-General Stoltenberg in April 2020, to assess ways to strengthen the political dimension of the NATO Alliance. One of the key recommendations of the "NATO 2030" report was to update the 2010 Strategic Concept, as a "starting point" and "an opportunity to solidify cohesion by confronting new strategic realities and bringing together the various strands of recent adaptations into one coherent strategic picture" (NATO 2030, 2020, para. 1 and p. 23).

When the Reflection Group appointed by Secretary-General J. Stoltenberg published its report on "NATO 2030" in late 2020, it was no coincidence that the Alliance's cohesion was among the key points (NATO 2030, 2020, 50). Diagnosed "brain dead" by French President Macron (*The Economist*, 2019) - a remark which apparently boosted the process of a Strategic Concept -, stigmatized as "obsolete" by Donald Trump right after his election in 2017 (Reuters, 2017), the Atlantic Alliance needed to restore and maintain internal political cohesion across its members, further shaken by Russia's behaviour.

The 2022 Strategic Concept is therefore an exercise of promotion and self-appreciation. The Allies stand together to defend their freedom and "contribute to a more peaceful world." (SC, Preface). "Investing in NATO is the best way to ensure the enduring bond between European and North American Allies, while contributing to global peace and stability." (SC, 47). The 30 NATO members reaffirm the common values which were already enshrined into the North Atlantic Treaty: individual liberty, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They commit to reinforce their "unity, cohesion and solidarity" (SC, Preface), building on the enduring transatlantic bond between their nations and the strength of their "shared democratic values", and to reinforce consultations when the security and stability of an Ally is threatened or when their "fundamental values and principles are at risk" (SC, 47). Fists are on the table: "while NATO is a defensive Alliance, no one should doubt our strength and resolve to defend every inch of Allied territory, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Allies and prevail against any aggressor." (SC, 20). But at fair price: "we will share equitably responsibilities and risks for our defence and security." (SC, 48).

The 2022 document, which is 11 pages in length, includes 49 paragraphs distributed on three axes: objectives and principles, the strategic environment, the three core tasks of the Alliance (deterrence and defense, prevention and crisis management, cooperative security) and, finally, a sort of conclusion on "Ensuring the Alliance's Continued Success". Contrary to its 2010 predecessor ("Active Engagement, Modern Defence") but similar to the 1991 and 1999 Concepts, the 2022 text has no title.

This Working Paper is structured around four parts:
First, it will focus on the political context which shaped the 2022 Strategic Concept, with special regard to the way the Russian Federation and China are seen by the Allies and addressed in the document.

Second, it will empirically scrutinize the new Strategic Concept through NATO's core functions, which reprioritization very much reflects the changes since 2010. Comments on Cooperative Security will also allow developments on the cooperational "momentum" between NATO and the European Union, which has recently been completed by a third – and long-overdue – EU-NATO Joint Declaration signed on 10 January 2023.

Third, it will highlight a few direct or indirect implications of the new Strategic Concept on European security architecture, NATO's and US's massive redeployment on the Alliance's eastern flank being the most visible.

Finally, this paper will focus on the specific situation of Austria which, as a neutral country, EU member State, non-NATO Ally but NATO's partner, finds itself in further isolation after Sweden's and Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership. The author provides with a few recommendations on how Austria could use the current NATO's "reset" to clarify its position both with regard to its partnership with NATO and to the EU-NATO cooperation.

1. A document shaped by the events in Europe in 2022

Each Strategic Concept endorsed by the Allies since 1949 fits into a different political context. The 2010 Concept, in force until 2022, was very much the product of a debate between a "global NATO" and a "regional NATO", between a "Come home, NATO" vision and a "Globalize, Stupid" one (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2009). It was also the symbol of an era where Europe was fully enjoying the "peace dividend" and reflected a European security order characterised by the absence of a unifying threat. Therefore, it was retrospectively seen as "overly optimistic and complacent" (Valasek, 2022, 6, 8). Its description of the security environment started with a statement that "Today, the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low". The document noted that NATO "does not consider any country to be its adversary" and famously called for "a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia" (SC 2010, 7, 16 and 33). Moreover, J. Ringsmose and S. Rynning deem it "extraordinarily political in character and oriented towards public diplomacy, and by implication rather disconnected from the military side of NATO." (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2021, 150). The "Strategic Environment" described by the 2022 Strategic Concept appears tragically different. Since 2010, the world has changed. The new Concept reflects very much what M. Webber calls "the US-China-Russia strategic triangle" (Webber, 2022).

The entire existential path of the North Atlantic Alliance, and implicitly that of the Strategic Concepts that ensured its functional success, were built on the power relationship between the Western community and Russia, more precisely, on the need to coagulate efforts in the Western community in order to ensure the balance of power with Russia (Chiriac & Olariu, 2017, 76). This first post-Crimea Strategic Concept does not derogate to this rule, and the crisis with Russia over Ukraine was a powerful catalyst requiring the Allies to reconsider the question of NATO's identity and core missions. Ironically, in 2010 against the backdrop of President Obama's "Reset", two fellows at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) envisaged a NATO–Russia Strategic Concept to raise their relationship to the next step and overcome their legacy of mistrust (Antonenko & Yurgens, 2010). Far from this irenic vision, in 2022 the Russian Federation is qualified as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security

and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." (SC, 8)[1], a formulation quite similar to the EU Strategic Compass adopted three months earlier.[2] "Moscow's behaviour reflects a pattern of Russian aggressive actions against its neighbours and the wider transatlantic community." (SC, Preface). Therefore, the Allies "cannot consider the Russian Federation to be (their) partner" (SC, 9). They will continue to respond to Russian threats and hostile actions in a united and responsible way, significantly strengthen deterrence and defence, enhance their resilience against Russian coercion and support their partners to counter malign interference and aggression. The 2022 Concept is clear: for NATO, the most immediate challenge is a resurgent and revisionist Russia. However, the authors of the Concept do not suggest that NATO should simply revert back to the Cold War posture: the world has become far more complex.

"China may be one of the most difficult issues to be resolved in the new Concept.", J. Shea predicted before the Madrid Summit (Shea, 2022, 14). China was not mentioned at all in the 2010 Strategic Concept. Without using the word "threat" (something that France – along with Germany – might have been successful in preventing), the 2022 document takes up the same wording as NATO's Brussels Summit the year before,[3] as well as inspiration from the "NATO 2030" report (NATO 2030, 2020, 12, 17-18 & 27-28): China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge the Allies' "interests, security and values" in a "systemic" way (SC, 13-14). The deepening strategic cooperation between China and Russia (what V. Tchakarova calls the "Dragonbear") enshrined in their "no limits" partnership twenty days before Russia's invasion, China's verbal and political support to Russia during the war in Ukraine, and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order, run counter to NATO's interests. China's "efforts to divide the Alliance" are pointed out.[4] The Strategic Concept also refers to the importance of the freedom of navigation, which might reserve the right for NATO, in

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[1] In comparison, the 2010 Concept stated: "NATO-Russia cooperation is of strategic importance as it contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability and security . NATO poses no threat to Russia . On the contrary: we want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, and we will act accordingly, with the expectation of reciprocity from Russia" (para. 33).

[2] "Through the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, Russia is grossly violating international law and the principles of the UN Charter and undermining European and global security and stability" (Strategic Compass, 2022, p. 17).

[3] See para. 3 and 55-56. The Alliance's change of tone with regards to China actually dates back to its December 2019 London Declaration, issued after a leaders' meeting marking the Alliance's 70th anniversary (see para. 6).

[4] It is interesting to compare the NATO Strategic Concept with the 2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. Whereas between two front-page threats for NATO, Russia is placed above the fold in the Strategic Concept, in the NDS, China comes as the first challenge, even before the threat posed by Russia ("The 2022 NDS advances a strategy focused on the PRC and on collaboration with our growing network of Allies and partners on common objectives. It seeks to prevent the PRC's dominance of key regions while protecting the U.S. homeland and reinforcing a stable and open international system" (p. 2); "The most comprehensive and serious challenge to U.S. national security is the PRC's coercive and increasingly aggressive endeavor to refashion the Indo-Pacific region and the international system to suit its interests and authoritarian preferences" (p. 3)).

the future, to patrol the Indo-Pacific, despite NATO Secretary-General's assertions that NATO as an organization has no plans to do so (Valasec, 2022, 46-47).

"NATO members should also be careful to not overemphasize China as a topic for the Alliance." (Kunz, 2021a, 172): the Allies have chosen to ignore this warning. It seems that NATO will from now on "look East beyond Russia" much more than in the past (Tertrais, 2022, 28). For S. R. Sloan, identifying China as an aggressive competitor is a historic step in a direction long advocated by the United States, and a clear "win" for the Biden Administration (Sloan, 2022, 21), in contrast with European Allies reserved position. Beijing's hostile reaction to the publication of the Strategic Concept confirms that the document has struck a sensitive chord.[5] Interestingly though, the Concept falls short of laying out how NATO can or should respond to this mounting challenge (Tardy, 2022, 11),[6] a shortage which might simply translate the profound divide between Allies on the ideological and political threat that China represents.

Adapting the alliance to this competitive era will arguably be the main purpose of the new strategic concept.

2. NATO's core functions

The Strategic Concept reaffirms that NATO's key purpose is to ensure the Allies' collective defence,[7] based on a traditional 360-degree approach. The return of great-power competition in Europe—arguably best illustrated by Moscow's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014—forced allies to put collective defense once again at the center of NATO strategy. The new Strategic Concept makes it clear that collective defence is the foundation of this Alliance. The three core tasks that NATO will continue to fulfill, which titles have been slightly amended compared to the 2010 Concept: deterrence and defence

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[5] See Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Press Conference on 30 June 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202206/t20220630_10713185.html; Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, "China resolutely opposes NATO's new strategic concept document: Defense Spokesperson", 28 July 2022, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2022-07/28/content_4916873.htm; and Spokesperson of Chinese Embassy in Norway, "NATO's New Strategic Concept has Nothing New but New Cold War", 30 June 2022, http://no.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zjsg_2/sgxw/202206/t20220630_10713156.htm.

[6] For instance, P. Keller regrets that the idea of creating a NATO-China Council did not make it into the Concept nor to the attached Summit Declaration (Keller, 2022, 38), an engagement platform that K. Kjellström Elgin and A. Wieslander had already suggested in 2021 (125).

[7] NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept defines Collective Defense as the firm and binding commitment of the Alliance's member States to "always assist each other against attack, in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty." (para. 4a).

(versus collective defence in 2010); crisis prevention and management (versus crisis management); and cooperative security, are "complementary to ensure the collective defence and security of all Allies" (SC, 4). "NATO is now returning to more familiar territory" (Shea, 2022, 3).

Deterrence and Defense: from the back seat to the center of NATO strategy

Deterrence has been a fundamental element of NATO's posture in Europe since the dawn of the Cold War. The new NATO Strategic Concept adopted in Madrid places a clear emphasis on defence and deterrence, which was seen as a weak point of its predecessor. Crimea's annexation and separatism in the Donbas were a "wake-up call" for the Alliance. The "NATO 2030" report called on NATO to "maintain adequate conventional and nuclear military capabilities and possess the agility and flexibility to confront aggression across the Alliance's territory, including where Russian forces are either directly or indirectly active, particularly on NATO's eastern flank" (NATO 2030, 2020, 4). The Russian assault on Ukraine in 2022 has further consolidated the Allied resolve to focus on defence and deterrence.[8]

 In the new Strategic Concept, NATO's deterrence and defence posture is based on a mix of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities. The Allies will employ military and non-military tools "in a proportionate, coherent and integrated way" to respond to all threats to their security (SC, 20). To that end, the Alliance will significantly strengthen its deterrence and defence posture to deny any potential adversary any possible opportunities for aggression, through "a substantial and persistent presence on land, at sea, and in the air" (SC, 21) and the delivery of "the full range of forces, capabilities, plans, resources, assets and infrastructure needed for deterrence and defence, including for high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors" (SC, 22). This strengthened posture and awareness extend to maritime security (SC, 23); the cyberspace and emerging and disruptive technologies – EDT, one of the domains where the Alliance's security environment has evolved the most (Gottemoeller *et al.*, 2022) and which are perceived as "both opportunities and risks" (SC, 17, 24 and 25) -; space (SC, 25); military and non-military threats and challenges to security, including with respect to critical infrastructure; supply chains and health systems, as well as strategic shocks and disruptions (SC, 26); hybrid tactics by states and non- state actors, which "could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic

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[8] For a critical note against NATO's "Cold War approach to conventional deterrence" ignoring twenty-first-century strategic realities, see Fabian, 2022.

Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty"[9] (SC, 27); Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats (SC, 31); and countering-terrorism (SC, 34).[10]

Quite understandably in current circumstances, long developments are dedicated to nuclear weapons, which makes the 2022 Strategic Concept "a very nuclear text", according to B. Tertrais (2022, 29). Whereas "nuclear weapons are unique" and the circumstances in which NATO might have to use them "extremely remote",[11] the Strategic Concept hammers that "the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance" (SC, 29). NATO will take all necessary steps to ensure the credibility, effectiveness, safety and security of its nuclear deterrent mission. At the same time, the Alliance reaffirms its attachment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its goal to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons.

The Strategic Concept places Allies' efforts on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the broader context of "Strategic Stability", which also entails effective deterrence and defence, thus strongly suggesting that care must be taken not to undermine the latter (Valasek, 2022, 29). NATO positions itself as a "platform for in-depth discussion and close consultations on arms control efforts." (SC, 32), but the Concept provides little clarity on how exactly NATO will engage in strategic risk reduction on these issues within today's tense environment (Swicord, 2022). In general, the new Concept contains notably less language on arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation than its predecessor, and it includes no mention of arms reductions in Europe. For W. Alberque, the 2022 document significantly downgrades the focus on arms control as the principle tool for managing conflicts and arms races (Alberque, 2022).

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[9] Discussion over what threshold of cyber- and hybrid threats constitutes a violation of Article 5 (see Gottemoeller *et al.*, 2022, 518-519 and recommendation, 521) has not been solved in the 2022 Strategic Concept. I believe that such flexibility and "constructive ambiguity" better operate than strict red lines, but L. Scheunemann finds this statement "surprisingly unclear" and that "NATO needs to do more work on how it will implement its strategic response to non-conventional attacks – and quickly" (Atlantic Council experts, 2022).

[10] In the 2010 Strategic Concept, terrorism was placed at the top of the list of sources of threat to peace and security at various levels ("Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly.", para. 10), and finds it somehow backwarded in the 2022 document, although it is still coined as "the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity." (SC 2022, 10). Overall, "terrorism is inevitably marginalized in the Concept" (Tardy, 2022, 9).

[11] It is interesting to observe that President Putin's multiple indirect references to the possible use of nuclear weapons in 2022 have not led to a change of this terminology compared to the 2010 Strategic Concept's ("The circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated are extremely remote", SC 2010, 17).

As a result, NATO has returned to its original mandate: collective defense and deterrence – missions where NATO's track-record is strong, its political-military assets well-established, and consensus clear -, and containment of Russian power in Eastern Europe; its "Realist roots", as D. Driver and his colleagues point out (2022, 497).

Crisis Prevention and Management

From its crucial role in stabilising the Balkans in the 1990s (Simonet, 2017) to its pitiful withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, crisis prevention and management[12] has dominated the Alliance's business for most of the past three decades. The 2022 Strategic Concept contains nothing revolutionary with that regard. The Alliance will continue to "invest in crisis response, preparedness and management, through regular exercises and leverage our ability to coordinate, conduct sustain and support multinational crisis response operations" (SC, 35). It will "ensure the resources, capabilities, training and command and control arrangements to deploy and sustain military and civilian crisis management, stabilisation and counter-terrorism operations, including at strategic distance". Its operations in Afghanistan are quoted as a source of "lessons learned". The Alliance's ability to support civilian crisis management and relief operations and to prepare for the effects of climate change, food insecurity and health emergencies on Allied security, will be ensured. Human security, including the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the protection of civilians and civilian harm mitigation, is addressed for the first time in a NATO Strategic Concept and considered central to the Alliance's approach to crisis prevention and management (SC, 5 & 39). How the Alliance will operationalize this commitment and put it across all policy areas will certainly be scrutinized.

Is NATO's increased focus on "high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors" detrimental to crisis management, counter-insurgency or stability operations, as A. Marrone considers (Marrone, 2022)? The fact is that crisis management received little attention compared to deterrence and defense. The concept of "projecting stability", launched by Allied leaders at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016 (Díaz-Plaja, 2018) and which tended to substitute crisis management in NATO's wording since then, does not even appear in the new Strategic Concept. The 2022 document confirms "a watershed change for NATO: the age of large scale allied out-of-area operations died in Kabul on 31 August 2021 and was subsequently buried in Kiev on 24 February 2022" (Marrone, 2022, 2-3).

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[12] Crisis management refers to NATO's commitment "to address the full spectrum of crises – before, during and after conflicts", using the Alliance's unique and robust set of political and military capabilities (SC 2010, 4b).

Cooperative Security[13]

This third NATO's core task is the only one which name remains unchanged between 2010 and 2022. "NATO's enlargement has been a historic success" (SC, 40). The Alliance's Open Door policy is reaffirmed to all European democracies that share its values. The Allies strongly support "independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity" of countries aspiring to become members of the Alliance; they will "strengthen political dialogue and cooperation" with those, "help strengthen their resilience against malign interference, build their capabilities, and enhance our practical support to advance their Euro- Atlantic aspirations". The wording of para. 41 clearly address "vulnerable partners", those countries aiming to join the Alliance and who are under pressure from strategic competitors and challenges of security environment. The Russian Federation is duly warned: "Decisions on membership are taken by NATO Allies and no third party has a say in this process. (…) We reaffirm the decision we took at the 2008 Bucharest Summit and all subsequent decisions with respect to Georgia and Ukraine" (SC, 41). However, no further steps are made with regards to these two countries' prospective membership.

Among several regions of particular interest for NATO (the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel regions, the Indo-Pacific), "the Western Balkans and the Black Sea region are of strategic importance for the Alliance". The Allies will continue to support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of interested countries in these regions. They will enhance efforts to bolster their capabilities to address the distinct threats and challenges they face and boost their resilience against malign third-party interference and coercion (SC, 45).

Surprisingly enough, for an organization which relies so much on partnership and counts more partners than members, partners are dealt with in a few short sentences (compared to the much longer developments devoted to partnership in the EU Strategic Compass). The Alliance will continue to ensure sustained political engagement and military interoperability with partner countries who express an interest in contributing to its missions and operations. Regarding partner organizations, coordination and cooperation will be enhanced with the United Nations and the European Union, as well as with other regional organisations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the African Union.

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[13] Cooperative security refers to the Alliance's active engagement "to enhance international security, through partnership with relevant countries and other international organisations; by contributing to arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament, and by keeping the door to membership in the Alliance open to all European democracies that meet NATO's standards" (SC 2010, 4c).

Of particular note is the whole paragraph devoted to the European Union, "a unique and essential partner for NATO". The EU and NATO, "the twin pillars of European and transatlantic stability and success" (Geoana, 2020, 42), cooperate in over 70 different areas, captured in two high-level declarations signed by the NATO Secretary-General and former Council and Commission Presidents.[14] Recent years have seen unprecedented high-level EU-NATO interaction, such as the the first-ever participation of a NATO Secretary-General in a meeting of the College of Commissioners on 15 December 2020, which sent a strong message of mutual commitment to enhance the partnership between NATO and the EU, and the participation of J. Stoltenberg in the European Council in February 2021. Stoltenberg and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, travelled together to Lithuania and Latvia in November 2021, sending a very clear message to Moscow. Presidents Michel and von der Leyen participated in the NATO Madrid Summit; a Euro-Atlantic dinner took place *en marge* of the event, on 28 June 2022, attended by all EU and NATO leaders.

The new Strategic Concept enshrines the "partnership" and the "structuring cooperation" (*coopération structurante*) between NATO and the EU, as French President Macron emphasized after the Madrid Summit (Macron, 2022). NATO-EU strategic partnership is enhanced on issues of common interest - but all predominantly non-military in nature, as T. Tardy detects (2022, 13) -, such as military mobility, resilience, the impact of climate change on security, emerging and disruptive technologies, human security, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as countering cyber and hybrid threats and addressing the systemic challenges posed by China to Euro-Atlantic security.[15] At the same time, "NATO recognises the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to, and interoperable with NATO" – a request from Emmanuel Macron, which the French President firmly conveyed to Secretary-General Stoltenberg during their "tête-à-tête" meeting on 21 June, as a translation of Washington's nod to "a stronger and more capable European defense, that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to NATO." (White House, 2021) -. "Initiatives to increase defence spending and develop coherent, mutually reinforcing capabilities, while avoiding unnecessary duplications, are key to our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer" (SC, 43), which sounds like an implicit

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[14] On 8 July 2016, at the NATO Summit in Warsaw, a Joint Declaration was published, calling for "new impetus and new substance" to be given to the "NATO–EU strategic partnership". In December 2016, the EU and NATO released a "Statement on the implementation of the joint declaration" listing 42 areas in which the two entities were actively cooperating, such as cyber threats, security sector reform, capacity building, strengthening resilience among neighbourhood states, global governance, maritime security, parallel and synchronised exercises and hybrid warfare. A new set of areas was agreed in 2017, bringing their number to 74. On 10 July 2018, the EU and NATO signed a second Joint Declaration, which sets out a shared vision of how the EU and NATO will act together against common security threats.
[15] Three agenda items of the NATO-EU Joint Declarations (counter-terrorism, maritime security, and exercises) are not mentioned in the NATO Strategic Concept as areas of NATO-EU cooperation.

endorsement for EU defence frameworks (Marrone, 2022, 4). Even the efforts of non-EU Allies, whose "fullest involvement in EU defence efforts is essential" (SC, 43), are encouraged, perhaps as a way to mitigate UK's and Turkey's uncontrolled – and sometimes anti-EU – positions. This general commitment vis-à-vis the EU seems to evidence that "the time is right to take greater action to ensure interoperability and avoid duplication of efforts between the two organizations" (Larsen, 2022, 3).

That the third NATO-EU Joint Declaration was adopted only on 10 January 2023, and not alongside the EU Strategic Compass and NATO Strategic Concept (as planned), or in the margins of the Madrid Summit, further attests to the difficulties in operationalizing the NATO-EU partnership (Tardy, 2022, 14). Furthermore, the declaration, which will be the focus of another Oiip Policy Brief, failed to clearly outline a much-needed division of labour between the two institutions, in areas such as crisis prevention and response, resilience, counterterrorism, information warfare, and civil-military coordination in hybrid situations. Further coherence remains also needed in sequencing the new Strategic Concept and the EU Strategic Compass; ensuring that the two road maps are aligned and lead to increasing strategic complementarity, will be key (EU Parliament, 2022).

Finally, climate change, as a "defining challenge of our time, with a profound impact on Allied security", and "a crisis and threat multiplier" (SC, 19), is singularized as well under the sub-chapter "Cooperative Security".[16] Paradoxically for a defensive military alliance, NATO positions itself as "the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security" (SC, 46), which has triggered debates among experts.[17]

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[16] At the 2021 NATO Summit, Allies agreed on an Action Plan on Climate Change and Security (see https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_185174.htm).

[17] "The Alliance must avoid the temptation to lead in areas such as climate change (…)" (Blessing *et al.*, 2021, 8). Also see Webber *et al.,* 2022, 565-566.

Resilience, the informal fourth core task

Resilience[18] is both a national responsibility and a collective commitment rooted in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.[19] NATO's ability to achieve its core tasks of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security requires strength and resilience of each member state.[20] "To fight back (Russia's assaults), the United States must lead its democratic allies and partners in increasing their resilience", Joe Biden called in a quite paternalistic contribution to *Foreign Affairs* (Biden & Carpenter, 2018).

In the 2022 Strategic Concept, the Allies pledge to "enhance (their) individual and collective resilience and technological edge" (SC, 5) and "pursue a more robust, integrated and coherent approach to building national and Alliance-wide resilience against military and non-military threats and challenges to (their) security" (SC, 26). Despite experts' suggestion to do so (Bell *et al*., 2022, 549 & 553-554; Blessing *et al*., 2021, 9-10; Hamilton, 2022c, 32), the 2022 Strategic Concept does not raise resilience to a fourth core task, but emphasises that ensuring the Allies national and collective resilience is critical to the Alliance's core tasks (SC, 5) and mainstreams it through all three. Resilience is referred to extensively throughout the text, for instance at para. 22 where the Allies commit to "ensure a robust, resilient and integrated command structure" or at para. 26, where they commit to "work towards identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies, including with respect to our critical infrastructure, supply chains and health systems."

We follow Larsen in observing that the 2022 Concept is "tempered" on resilience, compared to what was expected (Larsen, 2022, 2), which can be seen as a "missed opportunity" (Keller, 2022, 37).

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[18] Resilience can be defined as the ability to anticipate, prevent, and, if necessary, protect against, and recover from disruptions to critical functions underpinning democratic societies due to kinetic and hybrid attacks or non-military threats such as natural disasters.

[19] "In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."

[20] At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, Allied leaders adopted a Commitment to Enhance Resilience, and identified baseline requirements for resilience in seven areas (see https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133180.htm). In 2022, the Resilience Committee was established as the senior NATO advisory body for resilience and civil preparedness (see https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50093.htm).

3. A few direct or indirect implications of the new Strategic Concept on European security architecture

NATO's return to Europe[21]…

"Alliance power is ultimately fighting power." (Alphen Group, 2022). Protecting "every inch of Allied territory.", as Secretary-General Stoltenberg hammers in his press points and speeches,[22] and ensuring "a substantial and persistent presence" to deny any potential adversary any possible opportunities for aggression (SC, 21), require more troops deployed, new infrastructure by host nations to receive those troops, and new command structures. In the lead-up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and since the outbreak of hostilities, NATO has undertaken the largest reinforcement of its deterrence and defense since the end of the Cold War, and has indeed emerged as the more important agent of collective military action in Europe.

The Alliance's new deterrence and defence-centric approach has already materialized *via* NATO's reset of its policy on the eastern flank, with a series of decisions taken since February 2022 to reinforce existing forces in Central and Northern Europe, deploy new forces at the periphery of the Alliance, and review NATO's force model and level of preparedness. This "fundamental shift to our deterrence and defence" (Stoltenberg Doorstep Statement, 2022) is based on three pillars:

- More forward deployed combat formations on the eastern flank (*see hereafter*);

- More high-readiness forces. NATO Response Force, which was activated for the first time in a deterrence and defence role in February 2022 in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (NATO Response Force, 2022), will increase from 40,000 to 300,000 by 2023, based on a new NATO Force Model agreed in Madrid and guided by the Strategic Concept (New NATO Force Model, 2022; Monaghan & Wall, 2022; Hernández, 2022). For the first time since the Cold War, NATO will have forces pre-assigned to defend specific Allies so they can sharpen contingency plans and become more familiar with the local terrain (Stoltenberg Press Conference, 2022; Vincent, 2022).

- More pre-positioned equipment. To boost the credibility of NATO's "deterrence by reinforcement" model, Allies agreed to pre-position military equipment, stockpiles, and facilities in frontline nations.

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[21] This is the title of the book edited by Rebecca R. Moore and Damon Coletta in 2017 (see bibliography).
[22] See for instance Stoltenberg Press Conference, 2022.

This will be supported by forward-deployed enabling forces, such as air defense units, strengthened command and control, and preassigned forces (Monaghan & Wall, 2022).

… Also means U.S. return to Europe

While Russian President Vladimir Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine has reinvigorated the Atlantic alliance, it has also deepened Europe's strategic dependence on the United States. The decision by NATO leaders in June 2021 to update the Strategic Concept gave the Biden administration an opportunity to reassure America's allies about U.S. staying power (Hamilton, 2022c, 27).

On the eve and in the wake of the Russian invasion, the U.S. deployed an additional 14,000 troops to reassure European Allies, which brought the total number of U.S. troops in Europe to nearly 100,000 (Cooper, 2022). In Madrid, President Biden announced a series of additional actions to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defense and European security. The United States decided to permanently station the V Corps headquarters Forward Command Post and Army Garrison headquarters and Field Support Battalion in Poznan, Poland - the first permanent U.S. contingent on NATO's eastern flank, the White House underlined -, which will improve U.S.-NATO interoperability across the area. Washington will also position a rotational Brigade Combat Team (BCT) in Romania that will add "3,000 fighters and another 2,000 personnel," Biden said (Shalal & Landauro, 2022; The White House, 2022).

Moving Eastward

Eastern and North-Eastern European Allies naturally highlight the strong transatlantic bond and U.S. security assurances for the Allies, along with sound collective defence as essential elements of the security and stability in the region. With the war in Ukraine, Eastern Europe finds itself the "pivotal terrain" for European, transatlantic, and global collective defense (Keyman, 2022, 27).

An important component of NATO's deterrence and defence posture is "more heavy metal and boots" on the Alliance's eastern flank (Kojala & Kulys, 2022). Following Madrid, four additional multinational battlegroups have been established in the Alliance's East (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia),[23] to

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[23] Statement by NATO Heads of State and Government, Brussels, 24 March 2022. At the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw, in response to the increased instability and insecurity along NATO's periphery, Allied Heads of State and Government agreed to establish NATO's forward presence in the northeast and southeast of the Alliance. This forward presence was first deployed in 2017, with the creation of four multinational battalion-size battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, led by the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the United States respectively (NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance", 2022; NATO's Forward Presence, 2022).

cover NATO's borders down to the Black Sea. These battlegroups are multinational and combat-ready. In June 2022, the approximate troop strength in all battlegroups was 9,641 (Hernández, 2022). Since NATO leaders further committed "to deploy additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on [the] eastern flank" (Madrid Summit Declaration, 9), troops will be increased from the pre-existing battalion-size (between 1,000 and 1,500) to brigade-size (around 4,000) in the latter countries (Larsen, 2022, 2). "Today, eastern Europe is more militarised than at any time since the height of the Cold war", the *Financial Times* noted (Foy, 2022).

Source: "NATO's Eastern Flank: Stronger Defense and Deterrence," NATO HQ, June 2022,
https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/3/pdf/2203-map-det-def-east.pdf

So far, at no point have the Concept nor indeed NATO officials announced the establishment of permanent NATO bases on its eastern flank. However, on the long run, this 'reset', as Secretary-General Stoltenberg called it, could lead to a more substantial and more permanent stationing of troops in Eastern Europe in order to be able to directly repel a large-scale offensive by Moscow (Perot, 2022, 2). The 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, which provided the basis for a partnership between the Alliance and Russia, now being considered as null and void (although not formally abrogated in the Strategic Concept), nothing prevents the Allies from opening permanent military bases on the territory of East European NATO members.

Although unrelated to the Strategic Concept, NATO's Nordic expansion will also transform the European security architecture, just like the Ukrainian War (Dinicu, 2022, 21). The NATO summit in Madrid indeed opened on a strong note after Finland, Sweden, and Turkey signed a trilateral memorandum clearing the way for the Nordic states to join the alliance. The historic decision to endorse these two countries' membership application will significantly recalibrate the Alliance's posture in Northern and North-Eastern Europe. The eventual accession of Finland and Sweden (the latter being seriously compromised by Turkey's veto, after protests near the Turkish embassy in Stockholm) will provide NATO with a new strategic depth, expanding the Supreme Allied Commander Europe's (SACEUR) land area of operations by over 866,000 square kilometres. The Baltic States, until now geographically connected to the rest of the Alliance through the Suwalki corridor between Kaliningrad and Belarus, will be protected by their big Northern neighbors. NATO will cover all the North of Europe, from Finland to Iceland. The Baltic Sea will *de facto* become a NATO lake (Kojala & Kulys, 2022), further isolating Kaliningrad exclave from the Russian mainland and Saint Petersburg.[24] With unlocking opportunities for shipping routes, natural resources and economic development in Arctic created by climate change, NATO's expansion to the North is everything but insignificant (Buchanan, 2022).[25] "Putin was looking for the Finlandisation of Europe and you're gonna get the NATOisation of Europe.", Joe Biden ironically said at the Madrid Summit (Stoltenberg & Biden, 2022).

In response to NATO's redeployment, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Moscow would create new military bases in its western regions and form 12 new units and divisions in response to Sweden and Finland's move to join the NATO military alliance (*Euronews*, 2022).[26] The new armed face-to-face is likely to be perpetuated.

NATO into the Pacific?

At the Madrid Summit, NATO became more European in its membership composition but more global in its ambition by establishing further links between the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Asia-Pacific (Dalay, 2022). Though not eligible to membership due to their geographical position, Indo-Pacific partners Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea participated in a NATO Summit for the first time, as a clear sign of the Alliance's interest in the region and willingness to prevent Chinese hegemony. "This is not about moving NATO into the Pacific, but this is about responding to the

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[24] The Alliance has doubled its presence in the Baltic and North Seas, to over 30 ships supported by maritime patrol aircraft and undersea capabilities and closely coordinated by NATO's Maritime Command.

[25] "NATO is stepping up in the High North to keep our people safe", Stoltenberg made clear while visiting the Canadian Arctic with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in August 2022 (Stoltenberg, Op-ed article, 2022).

[26] On the Barents Sea, Murmansk, the main Russian nuclear *submarine base, is located not far from Finland.*

fact that China is coming closer to us," Secretary General Stoltenberg said (Mair & Packham, 2019). This was not missed in Beijing. On 10 January, the Chinese ambassador to the EU, Fu Cong, met with NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoana for the first time in Brussels; NATO, as an important military alliance organization, should strictly adhere to the established geographical scope, establish a rational and correct perception of China, and play a constructive role for regional and global peace and security, Fu said during the meeting (*Global Times*, 2023).

Does this, as well as the *de facto* prioritization of collective defense over crisis management, carry the risk of neglecting NATO's southern neighborhood, which remains structurally vulnerable (Morcos and Simón, 2022, 2; Tardy, 2022, 3)? Marrone argues that "the Strategic Concept clearly de-prioritises the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the Sahel. These regions are barely cited, receiving much less attention than the Indo-Pacific" (Marrone, 2022, 5). "Since instability, crises and conflicts in Europe's southern neighbourhood will not go away, the question mark left by the new NATO Strategic Concept is whether and how Europeans want and can address these challenges by themselves.", the Head of Defence Programme at Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) further assesses.

4. Observations and recommendations for Austria

A neutral (an "engaged neutrality", according to H. Gärtner, 2017), non-NATO member, Austria joined the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1995 (Relations with Austria, 2022), in parallel to becoming an EU member State that same year. Just like Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Malta, and Switzerland, Austria shares a "strategic commonality" with NATO members in terms of their social and political systems (Ivanov, 2017, 147-148). Despite its low profile in security and defence issues, its contributions kept to the minimum and its preference for observation instead of getting involved in shaping EU–NATO cooperation, Austria appreciates its cooperation with NATO and its participation in the PfP programme. Vienna has never objected to the enhancement of the interaction between the two ensembles. Being sceptical about NATO-led military crisis management operations, Austria does nevertheless favour strong cooperation and collaboration between the EU and NATO in crisis management, especially if the use of force is inevitable (Ewers-Peters, 2021a, 152-153 & 158).

The adoption of a new NATO Strategic Concept corresponded to an intense internal debate over Austria's neutrality and future security stance (Nowotny, 2022). Surrounded by five NATO member States, Austrians feel largely protected despite the war in Ukraine. Unlike non-military aligned Sweden and Finland, support for neutrality in the country remains high: approximately 70% of the population do

not want Austria to join NATO (Schwarz, 2022). Political voices calling for an end to neutrality are still a minority.[27] Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said Austria had no intention of following suit to Finland and Sweden: "Austria was neutral, is neutral and remains neutral," he said during a visit to Czech counterpart Petr Fiala in Prague. "For Austria, this question does not arise in this way. We also have a different history than Sweden and Finland" (Kurmayer, 2022). If neutrality is certainly not an outdated concept in Austria, the accumulation of events and doctrinal changes since 24 February 2022, all summarized in the recent "Risikobild 2023", might nevertheless impel its reinterpretation (Jonsson, 2022).

As a partner country, Austria was not directly involved into shaping the new Strategic Concept. However, it was among those consulted in the "NATO 2030" process, and Austria's mission to NATO has obviously been kept abreast of the relevant developments. The 2022 document, as well as the strategic adjustment and realignment of NATO's defensive posture it allows, entail a few direct or indirect consequences for the country and should be evaluated in Vienna using a strong lens.

- As a neutral, non-NATO member, Austria will have to deal with a reinvigorated Atlantic Alliance with the wind in its sails, which could be tempted to invoke the historic disruption of the war in Ukraine to more actively promote its ways and means towards its partners. This requires vigilance with regards to the country's specificities and geopolitical priorities. For instance, concepts like Hamilton's "forward resilience"[28] or the "Secure Neighborhood Initiative" (SNI) promoted by former NATO Deputy Secretary-General Alexander Vershbow,[29] stretch the mandate of a more assertive Atlantic Alliance to its maximum and would require careful examination in Austria.

- With the massive reinforcement of the Alliance's eastern flank, Vienna finds itself at a few hundred kilometers from NATO deployed combat formations. Should Russia decide to attack a NATO member country and target Allied troops stationed in Romania or Hungary, and should the Alliance choose to replicate, Austria could find itself at the edge of the conflict. The accidental fall of a missile on the Polish territory, on 15 November 2022, was indeed an alert. The threat of a war spreading to Europe is taken seriously in Austria. Defence Minister Klaudia Tanner recently reiterated her willingness to

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[27] In May 2022, 50 prominent Austrians — from business, politics, academia and civil society — raised the issue publicly. In an open letter, they called on Federal President A. van der Bellen to independently examine whether the country's policy of neutrality was fitting for the times (Walter, 2022).

[28] "Projecting resilience capacities forward to vulnerable democratic partners" (Hamilton, 2022a, 2-3), a task in which NATO should embark the EU (Hamilton, 2022b, 137).

[29] "Given the stakes, allies should use NATO's new Strategic Concept to adopt a Secure Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) that would extend the Alliance's security protection to non-members along Russia's borders" (Vershbow, 2022).

see her country participate in the Sky Shield Initiative,[30] the air defense system planned by European NATO countries (*Salzburger Nachrichten,* 2023).

- Bringing troops eastward to the defense of NATO borders immediately during a crisis highlights the need to strengthen military mobility. At the start of Russian invasion, Austria pushed for adapting the European regulatory toolbox to allow "the Member States (to) permit the transit of military equipment, including accompanying personnel, through their territories, including their airspace"[31] to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Thanks to the EU-NATO Structured Dialogue on military mobility and the recent EU Action plan on military mobility 2.0, the EU military requirements for military mobility are consistent with NATO's requirements to a level of around 95%.[32] However, due to its geographical situation, Austria could face further pressure to ensure the swift movement of NATO military personnel and their equipment, which could challenge its neutral status. For instance, the calls from the Baltic States and other Allies in close proximity to Russia for a 'Military Schengen Zone', "something that would allow a military convoy to move across Europe as fast as a migrant is able to move across Europe", in the words of Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the outgoing US Army Europe Commander (Hudson, 2017; Jan & Rizzo, 2017) would require scrutiny.

- With Sweden's and Finland's membership application, Austria finds itself further isolated, both as an EU member State and as a neutral country. NATO and the EU would now be more closely aligned in terms of their membership: 23 over 27 EU members would also be NATO members; 96% of the EU population would live in a NATO country. Of the four remaining non-NATO EU countries, Austria would be the only one located not at the EU's northern or southern periphery, but in Europe's very geographical heart. As a neutral country, Austria would see its influence diminish; in particular, the WEP-5 group (the five Western European partners Austria, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland), which had an active and fruitful cooperation, would lose two prominent members.

- "It is fair to say that NATO has not only a role vis-à-vis CSDP[33] but already in CSDP" (Jandl, 2016, 77). Supporting EU–NATO further *rapprochement* and interoperability would certainly help to overcome Austria's lack of multiple membership and thus allow it to compensate for its low level of influence, as

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[30] On 13 Oct. 2022, Defence Ministers from 14 NATO Allies and Finland came together to sign a Letter of Intent for the development of a "European Sky Shield Initiative". Spearheaded by Germany, the initiative aims to create a European air and missile defence system through the common acquisition of air defence equipment and missiles by European nations. See Khvostova & Kryvosheiev, 2022.

[31] Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/339 of 28 February 2022 on an assistance measure under the European Peace Facility to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces, *OJEU* L61, 28.2.2022, Art. 5 para. 2, p. 4, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022D0339&from=FR.

[32] See https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/action-plan-military-mobility-20_en, 16-17.

[33] The EU Common Security and Defense Policy.

N. M. Ewers-Peters argues. The third – and long-awaited - EU-NATO joint declaration, issued on 10 January 2023, certainly provides Vienna with a further insight into the Alliance. Without undermining such process, Austria, which fully participates in the Common Security and Defense Policy,[34] should be vigilant not to get caught up into EU-NATO mechanisms which could prejudice the specific character of its security and defence policy. The Third EU-NATO declaration contains the usual "waiver" ("without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of any of our members"); however, it also encourages "the fullest possible involvement of the EU members that are not part of the Alliance in its initiatives" (EU-NATO Joint Declaration, 2023, 13). For this reason, issues of coordination and interoperability between the EU and NATO should be further clarified. For instance, it is obvious that "the development of the EU RDC[35] concept will influence NATO's development of its high readiness forces, and vice versa" (Meyer, Van Osch & Reykers, 2022, 20). Would the EU RDC be called to contribute to a NATO operation, non-NATO members such as Austria might find themselves involved – at least indirectly - under NATO military coordination.[36]

- Austria's cooperation with NATO has been focusing on crisis management, co-shaping the cooperative security activities in the political field and improving interoperability. Austria commits to take part in "NATO crisis management activities, open to its partners", in particular "non-Article 5 operations which (…) fall within Austria's foreign and security interests.", the 2013 National Security Strategy assesses (Austrian Security Strategy, 2013, 3.4.2.2 & 4.3.14). NATO's refocusing on its "core business" – collective defense and deterrence – and the least attention given to crisis management in the 2022 Strategic Concept, might restrict Austria's room for maneuver in the framework of its partnership with NATO. "An exclusive focus on both the East and on collective defense would reduce cooperative security as well as the role of partners", H. Gärtner premonitory wrote in 2017.

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[34] When it joined the EU, Austria also obliged itself to be "ready and able to participate fully and actively in the Common Security and Foreign Policy" and amended its constitution accordingly, thus derogating neutrality in the field of CSFP including CSDP (Accession Treaty of 24 June 1994, quoted by Jandl, 2016, 75).

[35] The EU's Strategic Compass calls for the creation of a 'European Rapid Deployment Capacity' that would allow the EU to swiftly deploy up to 5 000 troops into non-permissive environments for different types of crises (EU Strategic Compass, 2022, 6, 11, 25, 30).

[36] The EU Parliament's in-depth analysis on the EU RDC indeed raises the question whether it is possible to double-hat high readiness units (EU RDC and NATO high readiness forces) to contribute to both organisations at the same time. "As crises in the east and south can happen at the same time, it is strongly recommended not to accept this double-hat solution", its authors conclude (Meyer, Van Osch & Reykers, 2022, 21).

Four main recommendations to Austria

Austria should:

1. Take profit of the ongoing NATO "reset" to **re-visit and reinvigorate its partnership with the Alliance**, to move it from a "security taker"/consumer-driven approach towards **interest-driven partnership**, based on more converging interests but also, from the partner country, political focus and support, proactive engagement and willingness to adequately resource its own efforts.

2. **Partner with Switzerland** to **update the "Non-Paper on the Development of our Partnerships with NATO** post-2014" which was circulated by the two neutral countries in the margins of the NATO Summit in Wales (Sept. 2014), and adapt it to the post-2022 context.

3. Initiate an **in-depth study focusing on the impact of EU-NATO cooperation on EU / Non-NATO members** such as Austria. This study would address, *inter alia*, issues such as the applicability of mutual defence clauses (TEU Art. 42(7), TFEU Art. 222 and North Atlantic Treaty Art. 5) and interoperability between the future EU Rapid Deployment Capacity and NATO's High-Readiness Forces.

4. As 2022 Chairperson of the **Central European Defense Cooperation** (**CEDC)** which, in addition to Austria, hosts five NATO Allies (Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) and one observer Allied State (Poland), team up with Czech Republic, the 2023 ongoing Chairpersonship to encourage reflection on **how the CEDC could serve to foster EU–NATO cooperation**, hence demonstrating that neutral States can make contributions to interorganisational cooperation.

Conclusion

The once predicted "post-NATO geopolitical and military era" (Parenti & Adda, 2017) has not occurred. The Atlantic Alliance, 73 years after its creation in Washington on 4 April 1949, has been rejuvenated. Bigger geographically, NATO has been given a road map to face a more unpredictable world.

The capstone document adopted in Madrid might well only be "an evolutionary, not revolutionary, Strategic Concept" (Tertrais, 2022). It might essentially consist of "Reprioritisation not Revolution" (Arnold, 2022). While it brings clarity on what the "West" is fighting *against*, it might lack of a vision about what it is fighting *for*, especially the vision for what the Euro-Atlantic security and defense architecture should look like in the aftermath of Russia's war in Ukraine (Atlantic Council, undated). It might have failed to forge a common strategic culture, notably on non-Russia-related/second-order priorities (Webber *et al.*, 2022, 564-565). Nevertheless, the 2022 Strategic Concept frames the next decade and provides a clear set of guidelines for the Alliance in a mid-term perspective. To produce a single, readable document reflecting the strategic consensus of thirty Allies was a success in itself.

NATO must start translating political rhetoric into action. "Yet the Concept should not be about merely preventing a further deterioration in the status quo. It should set forth a vision of how to progress to a more hopeful future" (Shea, 2022, 13).

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