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Military force mobility as a challenge for the European Union in the field of defence

Abstract: The paper analyzes the triggers for the consideration and the extent to which the European Union has improved military force mobility in Europe. Military force mobility ensures efficient, timely and safe transport and deployment of military staff, weapons and equipment for the needs of conducting missions, operations, exercises or everyday activities. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict pointed to an urgent need of substantially improving military force mobility within and outside the European Union through the realization of projects related to military mobility and through the development of the dual-purpose transport infrastructure within the trans-European transport network. Free movement of military forces in Europe, without any obstacles, is the question of strategic importance both for the EU and the NATO. However, it has been concluded that the current state of traffic communications is not at the satisfactory level and, according, the EU (and the NATO) undertake comprehensive measures to create conditions for completely unobstructed movement of their own military forces. The conclusions in this paper have been drawn mainly by the use of the analysis method and the comparative method. The data were collected by the qualitative content analysis of the relevant documents and statements, while the presentation is mostly chronological. In disciplinary terms, the paper is founded on science of international relations, chiefly on the foreign policy analysis.

Keywords: European Union, military forces, mobility, collective defence, defence initiatives

Introduction

Military force mobility in Europe, which implies quick transfer of forces and equipment from the west to the east of the continent is the topic that has for a longer period of time been high on the agenda of the top-level meetings in the European Union (EU) and the NATO. It is the organized movement of military staff, weapons and equipment in the existing traffic network, including crossing the

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borders between the countries by using different modes of transport – by land, water and air. Efficient military mobility within as well as outside the EU improves its capabilities of responding to crisis situations in its neighbourhood. It enables the member-states of the EU, as well as of the NATO, to act faster, in line with their defence needs and obligations, and in the context of collective defence (the NATO) and military and civilian missions and operations within the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), i.e., within various national and multinational military activities. However, military mobility is potentially affected and disturbed by the current various national, European and international rules, procedures, regulations and directives. That is why it is necessary to define a comprehensive "European" approach, which would be shared with relevant international entities present in the "European" territory, such as the NATO and the states with no membership in the EU and/or the NATO, in order to resolve potential problems in this respect and ensure fast and unobstructed movement of military staff, weapons and equipment in all regions where it is necessary.

Although military force mobility in historical terms is present, particularly during the Cold War, changes in the strategic environment and expansion of the EU and the NATO into the former members of the Warsaw Pact produced simultaneously problems in its realization due to various factors, such as differences in the infrastructure, but also neglecting this segment in the West. Key changes occurred after the first stage of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014, and particularly after February 2022. The intensification of the military mobility question has been present at the EU level, especially since the adoption of the EU's Global Strategy in 2016, which gave a new momentum in that domain. At the same time, a number of deficiencies have been observed that needed to be resolved, while it is also necessary to perform adequate coordination at the level of a series of EU's new initiatives in the sphere of defence.

Military force mobility in Europe

The practical starting point in the consideration of military force mobility in Europe was the military exercise *Saber Guardian* conducted in Romania in July 2017, where part of the US Armed Forces, based in Germany and Poland, also participated. In the course of re-basing the equipment necessary for the implementation of the exercise, due to complex administrative procedures in Romania, part of the equipment was "kept" for a period of time, while simultaneously, due to the lack of railway transport capacities, it was not known how much time it would take to send the military equipment of the US Armed Forces to the given location. However, the key trigger for initiating the question of military force mobility in Europe was the temporary landing of the helicopter transporting the former Commander of the US Land Forces in Europe, Lieutenant General Benjamin Ben Hodges, from the Bezmer Air Base in Bulgaria to Capu Midia in Romania, because of the necessary customs procedures (Judson, 2017).

In historical terms, the problem of military force mobility in Europe was also present on a smaller scale in the Cold War period. In fact, during that period the NATO regularly conducted large exercises extremely remote from the bases, crossing

the borders of the member-states with no obstacles. Moreover, there was a build infrastructure for the NATO forces. It was defined exactly what roads and railways were used for the transport of military forces, as well as load-bearing capacity of bridges and dimensions of tunnels on those sections. Even the specific-purpose pipeline system functioned for supplying fuel to allied forces stationed throughout Central Europe, but with the gradual expansion of the Alliance eastwards, no standardized infrastructure was established in the member-states. After the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact (1991) and the foundation of the EU (1993) until Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the NATO did not consider the question of military mobility nor did it have precise data about the routes for transporting forces from the west to the east in the shortest period of time. Furthermore, the branched network of roads and railways in the territory of Europe did not offer a larger number of options for efficient transport of military forces, but it additionally aggravated the existing situation. On the other hand, transport in many directions bears the risk of the people, main military means and equipment not reaching the given target in a timely or simultaneous manner, for the sake of efficiently connecting the forces.

Unlike the EU, whose battle groups ever since their foundation have never realized any movement in the territory of Europe, the NATO and the USA continually maintain their significant military presence in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, while regularly conducting large-scale exercises intended exactly for fast transfer of

Transport of military equipment by water using US Vehicle Carrier ENDURANCE, port of Bremerhaven in Germany, military exercise DEFENDER- Europe 20, February 2020.
Photo: NATO.

substantial military forces from the USA to Europe. In that respect, the complex of the US military exercises *Defender Europe* is seen as the greatest activity whose scenario involves transferring the American forces from the USA to Europe and military force mobility in the territory of Europe. At the same time, there is also the assessment that the efficient defence of Europe depends on the speed of transferring and grouping the NATO forces. Therefore, the need arose for establishing efficient routes from the West European countries to the NATO's eastern wing (Chihaia, 2024). However, the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the assessment that in the previous decade Russia conducted exercises at great distances from the peacetime unit bases, in the territory of Belarus and in the vicinity of the border with the Baltic countries (Facon, 2019), made the EU and the NATO begin collecting data about the condition and usability of passenger and railway traffic for military needs in the territory of the member-states, particularly Germany.

In November, the European Commission and the EU's European External Affairs Service, (EEAS) issued the Joint Communication "Improvement of military mobility in the European Union" (European Commission, 2017). Relying on it, in March 2018 the Commission announced its first action plan on military mobility (European Commission, 2018) which included the following: 1) harmonization of military needs; 2) assessment of the transport infrastructure for military purposes; 3) harmonization of military regulations with the EU regulations; 4) precise definition of customs duties and value added tax, and 5) facilitation of cross-border movement of military forces (European Court of Auditors, 2025). After the first three actions, the Union undertook measures for harmonizing military requirements with customs regulations and permits for cross-border movement. A digital form was created to be used by the forces of both the EU and the NATO, as a substitute for the EU "302" form and the NATO "302" form, for crossing the border between the stats (European Commission, 2021). The last action – facilitation of cross-border movement of military forces – was realized by the EU through the "Military Mobility" project within the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

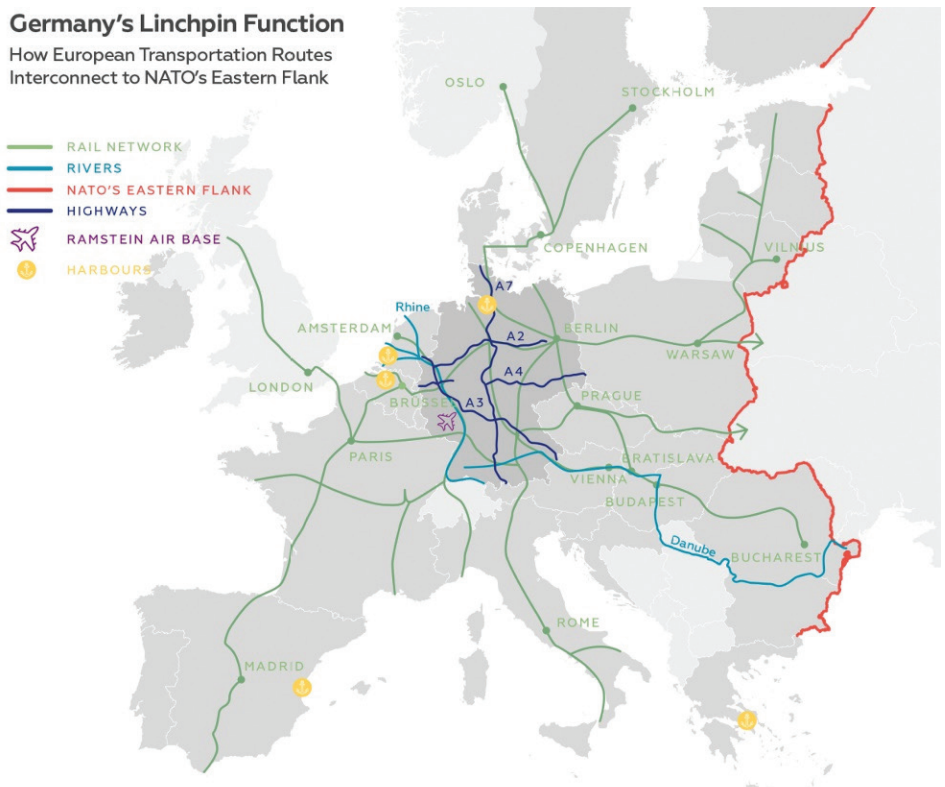
> It is the organized movement of military staff, weapons and equipment in the existing traffic network, including crossing the borders between the countries by using different modes of transport – by land, water and air.

The European Union and the NATO try to establish the conditions for unobstructed military force mobility in the land territory of Europe, such as the NATO's Rapid Air Mobility initiative (RAM). It functions by the model where by activating RAM, the NATO's airplanes are given a unique call sign "OAN" to be recognized as a priority by the European aviation system and to remove any restrictions of the capacities of the military air space for specific-purpose flights. Although this question has been dedicated significant attention since 2018, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which drastically escalated in 2022, clearly pointed to all the problems on the example of the transport of weapons and military equipment from the European countries to Ukraine. For example, the delivery of tanks from Spain, France or the Netherlands to Ukraine involves

transport of vehicles weighting 65 tons and more across the territory of Germany. Just as any commercial transport company, the armed forces of the EU and the NATO members faced the reality of the application of regulations in the German federal system, e.g., timely submission of the requests for permits for heavy-weight transport, finding suitable passenger and railway routes with adequate capacity and condition of bridges and tunnels, receiving time frames for transport on a congested railway network and lengthy border procedures (police and customs).

In line with the above-mentioned, we can define five main challenges to military force mobility in Europe, primarily Germany: 1) condition of the transport infrastructure; 2) administrative obstacles; 3) restricted capacities for transport; 4) protection and deficiencies of communication systems, and 5) mutual relations of the EU, the USA and the NATO.

The role of Germany regarding military mobility is extremely important because of its comprehensive role in modern political processes within



Map 1. European military transportation routes
Source: Hartmann, 2024, p. 4

the EU, as well as the NATO. Germany is considered one of the most important US allies in Europe and its territory is seen as the key transit zone. Due to its geographical position, Germany has the key position in Europe and borders nine countries, seven of which are members of the NATO.

Moreover, apart from the fact that the largest number of the US military forces in Europe are stationed in Germany, that the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) are situated in Stuttgart, while the seat of the Allied Air Command is in Ramstein, Germany is, in the context of military mobility questions, the leading member of the NATO in terms of logistics due to the seat of the Joint Support Enabling Command, (JSEC) in Ulm, which is intended exactly for enabling fast relocation of military forces across the national borders in Europe. Therefore, Germany can successfully respond to all requirements and needs of the alliance, with additional efforts though, because, despite technological and industrial develo9pment, the railway network and a large number of existing railway and passenger bridges are outdated or even unusable for military transport.

During the Cold War, German military and transport infrastructure was in much better condition than today. In practical terms, after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union and the unification of Germany, military signs were removed from highways, and important information about the condition and load-bearing capacity of the existing roads and bridges was lost. Furthermore, new highways, bridges and tunnels were not built in line with military needs and requirements, and that is why their today's usability is debatable. The transport network in Germany covers 13,000 km of highways and approximately 40,000 km of railroads, including numerous east-west connections of essential importance for the movement across the continent (Hartmann, 2024, p. 2). The waterways such as the Rhine, Mein and Danube Rivers are of vital importance for heavy-weight transport, connecting industrial regions with the ports in the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as in East and South Europe.

After the analysis of the collected data, it was concluded that in Germany there was a rather limited number of the NATO's infrastructural facilities from the Cold War period which could still be used for large military convoys, while in other NATO members there was not a single facility like that (Hartmann, 2024, p. 6). The above-mentioned is considered a huge problem because the route to the Baltic countries takes across several large rivers and canals. Within the analysis, three main components of the traffic infrastructure were examined: roads, railroads and navigable rivers/canals. The advantages of railway transport cannot be compensated for by road, water or air transport because of the weight and quantity of most frequently transported weapons and military equipment. That is exactly why Germany's railway network has the greatest significance for the NATO's military force mobility. The condition of 33,000 km of railroads was assessed, including tunnels, bridges and other key components, and the results showed that 23% of German railway was in poor condition. German railway underwent drastic changes at the beginning of the 21st century due to the reduced investments in less profitable routes and the closure of 5,400 km of railroads or

16% of the whole network. In the period between 1994 and 2018, only 1,700 km of railroads were built or renovated. In contrast to railway, 247,000 km of the road network were built during the same period. However, its condition is only negligibly better because 4.500 of 40,000 bridges in Germany are in poor condition and inadequate to support the transport of heavy military vehicles (Hartmann, 2024, pp. 4–6). As a consequence, military transports are forced to go around for hundreds of kilometres, which causes delays and, accordingly, increased costs. The infrastructure on navigable canals and rivers is also sensitive and requires investments since, due to faulty locks, whole segments of waterways may be closed, while there are no alternative routes.

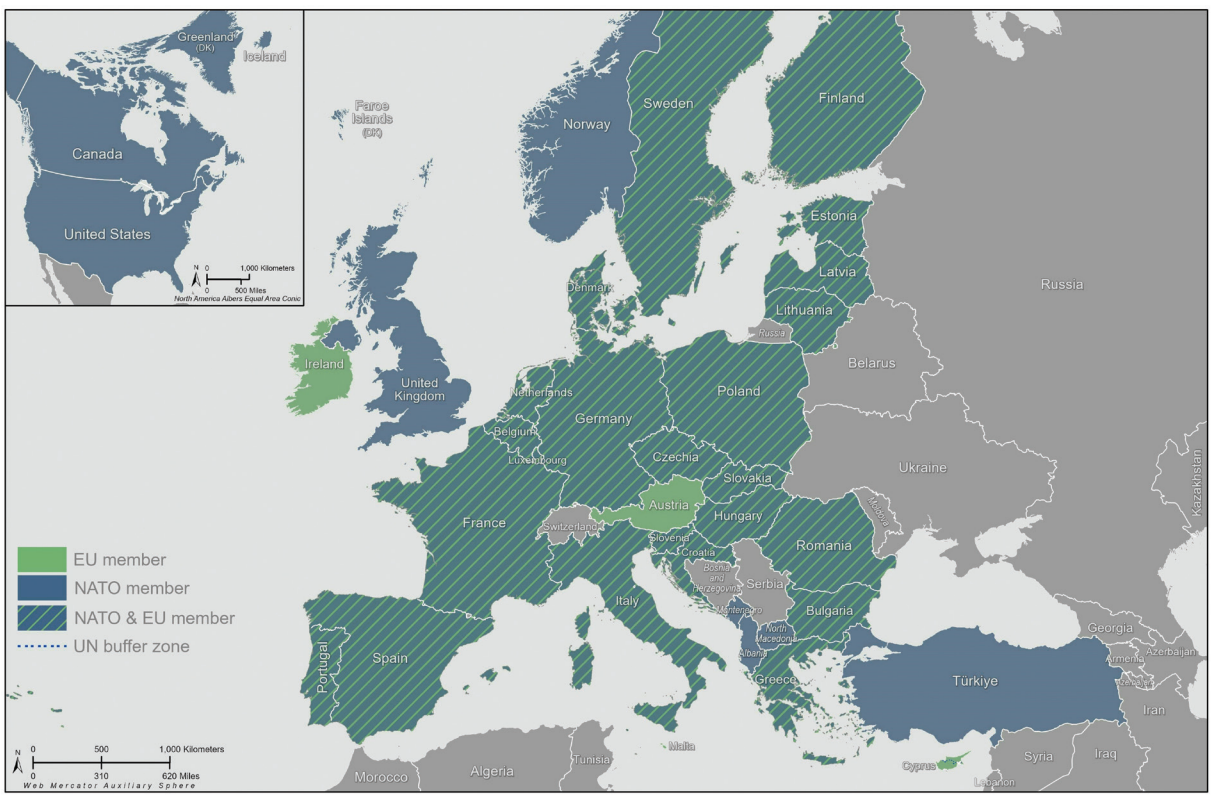
Another challenge for military mobility is posed by administrative obstacles both between the EU and the NATO member-states and within them, which is contrary to the free movement of the EU citizens and goods enjoyed in the Schengen zone. This is caused by the absence of standardization because each European country has its own national regulations and documentation necessary for transporting military forces across its borders. Therefore, for example, the NATO's military convoy in Germany and Slovakia must be registered 10 business days before the arrival, between 4 and 14 business days in Romania, or as many as 14 business days in the Czech Republic (Weaver, 2022). Furthermore, if transport is announced in a timely manner, the border customs can control weapons, military equipment, staff and complete accompanying documentation. According to Cokelaere, the paradox lies in the fact illustrated by American General Hodges – "that it is necessary to make the NATO's military forces move across Europe at the speed of a truck with apples travelling from Poland to Lisbon" (Cokelaere, 2022). Having in mind that convoys are used in the organization of military transports, it can be concluded that, without the accompanying infrastructure, transport of the NATO's forces is much slower than commercial transport. The second circle of administrative obstacles refers to the procedures existing within the member-states. In relation to the already mentioned example of Germany, the state's federal structure creates additional obstacles in transport of other countries' military forces because it requires further approvals for crossing the borders between German federal states. Moreover, military transports must often be conducted only at night so as not to disturb regular traffic and cause congestions, and to avoid the zones with the prescribed lower level of permitted traffic noise. Of course, the above-listed restrictions may be put out of force, but in that case, it is first necessary to declare an emergency situation (Hartmann, 2024, p. 7).

If is particularly important to consider the third challenge to mobility – restricted capacities for railway transport – because the railway system plays the key role in transport of heavy weapons and military equipment, especially tanks, infantry combat vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, missile systems and other weapons For transporting these combat systems, time frames are defined in advance for using railways and railway companies (train engines and cars), equipment for loading/unloading and transport, as well as necessary accompanying staff. Moreover, the number of flat-body freight cars for transporting armoured and other combat and non-combat vehicles has drastically dropped since

the end of the Cold War, and without their sufficient number, it would be impossible to quickly transport a large number of armoured combat vehicles.

The fourth challenge, i.e., protection of transport infrastructure, pertaining communications and logistics, is an inseparable element of improving military force mobility. For example, the attack on the internal communication system of German railway in October 2022, when two cables were cut on two separate locations (in the vicinity of Berlin and in the Ruhr region), cut both the main and the reserve communication systems, leading to hours-long suspension of traffic (ABC News, 2022).

Finally, the fifth challenge, playing one of the most important roles in the sphere of military force mobility in Europe, refers to mutual relations of the EU, the USA and the NATO. This challenge exists because large-scale military transport is realized to the greatest extent by the USA across the EU territory for the NATO's needs, while most countries (23) on the European continent are members both of the EU and the NATO.



Map 2. Member-states of the EU and the NATO
Source: NATO HQ SITCEN, Geospatial Section, August 2024

However, their mutual relations are rather complex because for improving of military force mobility, the EU uses its own capacities and defence initiatives which for years have not been open for the participation of the "third countries", including the USA and the European members of the NATO which are not EU member-states at the same time. Nevertheless, due to their interdependence and mutual needs, as well as the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict, military force mobility in Europe is one of the few areas in which there is no fierce rivalry between the EU and the NATO, but, on the contrary, a significant level of cooperation (Håkansson, 2023, p. 445).

Importance of the European Union's defence initiatives for improving military force mobility

Planning defence, also including the development of capabilities, is a process of creating military forces, weapons, equipment and other capacities found necessary by a state or a federation of the states for achieving goals or for countering threats. In that respect, there are three main processes of developing capabilities within the EU: 1) national planning by each member-state; 2) the NATO's defence planning process, when applicable, and 3) planning at the EU level, which has gradually developed since the 1999 meeting of the Council of Europe in Helsinki and consists of a large number of different processes.

The process of the EU's capability development is neither cyclical nor linear and it simultaneously includes a large number of participants. The idea of setting up the European agency for the development of defence capabilities, research, acquisition and weapons was presented in 2002, and the following year the Capability Development Mechanism (CDM) was established, which is particularly mentioned in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and is exclusively within the jurisdiction of military structures (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016). With the aim of 1) improving defence the EU's capacities and capabilities in crisis management, 2) encouraging cooperation in the sphere of defence at the European level, and 3) strengthening the foundations of Europe's specific-purpose industry and technology, in July 2024, the EU member-states established the European Defence Agency (EDA) (EU Council, 2004).

The process of the EU's capability development for which the member-states delegated the EDA follows the order from defining and separating needs at the strategic level (ambition level) to determining needs at the operational level (capabilities), which will subsequently be turned into so-called industrial decisions (capacities). To efficiently encounter long-term challenges of the EU security and defence, in 2008 EDA began preparing capability development plans (CDPs) which rely on the CDM process (Clapp, 2024).

By adopting the 2016 Global Strategy, the EU once again tried to define its global role under the idea of strategic autonomy in the sphere of defence, setting a new level of ambitions in the sphere of security and defence and the basis for further development and improvement of the CSDP (EEAS, 2016). To achieve the new level of ambitions and strengthening European cooperation in the sphere of defence through improvement of joint planning, development, acquisition of weapons and military equipment and the development of capabilities of,

inter alia, military force mobility, a number of new initiatives was created, such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF). The key role in implementing the above-listed defence initiatives of the EU is played by the EDA which, together with the EEAS, including the EU Military Headquarters, acts as the Secretariat of the CARD and the PESCO.

The Strategic Compass for the EU's security and defence policy (Council of the European Union, 2022), which was adopted in March 2022, included the goal that the EU member-states should significantly improve and invest in military force mobility. This was followed, on 10 November 2022, by the announcement of the new action plan on military mobility, Action Plan 2.0 (European Commission, 2022). Building on the results of the first action plan, Action Plan 2.0 cover the period 2022–2026 and includes 38 actions – 29 at the EU level and 9 directed towards the member-states, categorized into four main pillars: 1) multimodal corridors and network of logistic centres (investing in dual-purpose transport infrastructure– *TEN-T* etc.); 2) administrative support measures (digitization of administrative processes); 3) resilience and preparedness (measures for protecting transport infrastructure), and 4) partnership: strengthening the cooperation with the NATO, key strategic partners such as the USA, Canada and Norway, as well as promotion of connectedness and dialogue with other partners, e.g., Ukraine, Moldova and the West Balkan countries (European Court of Auditors, 2025).

The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) was initiated in May 2017 with the aim of encouraging gradual synchronization and mutual adjustment of national cycles of defence planning and capability development for the purpose of developing joint (European) capabilities – namely, the connection between defence planning at the national level and the EU's priorities. It is the key instrument in improving the development of the EU's capacities and ensuring support to the member-states in their efforts to implement jointly the agreed development priorities of the EU's capabilities, providing them with the full overview and analysis of the EU's defence architecture and the recommendations for cooperation in the development of capabilities and initiation of new projects in the sphere of defence. It is a two-year cycle synchronized with the PESCO and the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) (EDA, 2025). In that respect, the CARD identified the advancement of military mobility as one of six fields in which the participating countries should prioritize their development efforts (European Court of Auditors, 2025).

The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the sphere of security and defence was established by the decision of the EU Council in December 2017 (EU Council Decision, 2017) and constitutes a framework and a structured process for the gradual deepening of cooperation in the sphere of defence in order to ensure necessary capabilities. The initiative is based on the legal framework for joint planning and investment in joint projects of capability development, as well as the improvement of operational capabilities and contribution of the EU member-states' armed forces. The key difference between the PESCO and other forms of cooperation is that the obligations assumed by the member-states in this initiative are

legally binding, while each member-state decides about participating in the PESCO on a voluntary basis. Since March 2018, as many as 83 projects have been initiated (75 of them are active) in the fields such as training, land, seafaring, cyber, space, aviation and strategic support (EDA, 2025), including the above-mentioned project "Military Mobility", as well as the "Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations" (Kozioł, 2023) The project "Military Mobility", coordinated by the Netherlands, supports the member-states in the simplification and standardization of procedures of cross-order transport of military staff, weapons and equipment within the EU borders, colloquially called "Military Schengen Zone". In 2021/2022, expanding the reach and importance of the project, the European Union allowed the participation of the "third" countries in this project – Norway, Canada, the USA and the UK (Council of the EU, 2021). The finalization of the project is expected by the end of 2025. The final goal of the project is reflected in the member-states developing and implementing national military mobility plans, in harmonizing national plans between the member-states and with the EU Action Plan on military mobility (EEAS EUMS EDA, 2024).

One of the key efforts undertaken by the European Commission in the sphere of the EU's defence capability development was the establishment of the European Defence Fund (EDF) in 2017. The Fund had the budget of eight billion euros within the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2021–2027, in order to encourage joint research and innovation in the sphere of defence and co-financing joint European projects in the domains of defence research and capability development (Chihaia, 2024). The EU's budget (MFF) covers the costs of military mobility within Pillar 1 (dual-purpose transport infrastructure) in the amount of about 1.5–1.7 billion euros, provided via the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) instrument (Official Journal of the European Union, 2021), and Pillar 2 (administrative support measures) of Action Plan 2.0, in the amount of about 9 million euros, while no financial funds have been stipulated within the EU's budget for Pillar 3 (resilience and preparedness) and Pillar 4 (partnership) (European Court of Auditors, 2025).

Almost simultaneously with the complete establishment of the EU's new defence initiatives– CARD, PESCO and EDF – the Capability Development Plan (CDP) was revised as the central reference for defence planning in the EU and the basis for all defence initiatives of the EU. The last revision of the CDP from 2023 resulted in the definition of 22 priorities of the EU's capability development, aligned at the level of the member-states' ministries of defence. These priorities cover a whole range of EU's military capabilities, fourteen of which belong to five domains (land, air, sea, space and cyberspace) and eight priorities categorized under strategic support, including military mobility (EDA, 2023).

Most importantly, the EU's defence initiatives complement and/or support one another. Their connectedness and orientation towards harmonized priorities of the EU's capability development, including, *inter alia*, the improvement of military mobility, is crucial for directing the question of the EU's defence towards coherent European architecture of defence capabilities and the package of forces which may be used for conducting full-spectrum military operations and mission.

Conclusion

Military force mobility in Europe, without complex and long-lasting border procedures, is a matter of strategic importance for the EU (and the NATO) and is at the top of the political agenda. This is proved by the importance of improving military mobility, as well as the establishment of the EU's Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC), which was also emphasized I the EU's Strategic Compass adopted in March 2022, as well as the decision of the leaders at the NATO summit held in Madrid in 2022 to establish the New Force Model, or the Allied Reaction Force (ARF) in order to replace the existing NATO Response Force (NRF).

In the light of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the EU's Strategic Compass pointed to the urgency of developing military mobility on the European continent by strengthening dual-purpose transport infrastructure within the trans-European transport network, by accelerating and harmonizing cross-border procedures and increasing the resilience of transport infrastructure (Council of the European Union, 2022). The EU member-states committed to reduce the time necessary for approving border crossing to the NATO forces, while the European Commission considered the possibility of additional investments in dual-purpose transport infrastructure across the trans-European transport network (Official Journal of the European Union, 2024) which would be used both for commercial and military needs. Moreover, the existing transport infrastructure in Germany needs substantial financial investments, and the estimate is that during the following ten years as many as 457 billion euros will be necessary – which is equivalent to the total annual federal budget (Hartmann, 2024). Having in mind that the process of improving military force mobility in Europe is long-lasting and demanding, during 2024 certain progress was made by forming two NATO military transport corridors, which shows how national regulations may be efficiently harmonized among neighbouring EU member-states. First, on 31 January 2024, an agreement was signed by the Netherlands, Germany and Poland. (Chihaia, 2024), and then, on 11 July of the same year, an agreement was signed by Romania, Bulgaria and Greece (Reuters, 2024).

Moreover, the White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030, published in March 2025, confirms progress achieved in the development of military mobility, but also emphasizes that the EU is still facing old challenges: administration, non-harmonized procedures between the member-states, lack of dual-purpose infrastructure and limited availability of a larger number of routes and modes of transport. Military mobility has been given significant attention in the White Paper as a priority sphere of capabilities, crucial for the construction of a strong deterrent element and achievement of a high level of defence on the European continent (European Commission, 2025).

Having the above-mentioned in mind, it can be concluded that the EU, despite slow progress in the field, has achieved success in improving military mobility on the European continent, in terms of identifying bottlenecks, designing strategies, setting new priorities, as well as placing military mobility in the core of the debate about the improvement of European defence. The EU's defence initiatives – CARD, PESCO and EDF, are designed with the aim of gradually overcoming the problems of planning defence and the development of the

EU's capabilities from the previous period, have largely contributed to the improvement of military force mobility in Europe. They represent growing coherence in the EU's approach to challenges arising in the neighbourhood, despite frequent lack of harmonization between the EU member-states. Finally, they will lead to joint projects as well as concrete results that truly correspond to the member-states' priorities, and contribute to the removal of the existing critical deficiencies in the EU's defence capabilities and enable unobstructed engagement and practical application of both new concepts of response forces, the NATO's ARF and the EU's RDC.

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