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“Pool it or lose it?” – a contrastive analysis of discourses concerning EU military integration and demilitarisation in the Baltic Sea

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Abstract: This article illustrates that justification for EU military integration is sought with imperatives related to the economy, security, EU integration, and demands of citizens of the Member States. However, EU Treaties in terms of the improvement of military capabilities are not considered as a justification, but the European Union appears to be more of a power-enhancing realist actor rather than a normative one. As a counterexample to the European discourses, I discuss the case of the demilitarisation of the Åland Islands, in which case treaties perfectly justify demilitarization. I conclude that the development of European military integration is justified by political imperatives, but the demilitarization of the Åland Islands is supported with reference to agreements, which illustrate the differences in justifying military force and its absence. It is concluded that while the European Union appears as a realist actor in terms of defence, Finland complies with the image of a normative power as far as the Åland Islands are concerned.

Keywords: European Union, Common Security and Defence Policy, European Defence Agency, Åland Islands

Introduction

Calls for cooperation in terms of European Union defence have intensified as a result of the Brexit referendum and the launch of the European Union Global Strategy with its subsequent defence proposals. EU military cooperation has been willingly promoted, but has only recently gained momentum. This can be seen as a logical continuation of an “ever closer union”, where exogenous factors such as the Yugoslavian wars after the Cold War have been a contributing factor (Howorth 2003, pp.221–222). From a military perspective, Sven Biscop considers it pivotal for European states to cooperate in order to maintain their military capabilities (e.g. Biscop 2016b). I am also about to show in this article that the traditional image of the European Union as a normative power relying on non-military means (Manners 2002) is contrasted by the recent emphasis on military activities as solutions, as also argued by the author of the Normative Power Europe thesis himself (Manners 2006). The new focus on military means can be seen as a contradiction with the original idea of the European Union to emphasise law rather than arms. The aim was outlined, for example, in the European Commission’s White Paper on the Future of Europe (2017) stating that the founding fathers “replaced the use of armed forces by the force of law” (p.6). Now, it seems that arguments emphasising European integration, finances, threats and responsibility as far as citizens are concerned have surpassed the legal rhetoric, and law is not considered to be relevant in terms of the military discourses. In contrast, Finland, a non-NATO country that promotes more defence cooperation within the EU, seems to comply with the image of a law-emphasising normative power at least with regard to the demilitarised area of the Åland Islands, a group of islands with a strategic location in the Baltic Sea.

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In this article, I thus examine how European military enhancement is presented as necessary with political imperatives instead of by appealing to the legal basis in terms of EU treaties. Furthermore, I provide a counterexample of a demilitarised area inside the European Union where demilitarisation remains enforced due to international agreements. In simplified terms, it seems that “militarisation” requires crises, whilst demilitarisation requires multilateral agreements. I employ the terms military/defence cooperation/integration interchangeably, since the issue addressed revolves around the same tendency: European Union Member States embarking on more military-related issues together.

I analyse how EU actors working in the field of defence cooperation seek to present EU-level military capability as inevitable because of different challenges. In other words, a decline in terms of capability is considered to be dangerous and national sovereignty appears as something that hinders effective military capability. The European Defence Agency (EDA), among other institutions, claims that cross-border risks and risks of declining military capability should be addressed by pooling and sharing European military equipment and activities. I analyse such argumentation with the aid of the Discourse-Historical Approach and show that there are contradictions in these premises. The question I ask is *what sorts of arguments do defence actors utilise with regard to the enhancement of military capabilities and its absence and what does such argumentation reveal about the said actors?*

Deepening EU defence and the demilitarised Åland Islands both have a significant role as far as security is concerned in the Baltic Sea region. Indeed, one of the major security concerns in Europe is the Baltic Sea region, with rising concerns over the security situation in the area. Evidence of such tension appears to encompass, for example, the Russian deployment of missiles that can carry nuclear warheads in Kaliningrad and the Swedish decision to remilitarise Gotland. The Baltic States joined NATO and the EU simultaneously in 2004, but there are also two non-NATO countries, Finland and Sweden, in the region. Altogether, there are six militarily non-allied Member States in the European Union (Finland, Sweden, Austria, Cyprus, Malta and Ireland), but Finland has shown great interest in strengthening EU defence (France & Finland 2016; Rettman 2016a). In contrast, the Baltic States seem a bit uneasy about the prospect of European defence as an alternative to NATO (Peck 2016). It may seem unnecessary for Baltic NATO countries, faced with an increased NATO presence and rising defence budgets, to be part of yet another defence structure. Finland, in contrast, does not have the security guarantees provided by NATO, which makes it logical to push for security cooperation in the EU. In spite of the emphasis on defence when it comes to the EU, we will observe how the Finnish political approach as far as the demilitarised Åland Islands are concerned relies on diplomatic and international legal aspects, whilst the defence aspects are intentionally ignored.

In November 2016, all EU Member States unanimously accepted an Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, which, *inter alia*, calls for the launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in terms of defence (Council of the European Union 2016b). As far as this topical context is concerned, this article contributes to the recent scholarly debate on EU military cooperation and the role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) from a discursive perspective analysing the justifications for such military cooperation. EU military cooperation has gained much scholarly attention, focusing on both the problems of conducting military cooperation in the EU and on the discursive means of European officials that promote more military cooperation (Dijkstra 2012; Koivula 2016; Matlary 2008; Müller 2016; Norheim-Martinsen 2013; Rayroux 2013). In contrast to these studies that examine the influence of policies and discourses, this article focuses specifically on the types of argumentation and their relationship with each other, while also analysing potential justifications for these.

It seems that the objective of European institutions such as the European Commission and the European Defence Agency is to progressively develop European military capabilities, as laid down in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) 24(3): “Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities. The Agency in the field of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments (hereinafter referred to as ‘the European Defence Agency’) shall identify operational requirements, shall promote measures to satisfy those requirements, shall contribute to identifying and, where appropriate, implementing any measure needed to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector, shall participate in defining a European capabilities and armaments policy, and shall

assist the Council in evaluating the improvement of military capabilities.” In this article, I demonstrate how increasing European military capabilities is justified by the existence of different types of problems instead of by referring to the provision above or any other legal commitments. It appears that the enforcement of defence harmonisation is strongly sought after on the Union level, although an official common defence policy must be a unanimous decision of the Member States, as defined in Section 42(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU): “The common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides.” Even though this formulation emphasises national discretion, there is a desire to present the unification of defence as inevitable in the European Union: the need to maintain military capabilities overrides other viewpoints.

In the following sections, I illustrate which arguments are the most commonly employed ones in terms of arguing for more power for the EU in general and for the EDA in particular as far as defence matters are concerned. I begin by illustrating the background and my methodological basis, and then move onto presenting different arguments found in the analysis. There are five empirical sections focusing on different types of arguments and on the image portrayed by these arguments of the European Union. One should note that the material only covers the sphere of defence, and thus cannot provide a comprehensive picture of the Union. The four first sections present the arguments with which European defence actors promote the enhancement of military capabilities, whilst the final section presents how a contrasting phenomenon, demilitarisation, is discussed in Finland in terms of international legal responsibilities in spite of alleged security risks in the Baltic Sea region. Finally, I draw conclusions on the overall picture.

Analysis of European military debates

Since the late 1990s, the European Union has strengthened its legal and institutional security structures with enhanced cooperation with regard to security, making it not only a matter of domestic concern. A historical principle in military affairs has been a state monopoly on the legitimate use of force, which has been divided into domestic order and inter-state relations, that is, the police and the military. The EU has blurred these lines as well as the lines between different aspects of security. Traditionally, a trilogy of security threats, security strategies and security organizations has formed the basis of security policies, while today this trilogy has fallen apart in the Common Security and Defence Policy (Schroeder 2011, pp.19–24). The increased emphasis on military security may, however, be in contrast with the view that the European Union is often perceived as a peace project; European integration was launched after the Second World War to unite the continent into a security community where war would be unthinkable (cf. Deutsch et al. 1957). One of the most recent influential characterisations relates to the EU as a normative power (Manners 2002), which may be contrasted with military integration that has been a focus of debate recently.

Although outlined in the Maastricht Treaty, the actual framing of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, later CSDP), did not start until the incorporation of the so-called Petersberg crisis management tasks into the Treaty of Amsterdam¹ of 1997. The political push for the ESDP was provided by the UK and France in the St Malo Declaration of 1998, followed by the European Council’s Helsinki Headline Goal of 1999. The ESDP was established during the European Council’s meeting in 1999, preceding the European Capability Action Plan (ECAP) of 2001. The ESDP was particularly aimed at conducting crisis management on an intergovernmental basis. However, the EU seems to be in great difficulties when trying to draft common approaches to security challenges. This was evidenced already by the Yugoslav wars during the 1990s and more recently in the inability to find a common stance in the Libyan crisis of 2011. Furthermore, although proponents of a deeper defence community exist, it seems unlikely that the EU would witness defence cooperation involving all the

¹ This Treaty also established the architecture for the internal security with the title “Visas, asylum, immigration and other policies related to free movement of persons”.

Member States. Instead, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)², founded in the Lisbon Treaty that came into force in 2009, has now started to be seriously considered as a way forward (Council of the European Union 2016b). According to the EU’s Global Strategy and its implementation plan approved by the European Council in November 2016, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) should be launched (Council of the European Union 2016a). But what would the PESCO mean in practice? It would mean a group of Member States voluntarily integrating their defence structures. According to the European Commission, it would be a progressive process whereby Member States would harmonise different aspects of defence and enable non-participants to join on a project-by-project basis (European Commission 2015a, p.8). Problems related to the potential of the PESCO include the question of whether it puts too much pressure on the “input” side of military procurement and too little on the “output” side of deployability. Furthermore, although the ideal situation would be if all Member States participated, a smaller group could achieve deeper levels of integration. Notions of national sovereignty, national economy and other interests are also relevant in this regard (Duke 2012, p.351).

In this article, I focus on the argumentative methods utilised in favour of military cooperation in the EU as well as those related to the demilitarised Åland Islands in Finland. I have categorised the arguments into five groups following my analysis and constructed the table below after analysing arguments justifying further military cooperation in terms of official defence-related documents of the European Union over the past few years: from the European Defence Agency, European Commission, European Parliament and the High Representative. One of the most important sources was the bi-annual *European Defence Matters* magazine which has been published by the European Defence Agency since 2012. By considering the time period from January 2012 to December 2016 I am able to examine the periods of time both before and after the Ukraine crisis, which have often been referred to in recent debates. With regard to demilitarisation, I take into account the recent Finnish debates and arguments utilised by the current Finnish Defence Minister, who has been in power since 2015. My interest is thus on how defence actors discuss military issues and their absence.

The utilised methodology is adopted from the Discourse-Historical Approach elaborated on by Ruth Wodak (Wodak 2001; Wodak 2009) in particular. The approach enables “discursive practices, social variables, institutional frames and socio-political and historical contexts” (Wodak & Boukala 2016, p.178) to be taken into account, which are also important in defence discourses. The Discourse-Historical Approach is based on three dimensions: topics, discursive strategies and linguistic means. The topics of the discourses analysed in this study include military capability, demilitarisation and related phenomena, and I analyse discourse strategies through different *topoi* for argumentation. Wodak specifies five different types of discursive strategies (Wodak 2001, p.73), but for the purposes of this study, the most applicable ones include those of justificatory *topoi*. Linguistic means, in turn, are the manners in which these discursive strategies are constructed (Wodak 2009, p.38; Wodak 2001, p.74).

Table 1: Examples of argumentation concerning militarisation and its counterexamples.

	Topos of usefulness	Topos of finances	Topos of threat	Topos of responsibility	Topos of law
Example in favour of military means	EU actorness requires military capability	Economic effectiveness calls for European solutions	Military capability necessary to manage new types of risks	Citizens want cost-effectiveness and protection at the EU level	Legal obligation to defend the national territory
Counterexample	Arguing for voluntary arrangements	Need to create an autarchic defence industry	Need to prepare for traditional military threats	Citizens elect politicians who do not pursue EU military integration	International agreements to maintain demilitarisation

² A military alliance constituted of willing EU Member States.

According to Wodak, the *topoi* are ‘parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises’ (Wodak 2001, p.74). Different *topoi* include those of usefulness/advantage, uselessness/disadvantage, definition/name-interpretation, danger and threat, humanitarianism, justice, responsibility, burdening/weighting, finances, reality, numbers, law and right, history, culture and abuse (Wodak 2001, p.74). In this article, I focus on the most common *topoi* found in the analysed debates, including *topoi* of usefulness, finances, threat, responsibility and law.

As can be seen in the table above, military enhancement can, among other issues, be presented as crucial for European integration, but such arguments can also be contrasted with proposals for voluntary defence arrangements such as the PESCO. In addition, responding to cross-border security risks may be argued to be endangered if more pooling and sharing is not conducted, but in contrast, traditional military threats against states also exist. Military cooperation also appears to be an economic necessity, but it is simultaneously linked to the willingness to create an autarkic defence industry, which may not be the most economically viable one. European officials present military cooperation also as a must demanded by European citizens, but there is simultaneously a lack of political will. Finally, in legal terms, there may be an obligation to either militarily defend or exclude military activities from a certain area. In the following sections, I focus specifically on these five aspects, starting with the *topos* of usefulness, according to which the European Union needs military capability to be more powerful.

Topos of usefulness: imperative for European integration

In this section, I discuss argumentation whereby European integration requires military capability in order for the European Union to be a credible actor. In other words, the European project cannot allegedly continue without common military capabilities, and this is presented as a more important objective than that of national sovereignty in terms of defence. In contrast, as the current EU-level discussion mainly relates to voluntary PESCO arrangements, it is difficult to see how European integration in general could deepen if some countries choose not to participate in the cooperation.

The arguments presented in this section are based on the *topos* of usefulness, whereby an action should be performed if it is useful in some way (Wodak 2001, p.74). The logic of integration underpinning this *topos* of usefulness also reflects Ernst Haas’ idea of neo-functional European integration, spilling over into adjacent fields (Haas 1968). Institutions such as the EDA could expand their tasks even further in this spill-over manner, as defined by Haas: “policies made pursuant to an initial task and grant of power can be made real only if the task itself is expanded, as reflected in the compromises among the states interested in the task” (Haas 1961, p.368). The argumentation relying on the *topos* of usefulness seems to portray the European Union as a neofunctional actor, whereby integration moves forward in a spill-over manner into fields where it is considered functional. After the British “Brexit” decision in June 2016, European military cooperation may be easier to promote, as Britain was traditionally one of the fiercest opponents of a common European defence cooperation (Biscop 2012; Biscop 2016a). As argued by Jolyon Howorth, shifting integration also in the field of defence is only a logical continuation of the integration process (Howorth 2003, pp. 221–222).

In the EDA, decisions related to military cooperation projects are made on a voluntary basis by willing Member States (and Denmark is not even part of the EDA), but there appears to be a disposition to change that course, as the current practices do not provide much power to the EDA. It has indeed been argued that the EDA activities are hampered by its nature as an intergovernmental organisation (Trybus 2006), and that EDA personnel have had a supranational disposition from the beginning (Bátora 2009). Nevertheless, the EDA actors do not employ much spill-over argumentation, but such discourses are mainly presented by other actors related to EU security and defence. It has also been argued that the EDA favours a more ad-hoc and project-based approach than structural ones preferred by the European Commission (Fiott 2015). Of course, the actors utilising argumentation related to defence integration also aim at furthering their own interests; the EDA and the European Commission would benefit if they were to receive more resources as a result of EU defence cooperation.

It seems that military cooperation is presented as something inevitable, and it can also be argued that EU crisis management actions have spill-over effects on general defence cooperation (Österdahl 2009, p.105), in which case military harmonisation appears to occur for a good cause. The EDA also emphasises civil-military cooperation, which might make it easier to intensify military cooperation as well. At least, it seems that civil-military cooperation has further served to make the organisation more supranational, which again furthers the power interests of the organisation.

There are several arguments emphasising common defence as imperative for European integration. Relying on a *topos* of usefulness, the *Future of EU Defence Research* report claims that “the future of the whole European project” depends on introducing more defence activities in the European Union (Mauro & Thoma 2016, p.1). Common defence is thus presented as pivotal for the comprehensive integration of the European Union. It seems that in no other area of European integration is the insistence on the “must” as strong as in defence. The must in military harmonisation is also closely related to the European Union in terms of international affairs. Relying on a *topos* of usefulness, the then European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Michel Barnier, argued in 2012 that “[we] are right to address the issue of ‘soft power’, but at the same time we need to safeguard our military capacity – this is a precondition for a credible foreign and security policy”. In the same comment, he added that “European defence is not an option – it’s a necessity” (European Defence Agency 2012a, p.23). According to him, modifying defence at the European level should not be a national political decision but it is self-evident that all must commit to this. In addition to the strong demands of the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker to launch a European army (European Commission 2015a, p.2), it seems that the European Commission includes strong supporters of supranational defence policies. A major hindrance for European security seems to be the sovereignty of Member States, and according to the Strategic Notes from the European Commission’s EPSC (European Political Strategy Centre), “Member States are slow to accept that they need to go beyond a model where defence is a matter of strict national sovereignty” (European Commission 2015a, p.6). By relying on the *topos* of usefulness, the Member States should give up their sovereignty in exchange for more security. EU Member States are presented as slow and perhaps stubborn in the sense that they want to retain sovereignty even though it is evident for EU actors that European defence is necessary.

Even the EDA actors sometimes link the *topos* of usefulness to European integration. In 2014, it was stated in the magazine *European Defence Matters* that we should not forget the “supporters of European defence cooperation, who went to great lengths to promote the idea that we are ‘stronger together’. For it is in our collective past that we might find answers to the new threats” (European Defence Agency 2014, p.5). Although this comment also relates to the *topos* of threat, the main point seems to be that European integration in terms of defence is useful in the sense that the countries are stronger together.

Voluntary solutions have also been promoted, which contradict the aim of building a stronger European Union. PESCO is a voluntary programme and it seems unlikely that all the Member States will participate in PESCO. Relying on the *topos* of usefulness, the defence report commissioned by the European Parliament states that “EDA without PESCO is like the European Central Bank without convergence criteria” (Mauro & Thoma 2016, p.7). According to this claim, the existence of the EDA as such can also be a reason for deeper levels of integration, in line with the spill-over theory. Then again, PESCO among certain Member States could also lead to increased fragmentation in the EDA, resulting in a multi-speed Europe (Jokela 2014). It appears that the claim that the EDA is ineffective without PESCO is by itself an insufficient argument for establishing PESCO. Furthermore, PESCO among a few countries could also harm the entire European integration as it would divide the EU into different groups.

As far as European integration is concerned, there is currently much activity. A new *European Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy* (EUGS) was published in late June 2016, where defence themes were also considered essential for building a stronger European Union: “A stronger Union also requires investing in all dimensions of foreign policy. In particular, investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency” (Mogherini 2016b, p.10). In the context of rising levels of Euroscepticism, more military cooperation could even harm European integration. Since military cooperation is argued to be useful, it can thus simultaneously create different groups inside the European Union. It seems that the European

Union is utilising realist and rationalist argumentation to further the development of a neofunctional European Union, where a two-speed Europe in terms of defence must be allowed in order to preserve the European Union. It can be questioned whether or not such an EU with different groups of insiders and outsiders makes the European Union a stronger foreign policy actor, but this seems to be preferable to the option of not having deeper levels of defence cooperation at all. Defence integration in the European Union also provides more power for the actors analysed in this article, which may explain why any defence cooperation is considered positive.

Topos of finances: imperative for the economies of the Member States

In this section, I illustrate how defence harmonisation is presented as an economic non-choice for the Member States; control should be handed to European institutions as far as defence procurement is concerned in order to be effective. In such argumentation, the necessity of military capabilities is considered a pressing issue, and the argumentation mainly relates to why Member States should share costs in connection with defence matters. Such discourses rely on the *topos* of finances: if something costs too much, actions should be taken to diminish those costs (Wodak 2001, p.76). In this process, the financial crisis has provided particular leverage, as it has served as an impetus for further pooling and sharing of military equipment (Council of the European Union 2010). Economic interests are thus seen as imperative as far as questions related to maintaining and enhancing military capabilities are concerned. They most certainly are, but probably the reason why economic arguments are utilised is that those are the ones regarded as objective and rational. National leaders can more easily justify defence cooperation in terms of economic saving than relying on the need for further integration, since people take different stances as far as that is concerned. With regard to using the *topos* of finances, the EU appears to conform to the logic of liberal intergovernmentalism outlined by Andrew Moravcsik, whereby Member States choose to integrate whenever it is economically rational (Moravcsik 1998).

National-only procurement appears to be an economic problem, but the discourses contain contradictions; economic grounds are emphasised together with demands for European strategic autonomy in terms of defence, although protectionism is probably not the most economically viable solution. Economic arguments thus lose some of their weight when European protectionism is added to the picture: national protectionism is considered unviable, but the European equivalent is not, and it appears that national protectionism in relation to defence procurements is sought to be applied at the European level. Instead of finding the economically most viable option, ensuring that production and military capabilities remain in Europe is the priority.

The *topos* of finances was connected to the risk of losing military capabilities as far as the EU discourses are concerned. This is captured in the slogan of “pool it or lose it”, which was also adopted by Catherine Ashton, the former High Representative and Head of the European Defence Agency: “Our shared strategic culture is also a big advantage and the desire to maintain certain capabilities, given budgetary and other constraints, means ‘pool it or lose it’ is becoming a reality” (European Defence Agency 2012b, p.15). The risk of losing capabilities is considered to be a genuine concern and pooling and sharing appears to be the only method of maintaining defence capabilities. Therefore, the Member States have no say as to whether or not they want to pool resources, but it is evident that military capabilities require cooperation.

In the aftermath of the financial crisis, it is of course useful to argue in support of the *topos* of finances which states that economic austerity requires defence cooperation. For example, in the European Commission’s communication *Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector* published in 2013, it is emphasised that “Facing severe budget constraints, it is particularly important to allocate and spend financial resources efficiently. This implies inter alia to cut back operational costs, pool demand and harmonize military requirements” (European Commission 2013, p.16). The only rational action to take seems to be to pool and share military means, since military capability is allegedly something that cannot be weakened under any circumstances. The actors discussed in this article seem to share the view that

Member States cannot afford to employ national defence policies. In the EU Global Strategy of 2016, it was also stated that “While defence policy and spending remain national prerogatives, no Member State can afford to do this individually: this requires a concerted and cooperative effort. Deeper defence cooperation engenders interoperability, effectiveness, efficiency and trust: it increases the output of defence spending” (Mogherini 2016b, p.20). She contrasts sovereignty and economic interests in the argumentation: defence sovereignty should not be lost, but it is indispensable to cooperate as a result of economic aspects. Saving money thus trumps sovereignty in the rhetoric of the High Representative.

Similarly, the current EDA Chief Executive Jorge Domecq insists that economic necessity is the biggest issue in terms of common defence activities, in line with the *topos* of finances: “The sharp decline in national defence research and equipment budgets is here to remind us that we should spend more and better together if we want to retain the capabilities we need to act as a security provider” (European Defence Agency 2015b, p.20). Defence cooperation was thus considered as “providing security”, which was why capabilities needed to be maintained. In this context, it appears reasonable for the Member States to embark upon such common projects for economic reasons. The financial crisis is also exploited in such argumentation, since it is considered to make cooperation even more pivotal. In the defence discourses, military capability is thus the ultimate priority, to which all other aspects should be subordinate. Allegedly, if the Member States cannot afford to maintain capabilities alone, they must seek assistance on the European level.

Controversially, European strategic autonomy is also referred to as desirable, although an even wider degree of interdependence could be more effective in reducing risks and increasing cost-effectiveness. European cooperation is justified by economic argumentation, but European-only cooperation is more difficult to justify in such terms; it relies on the pursuit of autarkic defence production. In a report commissioned by the European Parliament, the guiding principle of spending is: “European money goes for European value”, which is justified by the claim that all countries follow suit (Mauro & Thoma 2016, p.67). This is closely related to the other crucial principle in European defence policies, namely the strategic autonomy of the European Union in terms of defence (Mauro & Thoma 2016, p.37). It is not justified why the progressive improvement of military capabilities is necessary, but it is argued as such to share costs in order to maintain this capability. In other words, in order to retain current military capabilities, European military integration is argued to be inevitable. Of course, self-interests are also influential when EU actors argue with such premises; more pooling and sharing at least means more work and resources for the European Commission and the EDA. Furthermore, if the commonly procured defence equipment is also manufactured in Europe, this may require actions from the EU institutions. Although the arguments presented may have valid grounds, it is important to also consider why such discourse is adopted; the reason seems to be to shift power to the European institution by arguing in favour of economic effectiveness, in line with liberal intergovernmentalist thinking.

Topos of threat: imperative to respond to security threats

In this section, I demonstrate that threats are employed as arguments for further military cooperation at the European level. While on the one hand it is argued that new risks are unpredictable, on the other hand there are discourses concerning preparation for traditional military threats, which have not led to the abandonment of national military capabilities in the past. Military cooperation is presented as non-politicised, i.e. as an issue that does not require political assessment but is inevitably necessary. This aspect could also be referred to as securitisation – a view of common threats that needs to be addressed, without the introduction of any alternatives. Securitisation is simultaneously a type of depoliticisation, as the question no longer concerns a political choice but a necessary measure (Diez et al. 2016). In argumentative terms, this aspect reflects the *topos* of threat; if there are threats, then enhancing European military capabilities is seen as the best solution to address them (Wodak 2001, p.75). Securitisation is a measure that has been connected to justifying exceptional measures, which may also be the case as far

as European defence actors are concerned. As a securitising actor, the EU also appears as a rational and realist actor that tries to convey its own interests by constructing threats.

A peculiar aspect in European debates is that the threats are not specified, but it is assumed that there is a mutual understanding of the existence of threats. This common assumption implies that there are threats and that Member States cannot respond to them alone. Relying on the *topos* of threat, the former Chief Executive of the EDA, Claude-France Arnould, stated in an issue of the *European Defence Matters* magazine published in 2012 that “I don’t think it’s possible to collectively define exactly what sort of conflicts we will face, but I do think we can define the types of capability we will need” (European Defence Agency 2012a, p.11). Such unpredictability justifies the creation of common capabilities and trusting that the EDA knows how to tackle such risks. Mrs Arnould seems to assume that threats are in any case cross-border in nature and require cooperation between the Member States. Similarly, the final report on the *Common Security and Defence Policy* compiled in 2013 by the then High Representative/Head of the EDA Catherine Ashton, stated that: “The future threats and challenges are such that some convergence of defence capability plans will be required if Member States are to be able to collectively meet the challenges of the future” (Ashton 2013, p.15). Ms. Ashton thus did not require the demise of national sovereignty but emphasised the importance of convergence due to the nature of future challenges.

It has been determined that the EDA has a double role in terms of modern security threats: it simultaneously introduces certain threats (such as cybersecurity) and claims that it is able to tackle them (Friis & Rechborn-Kjennerud 2016). This can also be observed in the material analysed in this article. In 2015, the EDA justified its actions with the *topos* of threat: “Whilst it is all too easy to allow a virtual threat to limit our ambitions or, worse, be used against us, the Agency’s work is moving defence to greater internal awareness of the cyber reality, from which we can manage risks and limit effect” (European Defence Agency 2015c, p.14). Such discursive construction of threats also serves to justify the existence of the EDA. Interestingly enough, while cybersecurity is often mentioned in EDA documents, terrorism is not considered an issue to be tackled with more military cooperation. Instead, according to the Global Strategy of 2016, the main measures of addressing terrorism include non-military ones such as “greater information sharing and intelligence cooperation” (Mogherini 2016b, p.21). Although it is usually the police and other internal security actors who are responsible for tackling terrorism, scholars have found that even the police are sometimes being militarised in the face of modern threats (Weiss 2011, p.399). An interesting aspect in this regard is whether or not the security concepts and responses to them are compatible: does cybersecurity require a defensive response and does defence remain the main response to security threats even though security encompasses ever more issues? At least in the discourses of the actors analysed in this article, it seems that common defence is seen as the ultimate solution.

The Ukraine conflict appears to provide further leverage for the EDA to put emphasis on European military capabilities as responding to military threats. Indeed, even though rhetoric of military threats largely disappeared in the 21st century when new types of risks started to emerge, the current situation has reintroduced war rhetoric. The actors of the European Union thus utilise *double rhetoric*; on the one hand, they argue that there are new types of threats but on the other hand, there are traditional military threats, and both of them require military preparation. Such military rhetoric is often discussed in the interviews published in the magazine *European Defence Matters*. In 2015, the *topos* of threat with regard to territorial defence was employed by Christian Madsen, Head of Unit in charge of cooperation planning at the EDA: “The question of territorial defence is back on the agenda for EU Member States” (European Defence Agency 2015a, p.21). It still remains unclear what makes it necessary to compromise national sovereignty in the face of such threats now, if previous threats have undergone a revival; why does such territorial defence need a European response now, when it has not needed it in the past? Neither is it justified why the revival of old threats needs new measures that compromise national sovereignty. The deterioration of the security situation seems to constitute an effective argument for exceptional measures such as European defence. Justification with regard to the deteriorating security situation is also present in the European Defence Action Plan of the European Commission: “The analysis in these reports and the work of the EEAS and EDA confirm the deterioration of Europe’s security situation and the need to do more to develop a more coordinated and robust European approach to defence co-operation” (European

Commission 2015b, p.1). While providing more power for these actors, military cooperation appears as something that can repel security risks. When the question is about threats, national sovereignty appears subordinate to the need to address such threats.

All EU actors talk about security challenges without outlining what they really are. The European Defence Action Plan published on 30 November 2016, reiterates that Member States cannot face challenges alone, in line with the *topos* of threat: “Europe has to take responsibility for protecting its interests, values and the European way of life. It is facing complex security challenges and no Member State can meet those challenges on its own” (European Commission 2016, p.19). It is understandable that threats are utilised to support defence cooperation, but why do the traditional threats require European defence right now? To search for an answer, one may refer back to securitisation: traditional military threats are the most intimidating threats, which is why they are also the most useful ones in arguing for exceptional measures such as European defence. So far, all the arguments presented imply that the European Union is a rational actor that seeks to promote integration as functional, enhance economic interests as well as securitise the world outside the EU, which also conforms with the idea of “romantic realism” whereby the identity of the European Union can be considered endangered without defence capabilities (cf. Morozov 2002). The last type of argumentation is more deontological (duty-based) at first sight, but the underlying implications are realist, as we shall observe.

Topos of responsibility: imperative to respond to the demands of citizens

In this section, I illustrate how state-specific defence arrangements are argued to be incompatible with the demands of citizens, who would prefer European military capabilities. The arguments relate to the *topos* of responsibility, whereby actors are deemed responsible for a specific situation (Wodak 2001, pp.75–76). In the European Union, this implies that states should be able to convince citizens of supranational rules; thereby both maximising and minimising their own power (Beck 2008, p.799). In this respect, the EU thus portrays itself as a democratic actor that takes into account the will of the people. However, referring to citizens seems to mainly be used as a rhetorical tool with which to bolster the previously presented arguments concerning European integration, economic rationality and threats. The European Union thus maintains the image of a realist actor also in this regard, since even citizens are only considered to be interested in economic effectiveness, European integration and protection. Citizens are presented as important reference points, but the sovereign decision-making power of the Member States is ignored. Indeed, in the argumentation of the European defence actors, it seems that Member States appear as the actors emphasising their sovereignty and blocking the will of citizens to go beyond the Member State as far as defence matters are concerned. This is somewhat contradictory: sovereignty relates to the will of the people, so how can citizens desire something else other than the politicians they elected?

The demands of citizens are connected to economic and security arguments, since it is taxpayers' money that is used and national citizens that should be protected by defence arrangements. However, this argumentation that is reliant on citizens can also be questioned: if citizens really require further European military cooperation, why have the elected leaders not embarked upon such arrangements? Also in this context, military harmonisation is presented as inevitable: Member States have no other option but to harmonise their policies, since citizens require that. The main alleged problem appears to be that citizens do not get enough security for their money, which is why European cooperation is necessary. In this case, citizens are probably brought into the picture, because they are effective argumentative tools; the job of the politicians is to further the will of the people.

Citizens are thus connected to both security and economic arguments. Federica Mogherini, the current High Representative and Head of the European Defence Agency, argued that citizens are the primary source of more effective defence cooperation, in line with the *topos* of responsibility: “By doing more

together, we will also clarify priorities for our defence industry and reduce the fragmentation of supply and demand, thus increasing the efficiency of our defence spending. European taxpayers expect no less of us” (European Defence Agency 2015b, p.35). It is thus argued that the taxpayers expect the Member States to do more together, but it is not specified where European taxpayers express the demands for more EU defence cooperation.

By relying on the *topos* of responsibility, the Chief Executive of the EDA, Jorge Domecq, has also intertwined public opinion and security by stating that in the current situation, the public expects more: “Public opinion is expecting a renewed impulse in defence cooperation in the face of the present security environment” (European Defence Agency 2015a, p.6). In a sense, Mr. Domecq argued that citizens have comprehended the risks of the current situation. According to the EDA documents, one gets the impression that citizens favour common defence, while the Member States insist on retaining their sovereignty. Indeed, in a Eurobarometer survey of the European Parliament in 2016, 66 % of the respondents appear to be in favour of the EU intervening more than at present in security and defence policy (European Parliament 2016, p.27). The Chief Executive of the EDA, Jorge Domecq, referred to the result of the study and stated that “Europe needs to be a reliable security provider for its partners while at the same time protecting its citizens. In order to achieve this goal, defence can no longer be looked at simply from a national perspective” (European Defence Agency 2016, p.29). Interestingly enough, only certain Member States have called for more robust defence policy in the EU. If it really is of high priority for citizens, one would assume unanimous support for it. In addition, if it is of the utmost importance for citizens, they would probably elect politicians who support such aims.

In addition to economic reasons, citizens should be protected from different types of risks. By relying on the *topos* of responsibility, the 2016 *Future of EU Defence Research* report stated that “Ultimately the demand to put ‘more defence in the Union’ comes from European citizens who wonder why Europe does not protect them in the current turmoil” (Mauro & Thoma 2016, p.1). Citizens are thus connected to the security situation, and the opinion of citizens is the reason for making it more important to harmonise defence in the European Union. According to the same report, the main justification does not relate to the turmoil, but to the demands of citizens, whose money should also be wisely spent: “We also suggest the definition of ‘European Defence Research Entities’ (EDRE) to make sure that the Union’s taxpayer money is conveyed to authentic European Defence Companies and undertakings” (Mauro & Thoma 2016, p.10). This comment is also connected to the demand for strategic autonomy in terms of defence, which is presented as of ever increasing importance, since it is not simply money, but taxpayers’ money that is at stake.

The 2016 Global Strategy document also refers to citizens 30 times in total, who constitute the main purpose for stronger foreign and security cooperation in the European Union, in line with the *topos* of responsibility: “The Strategy nurtures the ambition of strategic autonomy for the European Union. This is necessary to promote the common interests of our citizens, as well as our principles and values” (Mogherini 2016b, p.4). The High Representative made a similar argument in her speech at the EDA Annual Conference in 2016: “I believe this is a responsibility, first of all towards our citizens, who, everywhere across our Union, ask for security – look at the polls, first comes security, second comes economy and employment” (Mogherini 2016a). However, the fact that citizens appreciate security does not mean that security should be organised at the European level. The decision-makers in the Member States of the European Union are politicians elected by citizens, which allows the citizens to elect politicians who support European defence cooperation. In several Member States, the politicians have indeed illustrated their willingness to strive for stronger military cooperation in the European Union, including in Germany, France, Italy, Finland and Spain. These calls have intensified since the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump as the President of the US (Rettman 2016a; Rettman 2016b). It is still unclear whether citizens support such plans; however, no major opposition to defence affairs in particular, at least, has surfaced. However, there is increasing criticism towards developing integration in different European countries, which is ignored in arguments promoting EU defence.

Topos of law: imperative to hold onto demilitarisation in spite of risks

In contrast to the efforts to push EU military harmonisation with the aid of different political imperatives, demilitarisation of the Åland Islands, an autonomous region of Finland with a strategic location in the Baltic Sea, is grounded in international law and justified on this contractual basis. Although provisions of EU law seem to be irrelevant with regard to military capability, legal obligations appear to be the very reason for enforcing demilitarisation. Finland is a small EU Member State that promotes international law, which is logical for a non-NATO country whose foreign policy is based more on rules rather than military deterrence. Finland could even be described as a normative actor: trying to diffuse the norm of rule-adherence by setting an example (Manners 2006, p.184). Although demilitarisation is absent in the identity of Finnish foreign policy, not complying with the treaties would contradict this rules-based image.

This legal argumentation relates to the *topos* of law, according to which actions should be performed if they are stipulated in law (Wodak 2001, p.76). Demilitarisation of the Åland Islands does not seem to be questioned even if the demilitarised islands are at the centre of a deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea. According to the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy published in June 2016, “The security policy environment of Finland [...] has transformed. A tenser security situation in Europe and the Baltic Sea region will directly impact Finland. The use or threat of military force against Finland cannot be excluded” (Prime Minister’s Office Finland 2016). Still, the same report assures that the demilitarised and neutralised status of the Åland Islands remains valid. In the Defence Report published by the Finnish Government in February 2017, the Åland Islands are not discussed but the general impression reads that “Military activity and military tensions have increased in the Baltic Sea region” (Prime Minister’s Office Finland 2017, p. 5). Securitisation of the surrounding region thus does not justify questioning the demilitarised status of the islands, unlike in the case of the EU discussed above.

Demilitarisation (and neutralisation) of the islands is stipulated in several international treaties, the first of which was concluded in 1856 between Russia, Great Britain and France.³ These agreements, including a League of Nations Convention in 1921 and a bilateral treaty between Finland and Russia established in 1940, can even be regarded as customary international law. On the one hand demilitarisation means that a military presence is forbidden in an area during peacetime, but on the other hand neutralisation stipulates that no indirect or direct war activities may take place during wartime. The example of demilitarisation illustrates that increased military capability is not the only option to prevent harm but international law may also be effective, as it has been on the islands for more than 150 years. The strongest justification for maintaining demilitarisation is indeed its legal status as part of customary international law, which no actor has an incentive to violate. Although the islands are demilitarised, Finland is permitted and obliged to militarily defend the islands should they be attacked, e.g. by mining the demilitarised maritime area.

As was also evident in the quotations from the government reports, there is currently heated debate with regard to the alleged deteriorating security situation in the Baltic Sea area. Researchers have also speculated in newspapers suggesting Russian occupation of the Åland Islands (Myntti 2016; Tarkka 2015; Saloniemi-Pasternak 2014). Traditionally, the proponents in favour of changing the demilitarisation regime have originated from the military personnel, who argue that demilitarisation has not prevented the exploitation of the Ålandic territory in wars; weapon technology has made it easier to attack, and Finland’s international freedom to manoeuvre enables it to renegotiate agreements (Tiilikainen 2002, p.38; Hannikainen 1994, p.627). Such comments have been appearing since the beginning of the 1990s and have

³ For example, the 1921 League of Nations Convention on the demilitarisation and neutralisation of the Åland Islands stipulates that Finland may ask for help from the signatory states, which include Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Sweden. Russia is not a member of the treaty, but Finland and Russia have a separate agreement concerning the demilitarisation of the islands, which was concluded first in 1940 and renewed after the Soviet collapse in 1992. Originally, the demilitarisation of the islands was stipulated in a convention held in 1856 after the Crimean War, and also the Paris Peace Treaties established in the aftermath of the Second World War confirmed the status of the Åland Islands.

led to occasional discussions in the media that last for a few weeks at a time (Poullie 2016). However, no major support for changing the status is suggested.

In the autumn of 2016, there was another public debate in Finland concerning the relationship between the demilitarised islands and Finnish defence. The Defence Minister wrote in his blog that “the demilitarization of the islands does not decrease the risk towards the islands, rather the contrary. Although it would be militarily justified to reassess the status of the Åland Islands, we do not currently have such plans. [...] Defence plans take into account the agreement obligations related to the demilitarization of the Åland Islands” (Niinistö 2016b). It seems that in spite of alleged security risks, international obligations trump military considerations. Subsequently, comments made by him about the issue in the media, even though lamenting the difficulties of defending the islands, justified the maintenance of the status with regard to the *topos* of law. For example, in a televised interview, he claimed to be prepared to discuss changes in the status, in spite of failing to question its legal validity (Ykkösaamu 2016). Other Government Ministers and the President of the Republic denied that any changes were foreseen, and the status was also confirmed in a Parliamentary Committee Statement in November 2016 (Finnish Parliament Committee for Foreign Affairs 2016). A few weeks later, the Defence Minister addressed the issue again in his blog, also stating that Finland does not aim to revise the status even though it would be militarily justified; instead it is a more complex issue (Niinistö 2016a). The issue was also debated in the Finnish parliament, where the Defence Minister addressed the difficulties of defending the islands but assured that the common line of the government was to maintain the status (Finnish Parliament 2016). The Defence Minister argued that there are risks related to the islands, but such arguments seemed insufficient in order to question the status. International law thus seemed to overrule defence aspects in this case. The question of why defence aspects are ignored with regard to the Åland Islands probably refers to the reluctance of Finnish politicians to open a defence-related discussion in the fear of the status being questioned. Instead, by sticking to the role of demilitarisation as a diplomatic and international tool of law, such problems are evaded.

The discussion with regard to demilitarisation is thus very different from discussions concerning European defence, but even this superficial contrast between these debates reveals interesting insights. Alleged threats exist both in the European and Finnish debates, but Finland is unwilling to deviate from its international legal obligations even for defence reasons. The defence actors of the European Union, in turn, seem to suggest it is necessary that military aspects be introduced into European integration, utilising arguments that do not rely on treaties. Interestingly enough, the enforcement of defence did not seem to have progressed much before Member States started to make initiatives themselves. In particular economic and security arguments also appear to prevail in terms of the recent national arguments, and they have greater powers to actually apply more defence in the European Union. Whereas “more military” arguments present the European Union as a realist actor, the “no military” case of demilitarisation presents Finland as a normative one.

Concluding remarks

In this article, I have demonstrated how defence actors of the European Union present military harmonisation as a non-choice instead of mentioning its basis as part of a treaty. Several arguments for common defence in the European Union have been presented at the level of the European Commission, High Representatives and the EDA.

I divided the European arguments into four groups. In line with the *topos* of usefulness, the European Union is argued to necessitate integration in the field of defence in order for the international agency of the European Union to be effective. In contrast, the proposed measures are based on voluntary actions, such as the PESCO, and such forms of two-speed integration may not ensure the European Union becomes a more powerful foreign policy actor. As far as usefulness is concerned, the European Union appears to be a neofunctionalist actor that progresses in the fields considered functional, even though a multi-speed Europe may not always be functional. From the perspective of economic logic and the *topos* of finances, cooperation

appears to be the only economically reasonable action to take in order to maintain military capabilities. Still, economic arguments were also connected to European protectionism, which may not be the most economically efficient choice. Such thinking portrays the European Union as a liberal intergovernmentalistic actor, whereby economic interests encourage the Member States to integrate their policies.

As alleged risks for the security of the European Union are looming, the *topos* of threat suggests it is necessary to prepare through military cooperation, but the arguments also mention the return to traditional security risks, which questions the need for new cooperation. The European Union appears to be a securitising actor that tries to argue for exceptional measures in face of security threats. Finally, in line with the *topos* of responsibility, citizens are presented as demanding to be defended as cost-effectively as possible, but the citizens still do not seem to elect political leaders who might embark upon such actions. By referring to citizens, the EU may present itself as a democratic actor, but the arguments ultimately rest on the same realist arguments concerning integration, money and threats. It seems that enhancement in terms of military capability is not justified by EU Treaties, whereas the need for military capability in the first place is only justified with reference to threats.

While European military cooperation was considered the best solution with regard to security, integration, economic and democratic terms, demilitarisation had already been stipulated in international law as the solution elected by major powers with regard to the Åland Islands in the 1850s. Although international law is not always respected by major powers (Hannikainen & Lundstedt 2016), it was a solution enabling the actors to shift their focus away from the Baltic Sea. Despite alleged risks concerning the demilitarised islands, international law is the justification for maintaining the status. If Finland were to start questioning international rules, its foreign policy reputation of practising what you preach would be hampered.

It is also remarkable that the discourses with regard to European defence do not seem to have much power. Calls for military harmonisation have been made throughout recent years, but the movement only started to progress when the largest Member States started to promote it. Of course, there are some external events that have encouraged such proposals to be drawn. In the past, the UK has vetoed proposals concerning defence integration such as the launch of a military headquarters, which was backed by many states (Whitman 2016), and Brexit thus makes military integration easier. The election of Donald Trump as the President of the US also increased calls for autonomous European defence, since during his campaign, Mr. Trump did not always appear very eager to support European states through NATO. Furthermore, increasing tension between Russia and the West may have functioned as a pushing force towards common defence, especially in the Baltic Sea Region.

This article has illustrated that security concerns do not always surpass other concerns, but are apparently considered effective in justifying “more military”. Security threats may be an effective tool in increasing defence budgets and European cooperation, but they do not seem to be effective in trumping demilitarisation based on international law. Instead of becoming a military superpower, one of the major incentives for European actors to promote defence cooperation seems to be to move European integration forwards. The European Union is sometimes compared to a bicycle, which falls if it does not move forward. However, this is not necessarily the case, and it is only the Member States that can move integration forwards as far as defence matters are concerned. As stated previously, decisions always have to be made unanimously, and the Member States may decide to stay outside the PESCO. They can thus make up their own minds on how to find a balance between being a realist actor with military power and the idea of Normative Power Europe that relies on norms.

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