# Weimar Task Force

On the European Security Order 2030



Weimar Task Force



### **Editorial**

urope is at a historic turning point [...] We are aware that the Poles, the Germans, and the French bear significant responsibility for the success of sustainable structures in the European neighbourhood." This quote, as current as it may seem, dates from 29 August 1991, when the foreign ministers of France, Germany and Poland announced the creation of the Weimar Triangle format. The idea back then was to foster exchange and cooperation between three of the largest European nations, bringing East and West closer together on the newly reunited continent. Today, the Weimar Triangle has stayed far behind these initial hopes due to divergent interests, incongruent ideas about the future of European integration and different interpretations of European democratic norms and values.

The three countries have also exposed different views on the international environment. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has led to a *Zeitenwende* for Europe and its wider neighbourhood. The unprovoked invasion has put a definitive end to the post-Cold War security order. Flawed as it was, it provided relative peace and stability on the European continent for three decades. Besides the unspeakable suffering that the war has brought to the people affected by it, the new situation poses fundamental questions about how security and stability will be achieved and maintained in Europe: Now that the existing European security order has fallen apart, how can we rebuild it? The underlying and even more important question is, how *do we want* to rebuild it?

Regardless of political disputes, the Weimar Triangle has a preeminent role to play in this context. France, Germany and Poland combine more than 40 per cent of the EU's population. Yet diverging threat perceptions between the East and the West of Europe have prevailed for decades. Western countries, to some extent, proved tone-deaf to the warnings laid out by their Eastern neighbours when it came to Russia. The war in Ukraine has verified the East's concerns in the most tragic manner. But while there is broad European agreement on who is the aggressor in this conflict, the immediate response to the Russian invasion has differed among Eastern and Western Europe in both speed and substance. These divides must be bridged, especially if we are to establish a sustainable European security order that serves all European citizens equally.

Achieving this will require mutual trust, open exchange, and also fresh ideas. This is why we initiated the Weimar Task Force. Our founder, Kurt Körber, emphasised that it is better to talk with each other rather than about each other. The Weimar Task Force thrived in discussions characterised by this spirit. Bringing together experts from France, Germany and Poland to work towards a unique common vision of a *desirable* future, it opened a space to think and discuss openly, trustfully, and creatively. This report summarises the group's discussions. Our special thanks goes to Ronja Scheler and Lucie Courtade whose ideas and dedication made the Weimar Task Force possible. We hope you enjoy reading!

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Photo: Körber-Stiftung/ David Ausserhofer

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### Introduction

How do we want the European security order to look like in 2030? And what do we have to do to get there? These questions can be answered using a normative foresight process.

f I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." This quote by Henry Ford, the inventor and industrialist who revolutionised transportation in the 20th century, encapsulates the challenges that we encounter when thinking about the future. All too often, we extrapolate from what we know, from what is familiar, and from what we believe to be realistic. But these restrictions may not get us far in times of systemic change. To navigate a world in flux, we should, from time to time, take a step back and think about where we want to go, "unrealistic" as it may seem.

This approach can easily be applied to thinking about the future of European security. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has overthrown the post-Cold War security order, which rested on the basic principles of non-intervention, territorial integrity and sovereignty, as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act. While these principles remain worth striving for, we need to rethink the core tenets of our views and understandings of European security. How do we want security to be provided and maintained on the European continent? Which institutions should be at the helm of this undertaking? And which norms, rules and principles should drive the European security order of the future?

Answering these questions is an inherently normative process. This is why we chose a normative foresight methodology as the backbone of the Weimar Task Force. A normative foresight process creates a *desirable picture of the future*. We chose not to present a likely scenario or one that could be

easily achieved, because determining where we want to go rather than just following along what the world around us dictates seemed a worthy undertaking in challenging times like these.

For this purpose, we brought together a group of thinkers from Germany, France and Poland to design a desirable picture of the European security order in the year 2030. By nature of the process, another group would have arrived at different results. But by bringing in experts from different parts of Europe and with different professional backgrounds, we provided for a balanced look at the security situation in Europe.

Security order was defined as "the institutions, instruments, norms and rules that provide security on the European continent". Beyond this, we deliberately chose a broad approach to the concept of security order as this enabled us to think beyond established categories and freed up space for various aspects that may contribute to European security in the year 2030.

The following pages set out the vision that emerged from our discussions (pp. 4–7). It is not necessarily a very likely scenario. Quite deliberately, we envisioned a security order that we believe is worth striving for. Because only if we know where we want to go, we can take steps in the right direction. These first steps and strategic options are summarised subsequently (pp. 8–11). The methodological approach as well as the people behind the Weimar Task Force can be found in the final section (pp. 12–14).

# Vision

All too often, policies are modelled around what seems "realistic" or "achievable". What if we could shape the future in a way that appears "desirable"? To make things move in the right direction, we need to think about where we want to go. The following pages present a vision for the European Security Order 2030 that the participants of the Weimar Task Force believe is worth striving for.

# **Elements of the European Security Order in 2030**

What is our vision for the European security order in 2030? Which institutions, instruments, norms and rules should underpin it? The Weimar Task Force developed desirable trajectories for seven core elements.

Order is a fluid beast. For the purpose of the Weimar Task Force, we defined the European security order (ESO) as "the institutions, instruments, norms and rules that provide security on the European continent". As for the context, the group assumed that, within the timeframe of eight years, a European security order will not be maintained with Russia, but rather in confrontation with it. Therefore, we did not discuss security orders based on cooperation with the Russian Federation, desirable as they may seem. Apart from that, we consider the ESO in 2030 to be inherently cooperative. In general, we projected a rather stable global environment with trends developing in a more or less linear manner: the US remains a strong (security) partner for Europe, albeit with an increasing focus on the Indo-Pacific theatre; China continues to rise and challenge Western norms and values in various parts of the world; power continues to shift towards East and

Against this backdrop, the European Union plays a key role in the ESO in 2030. At its very core rests a cohesive EU with strong ties to NATO and the US. NATO, as an expression of a strong transatlantic bond, remains the key provider of collective defence. The EU, however, is able to project security and stability in its Eastern and Southern neighbourhood and to champion its values into the wider world. More concretely, we arrived at seven factors that underpin the European Security Order in 2030. The following list is neither exhaustive, nor was it the aim to create a vision that is probable and within reach but instead draw a picture of the ESO in 2030 that the Weimar Task force finds desirable.

### A cohesive EU as a strong actor in the world

The EU has navigated the serious economic crisis that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine with a smart mix of stimulus packages, managing the green energy transition, entering into strategic (trade) partnerships, and fostering a climate of innovation in Europe. As a result, the Union has emerged from the crisis relatively well in terms of socio-economic development, and centrist parties have been strengthened at the expense of populist ones. This cohesion has been reinforced by the EU, which has stood by its principles and values, and taken a strong stance against member states that do not abide by the rule of law or good governance standards. As a consequence, European democracy has been strengthened sustainably. The Union has also massively invested in the resilience of European societies, for instance by ramping up efforts to counter misinformation and disinformation by malign actors. A single EU President, chosen by the European Council, heads the European Commission and the Council, and is widely acknowledged as the EU's voice in the world. Importantly, internal cohesiveness and the EU's ability to act in international affairs are viewed as mutually reinforcing trends.

By 2030, the EU has gained an effective strategic sovereignty with links to security and defence, trade, and industrial policies. First, the European defence market is more inte-

<sup>1</sup> **European strategic sovereignty**: Strategic sovereignty is a hotly debated issue. Within the Weimar Task Force, we define it as the EU's ability to streamline the instruments at its disposal, enabling it to maximise its impact on international affairs and to take sovereign decisions. We do *not* understand it as EU attempts to act independently from its (transatlantic) partners.

grated than it was in the early 2020s, creating attractive output that is also purchased by transatlantic partners; joint procurement by EU member states has reached a level of 30 per cent of total spending. Second, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) significantly helps to stabilise countries in the neighbourhood during and after crises (notably as a result of the Strategic Compass' full implementation), for instance, through the deployment of battlegroups; and partner countries appreciate the EU's presence. Third, the EU has also ramped up its geostrategic edge, exemplified by effective investments in strategic (tech) sectors as well as by its ability to secure access to strategic materials, for example, through respective bilateral trade deals. Strategic sovereignty is underpinned by reformed institutional processes that allow for more flexible and effective foreign policy making. Despite initial disagreement, the Weimar Triangle countries have put forward a joint proposal for reformed voting mechanisms such as qualified majority voting under certain conditions in selected areas of EU foreign policy. The proposal managed to rally member states from East and West behind the idea. As a consequence of its ability to project its strengths and values internationally, European soft power is alive and kicking.

Providing order in the neighbourhood
The EU has blown some fresh air into its
neighbourhood policy, resulting in positive
influence on countries both in the East and
the South. Through a mix of leading by example
and smartly applying conditionality, the EU appears
as a principled actor that uses its toolbox strategically and effectively. First and foremost, the EU and
its member states have understood that enlargement policy is a strategic asset in a geopolitical
world, and use it accordingly. Negotiations with the



Weimar Task Force Meeting. Photo: Körber-Stiftung/ David Ausserhofer

Western Balkans as well as with Ukraine and Moldova are progressing well, however without the EU making amendments to the accession process or concessions to its standards. Furthermore, the EU is maintaining an appropriate sequence of negotiations. With more challenging neighbours, the EU has chosen a principled approach by successfully applying sanctions (e.g. Belarus) and conditionality (e.g. Serbia) where appropriate. With Russian influence waning as a consequence of the country's economic breakdown, Belarus returns to its "in-between" status preceding 2020. Serbia, at the same time, joins EU sanctions against Russia as a consequence of EU conditionality and the attractiveness provided by the perspective of accession. In its Southern neighbourhood, the EU is able to set the right priorities in its mix of development cooperation and security policies. Although the focus is now on the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the EU continues to cooperate with an economically weakened Turkey in areas of common interest. The EU has a tangible impact on stabilising countries in the Mediterranean and the Sahel, for instance through the newly created North-Africa-EU Skilled Workers Initiative.

Ukraine reaches a stable and acceptable settlement Ukraine has successfully defended its sovereignty against Russian aggression. For this to happen, European countries have followed through with weapons deliveries and successfully countered war fatigue in their societies. In Germany, the Zeitenwende was implemented through fundamental and sustainable changes to the country's foreign and security policies. Following financial and military support from various partners, Ukraine has been able to negotiate a stable settlement with Russia to end the war on Ukraine's terms. As a consequence of vast financial assistance – a successful EU reconstruction plan among others -Ukraine is flourishing after years of war. The country is experiencing transformation in various sectors: it has successfully curbed corruption, its security sector reform is showing effects, and its economy is embracing the green transformation. Following economic stabilisation, EU member states and Ukraine enter into strategic cooperation in the defence sector, for instance, through a joint drone project.

Relations with the US (almost) at eye-level

The US is appreciative of more substantive and effective investment by EU member states in their own security as well as the security of the Union's neighbourhood. An effective division of labour is negotiated between partners on both sides of the Atlantic. An increasing level of European strategic sovereignty enables the transatlantic



Weimar Task Force Meeting. Photo: Körber-Stiftung/ David Ausserhofer

partners to interact almost at eye-level. This new arrangement finds its expression, for instance, in a biannual joint EU-US Security and Defence Summit. The EU and NATO invest an increasing level of resources in joint projects such as the creation of a joint transport command.

A cohesive and adaptive NATO NATO forms an important pillar of the European security order in 2030. It has used its regained purpose following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine to position itself as a future-embracing and adaptive security alliance. The ability of NATO to adjust to an evolving global environment and the changing nature of security is embodied among others in the adoption of a far-reaching and state-of-the art strategy on the responsible use of emerging and disruptive technologies (EDT). The strategy finds followers and adopters worldwide. At the basis of NATO's adaptive capacity is a strong cohesion of its members on both sides of the Atlantic. Members are committed to a common purpose, and pragmatic in adjusting to changing contexts.

Managing the China challenge Europe has been rising to the challenge posed by China mainly by standing up for its principles, diversifying its partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region, and by embracing the importance of connectivity in a geopolitical world. Specifically, the EU has been true to its values, for instance by freezing dialogue formats with China and other actors over their human rights violations. This includes that the EU was ready to bear the ensuing economic costs. The respective fallout has been compensated by a diversification of trade relationships, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, where free trade agreements such as the EU-TPP trade deal have been gaining speed. The EU's reinforced approach to the region has also improved relations with the US. Taiwan plays a specific role in this regard. The EU has strategically strengthened its ties with Taipei, for example, by opening an EU mission in the city. Finally, the EU has understood to take connectivity issues seriously, and has ramped up its own infrastructure projects throughout the world. As a result, the Global Gateway programme has grown to become the most successful global connectivity initiative, and the largest in terms of investment volume.

# Strategic Options

Now we know where we want to go. But how do we get there? The Weimar Task Force developed conceivable road maps that can lead to the achievement of its vision for the European Security Order in 2030. The following pages present examples of specific and actionable first steps into this direction. They will encourage strategic thinking and discourse or even serve as concrete strategic starting points for decision-makers in European capitals and elsewhere.

# A Desirable European Security Order for 2030

How do we get where we want to be in 2030? Which steps should policy-makers take today? The members of the Weimar Task Force came up with some actionable recommendations.

isions that are unable to link the present to the future are nothing but fantasies. One can conceive many actions in the present that would influence the future, but where should we start?

The participants of the Weimar Task Force selected specific aspects of their vision, and created road maps detailing what would have to happen between now and 2030 in order to achieve this desirable future. The group then formulated starting points providing a path towards the first milestones defined in the road maps.

The following paragraphs present examples for first concrete steps that could be taken to help reach aspects of the Task Force's vision.

These three strategic options are not silver bullets that constitute comprehensive solutions for all of the problems that might crop up on the path to the vision. Rather, they are examples of initial steps in the right direction.

A first step towards effective European strategic sovereignty: Strengthening the EU defence market

A more integrated and effective European defence market is essential if European strategic sovereignty is to become a reality. The first step in this direction would be strengthening EU defence production capabilities by aligning supply and demand and defence budgets.

For this to happen, EU member states would increase joint procurement in order to profit from economy of scale due to the larger volume of orders. EU Commission instruments that incentivise

joint procurement – such as the <u>European Defence</u> <u>Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act</u> (EDIRPA) – support this development and could be maintained and strengthened. Such instruments foster solidarity between member states and prevent larger members from monopolising the continent's defence industry. Another helpful tool would be a financial envelope at EU level where member states allocate resources for joint projects. This could mitigate the negative effects of the lack of synchroneity between member states' defence budgets.

However, procurement will chiefly remain a national matter for the foreseeable future. A European Council agreement on the synchronization of budgeting cycles could facilitate long-term planning in production and procurement processes. Guaranteed demand would encourage public and private investment in the industry. Furthermore, member states should increase their defence budgets and fill gaps in the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) so that necessary capabilities can be developed at the national and NATO level.

In all these actions, time is of the essence. The process should be advanced as fast as possible for at least two reasons. Firstly, a growing "war fatigue" among the public could slow down support for larger defence budgets and increased procurement the longer the war in Ukraine carries on. Secondly, the system should be established before the US elections in 2024. A new Republican administration may be even more opposed to joint European defence procurement than previous administrations.

Taking these steps would contribute towards achieving an effective European strategic sovereignty. At the same time, it would also constitute advance-



Weimar Task Force Meeting, Photo: Körber-Stiftung/ David Ausserhofer

ment on two more aspects identified by the Task Force as crucial on the path to the ESO in 2030. First, it would assure that the EU can deliver weapons to Ukraine in order to help the country defend itself and thus enable any settlement between Ukraine and Russia to be reached on Ukraine's terms. Second, it would strengthen the European pillar of NATO and therefore NATO itself, while having a positive impact on the economy and technological know-how within European industry.

A first step towards the EU as a coherent and effective international actor: A new strategy towards Russia
If the EU really is to become a meaningful and coherent international actor, it needs internal cohesion; but it also needs to be able to consider the international environment strategically and to act accordingly. The lack of coordinated communication and policies among member states regarding a visa ban for Russian tourists in summer 2022 has underlined this need.

In line with the view that dealing with a belligerent Russia will remain a top priority of EU foreign policy and due to the need to move towards becoming a strategic actor, the Weimar states could give a mandate to the Commission and the High Representative to initiate a strategic discussion on dealing with Russia. Borrowing from the processes of the <u>EU-China Strategic Outlook in 2019</u>, the Commission and the High Representative could formulate specific actions for EU heads of state or government that could be discussed at the European Council.

Ideally, this would help to overcome divergent threat assessments among EU member states and contribute to the emergence of a common European strategic thinking. The aim would be to find agreement on shared principles regarding the following:

Containment – The priority for the years to come will be containing Russia, reducing the vulnerability of member states and becoming as self-sufficient as possible regarding energy supplies as well as in military and economic terms.

Negotiation and Deconfliction – At some point it will be necessary to discuss areas of mutual strategic interest with Russia. A key question in this regard will be whether and how to retain existing or establish new mechanisms for deconfliction and risk reduction. The member states should decide whether and how to engage with Russia on issues such as arms control, non-proliferation and climate change.

Flexibility – The process should have a built-in review mechanism to be able to reassess the strategy every two years in light of possible changes in Russian government and its policies. Furthermore,

this would enable the strategy to be continuously discussed and evaluated together with newly elected governments of the member states and hence reduces the risk of single governments sabotaging or vetoing the strategy.

# A first step towards a resilient EU neighbourhood: The reconstruction of Ukraine

A promising way to support the development of a stable and resilient neighbourhood – first and foremost the EU accession candidates in the East – would be a facility for a sustainable green transition in these countries. While the immediate support of Ukraine should be the utmost priority, the initiative, led by the European Commission, should also focus on longer-term questions of green reconstruction. The goals and processes of the reconstruction would be identified and agreed upon together with the Ukrainian government.

The reconstruction plan could be two-tiered: rebuilding vital infrastructure (water, electricity, gas, housing, etc.) could be addressed independently of the security situation in the area. Industrial and green tech investments would only be pursued in relatively safe areas. Funding for these measures could be provided by reprioritisation of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) or grants and loans from a new recovery package similar to the NextGenerationEU recovery package (NGEU). Additional funding could be mobilised from private investors, in a similar manner to funding provided by Germany's Green Fund for Ukraine. Furthermore, the process could involve teaming up with the World Bank, the IMF and other donors.

This plan could also contribute to improving good governance in Ukraine as funds would be supervised by an independent agency with civil society oversight complementing that of the EU. Importantly, these investments would be designed not only to reconstruct but to sustainably strengthen Ukraine, including its ability for self-defence. Efforts towards a green transition would therefore be complemented by actions to support Ukraine's defence and security.



Weimar Task Force Meeting. Photo: Körber-Stiftung/ David Ausserhofer

This plan would also boost EU industries that supply products needed for the sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine, and hence create jobs in EU member states. Furthermore, it would increase the energy security of the Union by enlarging the European energy infrastructure. Emphasising these benefits could help to attract funding, but also to safeguard the initiative against potential attacks by populists.

Clearly, the EU would not run its reconstruction efforts independently of other international actors. Although the significant efforts undertaken by the EU would lead it to become Ukraine's key partner, the EU should still involve like-minded partners in its initiative. US financing and capital would play a preeminent role, not least because the positive ramifications for the US economy would make it harder for a (potentially populist) future administration to withdraw from these joint efforts. Swift and convincing aid provision, therefore, could enable the EU and US to secure a competitive edge in donor competition compared to actors such as China, which might attempt to undermine among others the green conditionality of the reconstruction plan.

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# Methodology and Participants

To develop our normative vision as well as the road maps and strategic options, we employed an elaborate toolkit of foresight methods, provided to us by the team from Foresight Intelligence. This enabled us to ensure that the ideas emanating from the Weimar Task Force would not only be future-oriented and innovative, but also methodologically sound in the sense of being well thought through and less prone to individual biases and group think. The following provides more details about the foresight tools we used as well as the people that formed the Weimar Task Force.

## **A Normative Foresight Process**

For the Weimar Task Force, we convened experts from Germany, France and Poland in three consecutive workshops (one digital, two on-site) that rested on a sound methodological basis.

n the first, digital workshop, participants discussed factors that they believed would have an impact on the European Security Order in 2030. The results of this structured brainstorming were clustered into five issue areas: relations between the Weimar Triangle countries; defence capabilities and doctrines, the role of the US and NATO; Wider Europe; and the role of Russia (scoping).

All these factors were then compiled in a list of "descriptors" – elements that were viewed as potentially relevant to the European Security Order in 2030. In two online surveys, the participants ranked these elements according to their uncertainty, impact, and controllability. In the second workshop, the group chose six factors that it deemed particularly impactful, controllable and uncertain (in the latter case, therefore leaving room for manoeuvre). This resulted in the following seven factors: cohesion within the European Union; the EU's ability to act internationally; effective strategic sovereignty, the role of NATO in Europe; developments in the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods; the outcome of Russia's war in Ukraine; and European policies towards China (factor assessment).

For each factor, a "best guess", "worst case", "best case", and "wild card" projection for the year 2030 was formulated (alternative assumptions). Based on these different future trajectories, the participants constructed a comprehensive normative vision – an image of the European Security Order in 2030 that they viewed as desirable – albeit not necessarily likely (normative vision).

The third and final workshop took the vision as a starting point for debate and prioritised some of its aspects. Subsequently, the participants developed a number of potential pathways to this particular future (road maps). As a final step, the Task Force formulated examples of strategic options that could be employed by decision-makers today in order to take initial steps along this path.

Scoping **Rating of** factors **Alternative** assumptions **Normative** vision **Road maps Strategic** options

# 16 Participants from 3 Countries

#### **Participants**

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All members have participated in the Weimar Task Force in their personal capacities. The normative vision as well as strategic options were drawn up using group discussions, but do not necessarily reflect the opinions of individual task force members or of their respective institutions. Some members have only participated in individual sessions.





Photos: Körber-Stiftung

## Paris Peace Forum

In a world requiring more collective action, the Paris Peace Forum is a platform open to all seeking to develop coordination, rules, and capacities that answer global problems. Year-round support activities and an annual event in November help better organize our planet by convening the world, boosting projects, and incubating initiatives. Set to take place on 11 and 12 November 2022 at the Palais Brongniart in Paris and livestreamed to the digital world, the fifth edition of the Forum will focus on "Riding out the multicrisis".

www.koerber-stiftung.de/en/paris-peace-forum www.parispeaceforum.org/en/

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speakers

Comfort Ero

Nadia Murad

**Brad Smith** 

include: Audrev Azoulav

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#### Körber-Stiftung

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#### **International Dialogue**

Conflicts arise in situations that are fraught with misunderstandings and lack debate. Moreover, such conflicts are often grounded in the past. This is why we champion international dialogue and foster more profound understandings of history. We address political decision-makers as well as civil society representatives and emerging leaders from the vounger generations. Our geographic focus lies on Europe, its eastern neighbours, the Middle East, and Asia, especially China. We strengthen discussions about history at the local level in a manner that stretches beyond national borders and encourage people to share their experiences of cultures of remembrance. Our foreign- and security-policy formats provide safe spaces for confidential talks built on trust. However, we also employ formats that involve the public, such as publications, competitions and networks, to provide impulses to the debate about common European values and inspire the further development of international cooperation.

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