

## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE INTEGRATION AND SECURITY OF EUROPE IN THE PERIOD 1993–2024 AND ITS FUTURE

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### INTRODUCTION

The article presents the European Union and its activities and the role it played in the integration of Europe and the provision of security in the period 1993–2004, i.e. since its creation till now. In addition, it presents its future and the place in the new international order. Today it is difficult to imagine not only our continent, but also the whole world without the EU and NATO. It is one of the major participants/entities in the contemporary international relations and together with NATO it co-creates the Euro-Atlantic system of international security, which theoretically is responsible for maintaining peace in Europe and in the world. In practice, it is not so certain now as Russia's aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and the war being fought there constitute a serious threat to the security of Europe and peace in the world. Speaking directly, neither the EU, nor NATO managed to prevent the outbreak of the war between Russia and Ukraine. We are dealing with these organisations' and UN's obvious failure despite their efforts put into stopping Russia's attack on Ukraine. In my opinion, the efforts were too late, because the West and Germany, France and the United States in particular did business with Russia, which was a real cash cow. Thus they tolerated Vladimir Putin's aggressive behaviour and his imperial policy. Today, Russia and its allies are fighting a war against Ukraine and at the same time a proxy war against the West. They strive to weaken the EU and pose a threat to the security of Europe (Mason, 2024, pp. 1–3).

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Writing this article I referred to a few theories and research methods. In particular I used the systemic analysis method and inductive reasoning, i.e. drawing conclusions and verifying hypotheses with the use of the method of generalisation, cognition from details to totality. Those methods together with the theory of realism and the theories of integration and foreign policy let me formulate a few theses and research questions. The main thesis is a statement that the EU, which is the fruit of integration processes that started in Europe after the end of World War II became their accelerator at the turn of the 21st century. It contributed to the development of universal cooperation between the states of our continent and strengthened the position of Europe in the international arena. Thanks to the processes of enlarging and integrating over the last 30 years, the EU has closed the gap between the post-communist East and the capitalistic West and strengthened its security. It ensured reasonably fast and steady civilisation development for Europe and prosperity and security for its citizens. The EU as a social, political, cultural, economic and axiological community became a model to follow for countries on other continents. Until 2022 it also constituted an attractive oasis of security and welfare for the Europeans and millions of immigrants and refugees from all over the world. However, Russia's aggression against Ukraine revealed many weaknesses of the EU, inter alia the existence of some divisions, conflicting interests and disintegration phenomena as well as that it was not prepared for Russia's asymmetric war with the West. Here, a question arises why it occurred and who is responsible for that. Did political elites, mechanisms or decision-making processes fail? In my opinion, everything; and this caused over-optimism and a slowdown in the process of reforms necessary for the EU to continue its active policy of European integration and strengthening its security.

One of the conclusions drawn from the analysis conducted in this article is that, in my opinion, there is a need for a radical reform so that the EU would be able to integrate Europe further and strengthen its security, inter alia, by developing the Common Defence and Security Policy (CDSP) and its further enlargement and integration. It is required by the current dangerous international situation, which resulted from Russia's aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and progressive destruction of the global order, which is determined by superpowers' struggle, in particular the United States and China, for global hegemony. The new emerging multi-polar international order cannot lack the EU. Its former international policy based on soft power should change as soon as possible and be strengthened by hard dimension of power (hard power). The EU and NATO should return to the old Roman adage *si vi tempom, para bellum*: „If you want peace, prepare for war” (Rasmussen, Yermak, 2024, p. 24). It is also necessary to have new political leadership that will re-define the EU's objectives and tasks so that it can ensure security for Europe and become one of the major pillars in the multi-polar global order.

Recently, the world has become loud about the extensive report on the EU's current state and prospects for development and growth by Mario Draghi, former Prime Minister of Italy and President of the European Central Bank, who writes, *inter alia*, that in order not to fall apart, the EU must return onto the track of the European development and growth of competitiveness. He emphasises that: „Europe's fundamental values are prosperity, equality, freedom, peace and democracy in a sustainable environment. The EU exists to ensure that the Europeans enjoy these fundamental rights. If Europe stops guaranteeing them it will lose its reason for existence” (Draghi, 2024, s. 13). Draghi is right and his diagnosis shows how the EU is systematically losing its economic position and, as a result, its role in the international arena. The reasons for this include reduced productivity, lack of innovation, shortage of qualified employees, high prices of energy, costs of climate transformation, and changes in international trade often involving unfair competition. Mario Draghi does not rule out internal differentiation of the European integration and, ultimately, purely intergovernmental cooperation. He proposes reforming the EU budget in order to focus on achieving goals of pan-European importance, especially in the area of financing innovation. By the way, such ideas have been occurring for a long time, because the EU needs not only a new economic strategy, but also radical reforms in its internal and foreign policy. If these reforms are not carried out, the EU may fall apart. In this context it can be said that Brexit was not a precedent. Other countries may follow Great Britain, because the EU has been weakened by subsequent crises: the financial crisis of 2008–2014, the migration crisis of 2015–2019 and the pandemic crisis of 2019–2023, which have not been resolved in a systemic way and still make themselves felt. This applies in particular to the migration crisis. Migrants from Africa and Asia continue to flow into the EU and Europe is unable to retain or assimilate them. This, in turn, causes social divisions: our own vs. alien, which generates xenophobia, populism and nationalism and undermines the foundations of neoliberal democracy. Autocracy and fascism are growing among the EU Member States, examples of which may be France, Austria, Hungary and Germany, which may follow Great Britain and leave the EU; and this will lead to the EU's collapse.

The article was developed based on the extensive Polish and foreign literature on this subject as well as on documents published and data from the press and the Internet.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ENTITY

The European Union is a relatively young legal and international relations entity. It was founded on the basis of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) commonly known as the Treaty of Maastricht signed on 7 February 1992 by Belgium, Denmark,

France, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, Luxemburg, the Federal Republic of Germany, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Italy (for the text of the Treaty see: Przyborowska-Klimczak, Skrzydło-Tefelska, 2007, p. 295). After ratification, it entered into force on 1 November 1993 and contained seven Titles, 33 Declarations and 7 Protocols (Fiszer, 2002, pp. 15–38).

The Treaty of Maastricht defined the principles governing relations between the European Union and the Member States introducing the principle of respect for national identity and raising the principle of loyal cooperation to the EU level. Moreover, it set itself five basic objectives to accomplish, which have remained relevant up to now. These include: firstly, to promote economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable, in particular through the creation of an area without internal borders, through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion and through the establishment of economic and monetary union (EMU); secondly, to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy including the eventual framing of a common defence policy; thirdly, to develop close cooperation on justice and home affairs; fourthly, to strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of the Member States through the introduction of a citizenship of the European Union; fifthly, to maintain in full the ‘*acquis communautaire*’ and build on it with the aim of ensuring the effectiveness of the mechanisms and the institutions of the Community (Article B. TUE) (Węc, 2012, pp. 209–212; Fiszer, 2002, pp. 31–42).

The European Union created on the basis of the Maastricht Treaty had a rather complex structure which consisted of three „parts” called pillars. The first pillar was created by the European Communities (EEC, ECSC, EAEC), the second one by common foreign and security policy and the third one by cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs (Maliszewska-Nienartowicz, 2010, p. 31). The last, third pillar resulted from hard-fought compromise between the Member States, which wanted to leave the powers in the fields of justice and home affairs at the national level. In accordance with Article K TEU common activities and interests include: combatting terrorism, asylum policy, combatting drug trafficking, rules governing the crossing of the external borders of the Member States, combatting unauthorised immigration and organised crime and judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters (Przyborowska-Klimczak, Skrzydło-Tefelska, 2007, p. 306).

Under the Maastricht Treaty the Member States entrusted the European Union with competences, the scope of which was extended by subsequent revision treaties: the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999), the Treaty of Nice (2003) and the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) (Węc, 2012, p. 210; Grosse, 2018).

Contradictory assessments prevail among researchers and politicians with regard to the condition, tasks, goals and future of the EU. On the one hand, the prevailing

opinion is that the EU has already created a specific system of internal ties, has developed its own structures and original governance procedures, and its main bodies reflect a specific system of legislative, executive and judicial powers with limited possibilities of coercion. In their opinion, the EU has set the most favourable direction of development of entire Europe. On the other hand, there are opinions that the EU has been drifting in an unknown direction for years which poses a serious threat to it and that it requires further improvement of the organisational/community structures and new rules of cooperation, as well as a broader development of the European and global awareness among the Member States, their citizens and political elites. Brexit, i.e. Great Britain's exit from the EU which eventually took place on 31 January 2020, deepened these pessimistic assessments. Brexit contributed to the growth of nationalist and anti-EU sentiments and the inhibition of the integration processes in Europe and seriously weakened the economic and military potential of the European Union and thus the security of Europe (Fiszer, 2018, pp. 35–71; Chojan, 2021, pp. 2–16; Kearns, 2018). Brexit was preceded by other crises and negative phenomena including: the financial and economic crisis (2008–2014), the migration crisis (2015–2017) and the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed numerous shortcomings of the EU and undermined its position in the international arena. The weakened and divided EU was surprised by Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 which, on the other hand, consolidated the EU and became an accelerator of its activities for European integration and security.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ACTIVITIES FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The integration activities initiated after World War II by the Western European states and continued in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War, have led the European Union to the position of the strongest socio-political and economic organisation in Europe and strengthened its security. The membership in the Community became an opportunity for development for the European countries and gave them the opportunity to strengthen their position in the world, of which also Poland may be an example (Polska w Europie jutra, 2021; Fiszer, 2015). When joining the EU in 2004, Poland was the poorest country in the Community. Today, in terms of GDP per capita, we are in the 18th place in the EU with the income of 17.7 thousand euros per capita. Our current contribution to the EU accounts for EUR 6.5 billion. According to the European Commission data the annual benefits from the participation in the European single market account for 10.6% of the Polish GDP and the total annual economic benefits from the membership in the EU are currently circa EUR 115–120 billion. 3.5 million jobs in Poland exist thanks to the EU countries' demand for goods with Polish added value. In April 2022, after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, public support for

the EU in Poland reached 92% and it was still high in June 2023 although it dropped to 85% (Bielecki, 2023, p. A8.5; Wojtaszczyk, 2023, pp. 97–112).

The most important objectives that the European Union set for the Member States, as I have already mentioned, were formulated in Article 2 of the Maastricht Treaty. They included: promoting economic and social development, eliminating unemployment and strengthening economic and social cooperation among the EU Member States. The ultimate goal of the joint efforts was to create an economic and monetary union with a common currency. Article 2 obliged the Member States to strive to implement a common foreign and security policy which should constitute the basis for common defence in the event of a threat. The Treaty placed emphasis on strengthening the protection of the rights and interests of the citizens of the Community who became the citizens of the Union then. All the residents of the Member States holding their citizenship acquired the citizenship of the European Union. Under the Treaty they are guaranteed freedom of movement throughout the entire territory of the Union. The provisions concerning the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the so-called convergence criteria that opened the door to the monetary union for Member States were its most important parts (Koszel, 2019, p. 38; Borkowski, 2013, pp. 269–297).

The conclusion of the Maastricht Treaty and the establishment of the European Union presented many new challenges and obligations to its Member States which eventually were to result in a single (common) market without any barriers. Joint efforts brought the greatest effects in regional, agricultural, currency, industrial, research and development and transport policies, as well as in various spheres of social policy (Łastawski, 2003, p. 300). The development of regional policy constituted one of the EU's priority goals supported by the European Investment Bank. The regional policy objective was to support entrepreneurship by creating new infrastructure, growth of production related investments and from 1994 developing cross-border cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Łastawski, 2003, p. 303).

All activities of the European Union were guided by one main objective: economic growth translating into increased employment, the raising of living and quality of life level and competitiveness of individual economic sectors in the entire Union. For this purpose a lot of attention was paid to scientific research and technological development. Research programmes were to be focused on the development of high technologies used for civilian and military needs which required large financial outlays on research and education of highly qualified scientific staff. Another important factor supporting the development of the Community market was to be a common transport policy improving the movement of people and goods throughout the European Union. Joint activities for the development of pan-European infrastructure were also intended to reduce transport costs and minimise the burden on the natural environment (Weidenfeld, Wessles, 1999, p. 237). Activities in the sphere of environment

protection did not only address the issue of transport and its negative consequences for the natural environment. The Maastricht Treaty introduced many restrictions and standards to which the Member States had to adapt. The policy in this sphere was aimed at improving the conditions of the natural environment and thus protecting human health and life. In the period of constant economic and civilisation development this was a very important issue that was a basis for sustainable development taking into account the needs of future generations.

The signing of the Treaty on the European Union did not mean the end of the process of European integration. It required the introduction of further solutions which had to take into account the level of unity currently achieved and at the same time set new goals and priorities. Therefore, on 2 October 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed and entered into force on 1 June 1999. The most important changes it introduced concerned: the inclusion of cooperation under the Schengen Agreement in the EU policy, the transfer of activities in the sphere of justice and home affairs from the third pillar to the first pillar (of the European Communities) and extension of the scope of qualified majority voting in the European Parliament.

The next revision of the founding treaties took place on 26 February 2001, when the Member States signed the Treaty of Nice which entered into force on 1 March 2003. It laid the foundation for the future enlargement of the European Union and access of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Lisbon Treaty was last but not least. It was signed on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009. The enlargement of the European Union required, *inter alia*, introduction of new regulations concerning the determination of decision-making mechanisms. The Treaty of Lisbon was aimed at strengthening European democracy and closer cooperation in the sphere of border control as well as judicial and police forces' cooperation. What is worth noting is the so-called European citizens' initiative which enabled the EU communities to participate in its activities (Węc, 2011; Fiszer 2011; Fiszer, 2013, pp. 149–168).

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Parliament gained a lot of power in the EU and it now decides on most Union's law. Some of the competences acquired were previously reserved only to the Council, e.g. agricultural, and visa and asylum policies. In addition, there were also new issues such as personal data protection, energy and intellectual property. The Parliament has influence on the appointment of commissioners. And although it is too early to claim that the EU is becoming a parliamentary democracy, membership in the European Parliament gives not only a lot of money but also power (Marczak, 2009, s. 23).

As a matter of fact the European Parliament can and does create law today on an equal footing with the EU Council and the European Commission. It has the power to block the EU trade agreements (e.g. those that are in conflict with human rights)



and influences the distribution of the EU money that is, for example, allocated for the common agricultural policy. Speaking about the systematically growing powers of the European Parliament it is necessary to remember that they are granted by the Member States. They decide what the Parliament is allowed to do and how it can exercise its powers. On the other hand the Parliament is not entitled to decide about itself and to grant itself powers. This is what the EU Member States shall decide on (Wojciechowski, 2008, pp. 56–58).

Moreover, the Treaty of Lisbon changed the rules of operation of some EU bodies. First of all it recognised the European Council as an institution of the European Union although it still lacks legislative powers. The decision-making process in the European Council raised most doubts and it was eventually decided to take decisions by qualified majority vote. A new institution was also created: the President of the European Council appointed for a period of two and a half years. Their main tasks are to organise and manage the work of the European Council, present reports to the European Parliament and ensure the continuity of the European Council's work. Unfortunately, in practice, this sometimes leads to conflicts with the competences of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Klejnowski, 2015, pp. 184–207). It can be argued that the Treaty of Lisbon strengthened the role of not only the European Parliament but also the position of the EU in the international arena. (Klejnowski, 2015, pp. 184–207; Fiszer, 2009, pp. 115–152).

Unfortunately all these solutions did not protect the EU against successive problems and crises in particular the already mentioned 2008–2014 financial and economic crisis and the 2015–2016 migration crisis which have not been efficiently solved to this day and pose a threat to the integration and security of Europe. The counter-crisis measures undertaken did not aim to solve the main causes of the problems occurring. The EU leaders excessively focused on secondary issues and on the defence of their own national interests which was harmful to the climate of mutual trust and belief in the effectiveness of European integration (Grosse, 2018, p. 275; Maull, 2011, pp. 11–25).

Despite these problems and the growing new threats to the security of Europe and the world today which are determined by the Russian-Ukrainian war there is no better prospect for the EU than far-reaching integration. Therefore, it is imperative to broaden and deepen it in spite of or even against some European leaders' short-sighted policies. At the same time, in order to eliminate the growing nationalist sentiments the European Union should actively support the Member States' efforts aimed at preserving their specificity and cultural identity and create its own armed forces necessary to ensure the security of Europe (Wielniński, 2024, p. 11).



## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE SECURITY OF EUROPE

The EU does not have armed forces and its military missions outside its territory, e.g. in the Balkans rely on the Member States' troops and the support from NATO. To begin with, it is necessary to establish a fast response brigade that would consist of volunteers from the Member States and would be at the disposal of the head of the EU diplomacy. This will require a thorough reconstruction of the current political elites' way of thinking about the EU and the awareness of the Europeans. It can be assumed that the global situation and the attractiveness of the EU will be conducive to this. The EU regardless of many problems it faces is still a serious force and has many geopolitical advantages that strengthen its position and role in the international arena.

However, in order to become an important pillar in the international security system the EU needs deep reforms for its strategic autonomy. Such an opportunity was provided by the Treaty of Lisbon which modified the institutional structure of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and at the same time its supplementary parts the Common Security and Defence Policy. Thanks to that it is possible to create new bodies and agencies within the framework of the EU security policy. It should be emphasised here that the sphere of foreign policy was considered to be the competence of the EU Member States during the decades of the European integration processes. Moreover, with regard to institutional and decision-making issues in the context of the necessary reforms of the CSDP it is also necessary to strive to ensure the participation of institutions representing supranational interests in this process while guaranteeing the influence of the Member States' governments on this process. This is necessary in order to fairly balance the interests of the Community with the different, sometimes vital, interests of individual Member States. In practice, this is a dilemma difficult to resolve especially as the EU does not yet have sufficient mechanisms to coordinate the EU foreign policy with the regional and local levels in the Member States (Kamiński, Gzik, 2022, p. 233; Piechowicz, 2022, pp. 37–38).

Due to the continuing decomposition of the security architecture in Europe and all over the world the EU is taking new initiatives to strengthen the security of the Member States, however many of them are long overdue. New investments and broader military cooperation as well as maximising the effectiveness of all EU countries' spending on defence in the coming years are also necessary. This is a difficult and ambitious challenge that must be supported by specific actions, programmes and funds.

In the last decade the EU Member States have started the implementation of several programmes within the CSDP which are supported by special European funds. Resolving dilemmas such as maintaining the level of investment and quality in the sphere of security while national budgets are reduced is their main goal. In addition,

while complementing and mutually reinforcing the importance of the EU Member States in supporting international peace and security, in particular in the context of the continuing war in Ukraine it is a major challenge to manage a common policy which, on the one hand, is still in the development phase and on the other hand its planned activities are not to duplicate the attempts already taken and investments and activities being implemented. It is assumed that profitability of joint activities will be maximised by expending military-political consultations on issues of common interest to the EU institutions and the governments of the Member States. Quick and decisive activities of the EU within the CSDP require limiting unanimity when taking decisions necessary for Europe's security, i.e. wider use of qualified majority vote (QMV) than before and limiting the use of veto in the EU Council. Some areas of the EU foreign policy already allow decisions to be taken by qualified majority vote. Contrary to some opinions, a reform of the EU treaties is not required as existing provisions and mechanisms can be used such as „constructive abstention” provided for in Article 31 par. 1, 2 and 3 TEU (Bielecki, 2023, p. A6).

The war with Ukraine unleashed by Putin which has and will have a significant impact on the reform and evolution of the European Union's CSDP could have been avoided if only the West and especially the United States, Germany and France had pursued not such a passive, even pro-Russian but a decisive and coordinated policy stopping Putin from implementing his visions that are dangerous to peace which he has been proclaiming since he took over as president of the Russian Federation. Moreover, Ukraine should have been admitted to the EU and NATO a long time ago which would have stopped Putin from aggression against this country (Bielawska, 2015; Kiwerska, 2022, pp. 20–23). Meanwhile, the war between Russia and Ukraine has been fought for almost three years and the West, in particular the United States and Germany still do not want to admit Ukraine to NATO.

If Russia wins the war it will dictate peace condition and one of them will be the lack of consent for Ukraine's membership in the Euro-Atlantic system, and certainly in NATO. Moreover, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has resulted in far-reaching changes in the balance of power in the international arena. It showed that despite decades of international integration and globalisation the world is deeply divided. It exposed the low effectiveness of the policy for the security of Europe and the world pursued by many international organisations led by the UN, the EU and NATO which requires deep reforms including creating an effective system for deterring potential aggressors and an efficient decision-making process based on qualified majority voting and limiting the exercise of the right to veto. These organisations should also have the right to take preventive actions in order to preclude an outbreak of war between states that are in conflict (Bielecki, 2023, p. A6).

## PROSPECTS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS ROLE IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The global order that we have seen over the past thirty years has been falling apart for a long time now. The leading role of the United States/the EU duo in global governance is being contested today by a number of global players. And although the current system has brought many benefits to the world it is also starting to become a burden for the West itself and above all the „world policeman”, i.e. the USA. The resurgent authoritarian tendencies also show that globalisation which built great hopes at the beginning of the 21st century did not contribute to the spread of liberal-democratic values around the world (Halesiak, 2024, p. 11). On the contrary, it has led to serious internal tensions in Western countries including those belonging to the European Union (Fiszer, 2022, pp. 11–35; Fiszer, 2023, pp. 469–482; Fiszer, 2022, pp. 17–48).

The Russian-Ukrainian war consolidated the West and strengthened the Euro-Atlantic system what was confirmed by the NATO summit in Vilnius on 11–12 July 2023 (Czarnecki, 2023, pp. 12–13; Kapitonenko, 20230). It also led to the elimination of Russia from international relations for many years and thus strengthened the leadership of the United States in the world which is conducive to the improvement of its relations with China and cooperation in building a new bipolar or multipolar global order (Przychodniak, 2024, pp. 2–9; Piłkuła, pp. 12–13; Maciejasz, 2022, p. 12). This hypothesis is confirmed by the visit of Chinese leader Xi Jinping in the United States on 14–15 November 2023. It showed that both parties strive to improve their mutual political and economic relations (Gadomski, 2024, p. 12). President Xi insisted that the United States should not expand its trade war or technological competition. He reassured Biden saying that China „does not seek to overtake or unseat the USA” and expects that the United States, for its part, „will not plot to suppress or contain China” (Kruczkowska, 2023, p. 12).

The leaders agreed to restore the military dialogue interrupted in 2022 as well as permanent contacts at the level of ministers of defence and the high commands of both countries. The talks also concerned the economy and China's hopes for the inflow of American capital as well as the climate crisis which forces the world powers to cooperate; in addition, such controversial issues as human rights and Taiwan, the war between Israel and Hamas and the war in Ukraine. The above implies that China came to the conclusion that for now it has no chance of taking control over the world but this does not mean that it has already given up this goal (Szomburg, 2024; Krauthammer, 2024).

Therefore, the EU today faces a number of challenges and tasks in order to be an important player in the emerging new international order. It is currently losing

the race in many important areas not only to the US but also to Asian countries (China and Korea). In the socio-economic sphere there is a need to develop and implement a strategy that will ensure the capacity for caring for the Union's aging population especially in the field of healthcare services. In order to maintain the entire socio-economic system and at the same time ensure a high quality of life level a leap in productivity is needed so the EU must become a leader in automation and robotics (Grzymisławski, 2023, p. 2; Wowra, 2018, pp. 77–97; Halesiak, 2024).

Apart from that, the EU, unlike China, the United States and Russia, does not have comparable strategic and offensive forces. Due to the continuing decomposition of the global order and security architecture in Europe and all over the world the EU is taking new initiatives to strengthen the security of its members but many of them are long overdue. New investments and broader military cooperation are also necessary as well as maximising the efficiency of all EU countries' spending on defence in the years to come.

This is necessary in the context of upcoming presidential elections in the United States in 2024 which may be won again by Donald Trump, a politician with populist views and an isolationist attitude in the US foreign policy disregarding the European Union and NATO. He questions Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and says that if he wins he will not comply with NATO's collective defence clause and that he will encourage Russia to do „everything it wants” with NATO (Heilbrunn, 2024; Kazimierzuk, 2024). This may weaken the EU's cooperation with NATO and the United States. NATO may also collapse and Europe is not prepared for that (Greven, 2023). Therefore, within the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) the EU should strive to have military capabilities and provide itself with broadly understood „hard security” which will allow it to strengthen its position in the international arena and participate in building a multipolar global order together with the United States and possibly China. This is the hope raised by the above-mentioned meeting of the leaders of both countries on 14–15 November 2023. After his talks with Xi, President Biden posted on Twitter: „I think it is paramount that you and I understand each other clearly, leader to leader. There are global challenges that call for our collective leadership. Today we have made some important progress” (Kruczkowska, 2023, p. 12). Xi on the other hand stated that: „there are a thousand reasons why we should not continue to deteriorate relations with the USA and none why we should do so” (Grzymisławski, 2023, p. 2).

Time will tell whether we are dealing only with a cyclical improvement in Sino-American relations; a ceasefire in the war for world hegemony or the beginning of a new stage in cooperation between China and the United States to build a bipolar or multipolar international order in the world with the participation of the European Union as well.

## CONCLUSIONS

There is no doubt that the creation of the European Union in 1993 was a clear turning point not only in Europe's integration processes but in its history in general and in the history of the European states and their nations. As I have already mentioned the EU became an accelerator of the European integration in the period of 1993–2024 and together with NATO is a guarantor of its security and plays an important role in international relations. It actively participates in resolving international conflicts and building a new world order which is difficult to imagine without the European Union. The EU together with the United States and NATO can and should play an important role in the race to take control of the world. Moreover, with Russia posing a threat to Europe today the European Union must prepare for a potential war and ensure the security for its citizens.

All in all, I say that, as there was no alternative before now there is also no alternative to the EU thanks to which Europe has been relatively safe and rich for over three decades. However, the EU should carry out a number of necessary social, political and economic reforms and create its own armed forces at least the so-called fast response brigade. In addition, it should continue the policy of enlargement and integration which is necessary for the security of Europe and strengthening its position in the world. It should also have a nuclear deterrent system against Russia in the event the United States withdraw or limit its presence in Europe. To this end, it should tighten cooperation with the United Kingdom, Turkey and China and increase spending on defence.

In addition, complementing and mutually reinforcing the importance of the EU Member States in supporting international peace and security especially in the context of the continuing war in Ukraine a major challenge is the management of a common policy which, on the one hand is still in the development phase and on the other hand its planned activities should not duplicate the already undertaken efforts, investments and activities being implemented. It is assumed that the profitability of joint activities will be maximised by expanding military and political consultations on issues of common interest to the EU institutions and the governments of the Member States. Fast and decisive actions of the EU within the Common Security and Defence Policy requires limiting unanimity when taking decisions necessary for Europe's security, i.e. wider use of qualified majority voting than before and limiting the right to veto in the EU Council. Some areas of the EU foreign policy already allow for decisions to be made by qualified majority vote. Contrary to some opinions, it is not necessary to change the EU treaties as the existing provisions and mechanisms can be used such as „constructive abstention” provided for in Article 31 par. 1, 2 and 3 TEU. New enlightened and responsible political elites are also necessary to reform the EU and strengthen its role in international relations.

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## THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ACTIVITIES FOR THE INTEGRATION AND SECURITY OF EUROPE IN THE PERIOD 1993–2024 AND ITS FUTURE

### Abstract

The article presents the European Union, especially its creation, evolution and significance for the integration and security of Europe in the period 1993–2024. In addition, it shows the EU's prospects and its place in the emerging new international order. The author states that today it is difficult to imagine not only our continent, but the whole world without the EU. It is one of the main entities of contemporary international relations and, together with NATO, co-creates the Euro-Atlantic security system, which guarantees the maintenance of peace in Europe and in the world. It has contributed to the development of universal cooperation between the countries of our continent and has strengthened Europe's position in the international arena.

**Key words:** European Union, integration, security, Europe, world, prospects

### DZIAŁALNOŚĆ UNII EUROPEJSKIEJ NA RZECZ INTEGRACJI I BEZPIECZEŃSTWA EUROPY W LATACH 1993–2024 ORAZ JEJ PRZYSZŁOŚĆ

### Streszczenie

Artykuł ukazuje Unię Europejską, jej genezę oraz działalność i znaczenie dla integracji i bezpieczeństwa Europy w latach 1993–2024. Ponadto ukazuje przyszłość UE i jej miejsce w powstającym nowym porządku międzynarodowym. Autor stwierdza, że dziś trudno sobie wyobrazić nie tylko nasz kontynent, ale cały świat bez UE. Jest ona jednym z głównych podmiotów współczesnych stosunków międzynarodowych i wraz z NATO współtworzy euroatlantycki system bezpieczeństwa, który gwarantuje utrzymanie pokoju w Europie i na świecie. Przyczyniła się do rozwoju wszechstronnej współpracy między państwami naszego kontynentu i umocniła pozycję Europy na arenie międzynarodowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Unia Europejska, integracja, bezpieczeństwo, Europa, świat, perspektywy