

## ESSAY

## Lithuanian-Polish security cooperation in European Union (EU) Defence Programs

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### Abstract

This article is part of a broad discussion concerning the deteriorating security environment in the European neighbourhood and the initiatives the European Union (EU) and its Member States (MS) took to intensify security and defence cooperation. The war in Ukraine put pressure on the entire regional security structure. Hence increased investments and more collaboration are necessary to jointly develop and use the military capabilities that the EU and Baltic region need. In this context, it is interesting how Lithuania and Poland – both Eastern EU members with grave concerns and engagement in regional security – perceive and utilize the potential that EU programs offer. This article will look deeper into the level of cooperation between Lithuania and Poland before the intensification of military operations in Ukraine in February 2022. Furthermore, the paper presents an overview of the regional cooperation concept, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and its funds, agencies, and instruments. The key elements of this study are the analysis of both countries' involvement in the European Defence Fund (EDF) preparatory programs implemented since 2017.

### Keywords

EDF, PESCO, CSDP, military cooperation, regional cooperation, European funds, EDIDP, PADR

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## Introduction

In light of the deteriorating security environment in the European Union (EU) neighbourhood, its Member States (MS) launched several initiatives to intensify security and defence cooperation within the EU framework. Increased investments and greater collaboration are necessary to jointly develop and utilize the military capabilities that the EU needs. To enhance its capacity as an international security actor, to contribute to the protection of EU citizens, and to maximize the effectiveness of defence spending – these are the primary targets for the coming years. However, concrete actions, programs, and funds must support these challenging goals. It is interesting to see how Lithuania and Poland, eastern EU members with serious concerns about and engagement in regional security, perceived and utilized the potential that EU programs offer. This article will examine this security aspect and the level of Lithuanian-Polish cooperation.

As to methodology, qualitative content analysis was used. In addition, this case study applies the logic of process tracing. It, therefore, aims to follow the process of Lithuania and Poland adapting within the EDF and its preparatory programs framework. The research follows the theory analysis process, shows Lithuanian and Polish adaptation to EDF goals are explained by the theory of regionalism.<sup>1</sup> However, it should be remembered that security and defence are those policy areas where cooperation analysis might be less transparent due to its close relation to national security. Hence secondary literature and prognoses made by think tanks are indispensable for collecting empirical material.<sup>2</sup>

The article is structured as follows. After describing the scope of research and the relevant literature, it presents an overview of the CSDP and its funds, agencies, and instruments. It discusses the framework of Lithuanian-Polish cooperation in the last three decades, up to 2021. Afterward, it analyses and discusses both countries' engagement in *Preparatory Action on Defence Research* (PADR) and *European Defence Industrial Development Programme* (EDIDP) instruments, concluding with a discussion of the findings and suggestions for future research avenues.

As stated, the subject of this paper is the analysis of the Lithuanian-Polish security cooperation and its stage of development under the EU EDF programs implemented by the European Commission (EC) up to the end of 2021.

Thus, the research object in this study is the analysis of both countries' cooperation and participation in developing regional security architecture. The research questions that will guide the further analysis regard the role of the EDF in increasing and stimulating Lithuanian and Polish cooperation in the security field, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Beach and R.B. Pedersen, *Process-tracing methods: an essential tool for cutting-edge social science research* (University of Michigan Press, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> See A. Calcarà, "Making sense of European armaments policies: a liberal intergovernmentalism research agenda," *Comparative Strategy* 38, no. 6 (2019): 567–581, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2019.1674084>.

whether and how the created instruments have motivated both governments to participate in joint EDIDP and PADR programs and whether Lithuanian-Polish engagement in using EU funds in the security sphere is a proper example of cooperation from the perspective of regional integration and regionalism theories.

To make this article more comprehensive, it is necessary to analyse how EDIDP and PADR are included in the new CSDP agencies/mechanisms/programs/funds system. Another important issue is whether, at the end of 2021, the state of Lithuanian-Polish partnership reflected a properly used potential of both states to cooperate in the sphere of security. To meet these assumptions, an indication of the main fields of cooperation of Lithuanian and Polish counterparts in these projects is essential.

## Literature background on regionalism

Over the last decades, the theories of the evolution of European integration, which gave rise to various integration models, have partly taken into account the increasing number of aspects of the idea of regionalism.<sup>3</sup> The added value of this development is that the approach to regional integration is no longer based solely on theories such as neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism that used to dominate research on the EU.

Importantly, Schneider<sup>4</sup> discusses regional integration as a consequence of political leaders' decision-making and explores this concept's normative and strategic implications. This approach has modelled our study as the regional cooperation among the EU MS is a governmentally created policy level of dealing with regional concerns. It is simultaneous and additional to the classical supra-national Brussels' policy creation processes. A detailed analysis of regionalism is presented by Börzel,<sup>5</sup> and Börzel and Risse,<sup>6</sup> who combine this theory with the others discussed in the evolution of European integration. The authors treat the regional integration process as a supplement to the broader idea of intergovernmental cooperation. The theoretical approach in this paper is perceived similarly; as such a meaning of regional integration places it as the next stage of adding the regional aspects of mutual, smaller-scale understanding to the national, governmental statements. For the Central and East European (CEE) MS, creating a broader European strategy, including governmental-regional consensus, should be

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<sup>3</sup> W. Mattli, *The Logic of Regional Integration – Europe and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); W. Mattli, "The Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Regional Integration: A Concluding Note," in *Comparative Regional Integration – Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. F. Laursen (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> C. Schneider, "The Political Economy of Regional Integration," *The Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 229–48, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051215-023006>.

<sup>5</sup> T. Börzel, "Comparative regionalism: European integration and beyond," in *Handbook on International Relations*, eds. W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B.A. Simmons (London: Sage, 2012), 503–30.

<sup>6</sup> T. Börzel and T. Risse, *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

a part of their holistic inter-EU policy creation processes. Mansfield and Milner<sup>7</sup> analysed the adaptation of regional integration and the evolution of the concept itself; they prove how flexible this theoretical approach is in analysing actors' behaviour in international relations. These findings ensured that Lithuanian-Polish regional cooperation could be analysed in this paper in the security sphere and is adaptive to its goal and research question. The authors also intend to elaborate on Mattli's<sup>8</sup> research. He examines how the multilevel concept of regional integration works in practice and how it covers many areas in the functioning of states and regions. Considering Lithuanian-Polish security cooperation is a good example of the continuity of Walter's research idea.

Additional inspiration is being gained according to the contribution of Schimmelfennig, Leuffen, and Rittberger<sup>9</sup> and their presentation of the concept of regionalism in the context of differentiated integration. Their analysis reveals how this classical concept is still helpful in explaining and discussing the contemporary dilemma of the ongoing differentiation processes in the EU. Additionally, the influence of international institutions and multilevel governance in the EU reveal why researchers are still interested in analysing regional integration. Interestingly, Mattli<sup>10</sup> introduces the concept of voluntary integration in the context of regional integration, which confirms the connection of this notion with the idea of intergovernmentalism, which is essentially the background of this analysis.

Furthermore, the authors of this article also find the political economy concept presented by Schneider<sup>11</sup> to be an intriguing theoretical background. It assumes that the frameworks of decision-making by an MS government in a particular sphere of regional integration are a central element in the dynamics of this phenomenon. As with any conscious choice, the analysis refers to identifying a government's motivation for action, including actors who support the movement, those who oppose it, and political institutions at the national and supranational level that mediate or participate. Political-economic theory research includes the government's ideological and perhaps opportunistic motives stipulating the decision.<sup>12</sup> The logic of this paper's background is that including regional cooperation simultaneously with EU supranational processes is a way to create and strengthen intergovernmental collaboration on a smaller, regional scale. It is also motivated by a reasonable

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<sup>7</sup> E. Mansfield and H.V. Milner, "The new wave of regionalism," *International Organisation* 53, no. 3 (1999): 589–627, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899551002>.

<sup>8</sup> Mattli, "The Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions."

<sup>9</sup> F. Schimmelfennig, D. Leuffen and B. Rittberger, *Differentiated Integration. Explaining Variation in the European Union* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Mattli, *The Logic of Regional Integration*.

<sup>11</sup> Schneider, "The Political Economy," 229–48, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051215-023006>.

<sup>12</sup> Schneider, "The Political Economy," 231, 232.

and practical approach. That is why the authors have chosen Schneider's findings for conceptualisation phase of this paper's goals.

## Literature background on CSDP

The choice of texts relevant to this article is based on their subject matter and contribution to the current state of the debate. The literature review structure in the security field is based on the keywords and the main issues discussed. The research and findings listed below are sources for the authors' initial analysis. Additionally, they can serve as follow-up reading for those interested in the state of research in this field.

Currently, the primary debate regarding the issues related to the European Defence Agency (EDA), EDF, and EU security architecture focus on several major fields of interest. However, before focusing on the institutions, it is worth considering Meulewaeter's<sup>13</sup> analyses of the relationship between military expenditure, arms transfer, and armed conflicts. She proves that the first two are interconnected, and only their simultaneous development guarantees the proper use of capabilities on a battlefield. Thus, Meulewaeter's findings form a suitable background for understanding the security policy evolution at the EU level, which this paper will not elaborate on. As a background for understanding the European security sphere development of the EU, Serrano<sup>14</sup> evaluates the CSDP achievement and failures, and Ditrych and Kucera<sup>15</sup> examine recent security developments from a broader historical perspective. Furthermore, Meijer and Wyss<sup>16</sup> turn the dominant CSDP-centric research lens of European defence studies by returning the precedence to the national level, as well as moving beyond the CSDP-centric perspective to re-emphasize the cross-European comparative analysis of national defence policies and armed forces. This approach is supported by this paper's authors, who believe that Meijers' and Wyss' lens of understanding the security policy creation in the UE is also helpful in explaining the evolution of Lithuanian and Polish security cooperation. However, since the EU's security scheme is highly structured, the role of the intergovernmental agency system and institutionalization of the EU defence

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<sup>13</sup> C. Meulewaeter, "The relationship between military expenditure, arms transfer, and armed conflict," in *Military Spending and Global Security, Humanitarian and Environmental Perspectives*, ed. J.C. Rufanges (Routledge, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> P. Serrano, "Truth and Dare – a personal reflection on 20 years of CSDP," in *The CSDP in 2020 - The EU's legacy and ambition in security and defence*, ed. D. Fiott (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020), 16–36.

<sup>15</sup> O. Ditrych and T. Kucera, "Defence cooperation and change: How defence industry integration fostered development of the European security community," *Cooperation and Conflict* 57, no. 3 (2022): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367221099086>.

<sup>16</sup> H. Meijer and M. Wyss, "Upside down: Reframing European Defence Studies," *Cooperation and Conflict* 54, no. 3 (2019): 378–406, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836718790606>.

field is discussed in detail by Calcara.<sup>17</sup> This knowledge of cooperative mechanisms is necessary to follow the European logic applied in this field. That is why the authors elaborated on this aspect in the paper.

While considering the aspects of integration theory, the authors were inspired by Knutsen,<sup>18</sup> who argues that EDF is a game-changer in European defence cooperation and integration. While being organized under the EC, the traditional division between intergovernmental and supranational decision-making levels no longer exists. Knutsen claims that this is entirely in line with the comprehensive neo-functional approach. Interestingly, Haroche<sup>19</sup> investigates the EU Commission's engagement within institutional security architecture and the EDA's role in defence funds. This analysis is intriguing, as the balance between EC, agencies, and funds, with the addition of the decisive role of MS, is a current policy scheme for the EU security and defence cooperation. Håkansson<sup>20</sup> adds theoretical explanations to the debate as he examines the process of the EDF and argues how the basis of neo-functionalism theory influences the dynamics involved in its establishment. Similarly, Haroche<sup>21</sup> analyses EDF through the lens of neo-functionalism theory and new intergovernmentalism in the evolution process of EU governance. Considering the selected analyses above, the authors decided to place the Lithuanian and Polish cooperation in the security field in a particular Knutsen's, Haroche's, and Håkansson's understating of theory.

In a holistic approach, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as well as EDF's military and industrial instruments in the field, together with preparatory programs, are discussed by Nováky<sup>22</sup> and Zamarripa.<sup>23</sup> As those are relatively new instruments in the EU security mechanism, it is worth looking at the current logic of their functioning within the system, which these authors present comprehensively.

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<sup>17</sup> A. Calcara, "The European Defence Agency and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence: A 'discursive coalition for EU defence research,'" in *Emerging Security Technologies and EU Governance*, eds. A. Calcara, R. Csernaton and C. Lavallée (Routledge, 2020), 23–41.

<sup>18</sup> B. Knutsen, "A weakening transatlantic relationship? Redefining the EU-US security and defence cooperation," *Politics and Governance* 10, no. 2 (2022): 165–175, <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i2.5024>.

<sup>19</sup> P. Haroche, "The European Defence Fund: How the European Commission is becoming defence actor," Research paper no. 56, Institute de Recherche Strategique de l'Ecole Militaire, 2018, [https://www.irsem.fr/data/files/irsem/documents/document/file/2422/RP\\_IRSEM\\_No56.pdf](https://www.irsem.fr/data/files/irsem/documents/document/file/2422/RP_IRSEM_No56.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> C. Håkansson, "The European Commission's new role in EU security and defence cooperation: the case of the European Defence Fund," *European Security* 30, no. 4 (2021): 589–608, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2021.1906229>.

<sup>21</sup> P. Haroche, "Supranationalism strikes back: a neo-functional account of the European Defence Fund," *Journal of European Public Policy* 27, no. 6 (2020): 853–872, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1609570>.

<sup>22</sup> N. Nováky, "The EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation in Defence: Keeping Sleeping Beauty from Snoozing," *European View* 17, no. 1 (2018): 97–104, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1781685818764813>.

<sup>23</sup> E. Zamarripa, "The Permanent Structured Cooperation in the European Union. Its Real Potential Value," in *Security and Defence in Europe*, eds. M. Ramirez and J. Biziewski (Springer, 2020), 87–95.

Sabatino<sup>24</sup> adds to this debate the issue of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base and the EU military initiatives by a nascent European Military Industrial Complex are analyzed and discussed by Mawdsley.<sup>25</sup> These concepts detail the current approach and are proof of politicians' endeavors to create links between technical/practical and strategic policy objectives.

### CSDP agencies, mechanisms, programs, and funds

The notion of the EU's closer coordination in the security sphere, particularly in capability development, has resulted in several actions. Principally, the Capability Development Plan (CDP) led by the EDA occupies most of the communication space in this field. At the same time, the Capability Development Mechanism (CDM) enhances the coordination of national defence planning,<sup>26</sup> which is expressly referred to in the Treaty on European Union (TEU). CDM and the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD) are entrusted exclusively to the military structures. EDF has been created to provide financial support for joint research and development projects<sup>27</sup> with PESCO in security and defence; these initiatives aim to develop the framework of interlinked instruments enabling better military proximity. A group of countries involved in such cooperation might serve to fulfill the EU's ambitions as defined in the EU Global Strategy.<sup>28</sup> The framework of obligations and reporting would make it a self-reinforcing structure that develops military capabilities for crisis management operations led by the EU command structures.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, an important role is played by PADR and EDIDP; as of 2021, these two initiatives are merged into EDF. This set of EU defence and capability-oriented mechanisms, funds, programs, and agencies makes the CSDP scheme a complex

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<sup>24</sup> E. Sabatino, "The European defence fund: a step towards a single market for defence?," *Journal of European Integration* 44, no. 1 (2022): 133–148, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2021.2011264>.

<sup>25</sup> J. Mawdsley, "Armaments decision-making: Are European states really different?," *Comparative Strategy* 37, no. 4 (2018): 260–271, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2018.1497319>.

<sup>26</sup> See D. Fiott, "Introduction," in *The CSDP in 2020 - The EU's legacy and ambition in security and defence*, ed. D. Fiott (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020), 6–15, 7, [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/CSDP%20in%202020\\_0.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/CSDP%20in%202020_0.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> J. Muravska, "How can the European Commission help Europe's defence industry? By making the most out of what it is already doing," *Defence and Security Analysis* 36, no. 4 (2020): 450–452, 450, 451, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2020.1857913>.

<sup>28</sup> See E. Barbé and P. Morillas, "The EU global strategy: the dynamics of a more politicized and politically integrated foreign policy," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 6 (2019): 753–770, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1588227>.

<sup>29</sup> J. Gotkowska, "A European Defence Union – The EU's New Instruments in the Area of Security and Defence," *OSW Report November 2019*, Centre for Eastern Studies, 2019, 11, [https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/Report\\_\\_A%20European%20Defence%20Union\\_\\_net\\_0.pdf](https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/Report__A%20European%20Defence%20Union__net_0.pdf).



design.<sup>30</sup> The participating MS governments are another element to consider in discussing these issues.

EDF, officially launched in 2021, can be considered a real breakthrough because, for the first time, a part of the EU budget has been allocated for defence investment.<sup>31</sup> Although it is unlikely to deliver results before the decade's end, the EDF is a promising initiative in European defence. This stems from many reasons, which include its capacity to make decisions that are not based on the lowest common denominator. There are proper conditions for this fund to achieve its purpose.<sup>32</sup> Firstly, a budget of nearly €8 billion for 2021–2027 is dedicated to EDF, where €2.7 billion is allocated for collaborative defence research, and €5.3 billion is designated for collaborative capability development projects that would complement national contributions. This is considered a reasonable sum to meet sustainable goals in the present context.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, the Commission has been building appropriate structures to manage a fund of this magnitude,<sup>34</sup> as exemplified by creating the Directorate-General Industry Defence and Space.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the essential condition for the EDF to become successful is to link it to an efficient defence planning process – which is also a part of the CSDP development.<sup>36</sup> EDF is expected to attract governments and foster cooperation as it will also indirectly save spending from their national defence budgets.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the objective of CARD is to review the participating MS defence activities to provide, over time, a comprehensive picture of the European defence landscape, which includes capability development, research efforts, and defence industry support dimension, together with operational aspects and promotion of opportunities for multinational

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<sup>30</sup> See T. Tardy, “Does European defence really matter? Fortunes and misfortunes of the Common Security and Defence Policy,” *European Security* 27, no. 2 (2018): 119–137, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2018.1454434>.

<sup>31</sup> D. Zandee, “No more shortfalls? European military capabilities 20 years on,” in *The CSDP in 2020 - The EU's legacy and ambition in security and defence*, ed. D. Fiott (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020), 50–58, 54.

<sup>32</sup> D. Fiott “Financing rhetoric? The European Defence Fund and dual-use technologies,” in *Emerging Security Technologies and EU Governance*, eds. A. Calcara, R. Csernatonni and C. Lavallée (Routledge, 2020), 42–57.

<sup>33</sup> EU, “European Defence Fund,” n.d., accessed November 2, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf_en).

<sup>34</sup> Håkansson, “The European Commission's new role,” 590–592.

<sup>35</sup> See Sabatino, “The European defence,” 133–148, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2021.2011264>.

<sup>36</sup> F. Mauro, “European Defence: Challenges Ahead,” *IRIS – Analyses*, January 27, 2020, accessed August 30, 2022, 2, <https://www.iris-france.org/143892-european-defence-challenges-ahead/>.

<sup>37</sup> L. Béraud-Sudreau, “Integrated markets? Europe's defence industry after 20 years,” in *The CSDP in 2020 - The EU's legacy and ambition in security and defence*, ed. D. Fiott (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020), 59–73, 63.



cooperation in defence capability development. The final goal is to achieve better consistency in MS defence planning.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, the EDF budget comprises two complementary structures.<sup>39</sup> Firstly, the research window aims at financing collaborative defence research and development (R&D) activities across Europe. However, defence companies rarely invest in R&D if they do not commit the government to acquire the final products. Through the EDF, the EU offers direct funding from its budget. Thus, this approach differs from the previous one in that it considers the current and the next budgetary cycle where the Commission plays a decisive role in three-way cooperation with MS and the EDA.<sup>40</sup>

Secondly, there is a capability window that supports the joint development and joint acquisition of key defence capabilities by complementing, leveraging, and consolidating cooperation among MS. It focuses on collaborative projects to develop prototypes in strategic priority areas defined in CDP.<sup>41</sup> While the research window is entirely financed from the EU budget, the capability window approach is focused on co-financing. Such contributions mainly come from MS, but the EU makes a budgetary contribution to encourage defence cooperation and reduce the risks associated with the industrial development cycle to directly influence the competitiveness of the European defence industry.<sup>42</sup>

Notably, the EDF was preceded by two pilot programs: PADR for 2017–2019 with a budget of €90 million and EDIDP for 2019–2020 with a budget of €500 million. This series of defence initiatives expand the complexity of the EU defence landscape. However, guided in this aspect by the EDA, the EU strives for a coherent approach within the spectrum of these recently created tools. Each mechanism, along with the overarching CDP, has its own separate and well-defined purpose that, if adequately accomplished, would serve as an enabler for the next one and contribute to enhancing EU-wide integration in defence.<sup>43</sup>

While the EDF brings the money that had been a missing element of defence cooperation, it is vital to ensure it works in harmony with PESCO.<sup>44</sup> This approach

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<sup>38</sup> See D. Fiott and V. Theodosopoulos, *Yearbook of European Security 2020* (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020), 239–242, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/yearbook-european-security-2020>.

<sup>39</sup> Muravska, “How can the European Commission help,” 451, 452.

<sup>40</sup> M. Blocken, “Behind PESCO – the Past and Future,” *FINABEL – European Army Interoperability Center*, 2018, 21, <https://finabel.org/behind-pesco-the-past-and-future-2018/>.

<sup>41</sup> See Gotkowska, “A European Defence Union,” 25.

<sup>42</sup> Blocken, “Behind PESCO,” 21, <https://finabel.org/behind-pesco-the-past-and-future-2018/>.

<sup>43</sup> P. d’Alesio, “EU-UK Defence Cooperation After Brexit,” *FINABEL – European Army Interoperability Center*, 2021, 10, <https://finabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/22.-EU-UK-Defence-Cooperation-After-Brexit.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> See Fiott and Theodosopoulos, *Yearbook of European Security*, 236–238; L. Wolfstädter and V. Kreiling, “European Integration via Flexibility Tools: the case of EPPO and PESCO,” Policy Paper no. 209, Jacques Delors Institut, November 27, 2017, <https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/europeanintegrationviaflexibilitytools-kreilingerwolfstdter-nov17.pdf>.

might support the realization of the ambitious challenge that PESCO is.<sup>45</sup> It has five key areas: increasing investment expenditure on defence equipment; harmonizing the identification of military needs; enhancing the availability, interoperability, flexibility, and deployability of forces; cooperation on overcoming capability shortfalls; and participating in the development of major joint equipment programs in the framework of the EDA. It has been widely discussed that without fluent coordination with the EDF, PESCO might not meet its goals.<sup>46</sup> Ideally, industrial PESCO projects should receive EDF financing. However, both of these instruments have different decision-making processes. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the EU mechanism and agencies, together with MS, agree on a priority identification process that will guide the decisions on capabilities within both PESCO and the EDF.<sup>47</sup> Without getting into detail on this complex mechanism (which goes beyond the frame of this article), PESCO can be described as the process provided for by the TEU to develop the ‘autonomous capacity for action’ considered vital for CSDP missions. As the authors of the Treaty anticipated that not all MS would be willing or able to participate in such missions, they set out to ensure that a vanguard of states wishing to act could not be prevented from constituting the capability to do so by the other MS. This restriction on the number of participants was a suitable way of accommodating the intergovernmental nature of the CSDP, which makes decision-making all the more difficult that the vision is inclusive due to the unanimity rule.<sup>48</sup> This inclusivity and voluntariness of participation in PESCO is one of the reasons why the EDF, including PADR and EDIDP, has not been involved in all PESCO projects.

However, because of the coherence between PESCO and, notably, the CARD, the EDF, and its preparatory programs have also granted funds in 2019 to actions related to PESCO under the EDIDP. Still, such funding can only support the development of operational autonomy if it meets the relevant operational needs that rely on intergovernmental dynamics. Therefore, to define and promote the relevant operational needs and develop operational autonomy, MS can go through “comitology”. They can use their capacity and expertise to determine operational needs while maintaining the legitimacy of actions, as the Armed Forces (AF) are under the control of national Ministries of Defence/Heads of State.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Zamarripa, “The Permanent Structured Cooperation,” 87–95.

<sup>46</sup> See Gotkowska, “A European Defence Union,” 27.

<sup>47</sup> C. Major and C. Mölling, “The EU’s military legacy. Over-institutionalised, under-equipped, and strategically divided,” in *The CSDP in 2020 - The EU’s legacy and ambition in security and defence*, ed. D. Fiott (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020), 35, 38–49, [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/CSDP%20in%202020\\_0.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/CSDP%20in%202020_0.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> European Commission Directorate-General for External Relations, “EU Defence: The White Book implementation process,” PE 603.871, 2018, 30, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/603871/EXPO\\_STU\(2018\)603871\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/603871/EXPO_STU(2018)603871_EN.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Q. Loïez, “Permanent Structured Cooperation and the European Defence Fund: Interaction and Equilibrium,” in *Views on the progress of CSDP*, eds. F. Belou and D. Fiott (European Security and Defence College, 2020), 137–155, 152.

## The current stage of Lithuanian and Polish security defence cooperation

As it has been proved, initiatives like PADR, EDIDP, EDF, and PESCO are parts of evolving security architecture of the EU, and they represent a currently blooming sphere of European integration. At first glance, it seems that both Lithuania and Poland might use the potential of these tools in a joint effort, particularly as both Vilnius and Warsaw have had similar security and defence concerns for over 30 years (if we consider only the period after the dissolution of the USSR).

Joint military cooperation between Vilnius and Warsaw was initiated in 1994 by signing the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Defence Cooperation.<sup>50</sup> It should be noted that the wish to support the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) was not the main reason behind Poland's increased concern about regional security: it was grounded on rather pragmatic considerations. Firstly, any Russian aggression near Polish borders would have a dramatic impact on Poland itself. Secondly, as the largest and economically strongest country on the Eastern flank of the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Poland would have to deploy a significant military contingent to protect the Baltic States within defence obligations under both North Atlantic Treaty and TEU.<sup>51</sup> Thus, effective military cooperation between Lithuania and Poland, as well as the intensification of bilateral defence cooperation in light of a genuine security threat, would demonstrate the capability of Lithuania and Poland to mobilize the potential of their strategic partnership and cooperate constructively as the need arises.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, this increased common understanding has not been free from a constant dilemma perceived by Vilnius – to increase its security in the face of Russian military threat, would Lithuania have to accept Poland's (probably limited but not negligible) superiority?<sup>53</sup> This dilemma notwithstanding, Lithuanian-Polish bilateral relations are pragmatic, driven by the fact that the region's security relies on their joint defence architecture and the need to synchronize security strategies and implement them with the support of both NATO and EU programs.

Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the war in eastern Ukraine (2014-ongoing; escalated since February 2022 into a full-scale armed conflict),

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<sup>50</sup> G. Vaščenkaitė “Lithuanian-Polish Relations after 2004: Good Old Cooperation in Regretfully Bad New Wrapping,” *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 32 (2014): 73–105, 79, <https://etalpykla.lituanistikadb.lt/object/LT-LDB-0001:J.04~2014~1512653902258/>.

<sup>51</sup> See L. Cladi and A. Locatelli, “Keep Calm and Carry On (Differently): NATO and CSDP after Brexit,” *Global Policy* 11, no. 1 (2019): 5–14, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12747>.

<sup>52</sup> Vaščenkaitė, “Lithuanian-Polish Relations after 2004: Good Old Cooperation,” 83.

<sup>53</sup> I. Gajauskaitė, “The Dynamics of the Lithuanian - Polish relations and military cooperation,” in *Lithuania in the global context: national security and defence policy dilemmas*, eds. I. Matonytė, G. Česnakas and N. Statkus (General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, 2020), 264–279, 265, 266.

NATO's new territorial defence agenda in CEE is a major external factor promoting Lithuanian and Polish defence cooperation. In a conflict between NATO and Russia, both countries face the inevitability of becoming frontline states and a buffer for Western Europe. Accordingly, Lithuania and Poland have equal responsibilities – to protect the eastern EU/NATO borders. If they cannot withstand a Russian military attack on their own, then at least they should maximize their chances of receiving support from the Allies.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the geographical location of the Baltic States, as well as the closeness of Belarus and the Kaliningrad region, are a crucial problem for Lithuanian-Polish territorial defence.

As revealed by the analysis of the details of joint activities, the first step in Lithuanian-Polish cooperation in the field of defence was the proposal made by the Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas to establish a joint military battalion for UN peacekeeping operations, the Lithuanian–Polish Peace Force Battalion (LITPOLBAT). Based in Orzysz (Poland), it became operational in 1999. At that time, that was the only Lithuanian military unit cooperating with NATO members and therefore became an essential tool for Lithuania's integration into the Alliance.<sup>55</sup> Soldiers of LITPOLBAT were deployed to NATO military operations, i.e., in Kosovo, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq.<sup>56</sup>

After Lithuania joined NATO and the EU in 2004, Poland's security policy aimed to expand the security cooperation with Ukraine and Georgia. Partnership with Ukraine has also become a priority for Lithuania's foreign policy. At the same time, Lithuania and Poland viewed NATO and the US as the crucial guarantor of European security. They were keen to remain the focus of the US's attention, which was increasingly shifting towards the Pacific. However, the LITPOLBAT initiative was terminated in 2007, and a new formation, the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LITPOLUKRBRIG), ensured the continuation of this close cooperation.<sup>57</sup> In 2009, partners expressed their wish for LITPOLUKRBRIG to operate not only within the framework of NATO but also of the CSDP, assigning the brigade to the EU multinational battlegroups for crisis management.<sup>58</sup> This move was consistent with the contemporary aspirations of Lithuania and Poland to become responsible and credible members of both the Alliance and the EU. Interestingly, LITPOLUKRBRIG

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<sup>54</sup> Gajauskaitė, "The Dynamics of the Lithuanian," 272.

<sup>55</sup> See F. Žigaras, *Baltijos šalys - saugumas ir gynyba: 1990–2002* (Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos Karo Akademija, 2002).

<sup>56</sup> See V. Isoda "The Participation of the Lithuanian Military in International Missions as an Element of Lithuanian Defence Policy," in *Lithuania in the global context: national security and defence policy dilemmas*, eds. I. Matonytė, G. Česnakas and N. Statkus (General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, 2020), 326–340.

<sup>57</sup> Gajauskaitė, "The Dynamics of the Lithuanian," 269, 270.

<sup>58</sup> See M. Fryc, "The Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade's development potential in the context of regional security," *Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces* 195, no. 1 (2020): 5–11, <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.0247>.

reflected Poland's political agenda to become one of the EU's centres of power and a major US ally in the CEE. Unfortunately, implementation of the project was delayed due to Ukraine's attempt to manoeuvre between the EU and Russia, and Lithuanian-Polish military cooperation faced challenges not only due to the reduction of Lithuania's military budget resulting from the economic and financial crisis but also because both countries returned to the classical approach of focusing on territorial defence.<sup>59</sup>

After the 2016 NATO summit, as the Alliance returned to considering territorial defence and strengthening the Eastern Flank defence as a critical function, Lithuanian-Polish defence cooperation increased. So far, Polish troops have participated in the NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission more than ten times. LITPOLUKRBRIG has reached operational capability, and its soldiers participate in international exercises. In February 2019, Polish President Andrzej Duda and Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė signed a joint declaration on strengthening the Lithuanian-Polish security partnership. They pledged to coordinate their actions within NATO and the CSDP and to develop intensive military cooperation to strengthen deterrence against Russia. In addition, a joint Lithuanian-Polish Defence Ministers Committee was established, and the ministers signed a comprehensive defence cooperation agreement. Lithuania and Poland assigned brigades to NATO's Multinational Division North-East Headquarters to protect the strategically important Suwałki Gap. US Patriot air defence missiles acquired by Poland are to defend objects in Lithuania; thus, a potential opportunity to synchronize air defence has emerged.<sup>60</sup>

Notably, a related development that might distance the Baltic states from each other is the establishment of Multinational Division North (MND North), a NATO force division-level headquarters led by framework nations Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia. Interestingly, Denmark was the main mentor as it not only helped coordinate the peacekeeping efforts of the Baltic States but also donated equipment, provided training and education for their officers, and eventually supported their NATO and EU membership bids.<sup>61</sup> Like eFP, creating headquarters at this level in the Baltic states (MND North will divide its staff between Ādaži in Latvia and Karup in Denmark) is a welcome and vital contribution to regional defence and deterrence. However, while it is expected that MND North will eventually include staff from all three Baltic states, Lithuania is likely to continue to focus its attention at this level on the existing Multinational Division Northeast, which is located in Elbląg (Poland).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Lithuania and Poland are pursuing an agreement

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<sup>59</sup> Gajauskaitė, "The Dynamics of the Lithuanian," 270, 271.

<sup>60</sup> Gajauskaitė, "The Dynamics of the Lithuanian," 274, 275.

<sup>61</sup> Isoda, "The Participation of the Lithuanian Military," 328.

<sup>62</sup> T. Jermalavičius, T. Lawrence and A.L. Merilind, "The Potential for and Limitations of Military Cooperation Among Baltic States," in *Lithuania in the global context: national security and defence policy dilemmas*, eds. I. Matonytė, G. Česnakas and N. Statkus (General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, 2020), 280–306, 297.

to share air surveillance data and have agreed on modalities for cross-border operations for the Baltic Air Policing mission. Polish Air Force, which includes MIG-29 and F-16 Fighting Falcon squadrons, also has a role in the layered air defence of the region.<sup>63</sup>

The mentioned Suwałki Gap is a potential challenge for the Baltic states' defensibility. It is a narrow 80-km land strip on the Lithuanian-Polish border, squeezed between Belarus and Russia's Kaliningrad enclave. If Russia seizes it during an armed conflict, the Baltic states will be cut off from the rest of NATO. Battlegroup Poland is based near Suwałki, but it may be insufficient against Russian forces due to its size. Lithuania and Poland have taken steps to solve the Suwałki problem: In January 2020, they signed an act of affiliation between the Lithuanian Iron Wolf Mechanized Brigade and Polish 15th Mechanized Brigade, with both assigned to NATO's Multinational Division North-East headquarters to "train and act together to protect the Suwałki Gap".<sup>64</sup> The Iron Wolf mechanized infantry brigade of the Lithuanian AF is also affiliated with a German division HQ for training purposes.<sup>65</sup>

Concerning the defence industry and R&D engagement, two factors affect Lithuania's participation in the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. The first is its defence industry's characteristics and ties with the US and Germany. The Lithuanian defence industry is small and primarily private: AB Giraite ginkluotės gamykla (GGG) is the only state-owned defence company, but only a few small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are engaged in this sector. Due to the limited defence budget, national procurement<sup>66</sup> responds mainly to the lowest price logic, so government-to-government (G2G) contracts are considered particularly advantageous. The US and Germany are key partners in the defence field and among the most significant providers of the Lithuanian defence system. At the same time, most of the local production is exported to NATO member states. Thus, it seems Lithuania has limited incentives and capabilities to participate fully in European defence procurement.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> C. Harper, T. Lawrence and S. Sakkov, "Air defence of the Baltic states," *Report May 2018*, International Centre for Defence and Security, 2018, 14, [https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ICDS\\_Report\\_Air\\_Defence\\_Christopher\\_Harper\\_Tony\\_Lawrence\\_Sven\\_Sakkov\\_May\\_2018.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ICDS_Report_Air_Defence_Christopher_Harper_Tony_Lawrence_Sven_Sakkov_May_2018.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> M. Šešelgytė, "Lithuania as host nation," in *Lessons from the enhanced forward presence 2017–2020*, NDC research paper 14, eds. A. Lanoszka, C. Leuprecht and A. Moens (NATO Defence College, 2020), 71–79, 76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27710.15>.

<sup>65</sup> T. Jermalavičius *et al.*, "NATO's Northeast Quartet: Prospects and Opportunities for Baltic-Polish Defence Cooperation," International Centre for Defence and Security Policy Paper, November, 2018, 5, <https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ICDS-Policy-Paper-NATOs-Northeast-Quartet-November-2018.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> See F. Biermann and M. Weiss, "Power without a cause? Germany's conflict avoidance and the integration of European defence procurement?," *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 2 (2021): 227–242, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2021.1877691>.

<sup>67</sup> V. Fedorchak, "European procurement schemes and the European Defence Fund (EDF): How should academic research develop?," *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 6 (2021): 773–780, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2021.1974164>.



The Polish defence industry is mainly state-owned, and only a few private SMEs operate there. The industry needs to be integrated better at the European level as it remains largely dependent on the domestic market. Like Lithuania, Poland seeks G2G contracts as they are also beneficial in terms of offsets. Poland considers cooperation in the defence industrial field with the US as essential. Therefore, current EDF/PESCO initiatives for Lithuania and Poland could be seen as essential too, but not forcing these countries to contribute to the process of integration among the European defence industries.<sup>68</sup>

As to cooperation in building the region's security architecture, it is worth adding that Lithuania and Poland were the countries that invoked NATO's Article IV after Russian activities in Ukraine in 2014. The article facilitates consultations among Allies "whenever (...) the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened".<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, in 2014, Lithuania bought Polish *Grom* man-portable short-range air defence systems (MANPADs), followed by the training of Lithuanian personnel in Poland.<sup>70</sup> A notable element is an agreement to share air surveillance data and thus enable cross-border operations for the Baltic Air Policing mission.<sup>71</sup>

The three-decades-long development of Lithuanian-Polish cooperation can be summed up on three levels. The first is the political and declarative level, building and systematically emphasizing the will to create joint bilateral initiatives. The second level is the creation of joint units cooperating internationally within NATO and the EU. The third level is the developed cooperation in the development of, for example, joint operational capabilities, air surveillance, information exchange, and military mobility. Notably, the development of this partnership has been gradual, with various actions implemented. With its preparatory programs (PADR and EDIDP), EDF might accelerate both countries' ongoing regional security cooperation.

## **PESCO, EDIDP, and PADR programs in which Lithuanian and Polish entities jointly participate**

As noted above, with more than 30 years of defence cooperation background, Lithuanian and Polish engagement in creating regional security architecture should

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<sup>68</sup> J. Maulny and L. Di Bernardini, "Moving PeSCo forward: what are the next steps," ARES Policy Paper no. 39, 2019, 24, <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ARES-39.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> A. Lanoszka, "Do Allies Really Free Ride?," *Survival – Global Politics and Strategy* 57, no. 3 (2015): 133–152, 140, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1046229>.

<sup>70</sup> Jermalavičius *et al.*, "NATO's Northeast Quartet: Prospects," 2.

<sup>71</sup> Harper, Lawrence and Sakkov, "Air defence of the Baltic states," 14, [https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ICDS\\_Report\\_Air\\_Defence\\_Christopher\\_Harper\\_Tony\\_Lawrence\\_Sven\\_Sakkov\\_May\\_2018.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ICDS_Report_Air_Defence_Christopher_Harper_Tony_Lawrence_Sven_Sakkov_May_2018.pdf).



have been a convenient starting point for further joint actions in more advanced EU investment and research programs. However, the analysis of programs that both countries are involved in raises questions about how EDIDP and PADR have increased the development and cooperation of the Lithuanian and Polish defence industries and whether both countries have used this potential properly.

Interestingly, within all ongoing up to the fourth wave of PESCO projects, only three are jointly participated by Lithuania and Poland: Military Mobility (MM); Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security (CRRT); and Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations (NetLogHubs). The MM project, coordinated by the Netherlands, aims to improve the movement of military forces across Europe and is fully endorsed by Lithuania and Poland, as the project emphasizes the EU's role in support of NATO. Furthermore, cyber defence is a field of cooperation in which Lithuania and Poland are interested since cyber threats are perceived today as significant challenges to security. The CRRT project is coordinated by Lithuania and is intended to ensure better cyber resilience.<sup>72</sup> Germany coordinates the NetLogHubs project, and its goal is to use the existing network of logistic installations and depot spaces to prepare equipment for operations, store spare parts or ammunition, and harmonize transport and deployment activities. While Lithuania and Poland jointly participate only in three out of 61 joint PESCO projects, the figures are higher in practical project implementation. Out of 18 PADR and 42 EDIDP projects listed by the European Commission, companies and institutions from Lithuania and Poland participate jointly in two PADR and four EDIDP projects—details of bilateral cooperation among defence industry companies in the projects mentioned below.

PADR was therefore understood and conceived as a pilot project, a precursor program of the EDF, launched to pave the way for the EDIDP under the EU budget for 2019–2020 to boost Europe's defence industrial competitiveness. It funds research projects selected in the years 2017–2019. In addition, an open call for new disruptive technologies was included to test this research field. PADR demonstrates and assesses added value of the EU-supported defence R&D projects and prepares the research window for the EDF from 2022 onwards. These initiatives are linked by a common desire to develop a robust and competitive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and safeguard Europe's long-term technological power.<sup>73</sup>

Speaking in detail, there are two projects in which Lithuanian and Polish companies participated. Open Cooperation for European mAritime awareNess (OCEAN

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<sup>72</sup> Maulny and Di Bernardini, "Moving PeSCo forward," 16.

<sup>73</sup> R. Csernaton, "The EU's Technological Power: Harnessing Future and Emerging Technologies for European Security," in *Peace, Security and Defence Cooperation in Post-Brexit Europe*, eds. C.A. Baciú and J. Doyle (Springer, 2019), 119–140.

2020) was a PADR project coordinated by the Italian company Leonardo Società Per Azioni.<sup>74</sup> The partner enterprises from Lithuania were Baltijos pažangiųjų technologijų institutas<sup>75</sup> and the Lithuanian AF. In contrast, the Polish partner was Ośrodek Badawczo-Rozwojowy Centrum Techniki Morskiej S.A.<sup>76</sup> OCEAN 2020 was launched in March 2018 and scheduled for 36 months. The project aimed to demonstrate enhanced situational awareness in a maritime environment by integrating legacy and new technologies for unmanned systems, ISTAR payloads, and effectors.<sup>77</sup> Its consortium included 40 participants from 15 EU MS and one international entity – NATO Science and Technology Organization. To reach the set goals, it was necessary to support maritime surveillance and interdiction missions at sea and enhance air, naval surface, and unmanned underwater systems. Ultimately, the information acquired was combined with the entire set of naval data obtained by the existing systems to build up a Recognized Maritime Picture of developing situations for military commanders.<sup>78</sup>

The final live demonstrations and project verification were held in 2019 in the Mediterranean and in 2021 in the Baltic, involving 10 Member States' Ministries of Defence. The demonstrations proved how innovative solutions for the fusion of multiple data sources can be integrated with Combat Management Systems. This also revealed how collaborative autonomy between multi-domain uncrewed vehicles could act as a force multiplier, providing end-users with the advantage of interoperability for joint missions while offering the industry an opportunity to build Command and Control (C2) modules in a multi-company environment.<sup>79</sup> Its outcomes have also been using protocols compatible with NATO standards. However, only the Lithuanian navy was detailed in OCEAN 2020 as the end user of the outcomes. The Polish Ministry of Defence is not involved in acquiring project outputs, which is disappointing as a Polish company was involved in the research part of the project.

The second PADR project involving both Lithuanian and Polish companies is INTERoperability Standards for Unmanned Armed ForCes SysTems (INTERACT) led by the German Fraunhofer Institut für Optronik – Systemtechnik und Bildauswertung

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<sup>74</sup> Leonardo, n.d., accessed November 2, 2022, <https://www.leonardo.com/en/innovation-technology>.

<sup>75</sup> Baltic Institute of Advanced Technology, n.d., accessed November 13, 2022, <https://www.bpti.eu/>.

<sup>76</sup> Polish Armament Group - Research and Development Centre, Marine Technology Centre, n.d., accessed November 19, 2022, <https://ctm.gdynia.pl/rozwiwania/>.

<sup>77</sup> EU, "Ocean 2020," n.d., accessed November 21, 2022, <https://ocean2020.eu/>.

<sup>78</sup> EDA, "Ocean 2020," n.d., accessed November 22, 2022, [https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/projects/padr-ocean2020-projectweb\\_2018-05.pdf](https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/projects/padr-ocean2020-projectweb_2018-05.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> EDA, "Ocean 2020," [https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/projects/padr-ocean2020-projectweb\\_2018-05.pdf](https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/projects/padr-ocean2020-projectweb_2018-05.pdf).

IOSB.<sup>80</sup> The partner enterprise from Lithuania is again Baltijos Pažangių Technologijų Institutas (BPTI); the Polish counterpart is PCO SA,<sup>81</sup> a part of the Polish Armament Group. Its consortium comprises 19 participants from 12 EU MS.

The project was launched in June 2021. It will deliver effective means to ensure the interoperability and standardization of different unmanned systems, equipment, components, and procedures to optimize the adoption and integration of unmanned systems in the operation of AF.<sup>82</sup> “Such an approach will allow unmanned assets to be deployed flexibly in different configurations, such as singular deployment, in manned-unmanned teaming, or as autonomous swarms independent of organizational or national provenance”.<sup>83</sup>

EDIDP is an industrial program supporting the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union’s defence industry. It aims to foster “cooperation between undertakings and MS in developing defence products or technologies”.<sup>84</sup> It is the next level of exploitation of the results of defence research and prepares the EDF development window from 2022 onwards. Accordingly, four projects in which Lithuanian and Polish companies participate will be detailed below.

Cyber Rapid Response Toolbox for Defence Use (CYBER4DE,) launched in 2020, is coordinated by Lithuanian Baltijos Pažangių Technologijų Institutas (BPTI). A second Lithuanian enterprise NRD CS UAB.<sup>85</sup> and a Polish company ASSECO Poland S.A.<sup>86</sup> are co-creators of the project. Its whole consortium consists of 10 participants from seven EU Member States. This project develops an easily deployable, modular, and scalable cyber rapid response toolbox to manage cyber incidents in complex national and international scenarios. It also aims to enhance processes and practices of Cyber Rapid Response Teams for a faster uptake of the new tools and increased effectiveness in the operating domain”.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, it provides open access to the benefits of free, secure, and resilient cyberspace

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<sup>80</sup> Fraunhofer, Institute of Optronics, System Technologies and Image Utilization, n.d., accessed November 18, 2022, <https://www.iosb.fraunhofer.de/en/business-units.html>.

<sup>81</sup> PCO S.A., Industrial Optics Center, “Offer,” n.d., accessed November 17, 2022, <https://pcosa.com.pl/en/offer/>.

<sup>82</sup> EU, “Interact,” n.d., accessed October 21, 2022, <https://www.interact-padr.eu/the-project/>.

<sup>83</sup> EDA, “Interact,” n.d., accessed October 21, 2022, <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2021/06/25/new-r-d-project-to-focus-on-interoperability-standards-for-unmanned-systems>.

<sup>84</sup> EC, “EDIDP,” n.d., accessed October 27, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-industrial-development-programme-edidp\\_pl](https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-industrial-development-programme-edidp_pl).

<sup>85</sup> NRD Cyber Security, “cybersecurity capacity building,” n.d., accessed October 29, 2022, <https://www.nrds.eu/cybersecurity-capacity-building/>.

<sup>86</sup> ASSECO S.A., “uniformed services,” n.d., accessed October 27, 2022, <https://pl.asseco.com/en/sectors/uniformed-services/military-sector/>.

<sup>87</sup> EC, “Cyber Rapid Response Toolbox for Defence Use,” 2021, accessed November 5, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/document/download/7dd64830-c071-4c23-8303-340eaf075001\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/document/download/7dd64830-c071-4c23-8303-340eaf075001_en).

as safe and secure infrastructure fosters economic investment and growth, which in turn benefits all public and private community sectors.<sup>88</sup>

With French NEXTER Munitions acting as a project coordinator,<sup>89</sup> Lithuanian UAB ELSIS PRO<sup>90</sup> and Polish CRW Telesystem – MESKO sp. z o.o.<sup>91</sup> co-create the project Future Indirect fiRes European Solution (FIRES). The consortium comprises 18 participants from 12 EU MS. This EDIDP co-financed cooperation will initiate “the development of next-generation 155mm artillery projectiles and rockets based on common technological solutions”. Its goal is to integrate “advanced concepts, promising technologies, and innovations to the benefit of operational requirements. It will maximize commonalities and stimulate the harmonization of needs and cross-border cooperation to benefit economy of scales, reduced lifecycle costs, and European strategic autonomy and security of supply”.<sup>92</sup> CRW Telesystem-Mesko Sp. z o.o. contributes the know-how on the laser guidance for artillery rounds, developed as part of the APR 155 precision-guided ammunition project, necessitated by the fact that the loads carried by artillery rounds are entirely different from the ones used in bomb units delivered from air platforms.<sup>93</sup>

VITROCISSET S.P.A. from Italy coordinates Innovative and iNteroperable Technologies for space Global Recognition and Alert (INTEGRAL). The Lithuanian company ELSIS and Polish SYBILLA TECHNOLOGIES sp. z o.o. are among the 23 participants from six countries that form the project consortium. Its goal is to “study, design, prototype and test an advanced space C2 flexible and modular architecture to process and exploit Space Situational Awareness (SSA)”.<sup>94</sup> This data from sensors and enhanced catalogues will provide a complete military space picture. “Services and functions will bring technological value, relying on innovative algorithms based on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to overcome the limitations of the current SSA C2 systems”.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly,

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<sup>88</sup> CYBER4dev, “activities,” n.d., accessed November 4, 2022, <https://cyber4dev.eu/project-activities/>.

<sup>89</sup> KNDS, “products,” n.d., accessed November 5, 2022, <https://www.nexter-group.fr/en/our-products>.

<sup>90</sup> ELSIS, “services,” n.d., accessed November 4, 2022, <https://www.elsispro.com/en/#services>.

<sup>91</sup> Polish Telesystem Development and Implementation Center, “solutions,” n.d., accessed November 22, 2022, <https://telesystem.eu/rozwiązania>.

<sup>92</sup> EC, “Future Indirect fiRes European Solution,” 2021, accessed November 5, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/system/files/2021-06/EDIDP2020\\_factsheet\\_NGPSC\\_PGA\\_FIRES.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/system/files/2021-06/EDIDP2020_factsheet_NGPSC_PGA_FIRES.pdf).

<sup>93</sup> J. Pawlowski, “EU Supports the European Artillery Projects: Polish Industry Involved,” 2021, accessed November 6, 2022, <https://defence24.com/index-6>.

<sup>94</sup> EU, “INTEGRAL - Innovative and iNteroperable Technologies for space Global Recognition and Alert,” n.d., accessed September 7, 2023, [https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-06/EDIDP2020\\_factsheet\\_SSAEW\\_SC2\\_INTEGRAL.pdf](https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-06/EDIDP2020_factsheet_SSAEW_SC2_INTEGRAL.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> EC, “Innovative and iNteroperable Technologies for space Global Recognition and Alert,” 2021, accessed November 5, 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/system/files/2021-06/EDIDP2020\\_factsheet\\_SSAEW\\_SC2\\_INTEGRAL.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/defence-industry-space/system/files/2021-06/EDIDP2020_factsheet_SSAEW_SC2_INTEGRAL.pdf).

INTEGRAL is also related to one of the PESCO projects - the European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network.<sup>96</sup>

German OHB SYSTEM AG leads the EDIDP co-financed project Multinational Development Initiative for a Space-based missile early-warning architecture (ODIN's EYE). Lithuanian ELSIS PRO UAB and Polish company HERTZ Systems LTD sp. z o.o.<sup>97</sup> are participants, and the consortium comprises 27 participants from 12 EU MS. This project "contributes to the development of a European space-based missile early warning (SBMEW) capability".<sup>98</sup> This approach will "create a situational threat awareness against ballistic and hypersonic threats and generate the basis for European or national actions."<sup>99</sup>

The above projects related to the development of military technologies are promising; however, they do not reflect the current needs of the Lithuanian and Polish armed forces indicated in the development strategy and confirmed in the military acquisitions. Thus, they can be considered a positive contribution only from a distant future perspective. This issue will be discussed further, but it is worth noting that both governments focus on purchasing ready-made, comprehensive solutions rather than participating in long-term development works. This is one of the reasons for the limited participation of Lithuanian and Polish enterprises in the PADR and EDIDP programs.

## **Evaluation of Lithuanian and Polish participation in EDF preparatory programs**

Considering the research objective, it must be remembered that Lithuania and Poland are states on the EU's eastern border; they equally perceive the potential threat coming mainly from Russia. The war in Ukraine only confirms this assumption. History justifies these fears, including that both countries used to be in the USSR's sphere of influence (from 1944 to 1990, Lithuania was a Soviet republic). Therefore, starting cooperation in regional security on the Vilnius-Warsaw axis has been a natural consequence of building the EU security architecture. This has been made evident by the joint actions discussed in this article.

Considering the research question, it must be concluded that the development and technological cooperation of Lithuanian and Polish companies within

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<sup>96</sup> EU, "PESCO," n.d., accessed November 23, 2022, <https://pesco.europa.eu/project/european-military-space-surveillance-awareness-network-eu-ssa-n/>.

<sup>97</sup> HERTZ System, "Army," n.d., accessed November 14, 2022, <https://www.hertzsystems.com/en/army/>.

<sup>98</sup> EC, "Commission Implementing Decision - on the financing of the European Defence Fund established by Regulation (EU) No 2021/697 of the European Parliament and the Council and the adoption of the work programme for 2022 - Part II," accessed September 7, 2023, [https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/downloads/C\\_2022\\_3403\\_1\\_EN\\_ACT%20and%20Annex%201.pdf](https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/downloads/C_2022_3403_1_EN_ACT%20and%20Annex%201.pdf).

<sup>99</sup> EU, "Multinational Development Initiative for a Space-based missile early-warning architecture," 2021, accessed November 21, 2022.

the EDF preparatory programs is a path to strengthening ties and coordination in the regional security architecture. It should be treated as another step towards increased cooperation rather than a breakthrough or revolution. The joint projects also prove that in both countries, there are R&D companies that have adapted to the European research and innovation standards and can participate in development programs under pan-European projects in security technologies. This is a clear sign of the increased potential for developing Lithuanian and Polish cooperation at the level of EU programs, and therefore it should be supported. It has been proved that EDIDP and PADR are not the first instances of Lithuanian-Polish cooperation; instead, these programs are new pathways to participation and additional options that strengthen the evolutionary development of cooperation.

However, the assumption that Lithuania and Poland have used the potential of 2017–2021 programs to increase their security cooperation is not unjustified. Lithuania and Poland are jointly involved in specific EDF preparatory projects, and PESCO, the level of their joint involvement cannot be considered satisfactory in the context of the number of these projects and their scope within the full scale of EDDIP and PADR. One of the reasons is a relatively low level of development of the R&D networks of companies in both countries in comparison with other collaborating companies, mainly from Western EU MS. Another reason is still a significant involvement of the state in the functioning of the defence industry and the simultaneous focus on internal defence procurements.

Importantly, projects directly affecting the operational capabilities of the European AF implemented under PADR / EDIDP, such as the development of European high-power laser effector, projects on ground and air combat capabilities, including the next-generation ground-based precision strike capabilities, or usage of AI in defence technology, have not met with the common interest of Lithuania and Poland. Both countries primarily focus on cooperation in soft security projects rather than the one that directly increases defensive operational capabilities.

In the last three decades, the governments of both countries have purchased armaments mainly from US companies rather than from the EU industry. Hence getting involved in projects funded by the EU does not always fit in with the national programs already being implemented in the Lithuanian and Polish AFs according to their long-term modernization schedules. For example, the most significant investment projects in the Polish AF are purchasing the multi-mission 5th generation F-35, sophisticated anti-aircraft Patriot systems, and US Abrams tanks. The comprehensive picture is relatively straightforward when we add South Korean tanks, artillery systems, air fighters, and three UK-made frigates under the Miecznik project.

Currently, the investments of the Polish Army are not focused on the EU-based military industry. Furthermore, there have not been adequately developed comprehensive links between EDIDP/PADR programs and PESCO projects in which both countries participate jointly. It should be remembered that EDF, with its preparatory programs, is a vast sum of financial support that will not be used to buy weapons



but to foster research and development of military innovations and new defence technologies.<sup>100</sup> Until 2021, Poland and Lithuania were not ready to re-conceptualize their policies on EU-level processes of creating and implementing defence and security projects from nationally based to EU – supranationally oriented.

It is also worth noting that the system of financing, control, and implementation of the EDIDP and PADR results is reasonably developed, and the organizational framework allows MS to take full advantage of the possibilities EU funds offer. However, at least three preconditions must be fulfilled: firstly, the objectives of the project must go in line with the national military needs; secondly, there must be a company or an institute that will become an official partner of the project; finally, there must be political will and an operational justification to purchase the final result. The last condition is vital for Lithuanian and Polish engagement in preparatory programs. When MS companies and/or institutions engage in EDF or PESCO projects in R&D phases, they also undertake to purchase or implement the obtained project result. This is probably one of the reasons why the Polish government is cautious about involvement in joint EU projects in the field of security and defence. Lithuania's lack of strategic involvement in EDF preparatory programs can be explained by the fact that the country's defence industry is small, and most innovative companies are basically private. Thus, Lithuania has limited political incentives and ability to fully participate in European defence procurement.

So far, only a few companies in both countries have become project partners, and some of them tend to participate in several different EDIDP and PADR programs simultaneously. Therefore, it is assumed that this cooperation will continue and will be evident in other EDF projects as well (from 2022 onward).

## Discussion and summary

The projects of EDF preparatory programs revolve more around Western European MS, which have a higher participation rate. Consequently, as the case of Lithuania and Poland proves, CEE MS collaborate rather with their counterparts in the West than around solely CEE regional projects. Additionally, the 'three companies from three countries' standard adopted for PADR/EDIDP and the nascent practice that two countries jointly formulate proposals for forthcoming projects is too minimal to ensure geographical balance. This guarantees to perpetuate uneven competition in the single defence market.<sup>101</sup> However, despite the limitations of

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<sup>100</sup> R. Csernaton and B.O. Martins, "The European Defence Fund: Key Issues and Controversies," Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Research Papers 19, no. 3 (2019), <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2019/03/01/european-defence-fund-key-issues-and-controversies-pub-79982>.

<sup>101</sup> S. Blockmans and D.M. Crosson, "Differentiated integration within PESCO – clusters and convergence in EU defence," *Research Report – Thinking Ahead for Europe* no. 2019/4 (2019), 15, [https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RR2019\\_04\\_Differentiated-integration-within-PESCO.pdf](https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RR2019_04_Differentiated-integration-within-PESCO.pdf).



defence industries in CEE MS (compared to their Western counterparts) and their lower level of engagement in R&D notwithstanding, on the European scale, this standard limitation seems reasonable for the proper development of future projects.

Nevertheless, to make a real difference and develop initiatives that will meet EU security and defence expectations, the MS would have to coordinate their defence priorities to an unprecedented extent. Lithuanian and Polish participation in EDIDP and PADR (and in PESCO), combined with over 30 years of joint efforts to enhance regional security cooperation,<sup>102</sup> is a good example of evolutionary adaptation to current threats. Nevertheless, the war in Ukraine has proved this approach to be insufficient. For Lithuanian and Polish governments, EU CSDP programs and EC funds are still an option to strengthen national Armed Forces (AF) and adapt them to the changing security environment. Lithuania and Poland remain distinctly NATO-oriented. As they are located on NATO's eastern flank, are involved in supporting the Kyiv government, and perceive the threat from the East in a similar way, they seemed to be not only destined for cooperation in developing regional security but also ready to use instruments facilitating this cooperation within the framework of EU projects. However, despite years of building mutual trust, making positive political decisions, and forming small-scale joint military units, by the end of 2021, the Vilnius and Warsaw governments have not made use of the opportunity to become involved in EU-financed joint projects or to initiate fully regional cooperation as leaders of such projects.

Lithuania and Poland operate in several circles of cooperation. The supranational level developed according to the spill-over logic of the evolution of European integration and the theory of neo-functionalism in most economic spheres and policies. The multilevel management system is a binder connecting the circles of cooperation between Lithuania and Poland, as this theory considers the cooperation at the level of policies implemented in Brussels and the regional cooperation of both countries. The CSDP is differentiated in this context, as its framework and decision-making architecture is modeled on other communitarized EU policies. However, the example of the two discussed CEE countries shows that they are reluctant to join projects under the EDF and its EDIDP and PADR preparatory programs (and others such as PESCO), which would lead to the commonality of the military dimensions of these countries. Lithuania and Poland operate in the areas of support, logistics, and technology development, but not direct operational activities or joint projects resulting in the purchase of armaments based on concepts from other, mainly Western European EU countries. This diversity resulting from political decisions and long-term plans of AF modernization proves again the strongly NATO-centric approach. It is worth mentioning that military acquisitions are based chiefly on armaments from the US and, to a lesser extent, from EU military

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<sup>102</sup> See Vaščenkaitė, "Lithuanian-Polish Relations," 79.

producers. Hence, despite the logic of the neo-functional evolution of the idea of military cooperation at the supranational level of the EU, Lithuania, and Poland are among these EDF project participants who take part only in a limited extent of projects. Both governments are not ready to coordinate their defence priorities at the supranational European level. Theoretically, these approaches and selected activities are closer to the concept of regional cooperation and the theory of regionalism. The scope of these selected projects does not oblige both governments to make significant acquisitions of armaments and use newly developed technologies at tactical and operational levels of their AF, which is the goal of participating in EDF projects of the MS such as Germany, France, or Spain, which are most extensively engaged, so far.

Lithuania and Poland are fully involved in integration processes at the supranational level, with Brussels as the decision-making centre with normative and strategic implications for both MS. However, this does not concern aspects related to defence and the military sphere. Hence, the three decades of tightening cooperation between Vilnius and Warsaw in joint projects concerning their AF (i.e., forming a multinational brigade) are closer to the assumptions of the theory of regionalism according to Börzel and Risse<sup>103</sup> than other theories of supranational European integration. In addition, participation in EDF projects and its EDIDP and PADR preparatory programs is a good example confirming the conclusions presented by Schimmelfennig, Leuffen, and Rittberger<sup>104</sup> that the model of regional cooperation developed by Lithuania and Poland fits into the context of perceiving European integration as highly differentiated. Ultimately, as Mattli<sup>105</sup> noted, regional integration seems to be based on the multilevel style of governance, as evidenced by Lithuania and Poland's participation in security and defence cooperation.

## Data availability

No data are associated with this article.

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<sup>103</sup> Börzel and Risse, *Oxford Handbook of Comparative*.

<sup>104</sup> Schimmelfennig, Leuffen and Rittberger, *Differentiated Integration. Explaining Variation*.

<sup>105</sup> Mattli, "The Vertical."