BASIC

Paths to a Sustainable Future:

The Evolving Security Architecture in Europe

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Summary

The crisis in the liberal international order following the Russian war against Ukraine and the second Trump administration, alongside the ongoing transformation of the rules-based order, have placed unprecedented demands on European governments to reconsider how security is done in Europe. Through a series of Track 1.5 workshops with government officials and experts in Europe, four key functions emerged as requirements of a sustainable European security architecture in systemic order transformation and the Anthropocene.

Contents

Introduction

Over the past year and a half, BASIC has held a series of five Track 1.5 workshops across Europe, gathering more than 100 participants. The aim was to discuss and create a model for a sustainable security architecture in Europe that would go beyond traditional assumptions about security and encompass other threats to common European security.

The project was organised around four questions covering different aspects of security in an attempt to recognise that 'Zeitenwende' and the Anthropocene have changed the way we should think about security in Europe. It now includes other less traditional aspects, most obviously climate change, as well as energy security and human security. We used the term 'sustainable' to capture that European security architecture needed to be rethought to provide for the populations in Europe to live 'the good life' amid climate change and the breakdown of the immediate post-Cold War stability.

The project began after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which informed our discussions and underscored the need to reconsider how security is delivered in Europe. From our discussions, it is clear that the post-Cold War order failed to deliver common security in Europe, and the election of President Donald Trump in 2024 similarly upended fundamental assumptions about transatlantic security. The developments in Ukraine and the pace with which the Trump administration placed demands on European governments while simultaneously introducing new measures domestically made our discussions fundamentally different from workshop to workshop. New questions arose that revolved around Europe's security architecture and Europe's place in an emerging world order, which came to centre our discussions. Sustainability came to signify the survival of Europe as a unit bound together by values and ideals against the backdrop of unforeseen international developments. The future of European security was seen to be at stake.

There is little doubt that, taken together, the Trump administration and Putin's regime, as well as others such as Xi's China, have had a fundamental effect on the international order. There is a crisis in the liberal international order (LIO) and, simultaneously, an ongoing transformation of the global rules-based order (GRBO). This project has allowed us to chronicle the responses from experts and government officials to the order transformation and ideational crisis to situate Europe and future European security architecture in new emerging orders.

This report cannot cover all questions related to the future of the European security architecture. There are many dynamics that continuously unfold. The crisis in the LIO and the GRBO continues to unravel as Trump introduces alternative forums to deal with peace and security. However, it tries to situate these findings in the emerging new order of the international system to provide new thoughts on how a sustainable security architecture in Europe can be developed.

The workshops took place under the Chatham House Rule. They were all recorded and transcribed to help write this report and other workshop reports, but this report is the author's interpretation of what our participants said and expressed during the workshops.

The report falls into three parts. The first outlines Europe and the European security architecture. It then proceeds to outline the concept of multi-order as a way of understanding the transition in the international system we are currently witnessing, and raise questions about how we can situate Europe and the future European security architecture in the emerging multi-order. The first part also addresses the effects of climate change on security, and outlines how this is related to orders and especially to the LIO. The second part introduces the key workshop findings of what functions the future sustainable security architecture in Europe might have.[1] The third and final section is by way of conclusion.

1 The more detailed findings from each of our five workshops can be found in the separate workshop reports, see more: www.basicint.org.

SECTION 1

Background

Europe and European security architecture

Europe

Before we can proceed to examine the future security architecture in Europe, we must first consider what Europe and the European security architecture are. There is a common assumption, including at our workshops, that Europe is the European Union (EU). However, from a cartographical perspective, Europe is not only the second smallest continent but also far more than the EU. Europe is bordered by the Arctic Ocean to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, the Kuma–Manych Depression (in Russia), and the Caspian Sea to the south. The eastern geographic boundary runs along the Ural Mountains and southwest along the Emba River (in Kazakhstan), ending on the northern Caspian coast. As such, Europe is an appendage of Asia, yet it has set itself apart from Asia (and other regions) over the long course of human history as a distinct civilisation.[2] Europe is fundamentally different from other continents in having been organised by political borders throughout history, making the borders of the lands in Europe synonymous with the dividing lines between the powers in Europe, be they kingdoms or nation-states.[3] Europe, or rather the borders of the lands of Europe, has been politically negotiated among the European powers since the beginning of time, rather than having been demarcated by natural borders or wilderness. This project adopts an expanded view of Europe that aligns with its geographical definition. As such, we had Track 1.5 participation from a range of European states, including those outside the EU and NATO.[4]

European security architecture

'A security architecture is a system of norms, practices, relationships, alliances and institutions constructed or developed by nations to address, enhance or ensure international and/or regional security'.[5] The overall purpose of a security architecture is to ensure peace and stability.

When we talk about the purpose of a security architecture, it can be framed in material and immaterial terms. The material purpose is often expressed in the ability to produce tangible outcomes, such as missile defences, whereas in immaterial terms, the purpose is to produce normative outcomes, such as policies or understandings of threats.

The European security architecture is considerably institutionalised and has continued to grow and extend across Europe. Since the end of the Second World War, the European security architecture has been based on the liberal values laid down in the UN Charter.[6] The liberal principles, rules, and values found in the Charter have been reinforced through a range of European institutions that cover parts of Europe in formalised liberal principles to govern state relations and European peoples' rights, such as NATO in 1949, the European Economic Community and Euratom in 1958, the EU in 1993, the OSCE (CSCE 1973), and the Council of Europe (1949) and its European Court of Human Rights (1959).[7] However, there is a range of bilateral and multilateral relationships, formal and informal agreements, treaties, and

2 Windley, Brian Frederick, Berentsen, William H., Poulsen, Thomas M., East, W. Gordon. 'Europe'. Encyclopedia Britannica, 10 Oct. 2025, https://www.britannica.com/place/Europe. Accessed 12 October 2025.
3 Bakardjieva Engelbrekt et al., 'Perspectives on the Significance of Borders in Europe: Past Challenges, Future Developments'.
4 See Appendix A for a full overview of the composition of participants at the five workshops.
5 Taylor and Tow, 'What Is Asian Security Architecture?'
6 UN, 'United Nations Charter'.
7 Engelbrekt, 'The European Security Order'.

shared norms to ensure peace in Europe. The vast number of components in this system differ in geographical scope and level of formality, level of commitment, and purpose.[8] For example, the European Political Community only recently came into being as a new organisation to promote cooperation between democratic European nations on, among other things, security. Similarly, the Bucharest Nine came into being as a result of a perceived lack of attention to the eastern flank's defence needs following the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.[9]

The sum of these components, which function on multiple different levels, makes up the European security architecture, and they all have to fit together to accommodate everyone's security requirements. Although liberal values underpin this architecture, it is and has been expanding across Europe, not to promote liberalism, but to promote and ensure peace in Europe. Since the end of the Second World War, NATO, the EU, and the OSCE have emerged as key institutional pillars of the European security architecture.

Multi-order

Order transformations of the international system are rare, momentous, and are often associated with tumult, war, and deeply felt societal insecurity. In the 20th century we saw order transformations rooted in wars (hot and cold) in 1915, 1945, and 1989. The order transformation of the international system is currently accelerating because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

There is both a crisis in the LIO and an ongoing transformation of the GRBO, and these are two different concepts. The LIO refers to a bounded order based on liberal internationalist values, where adherents are restricted to those who share those values, whereas the GRBO is an unbounded universal ordering architecture.[10] In Europe, the majority of states belong to the bounded LIO based on shared values, such as through EU membership or association, and the European security architecture is underpinned by liberal values in institutions, organisations, alliances, norms, and rules.

The current crisis in LIO has many roots. These mainly fall under the heading of contestation of liberal values from outside, such as from China, but increasingly from inside, such as the turn towards illiberalism by European states and the US.[11] The US contestation of liberal values and principles leaves the LIO without a clear leader, thus exacerbating the current crisis, and showcases how the LIO is contested from within.

Flockhart and Korosteleva argue that the current order transformation will lead to a multi-order world, the contours of which we are now seeing following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In this act, Russia attacked not only Ukraine but also the LIO, and it denounced the GRBO. Before the invasion, Presidents Putin and Xi met and renewed their statement of friendship, which also outlined their shared view of 'entering a new era' and a critical view of democracy.[12]

In the multi-order world, several orders exist, including the LIO. Unlike in a multi-polar world order, global governance dynamics are between the various bounded orders rather than between sovereign states that are driven by national interests and in an unending competition for power. The exact nature of the multi-order is dependent on how the inter-order relationships evolve, whether they will be cooperative or conflictual, and whether they will embrace the rule of law, for example. Alongside the LIO, Flockhart and Korosteleva suggest that we are currently seeing the emergence of the Chinese-led Belt and Road order and the Russian-led Eurasian order, in which Russia appears to position itself as its leader by way of force and subjugation.

Several parts of the European security architecture are key elements embedded in the LIO. Its current crisis and the broader order transformations raise questions about how the shift to a multi-order affects the prospects and possibilities of a future sustainable security architecture and whether this changes its functions or the ability of the key pillars to deliver on its promise of peace.

8 For an overview of how complex European security architecture is, RUSI mapped the UK's defence and security relationships in Europe, see https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/projects/european-security-transformation-programme/uk-defence-and-security-relationships-across-europe

9 Thomasen, 'The Unsettled Alliance: Risk, Fear and Solidarity in NATO.'

10 Flockhart, 'Liberalism and Liberal Internationalism'; Flockhart and Korosteleva, 'War in Ukraine'; Flockhart, 'The Coming Multi-Order World'.

11 Laruelle, 'Illiberalism'.

12 Flockhart, 'NATO in the Multi-Order World'.

Climate change and the climate regime

Climate change transcends borders and orders and is arguably the first truly global security challenge. According to UN reports, only 11 out of the 193 UN member states do not currently experience its effect in one form or another.[13] Dealing with climate change, however, is a complex issue. It has immediacy because of the need to slow the rise of temperatures and thereby to reduce the risk of climate extremes and irreversible tipping points, but it must also be addressed through a long-term commitment to stabilising the climate. Recognising not only that climate change transcends borders but also that it can only be dealt with long-term by a multilateral endeavour, the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 by more than 190 state parties. It commits states to limiting the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100. The widely held belief that the 1.5°C threshold will be surpassed long before 2100 has led some to conclude that temperatures will rise to 2°C above pre-industrial levels—a major tipping point for the Earth's system.[14]

The climate regime is the global system of organisations, agreements, and treaties that collectively aim to regulate the effect of human activity on the climate.

The UN Conference of Parties (COP) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are key institutions in this regime. The contestation of liberal values has had a tremendous impact on the ability of the climate change regime to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change on the planet and its peoples when key states, such as the US, withdraw from for example, the Paris Agreement.[15]

This is not only an expression of disbelief in or rejection of the evidence of climate change but also part of the contestation of the LIO and the GRBO.[16]

Although it remains a matter of debate whether there is a causal link between global warming and increasing geopolitical competition, states are recognising that numerous threats to their security emanate from the effects of climate change, including mass migration and escalation of conflict.[17] There is also a clear link between traditional security and its focus on material defence and mitigating climate change. The so-called 'carbon boot print' of defence—the total emissions of carbon dioxide from armed forces and related industries—accounts for as much as 5 per cent of total global carbon dioxide emissions, making defence the single largest institutional emitter of carbon dioxide. This means that if states are committed to limiting the increase in global temperatures, defence must adapt to a new reality by reducing its carbon dioxide emissions.[18]

As with the advent of order transformation and the crisis in LIO, the Anthropocene raises questions about whether it changes the functions of the architecture, and if so, about the possibility of doing so.

13 'NATO and Climate Change'.
14 Carrington and editor, 'World's Top Climate Scientists Expect Global Heating to Blast Past 1.5C Target'; Matthews and Wynes, 'Current Global Efforts Are Insufficient to Limit Warming to 1.5°C'.
15 Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements' The White House, 20 January 2025. https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/putting-america-first-in-international-environmental-agreements/
16 Thompson, 'Contestation and Resilience in the Liberal International Order'.
17 Thomasen, 'NATO and Climate Change'; NATO, *The Secretary General's Report NATO Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment. Second Edition, 2023*.
18 Thomasen, 'NATO and Climate Change'; Depledge, 'Low-Carbon Warfare: Climate Change, Net Zero and Military Operations'; McDonald, 'Defence and Climate Change'.

SECTION 2

Workshop Findings

The future European security architecture

Our workshops discussed the requirements for sustainable security architecture in Europe. As mentioned above, our starting point was that security as a concept needs to be reconsidered. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was a clear indication that the post-Cold War order is broken and, as much as security must still be conceptualised as governments' ability to protect the territorial integrity of the state, the Anthropocene places new requirements on governments and international cooperation to protect populations, the environment, and the planet. Throughout the workshops, however, it became increasingly evident that the unfolding changes in the international system raise fundamental dilemmas for the future of the European security architecture and its sustainability.

The workshops provided insights into how changes in the international system and climate change affect European security architecture and its functioning, and the workshops discussed whether and how the transformation of the international system and climate change alter the functions of the architecture. They ultimately discussed what the notion of sustainability means in this new and still unfolding context for the European security architecture. A key finding was that sustainability is essentially resilience because it denotes a sufficient level of political stability, courage, and stamina to uphold and adjust the security architecture as international developments challenge peace in Europe.

Ultimately, our workshops identified that it requires fundamental reconceptualisation of what security is to Europe in this period of order transformation. There emerged a clear consensus across the five Track 1.5 workshops that the starting point is the need to realise that old fundamentals and assumptions are upended to conceptualise what a new sustainable security architecture in Europe may look like.

For now, they identified four primary purposes for the architecture: to deter adversaries from attacking European states and interests and defend it in war; to build resilience to climate change; to ensure Europe's energy needs are met; and economic security. The ultimate purpose of any security architecture is to secure peace, and these four aims emerged as essential to securing peace in Europe. The four functions of the security architecture our workshops identified are all in response to threats that have dimensions of totality.

Our workshops also suggested how these ends may best be met to ensure their effectiveness and ultimately make the security architecture sustainable. In this context, two concepts emerged across all workshops: total defence, mostly referred to as the whole-of-society approach to security, and resilience.

1. Deter adversaries from attacking Europe and defend it in war

The threats to Europe remain traditional in the sense of potential military attacks; however, the political and hybrid attacks on liberal institutions and democratic societies in wider Europe must be considered a new type of threat to peace on the continent. Taken together, the workshops identified that this new threat landscape necessitates a fundamental reconceptualisation of European defence and security to enable the architecture to deter adversaries and defend itself against attacks as one of the key functions of European security architecture. The ability to do so centres around total defence or a 'whole-of-society approach', resilience, and European strategic autonomy, in addition to maintaining traditional concepts of material defence and deterrence, and crucially, arms control.

Total defence and whole-of-society approach

The total defence or whole-of-society approaches are often used interchangeably and are to a large extent overlapping. Total defence is useful as an analytical tool and strategy because it relates directly to the nature of the threat, and more precisely to the type of threat. Thus, depending on what kind of total war is anticipated, the strategy of total defence looks different.[19] Our workshops, for example, did not anticipate an all-out nuclear war with Russia; rather, they did not rule out a large conventional war with Russia sometime in the future, each obviously requiring a different type of defence. Similarly, the workshops anticipated continued and accelerated hybrid warfare by Russia against European nations—both those within and outside the main pillars of the current security architecture—which again requires a different strategic logic in comparison to one dealing with a large-scale conventional war.[20]

Angstrom and Ljungkvist unpacked how total defence as a strategy is related to the anticipated type of total war, and found four ideal types reflecting the different strategic logics depending on how total war is anticipated to manifest itself. There are two building blocks of total defence:

"(1) security is a shared task of the *entire* society, and therefore total defence includes and integrates civil and military defence into one comprehensive strategy; and (2) the government manages and organizes command and control of the *entire* total defence".[21]

Across these building blocks, there are two dimensions relating to, first, the division of labour between the military and civil branches of society, for example, defending against misinformation is not a military responsibility, and second, how *centralised* or *decentralised* command and control is. These two dimensions relate specifically to how the threat is assessed to impact society and led Angstrom and Ljungkvist to four ideal types.[22]

States and societies, in their approach to each of the functions of the security architecture, therefore require a careful balance and planning of what total defence looks like in terms of the totality of the threat, and adequate response following from that assessment, in other words, division of labour between military and civil branches and how centralised command and control should be for each of the four functions.

Resilience

Total defence involves the entire society, making societal resilience an embedded part of total defence. It is a key finding from the workshops precisely that resilience and a whole-of-society approach to security are mutually dependent.

Resilience as a concept originated in the 1970s but has since become an integrated part of government planning. Yet, there are overlapping understandings across two main institutional pillars of the European security architecture.

19 Angstrom and Ljungkvist, 'Unpacking the Varying Strategic Logics of Total Defence'.

20 Hybrid warfare, while different from the original notion of what constitutes total war, has dimensions of totality. Hybrid warfare, for example, involves military, economic and political means, thus using a totality of means.

21 Angstrom and Ljungkvist, 'Unpacking the Varying Strategic Logics of Total Defence'.

22 The four ideal types are Cell, Stovepipe, Fort, and Cluster. Angstrom and Ljungkvist, 'Unpacking the Varying Strategic Logics of Total Defence'.

NATO defines resilience as 'the capacity to prepare for, resist, respond to and quickly recover from shocks and disruptions'.[23] In NATO's view, the responsibility for preparing and enhancing resilience lies at the national level through planning and exercises that ultimately serve collective security. The EU conceptualises resilience slightly differently and sees resilience as 'the ability not only to withstand and cope with challenges but also to undergo transitions, in a sustainable, fair, and democratic manner'.[24]

Resilience is not only the ability of a system to quickly recover from crises and shocks, such as war, but also a form or art of governance that enables societies to deal with the inevitable and fundamental changes in the international system or changes that expand the political, such as climate change. Resilience is thus about anticipating, adapting, and transforming continuously with the transformation. In multi-order, resilience as the art of governance is about making the relationship between the orders more congruent, as well as a form of self-governance within orders.[25]

Because one of the key aspects of resilience is for societies to be able to deal with ongoing changes in the international system and changes and threats to everyday life, there is a clear connection between the local and the global level. When resilience is seen as self-governance, it places the local (or the individual) in a position to find safety or feel safe despite the changes, by actively adhering to or using ideational, institutional, and material resources within society. At the heart of feeling safe is the notion of 'the good life'.

For the resilience of an individual or any other entity, there has to be the belief that a good life is possible, and the moment this is no longer deemed so, it will have a detrimental impact on the strength of resilience.

One key finding was the careful balance that governments have to strike between material defence and societal resilience. The workshops asked whether European societies can accept cuts to social services to finance a military build-up even though the build-up is to protect their society.

While this trade-off between material defence and welfare services appeared more delicate in some societies than others, the workshops identified that governments' abilities to balance defence and welfare is key to ensuring societal resilience.

The workshops debated *democratic* resilience in preparing for a potential conflict, be it with Russia or others, as a vehicle for enabling a clear understanding of shared purpose and vision, which can be mobilised in times of crises or deter attacks by adversaries. The discussions of resilience therefore raised fundamental questions about how or whether non-liberal democratic European countries participate in the new European security architecture, and even whether liberal democratic principles must be central to the architecture.

European strategic autonomy

European strategic autonomy has become increasingly associated with the EU.[26] However, there are at least two understandings of the term: one mainly focused on the ability to act independently in security affairs, mostly understood in military terms, and another which is broader and stresses that autonomy can be seen as referring to 'freedom to act' and 'freedom from dependencies', ultimately making autonomy 'not a binary choice, but rather a spectrum of various degrees of autonomy and dependencies'.[27] In the EU, strategic autonomy remains somewhat elusive. It is not defined in the Strategic Compass; instead, the Commission states:

> *This Strategic Compass will enhance the EU's strategic autonomy and its ability to work with partners to safeguard its values and interests. A stronger and more capable EU in security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members. These two go hand in hand.*[28]

23 NATO, 'Resilience, Civil Preparedness and Article 3'.
24 European Commission, *2020 Strategic Foresight Report STRATEGIC FORESIGHT – CHARTING THE COURSE TOWARDS A MORE RESILIENT EUROPE.*
25 Korosteleva and Flockhart, 'Resilience in EU and International Institutions'.
26 Union and Council, *Strategic Autonomy, Strategic Choices.*
27 Quoted from Union and Council, *Strategic Autonomy, Strategic Choices.*
28 EU Commission, 'Strategic Compass'.

The EU has emerged as a security provider in Europe following Russia's war against Ukraine, including through the distribution of weapons to Ukraine, which was a dramatic shift away from reliance on the US as the main security provider in Europe.[29] Yet, the advent of European strategic autonomy has not been seen as a replacement for the US but rather as complementary to NATO.[30] European strategic autonomy is conceptualised in a world order where the abandonment of liberal values and principles by the US was, if not unthinkable, then at least, as our workshops concluded, very difficult to conceptualise. The mere fact that European strategic autonomy was discussed extensively at our workshops reflects, however, the depth of the crisis in the LIO, and it was evident from our discussions that to enable the European security architecture to deter adversaries and enable its defence in the event of an attack, European strategic autonomy in one form or another is necessary.[31]

The concept, however, remains elusive, and there is a need to reconceptualise what the term means in light of the changes in the international system, especially the crisis in the LIO. Our workshops found that, in material terms, the aim of European strategic autonomy is to safeguard European security following US departure or partial departure from the security architecture in Europe, and they found that European strategic autonomy is on a continuum between dependency and, indeed, autonomy. The main concern our workshops expressed about dependency revolves around time, and they raised concerns about the urgent need to build up European defences and defence technologies to move away from the current US dependency. While sustaining European defence and security in the most immediate future had everything to do with the assumption of partial or total US departure, the workshops also found that Europe does not have a sufficient industrial base, including raw materials, to sustain complete strategic autonomy, and therefore there will always be some level of dependency.

Arms control

While deterrence and defence are fundamental functions of a sustainable European security architecture, our workshops highlighted that arms control is deeply intertwined with credible deterrence. Without arms control, there is an increased risk of an arms race, but without credible deterrence, the conditions for efficient arms control are not met. Our workshops found that this link between deterrence and arms control has been overlooked for years in Europe, for example, the string of arms control treaties, including the strategic arms control treaties between the US and Russia that ensured a credible deterrent in Europe following the end of the Cold War fell as the relationship between the US and Russia soured.[32] Our workshops found that this was partly due to lack of experience and knowledge in Europe, and partly due to decades of avoiding responsibility. Too often European governments have settled with declaratory statements on arms control, rather than taking responsibility for arms control as an integral part of Europe's deterrence posture.

29 Varma, 'European Strategic Autonomy'.
30 Česnakas and Juozaitis, *European Strategic Autonomy and Small States' Security*.
31 As one government participant said, we need at least a Plan B to deter attacks in case the US abandons Europe.
32 For example, the Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2007, the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) also in 2007. See Thomasen, *Applying a Systematic Approach to NATO-Russia Risk Reduction: Perspectives from the North East Flank*.

2. Ensure Europe's energy needs are met

European security has been framed around external threats to territorial integrity since the end of the Second World War, making material defence central and the key function of the architecture. As discussed above, according to our workshops, it remains one of the key functions today, as European governments have begun a historic rearmament to ensure material defence and strengthen deterrence postures, especially since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the second Trump administration's continued threats of abandoning European defence. Furthermore, ensuring that energy needs are met in Europe adds to the functions of a sustainable European security architecture.

Our workshops identified that energy infrastructure and ensuring energy needs are met are two of the most acute risks to European security and stability. The workshops asserted that traditionally, energy security has mainly been seen as an economic issue, a perspective that European governments and institutions must now step away from, mainly because Europe's dependency on energy and fuel imports from current adversaries clearly showed that they treat energy and the supply infrastructure as a tool of coercion. European governments thus need to reconceptualise energy security in such a way as to ensure that energy security takes place across the whole value chain, including raw material and fuel supply, and guarantees protection of critical infrastructure. In this view, energy security becomes total defence in the sense that it is tailored to deliver the necessary energy in times of crisis and geopolitical upheaval.

To this end, our workshops identified three steps:

Step 1:

First, European governments must consider and prioritise resilience over dependency. As is well known, Europe's dependency on imported energy has created a vulnerability that is easily exploited. Similarly, energy autonomy is not a binary choice, but rather a spectrum of various degrees of autonomy and dependencies, and there are questions about how easy it will be—even if it is possible—for Europe to overcome dependencies. Against the backdrop of multi-order and broader systemic changes, dependency must be rethought.

Step 2:

Second, this suggests that supply chains should be conceptualised as a critical infrastructure to prevent European governments from swapping one dependency for another, and supply chains should be seen in relation to managing order relationships.

Step 3:

Third, if European governments reconceptualise energy infrastructure as defence assets, this will support a broader movement of building both material and societal resilience.

3. Resilience to climate change and climate change mitigation

By the end of the 21st century, Europe's temperatures are predicted to rise by between 1.5°C and 4.5°C.[33] Dealing with climate change is complex, and societies must deal with it in both the short and long term. Whereas the temperature rise is scientifically predictable, the many extreme weather events that have occurred more frequently in Europe and elsewhere in recent years are far more difficult to predict. In addition, climate change could become more unpredictable as societies react differently to its effects. This makes the effects of climate change on security somewhat difficult to control and underscores the complexity of predicting the effects of climate change.

Our workshops identified several risks to societies in terms of their ability to deal with extreme weather events, the long-term effects of global warming on European populations, and their ability to live 'the good life'.

From the perspective of creating a sustainable security architecture, the ability to deal with the shocks of extreme climatic events on infrastructure, including energy infrastructure, the effect it will have on material defence capabilities and war-fighting abilities, and ensuring that societies are able to protect the ability to live 'the good life' emerged as a key function of a sustainable architecture. Our workshops also highlighted that Europe should lead international efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, especially in the wake of deepening crises in the LIO and GRBO.

Climate change effects on both the first and second functions of a sustainable security architecture (defend and deter, and energy security, respectively) are thus evident. Our workshops found that governments' ability to deal with the effects of climate change is part of a total defence strategy because of the totality of the threat from climate change.

They also found a disconnect between how governments prioritise extreme climatic events as compared to traditional threats to our societies. Defence against an adversary's attack on territory appears to be prioritised far above dealing with climatic events, because the risk of war is more tangible in Europe following Russia's war against Ukraine, the crisis in the LIO, and wider systemic changes in the international system.

It remains, however, a key finding from the workshops that climate resilience—that is, 'the capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of hazardous climatic events while incurring minimal damage to societal well-being, the economy and the environment'[34]—must be a third function in future European security architecture, alongside coordinated efforts to mitigate climate change on a global scale.

33 'What Will the Future Bring When It Comes to Climate Hazards? - Overview', Briefing, European Environment Agency, accessed 12 September 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/europes-changing-climate-hazards-1/what-will-the-future-bring

34 'What Is the Difference between Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience?'

Our workshops found that Europe's economic security is closely related to the transformation in the GRBO, or rather the inability of this order to serve the interests of liberal economies and societies.

4. Ensure the ability to protect and sustain economic stability and growth

Economic security remains a somewhat loosely defined concept. It is clear, however, that economic security is closely intertwined with national security not only because a stable economy is a prerequisite for states' ability to provide credible deterrence, to defend itself and its interests, but also, and importantly, to sustain key assets such as critical infrastructure, and ensure access to essential resources such as energy and technology.[35] One of the main concerns for economic security revolves around protecting against potential economic or geopolitical events and involves reducing reliance on a single supplier.

In the context of this work, our workshops found that Europe's economic security is closely related to the transformation in the GRBO, or rather the inability of this order to serve the interests of liberal economies and societies.

Since the end of the Cold War, non-liberal economies, most notably China, have entered the economic order, creating over-dependencies, and clearly showing that the fundamental assumption that liberal trade would foster balanced financial relations has not materialised.

Our workshops highlighted that Europe needs to de-risk and diversify its supply chains in critical areas.[36] Our workshops argued that this is particularly relevant to Europe's trading relationship with China, and increasingly more so in relation to the US, especially in the most critical area of the defence industry. While the workshops wanted to decouple the trading relationship with Russia, whether or when the trading relationship with Russia could be reinstated remained an open question.

In addition, our workshops clearly identified a strong connection between the democratic resilience of European societies and economic security.

35 OECD, *Economic Security in a Changing World*.

36 By de-risking, states seek to overcome dependency without severing trade ties. Instead, they are focused on mitigating specific risks associated with economic engagement with a particular trading partner.

A model for sustainable security architecture in Europe

The table below shows that a sustainable security architecture in Europe must have at least four primary functions to ensure peace and stability in Europe, and the specific approaches our workshops suggest that European governments can take to make the security architecture sustainable.

Function A	Function B	Function C	Function D
The ability to defend and deter attacks from adversaries	**Ensuring energy needs are met**	**Climate resilience and Climate change mitigation**	**Economic security**
APPROACHES: ▪ **Total defence:** understanding the type of total threat ▪ European strategic autonomy ▪ Material defence, conventional and nuclear deterrence ▪ Arms control ▪ Climate resilience and adaptation	APPROACHES: ▪ **Total defence:** understanding the type of total threat ▪ Resilience over dependency ▪ Supply chain critical infrastructure ▪ Energy infrastructure as defence assets ▪ Climate resilience and adaptation	APPROACHES: ▪ **Total defence:** understanding the type of total threat ▪ Prepare for, respond to, and overcome climatic extremes ▪ European leadership on climate change mitigation	APPROACHES: ▪ **Total defence:** understanding the type of total threat ▪ De-risking ▪ Decoupling
← RESILIENCE →			

SECTION 3

Paths Forward

The headline 'Paths forward' might be misleading. In a period of order transformation and crisis in the liberal international order, the starting point is to realise that we are facing historic and fundamental changes in the international system that force governments and societies to reconsider long-held assumptions about international security and stability.

Indeed, since our workshops, the Trump administration has continued to threaten Greenland, has issued numerous penalty tariffs on European allies, and has continued threats to abandon NATO in an effort to coerce European leaders to support his administration's various policy ends. The US administration has left the climate regime and has been drawn into a war against Iran by Israel. As a consequence of the war, the US administration lifted sanctions on Russian oil, thus enabling and supporting the Russian war against Ukraine. Russia has continued its war against Ukraine, continues to subvert and attempt to subvert governments in the Caucasus to build a Eurasian order led by Russia and held together by coercive tactics and brute force, and continues its hybrid warfare in Europe.

European allies, on the other hand, seem to have abandoned their tactics of appeasing the Trump administration by flattery and instead are finding agency despite the significant task ahead for the European governments to coordinate, contemplate, and collaborate in the emerging order to ensure peace and stability in Europe.

European agency is paramount to ensure stability and security in Europe, as is resilience, because resilience is not just adaptation to and mitigation of the current order transformation; rather, resilience is about transforming with the changes in the international system even at the local level. The failure to do so, such as by cashing in on the peace dividend, is what has brought Europe to its current position of lagging behind in preparation of its defence both in material and social terms.

This project is intended to support European governments in realising a sustainable security architecture in Europe.

The five Track 1.5 workshops happened to take place during an order transformation, and the findings of the report reflect the first attempts from European government officials and experts to contemplate what requirements this order transformation poses on a sustainable European security architecture.

It became increasingly clear from each workshop that we need a new structure. The first workshop was mainly concerned with the Russian war against Ukraine, but after the second Trump administration came into office, it increasingly focused on the ramifications for Europe's security. This resulted in progressively more discussion of Europe's agency, role, and responsibilities for the continent's security and stability. In other words, it was increasingly recognised and realised that Europe needed something entirely new to ensure the continent's peace.

The resilience of the European security architecture in order transformation and beyond lies, as our workshops found, in the ability to transform with the changes in the international system.

This is a new era for European security. Our workshops identified four key functions of sustainable security architecture, showing that new functions must be adopted to ensure peace in Europe amid systemic change and the Anthropocene.

We identified several approaches to each of the functions of the architecture, but at their foundation lies the bare truth that, for the first time in contemporary European history, European security and peace are a matter for European states that happen to be neither superpowers nor even great powers at this moment in time. This raises a fundamental question: what does European strategic autonomy look like when it is an autonomy of middle powers?

The closest we came to an answer was the ability to balance autonomy and dependency. Across all four functions, the workshops identified this exact mechanism as a means to ensure the functions would work. Only in Function C (Climate resilience) did a variant of dependency and autonomy appear.

On the one hand, Europe must prepare its defences against extreme climatic events, and on the other, Europe must lead global efforts to mitigate climate change in recognition of its dependence on all governments' commitment to mitigating climate change.

As we are progressing towards a multi-order world, the liberal international order appears to materialise with its epicentre in Europe, which means European governments must be prepared to be order-setters rather than order-takers.[37] European governments must contemplate their relationships with other orders from this perspective, and not retreat into fortress Europe.

As our workshops agreed, European autonomy is a spectrum, and it is up to the governments of Europe to manage and balance the relationship with the other orders in all four functions of the architecture. The resilience of the European security architecture in order transformation and beyond lies, as our workshops found, in the ability to transform with the changes in the international system.

37 Thomasen, 'Historic Opportunity Now Exists to Redefine European Security'.

Annex A

Workshops

Workshop 1:

March 14, 2024 in Vilnius, Lithuania

Track 1.5 participation from Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden, and the United States of America

Workshop 2:

May 28, 2024 in Vienna, Austria

Track 2 Russian participants

Workshop 3:

September 19, 2024 in Warsaw, Poland

Track 1.5 participation from The Czech Republic, Croatia, France, Poland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy

Workshop 4:

February 20, 2025 in Istanbul, Türkiye

Track 1.5 participation from Türkiye, Ukraine, Belarus, Romania, Moldova, and Bulgaria

Workshop 5:

March 19, 2025 in Brussels, Belgium

Track 1.5 participation from Norway, Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands

Prior to the workshop, participants were presented with a working paper to provide background information. This paper detailed concepts such as security architecture, Europe as a region, climate change and its risks, human security, and energy security. Each workshop's working paper contained largely the same elements yet contained examples that were tailored to each workshop's regional focus. The working papers can be found here: basicint.org/rethinking-european-security

The workshop sessions included: the most urgent dimensions of security now and in the next decade, energy and climate security, arms control and risk reduction in the European security architecture, and how a new sustainable security architecture can be put into practice. Each session began with two to three presentations from selected participants that were designed around discussion questions that were provided to the workshop. Participants were then invited to make comments and ask questions in a roundtable format. All discussions were held under the Chatham House Rule.

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