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Unlocking enlargement and building common defence: next steps for the European Union

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Executive summary

The future of the European Union is being determined by how it responds to Russia's war in Ukraine and the revision of US global strategy. This paper argues that Ukraine's rapid accession and the construction of a genuine European common defence are not separate projects but mutually necessary components of a single strategy to dispel complacency, combat rising nationalism and deter external security threats.

On past performance, the EU has been too ready to reject reform for fear of something worse. But the present deep crisis of European security must impel its political leaders to innovate. This paper examines the EU's options and suggests reforms for its own institutions and the wider neighbourhood to underpin a new round of enlargement. Our proposals include revising the Copenhagen criteria, streamlining the formal accession process, creating a new category of EU accession state, drafting an intergovernmental defence treaty and establishing a European Security Council.

The American challenge: Europe without guarantees

If he had not already done it himself, one might congratulate US President Donald J. Trump on succeeding in his goal of divide and rule in Europe. At the inaugural meeting of his Board of Peace in Washington on 19 February, two member states – Hungary and Bulgaria – were lauded as founding directors. Eight EU states plus the European Commission attended, excruciatingly, as observers. Eight other EU states plus the United Kingdom, Norway and the Pope refused his invitation. Denmark was not invited because it refuses to cede Greenland to the US. Canada's invitation was rescinded after Trump heard about Prime Minister Mark Carney's speech on 20 January to the World Economic Forum in Davos, in which he exhorted the 'middle powers' not to accept subordination to the hegemon.[1]

Trump's Board of Peace puts flesh on the bones of his new US National Security Strategy that excoriates the mission and accomplishment of the European Union. The Trump administration finds that Europe is no longer a reliable ally not only because of its economic stagnation but also "by the real and more stark prospect of civilizational erasure":

> "The larger issues facing Europe include activities of the European Union and other transnational bodies that undermine political liberty and sovereignty, migration policies that are transforming the continent and creating strife, censorship of free speech and suppression of political opposition, cratering birthrates, and loss of national identities and self-confidence."[2]

Left to its own devices, the Pentagon would continue with NATO.[3] But it is Trump and his MAGA followers who rule the roost in Washington with their blatant imperialist language, racist undertones and reckless betrayal of the long-standing tenets of US policy. When the White House speaks of "cultivating resistance to Europe's current trajectory", one presumes the President means it. The gross interference of Trump's envoys in European domestic politics to favour far-right political forces raises alarm. His own cavalier treatment of Ukraine's beleaguered President Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggests Trump would rather deal with Vladimir Putin, the Russian dictator, than secure Ukraine's future as a sovereign democratic polity.

Under the Biden administration, the US had been the largest donor of military hardware to Ukraine, but since Trump returned to the White House in January 2025, the US has withdrawn all its financial and military aid, leaving it entirely to the EU and its close partners to step up.[4] This they have done. Since 2022, the EU and its member states have donated well over €100 billion to Ukraine in the form of economic, financial and humanitarian assistance.[5] In December 2025, the EU agreed on further new loans or grants to the tune of €90 billion over the next two years – although this agreement is now being challenged by Hungary. The UK has committed over £20 billion.

Enlargement as a security imperative

What more must the EU and its partners do to bolster Ukraine in the face of Trump's neglect? The Union was founded on the assumption that its membership would grow. Jean Monnet, from the start, wanted to entice the British to change their minds about joining the Coal and Steel Community. In 1951, it was laid down by the six founding member states that "any European state may apply to accede to this [Paris] Treaty".[6] The Six hoped to share their prosperity and broaden security across the wider neighbourhood. And that is what happened. EU enlargement became an indispensable instrument in advancing its historic mission of an "ever closer union among the peoples of Europe".[7]

But 'enlargement', although very political, is deceptively simple. In fact, it took a full 20 years before consensus could be reached to admit Britain into the club. An incoming state, especially a large one, alters the balance of power among the existing membership: it installs new frontiers and transforms the Union's international profile; it stimulates internal competition and swells the EU budget; it may revive historic and ethnic tensions, yet poses challenges to the internal workings of Brussels institutions and raises awkward questions about constitutional reform. Enlargement, clearly, is not to be undertaken lightly. The Union's decisions about its future size and shape are inevitably affected by its own absorption capacity.

By fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Union had doubled its membership. The prospect of a new round of accession applications from the formerly communist countries of central and eastern Europe caused EU leaders to tighten the requirements for membership. First introduced in 1993, the Copenhagen criteria were intended ostensibly to ease the path of candidates. Yet they have been a double-edged sword, able to be used by current member states to repel unwelcome boarders or to delay the admittance of candidates deemed unready.

The Copenhagen criteria insist on the stability of national institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including the respect for and protection of minorities. They demand of the candidate a functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the EU. They require of the incoming state an ability to take on all the obligations of membership, including the capacity to effectively implement the rules, standards and policies that make up the body of EU law (the 'acquis communautaire'). They expect loyal adherence to the aims of European political, economic and monetary union.

These preconditions are surely challenging for candidates. They also stand to embarrass any member state that may have slipped backwards from commitments made when it first joined. Interpretation of the rule of law, in particular, has led to some widely contrasting definitions.

As the EU faced a growing queue of applicants, there was much dissimulation behind the cover of the Copenhagen criteria. Bulgaria and Romania were let in under licence in 2007, subject to a special verification mechanism that remained in place until 2023. The EU acquis still does not apply in Northern Cyprus. Turkey, notably, was granted candidate status in 1999 but remains in limbo: nobody seriously believes that either the Greek parliament in Athens or the Greek Cypriot parliament in Nicosia – let alone a referendum in France – would readily ratify a Turkish accession treaty. Yet both Brussels and Ankara continue in the polite fiction.

The authors of the treaties were wise enough not to have inscribed the Copenhagen criteria into the primary law of the Union. Combining high political ambition with low political cunning, the criteria are referred to only obliquely in Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (2007), which contains the current iteration of the enlargement process:

> "Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union. … The conditions of eligibility agreed upon by the European Council shall be taken into account".

Unanimity in the Council and the consent of the European Parliament are required to open each application. The final accession treaty must still be ratified by all member states according to their own constitutional requirements; some may use a referendum, offering a field day to nationalists.

Under this regime, nonetheless, the Union succeeded in growing its membership to 28 states with the addition of Croatia in 2013. Notwithstanding the safeguards already built into the enlargement process, with the prospect EU enlargement to the Western Balkans, further measures were thought to be necessary. Not the least among those who insisted on tighter rules was that "good European", President Emmanuel Macron, who faced a difficult re-election in France against far-right populist forces.

The authors of the treaties were wise enough not to have inscribed the Copenhagen criteria into the primary law of the Union.

In March 2020, the European Council revised the enlargement process. The reform had two rather contradictory goals: not only to "reinvigorate the accession process" but also to subject it "to stronger political steering".[8] For the EU to get a grip on its troubled and unstable Balkan neighbourhood, renewed emphasis was placed on a systematic, objective, "merit-based approach" in which respect for the "fundamentals" – human rights and the rule of law – takes totemic place. The Council now has direct involvement in setting benchmarks for the candidates and in monitoring progress, especially in the fundamentals and on the alignment of foreign and security policy. There is plenty of scope for any single member state to obstruct progress or procrastinate for all sorts of reasons, some of which may be bilateral banalities or alternative quarrels totally unrelated to the EU's overall enlargement strategy.

The elaborate choreography imposed by Brussels has not deterred aspirant members. At a summit meeting in Thessaloniki as long ago as 2003, EU leaders boldly declared that "[T]he future of the Balkans is within the European Union". Suitably enticed, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia maintain their membership ambitions. In practice, however, the progress of the Western Balkans towards membership has been protracted and dispiriting. Albania and Montenegro are the frontrunners.

Ukraine: Europe's security imperative

It is now Ukraine's turn. Entering its fifth year of war, Ukraine has resolved, correctly, that if its independence is to be salvaged against Russian attack, its own sovereignty must be pooled with that of the EU. Without EU membership, Ukraine's integrity as a sovereign state under international law cannot be assured. Equally, Europe's future security rests on Ukraine's success in blunting Russia's imperialist aggression. Were Ukraine to succumb, Putin would be tempted to turn his sights onto the other ex-Soviet republics of Moldova and the three EU Baltic states.

Ukraine first applied for EU membership immediately after the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. One month later, in a remarkable display of solidarity, the European Council accepted Ukraine's application (once Hungary's illiberal, antisemitic and nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had left the room).

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All things being equal, Kyiv can be said to have made good advances towards meeting the accession criteria, not least thanks to the Association Agreement that it had struck with the EU in 2014. It is, however, unrealistic to think that Ukraine can complete the conventional accession process, if at all, in its current wartime state. In any case, the hope of accession on its current slow trajectory will not address Ukraine's acute need to be immediately grounded in the EU security nexus.

Simply joining the candidates' queue will not break the logjam over enlargement. Ukraine's accession must be unorthodox.

And all things are not equal, of course, because Hungary, under the influence of the Kremlin, is blocking the progress of the Ukrainian dossier. Although Ukraine's technical preparations for the EU acquis continue, Orbán's government rejects the Commission's positive assessment of the situation and refuses to let the substantive political phase of accession negotiations begin.[9] Moldova's accession progress, caught in the slipstream, is also impaired.

It is obvious that EU membership must form an integral and robust part of any truce or inherently unstable 'peace deal' imposed by Russia and/or the US. While President Trump can block Ukraine's accession to NATO, neither he nor President Putin should be allowed any role in obstructing Ukraine's path towards a European liberal democratic future. The timing and terms of any ceasefire remain unknown. What is clear, however, is that Europe will have to react at speed to sudden developments if Ukraine's place in the Union is to be secured. Even if Putin agrees to a temporary halt in fighting, one should assume that he will continue planning further depredations against Ukraine in the near future.

Getting ready for an emergency landing

Like it or not, the European Union must cope with an emergency landing for Ukraine, all the while avoiding a disastrous crash landing.[10] Plodding on with the conventional merit-based approach will not cut it. Radical measures are required.[11]

Three steps should now be taken to overturn existing secondary rules while staying faithful to EU treaty objectives:

1. **The European Council should upgrade and modernise the Copenhagen criteria**, which were written in a more benign age over 30 years ago. Today, enlargement has become more overtly an instrument of EU foreign policy, security and defence. This shift should be codified in a solemn decision of the European Council to declare the immediate membership of Ukraine to be a strategic imperative for the sake of protecting the Union's own values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity.[12] A new condition of eligibility to that effect should be formally added to the Copenhagen criteria to ensure that every candidate is capable of and willing to reinforce the security, defence and independence of the Union.

2. **The European Council should table a revision to the 2020 enlargement procedures** so that each chapter may be opened and closed on the initiative of the Commission alone unless the Council blocks the action by Reverse Qualified Majority Vote.[13] The European Parliament should register its strong support. Such a reform would be consistent not only with Article 49, which prescribes unanimity only at the beginning and at the end of accession negotiations, but also with Article 17(1) TEU, which entrusts the Commission, not the Council, with the power to ensure the application of the Treaties. Cyprus, which holds the rotating presidency of the General Affairs Council until June 2026, should press the throttle: no country is better placed to understand how EU membership can be a refuge against external threat.

3. As EU Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos has hinted, **the Ukrainian accession treaty should be drafted to establish the incomer as a member state on probation**. Reform programmes in various policy sectors that would normally be required before formal accession should, in Ukraine's case, be repackaged as part of agreed post-accession transition arrangements. This would strengthen the leverage of the EU over Ukraine's administrative and judiciary reforms as well as facilitating coordination with Ukraine's military. The accession treaty should be rendered operational on a provisional basis until its final ratification – a process likely to take at least two or three years.

While still a probationary member state, Kyiv's government would have a vote in the Council (but not a veto) in all those areas as and when the relevant chapters

or clusters are satisfactorily closed in accordance with the conventional 'merit-based' procedures. These sectors should include, as a priority, the provisions for permanent structured cooperation in defence (PESCO).[14] Ukraine could lay claim to a place inside any pioneer group of integrationist member states acting under the enhanced cooperation provisions of the treaty.[15] Only after the completion of ratification would Ukraine have full powers with a Ukrainian member of the Commission, a judge at the European Court of Justice and directly elected MEPs. A target date of July 2029 to coincide with the European Parliament elections and the start of the next institutional cycle would make perfect sense.

Ukrainian membership will make the EU a much more powerful player in global affairs.

Naturally there will be many objections to this emergency procedure, not least from Orbán whose bluff must be called decisively while he faces the Hungarian general election in April 2026. Doubtless he and others will launch some ultra vires litigation at the Court of Justice.[16] The Council legal service, whose habitual raison d'être is to defend the status quo, must be called into line by the politicians and invited to embrace reform in the service of the EU's new geopolitical strategy as articulated in the supplemented Copenhagen criteria. Free-riders and eurosceptic insiders, like Austria, should be dissuaded from resisting internal EU reforms without which enlargement becomes implausible.

Diplomats representing other candidate states may protest that they are being unfairly excluded from Ukraine's privileged treatment. In practice, however, the more flexible procedures devised for Ukraine's emergency landing could be adapted to accelerate membership for Moldova and the leading Balkan candidates. Recent statements by Albania's Prime Minister Edi Rama that he would accept a modified status on a provisional basis are a welcome sign of realism.[17]

We are not advocating a permanent second-class EU membership for Ukraine, Moldova or the Western Balkans. But there is a case for developing a more flexible, multi-tier Union capable of accommodating the wider interests and varied pace of development of an EU of well over 30 states. Variable geometry has long characterised European integration – within the EU, through arrangements such as the euro and Schengen, and in its structured relationships with neighbouring countries that vary markedly in terms of form, stretch and intensity. An enlarged EU will in any case require greater recourse to enhanced cooperation among groups of integrationist members states in pursuit of Treaty objectives. Provided the fundamentals of membership remain intact, the Union's operating system can evolve in innovative and pragmatic ways.

Ukrainian membership will make the EU a much more powerful player in global affairs. Failure to embrace Ukraine would be an exercise in strategic self-harm – handing a great victory to Putin and inviting further derision from Trump.

Towards common defence

There remains the question of how the EU should organise its own defence. The Union is prone to offering more than it can deliver. Ukraine must not be admitted on false pretences, particularly when NATO membership, thanks to Trump, is not available to Kyiv.

The constitutionally prescribed route to common defence – a unanimous decision of the European Council according to Article 42(2) TEU – is effectively closed. Instead, EU Commissioner for Defence and Space Andrius Kubilius has explored ways to bypass political obstacles by establishing a European Security Council made up of only those states committed to developing military integration.[18] The UK would be invited to join meetings to reflect the advances made by the current Coalition of the Willing to support Ukraine.

To overcome national vetoes in foreign policy, security and defence, Kubilius has floated the drafting of a new intergovernmental treaty among the willing and excluding the rest. He suggests the model of the Schengen Agreement, first an intergovernmental treaty but always intended to be wrapped up inside the EU treaties when circumstances permitted.

Whenever new defence structures are proposed, federalists invoke the European Defence Community of 1952.[19] In truth, the system proposed in that treaty for the command and control of the federal defence forces contained many confederal caveats. Questions of governance and parliamentary accountability were left unresolved. Monnet quickly came to realise that it was premature to replicate in the military sphere an equivalent of the supranational High Authority he had designed to manage the integration of the coal and steel industries. The European Defence Community in practice would not have avoided the return of the national veto. In any event, the first attempt to create a European army collapsed when France's National Assembly refused ratification in August 1954.

As soon as the EDC project failed, the Six, joined by Anthony Eden for the UK, moved to establish the Western European Union (WEU). In October 1954, a new Brussels Treaty resolved "to promote the unity and to encourage the progress of integration of Europe".[20] In the case of an armed attack in Europe, the seven signatories committed to "afford the party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power".[21] A standing council was established and could be convened in an emergency at the request of any signatory.[22] The WEU was designed to function pragmatically, in close collaboration with both NATO and the United Nations. It was meant to last 50 years – and did, inoffensively – before it was absorbed by the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007.

Today, Article 42(7) TEU lays down that if a member state is the victim of armed aggression, the others "shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power".

WEU did not inherit the goal of the failed European Defence Community to build a European army. There was indeed a large conventional army stationed in western Europe, but it was an American one. It was not the EU but the US-led NATO which took military action in the Balkan wars in the early 1990s. European countries continued to buy American weaponry, becoming overly dependent on US technology, and missed the opportunity to develop a broad-based, integrated military industrial base of their own. After the apparent end of the Cold War, European investment in arms procurement slumped: the peace dividend was too tempting to pass up. Reversing that trend in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is proving difficult in financial, political and military terms both for the EU collectively and for individual states. Britain has the additional complication of the unforced error of Brexit.[23]

As former Finnish President Sauli Niinistö has reported comprehensively, the EU is at present woefully ill-prepared to give effect to the mutual assistance provision of Article 42(7) TEU.[24] This exposes a deep flaw in Europe's readiness to combat future Russian aggression or to protect its civilian population in such a crisis. The former EU official Jean-Guy Giraud, for his part, proposed that the signatories of a new European defence treaty should set as their explicit goal the progressive framing of a common defence policy leading to common defence, as foreseen in Article 42(2) TEU.[25] They would commit to taking strategic decisions in common and to realising joint military action.

A European Security Council for an enlarged Union

There would seem to be a strong case for creating a European Security Council as a supplement to, not a substitute for, the EU institutions.[26] The exclusive body could at the very least take on responsibility for identifying and filling capability gaps, driving common arms procurement and securing supply lines. Its responsibilities would include crisis management in case of military aggression against any member state. It would also work to assimilate Ukraine's military within a European Defence Union. A European Security Council would in effect transplant the competences once vested in the North Atlantic Council and related NATO structures into the EU's orbit. It would set the strategic posture of Europe vis-à-vis the US, China, Russia and the Middle East. It would be where the future of the French and British nuclear deterrence could be discussed with European colleagues in some confidence.[27]

We do not know whether or when NATO might cease to be functional. But the political trust among Allies that has underpinned it since 1949 appears irretrievably damaged. It falls to the European Union to design a contingency plan that conserves as much of NATO's operational system as possible while building up its own capabilities. More European resources should be channelled into NATO's Provisional Ukrainian Requirements List (PURL). The proposed EU Security Council should resuscitate the Berlin Plus arrangements of 2003 that unplug EU security and defence missions from NATO command while retaining use of its assets. A European Union military command and headquarters is already needed to assume the functions currently exercised by NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (who is always a European). The Security Council would also require structured oversight of the pooling of military and security intelligence.

A European Security Council would in effect transplant the competences once vested in the North Atlantic Council and related NATO structures into the EU's orbit.

The first signatories to the new defence treaty should include all EU member states, with the exception of those presently unreliable and non-compliant – namely Hungary, Slovakia and Czechia. Non-EU NATO members the United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway and Canada should also be founding signatories, as should Ukraine. The EU's 'neutrals' (Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Malta) would face a moment of reckoning.

The treaty should contain an explicit clause stating the objective of its eventual incorporation into the EU proper. If the Schengen model is followed, the treaty should cleave closely to the objectives of the EU. The Security Council should make maximum use of existing EU institutions, such as the European Defence Agency, and the EU's enhanced cooperation provisions where relevant. Members would coordinate their approach to the design and implementation of EU security and defence programmes, particularly those arising from PESCO.[28] They would work to overcome the restrictive effects of Article 346 TFEU, which impedes the emergence of a genuine single market in the defence industry.

Membership of the European Security Council would be drawn from the signatory states of the new treaty. One presumes that Britain, France, Germany, Poland and Ukraine would make the cut as permanent members. The Security Council should retain the power to sanction any member that falls into error, for instance, following the election to government of a party heavily subject to foreign influence. Its chair, possibly the President of the European Council, should report to the European Parliament and answer parliamentary questions. As with the former Western European Union, a joint parliamentary body composed of MEPs and national MPs should be established.

Conclusion: Breaking the logjam

This paper has argued, firstly, that the present international situation demands new strategic decisions from the European Council about the size, shape and character of the future Union, specifically but not uniquely for the sake of Ukraine. This should take the form of **a new Copenhagen criterion**.

Secondly, this paper has proposed a **revision to the current enlargement methodology** so that qualified majority voting replaces the national veto at the interim stages of accession. Thirdly, it has outlined how **a new category of acceding member state on probation** – an 'accession member state' – can ease enlargement without diluting quality control or endangering the integrity of the acquis. Lastly, it has advocated **a new intergovernmental treaty on European defence establishing a European Security Council** made up of key EU member states plus like-minded partners.

Reforming enlargement will not resolve all of the EU's current constitutional problems. But it may open minds, hitherto closed since the Treaty of Lisbon, to the possibility of making wider reforms in a federal direction, some of which have been well trailed. It seems to be dawning on formerly eurosceptic member states like Denmark, and political parties such as the European People's Party, that an overreliance on confederal methods and the national veto are no longer a sustainable basis for the organisation of a modern united Europe. As nationalist resistance intensifies, with the connivance of Trump and to the glee of Putin, the mainstream, pro-European majority has no alternative but to act beyond the strict confines of Lisbon to prevent systemic drift – or disintegration.

Monnet was not a naïve federalist, and he would be gratified today that Mario Draghi, that champion of integration, talks up the virtues of "pragmatic federalism".[29] President Zelenskyy told his Davos audience of his frustration that the EU remains "a beautiful but fragmented kaleidoscope of middle powers".[30] In private and now in public, Zelenskyy reprimands the Union he yearns to join for a lack of action. Imagine his impact as a full member of the European Council. Ukraine will surely be an engine of integration, particularly in security and defence.

Ukraine's accession could also jolt the Union out of its constitutional torpor, significantly enhancing its international profile and paving the way for market and governance reforms. Iceland is already preparing a referendum on reopening EU accession talks. Once the logjam on enlargement is broken, Norway, long hesitant, may well revive its frozen bid. Greenland, which left the Communities in 1985, might even be wise to come back.

The present UK government, without a trace of irony, is an outspoken supporter of Ukraine's EU membership. The British people will certainly notice the fast-tracking of Ukrainian accession. Even Prime Minister Keir Starmer is warming to Europe, at least as far as security and defence are concerned.[31] He told the Munich conference on 14 February of his "vision of European security and greater European autonomy" and "a more European NATO," adding that "We are not the Britain of the Brexit years anymore".

Starmer would do well to soon express support in public for the idea of Britain's participation in a new multilateral defence treaty and a European Security Council. Tension between the UK and US over Iran will only reinforce such an initiative. The UK is more likely to find its way back to Europe through structured defence cooperation than by tinkering at the edges of its post-Brexit deal, tiptoeing around single market red lines.

Bringing Ukraine into the EU – and bringing Britain back against the odds – would be proof positive that the European Union is learning to defend itself and live on into the 21st century with purpose and confidence.

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[5] European Council, Council of the European Union, EU financial assistance to Ukraine, Consilium.

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[7] Article 1 TEU.

[8] European Commission (2020), Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the western Balkans, Brussels, COM(2020) 57 final.

[9] Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood, 2025 Enlargement Package shows progress towards EU membership for key enlargement partners, Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood, 4 November 2025.

[10] Ukraine would join EU next year under draft peace plan, Financial Times.

[11] For a thorough discussion of the options, see: Emmanouilidis, Janis A et al, *A Test of Times: Permachange through enlargement and EU reform*, European Policy Centre, 24 April 2025.

[12] Article 21(2) TEU.

[13] RQMV was first introduced in 2011 as part of the revised Stability and Growth Pact and has served the Union well by reducing the prevalence of the national veto in sensitive and urgent matters.

[14] Article 42(6) TEU.

[15] Article 20 TEU.

[16] Article 263 TFEU.

[17] Vreme, "Vučić and Rama in a joint text: Let us into the EU without a veto", 28 February 2026.

[18] Andreas Kubilius, *On 'Europeanisation' of European Conventional Defence: The Case for a European Security Council*, 27 January 2026.

[19] Mémorial du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Treaty instituting the European Defence Community, Luxembourg: Journal officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg. Recueil de legislation, 27 May 1972.

[20] Preamble WEU.

[21] Article V WEU.

[22] Article VII WEU.

[23] Shea, Jamie, "Ten years after: the UK Brexit referendum ushered in the age of self-destruction", Friends of Europe, 20 February 2026.

[24] Sauli Niinistö, *Safer Together: Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness*, 30 October 2024.

[25] Sanchez, Pedro, "VERS UN TRAITÉ DE DÉFENSE DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE?", Les amis du traite de Lis bonne, 21 February 2025.

[26] See *Test of Times*, pp. 60-63 on 'Open Supra-Governmental Avantgarde'.

[27] President Macron outlined his plans on 2 March. See: Elysee, "Déplacement sur la base opérationnelle de l'Ile Longue", 2 March 2026.

[28] For a useful analysis, see Steven Blockmans and Daniel Fiott, *European Defence Projects of Common Interest: From concept to practice*, European Parliament Study, January 2026.

[29] Carretta, David et al, "Draghi's Federalist Addendum to his Competitiveness Report", Morning Post Europe, 3 February 2026.

[30] World Economic Forum, "Davos 2026: Special address by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine", 23 January 2026.

[31] Prime Minister's Office and The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, "PM speech during the Munich Security Conference", Speech, 14 February 2026.

NOTES

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