

# EPRS

## Policy foresight unit (PFOR)

Mission:

*To foster a culture of anticipatory governance within the European Parliament*

### 1. Risk and capabilities

- Future Shocks reports
- Strategic autonomy 360° monitor
- Policy-specific publications

### 2. Strategic Foresight Conversations

- Future of EU-Ukraine relations 2035

### 3. Futures literacy

- Methodology trainings and support
- Outreach

# Capabilities: strategic autonomy

- What the EU can do about its own situation
- Managing dependencies on others
- Terminology: open SA, sovereignty, capacity to act
- Thematic papers: defence, energy, chips, ...

BRIEFING  
EU Strategic Autonomy Monitor  
July 2022



## EU strategic autonomy 2013-2023

From concept to capacity

**SUMMARY**


EU strategic autonomy (EU-SA) refers to the capacity of the EU to act autonomously – that is, without being dependent on other countries – in strategically important policy areas. These can range from defence policy to the economy, and the capacity to uphold democratic values.

In order to structure the debate on strategic autonomy into analytical categories, this briefing assumes that by and large there have been several phases to the debate about EU-SA, each with a different focus. From 2013 to 2016, it was mainly seen as an approach to security and defence matters. From 2017 to 2019, EU-SA was considered as a way to defend European interests in a hostile geopolitical environment, marked by Brexit, the Trump Presidency and China's growing assertiveness. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic shifted the focus to mitigating economic dependence on foreign supply chains. Since 2021, the scope of EU-SA has been widened to virtually all EU policy areas, including that of the EU's values, while the expression 'strategic autonomy' was paradoxically used less and was often replaced by similar concepts, such as 'open strategic autonomy', 'strategic sovereignty', 'capacity to act' and 'resilience'. This briefing uses 'strategic autonomy' and 'strategic sovereignty' as equal and interchangeable terms. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, steps towards achieving EU-SA are being taken, while the concept nevertheless remains blurred by the variation in terminology.

Achieving EU-SA will require a common vision, political will and capabilities to implement it, and a distinct role for the EU, between Member States and global players. Visual tools, such as the 360° strategic autonomy wheel (in Annex 1), can help to identify dependencies and understand complex interdependencies between policy areas. Political will was expressed in the European Council's Versailles Declaration of 11 March 2022, which aims at greater EU-SA in defence, energy supply and the economy. However, EU-SA can be constrained by Member States and non-EU (third) countries or international organisations that challenge the EU. This EU strategic autonomy monitor is the first in a series on the state of play in the debate and implementation of EU-SA. It will be complemented by thematic papers in the 'strategic autonomy 360°' series.

### 2013-2016 – Autonomy in security and defence

The basic assumption behind any debate about EU strategic autonomy is that Europe is an entity capable of taking its own decisions and determining its own future. Since the days of the EU founding fathers in the 1950s, this autonomy has increased as regards geography and competences. Geographically, 'Europe as an actor of its own' has expanded from a Community of six to the current Union of 27 states. Its competences have grown from solely economic matters to virtually all policy areas, although these are shared with the Member States and other international organisations. However, as 1950s efforts to establish a European Defence Community failed, it has taken until the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon to add substantial power in security and defence matters to the EU's competences. Some of the Member States which are also North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members did not perceive much need for a separate EU defence policy (or even saw this as a threat



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# EU-Ukraine 2035 foresight conversation

- June 2022 – April 2023
- Multi stage stakeholder consultation
- 50 + experts
- Phase 1: 360° exploration
- Phase 2: scenarios
- Phase 3: policy considerations



### Fair Stability

- Ukrainian victory - Russian regime change
- Comprehensive peace agreement
- Ukraine accedes to EU and NATO
- Economic recovery



### Cold War II

- Front stuck - Iron curtain, Russian hybrid actions
- No formal agreements
- Ukraine accedes to EU, gets security guarantees
- Slow recovery



MAX

LOW

Ukraine-Russia Hazard

HIGH

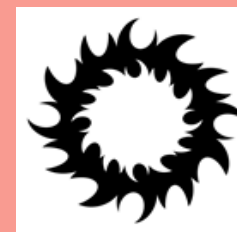
### Frozen conflict

- Front stuck – exhausted parties negotiate
- Ceasefire agreement with trade offs
- Ukraine doesn't accede to EU nor NATO (neutral)
- Recession/partial recovery



### Devastated Europe

- Russia escalates war => NATO involvement
- Fragmentation of Russia, upheaval in Belarus
- Ukraine doesn't accede to EU, but to NATO
- EU and Ukraine economy damaged



EU-Ukraine Cooperation

MIN

# Future Shocks annual report - objectives

**Part 1.** Provide up-to-date, objective and authoritative information about global risks

- introduction to risk, risk aggregation, risk governance
- survey of risk literature
- figures illustrating **interconnectedness** between risks and capabilities, and estimated **probability/impact** of risks

**Part 2.** Analyse 15 specific risks that have the potential to harm Europe and its people.

**Part 3.** Identify 10 policy options for EU decision-makers to effectively address these risks.

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## Future Shocks 2022

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Addressing risks and  
building capabilities  
for Europe in a  
contested world

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# Future Shocks – risks 2022

- Russia's brutal expansionism
- Extreme weather events
- Very high energy prices
- Another major pandemic
- Is a public debt risk looming post-COVID?
- Stalling economy with possible slumpflation
- Semiconductor supply chain disruption
- Growing democratic fragility
- Collapse of the internet
- Algorithms undermining rational political debate
- Deepening and pervasive social divisions
- EU spending capacity under threat
- Major slowdown of the Chinese economy
- Acute stress at EU borders

# Future Shocks – policy responses 2022

- Climate-proofing the EU
- Building a European social model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Strengthening our energy security
- Responding better to future pandemics
- Promoting economic recovery and resilience
- Establishing a greater strategic autonomy for European industry
- Consolidating strategic ties with democracies
- Building a healthier online environment for healthy democracies
- Safeguarding EU and global food security
- Strengthening European defence union
- Consolidating EU internal security