

KEY ASPECTS AND ANALISYS OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE PLANNING PROCESSES

Zhivo Petrov

Assoc. Prof. Ph.D., Faculty of Aviation, Vasil Levski National Military University, Dolna Mitropoliya,
District Pleven, Bulgaria, zhpetrov@gmail.com

Abstract

Strategic planning - its theoretical and methodological principles - serve as the basis for national security planning, including, of course, military activities. It is important to note the limited accuracy in the field of strategical assessment and planning. For example in a period of 30-40 years the paradigms inevitably change, evolve or emerge in new implemented policies that directly or indirectly affect the economy, science, technology and in particular the processes in the armed forces.

Keywords: European processes, defense, analysis, strategic planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning - its theoretical and methodological principles - serve as the basis for national security planning, including, of course, military activities. It is important to note the limited accuracy in the field of strategical assessment and planning. For example in a period of 30-40 years the paradigms inevitably change, evolve or emerge in new implemented policies that directly or indirectly affect the economy, science, technology and in particular the processes in the armed forces. During the last decade, the European Union has faced a chain of serious problems. They include the global financial crisis from 2008 to 2009 and the overpopulation of Africa and the Middle East which triggered a new flow of refugees and immigrants. The events of the „Arab Spring” in early 2010 which caused an increase in terrorist threat in Europe, Islamic terrorism, change of the US policy towards the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, requirements from the US and NATO leadership towards the EU to learn to deal with problems occurring in neighbor states, the dissatisfaction of EU citizens towards the EU's inability to solve its problems. EU is faced with growing instability and conflicts in neighboring countries new security threats from internal as well as external origin. The magnitude of these problems is such that none of the Member States can successfully solve them individually with EU Member State citizens relying more and more on a United Europe. The above mentioned lead to an active debate about the idea for the creation of the European Union for defense conducted in a way similar to the European Community for coal and steel (EOBC) or the Economic Monetary union (Antonov, Hristozov, 2018; Antonov, 2017; Antonov, Hristozov, 2017a).

2. KEY ASPECTS AND ANALYSIS OF PAN-EUROPEAN PLANING PROCESSES IN DEFENSE

Following the 1998 Saint-Malo Summit, European countries have taken a number of steps to formulate a The creation of protected union demands the presence of modern programs for the development and purchase of weaponry. This in turn requires the overall assessment of threats and requirements towards the

weaponry as well as the effective partnership between the involved EU states and the industry. Contemporary trends at the stage of development or assignment of public procurements also requires a relative degree of synchronization on state defense planning and budget cycles. For the creation of a solid foundation for such projects, an integrated approach is required towards the defense-planning problem, which includes all its aspects and combines elements of different strategies in an understandable and logically consistent form.

The origin of the defense resource management process.

The prototype for the defense resource management process is output budgeting. Output budgeting is a large in scope management method that was introduced in the US during the 1960's by the Assistant secretary of defense Robert McNamara and Charles J. Hitch and is based on the industry management methods. Later this method was introduced in other countries including Canada and the UK.

The Planning, Programming and Budgeting System/PPBS represents the integration of a number of methods into the planning and budgeting processes to identify cost estimates, calculate expenses and allocate resources establishing priorities and strategies for a large scale program and forecasting expenses, costs and achievements for the next fiscal year or for a longer period.

The US Department of Defense's leadership utilizes its system for planning, programming and budgeting so that weaponry requirements link up with the current defense budget. The US Defense departments divide the planning processes, programs and budgets. PPBS annually provides a consistent process that ends with an annual Defense Plan after which a Defense program and Defense Budget. The planning, programming and budgeting system requires:

- Planning organs focused on weaponry requirements;
- Program managers associate short-term plans with a six-year plan (Future Years Defense Plan /FYDP);
- The authorities responsible for the budgetary status prepare a two-year congressional budget.

For its part, the two-year congressional budget is a part from the six-year plan of the "Future Years Defense Plan /FYDP" which is based on an even longer terms "Defense plan". Before the implementation of the PPBS system the US department of Defense's budgets was largely unrelated to the military strategy. Strategy development and budgeting were considered independently from one another. Whereby any management creates its own budget plan without any effort to reduce cost or use synergic effects.

It must be noted that the common concerns that have lately arisen in the development of weapon programs should be noted. In advanced military research the focus shifts from the defense enterprise to a relatedly new type of trading company with considerable financial capabilities and investment potential. The defense sector which has exported technological potential to the trade sector is today becoming an importer of technological advancements around the world. Today In the defense industry of Western Countries leading positions are held by international trading corporations. Globalization has blurred the line between defense and civilian industries and weakened the role of the technology innovation sources and removed them from government control.

Technological changes led to the restructuring of the whole defense industry of Western Countries: for example among the 20th biggest industrial developers in the world, there are no defense companies. The aggregate market capitalization of the US "Big Five" defense corporations („Boeing", „Lockheed Martin", „General Dynamics", „Raytheon" и „Northrop Grumman") is about half the capitalization of one the pioneers in the field of personal computers - the Apple Corporation. Global companies, driven by the interest of increasing the profits tend to abandon the defense business with all its consequent pros especially in terms of attracting the young and talented.

The developed situation increases the influence of commercial research and (R&D) development as an innovation source and prevents defense companies from meaninglessly continuing to accept assistance from their governments to fund defense R&D. At the same time governments are becoming more cautious as they strive to sustain real innovation by allocating funds to companies in defense research and development funding.

As a result, defense ministries are considering the possibility of reorganization of the procurement process in such a way that it contributes to the promotion of innovation and development in cooperation with the commercial sector. Unforeseen changes in circumstances require the development of flexible purchasing strategies. In this regard the issue of intellectual property rights also requires special attention. Trading

companies are not ready to relinquish their intellectual property rights to dual-use products which can later become a serious source of their income.

The transition of key positions from military to civilian research will also influence decision-making policies and changes in industrial manufacture. In this regard the process of defense planning and budgeting in the United States, which stands as an example for defense planning in Western countries, has been severely criticized. Nevertheless, it can serve as a good starting point for an integrated approach for the study of the defense planning processes in the EU, NATO and the individual members of such organizations (Angelov, 2015; Angelov, 2016-a).

Modern defense planning process.

A general description of the defense planning processes is made. In this case, not all relevant documents are taken into account. Each process is individual and is different in every country. It must be noted that a number of countries have adopted programs that aim to further improve such processes. The diversity of new doctrinal documents and their annexes is also growing so the diagrams below allow only for an approximate overview of defense planning processes.

The "planning" stage begins with an attempt to characterize global and strategic trends, strategic directions, strategic prospects and problems in key areas of significance (demographic, economic, political, scientific and technical, etc.) for all regions of the world. Each stage is divided into sub-stages. As a rule each stage consists of three sub-stages (Terziev, Petkov, Krastev, 2018d-m).

For example, for further conceptual support on sub-level analysis on the global trends in 2014 the United Kingdom developed a document entitled "Global Strategic Trends for 2045". The US National Intelligence Council also issued a document in 2012 titled „Global Trends 2030“.

On the next sub level the military-political leadership generally seeks to draw conclusions from the analysis of global trends. Attempts are being made to identify "partners" and "adversaries" among states and non-governmental actors, assess threats and risks (including, for example, pandemics, floods, global warming, etc.). The document presented as a result from work on this sub-stage can be classified (as in the case of the French Atlas of Threats) or made public (as the UK's document called the Future operating environment – 2035, first published in 2014").

The potential risk from the publication of documents regarding the assessment on the development of global trends (in particular, studies on the development of weaponry and defense) from which potential adversaries could obtain information about weapon systems and processes must be taken into account as the possibility of potential misuse of such documents against the state that has published them exists. At the end of the first stage (the third step) the most important defense planning document is created. This document defines the "level of ambition" of the state's Armed Forces "construction planning". For the determination of this "level" the following block questions are required:

What role does the country play in the world arena? What are the country's long term interests? What security interests does the country pursue based on projections on the development of the international, political and military situation? The answers of these questions can be regarded as conditional on the objectives pursued by a particular country;

What opportunities and resources does the state have? When addressing this question it is necessary to compare the mentioned resources and capabilities with existing ambitions. It can be assumed that the addressed funds are only the ones that the country is capable of using.

In what way can the state achieve the goals determined by the defense policy, will the state build and utilize all components of the Armed forces considering the presence of limited resources?

In order to determine "the ambition level in planning the construction of the armed forces" it is also necessary to answer the question about the level of equipment in the Armed forces. In other words it is necessary to determine the order and methods of fulfilling the goals and tasks of the development of the military organization, construction and development of the Armed forces; the optimal construction and development directions for the Armed forces, the forms and methods for their use based on the predictions for the development of the military-political situation, military dangers and threats. The purpose of the document that is developed as a result of the third sub-stage differs from country to country. In particular the "objectives" are outlined in the Defense White Paper / DWP, the US National Security Strategy (NSS), and the British National Security Strategy NSS in the NATO Strategic Concept and in the Russian National Security Strategy. According to the rules the "goals" are compared to the available funds.

The methods and quantitative parameters of weapons and military equipment (WME) are described in the European doctrinal documents "Helsinki Master Plans and Tasks for the Construction of the Armed Forces" and "Planned Quantitative Levels of Technical Equipment for the Armed Forces" until the year 2010.

The "methods" can be described separately - for example, in NATO's "Directive on the military-political planning guidance for the construction of the armed forces" in the respective US "Defense Planning Guidelines" document or documents in different countries with the common title "Defense White Paper". The methods and quantitative parameters of weaponry and military equipment (VVT) are described in the European doctrinal documents "Helsinki Master Plans and Tasks for the Construction of the Armed forces" and "Planned Quantitative Levels of Technical Equipment for the Armed forces up to 2010".

In some cases, such strategic documents are classified. And in other cases, their main points are published as in the US „Quadrennial Defense Review“. Sometimes the relevant information is included in broader strategy or in the „White Paper on Defense Planning“ as in France (Livre blanc sur la Defense). Sometimes all three elements ('goals', 'means', 'methods') are reflected in the structure of the same document as in the UK's doctrinal document "National Security Strategy and Strategic Review of Defense and Security Planning" (2015).

The "Programming" stage. The next step is to answer the questions:

- What should be the structure of the armed forces?
- What does the state lack for the proper implementation of the "Defense planning directive policy for the construction of the Armed Forces"?

The answers to these questions in turn form the next questions about the need of weaponry. What weaponry does the state have in abundance and what should be removed – (Removal is often a painful step that is rarely undertaken). What weapons and equipment should the state purchase? The answers to this question are at the heart of the "Armaments Development Plan". In the EU, such a document is the Capability Development Plan, in NATO the „Minimum Capabilities Requirements“, in the UK, the „Defense Equipment Plan“, and in the US it is simply called "Requirements".

The term capability used in foreign specialized documents is often difficult to understand and cannot always be translated because of the so-called false uniqueness. Capability can be defined as „available forces and means“. This term should not be confused with the term „capacity“, which in different program documents usually describes military equipment or weapon systems. The term capability is used extensively in the defense industry, especially in US military planning.

An important part of the US Department of Defense's planning is the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System which defines the procurement requirements and the criteria for the evaluation of future defense programs. The system is based on the Capability Based Analysis process, the importance of which is to identify the missing forces and resources. In essence, it is the Capability Gap Analysis mechanism - identifying the necessary forces and resources that do not yet exist.

One of the main focuses of the „Unified System for Integration and Development of Forces and Resources“ is on the choice of approach in problem solving related to the lack of operational capabilities. The solution may require the development of a physical system, procedure, or decision regarding combat training. In this sense, this procedure creates an opportunity for different problem-solving approaches, including a combination of factors related to doctrine, organization, combat training, material resources, candidate selection, staff and infrastructure.

This sub doctrine implies a method for conducting combat operations. Under the organization – warfare actions; under combat training - training in combat tactics; under material means - the necessary armament of the armed forces in the form of equipment and property. In the selection of candidates - the training of professionals for conducting combat operations; under staff - the availability of qualified personnel to conduct operations in peacetime, in wartime and in various emergencies; and finally, under infrastructure, real estate, sites, industrial enterprises (for example ammunition manufacturing plant) used to support the armed forces.

Under the organization of – organization of combat operations – under the training of – warfare tactics

Capability is thus the ability to achieve the desired effect in a particular operational environment. This effect can be achieved both through a military action, solution and through non-military means and operations. The above-mentioned effect is related to many factors known as "Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership and Education, Personnel and Infrastructure".

Military program distribution phase basically answers the question „who does what?“ mainly within the alliance. Should all member states of the alliance be responsible for creating their own weapons? In NATO this question is subject of the „Target Packages“ document. Should a state limit its share of armaments if any other state can't provide it? Should a country specialize in any weapon systems? The answer to the last question may mean the cancelation of weaponry to a state intended for military operations conducted only by the above-mentioned state.

Conversion stage includes three main elements.

First element - a budgetary strategy that determines the timing and extent of funding for the alleged purchase of weapons. Due to the inherent duration of the procurement order grant process this stage requires the preparation of the relevant documents in the form of multiannual budget programming.

The second element is the policy for public procurement assignation which solves the answers to the question what kind of materials can the state buy from the available ones on the market and what weaponry will the state create alone or with another state. In the latter case, the question arises whether this is a cooperation for example, in a European or a wider framework. During the development of which weapon systems will require the state to use advanced technologies and in which cases will the state work with existing ones on the basis of which well proven models of technology work?

The third element is the strategy for the development of defense research. Which technologies will the state choose to meet the requirements of the proposed weapons list? Is technology available? Which technological solutions are key to the state in terms of developing and purchasing weaponry?

As the procurement strategy is often closely intertwined with the research development strategy the „Common Weapons Plan“, (the term "Acquisition Strategy" is used in the profile documents of Western countries) to cover both strategies: procurement policy and research development strategy. One of these documents is „National Security through Technology - Technology, Weapons and Logistics for the UK Defense and Security“ (2012). Sometimes, in order to encourage investment or to make the general public aware (or in a reduced format for individual stakeholders), documents such as the „Critical Military Technology List“ are published in the United States.

Evaluation stage. The purpose of this stage is to evaluate the results, classify the positive and negative indicators and learn from the gained experience. The assessment can be performed by specialists from the military administration or an external audit company and often from both instances at once.

EU defense planning for the period 1998–2018

Let's follow the development of the defense planning process in the EU and the trends in the formation of its mechanisms.

Following the EU Summit in Saint-Malo (1998), EU Member States have taken a number of initiatives to “consistent formulation of a common policy in the field of defense under a common foreign security policy” with the purpose of giving the European Union „the ability for autonomous actions, backed by reliable armed forces, to decide on their use and their readiness to respond to international crises“. 1998 can be regarded as a starting point in the development of current trends in the formation of EU above national defense planning. In the following years, separate elements of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) planning emerge. By 2015, the documents contained in the defense planning system have been progressively developed. In 2015–2016, a complete set of doctrinal documents was formed to provide the “planning” stage or the process of planning the strategy. Documents covering all three stages of planning have been published: (1) global trends, (2) conclusions on military political leadership, and (3) the degree of ambition in planning the construction of the Armed Forces. The document „The EU in a changing international situation“ was published in 2015 and during 2016 the „EU Global Strategy“ and the „EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan“ followed. A description of these processes and relevant EU strategic documents are presented in fig. 1.

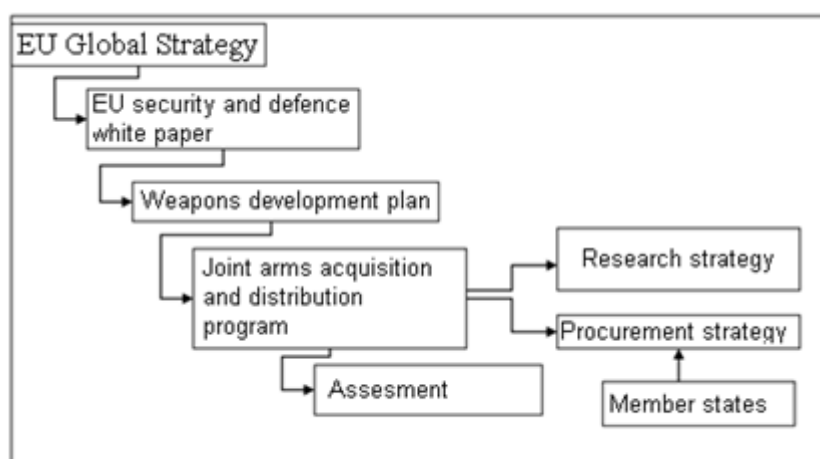


Figure 1: Outline of the European defense planning process.

Planning stages of the pan-European defense strategy

The basis of the new „EU Global Strategy“ and its consolation processes are found in the document „The European Union in a changing international environment: a more connected, contentious and complex world“. This document assesses the EU's security situation and its related threats. The profile document was prepared by an informal working group comprising representatives of the European Diplomatic Service, the European Commission, the Secretariat of the European Council and was presented to the European Council and the public in June 2015. The document „EU in a changing world environment“ among other documents is intended for the military-political leadership. Therefore, it partly goes beyond the characteristics of global trends and to some extent covers the next sub-stage, where the military and political leadership presents analytical conclusions.

In the system defining the principles of the European defense planning, a new document is placed, after the document that researches the global trends. This document formulates the principles of national security. In the EU, this document was formerly known as the "European Security Strategy" but since June 2016 it has been replaced by a new document called „The EU's Global Strategy on Foreign Policy and Security ". It sets quite ambitious goals and the main priority is to achieve "strategic autonomy". The EU Global Strategy sets out four major military tasks:

- Protection of EU values and EU way of life;
- Maintain stability in the EU environment;
- Preserving world order that guarantees peace, human rights and freedom of access;
- Maintaining the UN collective security.

Together all four tasks imply a significant increase in the responsibility burden on the armed forces of European countries. The following document, entitled " EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan" published six months after the „EU Global Strategy“, focuses on the concept of building up the armed forces. This document plays the role of the so-called "Defense Sub-Strategy" or "EU White Paper on Defense Planning".

The stated document establishes a new level of planning objectives for the construction of the armed forces and sets new military tasks. Unfortunately the document does not align the structure, composition, strength, weapon requierments and military equipment for these new military tasks and it does not specify the number and scale of requested operations that EU Member States' armed forces must be able to accomplish simultaneously, relying on the overall infrastructure (as required by the „strategic autonomy“).

The White Paper is also the basis for the conceptual understanding of the industrial component of „strategic autonomy“. Should the next European Defense Research Development Program, calculated for the period 2021-2027 be approved, no less than € 1.5 billion annually will be allocated to defense research. The EU „White Paper on Defense Planning“ and the resulting armaments priorities (which must be articulated in the new Armaments Development Plan) should become official guidelines for the use of these new investments so that they contribute directly to the achievement of the goal of strategic autonomy and the formation of the necessary military potential.

Programming stages of the European defense strategy

At this stage, a list of the required weaponry is created. Such a list is contained in the EU „Weaponry Development Plan” document published in 2008, 2010 and 2014. The Weaponry Development Plan sets out a list of weaponry requirements. The plan thus answers the question „what weapons does the state need to carry out military tasks?”

However, the current European „Weaponry Development Plan” suffers from significant drawbacks.

- It reflects the „bottom-up” approach on the interstate principle that Member States try to „push up” such small projects that they don't want to implement on a national level.
- It is not based on any important socio-political document that establishes the level of ambition regarding the construction planning of the armed forces.
- The military leadership (Military Headquarters and the EU Military Committee) has only nominally participated in the creation of this document. State headquarters are not sufficiently interested in the European „Weaponry Development Plan” and the range of actions of the EU Military Headquarters are too restricted.
- There is no proportionate distribution of military obligations between EU states.
- There is no mechanism for reviewing the CSDP planning process within the EU.

The EU “Global strategy implementation plan” mentions that the new “Weaponry Development Plan” will take into account and analyze industry issues that will affect the next stage of implementation namely “The Joint Weaponry Acquisition Plan”.

On 28 June 2018, the European Commission approved and classified a new “Weapons Development Plan”. The plan establishes a list of prioritised weaponry with the goal to link national and multinational measures to achieve “strategic autonomy”. These priorities can also be taken into account in the NATO “Defense Planning Process”. In the EU „Weaponry Development Plan” a proposal is made for the comparison of existing weaponry with a new level of ambition for planning and building the EU Armed Forces .

For the next phase a “Common Weaponry Purchase Plan” is being developed, which should determine what weaponry can be purchased from the market (taking into account the relations, price and quality) what should be created with own efforts and in that fields research should be conducted. Weapons responsibility can be shared between Member States the way it is done in NATO. Each stage of the defense planning policy is designed over a five-year period, which coincides with the parliamentary cycle and is approved after due consultation with the European Parliament (Tsanov, 2002; Tsanov, 2015; Tsanov, 2010).

Implementation stages of the pan – European defense planning.

- Budgetary strategy in the form of multi-annual budget planning;
- Purchase policy;
- Research development strategy.

To date, the EU has no joint budgetary strategy in the defense sector. According to the European Commission and the European Defense Agency, currently about 80% of defense purchases are made exclusively on a national basis. EU Member States themselves formulate defense budgets and public procurements as part of their state programs, while the EU can only help create the conditions for drawing up common budgetary plans and organizing unified public procurements whose ultimate goal is to form a single pan-European weaponry market. However, in order to characterize current trends related to the implementation phase of defense planning and procurement policies, some EU initiatives must also be taken into account.

The provisions of Article 296 (or according to the new heading 346) of the Treaty establishing the European Community allows for a significant part of defense purchases outside the rules of the EU internal market. In order to create a competitive pan-European weaponry market as a key factor in strengthening the pan-European military-technical and military-industrial base, the Member States of the European Defense Agency (EAO) have decided to create without prejudice to their rights and obligations under the Treaties , a voluntary and non-binding intergovernmental administration. This intergovernmental administration aims to promote competition in the defense procurement segment on a reciprocal basis among those affiliated to the administration. The intergovernmental administration was referred to as the 'Military Procurement Procedure

Set' and was approved in November 2005. The main tool for implementing the 'Procedural Set of Procedures' was the 'Electronic Bulletin', a pan-European competitive procurement portal. The portal contains tenders for the supply of defense products, services or work.

In June 2013, the EAO launched its own website a new section dedicated to capabilities and information in the field of defense. The "Auxiliary Defense Procurement Portal" is intended to ease the access of governments, industry and academic fields of all EU Member States to all the information corresponding with the Defense procurements on EU and national levels. The "Auxiliary Defense Procurement Portal" should combine information from various open sources and increase the availability and transparency of defense business information. The portal provides information on defense procurement opportunities published at EU level through the „Daily Electronic Auction" as well as other defense contract options published by national or European organizations and agencies, including the EAO. According to governments, the „Auxiliary Defense Procurement Portal" provides the opportunity to use new resources from the European Defense Agency such as e-QUIP and CODABA.

The Auxiliary Defense Procurement Portal also provides convenient access to EU Regulations on defense topics, lawsuits and infringement cases the EOA Procedural Measures Set, EOA procurement rules and regulations, online services support, national catalogs (including information on public procurement policies for individual countries), a sectoral directory (containing, inter alia, data on national and pan-European defense industry associations), as well as information on trainings and conferences. The „Auxiliary Defense Procurement Portal" contains a „Yellow Pages" section which serves the European defense industry as a platform to promote knowledge and experience.

In 2006, the European Commission published a Communication on the interpretation of the application of Art. 296 (346) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) with the State Defense Order. In 2009, the EU issued two directives (on military procurement activities and the movement of weapons within the EU), the main objective of which is to create a pan-European weaponry market. In 2014, three directives were issued regulating public procurements. There are also a large number of lawsuits that concern the European Commission, Member States, companies and deputies in relation with defense contracts and Art. 346 from TFEU. Amendments have been made to some defense procurement laws in the EU Member States themselves.

The European Defense Agency has launched a „Strategic Plan of Activities for Key Areas" which aims to promote investment in industry's competence, technology and production capacity, relying on relevant EU financial instruments. The task of the EOA in this case is to disclose such activities and to provide information to the European Commission on the subsequent use of pan-European mechanisms such as the European Defense Fund, the program for improvements in the competitiveness of small and medium-sized businesses and the European Structural and Investment Funds (Tsanov, 2002; Tsanov, 2015; Tsanov, 2010).

In order to support the defense sector's access to financial funds, an interactive „European Access to Finance" portal is in place. This mechanism contributes to the development of priority defense programs under the "Strategic Research Agenda", the „Strategic Action Plan for Key Areas" and the „Common Strategic Research Agenda", which also relates to the third sub-phase of the Strategy for the development of research "at the implementation stage for defense planning. All defense stakeholders receive the results of a comparative analysis of all funding aspects to compare each individual criterion individually, as well as a detailed analysis of funding sources for a detailed study of each specific financial opportunity within the EU.

It must be noted that specially developed by the EOA are „The Strategy for the Development of a Pan-European Military-Technical and Military-Industrial Base" (2007), a „Pan-European Strategy for Arms Cooperation" (2008); "Code of Conduct for Advanced Networking Practices" (2006), "Code of Good Practice for Offset Agreements" (2011) and "Set of Procedural Measures for Allocation and Sharing of Defense Resources" (2012). In this context, the attempts to optimize procurement policies within other Western organizations should be mentioned, including NATO the Western European Armaments Group (WEAG), the Organization for Cooperation in Weapons Development and Production (OCCAR), and the European Intergovernmental Project Restructuring the European Defense Industry „Letter of Intent: restructuring the European defense industry" (LoI-FA).

Overall, a considerable number of initiatives have been implemented as part of the sub-stage of public procurement. Nonetheless, the major drawbacks of such programs and projects today are that they are all voluntary and temporary and look like „patchwork". Against this background a notable example is the Common European Framework for the Integration of Military Cooperation. Although voluntary it already

implies permanent work and contributes to the transition from cooperation to integration. The mechanism was legally enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon (Article 46), but until recently it was not well-developed and had no legally enforced implementation algorithm. The EU Defense Ministers, meeting in Tallinn on 7 September 2017, reached an agreement on the common obligations that bind their countries and made a legal decision to start implementing cooperation in this area. On 11 December 2017, the European Council approved a decision establishing a „Pan-European Mechanism for the Integration of Military Cooperation“ with the participation of 25 EU Member States. As part of the implementation of the mechanism, 17 joint projects were approved. United Kingdom, Denmark and Malta refused to support the initiative. Denmark is not a member of the EOA, as an exception is provided for in the treaties of the European Union. Malta has taken a wait position because of the danger of violating its constitution (a neutrality clause). The UK plans to withdraw from the EU in 2019.

Third sub-stage - strategy for the development of defense research. The EU has been actively developing this field for a long time. In 2008 the EOA published a European „Strategy for the Development of the Scientific and Technical Reserve“. In April 2008, Germany and France launched an initiative for the creation of a single pan-European portal for European Defense Research Centers. On the basis of common interests, EU Member States agreed to support a project that would give an overall picture of the available defense technologies, and decided to create an appropriate database that promotes the interaction of national defense research centers and promotes increased awareness of scientific competences in Europe. The main priorities underpinning the concept of defense research centers (R&D activities) are finding and showing on the map data on the distribution of technological competences in Europe, promoting and establishing links and cooperation between different research centers (national research centers). institutes, academic institutions, small and medium business and industry). The collection of information on military research institutes and their competences is also in line with the overall objective set at European level in the civilian science sector under the „European Research area“. Its priorities are to promote awareness in the scientific and technical fields, the interaction of the research network and the mobility of scientists. The systematization of such information is also in line with the Europe 2020 economic strategy, helping to raise awareness of technological developments and innovations, thereby ensuring closer interaction with the consumer and proximity to the market.

In 2008-2014 „Captech/SRA“ is created - a network of science and technology groups developing technology roadmaps based on "Strategic Research Programs" to meet the future national arms requirements set out in the Weapons Development Plan.

As the major drawback of the European Defense Agency is the so-called „bottom-up“ approach or the interstate approach, during the presidency of Jean-Claude Juncker (2014-2019) the European Commission is making every effort to promote the „top-down approach“, also known as the supranational approach or the combination of these two approaches. For example launching a “Key area strategic planning” which is also intended to develop European priority technologies identified under the Common Strategic Research Agenda and the Weapons Development Plan.

On 30 November 2016 the European Commission initiated the European Defense Action Plan, which includes:

- Creation of an EU defense fund;
- Stimulating investments in small and medium-sized enterprises start-ups and other suppliers through the efforts of the European structural and Investment funds and the European Investment Bank;
- Ensure effective use of the EU directives on military procurements and the movement of weapons within the EU (with a view to create European weaponry market).

We can also refer to the European Defense Fund. Its activity is focused in two directions. The **first** is related to research. For the first time since 2017 the EU has been offering joint research grants in the development of defense products and technologies which are fully and directly funded by the EU budget (previously the European Defense Agency promotes cooperation between Member States in projects implemented with its own funds). It is suggested that such studies will be funded with the following packages of programs:

- Preparation plan for defense research development with a budget of 90 million euro until 2019;
- The European defense research program with an annual budget of 500 million euro proposed by the EU commission in 2018 in the subsequent Multiannual Financial Development program for 2021-2027.

These measures can make the EU one of the largest investors in defense research in Europe.

The second direction of the European Defense Fund is related to the production and purchase of weapons. In this case the EU proposes a co-financing mechanism under which 500 million-euro have been allocated for 2019 and 2020. After 2020 the planned "European Defense Industry Development Program" is foreseen to be allocated 1 billion EUR annually. The creation of unified types of equipment will have to be financed by combining the contributions of the Member States that decide to participate in the program. The European Commission has set itself an indicative target of reaching 5 billion EUR annually in defense development beyond 2020. This corresponds to 2.5% of the EU's total national defense spending and 14% of national expenses for defense and R&D.

In order to initiate the European defense procurement programs by 2023-2025 it is proposed to adopt a „European Defense Industry Development Program“ which includes co-financing by the EU and its Member States under Art. 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Specialized structures for the implementation of military programs may be organized by the EOA (which discusses the granting of considerable authority to the agency and allocating appropriate funding) or the Organization for Co-operation and Production of Arms (OCCAR).

The EU's budget for research and development of weaponry and military equipment amounting to 1.5 billion-euro a year (including national funding - 5 billion-euro a year) for the post-2020 period is relatively large. By comparison, since its inception in 2004 the EOA, together with all Member States of the European Union has organized and implemented 160 research programs for 2015. With the total worth of all programs being 600 million EUR. Germany spent 846 million euros in defense research and development in 2014, France 3.56 billion euros, the United Kingdom 3.75 billion euros.

Evaluation stage of the European defense planning

The goal of this last stage is to evaluate the results, classify the positive and negative factors and learn from the gained experience. In the process of European defense planning the evaluation phase is devoted to the document entitled "Coordinated Annual Defense Review". The „EU Global Strategy“ requires a gradual synchronization and joint adaptation of national defense planning cycles and weapons development practices. In this regard, Member States have invited the Head of the EOA to present a proposal for a framework, mechanism and content of a „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“ This document aims to promote the development of weapon systems, to eliminate gaps in their nomenclature, to deepen defense cooperation and to ensure coordination and optimization of defense spending plans.

The „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“ was prepared by the EOA in cooperation with the European Diplomatic Service. This document has been discussed in the EU Military Committee by the Member State's defense policy officials, officers responsible for the development of military capabilities, national arms directors as well as in several working bodies of the European Council and the EU Military Committee. On 18 May 2017, the European Council approved the procedure for drawing up a „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“. Member States were offered a transition, during the transitional period, to test, adapt and approve the methodology for the review before its first full issue in fall 2019. The first pilot „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“ was presented on November 2018.

In the „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“, Member States provide up-to-date and detailed information on defense plans (including spending plans) and the implementation of EU arms development priorities stemming from the Weapons Development Plan. The European Defense Agency plays the role of the secretariat for the „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“.

As a rule EU Member States establish their national defense planning. In some cases this complicates the European defense planning due to excessive or duplicate priority spendings, weaponry development plans, procurement decisions and budgetary deadlines. The „Coordinated Annual Defense Review“ aims to provide initial and subsequent evaluation of national defense plans, taking into account the cooperation options that can be identified through a joint evaluation of national defense plans. The „Annual Coordinated Defense Review“ makes it possible to jointly set priorities for the development of weapons and defense research. This approach plays an important role in the process of developing a new weapons development plan (Terziev, Bankov, Georgiev, 2018b-c).

The EU's defense component continues to evolve. Over the last 25 years two major events that have had a significant impact on the development of the Common European Defense Policy have been:

- Joint statement on the results from the France-UK Summit in Saint-Malo on 4 December 1998. In the summit, the British government in the face of T.Blair expresses its desire to move close to France's position on the European defense policy. Thus allowing the formation of its own armed forces outside NATO;

- The global financial crisis (since 2008), the refugee crisis (caused by instabilities in Africa and the Middle East) and the growing terrorist threat. These events, combined with the statements by US president D. Trump that Europe should take responsibility for the security of the European continent (it should be noted that such statements were made earlier by other US administrations) and that NATO should be more involved in combating terrorism. These events urged European leaders to reconsider the need of the EU defense policy.

EU citizens themselves make certain demands for change, as they are unhappy that the European Union is unable to protect them in the current fragile situation. Not only the „strategic autonomy“ of Europe but also probably the future of the whole European project depends on resolving this issue (Terziev, Bankov, Georgiev, 2018b-c).

3. CONCLUSION

The EU's defense component continues to evolve. With the advent of Jean-Claude Juncker as the President of the European Commission defense was identified as a priority area for the EU. Despite the differences in the strategic cultures of the EU Member States the European Commission is trying to formulate a joint defense policy and thus apply a so-called 'top-down' or 'supranational' approach.

Overall in 2014–2017 while also accounting for the transformations in (2018–2019), the EU forms a complete cycle of the defense planning process that can be integrated into the assets of both the EU as a whole and the individual Member States. The integration of national priorities pursued by the European Union in planning guidelines for the deployment of the armed forces is more productive than NATO's efforts in this direction. At the same time, the continued principle of voluntary participation (not only in defense research but also in other fields) does not always have a positive impact on the effectiveness of efforts to consolidate EU defense policy.

Relative uncertainty is inevitable, since the allocation of most of the resources which could be used for foreign policy activities is controlled by the Member States and is subject to their own national security policy. This does not preclude Member States' voluntary implementation of the EU Global Strategy and the fact that the strategy will contribute to the integration of national and European defense plans. At the same time, there is always a risk that failure to comply with such plans will affect the implementation of the EU Global Strategy. The White Paper on the Future of Europe was published on 1 March 2017 and the Concept for a Future European Defense was published on 7 June the same year. These documents set out the parameters for a discussion on the future development of the EU (beyond 2025-2030) and scenarios for the development of European defense. The documents do not discuss those unfavorable scenarios where the development of cooperation is stalled or delayed. In this regard, EU Member States will have to address many more issues and face different challenges.

All this can be a good test of the political will of the EU Member States to reinforce the cooperation in the area of defense. Despite the existence of uncertainty, progress has been made in this area in recent years. The European Commission has clearly identified defense as a priority for the EU and is leading this process with the support of the European Council. All of this in itself is not a guarantee for success, but it does create opportunities for the development of a pan-European defense system (Terziev, Petkov, Krastev, 2018d-m).

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