

EUROPEAN MILITARY MOBILITY – IMPLICATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTEGRATED DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT –

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DOI: 10.55535/RMT.2023.4.23

The European Union's decision to deepen and develop the military mobility from a logistical and organisational point of view represents a logical step in its natural evolution. The implementation of the EU Action Plan on Military Mobility, presented by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in 2018, represents a main act in achieving the generic purpose of the European Union, i.e., a European Defence Union.

This article aims to highlight these military mobility measures proposed to be implemented, but also to emphasise the outcome from the integrated management of defence resources point of view.

This article will try to link the causes to the results concerning the implementation of European military mobility. A synthetic documentary analysis, taken mainly from a qualitative point of view and with an additional quantitative support, will try to highlight the causal element and the effects on European military mobility related to the integrated management of defence resources. The research hypothesis is related to the utility of measures taken for the development and operationalisation of European military mobility in relation to the actual impact on defence resource management, respectively the coherence of defence planning in member states and resource optimisation.

Keywords: military mobility; projects; networks; transport; resources;

INTRODUCTION

The current approach of the European Union in terms of developing and streamlining processes that include or have as a basic element or support military mobility links the types of visions generated in the recent past with the present marked by the new geopolitical, geostrategic and security challenges.

A true European Defence Union, “a Europe that protects, a Europe that empowers, a Europe that defends” (Jean-Claude Juncker, 2017, p. 1), is based on and must “exploit civilian/military synergies to expedite military mobility – both within our borders” (Commission, 2017, p. 2). For example, as concluded by the European Commission in the *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the Action Plan on Military Mobility*, transport infrastructure “has traditionally been a necessary component of any defence system, providing in particular routes for military supplies and troop movement” (Commission, 2017, p. 3).

If the idea of mobility promoted by the European Union, prior to the aggression of the Russian Federation on Ukraine, had as its starting point the Global Strategy of the European Union (EEAS, 2016) and was focused, at that time, on a mix between civilian and military elements without a clear individualisation, in order to achieve generic objectives, today we talk and refer to well-determined elements of European military mobility established and assumed as such. The turning point was, in this matter, obviously, the coming into force of the Strategic Compass in 2022 (Council of the EU, 2022), a fundamental programmatic document in the projection of the European Union as a global actor in security and defence.

Moreover, the integrated elements that have been adopted and which, through the documentary analysis, will be analysed below, generate and design the concrete steps taken by the European Union (EU) in achieving the global goal assumed by the Maastricht Treaty, namely the creation of a European identity in defence and security matters (Member States, 1992, p. 105) and, in time, of a genuine common defence (Banu, 2022, p. 9).

Highlighting the effects and implications on defence resources management of the new European policy on military mobility is an equally important element of analysis on which it will be deepened.

EUROPEAN MILITARY MOBILITY – A BRIEF LOOK BACK

Military mobility – a new direction of action for the European Union

❖ Based on *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the Action Plan on Military Mobility* (Commission, 2017) conceptualisation and terminological identification of the term military mobility in the European Union, hereinafter referred to as European military mobility, represented the step taken by the EU in dealing with the topic and the phenomenon of mobility in its own right.

The document referred to above contains two separate elements, policy elements, but also strict measures to implement this policy: *the EU Action Plan on Military Mobility* and the convergent measures in order to achieve the goals set out in that communication.

The regulatory layers of the document concern:

- identification of the current situation;
- vulnerabilities and related risks;
- proposals to improve military mobility, seen through the prism of hybrid threats.

The starting point in the Commission's vision at that time was a "*common understanding of needs and requirements*" (Commission, 2017, p. 5), converted into actions targeting at least certain areas (eur-lex.europa) considered essential for successful implementation of measures.

The generic purpose of the communication, but also of the administrative procedural measures envisaged, was to generate a normative-administrative-procedural framework that would allow an easy, fast, and efficient movement in the European Union without difficulties or physical, legal or administrative-procedural barriers, travel to benefit military personnel and equipment related to the execution of ordered missions.

Basically, the European Commission aimed to generate a joint integrated effort on the line of committing resources for defence, an effort that would be sustainable from a procedural and normative point of view, laying the foundations for a framework for the effective implementation of the elements of European military mobility identified or identifiable along the way.

The heterogeneous elements in the development of the transport infrastructure of member states need to be approached as analysis and understanding in a unitary manner, in relation to the dual use of infrastructure, the military requirements being different and having a special specificity from the civilian ones.

Focusing on the assessment of existing road, rail, air or sea infrastructure, the Commission proposes, as a start, to identify the drivers of deficiencies in the integrated approach to infrastructure, with a view to gradually improving and eliminating these shortcomings, through legislative, procedural measures and financial instruments to aid implementation.

The Commission exemplifies the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the possibility of using it also for military purposes. The TEN-T analysis should note the opportunities for use, but also the overlapping elements or gaps identified in the implementation and development of the project, given that the Trans-European Transport Network was conceived, from the beginning, as a multimodal infrastructure for civil use.

The Commission's effective proposal as a procedural and legislative element to achieve the specific objective was for "*the EU to develop an infrastructural standard that integrates the military profile for multimodal transport*" (Commission, lb., p. 6), a standard that addresses current and future EU infrastructure investments and that, through the dual-use approach, supports European military mobility.

On the other hand, the Commission proposed strict procedural measures in customs and dangerous goods legislation, with facilities for military vehicles and equipment transiting through the EU to be harmonised with civilian ones already existing or to be applied. As regards uniformity in order to use a single procedure relating to military mobility on the territory of the member states, the European Defence Agency is given as an example to provide the necessary experience for the development of such a procedure, taking into account the projects already carried out.

In the event of an emergency in the Baltic states, allied forces would have to cross the Suwalki breach – a strip of land about 60 km wide and stretching for about 100 km along the Lithuanian-Polish border between pro-Russian Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. The corridor could become a choke point for Western forces and cross NATO's land supply axis to the Baltics (Ikram Aboutaous et al, 2021).

At the same time, the Commission considered the need to continue taking measures to counter hybrid threats to European critical transport infrastructures and increase resilience, as well as to continue working and coordinating with NATO to streamline, facilitate and increase the dynamics of military mobility in the European Union.

To follow up on the elements proposed in the Communication, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security together with the European Commission have undertaken to present an Action Plan on European Military Mobility for approval by member states, with the aim of formulating recommendations on actions, actors and deadlines in increasing efforts to improve European military mobility¹.

Basically, the European Commission aimed to generate a joint integrated effort on the line of committing resources for defence, an effort that would be sustainable from a procedural and normative point of view. The Commission laid the foundations of the framework necessary for the effective implementation of the elements of the European military mobility identified or identifiable along the way.

The Commission's causal approach aimed to generate an impact in defence planning in member states along the lines of an integrated infrastructure management. The military mobility is being viewed at an integrated level projecting changes and developments from planning, allocation, and use of resources to developing member states' capabilities and capabilities.

¹ "This plan will build upon the results of the European Defence Agency's Ad Hoc Working Group on Military Mobility and will propose recommended actions, implementing actors and ambitious timelines on how to address identified barriers hampering military mobility within the European Union" – Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017JC0041>, p. 8, retrieved on 8 September 2023.

❖ Presented in March 2018, *The Action Plan on Military Mobility*² set out a number of guiding principles to be used in its effective implementation and better and efficient coordination and reinforcement between member states.

All parties involved acknowledged and concluded that increased military mobility, within and beyond member states' borders, streamlines the deployment and exploitation of resources and generates additional stability and security at EU level.

Moreover, the close cooperation of all relevant actors within member states, public or private, military or civilian ones, is the cornerstone of the implementation of the Action Plan.

On the other hand, the Commission drew attention to the need for much closer cooperation with NATO in the field of military mobility in order to develop a common vision and pragmatic and unitary approach to the challenges and obstacles identified, legal, administrative or fiscal issues being equally challenges identified as elements of actual infrastructure or technical or operational nature.

In other words, for example, understanding the administrative-territorial organisation of all states involved can be as important as fully identifying and mapping landforms. Similarly, national legislation may pose challenges as significant as different track gauges or the impact of climate change in certain geographical areas.

The Commission concluded the need for cooperation with NATO to find common solutions to overcome these challenges, respecting the security policy of each member state involved, in conditions of transparency and equidistance. Practically, the Commission's conclusions converged towards identifying all the necessary resorts to fulfil the generic purpose of collaboration with NATO, respecting certain pre-mentioned principles.

The 2018 Action Plan was based on *the Roadmap for Military Mobility* developed by the ad hoc Working Group established within the European Defence Agency by Steering Board decision of September 2017 (EDA, 2017, p. 3).

The ad hoc Working Party addressed the topic of military mobility in Europe, in particular to identify obstacles to cross-border movement and surface transit of military personnel and capabilities across the European Union, to map existing initiatives and shortcomings and to identify relevant actors within EU and at national level (Ib.).

² Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the Action Plan on Military Mobility, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018JC0005>, retrieved on 8 September 2023.

The roadmap prepared by the Ad hoc Working Group identified and outlined:

- tasks,
- responsibilities,
- ambitious timetables for improving military mobility,
- legal aspects,
- customs,
- specific military requirements,
- updating military standards related to infrastructure,
- identification of measures allowing cross-border movement, including related diplomatic authorisations (eda.europa.eu).

The implementation of the Plan will generate among member states the possibility to act faster both in the context of missions and operations carried out under the Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as national and multinational activities (Commission, 2018, p. 2).

More than listing forms, aims or principles, the 2018 Action Plan has proven to contain effective measures and clear steps to follow in areas such as transport of dangerous goods, customs duties and VAT, or cross-border travel permissions.

The Commission recommended to member states measures to revise the relevant national legislation, outline the operational requirements specific to each area, but also the existing restrictions and motivate them from a political point of view, possibilities to adapt regulations and sign agreements to harmonise procedures and rules to facilitate the implementation of measures in order to substantially improve European military mobility (Commission, 2018, p. 9).

Such a complex measure envisaged optimising and interrelating member states in terms of adjusting operational capabilities and increasing pooled capabilities in the field of defence resources. A sharing of existing infrastructure, whether civilian or military, an increase in its capabilities would generate the effects predicted by the Commission in terms of improving European military mobility, and this is already happening within the framework of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

European military mobility, a project within the Permanent Structured Cooperation

The natural step in the development of military mobility projects was the initiative of military mobility projects within the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

The establishment of this European framework for cooperation by Articles 42 (6) and 46 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Protocol No. 10 to the TFEU on permanent structured cooperation respectively enabled the adoption of EU Council Decision 2017/2315 establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and adopting the list of participating member states (Council of the EU, 2017).

Examples of the direct applicability and application of the 2018 Action Plan translated into cooperation projects under the PESCO umbrella can be provided by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany Direct initiatives to which reference can be made are the project:

- “Military mobility”, coordinated by the Netherlands,
- “Network of logistics centres in Europe and support for operations” project whose framework nation is the Federal Republic of Germany.

Denmark has been applying the Common Defence and Security Policy since 2022 by abandoning the opt-out clause agreed by the Maastricht Treaty (EU Information Centre - Danish Parliament, 2022).

Under the coordination of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, all member countries of the European Union are participating in this project, except Ireland, Malta and the Kingdom of Denmark, a country that started to be part to the Common Defence and Security Policy in 2022 by giving up the opt-out clause agreed by the Maastricht Treaty.

Moreover, between 2021 and 2022, Norway (Council of the EU, 2021a), Canada (Council of the EU, 2021b), the United States (Council of the EU, 2021c) and the United Kingdom (Council of the EU, 2021b), (Council of the EU, 2021c) joined (Council of the EU, 2022) military mobility cooperation programme.

The stated aim of the project is to support member states’ commitment to finding ways to simplify and standardise cross-border military transport procedures, aiming to enable the unhindered movement of military personnel and goods within EU borders, by road, sea, rail or air, without lengthy bureaucratic procedures (www.pesco.europa.eu-1).

The second project “Network of logistics hubs in Europe and support to operations” has as its main vision Germany’s idea to improve military mobility by eliminating existing infrastructure deficiencies (railways, roads, bridges) and speeding up the administrative and regulatory procedures needed to move military assets. This translates into creating “a multinational network based on existing

logistic capabilities and infrastructure. The goal is to use a network of existing logistic installations for MN business to prepare equipment for operations, to commonly use depot space for spare parts or ammunition and to harmonise transport and deployment activities” (www.pesco.europa.eu-2).

The generic purpose is to pool resources and capacities, concentrated in specific areas, in the form of logistics hubs. These resources and capacities such as warehouses, equipment maintenance facilities, etc. will be shared by Member States. The implementation of these logistics hubs as an interconnecting element of member states is based on the use of the multimodal transport network within the European Union.

Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Netherlands joined this project coordinated by the Federal Republic of Germany.

The advantages of such projects envisage better coordination in resource allocation planning, predictability, forecasting and development of military capacities and capabilities needed for the execution of missions requiring cross-border military mobility within the EU and beyond.

The establishment of those logistics hubs, in an integrated format, facilitates a return on the financial resources needed to be committed, a coordinated investment planning as well as an efficient management of the defence infrastructure of each member state.

Evaluating the two PESCO projects in terms of European military mobility, the first serves as a political-strategic platform for simplifying and standardising cross-border military transport procedures, while the second targets a multinational network based on existing logistical capabilities and infrastructure to reduce reaction time and increase the capabilities and sustainability of military operations across Europe (Hadeed & Sus 2023, p. 157).

ACTION PLAN ON MILITARY MOBILITY 2.0 – NOVELTY ELEMENTS AND EFFECTS ON INTEGRATED DEFENCE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Action plan on military mobility 2.0 – short presentation

The political-socio-economic developments at European level, namely the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, determined the European Commission to accelerate the process of implementing integration measures into the European military mobility project. The geopolitical situation is providing the Union the current need to take precise and directly targeted measures on key areas in order to achieve the objective. The EU is updating and rethinking the strategic vision on military mobility, a key area in the defence and security domain of the entire European Union and beyond.

The coming into force, in 2022, of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence as a “*programmatic document and, at the same time, a vision through which the EU stages its capacity to be a relevant actor at geostrategic level*” (Bangală, 2023, p. 4) was the decisive step in approaching military mobility as a main element in building the new conceptual framework in security and defence. Also this approach will allow the EU to achieve the already established goal – the horizontally construction of a strategic autonomy that will enable the Union to reduce dependence on other external actors (Anghel et al, 2020, p. 2).

The proposal of the “*Action plan on military mobility 2.0*” in November 2022 represents for the European Commission “*the next chapter of work on military mobility for the period 2022-2026. Enlarged in scope and proposing additional measures, it will contribute to a well-connected military mobility network, with shorter reaction times and capable, secure, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure and capabilities*” (European Commission, 2022, p. 1).

Topic	Budget (EUR) - Year : 2023	Stages	Opening date	Deadline	Contributions	Indicative number of grants
CEF-T-2023-MILMOB-WORKS - CEF-INFRA CEF Infrastructure Projects	790 000 000	single-stage	03 May 2023	21 September 2023		

Figure 1: Budget overview

Taking into account the foundations for the development of European military mobility, the Commission notes that the Council of the EU has already adopted requirements for military mobility within and outside the EU, including technical specifications and main military routes (European Commission, 2021) and there are

budgetary allocations of over €2.8 billion for dual-use infrastructure projects under the programme *Connecting Europe Facility* (CEF) carried out between 2021-2027 (European Council, 2020. p. 20).

At the same time, strictly for projects related to military mobility, an amount of EUR 1.69 billion is allocated under the CEF 2.0 – Transport section (www.eumonitor.nl), carried out between 2021-2027. For 2023 alone, the European Commission has made available EUR 790,000,000 for projects aimed at military mobility at EU level (ec.europa.eu).

On the other hand, the Commission recalls that transport infrastructure requirements applicable to certain categories of dual-use infrastructure actions under the CEF have already been adopted (Commission Implementing Regulation EU, 2021, pp. 37-47), customs procedures have been simplified and cross-border transport has been optimised, and member states have proposed collaborative projects in the field of military mobility under PESCO.

The Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 has a strategic approach condensed into a definition that is intended to be comprehensive and quasi-comprehensive in terms of its generic purpose: the Action Plan is *“a comprehensive framework to enhance military mobility. It proposes further actions to enable the swift, efficient, and unimpeded movement of potentially large-scale forces, including military personnel and their equipment, both in the context of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as for national and multinational activities, notably in the framework of NATO”* (defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu).

Basically, the strategic approach aims to optimise a network for military mobility containing multimodal transport corridors, nodes and logistic centres that provide support and facilitate the deployment of troops and related equipment, that is governed by harmonised, optimised and administratively digitised rules and procedures, and that is individualised and characterised by sustainability, resilience and readiness to optimise civilian and military logistical capabilities, elements of utmost importance in military operations without which they cannot be carried out and sustained (Ib., pp. 2-3).

Action plan on military mobility 2.0 – Guidelines in strategic approach

The guidelines of the strategic approach of the document are outlined and developed in the 4 pillars identified by that document:

- multimodal corridors and logistics hubs,
- regulatory support measures,
- resilience and preparedness,
- partnership policy (Ib., p. 3).

❖ Multimodal corridors and support hubs aim to use transport routes and connect logistics hubs in order to enable the deployment and transit of troops and equipment in a short period of time. This implies a development of existing transport routes, in order to transform them into genuine dual-use transport routes, the construction of new ones, as well as the arrangement or redevelopment of logistics hubs in predetermined directions.

The Commission proposed to revise the 2013 TEN-T Regulation by extending core network corridors to Western Balkan partners by including additional road and rail sections on the existing geographical network to reduce gaps with the military network.

*Aim: - maximising synergies between the use of existing infrastructure by the civilian and military sectors;
- raising more technical standards for TEN-T infrastructure, a measure with direct benefits in troop movements and military materiel (European Commission, 2022, p. 4).*

In particular, the Commission recalled the importance of the current TEN-T network established in 2013. Reiterating that in 2019 the European External Action Service (EEAS) carried out an analysis to compare TEN-T and the EU military network, balancing military requirements for transport infrastructure with technical requirements for TEN-T transport infrastructure, the Commission highlighted the outcome of this analysis which concluded that the military network of Member States and TEN-T, overlapped by 93%. This means that transport infrastructure investments on the trans-European network directly improve military mobility, with the objective of a centralised network by 2030 (European Commission, 2022, p. 3).

On 27 July 2022, the Commission adopted the *“Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013”*, an updated proposal on the TEN-T network to reflect the new geopolitical context following the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine. Basically, the European Union envisages a concrete element *“an immediate response to the requested action communicated in the “Solidarity Lanes” Communication, an extension of four European Transport Corridors to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova is proposed, based on the indicative maps of the core network in these two countries. This regards notably an extension*

*of the North-Sea Baltic Corridor via Lviv and Kyiv to Mariupol, the extension of the Baltic-Black-Aegean Sea Corridor to Odessa via Lviv and via Chişinău as well as an extension of the Baltic Sea-Adriatic Sea and the Rhine-Danube Corridors to Lviv*³.

Member states' actions on this pillar are expressly mentioned by the Commission, inviting them to maintain and develop a network of national contact points for military mobility, to develop and submit proposals for dual-use infrastructure projects, to contribute to updating military requirements for military mobility within and outside the EU. Member states are also required to submit to the Commission and the EEAS, by mid-2023, their national assessments of the capacity of physical networks to meet infrastructure requirements identified in military requirements, and before the end of 2023 to identify synergies on energy efficiency in their national strategies for preparing their armed forces for climate change, as requested in the Strategic Compass (European Commission, 2022, p. 8).

❖ The regulatory support, the second pillar of the Action Plan, has as defining elements the need to harmonise procedures for further facilitating military mobility, respecting two fundamental principles, territorial sovereignty, and decision-making independence.

The components of the Pillar relate to facilitating cross-border transit, harmonising legislation from a customs point of view, digitalising administrative processes and developing the necessary logistics.

With the help of the European Defence Agency, in 2019 member states (except Ireland and Denmark) managed to implement the *Optimising cross-border movement permission procedures in Europe (CBMP)* programme to harmonise and simplify cross-border movement procedures, addressing both regulatory and procedural aspects, and to develop solutions optimised without generating additional administrative burden (eda.europa.eu-1). In 2020, Norway joined that programme coordinated by the European Defence Agency. The CBMP programme serves as the framework programme for the implementation of two technical arrangements (TAs), signed in 2021, for border crossing permits: one for land and one for air (Ib.).

Regarding the harmonisation of customs legislation, under the aegis of the same European Defence Agency, in May 2021, 23 member states and Norway signed the *“Harmonisation military requirements related to customs”* agreement aimed at *“the digitalisation of military customs related activities”* (eda.europa.eu-2) and making available the resulting dataset for exchange with civilian customs authorities.

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ec755361-0dbf-11ed-b11c-01aa75ed71a1.0001.01/DOC_1&format=PDF, p. 2, retrieved on 14 September 2023.

The steps taken towards achieving the objectives of this pillar consisted in the creation, in 2021, of a consortium of companies from Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Luxembourg and Norway, which, by 2025, with funding from the European Defence Fund, will develop a digital data and information exchange system, in a secure regime, specific and necessary for military mobility.

“Additive Manufacturing, as a key technology, contributes to both sustainability and industrial competitiveness. Finally, reducing the logistical footprint – such as the required (re)-supply, maintenance, and other logistics required when moving a military unit and/or materiel – would free up capacities and resources, and thus make military movements more efficient and faster” (European Commission, 2022, p. 10).

Concerning the development of the necessary logistics, it should be noted, as the Commission has also noted, that the logistical systems and processes of the Member States are heterogeneous, a uniformity and harmonisation of them being necessary, to build a coordinated system of response to the needs and implications of the military mobility of the member states and beyond. Therefore, the European Defence Agency proposed and supported member states in finding solutions for implementing common standards in the field, in accordance with the Capability Development Plan (CDP) constantly promoted and updated⁴ by the Agency.

Also, the implementation of common standards for Additive Manufacturing (AM)⁵, for example, for the military field can generate added value by ensuring, in a very short time, a rapid military mobility optimizing the supply of standardized and fully compatible spare parts in the logistics supply chain.

❖ In relation to resilience and preparedness, military mobility networks must always be prepared to face hybrid threats, cyber threats, but also be resilient and prepared to face climate change (global warming generates an obvious impact on rail, road, air or sea transport networks of transport hubs and supply hubs).

⁴ *“The purpose of the periodic CDP revision, a key tasking of the Agency, is to provide a full capability picture that supports decision-making at EU and national levels regarding defence capability development.”*, <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/capability-development-plan>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.

⁵ *“Additive manufacturing (AM) is the name of the industrial 3D printing process, a computer-controlled process that creates three-dimensional objects by depositing materials, usually in layers”*, <https://www.twi-global.com/locations/romania/ce-facem/intrebari-frecvente-faq/ce-este-fabricatia-aditiva-additive-manufacturing>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.

How will these elements of resilience be achieved? The Commission is proposing a holistic approach to mapping logistical gaps and weaknesses with reference to land, sea or air capabilities needed to be covered to optimise the large-scale movement of troops or equipment. In this respect, the Commission gives as an example, as an element of good practice, the PESCO project “*Strategic Air Transport for Outsized Cargo (SATOC)*”⁶ to improve European Strategic Air Transport Capabilities in the critical area of oversized or specialised cargo. For 2023, this project has a budget of 157,000,000 Euros (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/edf-2023-ra-protmob-satoc>).

This requirement comes from observing the inability of civilian structures to meet military requirements, the use of the first-come-first-served concept being the basis for the operation of civilian networks. In order to overcome these problems and improve military mobility at European level, the Commission discussed identifying those measures to prioritise and optimise the civilian response to military needs.

At the same time, the Commission proposes to identify urgent measures to facilitate priority access to transport, infrastructure, capabilities in full respect of EU member states’ sovereignty over their national territory and decision-making processes on military movements.

To maintain the high level of preparedness, the Commission proposes to carry out exercises in this area, based on a well-established plan, and calls for an increase in the level of protection against transport security risks.

Basically, the resilience to physical destruction of transport networks, cyber threats, including those related to air, rail or maritime traffic control), container terminal management systems, control systems for locks, bridges, tunnels, etc., is the generic objective, and the measures taken or proposed must be circumscribed to the resilience of critical entities – Directive on the resilience of critical entities COM (2020) 829⁷ - NIS2 Directive, entered into force in January 2023.

The Commission is also considering solutions for military mobility to benefit from the development of space programmes. Thus, the European satellite-based

⁶ *The overall goal of the Strategic Air Transport for Outsized Cargo (SATOC) project is to fill the critical deficit by developing, in a gradual 3-step approach, a European solution for the transport of large and heavy cargo* – <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/project/strategic-air-transport-for-outsized-cargo-satoc/>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0829>, retrieved on 15 September 2023.

navigation programme (Galileo/EGNOS) or the Copernicus observation programme are solutions identified as potentially generating data and information to optimise military mobility. Moreover, the Commission refers to the Public Regulated Service (PRS), the Galileo navigation service relevant for governmental applications and to the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) with utility and applicability in logistics and transport operations.

In terms of partnership dimension, EU-NATO relations remain the main element of cooperation and development in the field of military mobility, the technical requirements of the two partners being overlapped, due to close and efficient collaboration, in a percentage of 95%. A coherent and partnership approach to military mobility may lead to an overcoming of procedural, technical, or administrative obstacles or barriers, for the benefit of both entities by strengthening resilience and the possibility of participating in military mobility exercises.

In the same vein, the Commission encourages member states and refers to strengthening the relationship with other partners, the US, UK, Canada, or Norway being already partner states in various projects related to military mobility.

The main aspects to be highlighted in the evolution of European military mobility envisage on the one hand, the **identification of needs** in order to optimise the planning process and execution of military operations, in the process of facilitating the mobility of military equipment and personnel of the member states and on the other hand, **a realistic determination of the capacities** available to carry out this process. The European Commission has created the normative and administrative framework to develop this crucial field in the generic ensemble of European defence, but in our opinion, member states need a more pronounced involvement (punctual or generic) in order not only to assume military mobility projects, but also to their effective implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

The way of understanding and implementing a set of measures to generate a new, better outlined, pragmatic and efficient approach to military mobility on the European continent represents, nowadays, in our opinion, not only a *desideratum* to be achieved in shaping another level of European security, but also a form of deep integration of the member states into the European project.

Military mobility is part of the set of instruments that might generate major changes in the approach to defence resources, from planning and logistical support to the implementation and effective conduct of military operations, the measures taken or in full implementation process being decisive in approaching each member state.

Practically, this entire process of adapting and resizing resources for defence must, on one hand, be correlated through the procedural-technical-administrative measures that have been presented synthetically in the present research, and on the other hand, it must be verified in practice, through exercises and simulations that clearly show the viability and traceability of the component elements.

Therefore, for example, as an element of approach, the above-mentioned PESCO projects imply the contribution of the participating member states in terms of resources and capabilities necessary to improve military mobility, while the challenges related to the integrated management of resources for defence, identified along the way, should have a unitary solution at European level, with individualization specific to each member state. An attempt to cover up the shortcomings in the area of military mobility independently is, from my personal point of view, a low-success action that does not help the European Union as a whole.

Therefore, the civilian and military synergy in developing concrete projects and the *sui generis* concept of mobility can be exploited by the two parties involved, with mutually palpable benefits. As concluded by the President of the European Commission, Ursula Van der Leyen, in her State of the European Union address to the plenary of the European Parliament on 13 September 2023, for example, *“The Rail Baltica project is not only a symbolic return of the Baltic States to Europe, but also holds significant economic and geostrategic importance. By reconnecting the Baltic States to the European rail network, the socio-economic benefits are estimated at EUR 16.2 billion. It also enhances regional security by enabling the swift and efficient transportation of troops and equipment through the region”* (European Commission, 2023, p. 23).

Basically, such projects as *Rail Baltica* or the extension of the Baltic-Black Sea-Aegean corridor to Odessa via Lviv and Chişinău are based on a profound reassessment of TEN-T, with obvious implications for the member states. The nomination of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova as termination points, but also as potential beneficiaries of these networks is likely to effectively include them in the European security architecture, these countries being currently candidate countries for EU membership. Basically, the development of these large transport corridors should generate the possibility of ensuring the transit of troops and military equipment of all categories without encountering major obstacles in the current area of the European Union and beyond.

The significant impact on defence resources, as well as the need to finance projects will generate major challenges for member states, which is why the Commission came to their support and stipulated that the development of this dual-use infrastructure will be achieved through co-financing through the European

Defence Fund (CEF), a financing instrument that remains, further, an essential pillar in the implementation of the Action Plan (European Commission, 2022, p. 3).

In conclusion, the measures presented and analysed aim to maximise the coherence of defence planning in the member states and to optimise resources in order to operationalise a deep military mobility at European level. The research hypothesis is verified in the sense that the military mobility measures at European level proposed and implemented decisively influence the defence resource management of member states.

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