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Key Developments in Global Affairs

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## CHAPTER 2

# Franco-German-British Security Cooperation After Brexit

*Julian Kamasa*

The departure of the United Kingdom from the EU has considerable implications for the European security architecture. Although the UK continues to be part of NATO, it might not suffice to use NATO as a forum for comprehensive coordination, since it is primarily a military alliance. Therefore, new settings for the coordination of essential policies between London and its key European partners seem necessary. In the short and medium terms, a trilateral form of security cooperation among France, Germany, and the UK such as the E3 could bridge the gaps created by Brexit.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, French President Emmanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel attend the 2019 G7 summit in Biarritz, France. *Andrew Parsons / Pool via Reuters*



The United Kingdom has left the EU for good without any agreement on future structured cooperation in foreign and security policy. However, London can still be expected to cooperate with individual European states. On the one hand, the loss of formalized security cooperation between London and the EU should not be underestimated, since many channels of communication, coordination, and cooperation are now disrupted. On the other hand, the absence of the UK in security cooperation should not be overestimated either. EU foreign and security policy for the most part is still based on intergovernmental cooperation. The UK will continue to be surrounded by the same strategic environment regardless of its relationship with the EU. Brexit will not fundamentally transform core values of British foreign policy such as the promotion of liberal democracy, rule of law, human rights, free trade, or the increasingly essential topic of climate change. These values are largely shared with the majority of EU member states. Both the UK and EU member states have strong incentives to continue cooperation. London wants to know what is going on inside Brussels, and the EU simply cannot ignore the UK's diplomatic and military weight.

For the time being, the enduring similarities between UK and EU policies could mean that London will seek

useful points of contact with selected EU member states and build on existing cooperation formats such as the E3 with France and Germany. This format dates back to 2003, when the foreign ministers of the three countries traveled to Tehran to sign the first agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran with the aim of bringing that country back into full compliance with its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). However, E3 cooperation since then has included many other policy areas, essentially extending the scope of this format. The E3 has issued joint statements on many international issues, which most recently included political tensions in the Gulf region, terror networks in Iraq and Syria, the military coup in Myanmar, challenges posed by China, the global distribution of vaccines against the coronavirus, and the upcoming Climate Change Conference. Now that the UK has left the EU, the E3 format may become even more important. The choice of policy area in which it would be used may be rather hard to predict, since it would be unrealistic to assume that there is a structured agenda in such an informal setting. The areas in which the three European powers could be active are geographically and thematically diverse. However, cooperation in many policy areas could be constrained by a lack of coherence. The E3 need to



base their cooperation on a case-by-case basis, given that this loose form of cooperation is ultimately a function not only of a convergence of national interests, but also of external developments such as the efficiency of EU policymaking. This means that initial disagreement among EU member states on international issues allows a coherent E3 to deal with those issues on an ad-hoc basis. When the E3 can act swiftly and coherently, this format may be a useful tool to purposefully complement the rather lengthy policymaking process of the EU.

### **Post-Brexit Power Dynamics**

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) can no longer be used as fora for the coordination and exchange of information with the UK for the remaining 27 EU member states. The lack of a UK-EU security agreement means that new forms of cooperation may evolve. The UK should not suddenly be expected to be "less European." At the same time, British foreign and security policy is unlikely to mirror too closely that of the EU, as such intense collaboration could provoke criticism from Brexit hardliners. Conducting foreign and security policies independent from the EU was one of their main arguments for leaving the Union. However, this need not result

in political alienation between the UK and the EU. The 2021 Integrated Review titled "Global Britain in a competitive age" implies that London will try to establish itself as a committed partner of individual EU member states, bilaterally or in "minilateral" formats, which may consist of several like-minded states cooperating on an ad-hoc basis on a specific policy issue.<sup>1</sup> Such minilateral formats already exist, and perhaps the best example is E3 cooperation. Since 2003, when the three countries began to focus on the Iranian nuclear program, it has expanded to cover many areas of international importance such as freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, conflicts in Syria and Yemen, and the implementation of the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change.<sup>2</sup> The issues dealt with by the E3 can be characterized as a mix of joint responses to current security challenges and entry into specific policy fields that have initially been neglected by the EU.<sup>3</sup> Given the UK's changing relationship with the EU, the E3 and similar structures may therefore gain in importance.

It is important to take into account that, within the Franco-German-British triangle, security relations between London and Berlin are comparatively weak and essentially the missing link in the effort to build more equal security



cooperation among the three states. France, comparatively, is in a comfortable position, as it has strong relations with both countries. In the 2010 Lancaster House Treaties, France and the UK agreed to reinforce their bilateral defense cooperation in a number of areas. This even included intensified collaboration in the most sensitive field of nuclear weapons, where Paris and London agreed on improving their nuclear stockpile stewardship programs in support of both countries' independent nuclear deterrent capabilities. They are the only European states with nuclear capabilities. Moreover, they are the only European states belonging to the five permanent members (P5) with veto power of the UN Security Council (UNSC). As a result, Paris and London are used to intense bilateral cooperation. Furthermore, the two states have similar strategic cultures, as expressed in globally oriented foreign and security policies based on their historical self-perception as former colonial powers. Paris' links to Berlin are different. The establishment of Franco-German friendship after the end of the Second World War constituted the basis for the founding of the European Union. Most recently, these ties have been reiterated through the Treaty of Aachen in January 2019, which among other items includes a comprehensive mutual defense clause.<sup>4</sup> Within the format of the Franco-German Security Council,

the heads of state meet on a regular basis to discuss current challenges. However, given that Germany is not a nuclear power and does not belong to the P5, and against the backdrop of Germany's reluctance to use military force, France is likely to view its partnership with Germany in a very different light from that with the UK.

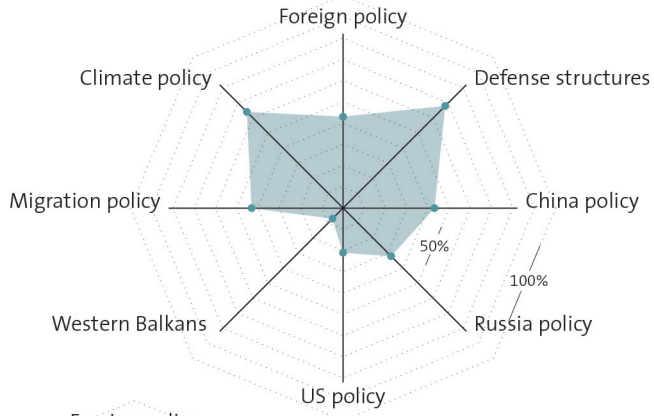
The scenario of stronger E3 cooperation will pose a new task for Paris and Berlin, namely, to bridge the gap between remaining committed EU member states and anchoring London in Europe. Neither France nor Germany are interested in creating the impression that E3 cooperation with the UK is more important than the EU's CFSP or CSDP. However, London is not obliged to cooperate with the two exclusively and is free to build significant partnerships with other EU member states as well. As the graphic on page 41 shows, the future of the Western Balkans for instance appears to matter comparatively more for the UK than it does for France and Germany. Hence, countries such as Austria, Slovenia, and Croatia could be the UK's partners of choice for minilateral cooperation on this specific policy issue. In the context of recent diplomatic tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, London might build on its historically strong ties with Cyprus and initiate some



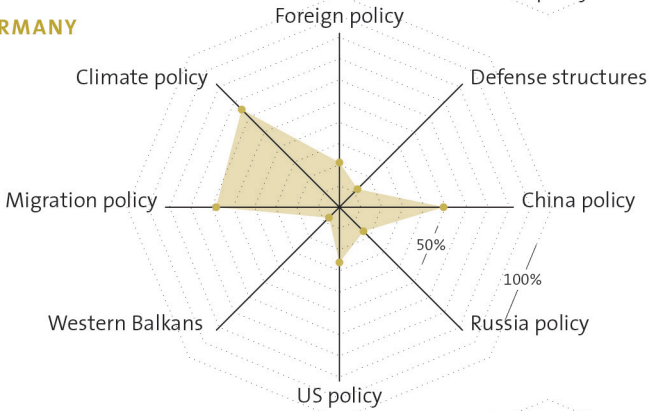
### Selected Key Security Policy Areas for European Cooperation

Percentage of policy experts who consider each policy area to be a priority for their government to address on a European level in the period up to 2025

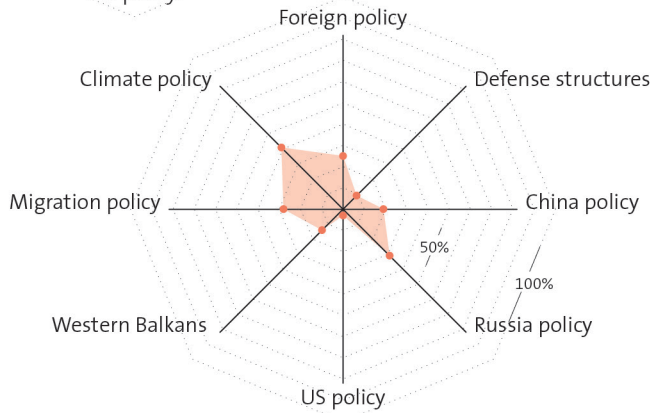
#### FRANCE



#### GERMANY



#### UK



Source: ECFR



sort of ad-hoc forum by including Greece and possibly France, which is already quite present in the region. Thus, Brexit may lead to a wide range of interesting new cooperation formats among European states.

### **Driving Forces for Trilateral Cooperation**

The E3 format can capitalize on two decades of good experiences of cooperation. The question of how to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons is the *raison d'être* of the E3 format, and remains “unfinished business.” Against the backdrop of their long-standing collaboration on the Iranian file, the E3 knows there is mutual understanding and that it is possible to pursue shared interests on a complicated problem consistently. This confidence in the partnership is a crucial driving force when dealing with other issues, which would likewise demand a lot of patience and consistency.

Each one of the E3 members has a different motivation for cooperating trilaterally. For the UK, an important factor is Brexit. Despite its nuclear capabilities, a well-embedded strategic culture, veto power in the UN Security Council, and NATO membership, the decoupling from EU institutions will influence the UK's foreign, security, and defense policies. A poll of British policy experts found agreement

that London should continue to cooperate closely with EU member states on global issues including climate change, policies towards China, rule of law, and foreign policy cooperation. Experts also agreed that the UK should continue cooperation on certain “European issues,” such as policies towards Russia, the Western Balkans, and migration.<sup>5</sup> Paris and Berlin appear to be useful points of contact for London. The UK may be able to use those channels to help influence the EU's positions on points of interest important to the UK. This may prove particularly feasible in cases where the UK is acting faster than the EU. One prominent example is the issue of 5G telecommunications networks. European nations are fragmented in their responses to concerns about vulnerabilities created by 5G infrastructure, and a poor EU response may risk undermining the protective work London has already undertaken. Not only has London created cybersecurity centers with a state-of-the-art insight into the activities of so-called high-risk vendors since 2010, but it has also stopped the installation of equipment from such vendors by September 2021.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to the UK, France perceives European defense and security as a core of its foreign, security, and defense policy. For instance, the





notion of *L'Europe de la défense* (a Europe which protects) is an essential component of the “2017 Strategic Review of Defence and Security” clearly prioritizing cooperation with European states.<sup>7</sup> Paris places strong emphasis on the EU’s geopolitical role, which is reflected in the French-led debate about strategic autonomy as well as the European Intervention Initiative and the idea of a European pillar in NATO. Berlin has a different view on European strategic autonomy, with Germany’s defense minister even calling it an “illusion.”<sup>8</sup> This divergence is an important driving force for France to promote close security cooperation with Berlin and London. For France, the dynamics of the relationship with Germany are different when the UK is present and discussions occur outside of an EU setting. Whereas Paris may feel like a “lonely leader”<sup>9</sup> when pushing towards a more geopolitical EU, the dynamics are different in the Berlin-London-Paris triangle. Here, Germany does not enjoy the same influence as it does inside the EU structures and, with its different strategic culture and reticence to acknowledge its position in the world, may find that its positions are in the minority. Thus, for France, this informal triangle provides an opportunity to engage Germany in the area of security and defense with more leverage and, at the same time, ensure that the UK remains a close European ally. The latter

is of crucial importance for France since the UK is a permanent member in the UNSC and a nuclear power.

Germany’s strategic culture differs sharply from those of the UK and France. It is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council, nor does it possess nuclear weapons. Moreover, Germany often hesitates to make use of its military. In light of its history, some pockets of German society are averse to the deployment of its military. Hence, Germany’s military, the *Bundeswehr*, is by many standards significantly under-equipped. In direct comparison to the UK and France, Germany lacks both diplomatic and military power. However, Germany has the fourth-largest economy in the world in terms of GDP and is a major trading power, particularly with China and the US. This imbalance between economic and diplomatic/military weight can be partly mitigated through E3 cooperation; Germany is able to participate in high-level debates where, in comparison to other fora such as the UN, it enjoys much greater influence. Unlike an elected, non-permanent seat in the UNSC, the E3 format also has low barriers to entry and no rotation mechanism. Just like France, Germany has a keen interest in trying to anchor the UK in Europe. Hence, trilateral cooperation seems beneficial for Berlin. Being part



of a security cooperation format with both the UK and France could potentially allow Germany to develop a more strategic mindset. A stronger German profile in security and defense policy would essentially meet external expectations that were set during the Munich Security Conference in 2014, when German leaders declared their intention to assume more responsibility in this area, which was called the “Munich Consensus.”<sup>10</sup> Germany’s March 2021 declaration that it would send a frigate to the Indo-Pacific by August 2021 can be interpreted as an important signal to like-minded states such as France and the UK, which are already present in this region, of Germany’s readiness to assume greater responsibility.<sup>11</sup>

### **Potential Policy Areas of E3 Cooperation**

It is obvious that the Iranian nuclear program will remain crucially important for the three states. The withdrawal of the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018 challenged the European states but resulted in their renewed cohesiveness rather than division. The main goal is still finding a solution with Tehran based on diplomacy. With US President Joe Biden, the hope is that both the US and Iran will return to full compliance with the JCPOA.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, lessons from the experience could be applied to future negotiations concerning

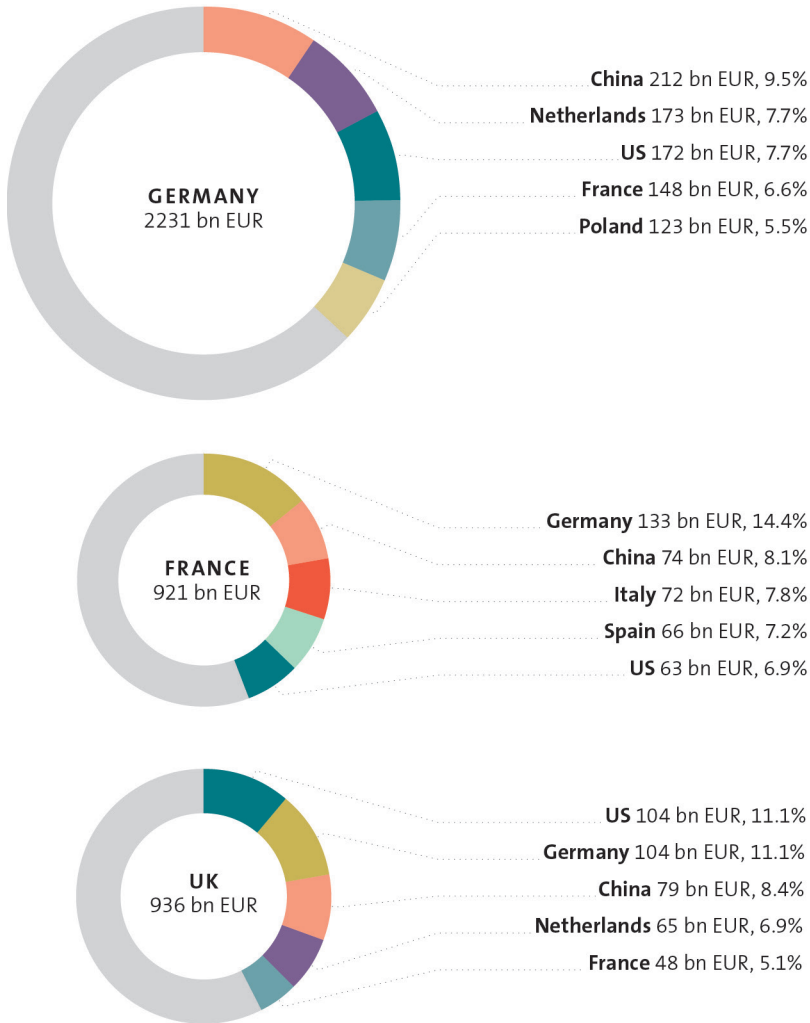
arms control, especially in the field of emerging technologies such as lethal autonomous weapons (LAWs). The question is, however, whether the three states can find a coherent stance in order to do so. For instance, Germany does not procure weaponized drones, whereas both the UK and France do. This issue creates divergences among the E3 when regulatory questions on an international level arise.<sup>13</sup> Although there is agreement on some aspects of the technology, notably an emphasis on human control, resistance by France and the UK to restrictions on the development and procurement of such systems may still prove a significant point of contention in their relationship with Germany.

Furthermore, there are regions or sub-regions of potential interest to France, Germany, and the UK that could be significant sites of future cooperation. A region closely linked to the complex topic of maritime security is the so-called “Indo-Pacific,” which describes the geographical area encompassing the Indian and Pacific oceans. It is strategically important to France and the UK as a tool to project global power, specifically by ensuring freedom of navigation in the South China Sea as guaranteed in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.<sup>14</sup> Germany recently issued guidelines on this region, which include the



## Trade Partners 2020

Trade volume of goods with the five most important trading partners



Sources: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis); Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances; HM Revenue and Customs



option of “various forms of maritime presence.”<sup>15</sup> Engagement by European states would be a strong signal of support for the US, which is placing priority on this region as part of a comprehensive strategic shift. Thus, the preconditions for engagement by the E3 appear to be promising. A stronger European engagement in the Indo-Pacific would be welcomed by countries in the region, too.<sup>16</sup> The E3 could, therefore, try to raise awareness of this approach among other European states, and both France and Germany could take a leading role in a strengthened EU engagement in this region.

The difficulties of E3 cooperation in maritime security in practice were particularly visible following attacks by Iran on international oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz in July 2019. Both Germany and France were opposed to siding with the US in its “maximum pressure” approach following Washington’s withdrawal from the JCPOA. London, on the other hand, had initially reached out to Berlin to seek a “European answer,” but joined the US-led mission after Germany expressed its reluctance to act outside of the EU structures.<sup>17</sup> France has also emphasized the need for an EU mission, but it grew impatient with the lengthy EU decision-making procedures and instead established the European Maritime Surveillance Mission in the Strait

of Hormuz (EMASoH) with a coalition of willing states outside of the EU framework. When EMASoH became fully operational in February 2020, Germany offered political support, the Dutch navy provided a frigate, and Denmark and Belgium supported the military operation *Agénor* with personnel.<sup>18</sup> The fragmented responses from France, Germany, and the UK show that even though in principle all states sought to achieve a similar goal, namely safe passage at sea, their priorities were not sufficiently in alignment to act cooperatively.

Similarly, in the Sahel region, all states share the same ends, namely political stability and the prevention of increased terrorism in the region. However, the presence of a variety of actors in the region increases the E3’s difficulty in acting coherently. As France started its own military operations *Serval* in 2013 and later *Barkhane* in 2014, both the UN and the EU were on the ground, too. Under the umbrella of the EU training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), both Germany and the UK (as a non-EU member state) are contributors. In Germany, the extension of the deployment related to the EUTM Mali earned the support of a sizeable majority in parliament.<sup>19</sup> Both Berlin and London are, therefore, anything but passive, though they need to issue more than their political support



for the French-led military operation. Instead, operational contributors are smaller EU member states such as Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, and Portugal.<sup>20</sup> A meeting of the French, German, and British defense ministers in August 2020 revealed that stability in the Sahel region is of crucial importance, which could indicate deeper E3 cooperation and increased engagement moving forward.<sup>21</sup>

On an EU level, insufficient unity exists at present to forge common policies and strategies for dealing with major global powers such as Russia and China, though there is a growing consensus on China, as shown by the targeted sanctions against Chinese individuals and one entity for human rights abuses that were imposed in March 2021. Notably, this step appeared to have been a coordinated approach among the EU, the UK, the US, and Canada. Therefore, for states like France and Germany that are trying to limit Chinese influence on a EU level, the Franco-German-British triangle could prove extremely useful. However, there are diverging views on how to approach powers such as Russia and China even among these three nations. For the UK, China's policy towards its former colony Hong Kong is a far bigger priority than for France and Germany.<sup>22</sup> Berlin's comparatively soft political stance towards Beijing is largely a product of its economic ties with

China. Essentially, Germany trades as much with China as France and the UK combined. However, recent events in Hong Kong have triggered surprisingly strong reactions from London to Berlin. Therefore, it is conceivable that proposals by the UK to address this issue could win the support of France and Germany. In this context, the role of the US matters, too. The Biden administration is already pursuing an approach of coalition-building, which may prove fruitful. For example, Germany faced a particularly vexing dilemma over its crucial car industry. In 2019, the German auto industry faced threats from both China, in the form of retaliation if Germany were to ban the Chinese 5G supplier Huawei, and also from the United States under Trump, which threatened to impose tariffs were Huawei not banned. The absence of politically motivated punitive tariffs by the US government towards European exports might thus create incentives for many European states to take a tougher stance on China.

This situation may be different with respect to Russia. In fact, all E3 countries have different kinds of relationships with Moscow that appear to be mutually incompatible. France did not achieve much with its unilateral approach of "renewed dialogue." Berlin, comparatively, is interested in maintaining



well-balanced relations with Moscow. Germany reacted relatively softly to the killing on German territory by Russian intelligence officers of a Georgian national who was a former rebel military commander in Chechnya. Furthermore, the German government, despite substantial domestic and foreign criticism, continues to support both Nord Stream pipeline projects. The UK, like Germany, strengthened economic ties for a long period while paying little heed to the potential geopolitical implications. Nevertheless, the UK was a leader in the process of imposing EU sanctions against Russia. The poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skrypal on British soil in 2018 and the comparatively strong reaction in Britain shows an altered approach from a similar incident in 2006. Overall, the divergence of approaches towards the Kremlin seems to be too big in order to develop a coherent trilateral Russia policy.<sup>23</sup> A scenario similar to the Skrypal attack on French territory could change the dynamics, however. On the other hand, the absence of further malicious Russian activities in Germany and the UK may tilt these countries' positions closer to the French one, opting for dialogue.

### **Obstacles to E3 Cooperation**

The United Kingdom's foreign and security policy has never really been truly "European." Even while it was part of the EU, many perceived the UK as

the main obstacle preventing closer cooperation among EU members in the field of foreign and security policy. Given that other EU members were also protective of their national sovereignty at times, this might be an exaggeration. However, it seems telling that in parallel to the Brexit negotiations, projects such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) or the European Defense Fund have become operational quite rapidly by EU standards. For the first time in the EU's history, defense has become part of the EU budget. Whether these intra-EU developments will have a push or pull effect on London remains to be seen. The Integrated Review, the biggest reassessment of British foreign, security, and defense policy since the end of the Cold War, has revealed the ambition to be a more globally oriented UK emphasizing cooperation in bilateral and ad-hoc formats with a group of like-minded states complementing the UK's membership in important institutions such as the UN, NATO, or the OSCE. The declared increase in defense spending is designed to underpin ambitions of a "Global Britain". How this spending will actually play out in practice remains to be seen. As indicated in the Integrated Review, Paris and Berlin may become key partners in many venues, since London's approach is shifting towards a more global orientation. How much focus can be put



on international matters, of course, will depend in many ways upon domestic stability. Growing dissatisfaction in Scotland and Northern Ireland about the actual consequences of Brexit could force London to focus inward at the expense of “Global Britain.”

France also has a distinct interpretation of what European security should be. Even for many committed EU member states such as Germany, Paris’ positions represent unrealistic ambitions. In addition, French leaders have a tendency to adopt “go-it-alone” approaches as soon as they determine that an issue is moving too slowly within an EU framework, or sometimes even from the very outset, in anticipation of slow EU procedures.<sup>24</sup> This approach of “talking European, acting French” is controversial. Eastern European EU member states, for instance, were displeased with the lack of consultation prior to Emmanuel Macron’s renewal of dialogue with Russia. Should trilateral security cooperation with the UK and Germany intensify outside of the EU framework, France’s credibility within the EU might suffer, especially in discussions of increased defense cooperation. How France will position itself within Europe may also depend on the outcome of the upcoming presidential elections, scheduled for April 2022. President Macron’s opponent Marine Le Pen, from the right-wing

party *Front National*, openly rejects Macron’s policy on Europe. Although a Le Pen presidency seems rather unlikely, Macron’s re-election should not be taken for granted, either. Measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus have given rise to widespread frustration and economic uncertainty among voters, which populist parties such as Front National could potentially exploit.

Germany’s relatively strong commitment to foreign and security policy-making within the EU framework could be an obstacle to extended E3 cooperation. Due to its history and geography, Berlin has to be cautious of engaging in additional projects like the Nord Stream pipelines, which were heavily criticized in Poland and reinforced some states’ fears of being sidelined in the EU. Germany could address such concerns by reviving the Weimar Triangle, together with France and Poland, in parallel with deeper E3 cooperation. This may alienate southern European states like Spain or Italy, however. Both Germany and France need to take this into account when considering intensified cooperation with the UK. Domestically, Germany is still working to define its role in a rapidly changing strategic environment.<sup>25</sup> Berlin has declared its intention to assume increased responsibility in international affairs.



To this end, the German government may have to re-define its economic priorities, as some of its current activities undermine the ambition of being a responsible power. This applies to the Nord Stream pipelines with Russia and a production facility that Volkswagen, the largest German car manufacturer, operates in Xinjiang, the province in northwest China where mass human rights abuses are taking place. The intensity of economic interdependence with autocratic regimes may become problematic, especially with regard to China. The key question in this context will be how to weigh normative and economic interests against one another when tradeoffs become necessary.

To some extent, an external obstacle to E3 cooperation could arise from the streamlining of EU foreign, security, and defense policymaking. The E3 has often been active on those occasions when decision-making in the EU was too lengthy. Thus, a truly effective EU could mean constrained windows of opportunity for the E3 to add value.

### **The E3 within Eroding Multilateralism**

Given that the world is increasingly dominated by the competition between the US and China, many countries are struggling to find a suitable position on the global stage. This also applies to European states. As far

as EU members are concerned, they align with the US and not with China. They have recently reinforced this by calling China a “systemic rival” and imposing targeted sanctions for human rights abuses.<sup>26</sup> In addition, EU member states are increasingly interested in establishing themselves as key players in the global system. However, the key question is how a coherent European Foreign and Security Policy can be put into practice. The departure of a powerful country like the UK from the EU may have far-reaching implications, but they do not necessarily have to be negative. Rather, Brexit could make it easier for the remaining EU members to make headway with their CFSP. At the same time, London and individual EU member states, particularly France and Germany, could increase their cooperation or establish a wide range of new cooperation formats.

For both France and Germany, it is clear that strategic long-term objectives requiring the EU’s economic weight cannot be dealt with outside of the EU structures or at national levels. This principle of subsidiarity was made especially clear in the case of economic sanctions against Iran. The E3 became the E3+EU as soon as the economic leverage of the EU was required. Furthermore, in accordance with EU treaties, issues concerning





trade and economic policy are prerogatives of the EU Commission. On many other issues, including investment screenings, 5G, cybersecurity, and data protection, the EU likewise possesses the necessary means to act most effectively. Regardless of Brexit, the UK's interests may continue to converge with the EU's. Under such circumstances, the UK will autonomously apply EU measures such as economic sanctions, which was particularly pronounced in the case of recent EU sanctions against China. The economic leverage that the EU possesses as a large trading bloc is its biggest strength, but this is also its weakness. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen tellingly admitted in the context of the Covid-19 vaccination campaign that "alone a country can be a speedboat, while the EU is more like a tanker."<sup>27</sup>

This assessment applies to the area of European Foreign and Security Policy, too. A wide range of security challenges, often unforeseeable, that require rapid and immediate answers are likely to arise. Even a mid-sized speedboat such as the E3 format can fail to respond coherently, as events in the Strait of Hormuz have shown. Bringing 27 nation-states together in order to define a common position under significant time constraints is, however, an even more difficult task. So-called minilateral cooperation formats bear the

potential to complement the EU without substituting it and vice versa. It is likely, for instance, that the French-led operation in the Strait of Hormuz may have paved the way for an EU mission in the mid- to long-term.

As a minilateral engagement, the E3 could thus complement the EU and contribute to what Brussels has yet failed to achieve: a coherent, effective, and rapid answer to global developments promoting European norms and values. A strong E3, on the one hand, runs the risk that other EU member states may feel excluded at times. On the other hand, from the UK's perspective, France and Germany are not the only useful partners in Europe. Depending on the issue in question, Sweden, Poland, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Austria may offer London what France and Germany do not. This could result in many new speedboat-like informal cooperation formats accompanying the tanker of the EU. This increased ad-hoc minilateralism should, however, complement and not substitute EU foreign and security policy. Such a division of responsibilities has the potential to maximize Europe's footprint in the world, not despite Brexit, but rather as a result of a new set of post-Brexit power configurations. The key will be a convergence of national interests, fortunate timing, and political will.



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