



General (ret.) Mikhail Kostarakos
Former Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff
Former Chairman of the European Union Military Committee

**JEAN MONNET EUROPEAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS**

“EU Policies Towards East Mediterranean Sea: Energy and Security.”

**“Threats and Challenges to EU external Borders – The role of EU in
protection security and Defence of its Member-States”**

Athens, 22 November 2021

Dear Professor (Professor Giannis Valinakis, President of the European Center of Excellence Jean Monnet - EKPA),

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for the invitation to your distinguished seminar. It's an honour and a privilege. The Outline of my briefing is on the screen.

There is a long list of geopolitical challenges for the EU globally. The list is the sum of the geopolitical challenges of the individual member states. For the EU, the main challenges besides the ones NATO is dealing with mainly armed or forms of hybrid aggression, are terrorism, hybrid and cyber, climate change, COVID-19, uncontrollable dissemination of WMD and illegal migration. Most of them are health and law enforcement issues. Energy security

concerns in the Mediterranean and the Middle East have also attracted EUs attention. Most of these challenges are coming from the South and the East and therefore for the EU the South and the East are the main directions of concern, although recently Poland-Belarus and Ukraine are covering the media headlines on a daily basis. In this briefing we will deal only with the situation at Southeast of the EU.

Climate change, the demographic explosion in Africa, the war in Afghanistan and elsewhere on the globe, along with the failure of governance, political instability and civil racial or religious conflicts in many remote countries in Asia and Africa, always combined with cable TV, social media, and mobile telephony, which "awakened African and Asian citizens", created new or intensified the already existing waves, of migration from the Middle East and North Africa.

At the same time, the current geopolitical situation in this region deteriorated and Eastern Mediterranean has become the stage of an aggressively escalating revisionist Turkish policy, which has now come to threaten the national sovereignty of the countries in the region. Following the discovery of energy deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as within the boundaries of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Cyprus and the commencement of licensing for hydrocarbon exploration within the hypothetical EEZ of Greece further deteriorated the situation. Turkey has decided unilaterally - as the "neighbourhood bully" - that it should have a share of any profits from hydrocarbon mining in the region, disregarding not only UNCLOS but also national sovereignty of neighbouring countries seeking as always zero sum solutions.

It is necessary however to clarify some issues from the beginning. First and foremost, for the EU MS, national defence and security are national responsibility. The MS have to be able to defend their own territory and their sovereignty. In order to be able to do so, against a stronger or more capable threat, 21 of the EU MS participate in NATO, which take responsibility of the Collective Defense of its members. Collective Defence of Europe therefore is a

NATO responsibility. This has not changed and will not change in the foreseeable future. But for Greece and Cyprus NATO and EU relationship has a completely different dimension. Firstly, Cyprus is not a NATO ally and therefore is not protected by NATO against any threat. Greece is a NATO ally but in a confrontation with Turkey NATO is not expected to take sides and therefore Greece is not protected either by the Alliance. EU remains the only “potential ally” for both countries.

This was the situation when in 2016 the EU launched the EU Global Strategy (EUGS). With the adoption of this Strategy, the EU has launched an ambitious and substantial two-fold effort. First line of effort was to upgrade itself to a credible global geopolitical player, providing security and stability to the Member States in their territory and protecting their interests. Second line of effort was to define new strategic tasks representing its practical level of ambition, setting thus the foundation for the concept of Strategic Autonomy, although nowhere in the EUGS, was this clearly stated. In the EUGS, the main strategic tasks for the EU were described as follows: Crisis Management, Support to Partners and Protection of Europe. It also reiterated the importance of Hard Power in contemporary international affairs.

In any case, the protection of EU citizens is a strategic priority of the Union and the EU is trying to implement it. Going some decades back, with the entry of our country and later of Cyprus into the EU, the borders of these countries became the borders of the EU, and a strong hope based both on ignorance and wishful thinking was created in both countries that the EU will undertake or even participate in the defense of their borders which now were the borders of the EU disregarding that this is not a military issue for the EU. It is a matter for law enforcement, police, border guards, gendarmerie, coast guard, customs police, counter-terrorism service, etc. but not a military issue.

The most prominent and familiar European border service to us is the well-known FRONTEX, the European External Border Guard Service, as its name implies (from the French phrase: "Frontières extérieures") because the

responsibility of the borders themselves is a national responsibility as related to national sovereignty, and international organizations have only a supporting role. The service has already upgraded and transformed and renamed to European Border and Coast Guard Organization keeping the same acronyms.

But what the situation is at the Greek-Turkish front? It is certain that in the near future Turkey will continue to strengthen by all means its role, regardless of its interlocutor and often in violation of what has been discussed and agreed informally either with Greece and the EU. Ankara, in parallel with its effort to have a strategic role in the Central Mediterranean, will continue to disregard sovereign rights of Greece and Cyprus, challenging not only the continental shelf of the islands or the EEZ but also status and the territorial waters. Following Greek diplomatic efforts the Greek-Turkish issues have become finally EU-Turkish issues to the despair of the Turkish leadership and diplomacy.

We must understand, dear friends, that the Turks are not consensual. Their political culture and mentality have no roots in the Enlightenment, Greco-Roman culture, Christian tradition, and Humanism. Their political culture is not based on consensus, dialogue, and negotiation. They do not want conciliation and mutually beneficial solutions. They are confrontational, they recognize violence as their preferable course of action and they are always ready to resort to it, and although they negotiate with bargaining bazaar logic, they perceive all conflicts as zero-sum games.

The energy/security geopolitical situation has a contribution to this. The energy issue is much more related to security and defence than any other issue because of the aggressive way the Turks demand the sharing of the potential wealth in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Cyprus. They have decided to ignore the international law to undermine the negotiations in Cyprus, to ignore the EEZ of all their neighbors, and finally to project and exercise their hard power naval capabilities in order to leave to their opponents –as they

always do- no other than two options: accept their demands or fight against their huge military. And the issue has all the cynical and unethical characteristics of bullying, when Turkey with its 80 + million people violates the national sovereignty of a small island with no naval capabilities. The EU should be aware of these bullying events to its members, and should react every time its global player status is challenged.

I will not get into details about the rising tensions and the confrontation between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean Sea over the airspace, the territorial waters, the EEZ and lately the military status of the islands and the delimitation of the continental shelf. The options offered again by the Turks are the same: Concede or Fight, but in this occasion, the capabilities of the Hellenic Armed Forces make the whole problem much more complicated and dangerous for the Turks. And they know it. But there, the borders under discussion are also EU borders.

I believe it is clear now that Turkey is the common denominator in all the challenges in the area, not only for some of the EU member states but also for the proper EU. However, the EU is difficult to react (for a lot of reasons) and therefore sometimes it pretends that nothing happened. Besides, the fact that Turkey is a NATO ally makes things for the EU much more complicated, when we discuss possible courses of reaction.

The problem with the EU lies with those –member states or officials - who think that they can endlessly negotiate with the other part, in order to convince them. Unfortunately there is diplomatic fatigue in these issues. Diplomatic exchanges and endless rounds of negotiations are just an empty shell if not backed by some meaningful form of Hard power military capabilities. A strong EU reaction of the problems at its borders, not only in the Mediterranean but also in Central Europe and elsewhere, remains to be seen.

We all agree that the EU is not a military organization and we should never even think to allow this to happen. It should be more and more clear now to

the EU establishment that no solutions to crisis can be reached without the proper use of the military tool and that makes the military not only one very important tool among the others in this unique and rich toolbox of the EU, but also a tool that has to be used when effective results are requested. However, with defence planning and capabilities being under national control and at national level, European cooperation in security and defence issues is often impeded. There is a long way ahead of us. The EU has the political strength that comes from the common political will of the 27 member states. The unanimous rule for defence and external policy decisions is an extremely powerful feature of the EU and should never change. This may sound as not enough in our tough world, but it is very important in the international rules-based order. We should not forget the two articles existing in the Treaties that could be invoked by a victim of aggression. I refer to Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (solidarity clause), and to Article 42.7 of the Treaty of the European Union (mutual assistance clause). This course of action, given the situation in the area, deserves further consideration by the political leadership of Cyprus and Greece.

We need to find somehow a way to protect EU citizens and interests. And this is how we try to do it by it using Smart Power substitutes for the missing Hard Power.

EU's main Hard Power weapon is economic sanctions against various opponents instead of military might. When these sanctions are combined with political, legal and diplomatic actions "for good or bad" becomes Smart Power. We consider the EU as the "Queen of Smart Power". This is the ultimate weapon of the EU and should be used very carefully but also very decisively against the troublemakers.

It is generally accepted that all effective geopolitical negotiations in Hard power environment should always be backed by decisive military power and with the credible will to use it. In the course of human history, no fight has ever been won only with diplomatic notes, media statements or euro checks

for to the opponents for that matter. To this end, the EU should dispose some kind of Hard power in order to play a serious geopolitical role. The Union desperately needs a change in the Treaties as well as in its attitude, a change that will provide for the funding of military operations with EU budget money as well as a small, lean, and effective command and control structure that will allow the Union to plan and to conduct operations in crisis areas in order to protect and to defend our interests and the European way of living. Eventually things are changing towards this direction.

For the first time in EU's history, the EU Budget, aka MFF (Multiannual Financial Framework) 2021-27 features a section on defence and security. This was a groundbreaking decision. Commission was involved in the military domain for the first time. In this radical break from the past, EU leaders have agreed on the much-needed financial basis for further EU defence cooperation. It seems to me that a bright future lays ahead.

There are high expectations from the EU political leadership. The framework is there; now flesh must be put on the bones. The way the EU will proceed with the recently agreed Coordinated Maritime Presences Concept will send a very clear message to the revisionist powers of the region that put the Union's energy security under question. Nevertheless, things are moving. Last January, the EU Council launched the first pilot case of the new Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) concept in the Gulf of Guinea which is the area that accounts for 95% of maritime kidnappings in the world. The new Coordinated Maritime Presence tool will further strengthen EU maritime security engagement and will be coordinated from Brussels. The expansion of the CMP at the Indo-Pacific and maybe later at the East China Sea is under discussion in Brussels. Greece and Cyprus should consider the possibility to propose and have agreed by the EU a further expansion of the Presence in other areas of Maritime Interest including the SE Mediterranean.

But not only this. Another turning point for the EU is ahead of us. It is called Strategic Compass and it was discussed last week in Brussels. This will be

the document that will update and upgrade the GS without cancelling it and will bring it up to today's global geopolitical requirement.

Despite the political hyperactivity in security and defence since 2016, but even then, we realized that the new tools overwhelmingly focus on defence capability development and on the defence industry only. It seems to me now that the EU as well as the MS have realized to a certain extent, that as important as these two factors continue to be, there is a third factor that needs to be addressed; that is the capability for dynamic military engagement, reacting even pre-emptively on crisis situations on the ground. This is the third leg of the tripod complementing political credibility in decision-making and Strategic Autonomy. What happened in Kabul last August must never be forgotten and should not be repeated elsewhere and especially not in our area. The EU should not continue pretending that is possible to play a role in the geopolitical arena without having concrete dynamic action capabilities. Strategic Compass obviously will cover their requirement. The first drafts propose a 5000 strong Rapid Response formation. Decision is expected at the beginning of next year.

Until then however, we, the Greeks, alone will defend our borders and the interests and integrity of our Nation, and we may be the first to defend Europe's borders as well. That is why we must be properly equipped and mentally prepared. And fortunately, we are and remain prepared for many years. But if we really want to prevent in real time any opponent who plots against us, we must stand on our own two feet, look him in the eye as an equal and let him know that we will not be an easy opponent at all, as we usually do thousands of years now. Maybe this will guarantee and secure the peace in our area. But we are EU MS and should not be left alone. The European political leadership should have the will, the courage, and the capabilities to make the proper use of its Hard Power in the face of any threat against the EU MS. This is the only way EU has in order to be a successful and useful international organization.

In a perfect world, every nation in the Eastern Mediterranean would see the obvious advantages. They would seek to participate in this kind of cooperative schemes, offering their competitive edge. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all countries in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece and Cyprus together with other like-minded countries provide the necessary networking that will cement the stability and security in an effort to provide wealth dividend to their own people. That would be the case for law abiding nations like us and our allies and partners, countries that really care for their own people. Continuous military power projections and threats by one of our NATO Allies, Turkey, to both countries and the EU are not compatible with these peaceful policies, and are not promoting security and stability in the region.

I cannot think of a stronger foundation for stability than the security, well-being and prosperity of the people of neighboring, like-minded, peace oriented but proud and sovereign nations, with cultural and trade relations measured in millennia. This is what cements stability in the long run. This is what Greece, Cyprus and the EU are doing and trying to achieve and Turkey has to understand it and willingly participate in these efforts, in a clear, civilized and cooperative manner. We remain optimistic for the security of the area in the future hoping that Turkey will come to its senses and will participate in our plans as a peaceful and civilized partner, and all together we will work hard to make it happen.

Thank you for your attendance.

**JEAN MONET EUROPEAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS**

EU Policies Towards East Mediterranean Sea: Energy and Security

**“Threats and Challenges to EU external Borders –
The role of EU in protection security and
Defence of its Member-States”**



General (ret.) Mikhail Kostarakos

Former Chief of HNDGS-Former Chairman of EUMC

OUTLINE



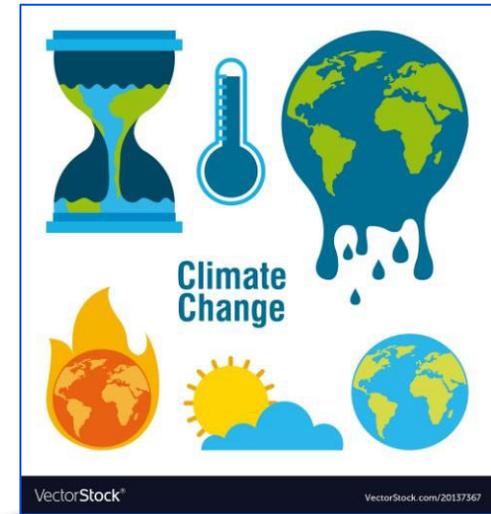
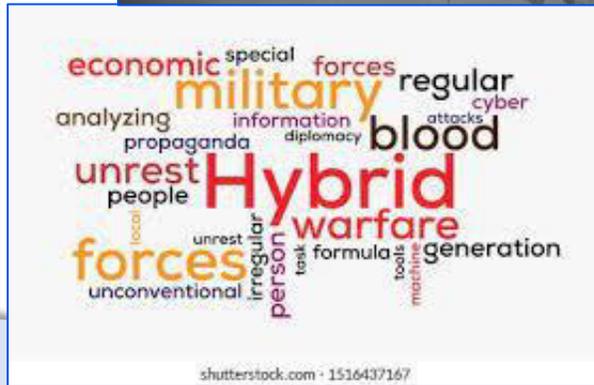
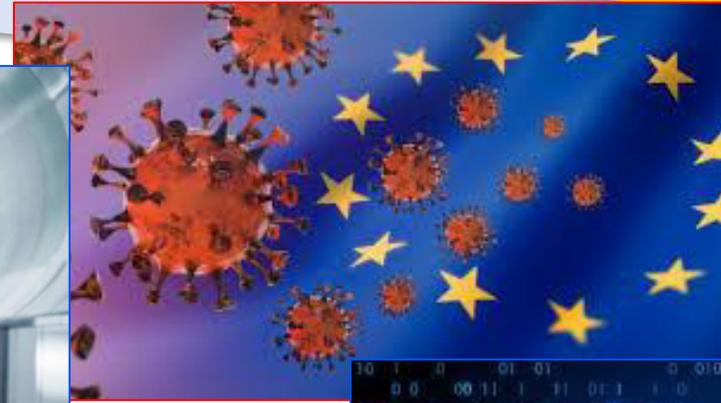
Jean Monnet

- ❑ Challenges
- ❑ EU-NATO Relationship
- ❑ EU Global Strategy
- ❑ EU Borders - FRONTEX
- ❑ EU-Turkish issues
- ❑ EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- ❑ Defending alone the EU Borders
- ❑ Cementing security and stability in Eastern Mediterranean

OUTLINE

Challenges

- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean

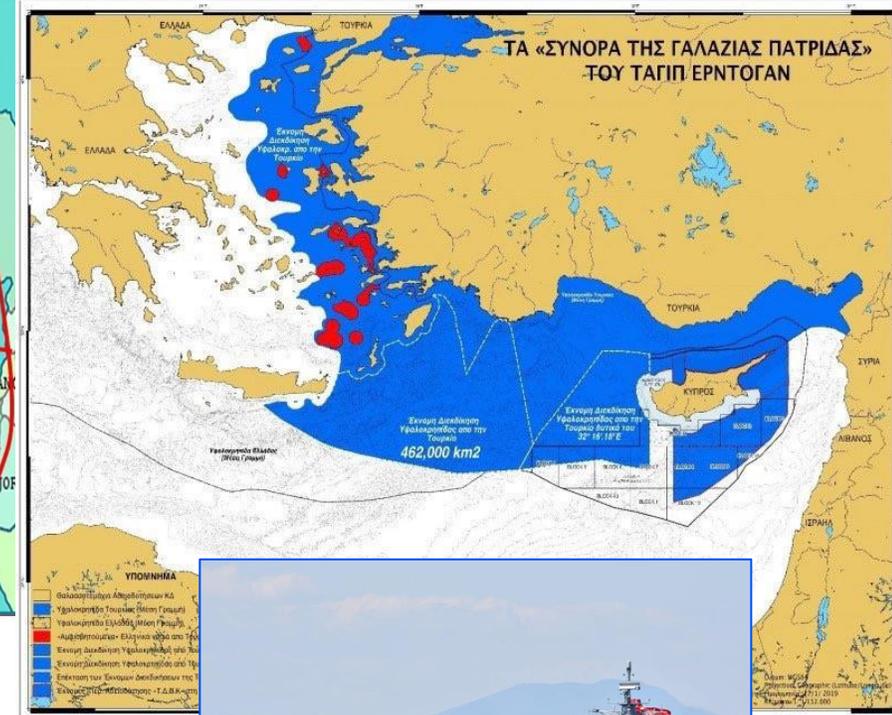


OUTLINE

Challenges

- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean

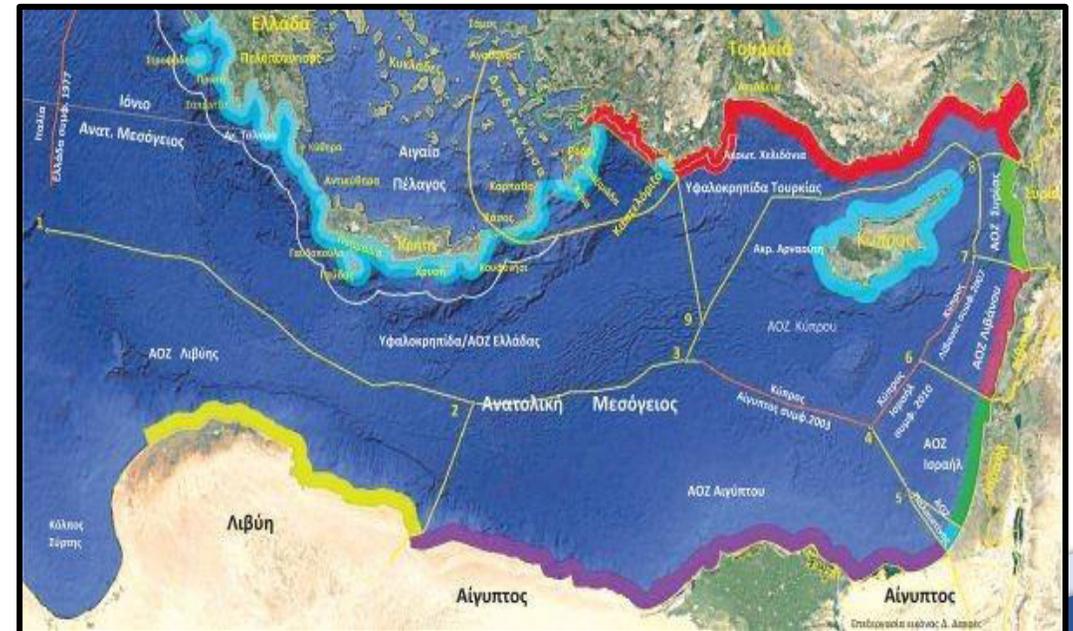
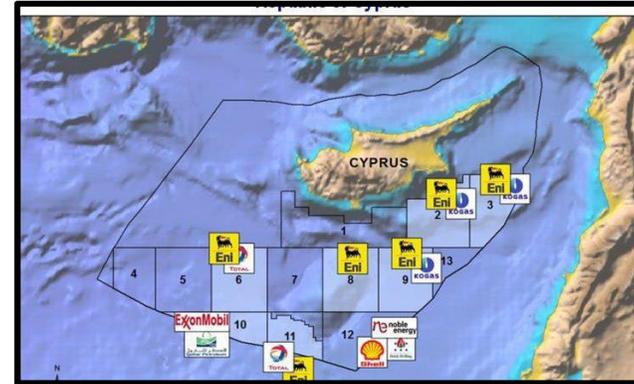
Turkey's revisionist Policy - Illegal Migration from Asia and Africa



OUTLINE

Energy Deposits and Exclusive Economic Zones (EOZ) of neighbors

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

Challenges

EU-NATO

Relationship

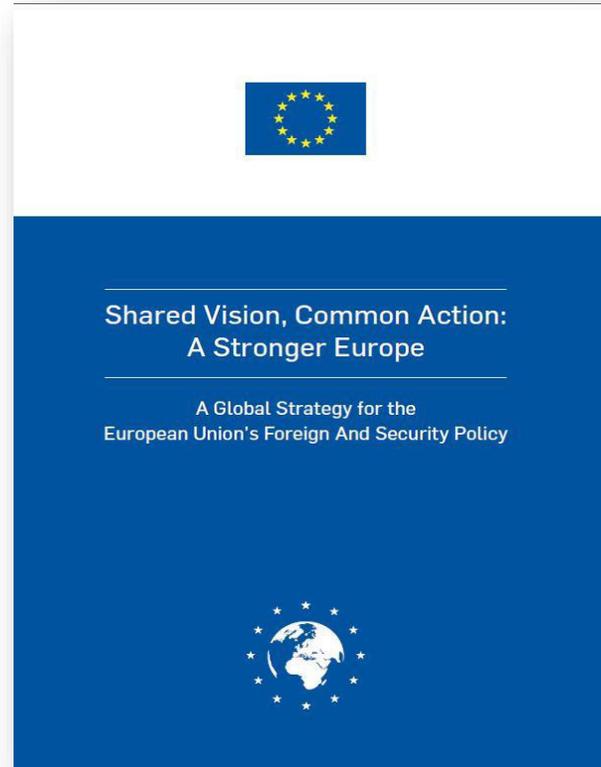
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



For the EU MS national defence and security are national responsibility

OUTLINE

- ❑ Challenges
- ❑ EU-NATO Relationship
- ❑ **EU Global Strategy**
- ❑ EU Borders - FRONTEX
- ❑ EU-Turkish issues
- ❑ EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- ❑ Defending alone the EU Borders
- ❑ Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



EU Global Strategy

- ✓ **A reliable security provider**
- ✓ **New level of ambition**

Three Strategic Priorities:

Respond to crises



respond to external

Capacity building



build capacities of partners

EU Protection



protect EU and its citizens

OUTLINE

☐ Challenges

☐ EU-NATO Relationship

☐ EU Global Strategy

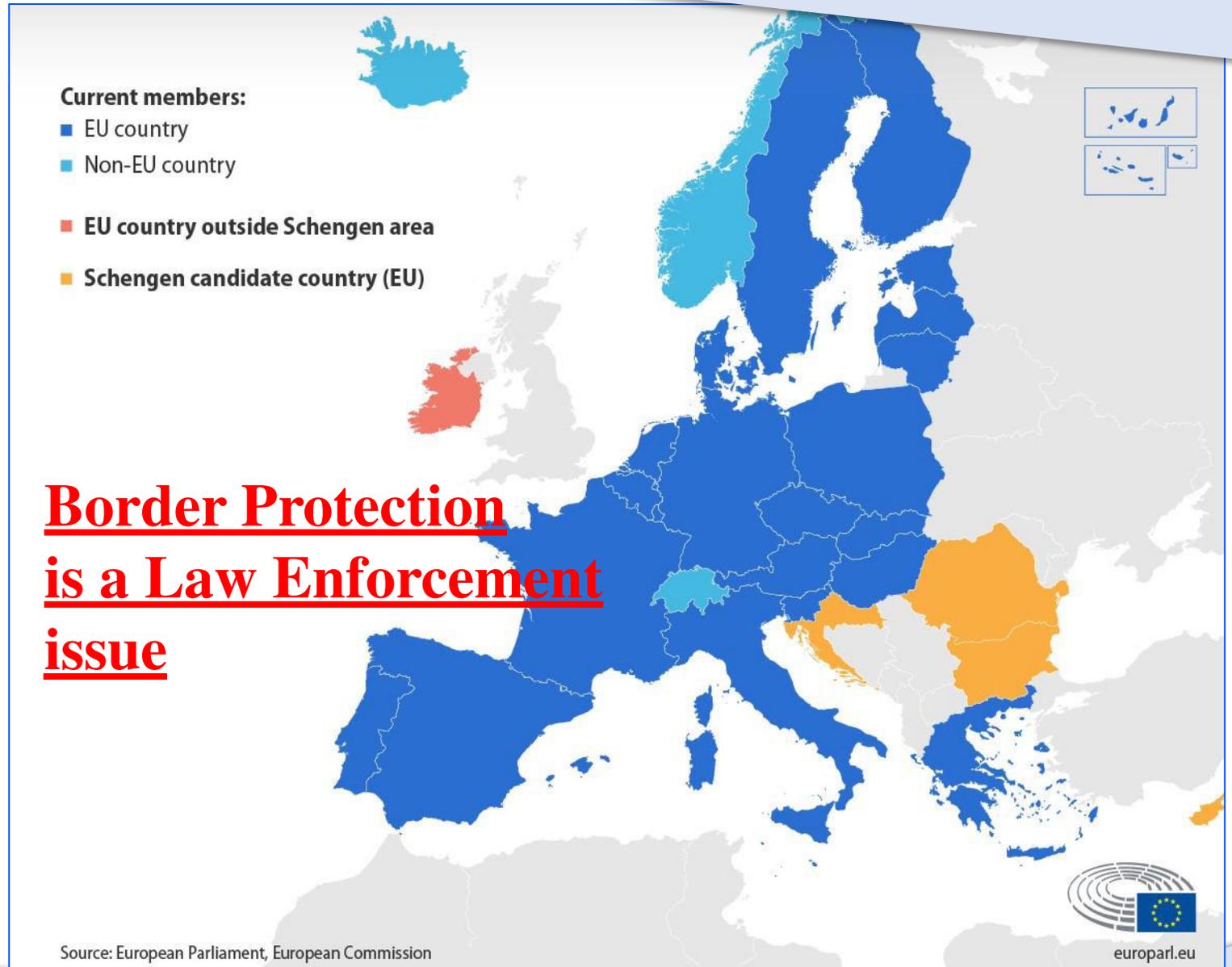
☐ EU Borders – FRONTEX

☐ EU-Turkish issues

☐ EU Smart Power –
Strategic Compass

☐ Defending alone
the EU Borders

☐ Cementing security and
stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- **EU Borders –
FRONTEX**
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power –
Strategic Compass
- Defending alone
the EU Borders
- Cementing security and
stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- Challenges

- EU-NATO Relationship

- EU Global Strategy

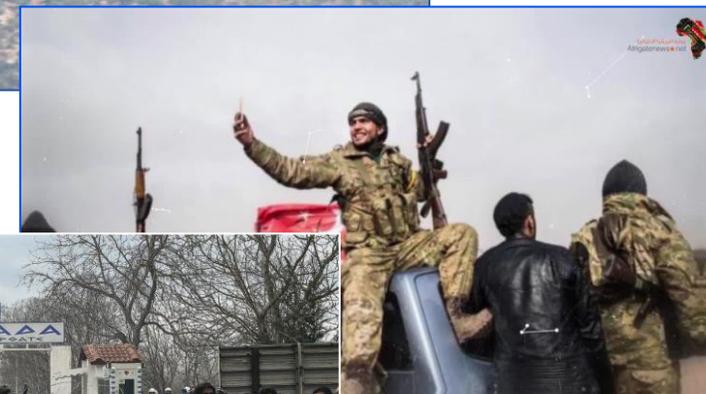
- EU Borders - FRONTEX

- EU-Turkish issues

- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass

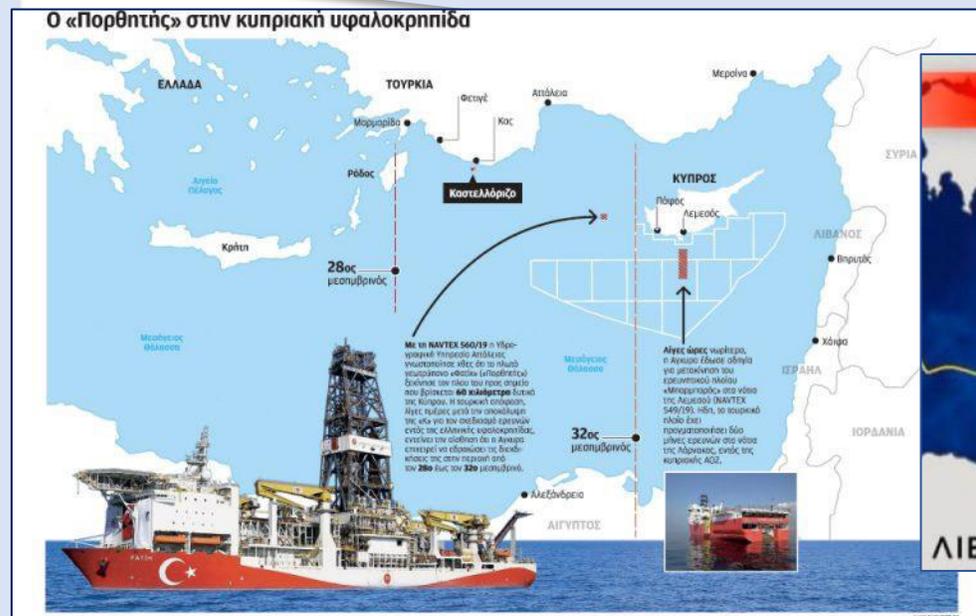
- Defending alone the EU Borders

- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



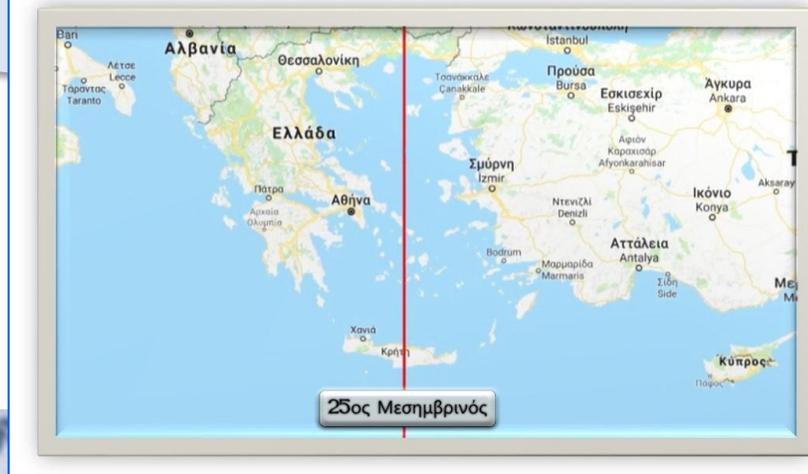
OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power – Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

Challenges

EU-NATO Relationship

EU Global Strategy

EU Borders - FRONTEX

EU-Turkish

issues

EU Smart Power –
Strategic Compass

Defending alone
the EU Borders

Cementing security and
stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- ❑ Challenges
- ❑ EU-NATO Relationship
- ❑ EU Global Strategy
- ❑ EU Borders - FRONTEX
- ❑ EU-Turkish issues
- ❑ EU Smart Power
- Strategic Compass
- ❑ Defending alone the EU Borders
- ❑ Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



- Art. 42-7 of TEU: Mutual Assistance clause
- Art. 222 of TFEU: Solidarity clause



OUTLINE

- ❑ Challenges
- ❑ EU-NATO Relationship
- ❑ EU Global Strategy
- ❑ EU Borders - FRONTEX
- ❑ EU-Turkish issues
- ❑ **EU Smart Power**
 - Strategic Compass
 - ❑ Defending alone the EU Borders
 - ❑ Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean

MILITARY

ECONOMIC



**POLITICAL
DIPLOMATIC
LEGAL**

ALL ACTIONS COMBINED

EU, THE QUEEN OF "SMART POWER"

OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power

-Strategic Compass

- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND



RESEARCH WINDOW
Collaborative research projects

COORDINATION BOARD

Member States, High Representative, European Defence Agency, European Commission, Industry

CAPABILITY WINDOW
Joint defence capabilities



- EUR 90 million until 2020
- EUR 500 million per year post-2020



- Umbrella structure*
- Reference amount EUR 5 billion per year



*establishing a **common framework** for independent projects and providing back office

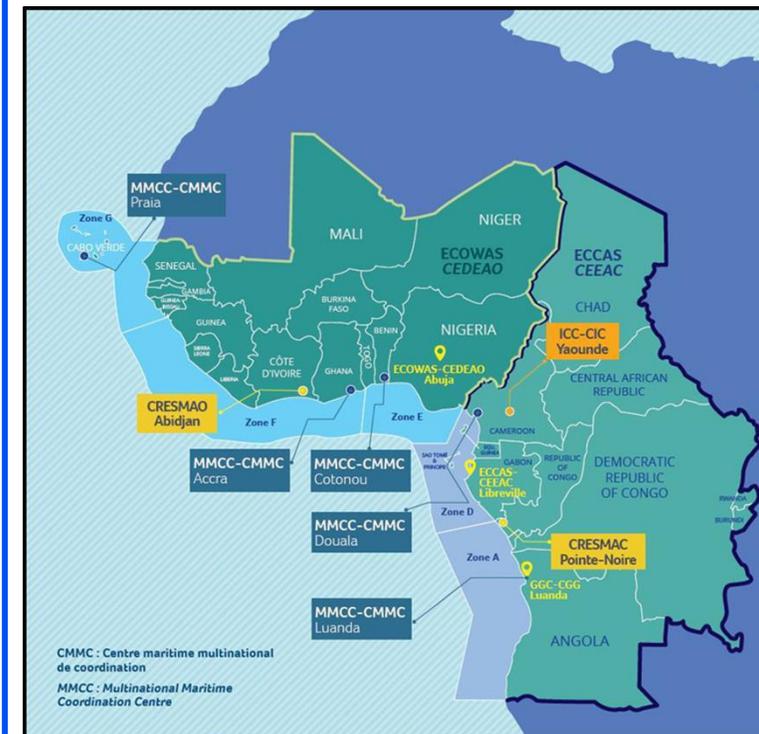
OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power
- Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean

COORDINATED MARITIME PRESENCE (CMP)



- Can be implemented in any maritime area of the world;
- Uses existing EU MS assets present or deployed on a voluntary basis;
- Relies on enhanced coordination of assets, which remain under national command;



OUTLINE

- Challenges

- EU-NATO Relationship

- EU Global Strategy

- EU Borders - FRONTEX

- EU Naval Operation IRINI

- EU-Turkish issues

- EU Smart Power

- Strategic Compass

- Defending alone
the EU Borders

- Cementing security and
stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- ☐ Challenges
- ☐ EU-NATO Relationship
- ☐ EU Global Strategy
- ☐ EU Borders - FRONTEX
- ☐ EU Naval Operation IRINI
- ☐ EU-Turkish issues
- ☐ EU Smart Power
- Strategic Compass
 - ☐ Defending alone the EU Borders
 - ☐ Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean

For EU's global role and higher security profile, three strategic/political factors are necessary:

- ✓ **Political credibility in decision making.**
- ✓ **“Strategic Autonomy”**
- **Real – Dynamic troop deployment capabilities in time with the necessary organization of forces**

OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU Naval Operation IRINI
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power
- Strategic Compass
- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU Naval Operation IRINI
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power-
Strategic Compass
- Defending alone
the EU Borders
- Cementing security and
stability in E. Mediterranean



OUTLINE

- Challenges
- EU-NATO Relationship
- EU Global Strategy
- EU Borders - FRONTEX
- EU Naval Operation IRINI
- EU-Turkish issues
- EU Smart Power

Strategic Compass

- Defending alone the EU Borders
- Cementing security and stability in E. Mediterranean



“Threats and Challenges to EU external Borders – The role of EU in protection security and Defence of its Member-States”



Questions?