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**The contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass in a collective action perspective: A study on the establishment of the Strategic Compass through the collective action perspective**

Plaisier, Bas

**Citation**

Plaisier, B. (2022). *The contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass in a collective action perspective: A study on the establishment of the Strategic Compass through the collective action perspective.*

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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# **The contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass in a collective action perspective**

A study on the establishment of the Strategic Compass through the collective  
action perspective



## **Master thesis**

B.J.C.H. Plaisier

Leiden University

Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs

MSc Public Administration: Economics and Regulation

Thesis supervisor: Dr. Jaap Reijling

Word count: 24.399

## *“Europe is in danger.”*

This sentence has been used repeatedly by documents from the European Union since 2020 to emphasise the need to act in Europe. Europe wants to be prepared against the threats that could bring instability. To give direction to this, a programme called the Strategic Compass has been set up. This study examines whether the Netherlands' contribution to this programme can be explained based on the collective action perspective.

Writing this thesis has been a process that I have been engaged in since January 2022, during which I have learned a lot about how to conduct research appropriately and about the European Defence and Security Policy in general. The process was not done without help, so I would like to thank those who helped me during my research. First, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr Jaap Reijling, for his advice and guidance during this research on the Strategic Compass. This has undoubtedly helped me to complete my master's thesis successfully.

In addition, I would like to thank Jan Roede, Joost van Iersel, Iric van Doorn and the people who have contributed to this study anonymously. Thanks to their willingness to participate in this research, this study has been made possible, and relevant insights have emerged during the conversations.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to see if the collective action perspective can explain the contribution of the Netherlands to this Strategic Compass. The Strategic Compass was set up to give the European Union a direction for a common defence policy, enabling the European Union to act more independently and be better prepared. This study looked at the Strategic Compass from three levels: the national, EU, and international levels. Additional factors were added that play a mediating role in international defence cooperation to see if these were also essential in the case of the Strategic Compass. The levels mentioned above and factors were examined through document analysis and six interviews with actively involved policy advisors, experts, and an active officer in the Armed Forces. One of the most important findings of this study is that there is a realisation within the European Union that the organisation must take responsibility for its defence policy and that the Strategic Compass can provide a direction for the EU which has been missing. In addition, the Netherlands has not contributed enough in recent years and is now improving this with a more active role and investment in defence. Therefore, the Strategic Compass fits well with the policy the Dutch government wants to implement. The study shows that the collective action perspective can be successfully used to explain the contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass. Nevertheless, according to the document and interview analysis, several factors were essential, including trust, standardisation, sovereignty, and interoperability. Based on this research, the study recommends that the collective action perspective be used more often to analyse European forms of cooperation, such as the missions of the Rapid Deployment Capacity. In addition, the study recommends exploring the opinions of soldiers currently active in international missions to see how they view cooperation with other armed forces. Finally, it indicates why the Netherlands should take its active role seriously and follow the example of France and Germany.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

*AIV* – Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken (Advisory Council on International Affairs)

*CFSP* - Common Foreign and Security Policy

*CSDP* - Common Security and Defence Policy

*EDA* – European Defence Agency

*EDC* – European Defence Community

*EEAS* - European External Action Service

*EDF* – European Defence Fund

*EPF* – European Peace Facility

*ESA* – European Space Agency

*ESDP* – European Security and Defence Policy

*EU* – European Union

*FAC* – Foreign Affairs Council Configuration

*GATT* – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

*HR* – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

*IR* – International relations theory

*LI* – Liberal Intergovernmentalism

*MFF* – Multiannual Financial Framework

*MPCC* – Military Planning and Conduct Capability

*NATO* – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

*OCCAR* – Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation

*PESCO* – Permanent Structured Cooperation

*RDC* – Rapid Deployment Capacity

*SG NATO* – Secretary General of NATO

*WTO* – World Trade Organization

*WU* – Western Union

*WUDO* – Western Union Defence Organization

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background of the problem**

There are ever more intense threats to the European Union. Terrorists are now also present on the web, and military threats from Russia are also creating unstable times in Europe. Strategically, there is also increasing competition due to an increasingly multipolar world order, which is a geopolitical situation with different power centres. This is why the current High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, fears for the security of the European Union (EU). After the Cold War, the United States had been seen as a unipolar power at the top. However, with China's growing economic influence and Russia's desire to gain more influence, Europe can not stay behind strategically (EEAS, 2022; EUISS & ESDC, 2022; De Aguiar Patriota, 2017). The EU must have a common security and defence strategy to remain significant in the world order. While once the enemy was on the other side of a field, it is now essential to devise a land-, air-, space-, cyber- and sea strategy (EUISS & ESDC, 2022). For decades, the EU has been trying to establish a common security and defence strategy (EDA, n.d.; Borrell, 2021). There are several reasons why the EU wants this. A common security and defence culture and addressing some of the weaknesses of the European Security and Defence Policy are the most important ones. By generating a strategy, the EU wants to improve mobility, react more decisively when needed, and enhance the cooperation between the EU Member States at the security and defence level (Koenig, 2020). The Dutch government has not always favoured such forms of collaboration without the United States. Still, in January 2022, the Minister of Defence, Kajsa Ollongren, indicated that what is now being proposed, namely the establishment of a rapid deployment force, is beneficial for the Netherlands (Dietvorst, 2019; Ollongren, 2022).

Past collaborations between EU Member States have hardly achieved the hoped-for effect (EDA, n.d.). To comprehend the developments in this area, it is helpful to look at the treaties signed after the Second World War. In the aftermath of World War II, the United Kingdom and France signed the Treaty of Dunkirk. They pledged to defend each other under the guise of the Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance against a possible attack from Germany. This was the first step toward European defence cooperation (EDA, n.d.). Not long after the Treaty of Dunkirk was signed, the foundation of the Western Union (WU) took place with the Western Union Defence Organisation (WUDO) as its military arm. The countries that were a part of this were France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium and the United

Kingdom. In Article IV of the Treaty of Brussels, which was part of the implementation of the WU, there was a mutual defence clause:

*“If any of the High Contracting Parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other High Contracting Parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power”* (EDA, n.d.).

With this Treaty, the countries indicated their willingness to help each other. However, there were many noises about doing this on a larger scale, with the whole of Europe and in a more intensive way. Eventually, in 1950, French Prime Minister Rene Pleven submitted a proposal for the European Defence Community (EDC). The EDC would make a European Army possible with supranational authority and a joint budget. Most countries supported the EDC, which would maximise the European military potential. The cooperation did not work out as France, the initiator of the treaty, rejected it and did not even want to discuss it any further (EDA, n.d.). The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was established not long after that, which had to fulfil approximately the same function. Still, the United States and other non-European countries were included (EDA, n.d.). After trying various cooperative ventures such as the Western European Armaments Group and OCCAR, the Maastricht Treaty announcing the European Union was signed in 1992. This led to a new European integration stage and standard foreign and security policies.

The European Union wanted to fulfil its role on the global stage (European Parliament, n.d.). The EU needed to have autonomous action backed by credible military forces to respond to international crises. All Member States agreed on this, which led to the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which was part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) by the European Union. The ESDP changed into the Common Defence and Security Policy in 2009 when the Treaty of Lisbon was signed (EDA, n.d.; European Parliament, n.d.). This Treaty also stated that the Member States should assist when a Member state is attacked by terrorists or victims of a natural or manufactured disaster, similar to the Treaty mentioned earlier of Brussels. The CSDP was founded to form a common defence for the EU and enhance the cooperation between the Member States to preserve peace, prevent conflict and strengthen international security. And in an era of increasing strategic competition between states and various security threats, Europe needs to maintain adequate protection



(Borrell, 2021). The European Union and NATO have faced significant challenges in the past years, such as the United Kingdom withdrawing from the European Union.

In June 2020, the EU Defence Ministers agreed to create the Strategic Compass for security and defence, which would boost the current CSDP. The Strategic Compass will develop a shared strategic culture and clarify EU defence cooperation (Zandee, Stoetman & Deen, 2021). In this two-year process, the EU Member States worked together with the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Commission, and the European Defence Agency (EDA) to form a strategy that sets clear targets and milestones for the next 5-10 years (EEAS, 2022). It addressed the weaknesses of the CSDP, the threats and challenges for the EU and outlined the steps to become more successful in providing security. The EU wants to be prepared for complex security threats, conflicts and sources of instability resulting from cyberattacks, manipulation of information, outer space competition, climate change and terrorist attacks (Koenig, 2019). However, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an even more significant threat to Europe's security (Zandee, 2018; Hoekstra & Ollongren, 2022). Josep Borrell, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President, who plays an essential role in the establishment and process of the new strategy for the EU, stated the following:

*“For EU diplomacy to succeed, we need to put the means behind our words. We must be ambitious and result-oriented. The Strategic Compass proposes ways and means for the EU to handle the challenges it faces and become a credible security provider (EEAS, 2020).”*

The Strategic Compass was also initiated to avoid risk, namely strategic shrinkage. The EU is necessary at the international level for security and defence, but it rarely operates in practice. The European Commission President, Ursula von Leyen, also stated that the EU must move from a 'defence ecosystem' to a genuine 'European Defence Union'. This is something that Joe Biden supported, President of the United States, because he opted for *“a stronger and more capable European defence which makes a positive contribution to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to NATO (Borrell, 2021).”* With the establishment of the Strategic Compass, Europe will no longer be a bystander in the hypercompetitive world. The Strategic Compass builds on the projects and instruments that have been implemented over the years. Borrell states that the increased cooperation between member states will strengthen the operational capacity of the EU. The Strategic Compass will be a guide for preparation, decision and action to make the EU a security provider that can protect the values and interests of the

European Union (Borrell, 2021; Zandee et al., 2021). In November 2020, a threat analysis was followed by strategic dialogues between the Member States. At the end of 2021, the first drafts would be established before adopting the Strategic Compass in March 2022 (EEAS, 2022). However, the invasion of Russia caused the concepts to become outdated. That is why several members demanded a new draft with substantial impositions on Russia as the main threat to European security, increased EU-NATO cooperation, military mobility, and more ambition in joint defence capabilities development (Hoekstra & Ollongren, 2022).

The Strategic Compass is an international program where many actors and underlying interests play a significant role. Marks & Hooghe (2001) indicate that the Principal-agent problem is also actual in European partnerships. This is because national governments, the principals in this story, do not always have the same motives. The result is that the European Commission and the European Court of Justice are installed as agents to ensure that everyone participates. Because there are many principals, each with a veto for a change, this can cause decision-making to be slow and direct action to be impossible. Therefore, because all treaties are vaguely drafted, countries often find themselves on a playing field over the crafted words. The Strategic Compass indicates that direct joint action can be taken, and governments will work together intensively (Borrell, 2021). However, how decisions are made, such as establishing unanimity, often causes policy processes to break down or take a long time. This process is further disrupted by information asymmetry, whereby countries can withhold certain information to have a relative advantage. This makes for an unhealthy relationship (Marks & Hooghe, 2001). Since many European countries have already worked together and several operations have been completed, it is unlikely that there will be mutual distrust. The question that emerges here is who are the main actors and their motives behind this step to cooperate more internationally in the field of defence. A theoretical perspective is needed to shed more light on this as a basis for analysis.

Therefore, this study about the Strategic Compass will be conducted through the theoretical lens of the collective action perspective (Ginsberg & Penksa, 2012; Nováky, 2014). Nováky's (2014) paper about the deployment of CSDP military operations showed that this perspective reveals the main actors and motives behind these operations. It can be seen as an addition to the International Relations (IR) theory which is often used in many articles about supranational cooperation. Liberalism, Realism and constructivism have different views on European integration and international collaboration, which will be elaborated on further in the next chapter (Maher, 2021). In addition to these paradigms, Ginsberg and Penksa (2012) have adopted a six-level analysis of studying CSDP. In Nováky's (2014) study of Ginsberg & Penksa's collective action perspective, he applied the theory to understand the deployment of CSDP military missions. In their book, Ginsberg & Penksa (2012) have come up with six levels: Domestic politics, Elite actors, National interests, European interests, the International system, and Global/transnational phenomena. To keep it analytically manageable, Nováky used three levels in his study.

This study will mainly use the same three levels to explain the origin of the Strategic Compass. Since EU member states, the European Union and its committees and other supranational organisations are essential to establish the Strategic Compass. Therefore, the European, international, and national levels are relevant in the present context, which corresponds to the levels used by Nováky. The first level in which the Strategic Compass will be analysed is the international level, where events that result in threats to European countries or citizens lead to operations deployment. This involves attempting to attack values rather than surviving an attack on a country, which is becoming less common in the modern world. As a result, there are relatively few CSDP operations (Zandee, 2018). The Strategic Compass will be implemented to boost the CSDP (Borrell, 2021). Still, the international level states that the nature and intensity of the threat are essential whether the EU will counteract it. The next level is the national level, where governments are responsible for their foreign and security policy. States benefit from times of peace and regional stability, but these can be seen as public goods which are non-exclusive and non-rival. This can lead to a prisoner's dilemma problem because countries try to benefit from the prosperous times while investing as little as possible. An example is that not all European countries contribute to a particular peace mission, but all countries benefit from regional stability. However, a government can also take the honour if they accomplish their task well. Therefore, the interests of a country play a significant role in cooperation on such a scale and the potential gain a country retrieves from participating in specific military operations. The third level is the EU level, where CSDP military operations

are initiated and launched. Member States and the Council are the main actors on this level because they decide, for different reasons, which military or security operations will take place. Member States are constantly compromising each other as long as the member states return the favour in the future, which can be described as European solidarity (Ginsberg & Penksa, 2012; Nováky, 2014).

This study of the rationale and contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass also argues that the collective action perspective falls short in explaining the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass. Indeed, there are still important factors in the drafting and implementing of international defence cooperation. These include trust, reliability and solidarity. But also the defence cultures of countries and the number of parties participating in global alliances. In the article by Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016), these factors are mentioned in their research on how European defence collaborations have taken place. The report shows what elements have been essential in CSDP operations and what were barriers, making it relevant to include them in this study as mediating variables. This is because the Strategic Compass is to boost CSDP and will also use (military) operations. In the next chapter, a more detailed elaboration will be made of the reasoning behind the shortcomings of the collective action perspective and the factors of Zandee, Drent & Hendriks that can assist in this process.

## **1.2 Research question**

This study mainly focuses on the contribution and functioning of the Netherlands regarding the Strategic Compass. The Netherlands has been one of the main actors in Europe since the post-World War II treaties (EDA, n.d.; Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). Also, there is a division in the country regarding the European Union, a European army and support for an additional security organisation without countries such as the United States (Dietvorst, 2019; Ollongren, 2022). This, along with the collective action perspective of Ginsberg and Penksa (2012) & Nováky's (2014) application of it, leads to the following research question:

*To what extent can the contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass be explained from a collective action perspective?*

### **1.3 Academic and societal relevance**

Since the Strategic Compass is a program that has only been in existence for two years, little research has been done on its implementations and effects. Most of the existing research and papers that covered the Strategic Compass addressed recommendations or elements that the EU must include for this strategy to work (Mölling & Schütz, 2020; Fiott, 2021; Koenig, 2019). Over the years, there has been an increasing amount of research into the functioning of the CSDP and its operations (Nováky, 2014). This research is in line with that since the Strategic Compass is intended to boost the CSDP so that member states cooperate more on security and defence. Based on the collective action perspective, this study examines the contribution of the Netherlands to this process and the feasibility of giving the CSDP a boost. This is something that was not yet explicitly addressed in the literature. The collective action perspective is still little used in the literature because the International Relations theory (IR) is often used when analysing European integration or supranational collaboration (Maher, 2021). Using the collective action perspective when looking at the Strategic Compass, the academic literature can be enriched with insights on European cooperation in security and defence.

European integration in defence and security is currently a much-debated issue in Europe, making this research even more socially relevant. The existing studies give broad recommendations (Mölling & Schütz, 2020; Fiott, 2021). However, no research has been done into the Netherlands' contribution and commitment to this programme. Therefore, this study can offer some point of reference by looking at where the Netherlands' ambition lies and whether it can be realised in a current manner. The developments in Eastern Europe put Europe at risk, and therefore a programme that gives the CSDP a boost is helpful, but it has to be anchored and balanced in the right way (Zandee, 2018; Hoekstra & Ollongren, 2022). Contributing to a European security and defence strategy must be supported by society. By assessing the Strategic Compass with the different levels, this study can look at the ambition of Europe and the Netherlands and how helpful the country's contribution and objectives are to the Strategic Compass. The study can provide insights and previously overlooked perspectives that other countries can use when implementing the Strategic Compass in their national policies.

The theoretical framework with the main concepts will be described in the next chapter. The methodology and operationalisation of this study will be addressed in the third chapter of this study. The fourth chapter of this study will be the analytical part. In the fifth and final chapter, conclusions, reflections on the result of the research and recommendations for future research will be presented.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the literature related to International Relations (IR), collective action perspective, and factors that influence the willingness to participate in international collaboration and multi-level governance. By addressing existing literature, possible explanations for the contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass can be identified. The theoretical framework concludes with the conceptual model.

### 2.1 International Relations theory

When a great-power conflict happened worldwide, namely, the Cold War, the International Relations theory (IR) was published in 1987. There was more attention to studies and theories that explained how the world worked and how international organisations and transnational actors interacted, eventually called world politics. Different scholars began writing about the complexity of the relationship between two or more countries, including globalisation, diplomatic-strategic relations and cross-border transactions (Daddow, 2017). After the establishment of many multi-national organisations with different countries, the integration of Europe was at the top when establishing the EU (Viotti & Kauppi, 2019). In this part, the existing literature about why the EU, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and the Strategic Compass were established will be addressed based on the IR. The first paradigm that Czaputowicz (2014) of the IR is realism, one of the most dominant theories of international relations. Realists believe that the European Union is the field where states interact as central actors. Furthermore, material factors caused the emergence of ESDP and thus not the norms and security culture. The most vital states like France, Germany, and Great Britain keep participating in the cooperation as long as they increase their influence. European countries wanted to fill in the security vacuum after the Cold War to avoid a security dilemma, increase Europe's capacity to run missions and be less dependent on the United States. This ties in with European Strategic Autonomy (ESA), which belongs alongside a European army and common European strategic culture. This indicates that Europe should take on a more significant role, take on more in the area of security and become a better partner (Stoetman, 2021, Franke & Varma, 2019). Macron, the president of France, for example, is in favour of this and shows this in the following quote: "*The United States will only respect us as allies if we are earnest, and if we are sovereign with respect to our defence (...) we need to continue to build our independence for ourselves* (Budryk, 2020)."

The latter is still important as it is included in establishing the Strategic Compass. Czaputowicz (2014) also talks about the weaker countries joining cooperation like the ESDP because they want to share the benefits of the international order. To conclude this paradigm, the realists believe that the global political system is a field where states desire power for their use. The second paradigm many scholars discuss when looking at the EU, NATO, or another supranational organisation is liberalism. According to this paradigm, institutions will restrict the influence of the strongest countries, help weaker countries express their opinion and narrow the anarchy in the EU-field down. The implementation of the ESDP was introduced to complement NATO and liberals state that the realists ignore the impact the institutional ESDP has over states. There is a common understanding of security and defence problems by consulting and sharing information and opinions with other European countries (Czaputowicz, 2014). This also results in the prevention of conflicts within the European Union and increases the military potential, which the Strategic Compass is the result of. Liberals believe in international cooperation as long as it benefits multiple actors. Institutions play a vital role in shaping policy choices and preferences in the global political system. The following perspective that will be addressed is constructivism, where a strategic culture is built on multiple shared meanings that form a country's perception, communication, and activities. Security and threats are dependent on the dominant culture of the system and are constructed through social processes. Constructivists say that people's behaviour and beliefs are shared within the ESDP and act according to how they perceive national security issues at a particular moment in time. According to this paradigm, shared experiences of military missions and shared risk assessment within institutions create: "*a normative space necessary to shape the European strategic culture* (Czaputowicz, 2014; Meyer, 2005)." The ESDP is not dominated, which realists would like to see, by the logic of the zero-sum game but by the shared norms and values determined by the member states' perceptions and beliefs (Czaputowicz, 2014).

With liberals highlighting the internal factors such as political processes, constructivists the strategic culture and socialisation processes and realists the power interactions, each paradigm has its characterisations. The paradigms have evolved, and new versions have been introduced. Still, the paradigms were part of the international relations theories widely used when studying the European Union, primarily until the mid-1980s. There was a turning point in looking at the EU after 1986. The studies were mainly from international relations theory when the EU was treated as an international organisation like NATO in the first phase. However, with the introduction of the Single European Act of 1986, the EU boosted its integration in the form of the single market program. This resulted in the EU having more

competencies and eliminating several decision-making procedures. This resulted in the EU being more flexible and facilitating faster integration because the use of the veto was stopped in some areas. Also, the second phase of theorising about the EU began with this Act, and since then, the EU has had many parallels with domestic political systems. This was because of the nature and the development the EU made. The autonomy and authority of states in the EU changed due to these changes, and the scope and depth of policymaking increased massively (Hooghe & Marks, 2001).

## **2.2 Collective action perspective**

Nováky's (2014) article was covered in the previous chapter briefly. In this chapter, a deeper look will be taken at the collective action perspective used to analyse the military operations of the CSDP. It also discusses that it was not initially assumed that the European Union would also carry out military missions due to the sensitivity and complexity. Nováky (2014) also discusses international relations theory with the earlier three paradigms. According to the author, Realists would judge CSDP missions by power and interests. This also indicates that these operations see the independence of the EU from the US. According to the author, liberals suggest that government interests drive the operations, as governments want to be re-elected. Pohl (2013) states that *"their foreign policy stances reflect attempts to satisfy their home constituencies and dodge potential blame."* The media and the elite who control foreign affairs have a significant role here. According to Nováky (2014), the constructivists would see norms, values, and culture as reasons to engage in the operations. In addition, the emergence of European strategic culture is also a cause of the military missions, something that corresponds to the implementation of the Strategic Compass. The different levels have already been discussed in the previous chapter. These levels come from Ginsberg & Penksa's (2012) book, which presents a multi-level analysis of the impact of the CSDP operations that are special in their scope and depth. The model represents the internal and external effects of the CSDP operations on the EU, its member states, the states in which the missions took place and the United Nations and NATO. With this, it is indicated that because the EU has shown its value with missions, more is expected from it. Therefore, the levels discussed in the book will be relevant for this study of the Strategic Compass, as several missions should result from this. By examining these levels, the contribution and motive of the Netherlands to this more intensive form of international cooperation on defence policy can be explained. It also becomes clear that



these levels fall short when it comes to explaining the motives of the Netherlands, but more will be said about any other factors later in this chapter.

To explain where these levels come from, the authors indicate that the EU decision-making model for foreign affairs is multifaceted and essential for forming policy within the EU. This model, therefore, means how interests can be promoted from within the Netherlands. However, it remains a simplified version of reality, shown below as a model (Ginsberg & Penksa, 2012). But the Netherlands, as a member state, would have the right to initiate a CSDP action. The main actors here appear to be the member states, the European Council, Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), European External Action Service (EEAS), other bodies of the Council, and the European Commission - and the union leadership (Ginsberg & Penksa, 2012).

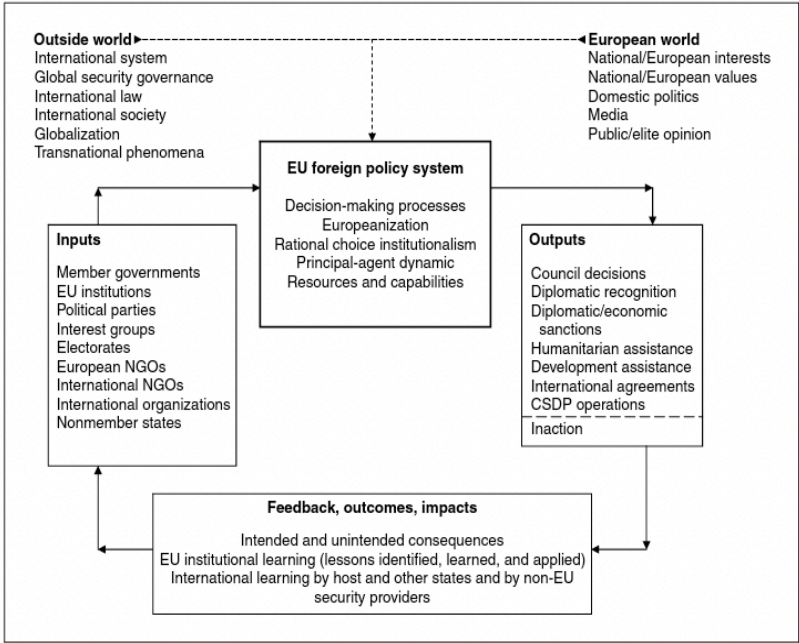


Figure 1. EU decision-making model for foreign affairs and security policy. (Ginsberg & Penksa, 2012, p. 36)

Ginsberg & Penksa (2012) explain that the neorealist, institutional, and social constructivist perspectives are not enough to justify the political and social levels of government decisions regarding CSDP operations. Therefore, the following six levels have been established that international relations theory should help to explain the motives and perspectives:

1. *domestic politics/public opinion, which affects CSDP decision-making through national governments and non-governmental organisations at the EU level;*
2. *elite actors – decision-makers within member governments and EU bodies – who drive or put the brakes on CSDP actions;*
3. *national interests and values – enduring and unique foreign policy preferences of member states that mirror political culture – that influence the choice of CSDP actions;*
4. *European interests and values – unique preferences common to the EU member states and institutions and mirrored in the European Security Strategy –which influence CSDP decisions;*
5. *international systems – the pattern of relations among states during given periods of time – which heavily influence the scope for EU foreign policy and CSDP action. The Union responds to the needs of states and interstate organisations, but it is also influenced by them. When international systemic change occurs, the scope for EU agencies in foreign affairs and security may tighten or widen;*
6. *global/transnational/borderless phenomena, which influence the union to respond and provide opportunities for the Union to gain influence in new areas, such as global health issues, global norms for human and minority rights and human security, transnational terrorism and crime, and climate change (Ginsberg & Penksa, 2012).*

The authors mainly look at the underlying thoughts of CSDP missions through the levels. This study looks at how these different levels contributed to the Strategic Compass as a program itself. Since there have not yet been EU operations that can be characterised from the perspective of the Strategic Compass, it is a new way of looking at Europe-wide cooperation. The primary levels also used by Nováky (2014) will possibly be able to explain the motives and possible contribution of the Netherlands, along with factors such as trust and similar defence cultures.

Nováky (2014) mainly addresses the international level, the national level, and the European level. Here the international level is the level where the particular events cause the deployment of military missions to be justified. However, not all military missions are supported or explainable in the same way, according to Palm & Crum's article (2019), which

will be addressed in the next paragraph. The second level, the national level, is where governments affect their preferences based on utility. Lastly, the EU level is discussed, where member states seek compromises that match national preferences. Nováky's (2014) article has shown that a multi-level collective action approach can be used to explain the missions of the CSDP. Since the Strategic Compass is supposed to boost the CSDP, it is helpful to analyse past missions to find out what the exact interpretation is and what consequences this has for Europe and the Netherlands. The authors conclude that member states supported operations as it would be helpful for the government and the interests of countries. In addition, member states were constantly compromising when interests clashed. The United Kingdom also made noises to do anti-piracy operations with NATO instead of with the EU and not put up a headquarters. Still, the United Kingdom saw that the operations would give the CSDP and EU credibility.

Palm & Crum (2019) continue in their paper about the role of the European Union and how it has changed over the years. This article was released after Nováky's (2015) article, as Nováky talks about 9 EU military missions instead of 12. The report also focuses on the EU's military missions and how they then provided that change. After the 1950s, when the creation of the European Defence Community failed, not having military cooperation was not seen as a weakness. With the establishment of the European Common Security and Defence Policy, there have been 12 operations since 2013. This article systematically looks at all operations' justification and policy embeddedness to see the underlying patterns. They conclude that the first missions, from 2003 to 2007, had primarily value-based goals with peace agreements and bringing civilians to safety. The political embedding of the operations at that time differed. The missions after 2008 had more political embedding but were more focused on utility. An example mentioned here is the mission EUNAVFOR Atalanta, where the goal was to protect vessels carrying food to Somalia. However, it was added to this mandate that the commercial trade routes and boats had to be secured against piracy and robbery, so economic interests played a role in the operation. This is also the case with EUTM Mali and EUNAVFOR Med Sophia, where thus trade goods, countering terrorism, and border security were the main reasons for the mission.

The article also indicates that there has not been a mission driven by military logic and utility alone, which aligns with the paradigm of realism. The shift from justified tasks based on value to justification regarding utility indicates that the EU wants to get more out of its missions. They suggest in the article that the EU's missions are moving more towards Liberal Power, where economic interests and tools play a more significant role than security or non-military meanings. However, fewer missions have been done over time, contradicting the previous statement. (Palm & Crum, 2019).

### **2.3 Various factors influencing international defence cooperation**

A critical theory of international relations and integration is liberal intergovernmentalism (LI), developed by Moravcsik (1993). The significance of LI for this Strategic Compass study is that this theory indicates that rational individuals and groups with independent interests and autonomy have essential actors in the international polity. This domestically defined state interest is where this theory differs from the other paradigms discussed earlier. The EU, according to this theory, is the most successful integrated political regime through compromise, preservation of national interests, majority voting and delegation of tasks to autonomous institutions. There are several levels at which decisions are made: formulating national interests, which may be based on economic or geopolitical considerations. After this, there are discussions between countries about the common goals where governments try to impose their preferences, also called interstate bargaining. Finally, they consider whether decisions should be delegated or worked on together.

With the establishment of the Strategic Compass, the EU and the EU member states have already demonstrated the need to work together towards a security and defence policy. The policy document of this Strategic Compass states the following about this:

*“The EU must become faster and more capable and effective in deciding and acting. This requires political will. With unanimity as the norm for decision-making having military or defence implications, we need more rapidity, robustness and flexibility to undertake the full range of crisis management tasks. (...)”*

The EU Battlegroups will be used more often, and an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) will be established, with 5000 troops at the ready when needed, varying from air, land and sea forces. Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016) investigated how European defence collaborations have taken place. As a result, the fixed formations with the Eurocorps, the Franco-German Brigade and Belgian-Netherlands Navy Cooperation, for example, have been examined, and temporary operations or even training cooperations. This showed that collaboration on a smaller scale is more common nowadays. For example, the Netherlands has set up the 1st German-Netherlands Army Corps with Germany. Still, there is also cooperation between the Dutch Air Mobile Brigade and the German Division Schnelle Kräfte. The European Air Transport Command in Eindhoven is the best in the test for international defence cooperation. Indeed, it has been shown that a permanent transfer of command authority from the national to the international level is possible, but this can be withdrawn thanks to arrangements. This has led to more efficient use of air transport and air tanker capacity. In this study, the following twelve criteria were used to look at the collaborations (Zandee, Drent & Hendriks, 2016):

1. *Trust, reliability and solidarity*
2. *Sovereignty and autonomy*
3. *The similarity of strategic cultures*
4. *Geography and history*
5. *Number of partners*
6. *Countries and troops of similar size and quality*
7. *Top-down and bottom-up*
8. *Mind-set, defence culture and organisation*
9. *Defence planning alignment*
10. *Standardisation and interoperability*
11. *Realism, clarity and the degree of seriousness of intentions*
12. *Involvement of parliament*

In addition, the following ways of working together were considered: Multinational deployable headquarters, modular operational formations, integrated operational formations, permanent transfer of command and role specialisation. The study has shown that cooperative formations often cannot be reduced to 1 type. For example, the Franco-German Brigade combines a modular and integrated operational formation (Zandee, Drent & Hendriks, 2016).

Furthermore, this article concludes with a particular conclusion per criteria. For this study of the Strategic Compass, the most critical findings are included here in this section.

1. First, trust, reliability, and solidarity are the basis for success. There must be a shared sense of responsibility where trust and solidarity will grow over time. By building on each other, multinational defence cooperation can work, But the authors acknowledge that working together in this way is more difficult anyway. A situation must be created in which the participating parties all benefit.
2. The conceptions regarding sovereignty no longer hold. According to this study, countries are increasingly willing to transfer their national power, thus becoming dependent on partners and their military capabilities, which is challenging for countries.
3. The similarity of strategic cultures was also significant but not crucial, and an example of this is with the Franco-German Brigade.
4. Geography and history do not appear to be important factors, as these barriers appear to be overcome in practice.
5. The type of cooperation is more important than the number of participants. For instance, it was not necessarily the case that it becomes better for everyone when more countries participate.
6. According to the study, comparable size and quality are also not always crucial. With several larger and smaller countries, other factors were more critical. In the case of the Franco-German Brigade, the similar size created some inefficiency as two languages were constantly used.
7. Another critical element is top-down and bottom-up, both of which are required. Bringing politics and practice together is very important, and local parties are essential in this, at the start of a project and maintain the cooperation.
8. The mindset, defence culture and organisation help a lot in defence cooperation, which fit the first criteria.
9. Defence planning alignment was necessary only in 1 of the case studies, so this factor is also not seen as crucial in this study. This involves changing the priority from 'national first' to 'with partner first'.
10. Standardisation and interoperability are also crucial as a successful collaboration can be used in another situation with the same resources. This leads to cost savings and task specialisation. According to the study, this could be important, as it also applies to education, training, and exercises.

11. All case studies also showed that realism, clarity and taking intentions seriously are essential. However, the Eurocorps, for example, is sometimes labelled as symbolic.
12. In some instances, the involvement of parliaments is essential, namely in operations that require parliamentary approval. Parliaments are often involved early in the process, as otherwise, it will lead to unnecessary setbacks.

One factor that can be seen as an obstacle is when operations are transferred from NATO to the EU or vice versa, which can cause adjustment problems due to the different characteristics of the organisations. This article has thus been able to systematically analyse what essential factors in ESDP missions and what are still essential barriers were. (Zandee, Drent & Hendriks, 2016).

Another analysis of the ESDP's missions by Keukeleire (2009) from the European Union indicates certain shortcomings and challenges during its growth. Paying attention to quality rather than quantity is one of them. In specific missions, the main focus was finding enough soldiers and civilians. Another challenge is increasing the efficiency with interaction with other local and international actors and training for riskier missions. In addition, the author indicates that the scope of CSDP operations is too small to make a difference. Partly because of the dependence and cooperation with NATO, the addition of the ESDP can be considered symbolic. Keukeleire (2009) also states that the participation of some countries has more to do with stimulating European integration than with having an impact. Since the missions only started in 2003, according to the author, it is impressive that the EU has upgraded its foreign policy with the CSDP missions. Therefore, the Strategic Compass is in line with the direction that the EU is currently taking. However, an overall approach to foreign policy is still lacking; for example, there are still many differences of opinion, which can be the Achilles heel of the CSDP, significantly when escalating a conflict. These challenges and shortcomings are essential in analysing the use of the Strategic Compass for the Netherlands, as it interfaces with the criteria mentioned above, such as trust, defence planning agreement and how seriously it is taken (Zandee, Drent & Hendriks, 2016).

Van den Doel (2004) focuses more on the role of the Netherlands in this process in his critical article on the military ambitions of the European Union. From the beginning of the 1990s, the Dutch armed forces were changing from a peacekeeping army to an expeditionary army. Political aspirations and national interests drive the size and tasks of the armed forces rather than a threatening enemy. The Defence Policy Document of 1991 provided the first downsizing of the armed forces, followed by budget cuts two years later. The article dates from 2004, and at the time, NATO was still the anchor for security and defence policy, which was

also dependent on the input of the United States. But it was already stated from the political side that the EU should have a complementary role to NATO operations. Therefore there was no competition between the EU and NATO. Since then, the Netherlands has been a proponent of task specialisation, whereby the budget is used efficiently. The EU Battlegroups are an example of this, but there has to be political support. Incidentally, the author criticises the battlegroup concept, given that one battlegroup limits the possibilities of executing EU missions. Risky operations require multiple battlegroups. The expansion of the Union and the integration in the field of defence policy were, according to Van den Doel (2004), promising developments for the Netherlands itself. The Dutch armed forces are trained and equipped to contribute to multinational collaborations. However, the EU was not yet ready for heavier and large-scale operations. Germany and the United Kingdom would be essential allies for structured permanent alliances, according to Van den Doel (2004). Therefore, the creation of the 1st German/Dutch Corps is in line with Van den Doel's expectations. The author indicates that the Netherlands was too dependent on the large countries, but no arguments are given for this (Van den Doel, 2004).

Koenig (2020) does see the Strategic Compass as a real opportunity to address the weaknesses of EU security and defence policy. In doing so, enforcement and keeping the goal in mind are essential. Koenig points out that if the EU makes the same mistakes again as with other collaborations, the Strategic Compass will only be seen as the following paper that nothing is done with. When these obstacles are addressed and governments want to form a joint strategy culture, it can become an effective tool (Koenig, 2020).

## **2.4 Multi-level governance**

Marks (1992) was the first scholar to use multi-level governance to capture the EU decision making policy. It was tangential to studies which covered comparative politics and international relations theories. The developments in Europe from the 1970s to the 1990s ensured that the subject of European integration became much debated. And with the creation of the European Union and that 11 of the 15 countries became an economic and monetary union, this was only intensified. Hooghe & Marks (2001) have written about this intensification of European integration in several articles. State-centric and multi-level governance models are contrasted in their reports. State-centric governance means that European integration does not touch a state's autonomy. Sovereignty is preserved or reinforced by being a member of the European Union. Through European integration, states try to achieve bargains over each other. Supporters



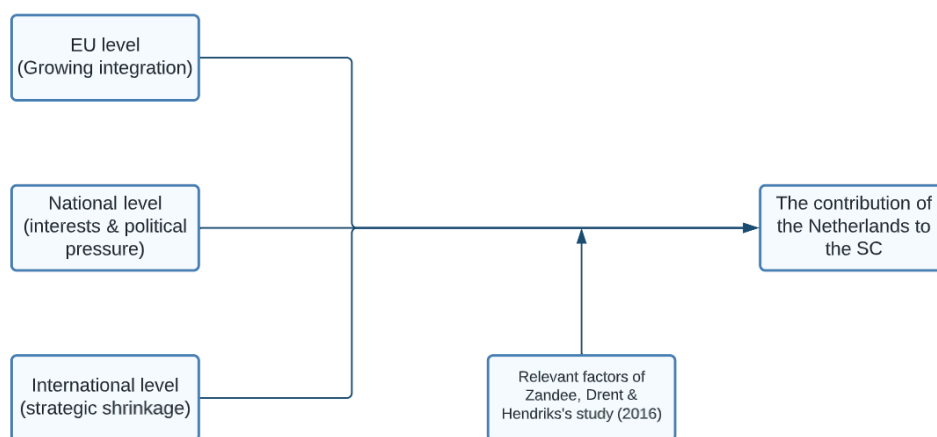
of state-centric governance indicate that supranational organisations exist to help states, but policy outcomes reflect national states' interests and power relations. This, therefore, aligns with the paradigm of realism, in which states value power and are primarily concerned with getting ahead of other national governments. Moreover, the institutions within the European Union ensure that policies do not necessarily have to be adopted. A state can vote against a specific policy, so a country still has autonomy. An important point within the state-centric model is that the formulation of policy within the European Union is also determined by the interests and political pressure of the states. This causes countries to hold on to certain ideals and ideas, making European integration difficult.

This theory about the state-centric model is relevant to this research since states can choose their defence and security policies. Still, the past has shown that multinational cooperation in this area is essential, it is more effective, and countries can learn from each other. This leads to the second model that Marks & Hooghe (2001) discuss, namely, the multi-level governance model. This model does not necessarily reject all elements of the state-centric model; for example, national governments are still important and have a significant stake in the European policy process.

The difference between the models is in the powers in making decisions. For example, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Court of Justice have independent influence over policy-making that does not derive from states and their interests. This model indicates that in addition to the role of states, the independent position at the European level is also explained as policymaking. Moravcsik (1993) noted that collective decision making would increase the control of states because it would enhance the national government's control over policy outcomes. This is because countries can achieve more economic growth, for example, and obtain more security as countries share more information about risks and hazards. This is important to this study since the Strategic Compass is a program from the European Union. It must ensure that the European countries contribute to it and that all parties work towards the same goal.

## 2.5 Conceptual model

A conceptual model was developed based on the various theories discussed in this chapter. The research is done on the motives and contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass. To explain this, the collective action perspective of Ginsberg and Penksa (2012) is used, whereas Nováky (2014) used three levels to describe the CSDP missions. These are the EU-level, which includes the growing integration of European member states. The second level is the national level, where political pressure and differing interests play a role. The third level that will be used to explain the contribution of the Netherlands is the international level, where the concept of strategic shrinkage plays a role. However, this model falls short; in this study, factors are added to understand better why and how the Netherlands can contribute to the Strategic Compass. According to Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016), six critical criteria were chosen when cooperating on defence policy at an international level. In addition, two criteria are essential: the involvement of parliaments and sovereignty and autonomy. But the latter criteria depend on the state's position, where there can be a choice between a state-centric way of governing or multi-level governance where there is more cooperation with other countries. Therefore, in this research, the mentioned criteria will be examined to whether they are also applicable to the Netherlands. Thus, by aligning the different levels of the collective action perspective with criteria that are important for international cooperation to work well, the contribution and motives of the Netherlands to the strategic compass can be explained.



*Figure 2. Conceptual model (Nováky, 2014; Zandee, Drent & Hendrik, 2016).*

### **3. Research design**

This chapter will present how this study was conducted. First, the method will be explained, after which the data collection will be described. This is followed by operationalising the essential concepts and the data analysis. Finally, the reliability and validity of this study will be discussed.

#### **3.1 Method**

The collective action perspective, designed by Ginsberg & Penksa (2012), served as the basis for answering the research question. This allowed for a multi-level look at CSDP operations, which was subsequently done again by Nováky (2014), but more specifically with three levels. These three levels, the EU level, international level and national level, are also reflected in this study. This should serve as a basis for how and why the Netherlands will contribute to the Strategic Compass. A qualitative approach with interviews was chosen to ensure that the lifeworlds and experiences of different groups of respondents are central (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Nováky (2014) discussed the levels connected to the international relations theories with the known paradigms such as neorealism and social constructivism. Ginsberg & Penksa's (2012) book looks even further into the decision-making process of the European Union and the internal and external politics of CSDP missions. Nováky (2014) takes this further and highlights the strength of this model by examining empirical case studies on CSDP. Where the authors use the collective action perspective to explain specific missions, in this study, the collective action perspective is used to describe a multinational program, the Strategic Compass, as this can also be examined from certain levels. However, this perspective falls short, and criteria from the study by Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016) were added. In their research, different ways of European defence collaborations were studied. Using the collective action perspective, it can be examined how and why the contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass can be explained from the different levels.

### 3.2 Data collection

This research will be conducted qualitatively with semi-structured interviews. In this way, respondents can explain why specific issues are more or less important to the Netherlands in contributing to the Strategic Compass. Moreover, the researcher can continue asking questions in the semi-structured interviews when the researcher expects that this will provide new insights for the study. In this way, an expert or policy advisor can be asked to tell more about an experience related to one of the concepts of Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016) or one of the levels of the collective action perspective (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Pot, 2018).

Six interviews were held with policy advisors within the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, experts in European defence cooperation and individuals currently active in the operational branch of Defence. In this way, much information can be gathered about the underlying thoughts and motives on why and how the Netherlands wants to contribute to the Strategic Compass. An overview of the respondents is included below. Several respondents wished to remain anonymous, so they are mentioned in the analysis with a relevant number, such as respondent 1. The origin and purpose of the groups will be explained later in this chapter. Interviews can be helpful since they can ask more questions to bring out the hows and whys, which is not possible with document analysis alone. However, there are also disadvantages to conducting interviews. For example, respondents can be selective in their answers and thus give socially desirable responses. Allowing them to do the interview anonymously gives the respondents the chance to say anything if they want to.

	Name	Job title	Group	Date of interview
1.	Respondent 1	Dutch Representative in Brussels	Actively involved	10 May 2022
2.	Jan Roede	Officer Royal Netherlands Marechaussee	Executor in the Armed Forces	13 May 2022
3.	Iric van Doorn	Vice-President of Eurodefence	Expert on this topic	16 May 2022
4.	Joost van Iersel	Member of Eurodefence	Expert on this topic	16 May 2022
5.	Respondent 5	Policy advisor for the Ministry of Defence in Brussels	Actively involved	19 May 2022
6.	Respondent 6	Senior Policy Advisor Ministry of Defence	Actively involved	20 May 2022

*Figure 3. Overview of the respondents*

The interviews were structured using an interview guide with primarily open-ended questions and some closed-ended questions. The open questions are mainly about the experiences and opinions about the contribution of the Netherlands to defence cooperation on an international level. This allows relevant insights to emerge as respondents talk about their living environment. The closed questions were used to find informative facts that could not be obtained elsewhere. The respondents permitted the interview to be recorded and processed for this study. The first interviewee was a representative in Brussel on behalf of the Netherlands who has a lot of experience at the Ministry of Defence. The second interviewee was Jan Roede, an officer in the Royal Marechaussee, with over 19 years of experience within the Armed Forces. The following interview was with Iric van Doorn and Joost van Iersel together. Both of these men are currently active at Eurodefence. This organisation makes recommendations on defence-related policies to the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament from an independent perspective. The fifth interviewee was also a representative in Brussel on behalf of the Netherlands. The sixth interviewee was a Senior Policy Officer for the Ministry of Defence. The interviews were conducted in Dutch as these were Dutch individuals. Quotes from the interviewees are included in the next chapter, translated into English. The interview transcripts were shared with the thesis supervisor for review. In translating the interviews, the choice was made to stick as closely as possible to the original text, affecting readability but increasing reliability.

In addition to conducting interviews, document analysis was done to understand the situation better and review policy documents. This also increases the credibility of the statements in the study and the conclusions drawn from them (Bowen, 2009). This, therefore, includes official proclamations and announcements from EU bodies, governments, speeches, reports and media pieces. In qualitative research, interviews and document analysis can comprehensively describe a particular phenomenon, such as the Strategic Compass. Furthermore, the period in which the Strategic Compass is discussed is favourable, as many documents are released online. In addition, documents provide broad coverage because it covers an extended period, and the documents are unobtrusive, so they are not influenced by the research process. However, there are also disadvantages, such as the lack of detail, so it is not sufficient to do only document analysis. In addition, false documents can also be chosen, or there are many documents available that match a particular position of a country (Yin, 1994, Bowen, 2009).

The selection of documents was based on relevance to this topic, and because this research is about the Dutch position, only Dutch policy advisors or experts were interviewed.

Studying policy documents and the most widely used news sources in the Netherlands makes it possible to see the government's wishes and how they were incorporated into the Strategic Compass. The policy documents were available online. A search for "Strategic Compass" as a keyword was conducted between January 1, 2020, and March 21, 2022, since negotiations began in 2020 and the Strategic Compass was adopted and released on March 21, 2022. In addition, the documents were allowed to come from all ministries as long as they were Chamber documents. This was chosen because here, Ministries gave agendas, reports and answers to the cabinet, so the interaction should reflect the intention or position of the Netherlands. In addition, the choice was made to analyse the highest-rated news sources based on what they released about the 'Strategic Compass' as a keyword. The NOS, NU.nl, AD & Telegraaf are the online news sources with the most exposure in the Netherlands, but the NOS has never released a paper on the Strategic Compass. The rest of the news sources all released 1 article on the intensification of European defence cooperation (SVDJ, 2018). In translating the documents, it was also chosen to remain close to the original text. The documents are also coded, and a complete overview of the articles used can be found in Appendix B.

### **3.3 Operationalization and data analysis**

In this study, three different distinct groups were interviewed. Respondents 1, 5 and 6 are assigned to those actively involved. Iric van Doorn and Joost van Iersel are experts in this field, as they are not actively engaged in policy formulation but do write advice on it. Finally, Jan Roede is the main person or executor who has knowledge of combat operations and is currently still an officer with the Royal Military Police. Having the respondents belong to a group allows readers to see whether there are still different opinions within certain groups or whether groups are opposed to each other or in agreement. By drawing up an interview guideline, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The operationalisation of the essential concepts can be found in Appendix D. The ideas, indicators and resulting questions were developed based on the previous chapter, which revealed several important factors involved in international collaborations. In addition, there would also be different balances of power and conflicts of interest within Europe, and by asking questions about this, the living environment of the respondents was put central whereby they shared experiences and gave their opinions about European integration, the Strategic Compass and the role of the Netherlands in it.

From both the document analysis and the semi-structured interviews, the analysis of the data was done based on the outline of Nováky's (2014) study, looking at missions according to

the three levels (European, international & national). In this study, these levels were also used to explain the motivations of the Netherlands as a country to work more intensively at the European level. After discussing each level, space was made in the analysis to discuss essential factors that would influence working more intensively at the international level. Using this analysis of the policy documents and semi-structured interviews, an attempt was made to answer the research question. The six interviews were recorded and transcribed before being coded in the program ATLAS.TI. The transcripts were then coded openly, axially, and selectively. This makes the analysis orderly and allows the reader to see what steps were taken (Boeije, 2002). Because the respondents differ at some points, the study will also focus on the differences and similarities to answer the research question from different angles. The documents were coded based on Nováky's (2014) three levels and essential factors for increased cooperation at the European level. The overview of the respondents with the used quotations can be found in Appendix C. An overview of the coded sources can be found in Appendix E.

### **3.4 Reliability & validity**

First, the respondents were chosen based on purposive sampling. The main feature of this form of sampling method is that the researcher approaches the respondents because he expects that person to be able to offer relevant insights. By using the researcher's network, six individuals were eventually interviewed. This makes the study less reliable than other sampling methods such as probability sampling. However, purposive sampling can be helpful in situations where few respondents can be found, and there are specific requirements for the selection, such as a particular profile or background (Lucas, 2014). Miller & Salkind (2002) indicate that a study is more reliable when the analysis is redone and receives the same results. Therefore, a data structure was created to ensure that other researchers could redo the concrete steps of the research. In addition, the researcher was always concerned with remaining objective and asking questions. This is also why the interview guide is also added in Appendix A to assess the quality and objectivity of the questions from the interviews as a reader.

Specific sources in this study should be analysed with care, as they may be characterised as misleading. This is because this Strategic Compass study examines the policy preferences of individuals within the national government who influence decision-making related to defence and integration. Therefore, document analysis was also chosen to look at government documents and the interviews. Accordingly, multiple sources were attempted here as often as possible to ensure reliability and quality, provided this was feasible (Bowen, 2009). As a result, relevant information was not taken from one source.

In this study, data triangulation was applied to ensure the validity of the results. Triangulation increases the validity of these results. This gave a more detailed and complete picture of the situation regarding the Strategic Compass and how the Netherlands views it. Collecting multiple sources, with document analysis where various sources were used per conclusion and combining it with the semi-structured interviews can validate this research (Bowen, 2009). The researcher's position is reflected in the last chapter to ensure that the study maintains its validity. This allows the reader to form her own opinion on the research (Creswell & Poth 2016). The external validity is otherwise limited as the six individuals do not represent all individuals engaged with the Strategic Compass in the Netherlands. However, this study aims not to get full theoretical saturation but to form a picture of how and why the Netherlands contributes to the Strategic Compass based on the collective action perspective.



## 4. Analysis

In this chapter, the specific findings from the document analysis and the interviews will be presented together to answer this study's central research question. The chapter is structured according to the conceptual model, which means that first, the results relating to Nováky's (2014) three levels: national level, EU level and international level, will be presented. After this, factors that might have affected European cooperation will be discussed. To apply the conceptual model to the Strategic Compass in this way, it will have to become clear what the contribution and intentions of the Netherlands were to the Strategic Compass. The research question will be reiterated before discussing Nováky's levels (2014). The central research question is: *to what extent can the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass be explained based on the collective action perspective?* By dealing with the various levels of this perspective in this chapter, the purpose is to answer the research question based on the document analysis and the interviews.

### 4.1 National level

In this part of the analysis, the ambition and preferences of the Netherlands in the area of Defence will be addressed, and with the continuation of existing relationships. Finally, the concrete contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass, according to the interviews and documents, will be discussed. The Strategic Compass was adopted on 21 March 2022 to guide and integrate European initiatives (NU.nl, 2022, A13). The debates began on 4 and 5 March at the 2020 Foreign Affairs Council with the defence ministers (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A1). In the report of this council, the Dutch position was recorded in the following sentences:

*“The strategic compass, according to the different member states, can give direction to a coherent further development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It should contribute to a common understanding of threats and challenges and identify more specific objectives to achieve the EU level of ambition. The Netherlands endorsed the need for a joint threat analysis as the basis for the compass. Member States should be at the helm of the process and avoid lowering the level of ambition. The initiative to create a strategic compass received broad support from member states, including the Netherlands (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2).”*

### 4.1.1 Ambition

This position above indicates that the Strategic Compass will complement the CSDP, also mentioned earlier in this research. In this report about the council, the Minister explains that the shared threat analysis should serve as the basis for this Strategic Compass. This is also something that most respondents mention as an essential component. Iric van Doorn, Vice-President at Eurodefence and an expert on European defence policy within this research, indicates that it says things that had never been put on paper before, demonstrating this analysis's uniqueness (Respondent van Doorn, 16 May 2022). The Parliamentary letters also correspond to each other between 2020 and 2022. The Dutch Ministries indicated that Europe should take more responsibility throughout the two years, which will be returned to later in the analysis. The Netherlands wants to take an active role in this. This dynamic role is also reflected in its national policy. In the policy document about providing answers to questions about the main policy lines of the Ministry of Defence, it was indicated in the following sentences that the Strategic Compass is in line with the current policy and plans of the government:

*"The Dutch armed forces will therefore cooperate with all member states in their implementation. The Cabinet thinks that this cooperation leads to an efficient and effective increase in the joint strength of European countries. The Cabinet considers it crucial that the EU and its Member States continue to act in concert, in close consultation and in cooperation with international partners. (...) The draft Strategic Compass contains good guidelines and concrete timelines to strengthen the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the coming years. This is also in line with the coalition agreement (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2022, A10)."*

Efficiency and effectiveness are cited as reasons for establishing the Strategic Compass. In addition, it is stated that countries must work closely together and that the concept at the time was in line with the coalition agreement. According to the same article, the Netherlands must therefore be prepared to scale up to achieve the following effects: a higher level of readiness and deployability, a targeted improvement of combat power, and more excellent organisation manoeuvrability. It also states that the Netherlands is forced to use targeted reinforcement as the country itself cannot do everything (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2022, A11). This is also in line with what all respondents indicated. The respondents state that the Netherlands cannot take care of itself regarding security and defence; the armed forces are too small. The Dutch position has

also evolved in recent years regarding the role of Europe. A more ambitious government responds to this and indicates more pro-active participation in European forms of defence cooperation (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3).

The document covering the developments of the Strategic Compass from the Dutch government is the "Hoofdpijnenbrief Defensie 2022", which is the main outline of the Defence Policy for the coming years. It indicates that the tasks and resources of Defence have been out of balance in recent years and, as a result, the financing was not sustainable. By focusing on cooperation and investing in Defence again, the Netherlands wants to bring this back into balance and ensure that the country is protected against emerging threats (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7). The following statement from this 'Hoofdpijnenbrief Defensie 2022' show the ambition of the Netherlands and how the government wants to put its defence policy in order after it got out of balance:

*"The Netherlands contributes to this by investing heavily in Defence to ensure solid implementation of the three main tasks and international obligations arising from the Constitution. Security is a precondition for prosperity and our democratic constitutional state. It is a core task of the government that deserves priority, and it has been given this priority in the coalition agreement. The defence's tasks and resources have been out of balance in recent years. As a result, there was no sustainable funding for the maintenance and modernisation of the armed forces. The readiness and deployability of the defence organisation are under pressure, due to, for example, shortages in supplies, operational support and shortages in operations (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A7)."*

This document was drafted during the final phase of the Strategic Compass, so European cooperation is also discussed a lot. According to Jan Roede, who is included in this study because of his experience in the armed forces, cooperating on a European level is essential for a country like the Netherlands:

*"The Netherlands was one of the proponents of this document. After all, we saw that we have been leaning on NATO for a very long time for our security. Because we knew, and we still know, that we cannot, or cannot do anything, much on our own. We do have a military force. You can argue about whether or not it's in good shape. (...) So the Netherlands was one of the Member States that thought we should come up with such a Compass because we clearly saw that you had all these separate initiatives, and you had this goal that we all still weren't*

*achieving, and you had to work towards it. The Netherlands is a country of culture, so to speak, of nature, because it says: well, we all have to make a plan, and we have to write that plan down, and then we really have to go for it (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022)."*

#### **4.1.2. Continuation of existing relationships**

The 'Hoofdlijnenbrief Defensie 2022' and the verdict of Jan Roede reflect that there have been shortcomings, and the Netherlands is now trying to get back on track with an active role in European Defence policy. A vital component in almost all documents is preserving and intensifying existing initiatives and relationships. In the policy documents about the main lines of Foreign Affairs policy and Ministry of Defence policy, the following is stated about maintaining these relationships:

*"Europe must therefore become more self-reliant. To this end, the Netherlands is strengthening its armed forces and deepening defence cooperation with neighbouring European countries. (...) With neighbouring European countries, we are committed to a long-term process of intensive cooperation and strengthening of specialisations (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7)."*

*"The government's ambition is to play a leading role in the EU and develop creative and pragmatic ideas early on in the political debate. Germany and, increasingly, France are very important partners in this respect. (...) European security cooperation with the UK remains of great importance even after the Brexit, as has once again been demonstrated in recent weeks in the coordination of the far-reaching sanctions against Russia (Hoekstra, 2022, A8)."*

The documents show that the Netherlands will intensify its cooperation with neighbouring countries. According to Hoekstra (2022, A8), the Netherlands must even assume a leading role in Europe, whereby Germany and France are essential partners. The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union is also mentioned, something which, according to the policy document, does not make any difference to European security cooperation. Europe can be more self-reliant by investing in its armed forces and deepening defence cooperation. The interviews explicitly identified that the Netherlands is already involved in training, sharing and intensifying relations with other countries. The first interviewee, who is a representative of

the Dutch government in Brussels, indicates that it is mainly Germany and France that pull the strings:

*“The engine of Europe is Germany and France, who together determine for a large part, certainly after the Brexit, what the EU does. (...) France really has a very, very heavy voice in Europe; they just play along with Germany. They play the leading role, and France has been hammering for decades that Europe has to take its responsibility (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”*

Most respondents revealed that cooperation with mainly Germany works very well in the interviews. According to the representative in Brussels, respondent 1, the Netherlands and Germany are also forerunners in EU Europe regarding military cooperation. All systems, training, and command structures are connected. Another section of this chapter will address the reason for this. In addition, there is also more active cooperation between Belgium's navy and the Dutch navy (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022). Still, there is an increase in collaboration between the Dutch armed forces and the one from France. The Strategic Compass (EEAS, 2022) states that the countries will train more with each other. *Partner* is, therefore, one of the four pillars that the Strategic Compass is about.

#### **4.1.3. Concrete contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass**

To elaborate further on the implementation of the Strategic Compass, the concrete performance and contribution of the Netherlands, according to the documents and interviews, will now be discussed. The very first policy document about the Strategic Compass already emphasises that the Netherlands wants to be actively involved in shaping the process:

*“The Netherlands supports a broad scope of the Strategic Compass (security and defence, which also addresses civil aspects) based on shared threat analysis. (...)*

*The Netherlands will actively participate in shaping the process that will be set up within the framework of the development of the Strategic Compass and will provide the necessary substantive input. The Netherlands supports the commitment to a shared threat analysis as the basis for the compass (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A1).”*

A shared threat analysis is critical. As mentioned before, Iric van Doorn responds by stating that it is a remarkable achievement that there is a shared threat analysis, which respondent 6 also sees as a significant achievement given the differences between the countries (Respondent van Doorn, 16 May 2022; Respondent 6, 20 May 2022). The AIV, an advisory body to the Dutch government, also recommended that the position of the Netherlands be reviewed due to the developments in Europe and the changing attitude of the United States. The AIV indicated that active participation in the CSDP is necessary (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3). Investing in Defence is the first step toward a future-oriented armed solid force. According to the Defence Outline Letter, an additional €3 billion per year will become available (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7). The investments will be for personnel policy, eliminating problems, strengthening support and new equipment. This is all for the following reasons:

*“The working conditions of our people will be greatly improved, we will make our real estate more sustainable, and we will deepen and broaden our collaborations with partners and allies. This will increase our operational readiness and deployability and work towards strong and future-proof armed forces (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7).”*

According to Ollogren (2022, A7), the Netherlands wants to emphasise the specialities of the Dutch Armed Forces, meaning the capabilities or qualities in which the Netherlands already excels. Cyber and intelligence are examples of this. Contributions to EU and NATO missions should also be made proportionately. As mentioned earlier, this has not always been the case. Respondent 6 said an instrument called the Fair Share, whereby each Member State contributes a proportionate number of people to a mission based on economic strength or population. According to Respondent 6, this is also not included in the Strategic Compass because *“there it is just assumed that not everyone can contribute equally. (...) If everyone contributes their share, we will get there (Respondent 6, 20 May 2022).”* According to the Ministry's documents, this is something the Netherlands has not succeeded in, in recent years (Ollogren, 2022, A7). The representative for the Netherlands in Brussel, the first interviewee, also states that the Netherlands get more out of the EU than it puts in it. The respondent says this is the Dutch mentality, whereby the Netherlands pragmatically joins a coalition that gives the country the most benefit (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022). However, the Netherlands does want to actively develop the EU Battlegroups into the Rapid Deployment Capacity, just like strengthening the military headquarters. The respondents who have actively contributed to the

Strategic Compass mentioned this as an essential aspect that the Netherlands has strongly advocated. In his policy letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hoekstra (2022, A8) also mentioned where the Netherlands now stands as a country:

*“Our society and business community are strongly internationally oriented. With our participation in the euro and Schengen, we are among the leaders in the EU. We are an active NATO partner. Europe still has great normative power and appeal. This means we have enough potential and perseverance to pursue an ambitious agenda with vigour and conviction (Hoekstra, 2022, A8).”*

Military mobility has received more attention in the Strategic Compass, something where the Ministry of Defence believes the Netherlands plays a leading role (Ollongren, 2022, A9). Moreover, the first interviewee indicates that the Netherlands also earns well from defence policy since the country has high technology and military mobility, as indicated earlier. Because everything passes through the port of Rotterdam or with data, this also counts for the Netherlands, according to him (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022). According to the same policy document, the Netherlands has strongly supported the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) as the primary operational military headquarters. In addition, the Netherlands would strongly support the use of RDCs (Ollongren, 2022, A9). This is the element most often mentioned in the Strategic Compass in the most popular news sources in the Netherlands, NU.nl, Telegraaf and AD. The Netherlands also co-initiated the hybrid toolbox, which is also included in the Secure chapter of the Strategic Compass. This should ensure that Europe can better resist hybrid threats, which should also be operational in 2022.

This section focused on national interests and values, which play a role in the foreign policy choices made by a member state, and in this case, the Netherlands. This follows the 'national level', which is one of the levels of the framework used by Nováký (2014) in his study. As for the Netherlands' objective, it wants and has played an active role in creating a more integrated European policy in the field of defence. The documents mainly show that the realisation of the Strategic Compass is in line with the coalition agreement, whereby efficiency and effectiveness are paramount. Respondents indicate, just as it appears from documents, that the more active role has to do with the fact that the Netherlands cannot take care of its security. In addition, the Dutch Armed Forces have been out of balance in recent years, and the government is trying to rectify this. The Dutch government wants Europe to become more integrated and improve existing relations, especially with France and Germany. They are seen

as the most important partners. The Netherlands has already linked up many systems with Germany, so it is only natural to expand this. The Ministry of Defence also receives over EUR 3 billion extra annually and wants to develop further and deploy its specialisms. The respondents and documents also showed that the Netherlands had taken a more active role in the Strategic Compass, especially in the MPCC and the Hybrid Toolbox; however, the RDC was mentioned explicitly in the news articles, while the other elements, in which the Netherlands has been heavily involved, were not mentioned. Finally, the Netherlands also intends to comply with the fair share idea, whereby soldiers are sent proportionally. This was not always the case, so respondents also indicated that the Netherlands got more out of it than it contributed as a country.

## **4.2 EU level**

This part of the analysis will look at the EU level, looking at the values and interests of the European Union, which, according to Nováky (2014), influence the decisions that the European Union makes. Again, this section is structured using the codes that resulted from the document analysis and the interviews starting with the EU's ambition with the SC, the relationships that play a role within the Union and beyond and obstacles that played a role during the creation of the Strategic Compass.

### **4.2.1 The ambition of the European Union**

On March 21, the Strategic Compass was finally adopted by member states and European bodies. Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the Strategic Compass, has been shaping and advocating for this guide for Europe since 2019. The report of the Foreign Affairs Council with defence ministers on March 4 and 5, 2020, included the first discussion of this plan with ministers. From the description of this Council, the following main priorities emerged:

*“The HR identified four priorities for EU defence cooperation, namely: strengthening operational engagement, more joint capability development, close cooperation with partners - including NATO, and achieving coherence between defence initiatives and reflecting new domains such as hybrid and climate change in them. The HR's priorities received strong support from member states.*”



*The HR and Commissioner Breton further stressed several times the importance of sufficient people and resources; there is a high level of ambition, and the EU has set up several new instruments, but in practice, the commitment of member states often lags behind. (...) Many member states also focused on the importance of implementing the various (new) initiatives, such as EPF, PESCO and the EDF, and achieving coherence between the various defence initiatives. In doing so, it was considered important to also monitor coherence with other policy areas. Sufficient attention must continue to be paid to the nexus between internal and external security, as well as to the 'new' developments in cyber, hybrid threats and in technology.*

*The strategic compass, the various member states argued, can provide direction for a coherent further development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It should contribute to a shared understanding of threats and challenges and identify more specific objectives to achieve the EU level of ambition. The Netherlands endorsed the need for a joint threat assessment as the basis for the compass. In the process, member states should be at the helm and avoid lowering ambition. The initiative to create a strategic compass received broad support from member states, including the Netherlands (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2).”*

For two years, under the guidance of the HR Josep Borrell, member states discussed and compromised to satisfy their constituencies about this European defence partnership. There is more to be written about meeting the constituency later. Before analysing the Council's report, below is the final objective presented in the Strategic Compass. This way, whether the objective and ambition have changed over the two years will be assessed.

*“In an uncertain world, full of fast-changing threats and geopolitical dynamics, this Strategic Compass guides and enhances our action to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider. To that end, it identifies clear goals in the area of EU security and defence, the means to achieve them and specific timelines along which we can measure progress.*

*Concretely it:*

- 1. Provides a shared assessment of our strategic environment, the threats and challenges we face and their implications for the EU;*
- 2. Brings greater coherence and a common sense of purpose to actions in the area of security and defence that are already underway;*
- 3. Sets out new actions and means to:*
  - a. enable us to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises;*

- b. *secure our interests and protect our citizens by strengthening the EU's capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats;*
- c. *stimulate investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies;*
- d. *deepen our cooperation with partners, notably the UN and NATO, to achieve common goals;*

4. *Specifies clear targets and milestones to measure progress. (EEAS, 2022)."*

To begin with the first-mentioned Council report. It is striking that it is already indicated that there will continue to be close cooperation with NATO in the first paragraph (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2). This will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, especially since all respondents had a particular opinion. Furthermore, it is indicated that the operational involvement should be strengthened, which is mentioned in the Strategic Compass under points 2 and 3A. In addition, joint capability development is mentioned, and issues like 3C and two are also covered in the final document. The third point mentioned cooperation with partners came in the final report, namely under points 3C and 3D with deepening collaboration with UN and NATO. The fourth point discussed in the Council is merging existing initiatives and getting ready for new domains or threats, reflected in item 1, which is the final threat assessment. Next, the Council mentions that countries have often fallen short regarding contribution and commitment, as mentioned before this chapter.

The Strategic Compass, according to the Council summary, should provide a direction for the existing initiatives, as well as a joint picture of threats and challenges to the Union. From this, it can also be extracted that until then, there was no or a non-working course in which the European Union imagined itself. The fourth point of the Strategic Compass priorities is about setting specific targets, and points to make progress will be added to improve the contribution and commitment of countries (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2). In the interviews, respondents were asked to what extent they thought the Strategic Compass was ambitious. There were different responses to this, but overall it was well received. The first respondent commented the following:

*"Definitely ambitious, absolutely. Especially if you compare it to what we've had up to now, you had the EU Global Strategy and that all remained pretty abstract. I find the real specialisation, the concretisation in the compass, very good. It really does get two feet on the ground. That RDC, that's just 5000 men or women, but that's just, that's just a super battle*

*group with all the command support, command service support attached to it, Strategic Enablement. And that's actually, that was born, that thought is, has come to fruition well, has become quite concrete after the debacle in Kabul. That was last August, how on earth are we going to, suppose we should do that as an EU? (...). How are we going to do that, how are we going to fix that? Well, they started thinking about it; of course, we already had the direction of the Strategic Compass. We said yes, you have to have an answer to that; how are we going to do that? (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022)."*

Having an answer to specific, relatively new or hybrid threats is also something that several respondents mentioned. The second respondent indicated that it was 'ok' for a first attempt, but ambition and realism were mixed. Iric van Doorn and Joost van Iersel are optimistic about the aspiration and build-up but do have a comment:

*"You said it well; it is more quantified than any plans so far, so quite specific: nice lists, nice topics, five pillars, so to speak, are covered. There are calendars with it. It says a timeline is in it; ambitions are in it, and all of that is true. But if I have to say what's not in it, I say, no organization's going to implement that (Respondent Van Doorn, 16 May 2022)."*

Iric van Doorn, in particular, stumbles over the fact that there is no directorial committee actively chasing the plans. Joost van Iersel adds that the European Union is harnessing itself but does not know against what. More on the clarity of the Strategic Compass and the relinquishing of autonomy is said later in this chapter (Respondent Van Iersel, 16 May 2022). The fifth interviewee thinks it is an ambitious and achievable plan. Eighty-one objectives have been set, and some will be easily achieved; however, not everything will succeed in starting this year, partly because there are 26 other emphases. He concludes it is realistic, but the timeline is ambitious (Respondent 5, 19 May 2022). Respondent 6, therefore, believes that it is an ambitious document, as it involves so many ministries and is effectively new territory for the European Union. Respondents were asked why Europe has drawn up the Strategic Compass and wants to work together more intensively. In the report of the Council in 2020, there was no apparent reason for creating the Strategic Compass, only what was going to be done (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2). So this is something that Joost van Iersel stumbled over, the lack of a purpose and why Europe needs to harness itself. Despite the positive response to the Strategic Compass, respondents indicated that it could have been elaborated a bit more or better. A

description that Respondent 6 uses with the Strategic Compass is that it is still an EU document, something also indicated by other respondents. Respondent 6 says the following about this:

*"It's, it actually should have been, that's what we focused on as well, a politically strongly understandable document. You must have read it; it's 47 pages with a lot of EU lingo. What I think someone if you were to ask someone on the street: hey, what is this? It wouldn't be understood. So, but that's inherent in drafting a text with 27 member states. That's kind of part of it (Respondent 6, 19 May 2022)."*

Jan Roede indicated that it does give a direction but remains an EU document because it does not become very prescriptive for the countries. Here the respondent also indicates that it is a 'Brussels document' that only a small number of people have written, so it is not apparent to Jan Roede what the national interpretation is (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022). When looking at the documents that followed, for example, the Defence 2022 Outline Letter and the Foreign Ministry Policy Letter, it is clearer why Europe needs a more integrated defence policy (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7; Hoekstra, 2022, A8). For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is cited, and Europe needs to become more self-reliant as the European Union cannot offer an equivalent alternative to the collective defence that NATO can. In the Strategic Compass itself, there are several reasons cited throughout the document, but particularly in the threat analysis:

*"The overall security landscape has become more volatile, complex and fragmented than ever due to multi-layered threats. Local and regional instability dynamics that feed on dysfunctional governance and contestation in our wider neighbourhood and beyond, sometimes nourished by inequalities, and religious and ethnic tensions, are increasingly entangled with non-conventional and transnational threats and geopolitical power rivalry. This erodes the capacity of the multilateral system to prevent and mitigate risks and crises (EEAS, 2022)."*

Further, Russia is mentioned explicitly since it violates international laws and principles of the UN Charter. In addition, instability and conflict are mentioned in the regions around Europe, in the east, from Africa but also still in the Sahel region. Terrorism is also still an important issue for the security and defence policy in Europe, as is the fear of nuclear weapons and states and non-states persons have different, new, hybrid strategies to harass elections or economic affairs. Finally, strategic competition and strategic autonomy are mentioned. The

former is also said in cyber and space, where the EU must prepare for cyberattacks and the peaceful use of the air and seas (EEAS, 2022). The European Union emphasises the following:

*“We must be able and ready to protect our citizens, defend our shared interests, project our values and contribute to shape the global future (EEAS, 2022).”*

However, the Strategic Compass also indicates that unity, solidarity and ambition from the EU Global Strategy 2016 are essential points. And to safeguard its values and interests, the Strategic Compass has been drafted, allowing member states to act on their own if necessary. This is also called strategic autonomy. According to Respondent 6, it is also essential to go back to the EU Global Strategy 2016 to experience what was the reason to start working together more intensively. The refugee crisis and Trump’s rise were cited here as examples of why the European Union wanted to do more work, so many initiatives have been since then (Respondent 6, 20 May 2022). The fifth interviewee also connects with this by stating that it is evolution rather than revolution; it will not be the Utopia for Europe. Still, it is a building on existing programs and initiatives. This is, therefore, a negative point according to Iric van Doorn, who describes it in the following sentence:

*“No, it's more of the same; that's my big concern. It's bilateral, multilateral cooperation, consultation, and trying to find solutions. (...) We want to keep our sovereignty. Well, international specialisation is at odds with sovereignty (Respondent Van Doorn, 16 May 2022).”*

Even though the policy documents indicate that Europe wants to become more self-reliant and be able to take care of its security in addition to NATO, no record suggests the developments in the United States. However, this is mentioned in every interview, the attitude of the United States had changed, the focus was shifted, or Trump in power was a threat. Therefore, this will be discussed at the international level in more depth. Another point that should not be forgotten, according to the first interviewee, is the financial aspect of the EU:

*“Don't forget that in the EU, there's a lot of money in it. The EU is a trade identity; it's only about money here. It is about money and regulation. Is a huge amount of financial capacity in it. And it's all these mutual funds. There are billions in them, and if you make good agreements*

*with each other about how you can use those funds, then you will benefit from that (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022)."*

Here the representative of the Netherlands in Brussels indicates that money and regulations are essential for the European Union, from which the Union can also earn. In addition, the respondent also touches on an oft-repeated point in the interviews, namely that the European Union is a trade identity, which for several years also wants to establish a defence policy. The change from a trade identity to a security guarantor is something that Joost van Iersel also stumbles over:

*"The Europeans have also always refused to raise the issue because it was said: that we are an economic union, and we keep away from the matters of defence in foreign policy. And that's where a change has actually come in only recently with this last committee which somewhat, to the amazement of onlookers, was advertising itself as a so-called geopolitical committee. (...) It used to be that the justification for integration in Europe was: peace in Europe, between whom, not with Russia because the US did that. No, between the old hereditary enemies. That was an issue if only we could get that done. Well, then we were good to go. And the vehicle for that was the economy. So the internal market and that worked extremely well because there was no conceivable war between all these countries. That's fine. But as far as the foreign relations of the union. Nobody looked at that, only in terms of trade, economic trade. (...) And there suddenly comes this change that one looks from inward unity, but looks inward unity? That means you also have to form a view from inside to outside unity (Respondent Van Iersel, 16 May 2022)."*

Joost van Iersel refers to the European Union's changing attitude. Because there was a trade agreement between the countries and particular responsibility for that, challenges ensured that the Union also had to have a joint response. What followed was that the European Union started to formulate a defence policy, something that before was only regulated by the UN and NATO. The expectations and opinions of other multinational organisations, such as NATO, on the Strategic Compass and the role of the EU, will be discussed in the next section on the international level of the framework.

#### 4.2.2 The relationships within the Union

The Dutch policy documents indicate that the Netherlands will join Germany and France in contributing more actively to European defence cooperation in the coming years. However, in response to the AIV letter advice, the following is indicated:

*“As a result of the departure of the UK from the EU and the consequences, this has consequences for both the available CSDP capabilities and for coalition and decision-making within the EU, the position of France and Germany within the CSDP has been further strengthened. (...) Franco-German initiatives are often a driving force for progress in the EU context. At the same time, the government is convinced that (coalitions of) other countries, including, for instance, the Benelux countries or the northern EU member states, can and should also play a significant role in the design and further development of the EU CSDP. The Netherlands is a coalition country (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3).”*

Some of these elements are relevant to elaborate on. It can be seen from this text that France and Germany, especially after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom, often took the lead in the European Union. Where there used to be three superpowers setting the tone, there are now two, which means that, according to the first respondent, more power has shifted to France and Germany (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022). However, the Netherlands does believe that other coalitions can also play an essential role in developing defence policy; the Benelux and the northern Member States are cited as examples. But France and Germany have a certain prestige and power with their initiatives. The last part of this chapter will discuss the power struggle. In the interviews with the respondents, it also came to the fore that there were certain power balances within the European Union, which was experienced as unfavourable by some and a logical phenomenon by others. There were various reasons for this. First, according to most respondents, France is a country that actively contributes to defence policy because the country's defence industry is so large that there is also an economic interest. According to the first interviewee, this provides the nation with employment, which makes France indicate: that we must do it at the European level, which can ensure that vehicles and other defence materials are bought from the French. The sale of defence materials is also a point on which the EU Member States differ. France sells everything to everyone, according to Joost van Iersel, while Germany would like to do the same but is not allowed to do so due to certain international treaties with Israel (Respondent Van Iersel, 16 May 2022). Moreover, Jan Roede added that

France had an even more significant role than Germany because it also had nuclear weapons, the only ones in the European Union (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022).

Furthermore, both respondent one and Iric van Doorn and Joost van Iersel indicated that it was no coincidence that the Strategic Compass was published now. Because Germany held the chair before, the Strategic Compass was brought out, and now that France controls the chair, it is being presented. In the meantime, it has been completed, and, according to the respondents, there were already agreements in place beforehand. Respondent 6 does indicate that the Netherlands, for the size of the country and its capacities, has contributed a great deal. Despite how 'big' the country was, it could not compete with France and Germany but could exert much influence (Respondent 6, 20 May 2022). Germany also often takes the initiative. For example, the first RDC will be led by Germany as the lead nation, where all countries will then plug in troops through the Fair Share. Moreover, Joost van Iersel points out that certain countries took positions which are still noticeable and remarkable today after the Second World War. Poland, for example, would still like to remain dependent on the United States and Germany gave in to the United States, and their strategic thinking stopped. However, later in the interview, he indicated that Germany is a decisive factor in defence policy. He states the following about this:

*“The decisive factor for whom we are all waiting is, of course, Germany, because Deutsche geschichte is European geschichte and vice versa. That was so in 1950, and it is still so today. If Germany is not involved, you achieve nothing, and if Germans are involved, you have a chance that something will come. Something will come, and so there really is a movement in Germany. A small one, but there is a movement (Respondent Van Iersel, 16 May 2022).”*

According to the first interviewee, the EU member states have arrived at a shared threat analysis also shows that relations have improved (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022). Moreover, the different interests and threats make it impressive that the countries have all signed the Strategic Compass, according to the actively involved respondents. Therefore, the negotiations were tricky, as there were many topics and opinions. The strategic dialogue phase, the first phase of the Strategic Compass negotiation process, was nine months of brainstorming without actually putting anything on paper. Respondent 5, who took an active part in the negotiations, was optimistic about it but indicated that many compromises had to be made, which Respondent 6 also revealed. According to them, this was not an obstacle but a reality, which is how it works.



The second part of the analysis looked at European interests and values, which shape the strategy from the preferences of EU member states and institutions and would therefore play a role in the Strategic Compass. This is referred to as the EU level in the context of Nováky (2014). The European Union has four priorities to which the Member States all subscribe. To achieve this, the European Union wanted to have a direction, something the Strategic Compass provides. Indeed, the security landscape has become more complex and divided by different (hybrid) threats. After all, the European Union is traditionally a trade organisation. Member States and other organisations are also expected to look outside the European Union, resulting in an integrated European defence policy. The European Union will become more strategically autonomous through a common defence policy. The experts were optimistic, but indicated that a directive committee and a clear goal were lacking. It was also pointed out that it is an EU document in which many compromises have been made, and every word has been discussed to satisfy each delegation's constituency. Finally, it was pointed out that the financial aspects are also crucial for the European Union. It is indicated that the European Union can also earn a lot, which is vital as an organisation that has been seen primarily as a trade organisation. When looking at the relations within the European Union, it is clear from the policy documents that Germany and France are calling the shots after the United Kingdom left the European Union. France has so much power with its industry and Germany because the European Union depends on it. From the interviews with the respondents and the documents from the Ministry of Defence, it is clear that the European Union needed a direction, as it has been mainly producing initiatives without a clear path. Therefore, the experts are more sceptical than the rest about the Strategic Compass. However, those actively involved indicate that it is taken seriously and put together well, despite the many differences within the EU Member States. According to the respondents, it is exceptional that a joint threat analysis could be drawn up for the Strategic Compass.

### **4.3 International level**

The last level to be addressed from Nováky's (2014) framework is the international level, looking at the patterns of relationships in different states. This expands or narrows the scope of EU institutions and policies as the Union responds to the needs of states and organisations. This section will begin with the international relations that influence the decisions of the European Union. In addition, certain obstacles specific to the international level are identified, including changing geopolitical power relations because of the United States and other potential threats.

### 4.3.1 Complementing NATO with the Strategic Compass

At the first Foreign Affairs Council with Europe's defence ministers, EU High Representative Josep Borrell was present, as was NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. The report of this council, which the yet-to-be-developed Strategic Compass dominated, included the following:

*“The SG NATO expressed his appreciation for the EU's contribution to global security through the various EU missions and operations and underlined their importance to allies.*

*The SG NATO stated that EU-NATO cooperation should focus on implementing current cooperation projects, including military mobility. On the other hand, there should also be room for new areas of cooperation, such as disruptive technologies, the rise of China and the consequences of climate change. The SG NATO further commented on the planned phase-out of the military presence in Afghanistan. This phase-out will be closely linked to the degree to which the various parties involved adhere to the agreements made (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2).”*

With this, the NATO Secretary-General indicated that the European Union already contributes to world security but that there are still points for the European Union and NATO to prepare better. The section in the report that dealt explicitly with the Strategic Compass, which indicates that closer cooperation with partners, including NATO, is seen as a priority, contained no response from the SG NATO (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2). In addition, the AIV also stated that the traditional division of labour between NATO and the EU is outdated and that the EU should have more capacity to act. For example, NATO, particularly the United States, appears to have been the cornerstone of Dutch security policy since World War II. To ensure that European countries are more secure, European member states should make a more credible contribution to NATO (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3). The 2021 Parliamentary Letter also indicates that NATO and the EU are working on strategic documents, namely the Strategic Concept (NATO) and the Strategic Compass (EU). Both organisations stand for the same values and must face challenges and confrontations. According to the document, these threats mean that European countries must take greater responsibility. With the launch of the Strategic Compass, the European Union also intends to take more responsibility (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2021, A4). The document also mentions NATO more than

25 times, indicating that these organisations will continue to work together (EEAS, 2022). This is, therefore, something that Josep Borrell is striving for:

*“The Spaniard spoke of “a turning point for Europe as a security provider. He emphasised that it is not about a European army, that each country will keep its own armed forces and that European defence cooperation is embedded in and complementary to NATO cooperation (AD, 2022).”*

NATO will continue to be the leading actor, something that is also included in the Main Line Letter on Defence 2022:

*“We will continue to invest in the multilateral partnerships in which we operate, such as NATO, the EU and the UN. A strong NATO remains the cornerstone of our collective defence. A strong NATO and strong EU are the basis for our comprehensive security policy. European countries must be able to act when European interests are at stake: Europe must therefore become more self-reliant (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7).”*

It became clear from the interviews that respondents did not expect the European Union to be able to protect everything now; NATO remains the primary security guarantor. When asked about the relationship between NATO and EU, respondent 1 responded as follows:

*“The EU’s Security and Defence Policy is focused on the ring of instability outside the European Union. The EU will also not deploy its armed forces on its territory. We will not deploy an EU force in Spain, Germany, or the Netherlands; we have NATO for that. But we will deploy it in the surrounding area, in North Africa and the Middle East. That’s where the crises manifested themselves, which negatively influenced the stability of the European Union territory. The second difference is that NATO is a military alliance with military means. The EU is a coalition where you have a much broader and much more differentiated toolbox involving trade, development cooperation, legal, diplomatic, economic and military means. (...) So there you see that the EU has a different character, on the same playing field. And in that, you see that also because of the 27 countries of the EU, 22 are members of NATO. (...) We can’t say that the EU is a left organisation and NATO a right organisation because that’s a left and a right leg. They are in the same body. So that’s where you see this consistency emerging (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”*

This is also something that the other respondents pointed out, NATO is structured differently, which is a military alliance. The European Union is a trade body that now also wants to ensure security for the countries and will do that by deploying troops when there is instability around the European countries. NATO will deal with anything outside or within the European Union. According to Jan Roede, the difference in authority is also evident based on the decision-making process. In NATO, there are mutual obligations, and so it is coercive. The European Union works more on consensus and is much less coercive (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022). This is also why respondent 5 indicates that the European Union Strategic Compass can complement NATO. NATO specialises in preparing for war and defending territory, something they have had years of experience with and a good command structure. Respondent 6 also indicated that the EU member states said that NATO is an ally and absolutely no duplicate systems should be set up during the negotiations. According to Respondent 6, NATO has more of a deterrent effect while the European Union, also in the Strategic Compass, has a broader security concept. Finally, respondent 5 indicated how NATO colleagues reacted when the Strategic Compass came out:

*“Of course, there's always some little bit of chagrin, but generally speaking, the Americans and my NATO colleagues that I spoke to about it, they were hugely appreciative of the fact that the European Union is finally taking responsibility, so to speak, for their security. In any case, they were trying to do so and were predominantly positive about it (Respondent 5, 19 May 2022).”*

Respondent 6 got the impression from his colleagues at NATO and the United States that they were sceptical and had many questions because Europe was going to try and do it all by itself. But now that the United States sees that NATO remains the most important and Europe is also making more defence and security work, the Americans were reassured (Respondent 6, 20 May 2022). The sceptical view of the United States is surprising given the other information from the interviews with the other respondents, which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

### 4.3.2 The changing image of the United States

Throughout the interviews, all respondents indicated that the image and or behaviour of the United States has changed. Incidentally, this is something that was not cited in the documents as a reason for increased cooperation between EU members. At the same time, it was indicated by every respondent that either Europe has become more critical of the United States or that the country itself has taken actions that few people support. The majority of respondents also indicate the reign of Donald Trump as a reason why Europe needs to become more self-reliant, as some expected that the United States could just let go of Europe under his reign. The AIV opinion also indicated that the tensions between the United States and China could put Europe in an awkward position and the shifting focus (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3). The United States' shifting focus from Europe to the Pacific is also cited in the conversation with Joost van Iersel and Iric van Doorn. But an even more significant point of contention in the discussion was the actions and wars that the United States has carried out that many countries followed through what is known as transatlantic allegiance. Below are some relevant quotes about the activities of the United States from that conversation:

*“What's good for America is not necessarily good for Europe, and so that blind Atlantic allegiance that's still there in many people, especially in our generation, who always still think that the Americans only liberated us and those 26 million dead Russians didn't. And so well, that is, we assume that it's always good when we pursue foreign policy together, but that has led to them becoming totally dependent in terms of equipment. The European defence industry is 30 per cent owned by the United States in terms of shares. So we can't do that much already. (...) The credibility of the omnipotence of the United States has gradually eroded. And that's to Europe's advantage if you want Europe to amount to anything (Iric van Doorn, 16 May 2022).”*

*“In Chile, an assassination party, cleaning up a president, et cetera. But it doesn't stop there. We are blind to it. If I say so myself, I almost don't believe myself already. One hundred interventions in the world for regime change and shout that you are the greatest democracy (Joost van Iersel, 16 May 2022).”*

Both Iric van Doorn and Joost van Iersel thought that the European Union followed the United States for too long, even though they went into specific wars about nothing and cost enormous money. They indicated that the great liberator of the Second World War was also shifting its

attention so that Europe would have to save itself. Finally, Respondent 6 and Respondent five also agreed with this as the time of Trump created much uncertainty for the European Union.

At the start of shaping the Strategic Compass, Russia's invasion of Ukraine was not yet underway. However, the eastern countries had already indicated that they felt a threat from Russia. With the invasion of Russia, the Strategic Compass underwent further radical changes to block Russia in the future and counter any threat to the European Union (Hoekstra & Ollongren, 2022, A11). Russia's incursion makes the shared threat analysis all the crisper, as many countries have a particular threat or challenge that they are dealing with daily. Therefore, the shared threat analysis fits into the international level of this framework, as it involves the preferences and interests of multiple European states.

The third level of Novák's (2014) framework is the international level. There would be a pattern of relations between states that influences EU foreign policy as it responds to the needs of different organisations and states. First, the EU and NATO relationship was discussed and how the Strategic Compass was assessed from different perspectives. The role of the United States and its changing character were also discussed. Looking at the relationship between NATO and the European Union, it is striking that NATO is often mentioned. Both in the documents and by the people actively involved in the talks, it was constantly pointed out that it should not become a duplication. NATO would still be the primary security provider. The European Union wants to take more responsibility but does not want a European army. NATO is purely military, whereas the EU can do much more because it is a trade alliance. The Strategic Compass can give direction here to coexist. According to those actively involved, NATO, especially the United States, sometimes had their doubts but were optimistic about the Strategic Compass because the EU takes its responsibility. The role, attitude and actions of the United States were also discussed. Most respondents indicated that the European Union also wants to become strategically autonomous because the United States is involved in many long, expensive wars; their focus is on the Pacific. Furthermore, leaders like Trump create uncertainty and instability globally, which affects the European Union. In addition, the invasion of Ukraine is also a threat to the Union, but it has also shown the need for an integrated defence policy for the Member States. From the interviews with the respondents, especially with the experts, it becomes clear that the European Union had to do something because it cannot go on like this. On the other hand, those actively involved saying that those within the United States are positive but initially critical. The respondents were generally positive about the use and existence of the Strategic Compass, in addition to NATO's existing range of tasks.

## 4.4 Relevant factors

The final section of this analysis presents the statements or responses that fit the factors included in the Conceptual Model by Zandee, Drent & Hendriks in their research. Throughout the interviews, the respondents cited certain factors, and the respondents also answered questions about certain factors or interests relevant to the Strategic Compass. Once a factor named in the Conceptual Model was not cited by respondents or found in the documents, it will be briefly stated that nothing about this factor was mentioned, and it will be discussed in the next chapter. The factors of Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016) will therefore serve as a basis in this section.

### 4.4.1 Trust, reliability and solidarity

Trust, reliability and solidarity appeared in the documents and the interviews with the respondents. First of all trust, this is already mentioned in the Hoofdlijnenbrief Defensie 2022 about intensifying cooperation and strengthening specialisms:

*In addition, we are committed to intensifying collaborations and the pooling and sharing of capabilities. In doing so, we contribute to the trust between partners and allies and to, for example, increasing interoperability. In time, agreements can be made with international allies and partners about specialisation (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7)."*

Trust also returns in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Policy Letter, together with solidarity. Here, the Cabinet mentions that financial solidarity is expected to go hand in hand with the trust that member states use EU funds responsibly (Hoekstra, 2022, A8). When it comes to reliability, the response to the AIV report indicates that the Netherlands wants to make a fair contribution, fair share, to the alliance and thus be a reliable ally, with the result that the defence budget was increased by 1.5 billion in 2020 (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3). This is also cited in the Policy Letter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and repeated in a parliamentary letter of 2022, where the Netherlands wants to be: a reliable partner that invests in a safe world' (Hoekstra, 2022, A8). About the documents, solidarity was only mentioned once more in the report of the Foreign Affairs Council. This was about member states expressing solidarity with EU member states directly involved in the refugee issue (Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A2). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Policy Letter states that the Netherlands wants to show allied solidarity within NATO (Hoekstra, 2022, A8).

Trust, reliability and solidarity were, according to the respondents, points through which the process was influenced. Mainly respondent 1 indicated enough trust between the member states, and Russia's invasion only increased it. Jan Roede added that there is enough trust on a fundamental level but too little trust due to the many differences of opinion between the countries. The differences in economics also play a significant role. Trusting each other on safety is possible, but it remains forced cooperation. Especially Joost van Iersel and respondent 6 thought differently about this. For example, Joost van Iersel indicated distrust between the member states, which means no common defence is possible. There is also distrust among the different Ministries of Defence, and this can even be traced back to the delegations of Eurodefence of certain countries. Respondent 6 adds that the difference between the ambitious, realistically ambitious and sceptical states makes it difficult to come to a joint document, especially with countries sceptical towards the EU itself. Still, in the end, despite the long process, it worked, so the respondent said there is solidarity (Respondent 6, 20 May 2022).

#### **4.4.2 Sovereignty and autonomy**

Sovereignty and autonomy were essential points, mainly in the interviews. The policy documents did mention strategic autonomy that the government is striving for within the Netherlands for Europe. Europe should become more self-reliant and increase its resilience, and the Netherlands wants a more level European playing field with more technological and industrial elements (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7). This will subsequently have positive consequences for the European Union and the Netherlands (Ollongren, 2022, A10). The 2022 Council of Foreign Minister's policy document also mentions that sovereignty is important to countries, which must have the freedom to choose their security arrangements, and territorial integrity is highly valued (Ollongren, 2022, A9). The news source AD also states that Borrell emphasises that each country retains its armed forces, and there is no question of a European army (AD, 2022, A12).

In this case, the respondents could be divided into two groups in terms of opinion. On the one hand, respondents indicated that it should be done since many member states with separate policies do not ensure cohesion. On the other hand, some respondents did not see it as surrendering sovereignty or that sovereignty was not being ceded. Respondent 1 saw it primarily as investing rather than surrendering sovereignty, which was echoed by respondent two and Iric van Doorn, who indicated that if the European Union wants to work together, it must do so. Respondent 1 suggests that the Netherlands and Germany are forerunners regarding



military cooperation. The countries are so attuned that it is even constitutionally incorporated that if a Dutch commander has German soldiers under command, the Dutch commander may give the German soldiers the order to shoot at the enemy. On the other hand, respondent five and respondent 6, who contributed to the Strategic Compass, felt that no sovereignty was ceded with the Strategic Compass. According to them, the Netherlands is still controlling its armed forces. Respondent 6 says that it is a sensitive subject, of course, but that as soon as there is an agreement in advance for a specific mission and the accompanying tasks, it falls under a particular chain of command that allows specialists in the field to carry out what they have been assigned to do.

#### **4.4.3 Countries and troops of similar size and quality**

The policy documents also did not indicate whether the size of troops mattered. However, it is also reflected in the fair-share element of the RDC. The Strategic Compass states that countries contribute troops and resources proportionately, so a country like Luxembourg is not expected to contribute as much as France. Regarding the qualities of soldiers and resources, the NATO standard is used for this. Respondent 1 states the following about this:

*“Fortunately, almost all countries use the same agreements that we have laid down in the NATO standard, standardisation documents and agreements. And also countries that are not members of NATO. They do always follow those models. (...) You conform to what the norm is. The norm is NATO as the military instrument. So what you see is that anyone can do that, and then indeed you get a plug and play system, where at some point. Yes, as a crucial factor: does everybody speak English well, because that's the common language. Can systems speak to each other? (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”*

The EU uses NATO's standards to guarantee quality, so countries know what they must comply with. By using this together with the fair share arrangement, countries will contribute proportionally and according to a certain level of quality. In addition, the Strategic Compass states that training and exercises take place within the EU framework to prepare the troops and increase interoperability, which must be in line with NATO standards (EEAS, 2022). Jan Roede, who is active in the armed forces of the Netherlands, gives his opinion on the difference in qualities below:

*"As long as you look at where the qualities are, you can deploy them accordingly. (...) Diversity can be the strength, can't it? But you have to have some basic level where you all go with it. (...) Look, NATO has a much better system than with the doctrines and requirements, so those procedures for commands all follow each other. Yes, you can do that as, as long as you as the EU adhere to that, that's your standard too? So then there's no problem (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022)."*

So also, in the field, according to Respondent Roede, it is indicated that specific standards are required so that people can work well with each other. Therefore, this is an essential point for the Strategic Compass, especially since the EU wants to be seen as a reliable partner, and quality is crucial.

#### **4.4.4 Mindset, defence culture and organisation**

This factor is closely related to the aspect of comparability of strategic cultures. It was indicated that having the same strategic cultures can be an advantage as political influences create barriers in the field. Respondent 1 does claim that the defence culture in Europe is very different, as the German culture is different from the Dutch culture, and the Dutch culture is different from the Belgian culture. Therefore he pleads for a basic common sense, which can also be found in the NATO standardisation. There is no mention in the Dutch policy documents that the same defence cultures and mindset are essential. Jan Roede also cited an example:

*"When the French president says: the armed forces will be deployed, the French armed forces will be deployed tomorrow. In the Netherlands, but especially in Germany and other countries, it really takes longer because parliament also has a role to play. And well, the Prime Minister or the Chancellor or whoever can suddenly decide that, so there are also differences in the methods of national decision-making. How quickly can you deploy a military force to what positions and things like that (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022)."*

This does tie in with this factor because if a specific armed force gets things done much faster nationally, it will always have to wait or take the lead. That is why it is essential to agree on a political level so that there are no different goals or agendas, which is necessary in the case of the Strategic Compass with many actors. Joost van Iersel does indicate that the countries have never been so close to each other as they are now. Respondent 6 also suggests that the

invasion of Russia has also united the European Union against this common threat, just as the strategic dialogue phase, with the discussion of threats and challenges, has also ensured the same mindset afterwards. This is also what respondent 5 experienced. Therefore, the mindset and defence culture are important factors when making defence policy, which was crucial in the Strategic Compass.

#### **4.4.5 Standardisation and interoperability**

In the AIV advice for the Dutch defence policy, the following specific recommendation is made:

*“Improving interoperability and standardisation of military units is essential for more efficient European defence cooperation. The Netherlands should work closely with Germany and France on equipment and arms export control, taking into account the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.*

*The Dutch government's response to this is positive: the government agrees with the AIV that improving mutual interoperability and standardisation of military units is essential for more efficient European defence cooperation. In addition to the intensive bilateral cooperation that already exists, PESCO and the EDF contribute to this on an EU-wide basis, as does the cooperation within the framework of the EU Battlegroup and the NATO exercises and activities in which European countries cooperate (Blok & Bijleveld-Schouten, 2020, A3).”*

Therefore, standardising military units and improving interoperability are actual goals and essential factors. The report of the NATO meeting with Ministers of Defence also indicates that the Netherlands is already actively working with Germany to submit proposals to improve, among other things, cyber resilience, military mobility, standardisation and interoperability (Kamp, 2021, A4). For that matter, strengthening specialisms and focusing on pooling and sharing increases trust among the Member States and interoperability with partners, according to the Ministry of Defence (Ollongren & Van der Maat, 2022, A7). Finally, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) can also play a role in this, according to Ollongren (2022, A9). A better and more effective EU defence policy can be formed and implemented by emphasising the importance of interoperability with NATO according to NATO standards and an operational military headquarters.

Jan Roede indicated that steps were being taken towards a European army, which would have to be standardised. Economic agreements would have to be made, for instance, with German tanks, French aircraft and Dutch ships. He also sees the MPCC as a step towards more standardisation. Respondent 5 adds to the other respondents that it is mainly about agreeing on rules that will lead to better cooperation and better capacities. In short, interoperability and standardisation are increasingly crucial to the European Union and are indeed included in the Strategic Compass. It will then also for cost savings and keep the different armed forces on the same page, something that comes across and touches task specialisation, a topic that has been discussed with several respondents and where most indicated that that is only possible on a small scale but not on a large scale.

#### **4.4.6 Realism, clarity and the degree of seriousness of intentions**

The documents do not specifically mention that the Strategic Compass will be treated seriously and that it is realistic. The role that the Netherlands assumes, according to the policy documents, as the proactive member state also shows that the Dutch government is, in any case, grasping the Strategic Compass with both hands. Respondent 1 also indicated that the Strategic Compass would become the umbrella for the initiatives and plans within the European Union concerning defence policy. According to him, a translation and concretisation per discipline will be made shortly. Iric van Doorn indicates that it has been well received and is clear, but he does have a comment about the Strategic Compass:

*“Look, Borrell presents it, and you almost have to say: you have to listen to what he doesn't say. What he does say is all incredibly logical. In an area where we are all very weak, you give the European Union space there, cyber, for example. That's obvious. But he can; he says this rapid intervention force of 5,000 men is necessary, and he describes what it's for. I just said it: within two weeks, you want to have a mobilised club somewhere. And he can't say that, but those guys have a blue badge, they're, where are those soldiers coming from? He can't elaborate on that, and so if you're a little bit more introduced to the subject matter, you pierce through that (Respondent Van Doorn, 16 May 2022).”*

So there are questions from the experts about the status of the soldiers and how they will be deployed. According to Jan Roede, the Strategic Compass does correspond to the ambition to work together more on a European level, so in that sense, he expects that the Compass has

been well received. Respondent 5 indicated earlier that concrete objectives had been drawn up, which shows that concrete and serious work is being done, certainly with the hybrid toolbox and MPCC. This makes this factor, the realism, clarity and degree of taking intentions seriously, undoubtedly crucial in the Strategic Compass.

In addition to the three levels that Nováky (2014) uses in his study, this study also looked at other relevant factors that Zandee, Drent & Hendrik (2016) believe play a role in international cooperation for defence. The factors that the respondents considered essential or mentioned in the documents were included in this part of the analysis; the other factors that turned out not to be relevant were omitted. The factors considered necessary were: trust, reliability and solidarity, sovereignty and autonomy, countries and forces of similar size and quality, mindset and defence culture, standardisation and interoperability, realism clarity and taking intentions seriously. The factors that were less or not important in the formulation of EU defence policy or the Strategic Compass itself were: comparability of strategic cultures, geography and history, number of partners, top-down and bottom-up policies, defence planning alignment and parliamentary involvement.

## 4.5. Results

This section will answer the research question based on the previous sub-conclusions and results. These have been established through the document analysis of 11 policy documents, three news articles, and the Strategic Compass document itself. This was supplemented by six interviews that were coded and analysed. The following research question was central to this study: To what extent can the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass be explained from a collective action perspective? This perspective, conceived by Ginsberg & Penksa (2012) but further developed by Nováky (2014), was used to examine the underlying thoughts on establishing the Strategic Compass. The perspective includes the national level, EU level and international level. Nováky's (2014) study uses the view to understand and explain the CSDP missions. It concluded that some missions could be explained more at the international level, and in others, the EU level was more important.

The results of the documents and interviews analysis on the contribution of the Netherlands to the Strategic Compass showed that the collective action perspective appears to be successful in explaining this, with the national level and the EU level underpinning the contribution. However, additional factors influenced this process. Without these factors, both the establishment of the Strategic Compass and the contribution of the Netherlands to it were more challenging to explain. Below, we will discuss the main results that underlie the conclusion that the collective action perspective can successfully explain the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass.

First of all, the national level was able to explain the intention of the Dutch government. According to most respondents, the Netherlands appears to have contributed too little in recent years but has benefited from international cooperation. However, with a pro-European government and the idea that the Netherlands cannot take care of its security, it seemed to be enough reasons for the Netherlands to contribute to the Strategic Compass. Effectiveness, efficiency and the financial aspect were also important factors here. The Netherlands also wanted to maintain and strengthen existing relationships with France, Germany, and Belgium. Those actively involved and the executor in the army indicated that these collaborations are frequently used and contribute to the defence policy of the Netherlands. According to the documents, the Netherlands would like to contribute more actively, also reflected in the Strategic Compass. The country has created the hybrid toolbox and is also trying to develop the MPCC further. So there was a particular ambition from the Netherlands to be more actively

involved in (European) defence policy. The Netherlands has subsequently implemented this by intensifying relations with neighbouring countries and investing money and effort in the Strategic Compass. Therefore, the results fall precisely within the national level of Nováky (2014), which is about the preferences of a country based on utility expectations.

The second part of the analysis went deeper into the preferences, interests, and values of member states within the European Union to see if and how the Netherlands is influenced by it when it comes to the Strategic Compass. According to most respondents, the European Union has had many initiatives for years without any real direction, something which the Strategic Compass must fill in. As a result, the European Union has leaned on NATO for too long, while the Member States such as the Netherlands have also indicated that the European Union should do more. Most respondents also indicated that it had leaned too long on NATO regarding defence policy. With the Strategic Compass, a joint threat analysis has been made to map out the (hybrid) threats to the European Union. This is special as the EU Member States all have their problems and threats, which do not correspond often. The fact that the European Union has taken responsibility, according to the respondents, by establishing the Strategic Compass allows the EU to set its course. Strategic autonomy is, therefore, an essential concept for the Union. However, the experts did say that a directive commission is missing who drives the policy points. The majority of the respondents noted that Germany and France, with their defence industry, are the most important actors within the Union, certainly after the departure of the United Kingdom. Still, because of the rules and procedures for decision-making, this is not an obstacle. Those actively involved did indicate that many compromises had been made, turning it into another EU document where many words had been discussed to satisfy the supporters. Nevertheless, all respondents were optimistic about creating the Strategic Compass from the European Union, which is ambitious, and most of them also considered it realistic.

When it comes to how actors outside the European Union view the Union and the Strategic Compass, NATO at least indicated that the Compass is welcome. It is considered good that the European Union is improving its defence policy. NATO is often mentioned in the Strategic Compass. Respondents also indicate that the EU should be able to function alongside and together with NATO, as it is the primary security provider. The change of the European Union from a trade alliance to a security guarantor is something that the United States also approves of, despite there being many questions, according to those actively involved, about the purpose of the Strategic Compass. The experts indicated that the changing focus of the United States, the actions and wars it has started have also created instability, so the European Union must also take responsibility, which was also mentioned in most policy documents. But

the changing attitude and actions of the United States were not mentioned anywhere in the papers. The interviews show that the following factors, in particular, have played a mediating role in the process: trust, reliability and solidarity, sovereignty and autonomy, countries and forces of comparable size and quality, mentality and defence culture, standardisation and interoperability, realism, clarity and taking intentions seriously. Several respondents frequently mentioned these factors as relevant to European cooperation. Interoperability, trust and standardisation were also mentioned in the documents. However, most of these factors cannot be attributed to one level of Nováky's (2014) framework. Nevertheless, these factors were important when cooperating at the international level for defence policy.

When looking at which level was most applicable to explain the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass, it was the national and EU level. According to multiple respondents and documents, the Netherlands was lagging with its defence policy, so it wanted to be more actively involved. The European Union has also leaned too long on NATO and wants to change this. The hybrid threats, the changing focus of international actors such as the United States and the sense of responsibility among the member states led the European Union to want to establish the Strategic Compass, something that matched the ambitions of the Dutch government at the time. The study showed that the collective action perspective could largely explain the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass. However, several factors influencing these levels need to be added to get the complete picture. The collective action perspective was used to examine, from various angles, how and why the Netherlands contributed to this process.

In the next chapter, there will be a reflection on the research results and how this study contributes to society and science. Finally, recommendations will be made for policy and future research.



## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 Methodology and conceptual model**

The previous chapter showed that the collective action perspective can explain Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass, although mediating variables influence the outcome to a large extent. This chapter places the research question in its broader social and scientific context and makes recommendations for future study and policy. In answering the research question, the national and EU levels came to the fore explicitly. This does not mean that the international level was unimportant, but the respondents and documents more often brought up elements that could be placed under the other levels. In doing so, respondents were asked about any crucial factors and interests during defence engagements with other countries. Trust and reliability, sovereignty and autonomy, standardisation, and ensuring quality and interoperability were considered necessary in the cooperation of EU member states. Again, some other factors also played a role in the negotiations with other countries, but they were mentioned relatively few or were considered unnecessary. Nováky (2014), in his study, focused on understanding CSDP military missions through the use of the multi-level collective action approach. These levels came from Ginsberg and Penksa's (2012) research. According to the authors, the institutional, neorealist, and institutional perspectives did not adequately capture the political and social levels of government decisions related to CSDP operations. Where the three levels used by Nováky (2014) made EU military missions easier to understand, the same levels were also able to explain the creation of the Strategic Compass and the Netherlands' contribution. Thus, the results are consistent with the existing literature that the collective action perspective is a perspective to explain military alliances or military missions across multiple levels. This research has shown that the collective action perspective can describe a European form of cooperation. In addition, no study has been done so far into the concrete interpretation and motivations of the Netherlands to participate in this Strategic Compass with the EU Member States. Even though it is a recent program that the European Union will work with, this research added relevant information by studying policy documents from the Netherlands and interviewing three actively involved in the Strategic Compass, two experts & 1 executive in the armed forces.

The study could not include the entire Ministry of Defence or all those involved in the Strategic Compass from the Netherlands. Nevertheless, by speaking to different groups about this program, a complete picture is obtained than when only one group was interviewed. The reader should then bear in mind that part of the results of this research are based on actively

involved parties, who may, therefore, from their position, react more positively about the Strategic Compass than they believe. This has been tried to tackle by giving the option to contribute to the study anonymously, which two of the three actively involved parties did. In addition, an interview guide was created in advance, based on the literature of Ginsberg & Penksa (2012) and Nováky (2014) and the factors of Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016). The reader should also consider that not all questions were answered during the group interview with Iric van Doorn & Joost van Iersel. However, there was a very detailed discussion in this interview of what motivates the European Union to establish a Strategic Compass. As a result, the interviews with the respondents are not 1:1 similar in structure. The final limitation of this research is that not all levels of Ginsberg & Penksa's (2012) research were covered in the document analysis or included in the interview guide. It was chosen to use the three levels (international level, national level, and EU level) that Nováky (2014) also used in his research to keep it organised. These levels most fit the scope of this research. The other levels (elite actors, domestic politics/public opinion, and global phenomena) could have been relevant to this research in retrospect, especially given Russia's incursion into Ukraine. That threat from Russia began halfway through this research, so it was too late to include. Still, public opinion and global phenomena were also interesting to examine from the time of Russia's invasion.

The research did show that a particular perspective cannot necessarily be used for one situation, as in understanding CSDP military mission, for example, in Nováky's (2014) study. The collective action perspective has also created a better picture of the Netherlands' contribution to the Strategic Compass. By representing different perspectives, this research is also socially relevant, as there appeared to be differences in opinion between the groups created. According to this research, the different levels are also helpful when looking at other military alliances or military missions of specific multinational organisations. From this, it can be concluded that the perspective and outcome of this research can be generalised and compared with each other, which ensures scientific relevance. However, the addition of Zandee, Drent & Hendriks (2016) factors proved to be a valuable addition, as they were relevant to European cooperation for this defence policy but can be directly derived from the levels of Nováky (2014).

## **5.2 Recommendations for future policy and research**

This chapter will focus on providing recommendations for policy and future research based on the results and conclusion of this study. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this research clarifies that the collective action perspective by Ginsberg & Penksa (2012) can be used more often to understand or explain military operations or collaborations within the European Union. The missions from the Rapid Deployment Capacity can also be defined and understood from this perspective. This is in line with this research and Nováky's (2014) research on CSDP operations. Since no missions or training have yet been initiated from the Strategic Compass, there is still room for future research regarding these RDC missions. In doing so, it is relevant to see if the actions of the European Union or the attitude of the Netherlands towards the Strategic Compass changes. More insight can be gained by regularly talking to the same respondents. This study showed that trust, interoperability and standardisation were relevant to cooperation between European member states. Proper research that could result from this is to compare the opinions of soldiers of different countries about European cooperation. So far, the literature mainly looks at the different views and motivations on the policy side. It is also relevant to map out what the people who will work together in the field in military missions think about the different materials and procedures from various countries. This can be both socially and scientifically relevant. In addition, the Strategic Compass is a policy document on which many policy officers from different ministries work. This research also looked at how different groups of people viewed it. However, it may also be interesting and relevant to examine whether policy officers from various ministries, such as the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, differ in their views due to their background or experience in the military. This could be important in making decisions for international collaborations.

In addition, several issues are essential for future policy. The interviews showed that the Netherlands cooperates with other countries to jointly ensure security and defence. The Netherlands cannot single-handedly provide security in the event of an invasion by another armed force of considerable size. Based on the results, the country should focus more on intensifying cooperation with Germany, Belgium, France and surrounding countries. In addition, the connection with the United Kingdom should be maintained, despite Brexit, as it is still an essential actor in Europe. The Netherlands is already investing in its defence policy but based on this research, it is emphasised that the country needs to innovate and not recover the missed opportunities of recent times when it was out of balance. With the various new or hybrid threats of the present time, it is essential to move with the times and not restore outdated

programs or materials. Therefore, the Netherlands prides itself on its military mobility and hybrid toolbox, making that something it needs to focus on and be seen as a severe actor between the armed forces of France and Germany.

Since the Netherlands cannot take care of its security, it may be helpful to align with France and Germany's European powers. The Netherlands can intensify the existing relationship with Germany, where much has already been agreed, and increase the relationship with France, which has an important voice in Europe because of its defence industry. Finally, an important suggestion that emerges from the results is that the Netherlands must continue to contribute to European defence cooperation, whereby the fair share idea must also be reached. Since the Netherlands wants to take on a more active role, it must also contribute proportionally to be seen as a serious actor. Otherwise, there is a risk that the Netherlands will fall behind again in the long term. Otherwise, there is a risk that the Netherlands will fall behind again and become more dependent than it already is in the long term. Nevertheless, according to the analysis, there is enough attention to defence policy within Europe and certainly in the Netherlands, which can ensure that Europe moves in the right direction with the Strategic Compass.

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## **Appendix A: Interview guide**

### **General Questions**

1. What is your current position?
2. In this, what are the primary duties?
3. How are you involved in formulating (defence) policy?

### **Strategic Compass**

4. How do you describe the Strategic Compass?
5. Did you participate in writing this policy? How did that work out? What do you think of the plan? Is it necessary for the Netherlands?
6. Does the Netherlands take a new path with this? Is it ambitious/achievable?

### **Europe as part of the world order**

7. Why do you think Europe wants to cooperate more and more in Defence?
8. To what extent would task specialisation be a real option for the EU?

### **Factors (Zandee, Drent & Hendriks, 2016)**

9. Is there enough trust, reliability and solidarity between EU countries?
10. What are further essential factors? For example, do you see the number of partners as a plus or minus and the similarity of strategic cultures?
11. Is it still important that countries and troops are of similar size and quality?
12. Do you believe in the delegation (with preconditions)?
13. Does it still matter if countries and troops are of different qualities and sizes?
14. How seriously is the Strategic Compass taken?
15. To what extent is it essential that a particular mission or plan can be standardised so that it saves cost/time?
16. To what extent is the same mindset/defence culture influential when working with multiple countries?

### **Multi-level governance**

17. Is there a struggle for power within the EU?
18. What are the most critical elements in drafting defence policy?
19. Are there any obstacles you experience in drafting this defence policy?
20. Do you think the Strategic Compass can complement NATO plans?

### **Collective action perspective**

21. What interests played the most part in drafting the Strategic Compass?
22. Looking at national interests, how were they considered in the Strategic Compass?  
Was there a desire from the Netherlands to cooperate more?
23. Did specific individuals have a significant role/interest in this Compass?
24. So, at the European level, there is more cooperation; what will this bring for Europe?
25. In the international system, how is this Strategic Compass received by other major players like NATO/US, for example?

## **Appendix B Document analysis**

### **Article 1**

Source: Ministry of Defence

By Drs. A.Th.B. Bijleveld-Schouten

Geannoteerde agenda informele Raad Buitenlandse Zaken Defensie van 4 en 5 maart 2020 te Zagreb

21 February 2020

- The Netherlands supports a broad scope of the Strategic Compass (security and defence, which also addresses civil aspects) based on shared threat analysis.
- The Netherlands will actively participate in shaping the process that will be set up within the framework of the development of the Strategic Compass and will provide the necessary substantive input. The Netherlands supports the commitment to a shared threat analysis as the basis for the compass.

### **Article 2**

Source: Ministry of Defence

By Drs. A.Th.B. Bijleveld-Schouten

Verslag Raad Buitenlandse Zaken met ministers van Defensie d.d. 4-5 maart 2020 te Zagreb

12 March 2020

- The strategic compass, according to the different member states, can give direction to a coherent further development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It should contribute to a common understanding of threats and challenges and identify more specific objectives to achieve the EU level of ambition. The Netherlands endorsed the need for a joint threat analysis as the basis for the compass. Member States should be at the helm of the process and avoid lowering the level of ambition. The initiative to create a strategic compass received broad support from member states, including the Netherlands.
- The HR identified four priorities for EU defence cooperation, namely: strengthening operational engagement, more joint capability development, close cooperation with partners - including NATO, and achieving coherence between defence initiatives and reflecting new domains such as hybrid and climate change in them. The HR's priorities received strong support from member

states. The HR and Commissioner Breton further stressed several times the importance of sufficient people and resources; there is a high level of ambition, and the EU has set up several new instruments, but in practice, the commitment of member states often lags behind. (...)

- Many member states also focused on the importance of implementing the various (new) initiatives, such as EPF, PESCO and the EDF, and achieving coherence between the various defence initiatives. In doing so, it was considered important to also monitor coherence with other policy areas. Sufficient attention must continue to be paid to the nexus between internal and external security, as well as to the 'new' developments in cyber, hybrid threats and in technology. The strategic compass, the various member states argued, can provide direction for a coherent further development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. It should contribute to a shared understanding of threats and challenges and identify more specific objectives to achieve the EU level of ambition. The Netherlands endorsed the need for a joint threat assessment as the basis for the compass. In the process, member states should be at the helm and avoid lowering ambition. The initiative to create a strategic compass received broad support from member states, including the Netherlands.
- The SG NATO expressed his appreciation for the EU's contribution to global security through the various EU missions and operations and underlined their importance to allies. The SG NATO stated that EU-NATO cooperation should focus on implementing current cooperation projects, including military mobility. On the other hand, there should also be room for new areas of cooperation, such as disruptive technologies, the rise of China and the consequences of climate change. The SG NATO further commented on the planned phase-out of the military presence in Afghanistan. This phase-out will be closely linked to the degree to which the various parties involved adhere to the agreements made.

### Article 3

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Defence

By Stef Blok & A.Th.B. Bijleveld-Schouten

Kabinetsreactie op AIV-briefadvies "Europese veiligheid: tijd voor nieuwe stappen"

5 October 2020

- As a result of the departure of the UK from the EU and the consequences, this has consequences for both the available CSDP capabilities and for coalition and decision-making within the EU, the position of France and Germany within the CSDP has been further strengthened. (...) Franco-German initiatives are often a driving force for progress in the EU context. At the same time, the government is convinced that (coalitions of) other countries, including, for instance, the Benelux countries or the northern EU member states, can and should also play a significant

role in the design and further development of the EU CSDP. The Netherlands is a coalition country.

- Improving interoperability and standardisation of military units is essential for more efficient European defence cooperation. The Netherlands should work closely with Germany and France on equipment and arms export control, taking into account the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.
- The Dutch government's response to this is positive: the government agrees with the AIV that improving mutual interoperability and standardisation of military units is essential for more efficient European defence cooperation. In addition to the intensive bilateral cooperation that already exists, PESCO and the EDF contribute to this on an EU-wide basis, as does the cooperation within the framework of the EU Battlegroup and the NATO exercises and activities in which European countries cooperate.

#### **Article 4**

Source: Ministry of Defence

By Drs. A.Th.B. Bijleveld-Schouten

Bijeenkomst NAVO ministers van Defensie 21 en 22 oktober 2021

11 October 2020

#### **Article 5**

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Defence

By Ben Knapen & Henk Kamp

Kabinets reactie op de eindevaluatie van HCSS over de Nederlandse artikel 100-bijdrage aan de missie EMASoH

6 December 2021

#### **Article 6**

Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy

By M.A.M. Adriaansens

Geannoteerde agenda European Space Summit van 16 februari 2022

9 February 2022

## Article 7

Source: Ministry of Defence

By drs. K.H. Ollongren & mr. drs. C.A. van der Maat

Hoofdlijnenbrief Defensie

11 February 2022

- The Netherlands contributes to this by investing heavily in Defence to ensure solid implementation of the three main tasks and international obligations arising from the Constitution<sup>1</sup>. Security is a precondition for prosperity and our democratic constitutional state. It is a core task of the government that deserves priority, and it has been given this priority in the coalition agreement. The defence's tasks and resources have been out of balance in recent years. As a result, there was no sustainable funding for the maintenance and modernisation of the armed forces. The readiness and deployability of the defence organisation are under pressure, due to, for example, shortages in supplies, operational support and shortages in operations.
- Europe must therefore become more self-reliant. To this end, the Netherlands is strengthening its armed forces and deepening defence cooperation with neighbouring European countries. (...)
- With neighbouring European countries, we are committed to a long-term process of intensive cooperation and strengthening of specialisations.
- The working conditions of our people will be greatly improved, we will make our real estate more sustainable, and we will deepen and broaden our collaborations with partners and allies. This will increase our operational readiness and deployability and work towards strong and future-proof armed forces.
- We will continue to invest in the multilateral partnerships in which we operate, such as NATO, the EU and the UN. A strong NATO remains the cornerstone of our collective defence. A strong NATO and strong EU are the basis for our comprehensive security policy. European countries must be able to act when European interests are at stake: Europe must therefore become more self-reliant.
- In addition, we are committed to intensifying collaborations and the pooling and sharing of capabilities. In doing so, we contribute to the trust between partners and allies and to, for example, increasing interoperability. In time, agreements can be made with international allies and partners about specialisation.

## Article 8

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

By Wopke Hoekstra

Beleidsbrief Buitenlandse Zaken

8 March 2022

- The government's ambition is to play a leading role in the EU and develop creative and pragmatic ideas early on in the political debate. Germany and, increasingly, France are very important partners in this respect. (...) European security cooperation with the UK remains of great importance even after the Brexit, as has once again been demonstrated in recent weeks in the coordination of the far-reaching sanctions against Russia.
- Our society and business community are strongly internationally oriented. With our participation in the euro and Schengen, we are among the leaders in the EU. We are an active NATO partner. Europe still has great normative power and appeal. This means we have enough potential and perseverance to pursue an ambitious agenda with vigour and conviction.

## Article 9

Source: Ministry of Defence

By drs. K.H. Ollongren

Geannoteerde agenda Raad Buitenlandse Zaken Defensie d.d. 21 maart 2022

11 March 2022

## Article 10

Source: Ministry of Defence

By Drs. A.Th.B. Bijleveld-Schouten

Antwoorden op feitelijke vragen 'Hoofdlijnen beleid Ministerie van Defensie'

15 March 2022

- The Dutch armed forces will therefore cooperate with all member states in their implementation. The Cabinet thinks that this cooperation leads to an efficient and effective increase in the joint strength of European countries. The Cabinet considers it crucial that the EU and its Member States continue to act in concert, in close consultation and in cooperation with international partners. (...) The draft Strategic Compass contains good guidelines and concrete timelines to strengthen the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in the coming years. This is also in line with the coalition agreement.



### **Article 11**

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

By Wopke Hoekstra

Kabinetsappreciatie vijfde conceptversie EU Strategisch Kompas

17 March 2022

### **Article 12**

Source: AD

By Frans Boogaard

Europa krijgt eigen snelle interventiemacht voor crisissituaties

21 March 2022

- The Spaniard spoke of "a turning point for Europe as a security provider. He emphasised that it is not about a European army, that each country will keep its own armed forces and that European defence cooperation is embedded in and complementary to NATO cooperation.

### **Article 13**

Source: NU.nl

By NU.nl

Defensies EU-landen gaan nauwer samenwerken om meer los te komen van VS

21 March 2022

### **Article 14**

Source: Telegraaf

By Alexander Bakker

Nederland levert 150 militairen voor nieuwe Europese flitsmacht

6 April 2022

## ‘Article’ 15

Source: EEAS

EEAS

Strategic Compass

21 March 2022

- In an uncertain world, full of fast-changing threats and geopolitical dynamics, this Strategic Compass guides and enhances our action to make the EU a stronger and more capable security provider. To that end, it identifies clear goals in the area of EU security and defence, the means to achieve them and specific timelines along which we can measure progress.

Concretely it:

- Provides a shared assessment of our strategic environment, the threats and challenges we face and their implications for the EU;
  - Brings greater coherence and a common sense of purpose to actions in the area of security and defence that are already underway;
  - Sets out new actions and means to:
    - enable us to act more quickly and decisively when facing crises;
    - secure our interests and protect our citizens by strengthening the EU’s capacity to anticipate and mitigate threats;
    - stimulate investments and innovation to jointly develop the necessary capabilities and technologies;
    - deepen our cooperation with partners, notably the UN and NATO, to achieve common goals;
  - Specifies clear targets and milestones to measure progress.
- The overall security landscape has become more volatile, complex and fragmented than ever due to multi-layered threats. Local and regional instability dynamics that feed on dysfunctional governance and contestation in our wider neighbourhood and beyond, sometimes nourished by inequalities, and religious and ethnic tensions, are increasingly entangled with non-conventional and transnational threats and geopolitical power rivalry. This erodes the capacity of the multilateral system to prevent and mitigate risks and crises (EEAS, 2022).
  - We must be able and ready to protect our citizens, defend our shared interests, project our values and contribute to shape the global future.

## Appendix C Overview of respondents

	Name	Job title	Group	Date
1.	Respondent 1	Dutch Representative in Brussels	Actively involved	10 May 2022
2.	Jan Roede	Officer Royal Netherlands Marechaussee	Executor in the Armed Forces	13 May 2022
3.	Eric van Doorn	Vice-President of Eurodefence	Expert on this topic	16 May 2022
4.	Joost van Iersel	Member of Eurodefence	Expert on this topic	16 May 2022
5.	Respondent 5	Policy advisor for the Ministry of Defence in Brussels	Actively involved	19 May 2022
6.	Respondent 6	Senior Policy Advisor Ministry of Defence	Actively involved	20 May 2022

*Figure 3 Overview of the respondents*

### Respondent 1

- “The engine of Europe is Germany and France, who together determine for a large part, certainly after the Brexit, what the EU does. (...) France really has a very, very heavy voice in Europe; they just play along with Germany. They play the leading role, and France has been hammering for decades that Europe has to take its responsibility (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”
- “Definitely ambitious, absolutely. Especially if you compare it to what we've had up to now, you had the EU Global Strategy and that all remained pretty abstract. I find the real specialisation, the concretisation in the compass, very good. It really does get two feet on the ground. That RDC, that's just 5000 men or women, but that's just, that's just a super battle group with all the command support, command service support attached to it, Strategic Enablement. And that's actually, that was born, that thought is, has come to fruition well, has become quite concrete after the debacle in Kabul. That was last August, how on earth are we going to, suppose we should do that as an EU? (...). How are we going to do that, how are we going to fix that? Well, they started thinking about it; of course, we already had the direction of the Strategic Compass. We said yes, you have to have an answer to that; how are we going to do that? (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”
- "Don't forget that in the EU, there's a lot of money in it. The EU is a trade identity; it's only about money here. It is about money and regulation. Is a huge amount of financial capacity in it. And it's all these mutual funds. There are billions in them, and if you make good agreements with each other about how you can use those funds, then you will benefit from that (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”
- “The EU’s Security and Defence Policy is focused on the ring of instability outside the European Union. The EU will also not deploy its armed forces on its territory. We will not deploy an EU

force in Spain, Germany, or the Netherlands; we have NATO for that. But we will deploy it in the surrounding area, in North Africa and the Middle East. That's where the crises manifested themselves, which negatively influenced the stability of the European Union territory. The second difference is that NATO is a military alliance with military means. The EU is a coalition where you have a much broader and much more differentiated toolbox involving trade, development cooperation, legal, diplomatic, economic and military means. (...) So there you see that the EU has a different character, on the same playing field. And in that, you see that also because of the 27 countries of the EU, 22 are members of NATO. (...) We can't say that the EU is a left organisation and NATO a right organisation because that's a left and a right leg. They are in the same body. So that's where you see this consistency emerging (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”

- “Fortunately, almost all countries use the same agreements that we have laid down in the NATO standard, standardisation documents and agreements. And also countries that are not members of NATO. They do always follow those models. (...) You conform to what the norm is. The norm is NATO as the military instrument. So what you see is that anyone can do that, and then indeed you get a plug and play system, where at some point. Yes, as a crucial factor: does everybody speak English well, because that's the common language. Can systems speak to each other? (Respondent 1, 10 May 2022).”
- “When the French president says: the armed forces will be deployed, the French armed forces will be deployed tomorrow. In the Netherlands, but especially in Germany and other countries, it really takes longer because parliament also has a role to play. And well, the Prime Minister or the Chancellor or whoever can suddenly decide that, so there are also differences in the methods of national decision-making. How quickly can you deploy a military force to what positions and things like that (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022).”

## **Jan Roede**

- "The Netherlands was one of the proponents of this document. After all, we saw that we have been leaning on NATO for a very long time for our security. Because we knew, and we still know, that we cannot, or cannot do anything, much on our own. We do have a military force. You can argue about whether or not it's in good shape. (...) So the Netherlands was one of the Member States that thought we should come up with such a Compass because we clearly saw that you had all these separate initiatives, and you had this goal that we all still weren't achieving, and you had to work towards it. The Netherlands is a country of culture, so to speak, of nature, because it says: well, we all have to make a plan, and we have to write that plan down, and then we really have to go for it (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022).”

- "As long as you look at where the qualities are, you can deploy them accordingly. (...) Diversity can be the strength, can't it? But you have to have some basic level where you all go with it. (...) Look, NATO has a much better system than with the doctrines and requirements, so those procedures for commands all follow each other. Yes, you can do that as, as long as you as the EU adhere to that, that's your standard too? So then there's no problem (Respondent Roede, 13 May 2022)."

### **Joost van Iersel**

- "The Europeans have also always refused to raise the issue because it was said: that we are an economic union and we keep away from the matters of defence in foreign policy. And that's where a change has actually come in only recently with this last committee which somewhat, to the amazement of onlookers, was advertising itself as a so-called geopolitical committee. (...) It used to be that the justification for integration in Europe was: peace in Europe, between whom, not with Russia because the US did that. No, between the old hereditary enemies. That was an issue if only we could get that done. Well, then we were good to go. And the vehicle for that was the economy. So the internal market and that worked extremely well because there was no conceivable war between all these countries. That's fine. But as far as the foreign relations of the union. Nobody looked at that, only in terms of trade, economic trade. (...) And there suddenly comes this change that one looks from inward unity, but looks inward unity? That means you also have to form a view from inside to outside unity (Respondent Van Iersel, 16 May 2022)."
- "The decisive factor for whom we are all waiting is, of course, Germany, because Deutsche geschichte is European geschichte and vice versa. That was so in 1950, and it is still so today. If Germany is not involved, you achieve nothing, and if Germans are involved, you have a chance that something will come. Something will come, and so there really is a movement in Germany. A small one, but there is a movement (Respondent Van Iersel, 16 May 2022)."
- "In Chile, an assassination party, cleaning up a president, et cetera. But it doesn't stop there. We are blind to it. If I say so myself, I almost don't believe myself already. One hundred interventions in the world for regime change and shout that you are the greatest democracy (Joost van Iersel, 16 May 2022)."

### **Iric van Doorn**

- "You said it well; it is more quantified than any plans so far, so quite specific: nice lists, nice topics, five pillars, so to speak, are covered. There are calendars with it. It says a timeline is in it; ambitions are in it, and all of that is true. But if I have to say what's not in it, I say, no organization's going to implement that (Respondent Van Doorn, 16 May 2022)."

- "No, it's more of the same; that's my big concern. It's bilateral, multilateral cooperation, consultation, and trying to find solutions.
- We want to keep our sovereignty. Well, international specialisation is at odds with sovereignty (Respondent Van Doorn, 16 May 2022)."
- "What's good for America is not necessarily good for Europe, and so that blind Atlantic allegiance that's still there in many people, especially in our generation, who always still think that the Americans only liberated us and those 26 million dead Russians didn't. And so well, that is, we assume that it's always good when we pursue foreign policy together, but that has led to them becoming totally dependent in terms of equipment. The European defence industry is 30 per cent owned by the United States in terms of shares. So we can't do that much already. The credibility of the omnipotence of the United States has gradually eroded. And that's to Europe's advantage if you want Europe to amount to anything (Iric van Doorn, 16 May 2022)."
- "Look, Borrell presents it, and you almost have to say: you have to listen to what he doesn't say. What he does say is all incredibly logical. In an area where we are all very weak, you give the European Union space there, cyber, for example. That's obvious. But he can; he says this rapid intervention force of 5,000 men is necessary, and he describes what it's for. I just said it: within two weeks, you want to have a mobilised club somewhere. And he can't say that, but those guys have a blue badge, they're, where are those soldiers coming from? He can't elaborate on that, and so if you're a little bit more introduced to the subject matter, you pierce through that (Respondent Van Doorn, 16 May 2022)."

## **Respondent 5**

- "Of course, there's always some little bit of chagrin, but generally speaking, the Americans and my NATO colleagues that I spoke to about it, they were hugely appreciative of the fact that the European Union is finally taking responsibility, so to speak, for their security. In any case, they were trying to do so and were predominantly positive about it (Respondent 5, 19 May 2022)."

## **Respondent 6**

- "There it is just assumed that not everyone can contribute equally. (...) If everyone contributes their share, we will get there (Respondent 6, 20 May 2022)."
- "It's, it actually should have been, that's what we focused on as well, a politically strongly understandable document. You must have read it; it's 47 pages with a lot of EU lingo. What I think someone if you were to ask someone on the street: hey, what is this? It wouldn't be understood. So, but that's inherent in drafting a text with 27 member states. That's kind of part of it (Respondent 6, 19 May 2022)."

## Appendix D Operationalisation

Concept	Definition	Indicators	How to measure?
Defence policy of the Netherlands	Policy providing the national framework for defence and crisis management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Key elements</li> <li>• Forms of cooperation</li> <li>• The Netherlands versus Europe</li> </ul>	<p>What are essential elements in formulating defence policy?</p> <p>Compared to the rest of Europe, how do you think the Netherlands is doing with its defence policy?</p>
Defence policy of the European Union	Policy providing the EU framework for defence and crisis management, including cooperation and coordination between Member States in the field of defence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European integration</li> <li>• The need to cooperate</li> <li>• Capacities</li> <li>• Ambition/satisfaction</li> <li>• Dependence on Europe</li> </ul>	<p>Was there also a wish from the Netherlands/Min-Def to work together more intensively?</p> <p>It has been indicated that there will be more intensive cooperation, more investment. How do you think this will mainly take shape?</p> <p>Can Europe defend itself without NATO?</p>
The Strategic Compass	The Strategic Compass is an instrument that ensures that Europe chooses a certain direction and stays on course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedules</li> <li>• Activities and events</li> <li>• Contribution of the Netherlands</li> <li>• More European cooperation</li> <li>• European Army</li> <li>• Ambition</li> <li>• Satisfaction</li> </ul>	<p>What do you mean by the Strategic Compass?</p> <p>Ultimately, the Strategic Compass must also ensure that Europe can take military action more quickly if necessary. Do you think this is feasible?</p>
European Union as part of the world order	European ambition on a global scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambition</li> <li>• Fulfilment</li> </ul>	<p>Why do you think that Europe wants more and more cooperation in the field of defence?</p> <p>How do you think this will manifest itself in the future?</p>
Factors (Zandee, Drent & Hendriks, 2016)	Zandee, Drent & Hendriks have compiled 12 criteria that are important for European cooperation in defence operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust, reliability and solidarity</li> <li>• Sovereignty and autonomy</li> <li>• Similarity of strategic cultures</li> <li>• Geography and history</li> <li>• Number of partners</li> <li>• Countries and forces of similar size and quality</li> <li>• Top-down and bottom-up</li> <li>• Mindset, defence culture and organisation</li> <li>• Alignment of defence planning</li> <li>• Standardisation and interoperability</li> <li>• Realism, clarity and the degree of seriousness of intentions</li> <li>• Involvement of parliament</li> </ul>	<p>Is there enough trust, reliability and solidarity between EU countries?</p> <p>Do you think it would be better to work top-down or bottom-up?</p> <p>How has the Parliament been involved in this policy?</p>
Multi-level governance	A way of cooperation between governmental organisations and countries where power is horizontally distributed among the actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of power</li> <li>• Why countries want to cooperate in an international defence policy</li> <li>• Setting goals</li> <li>• Perspectives (realism, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>What is the main reason for the Netherlands to contribute to this?</p> <p>Is the Netherlands at the forefront of defence policy making?</p> <p>Is there a struggle for power within the EU?</p>
CSDP operations	Missions set up from EU Member States since 2003 to ensure the safe existence of those same Member States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences</li> <li>• Important elements/obstacles</li> <li>• Satisfaction</li> </ul>	<p>There have been missions via the CSDP (European Common Security and Defence Policy), are you familiar with them?</p> <p>Are you satisfied with the role that the Netherlands played in these?</p>
Collective action perspective	A collective action approach that looks at why and how actors participate in a collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elite actors</li> <li>• National/European interests</li> <li>• International System</li> <li>• Global/transnational phenomena</li> </ul>	<p>What interests played the most part in the drafting of the Strategic Compass?</p>

# Appendix E Code Scheme

