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The Franco-German Leadership in the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy: A critical analysis of the Franco-German defence contributions to the EU

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Mestrado em Estudos Internacionais

Orientadoras:

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Abstract

The phenomenon of leadership is often crucial to the development of specific international arrangements and agreements. It has the potential of determining the success or failure of a community's attempt of achieving a common goal. The relevance of leadership is particularly predominant in the context of the EU due to the difficulty of managing and converging the wide range of interests within the EU, and the security and defence area is a clear example of that. Thus, focusing on the evolution of the EU's security and defence project from its first attempts in the 1950s until its current state, this study observes the Franco-German case study as a source of leadership in this policy area. Through the analysis of France's and Germany's leading role in the EU's history, this dissertation then focuses on understanding if that pattern of action is also present in the CSDP since its establishment in 2009. Considering the intergovernmental nature of this policy area, the value of leadership is evident amidst the ongoing institutional and communitarian debate. Therefore, by highlighting the concept of leadership in international relations and the characteristics that define a leader, this study identifies the Franco-German actions and strategies in the CSDP and reflects on how those have shaped European defence. The analysis concludes that France and Germany have led the EU's security and defence project, albeit with limited success. At the core of that limited success, this study identifies the divergent interests and strategies between the two countries as the main obstacle for further progress.

Key words

European Union, Common Security and Defence Policy, Franco-German axis, Leadership

Resumo

A liderança é um processo fundamental para o estabelecimento de específicos acordos e resoluções institucionais. Tem o potencial de determinar o sucesso ou o falhanço de uma comunidade que procura atingir um objetivo comum. A relevância de liderança é particularmente predominante no contexto da EU devido à dificuldade em gerir e convergir a diversa quantidade de interesses existentes dentro da EU, e a área de segurança e defesa é um exemplo evidente desse fenómeno. Então, focando na evolução do projeto de segurança e defesa da EU desde as primeiras tentativas na década de 1950 até à atualidade, este estudo observa o caso de estudo Franco-Alemão como fonte de liderança nesta área de política. Através da análise do papel de liderança da França e da Alemanha na história da EU, esta dissertação foca-se posteriormente em perceber se esse padrão de ação também está presente na PCSD desde o seu estabelecimento em 2009. Considerando o carácter intergovernamental desta área, a importância de liderança é evidente tendo em conta o contínuo debate comunitário e institucional. Portanto, realçando o conceito de liderança nas relações internacionais e os elementos que definem um líder, este estudo identifica as ações e estratégias Franco-Alemãs na PCSD e reflete sobre como essas modelaram a defesa europeia. Esta análise conclui que a França e a Alemanha têm liderado o projeto de segurança e defesa da EU apesar do sucesso limitado. No centro desse sucesso limitado, este estudo identifica os interesses e estratégias divergentes entre os dois países como o principal obstáculo a mais progresso.

Palavras-chave

União Europeia, Política Comum de Segurança e Defesa, Eixo Franco-Alemão, Liderança

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Acronyms

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defence
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CJEF	Combined Joint Expeditionary Force
CROC	Crisis Response Operation Core
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
ECB	European Central Bank
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDC	European Defence Community
EDTIB	European Defence Technology and Industrial Base
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EDF	European Defence Fund
EI2	European Intervention Initiative
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUGS	EU Global Strategy
FGB	Franco-German Brigade
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGC	Intergovernmental Conferences
MPCC	Military Planning and Conduct Capability
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WEU Western European Union

Introduction

On the 30th of August of 1954, following a negotiation process between France, West Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries in an attempt to establish the first defence community in Europe after the WWII, the Treaty establishing the European Defence Community was rejected in the French National Assembly. 68 years later, in a time where the European Union (EU) had already established a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in the European Parliament that "(...) we [the EU] ought to work on the vision of one day establishing a proper European army" (The German Federal Government, 2018). Thus, what was once perceived as an impossible achievement due to the European political circumstances at the time eventually became a subject of ongoing debate at the heart of the EU's supranational framework.

Such an institutional and political transition took a long time to become a reality as the European community had firstly to develop itself into a system where these matters and ambitions could actually be discussed. In fact, the first instance where the European community agreed on the establishment of a common security policy was in the 1992's Maastricht Treaty, where the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the first common defence policy were established (Treaty on European Union, 1992).

Nowadays, despite significant progress in this policy area which has allowed this cooperation framework to boost European integration in these matters and to allow the EU to act in civilian or military missions, it remains a disputed issue. Either because of its lack of efficiency, its failure in achieving several of its goals, or because defence matters are traditionally a prerogative of the states and thus a cooperative dynamic is difficult to achieve, the EU is still considerably criticised for not being a credible military international actor (Fiott, 2020: 123). Nonetheless, what has been achieved so far by the European community and its member states is historically unprecedented, despite its flaws and weaknesses. Not once in history has there been an institutional framework that fosters direct cooperation amongst several States in defence and security matters, specifically in a supranational and intergovernmental context.

In this context, a wide range of players has a role to play and is able to influence the policy-making process of the EU, from member states to the supranational institutions such as the European Commission. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to understand how a group of countries can influence and possibly lead the EU's defence project in a certain direction. In particular, this study picks France and Germany as its case study due to the undeniable impact that both of those countries have had in the European integration, not just regarding defence

and security issues. As the biggest member states within the EU in terms of population, economic power and political influence, their action inevitably affects the EU in one way or another. Furthermore, France and Germany have displayed their leadership capability in a wide range of areas in the EU. Hence, when analysing the EU's strategy and development in defence and security matters, the Franco-German partnership is identified as the most relevant case study for this dissertation.

In order to reflect on the Franco-German role in this area, this dissertation will firstly focus on the historic path that both countries have had in the EU's history with the goal of understanding what role each played in European integration and the contributions both provided in regard to defence. Secondly, this study will analyse the Franco-German influence and inputs in the security and defence policy-area since the Lisbon Treaty. The objective is to identify, highlight and scrutinise the actions, strategies and perspectives of each country or the partnership as a whole in this field. The primary goal of this dissertation is to determine if the Franco-German axis has led the European defence project, how that has been achieved and what success has it had in that endeavour.

The added value of this research is related not only with the importance of the case study (as previously mentioned), but also with its attachment to the overall environment of the EU's political process, while also linking it with the concept of *leadership*. Indeed, this study accordingly relates the Franco-German role with the phenomenon of leadership and the wide range of elements related to it, with the goal of deepening the understanding of that process. It is crucial to grasp the influence that one country or a group of countries can have in a specific policy-area in order to understand how the EU evolves over time. Therefore, the ability to lead is paramount in that context, particularly if the overall objective of the leaders is to achieve a specific goal in which the action of all members is required. This dissertation will thus attempt to find out if the Franco-German leadership in the EU has also been displayed in the area of European defence and security.

Chapter 1

1.1 - The ECSC as the first Franco-German rapprochement initiative after the Second World War

This subchapter will reflect on the impact France had in the initial developments towards European integration which began with the necessary rapprochement with Germany which, following the war, intended to regain its status in the European continent. The emphasis of this section is to highlight how the actions of both countries after the Second World War drastically changed the relations among themselves and the western/central European states, and set the foundations of European integration, which then set the path for the slow development of the defence cooperation. It is crucial to note how the elements of security, defence and militarisation already played a vital role in that process.

Following the Second World War (1939-1945) Europe was economically, industrially and militarily in ruins (Hadjilambrinos, 2019: 213), and the European states understood that only through cooperation, and support from the United States of America, could the continent rebuild its economies and societies while avoiding the return of conflicts. However, despite the understanding that an increasing cooperation and coordination of efforts was required in this endeavour, the interests of the European states were divergent and often conflictive. At the core of that divergence was the caution and assertiveness of the Allied forces towards Germany (Berger, 2013: 60).

On the one hand, France had highly ambitious plans and goals after the war, particularly regarding the French occupation of German territories motivated by economic interests (Lee, 2004: 111). With West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany) defeated and the United Kingdom focused on the Commonwealth, France intended to make its influence grow in Europe by establishing itself as the leader of the European project. On the other hand, West Germany saw a wide range of severe restrictions being imposed upon itself by the Allies as a result of losing the war, in which the reorganisation of its coal mining industry and the disarmament of the whole country can be highlighted (Berger, 2013: 60). Furthermore, Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, feared that the country would become the battleground between the East, led by the Soviet Union, and the West, led by the US. This increased the need for an efficient foreign policy that would integrate West Germany in Europe in order to avoid its isolation in the international system (Ackermann, 1994: 234).

Despite the animosities between France and West Germany, and the distrust the former had on the latter, France understood that the recovery and modernization of its economy was

connected to Germany's recovery due to the geographic proximity and the historic past shared between the two states. Aligned with this idea, Winston Churchill stated that a revival of Europe would not be possible without a strong recovery of both France and Germany (Berger, 2013: 67). Through this reasoning, the idea of European cooperation arose in the post-war era, which was also supported by the US as it created and implemented the Marshall Plan in 1947 with the goal of aiding Europe in its recovery process.¹

At the core of the conflict of interests among western European states were the main steel and coal producing territories, particularly in the Ruhr region in Germany, which was of special interest to France, who claimed the coal production of that region, and to West Germany, who opposed the French claims (Lee, 2004: 111). Indeed, France was already in control of the Saar region, while the Ruhr was under the control of the International Ruhr Authority. The possible loss of control over the Saarland was a considerable threat to France due to the extensive energy and industrial resources in those territories crucial in the post-war context (Hadjilambrinos, 2019: 217).²

Therefore, France was against the reorganisation of those regions as it feared the negative impact such an action would have on its economy. In addition, France intended to have some sort of control over Germany's economy and those regions were a major factor for Germany's previous industrial dominance. Thus, having the prerogative in those areas was a crucial step to avoid a return of that power and thus a possible resurgence of Germany's hostilities (Lee, 2004: 111). In France, nonetheless, there was a common understanding that the rehabilitation of the country's economy was connected to Germany's due to the geographic proximity and the historical path. Therefore, despite the French fears and the lack of trust towards the Germans, there was an understanding that the Franco-German relationship was crucial not only to both countries but to Europe (Berger, 2013: 67).

The question of Germany's re-militarisation was another crucial element that influenced France's stance regarding Germany, due to France's opposition to it. Linked with that issue was the rise of the US's influence in Europe in the shape of the Marshall Plan and the creation of the North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949. These initiatives pressured France to accept the re-militarisation of West Germany, which was supposed to eventually join the alliance

¹ One of the US's main goals was to foster European integration economically, but that was not possible in that particular time due to the existence of conflicts of interest among the European states (Berger, 2013).

² Steel and coal played a crucial role prior to the 2nd World War. Indeed, the international crude steel association secured access to raw materials and markets among several European states. Coal cartels also existed and established certain quotas for their members (Berger, 2013)

(Hadjilambrinos, 2019: 217). Consequently, Jean Monnet, Schuman's adviser, was aware that it was a matter of time until Germany's occupations would come to an end and, thus, Europe's future had to be based on ideas of unification and integration (Berger, 2013: 71). France was thus pressured to come up with an option that would be accepted by the Allies and the Germans, meanwhile attempting to avoid a loss of French influence and control over the Ruhr (Lee, 2004: 111).

Therefore, a change of France's policy and strategy towards Germany was required in order to avoid the return of conflict among the two states. Thus, a proposal from Monnet arose in 1950 with the intention of creating a supranational institution that would subordinate the Member States in the elements in which it intended to play a role. The plan, that became known as the *Schuman Plan*, proposed the creation of a common high authority which would supervise a Franco-German coal and steel community, particularly the vital industries in the Saar and Ruhr regions, while allowing other European states to join the treaty (Berger, 2013: 63). That treaty thus institutionalised the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Not only were these developments motivated by French national interests of economic and geopolitical interest (Lee, 2004: 112), but also by the French predilection in desiring the creation of strong and meaningful institutions and treaties (Berger, 2013).

At the core of this supranational organisation's creation was the desire to preserve peace and to create economic and political ties amongst the members-states in order to increase the interdependence between them, thus shifting the previous paradigm of conflict to one of cooperation in which each state would benefit from the established market and cooperation framework. Indeed, the symbolic value and the importance of these national resources is at the heart of this transformational process of Europe (Hadjilambrinos, 2019: 218). Therefore, the High Authority had power to "plan supply, handle shortages of supply or demand, and prepare production forecasts as guidelines for investment" (Ibid: 219). This cooperation plan among the member-states, which was also founded by Belgium Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, in addition to France and Germany, removed quota restrictions and tariffs, while also prohibiting price-fixing. Thus, one of the ECSC's priorities was to assure free competition among its members (Alphand, 1953).

Simultaneously, in this shifting political context in Europe following the war and the creation of the FRG in 1949, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer prioritised the return of the country's economy to the international market, the re-establishment of the FRG in the continent and the reclaim of its former status as a respected state, equal to its European counterparts. Hence, the first

chancellor of the FRG considered the country's relationship with France a vital component of its foreign policy in order to achieve those goals. Furthermore, European integration and cooperation was perceived as the best path to win back the trust of its neighbouring countries. Another element that must be considered is West Germany's desire to attain a NATO membership and, consequently, to rearm its country in the framework of the alliance (Berger, 2013: 75).

1.2 - The EDC as a French attempt of solving the issue of Germany's re-militarisation

Following the creation of the first European community under an institutional structure, the opportunity for further integration in other areas was open. Thus, the next section analyses the critical role France and Germany played in the first strictly European defence community.

As previously mentioned, the issue of Germany's rearmament was deeply controversial and a highly debated topic in the post-war context. Indeed, while West Germany desired to rearm itself, France was uncomfortable with the possibility of the former regaining its power with fear of a return of the past animosities. Notwithstanding, France became aware of the reality of the changing world and the new necessities that it required, which was directly connected to the creation of the ECSC, and increasingly became more open to the idea of cooperating with Germany for their benefit as well as for the betterment of the continent (Alphand, 1953: 143). According to Simpson (1971: 79), the US's desire to include West Germany in the European project in order to assure the preservation of democracy and peace in the continent was a crucial influence in France's stance regarding West Germany, aligned with its goal of contributing to the creation of a European identity that would be independent from the US while also being capable of defending itself from the USSR.

Thus, in addition to the economic ties amongst the mentioned six member-states established by the ECSC, René Pleven, France's Prime Minister, proposed the creation of a European Defence Community (EDC) in 1952, which purpose was to unify Europe in the area of defence and security under a supranational authority. Within this cooperation framework, the possibility of future conflicts existing amongst its member-states would be non-existent. The priority of the organisation and its members would be to use its armed forces for the defence of the community, as France desired (Alphand, 1953: 144).

It is important to notice that this was not the first attempt of creating a defence community in Europe because, besides NATO, the Brussels Pact was implemented in 1948 and later became

the WEU. Despite not being a pioneer initiative in defence matters, the EDC still stands-out for its exclusive European character without US participation (CVCE, 2016). However, authors such as Pastor-Castro (2006: 389) mention that, despite the fact that these were significant defence efforts by western-European states and other western countries, these treaties failed to address the issue of West Germany's potential contribution to the defence department. Notwithstanding the French fears that West Germany's inclusion in the EDC, aligned with its rearmament, would threaten the organisation itself and the whole European project, Pastor-Castro acknowledges France's will to avoid West Germany's exclusion in this project. On the other hand, authors such as Vanke (2007) highlight the fact that the WEU did lead to the rearmament of Germany, even though it did not address or increase European unity. Overall, France's priorities were three-fold: "German rearmament, France's general international position and European unity" (ibid: 448).

From FRG's perspective, Chancellor Adenauer played once again a crucial role regarding the country's decision to join the negotiations and the treaty that would create the EDC, despite divided German opinions regarding the EDC and the rearmament of the country. Adenauer highlighted the importance of Franco-German reconciliation and integration not only for both Germany and France, but also for the European community. The chancellor understood that deep international ties amongst countries would make conflicts much more unlikely to happen (ibid).

Just like in the FRG, opinions in France were highly divided. On the side of the opposition, the motives to be against the treaty were related with the fact that the proposed organisation would have a military contribution from West Germany (towards which a huge part of the French population still looked suspiciously) and that the supranational organisation would control France's defence resources. Furthermore, according to Pastor-Castro (2006: 390), the idea that the EDC treaty would threaten the influence of the US and the UK on European defence was another argument on the side of the opposition. Consequently, the treaty collapsed in the country where it was proposed as the French National Assembly rejected the treaty, thus originating a crisis in the western-European alliance. A considerable level of uncertainty was then placed on the future of the European project that had begun four years prior to this attempt of creating a defence community in Europe (Ibid: 400).

Besides the concerns of a part of the French and German populations that their countries would lose a part of their sovereignty, the rejection of the EDC did not mean that deeper integration of the European project was not possible. Indeed, in 1955, Dutch Foreign Minister

Wim Beyen proposed a project of further economic cooperation and integration which would consist on the creation of a Common Market and a Customs Union, with the long-distance goal of creating a political community in the future aligned with the economic one. The idea then became the Treaty of Rome, which was signed in 1957, thus establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), in which West Germany and France were some of the founding members (Vanke, 2007: 471).

Alongside the previously mentioned motivation of securing West Germany's place in Western Europe, an added reason for the country's membership in the EEC was the belief that a supranational institution was needed in order to secure integration. Otherwise, the integration system would eventually collapse.³ Nonetheless, just like in their French neighbours, there was also a confrontation between realists and idealists. Indeed, Adenauer feared that projects such as the Treaty of Rome were too ambitious and idealistic in their proposals, instead of attempting to achieve progress step-by-step, and thus would fail. On the other hand, according to Vanke (Ibid), Guy Mollet, France's Prime-Minister, was keener on containing West Germany within the European project rather than deepening Franco-German reconciliation. Indeed, Mollet and many others in France preferred "to sacrifice some French sovereignty in exchange for controlling West Germany" (Ibid: 460).

Franco-German reconciliation is a crucial element in this process of rapprochement between France and Germany, and thus a vital part of the European integration process. Ackermann (1994: 233), after defining "reconciliation" as the resolution of a conflict between two or more parties through social-political arrangements that are based on equality, explains how reconciliation played a key role between Germany and France in the post-war context. In 1949, Adenauer mentioned Germany's reconciliation with France and Poland as a priority of Germany's foreign policy (Feldman, 1999). In this case, the creation of institutional links of cooperation was the chosen model of reconciliation in order to sustain peace amongst the two countries. Thus, Adenauer's *Westpolitik* which entailed "integration into the West", not only restored the country's sovereignty but also prevented the return of Germany's nationalism. On the other hand, after failing to garner support towards their plans on Germany's territory, France shifted strategy into one of including and containing Germany in the European integration project. Therefore, West Germany's integration in that project was motivated not only by choice, but also by necessity from both sides (Ibid).

³ An important actor in West Germany's participation in the EEC was Hallstein, Adenauer's state secretary for foreign affairs, due to its insistence towards supranational integration (Vanke, 2007)

1.3 – The impact of De Gaulle and France’s national interests in the European integration process

Following the path of France’s and Germany’s role in the European project, after the creation of the EEC the person that had the biggest impact in the European community was Charles De Gaulle, France’s President from 1959 until 1969. This timeframe in European history must also be highlighted considering the impact De Gaulle had in the EEC, particularly regarding the potential one individual leader has in influencing the progress or stagnation of a specific international organisation. Furthermore, it underlines the permanent conflict between the national and supranational elements of the European community.

De Gaulle’s biggest priority was increasing France’s power and role in Europe and he perceived the EEC as a mechanism to achieve that (Troitiño, 2008: 144). Furthermore, he desired to see the US’s influence diminish in France and in the European community, though he understood that Europe was dependent on the US, at least at that moment (Trachtenberg, 2012: 84).⁴ In that context, De Gaulle understood the direction France’s foreign policy should take in order to achieve those goals. Hence, West Germany was identified as the only plausible ally for France particularly under the European community’s framework due to the benefits of France’s membership, West Germany’s economic power and potential, aligned with the idea that West Germany could be controlled on that basis (following Mollet’s and Schuman’s strategies in that regard) (Troitiño, 2008: 143).

De Gaulle’s two main concerns during his time in power were the following: the two attempts of the UK acquiring an EEC membership and the intergovernmental character of the EEC. Regarding the former, De Gaulle was straightforward with his opposition towards an UK membership in the EEC because he considered it as a disruption to the organisation. Indeed, according to authors such as Adityo et al. (2019: 12), De Gaulle’s position was mostly motivated by the close relations between the UK and the US, which De Gaulle perceived as a threat to a European community that strived for more unity.⁵ De Gaulle intended to place France as the leader of the community and transform the country into the strongest actor in the EEC while restoring France’s military autonomy (Ellison, 2006: 854).

With that motivation, France proposed the “Fouchet Plan”, which targeted the creation a common defence policy among the six EEC member states under a directorate composed of

⁴ Europe’s dependence on the US was perceived as dangerous by the French and specially by De Gaulle (Troitiño, 2008)

⁵ The defence agreement between the UK and the US in Nassau increased De Gaulle’s mistrust towards those countries (A., H. & Marihandono (2019)

France, the US and the UK. However, the UK-US Nassau Agreement was suspiciously received by De Gaulle, who perceived it as an expression of the Anglo-Saxon intention of maintaining its exclusive relationship (Menon, et al, 1992: 101). This sequence of events heightened De Gaulle's fears that an Anglo-Saxon alliance would dominate the European community and, consequently, prevent France from acquiring the power and position it desired (Ellison, 2006: 858).

Furthermore, the similarities between the EEC Member States was another focal point in France's rejection due to the idea that similarities such as the economic ones benefited the cooperation amongst those countries. The UK, on the other hand, had different economic interests and its geographic position was distinct from the member-states of the EEC. Hence, following these ideas, France vetoed Britain's first attempt of gaining an EEC membership in 1963 (Adityo et al., 2019: 11).

In 1967 France vetoed a second UK attempt of acquiring an EEC membership and Troitiño (2008: 145) emphasizes that, being a country with a large population, the UK would pose a threat to France's influence and to the Franco-German alliance, aligned with the possible rise of US's influence on the community. In addition, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had a substantial impact in France's veto because that specific policy area was of vital importance to France, and De Gaulle feared that the negotiations with the UK could go against France's interests in that regard (Moravcsik, 2000).⁶

Secondly, De Gaulle had a persistent dispute with the supranational integration of the EEC. Indeed, as mentioned by Troitiño (2008: 147), France, particularly under the leadership of De Gaulle, was fearful of losing its sovereignty to the EEC that was growing in an increasingly supranational integration framework in contrast with De Gaulle's priority of empowering France. What the French president desired was for the EEC to be an intergovernmental organisation, which would mean that each member-state would maintain its sovereignty because the decisions of that organisation would have to be made with consensus (Moravcsik, 2000). From De Gaulle's perspective, a decision made by majority, instead of consensus, would mean a loss of sovereignty, resulting in a weaker France (Troitiño, 2008: 147).

The peak of that dispute of ideals between De Gaulle and the supranational proposals was the "empty chair crisis", in 1965, in which De Gaulle opposed himself to the advancing integration in the European community, following proposals that attempted to provide the

⁶ The CAP was a policy in which De Gaulle was successful in defending France's interests because French production was eventually open to the European market, thus benefitting French production (Troitiño, 2008)

supranational institutions with more power (Moravcsik, 2000: 35). Being against those proposals, which included majority votes in the European Council, De Gaulle withdrew the French ministers from the Council for 6 months. That crisis ended due to an agreement⁷ in which a state could veto a majority vote if it went against its interests in crucial matters, consequently maintaining its sovereignty (Troitiño, 2008: 148).⁸

Due to this assertive strategy De Gaulle became recognized as a controversial figure. Nonetheless, despite his nationalistic actions that intended to strengthen France, Adenauer was still willing to recognise De Gaulle's leadership due to the priority that the former had with the Franco-German reconciliation. Hence, considering the convergence of ideas between both countries towards the future of the European integration project, the Elysée Treaty was signed in 1963 by both, which, according to Martins (2013: 61), is a pact that is not just a symbolic formality, it is an "efficient development of shared interests".

Despite the signing of the treaty, each country had a different perspective of it. Indeed, while West Germany intended to use it to develop the reconciliation amongst the two countries and to contain De Gaulle's anti-NATO tendencies, France perceived it as an opportunity to strengthen the EEC in the context of the Cold War (Adityo et al., 2019: 13). Martins (2013: 61) also considers the concerns both countries had of the other's national policies possibly affecting them. For France, this treaty was also a mechanism to avoid West Germany of getting somehow closer to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Notwithstanding all these motives, the main priority of the treaty was to create a bilateral cooperation that could lead the European project, while being a "counterweight" to the US-UK alliance (ibid: 64).

The cooperation dynamic established in the treaty focused on increasing common positions regarding foreign policy, coordinating defence policies in order to increase integration and coordination in this matter, and cooperating in economic and financial matters. Consequently, meetings between the leaders of each country and its foreign and defence ministers became more frequent. This framework would be the reference point for the future institutional structure of the European Union (EU) (ibid: 65).

⁷ It became known as the "Luxembourg Compromise" (Moravcsik, 2000)

⁸ The circumstances in which a simple majority vote was allowed increased in 1986, with the Single European Act (Troitiño, 2008)

1.4 - The development of the Franco-German partnership amidst German and communitarian changes

At this point of the historical contextualisation, how did this partnership establish itself and how did it affect the institutional developments of the 1980s and 1990s? The following analysis attempts to underline the main features and intentions of the Franco-German cooperation in the historical events that took place at the end of the 20th century.

The Franco-German partnership is overall regarded as the main driving force of the European community and Helmut Kohl even considered the Elysée Treaty as the “foundation for Europe” as it marked the end of an “hereditary enmity” and the beginning a new period of reconciliation and cooperation amongst the two main actors of the community (Krotz, 2010: 148). Krotz considers it the best example of *Regularised Intergovernmentalism*, which he defines as a model of foreign policy that regularises the interaction of the foreign policy of two or more states through the action of the highest governmental figures, such as heads of state and ministers. The treaty emphasised the need for consultation between both governments in important matters of foreign policy, especially in issues of joint interest.

Krotz (ibid: 151) also mentions the deepening and extension of the Elysée treaty through unofficial meetings and interactions, and particularly in the area of defence, security and foreign policy in which the Franco-German Security and Defence Commission (1982) and the Defence and Security Council (1986) were established with the goal of heightening the coordination between both countries regarding their stances towards these matters. This progress in the area of defence and security resulted in the creation of the Franco-German Brigade (FGB), in 1987, under the guidance of the WEU. The establishment of the FGB was followed by the Franco-German proposal of adapting that force to the European community by expanding it into other European military forces, thus creating the Euro-Corps. Alongside this plan, the defence and security component of the Maastricht Treaty was inspired by Franco-German proposals which intended to expand the area of competences of the EU (Stein, 1993: 200).⁹

Notwithstanding the unprecedented success of this bilateral cooperation and the impact that it had in the EEC, and later in the EU, the relations between the two countries have also included moments of disagreement where a crisis could have emerged (ibid). At the core of these disagreements was the issue of Germany’s reunification. Indeed, the reunification raised fearful questions regarding the weight of the country in the European community when it comes

⁹ The proposal of the Euro-Corps was received with suspicion and hostility by NATO and member-states such as the Netherlands, the UK and Italy who feared that the proposal was an attempt to undermine NATO (Stein, 1993)

to its population, and the possible rise of nationalist ideas in Germany which could lead to its exit from the community. According to Baun (1996: 609), France would be the member-state that would lose the most from the reunification because Germany's population would be superior to France's, and the former was set to regain a considerable amount of power that it did not have since the end of the WWII.

In these circumstances, France's plan was to strengthen the European institutions with the goal of maintaining some of its influence and control Germany with that institutional framework.¹⁰ From Germany's perspective, the strengthening of the European institutions and the preservation of the peaceful and successful relations with France were considered by Kohl as priorities (ibid). Hence, Germany's main goal was to prove that the country's unification would not affect its commitment towards the European project, but it would actually enhance it (Banchoff, 1997: 64). That process ended up being not as straightforward as intended because, on the one hand, France preferred a slower unification in order to avoid the political unbalance of Europe and, on the other, the European community was fearful of Germany's intentions. Considering these diverse political stances, Baun (1996: 623) argues that the Maastricht Treaty should be considered a political response of the European community to the German unification issue and the end of the cold war, where the US rose as the only superpower in the international system. Both Germany and France interpreted it as the means to "secure vital national interests" (ibid, p. 606).

Consequently, the unification accelerated Europe's move towards a monetary union and, despite a divergence of opinions regarding the status of the European Central Bank (ECB),¹¹ the Franco-German link proved to be once again the driving force of the process (Krotz, 2010: 174). Indeed, alongside the impetus towards a common foreign and security policy¹², Kohl and Mitterrand's proposal of accelerating the creation of a monetary union and an increased political union was a crucial factor for the ratification and establishment of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Baun, 1996: 616).

Another situation where the divergences between the two countries were noticeable was the conflict and crisis in Yugoslavia, towards which each country had a different perception. While France identified all the parties involved in the conflict as equally at fault for it, Germany

¹⁰ Jacques Delors, the Commission's President at the time, stated in 1989 that only a federal Europe would maintain Germany in the community and prevent it from straying away from it, thus agreeing with France's interests (Baun, 1996: 615)

¹¹ While France preferred the ECB to be dependent on political control, Germany wanted it to be independent and thus protected from political influence (Krotz, 2010)

¹² Kohl had committed himself to the community goal of establishing a common defence (Loth, 2013)

understood it as a Serbian aggression. Nonetheless, even though France was absent from NATO's military framework¹³ and Germany preferred to not use force in those circumstances, the partnership was able to act with coordination in the conflict (Krotz, 2010: 176).

Thus, Krotz (ibid) highlights that the Elysée Treaty's framework and its overall nature and development did not allow the relations of both countries to fall apart and eventually lead to a crisis at the core of the European community considering the existence of different political strategies in each country. In fact, the regularised intergovernmentalism (Krotz, 2010: 175) established between the two countries allow them to find and develop a common ground in a wide range of issues despite the divergence of interests and preferences.

1.5 – The French defence impetus at the core of the Saint-Malo declaration

Following the end of the cold war new challenges arose alongside the shift in the *status quo* which required more European cooperation in the area of security and defence (Shearer, 2000: 287). Indeed, the crisis in the Balkans, which showed the EU's lack of capabilities in dealing with security crisis and the inefficiency of the Western European Union (leading to a NATO intervention) (Cottey, 2009: 599), alongside the European suspicion that the US was decreasing its participation in the security affairs of the EU, revealed the need for the EU to develop its own autonomous defence capabilities (Howorth, 2003: 15). However, independent defence capabilities would not be created without the support and agreement between the UK and France, Europe's biggest military powers at the end of the 20th century. Thus, it is important to reflect on how France and Germany acted in accordance with the new international context and the security challenges that the EU faced.

Following the inconclusive¹⁴ EU Council of 1997 in Amsterdam regarding security and the WEU's future due to the divergence of ideas amongst the two EU member-states, the UK and France agreed that the EU needed stronger foreign policy and security capabilities (Shearer, 2000: 285). Thus, with that goal in mind, the leaders of the two countries met in Saint-Malo in 1998 and created the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), thus becoming the biggest attempt of achieving an European defence capability since the 1954 EDC treaty (Ricketts, 2017: 30). Even though this summit did not include Germany, it is still a crucial moment to highlight in

¹³ NATO's intervention in the former Yugoslavia initially intended to "deter renewed hostilities, establish a secure environment, ensure public safety and order", among other objectives (NATO, 2020)

¹⁴ According to Shearer (2000: 285), the 1997 Amsterdam summit ended in a stalemate as no agreement was reached regarding the WEU.

order to understand the evolution of, not only the defence and security cooperation in the EU, but also the evolution of France's European defence and security interests.

It is also important to notice that, in order to understand the evolution of the strategies and interests of the UK and France until the Saint-Malo meeting, both countries stood on opposite sides when the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)¹⁵ was established in the framework of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Indeed, Ricketts (ibid: 30) crucially mentions how, in that moment, while France intended to create an independent defence capability completely separated from NATO (due to the US's dominance of NATO), the UK did not want the EU to have that independence.

Nonetheless, even though the goal was the same, the two countries disagreed on the way they wanted to achieve that and on how they desired that defence framework to be developed within the EU. Indeed, as Howorth (2000: 35) states, each of these two countries had its own security culture despite having the same goals. At the heart of those differences were the opposition between *Europeanism*, on France's side, and *Atlanticism*, on the UK's side, which has always been a crucial factor and priority in the UK's foreign policy, consequently meaning that the UK did not want to undermine NATO or its alliance with the US. On the other hand, France's foreign policy had gone through a process of "Europeanisation"¹⁶ in order to acquire a role of political leadership in Europe and reduce its dependence on the US. In other words, while France's priority was the European defence project, the UK's priority was to maintain the Atlantic Alliance (Shearer, 2000: 286). For instance, regarding a collective defence guarantee, France believed that that guarantee should be included in the ESDP. On the other hand, the UK considered that irrelevant because NATO already had an article that assured that. According to Howorth (2000: 41), that is a crucial point when it comes to achieving European autonomy.

The core of the issue at Saint-Malo was to not undermine or affect NATO in fears of compromising the EU-US relations, which was a particular sensitive issue for France as well considering the fact that the French were not a part of the military structure of NATO and desired less European dependence on the US.¹⁷ Consequently, both the UK and France intended

¹⁵ Amongst other objectives, the CFSP acts to "preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter" (Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the European Union, 2008, OJ C326/29)

¹⁶ Europeanisation can be defined as "a process whereby domestic politics becomes increasingly subjected to European policy-making" or as "a situation where distinct modes of European governance have transformed aspects of domestic politics" (Buller & Gamble, 2002: 13, 17)

¹⁷ Furthermore, the US did not want the EU to have a fully independent defence force. Hence, the US would accept the declaration of Saint-Malo as long as it did not undermine NATO in any way. On the other

to improve the defence capabilities of the EU, instead of creating a fully integrated European security framework which would undermine NATO and thus be negatively received by the US (Shearer, 2000: 285). Still, France's ultimate goal was to establish an independent European defence force. Its approach to achieve that goal simply required a change in nature in order to create the foundations of that defence force. Notwithstanding, the question remained on how an EU defence capacity could be created without being dependent on NATO (Howorth, 2000).¹⁸

As previously mentioned, the UK and France still had different ideas and interests despite their common goal. In addition to the Atlanticism vs Europeanism divergence, the two countries presented additional contrasting ideas. Howorth (ibid: 44) presents such differences in detail, considering them as a distinction between "realistic" goals from the UK regarding the ESDP, and ambitious "long-term commitments" from France. For instance, among other elements, while the UK desired to establish self-sufficient troop levels with an appropriate command centre, France preferred the complete multi-nationalisation of existing French and British personnel and services with an autonomous European command chain (ibid: 38). Nonetheless, there were some aspects in which both countries agreed on, such as the goal of making the EU able to act autonomously without needing the US's aid or the idea that the EU should acquire a military capacity to act on crisis management, conflict prevention and peacekeeping operations (French Republic & the UK, 1998).

Shearer (2000: 284) interpreted this process as the "gaining of legitimacy" through "dynamic social constructs". Thus, from Shearer's point of view, what the UK and France were attempting to achieve was the creation of a group identity and of a security community through shared perceptions of external risks. Those perceptions are crucial to the development of a group identity and, in this case, those external risks were the post-Cold war challenges that were identified by the European states as risks that required collective solutions.

As a result of the Saint-Malo declaration, the European Council of 1999 in Helsinki decided that the EU's capabilities in this regard would only include operations in circumstances where NATO was not engaged in. However, as Howorth (2000) mentions, the idea of EU autonomy remained ambiguous and thus was not perceived in the same way by all the EU member-states.

Following these developments, the creation of the ESDP and the progress made in Saint-Malo was proceeded with the establishment of ambitious goals, such as the ones established in

hand, NATO would assure that the EU had access to its assets in what would be the *Berlin Plus Mechanism* (Ricketts, 2017)

¹⁸ Thus, NATO remained the main defence guarantee of the EU member-states, despite the creation of the ESDP (Howorth, 2003)

the Council of Helsinki where the European Council established the goal of creating an EU capability for security and defence by 2003.¹⁹ Indeed, the declaration resulted in the rise of ambitious aspirations for the future of the European security and defence because it was perceived as a big step for the EU in this area of action, but authors such as Ricketts (2017: 36) show how the years that followed the declaration did not allow it to achieve the intended goals. In fact, although Ricketts (ibid: 36) claims that the Saint-Malo declaration established the security structures that now exist in the EU, the discrepancy of interests between the member-states of both ESDP and NATO member-states created an impasse and did not allow the ESDP and NATO to cooperate as desired.

Furthermore, events such as the 2003 Iraq crisis affected the NATO-EU relations and, though an agreement had been reached between the UK and France, a difference of strategies and priorities between the two countries still prevailed (Howorth, 2003: 11). Nonetheless, Howorth acknowledges the idea that the ESDP and NATO were positive for each other during that stalemate because, on the one hand, the ESDP needed access to NATO's facilities and instruments and, on the other, a more coordinated and capable European defence would be more beneficial for the Alliance than an uncoordinated framework.

1.6 – France's and Germany's role in the EU's reform: the French and German Presidencies of the Council of the EU

Proceeding the chronological order of this research on the French and German leadership in the EU's context, the following analysis will then focus on the European integration process of the early 2000's which was characterized by the consecutive establishment of several community treaties that intended to reform the EU. Both France and Germany influenced this institutional process, particularly regarding the Nice Treaty of 2001, the 2004 Constitutional Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. The following thus considers France's and Germany's role in that chronological sequence and reflects on how the Franco-German axis directed that procedure.

In 2001, the EU Member States signed the Nice Treaty which intended to reform the institutional structure of the EU in order to efficiently expand the community eastwards following the failure of the Amsterdam Treaty in achieving that purpose. However, notwithstanding the crucial and unquestionable role France has had as a leader in the community's history, the French Presidency of the EU's Council was heavily criticized for the lack

¹⁹ The Helsinki Headline Goal targeted the EU's Member States ability to deploy 60,000 troops within 60 days and sustainable for a year by 2003 (European Council, 2006)

of control and efficiency displayed in its performance during the IGC (Intergovernmental Conference) that preceded the ratification of the treaty (Drake, 2011: 462).

At the heart of the issue, Ross (2001) highlights the French domestic politics' circumstances at the time and the French government's desire of achieving parity with Germany as the main motives for the inefficiency of the French Presidency. Regarding the latter, the new weighting of the votes in the Council of the EU was one of the IGC's main issues considering the fact that Germany's population was around 80 million since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Thus, Chirac feared a scenario where Germany would consequently have more power in the Council of the EU (Krotz, 2010: 159)²⁰. In spite of its interests, France was eventually forced to accept that scenario in addition to the increment of the number of German seats in the European Parliament. Indeed, the Nice Treaty established a new voting system in which 62% of the votes in favour of a decision would be considered a qualified majority, thus resulting in an advantage for Germany due to its bigger population in comparison with France's (Drake, 2001: 460). Furthermore, regarding the former, Ross (2001) highlights the French domestic political context at that time as an element that affected the French Presidency. Indeed, according to Ross, the fact that Chirac did not have a majority in the parliament during its Council's presidency, aligned with the prospect of the French elections of 2002, meant that Chirac needed to act with caution in order to avoid damaging his position in the French political landscape, which highly limited his actions.

Hence, the French Presidency of the EU was heavily criticized by the European community and, as Drake (2001: 461) emphasizes, particularly by Germany. Considering the inexistent, but necessary, rebalance of the Franco-German relations before and during the French presidency, following the presidency's performance the relations between the two countries became unprecedentedly worse since the start of the European integration, in part also due to Germany's desire of acquiring a bigger role in the European community and France's unwillingness to cooperate (Ross, 2001). Consequently, the two countries worked towards an improvement of the partnership through the increment of bilateral meetings after Nice, mainly through the *Blaesheim process* which consisted on increasing the frequency of ministerial meetings with the purpose of facilitating awareness and cooperation between both countries particularly in sensitive issues (Krotz, 2010: 159). Albeit the perception of authors such as Ross and Drake, which stated that France's position in the European community was changing as the country had placed its status under scrutiny due to its actions during the French Presidency, Germany

²⁰ After the Nice Treaty, even though a wide range of subjects was decided by a qualified majority, in matters of foreign and security policy the decision-making process was based on unanimity in the Council of the EU and in the European Council (Martins, 2013)

continued to prioritise its partnership with France to lead the EU, though policy divergences still prevailed following the Nice Declaration (Drake, 2001: 465).

Another crucial development in the midst of the Nice Treaty was Germany's step forward towards the "constitutional debate", following the country's role in the European Council of Cologne in 1999 where the German government encouraged the EU to create the "EU Charter of Fundamental rights". Indeed, it was Joschka Fischer, Germany's Foreign Minister, who launched the debate on the formulation of an European constitution through a speech where Germany's support towards an European federation was declared (Witte, 2001). According to Drake (2001: 458), this statement was also motivated by the fragile state of the Franco-German relations at the time.²¹

Incentives such as the one provided by Germany were the impetus that propelled the EU towards the European Convention which was set to establish an "European Constitution", with the core motive of reforming the EU and launching it with a different approach. Thus, a *Convention on the Future of Europe* was established with the goal of negotiating and establishing an European constitution. France and Germany were assured that their main interests in the European community were defended in the convention due to the appointment of former French President Giscard d'Estaing as the convention's chairman²², which was supported by both countries (Kiljunen, 2004). In the general context of reforming and restructuring the EU, those interests were mainly related with the idea of creating a permanent presidency of the Council of the EU aligned with the preference of reducing the power and impact of the commission through the establishment of a more proportional voting system in the Council (Kleine, 2007: 1232).

Consequently, an opposition between the bigger and smaller²³ EU member states arose due to the divergence of interests among the two sides. On the one hand, the bigger member-states desired a stronger European Council, which would benefit them due to their bigger populations, and, on the other, the smaller ones preferred the strengthening of the supranational institutions

²¹ Joschka Fischer's speech was the start of the destabilisation of the French Presidency and the moment that initiated the wave of criticism towards it due to the lack of clear ideas that the presidency had regarding the EU and the future enlargement to the East (Drake, 2001)

²² Giscard main goal was to transform the institutional architecture of the EU and he was able to partially influence several issues during the convention's negotiations (Kleine, 2007)

²³ The smaller member states were composed of states such as Portugal, Greece and the Benelux countries, who feared the heightening of the power gap between the small and bigger member states. The latter were composed by member states such as France, who did not want the power system of the EU to change because that system provided them with more influence in comparison with the smaller states (Peterson & Shackleton, 2012: 30)

because it would benefit them and prevent the bigger states from acquiring even more power over them in the institutional framework of the EU. In addition, the traditional dichotomy between the supporters of either a federal or intergovernmental EU also reappeared (Peterson & Shackleton, 2012: 30).

In these divisive circumstances, the Franco-German link was once again the origin of a proposal which would break the constitutional deadlock by attempting to reconcile and find a meeting point between the larger and smaller states. In that proposal, set in January of 2003, the idea to establish a president of the European Council for a period of 5 years can be highlighted. For that reason and the previously mentioned ones, the proposal met a clear opposition from the smaller states which perceived ideas such as that one as negative for their status and influence (Dinan, 2004). Due to his support towards the interests of the bigger member-states, such as Germany and France, Giscard supported their proposal (Kiljunen, 2004). Following negotiations and agreement by all of the member-states, parts of the proposal were then included in the *Draft Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe*, which further proves how crucial the Franco-German leadership is for the European project even in moments where there is difficulty in finding a consensus among the member-states (Cogan, 2003).

Despite progress being made in this regard, the Constitutional Treaty failed after being negatively received in the French²⁴ and Dutch referendums²⁵, due to the population's fear of a loss of sovereignty and national identity through the creation of a European constitution. In this matter, authors such as Podoljnak (2006) highlight the failure of the EU in allowing the member-states to freely choose their methods of ratification, which consequently led to the negative results in the French and Dutch referendums.

Following the EU's failure at achieving its goal of reforming and completing the constitutional process, a solution was paramount to end the crisis. Therefore, the German Presidency of the Council of the EU of 2007 (from January to June) committed itself to find a solution (Konig, Daimer & Finke, 2008: 337).

In order to achieve that, first and foremost, the German presidency acknowledged that the word "constitution" had a powerful and possibly determinant role in the result of the Draft Treaty and thus had to be avoided in the future treaty as many member-states did not approve of that nomenclature and what it implied (Dinan, 2008: 72). Furthermore, considering Germany's intention to plan and schedule an IGC to take place at the end of 2007, the presidency

²⁴ In France, the "No" won with 54.67% of the votes (Ministry of the Interior, 2005)

²⁵ In the Netherlands, the votes against the constitution won with 61.54% (Kiesraad, 2005)

understood that previous IGC's did not succeed due to discrepancies among the member-states. In order to avoid that, Merkel's main goal was to maintain most of the Constitutional Treaty's proposals in the new document, while removing matters in which there was not a consensus among the member states (Dinan, 2008 & Konig, Daimer & Finke, 2008). Thus, the presidency declared that it would "hold in-depth consultations with all the EU partners and institutions and make a concerted effort to drive forward the EU reform process in line with the decisions taken at European level" (German Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2007: 4).

Following this strategy of gathering support from the member-states and removing the constitutional symbols from the proposed document, Germany's presidency achieved its goal of completing the EU's reform. An IGC was set to December 2007 in Lisbon where the document was signed and set to become effective in 2009 (Konig, Daimer & Finke, 2008). In the same time-period, Nicolas Sarkozy became France's President and declared a shift in the country's commitment in Europe by declaring "France is back in Europe" (Dinan, 2008: 78).

Chapter 2

2.1 - Conceptualizing leadership

Before proceeding to the analysis of the French and German leadership in the European security and defence project, it is crucial to understand what the concept of *leadership* and, in particular, *political leadership*, consists of. Thus, the literature review that follows will look into the meaning of the concept and the major approaches that have been used to study it in order to lay the foundations for the analysis.

First and foremost, it is important to point out that there is no accepted and approved definition for the concept of “political leadership” because, in part, it extends through several dimensions and is connected with many different elements and concepts (Vu, 2017: 2). Notwithstanding the lack of a consensus, the fact that leadership is a crucial factor in the success or failure of the international system and in the process of international cooperation is agreed by all the mentioned authors, regardless of it being identified in the international system as a whole or in a specific region (Young, 1991; Blondel, 1987).

A concept that is highly mentioned in connection with leadership is *power*. For instance, from a neorealist perspective, in which the international system is an anarchy without a global government, leadership is present in the states that have more capabilities and resources than the rest, thus allowing it to command the latter. In that sense, those “resources” may be natural resources, military forces, economic power, among others (Waltz, 1979²⁶, as cited in Vu, 2017: 4). Blondel (1987) agrees with this view and perceives leadership as a “phenomenon of power” (ibid: 2) due to the sense of “superiority” that exists in a leader-follower relationship, as the former is able to compel the latter to act in a certain way. On the other hand, some authors argue that power is connected with coercion and thus is separated from leadership because while “leadership mobilizes, naked power coerces” (Burns, 1978²⁷, as cited in Helms, 2014: 264).

Legitimacy is another element regularly mentioned in connection with leadership, particularly in relation to the latter’s success or failure. In that regard, legitimacy can be described as an element that depends on the public perception of the leaders (either states, people or institutions) (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006²⁸, as cited in Helms, 2014: 265) or on the

²⁶ See: Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw Hill

²⁷ See: Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper

²⁸ See: Buchanan, A. & Keohane, R. O. (2006). The legitimacy of global governance institutions. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 20 (4), 405-437

performance of individuals that attempt to lead (Kane & Patapan, 2012²⁹, as cited in Helms, 2014: 265).

Besides their own resources, the actions of the leader, either individual or stata, are intrinsically influenced and dependent on the *environment* in which it is inserted. In other words, Cox (1969³⁰, cited in Helms, 2014: 264) states that a leader needs to be aware of the system and the circumstances in which it operates in order to identify and take advantage of any opportunity that may arise. In that sense, “timing” is crucial in determining the success of a leader, and events such as internal or external crises can thus affect its actions.³¹ Notwithstanding the risk of challenging circumstances, crises and other moments can not only be constraints but also opportunities (Blondel, 1987: 8).

These and other factors are deeply connected with leadership when it comes to enabling the potential of a leader or affecting its success, but it is paramount to look beyond these elements and try to identify what distinguishes a leader from the remaining players. A leader in the international system is the one who has a purpose and displays a strategic direction towards specific goals. It is the actor who seeks change either in a *transformational* manner, meaning that it targets to alter the course of history, or in a *transactional* form, which focuses on incrementing policy changes (Nye, 2008³², as cited in Wurzel & Connelly, 2011: 12). In a group environment, such as in a geographic region, the leader is the player who attempts to foster cooperation and coordinate the actions of the member in order to achieve the common goals of the group (Keohane, 2010³³, cited in Helms, 2014: 265).

Furthermore, authors such as Young (1991) highlight the role that leaders have in the process of *institutional bargaining* which, in broad terms, can be defined as the attempts of individual actors to establish rules and arrangements that manage the interactions between themselves. In that context, leaders are those who attempt to direct those efforts towards the solving of common problems, which does not equate with assured success, but it does heighten the possibility of a successful outcome.

When analysing those strategies, different perspectives can be presented and thus display a distinct understanding of the same phenomenon. For instance, Héri-tier and Prakash (2015:

²⁹ See: Kane, J. & Patapan, H. (2012). *The democratic leader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

³⁰ See: Cox, R. W. (1969). The executive head: an essay on leadership in international organisation. *International Organisation*, 23 (2), 205-230

³¹ The example of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2000 can be presented regarding the negative impact that the French domestic policies had in the performance of the Presidency (Ross, 2001)

³² See: Nye, J. (2008). *The Powers to Lead*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

³³ See: Keohane, N. (2010). *Thinking about leadership*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

249) analyse the issue by focusing on one element, which they define as *positional resources*, which can be defined as the range of available resources and competences that the actors possess in the decision-making process established by the institutional arrangements. In this context, the leader's understanding of its positional resources is essential in determining the success of its strategy, aligned with the importance of being able to establish a winning coalition. Consequently, the availability of more or less positional resources will result in a specific strategy, which can lead to a unilateral strategy by one leader or the need of said leader to negotiate with the remaining actors (ibid). This view is, in a way, connected with Ikenberry's (1996) description of the *situational leadership* which consists on the potential that leaders have of being able to make a difference depending on the specific contexts and circumstances in which it acts. In that regard, individual leaders are highlighted as potential difference makers.

Indeed, the concept of *behaviour* when analysing the actions of the leader is one regularly emphasized by most authors and, as Young (1991) and Wiener³⁴ (1995, as cited in Helms, 2014: 263) argue, leadership must be analysed through a behavioural perspective, thus highlighting and identifying the different types of leadership. In this regard, several leadership models can be identified, depending on the author being considered, and the ones that will be mentioned are the most appropriate to be connected with the analysis on France's and Germany's leadership role.

Firstly, a state's leadership may derive from its *hard power*³⁵ and material resources such as economic power, military forces and capital, which is similarly identified by Young (1991) as *structural leadership* and Vu (2017) as *hierarchical leadership*. Vu also identifies the *functional leadership* model. In this type, leaders stand out through their contributions in a certain situation, such as coming up with initiatives or setting the strategy of action to tackle a certain common issue while attempting to maintain order and prosperity. In this context, *commitment capability*, which is the ability to make a commitment to neighbouring states in a certain region through the establishment of a regional strategy, is therefore crucial due to the fundamental role of a leader in a multilateral cooperation framework (Vu, 2017).³⁶

In addition, Young (1991) identifies three other types of leadership: the *symbolic leadership*, which is based on the political stances of certain actors without the implementation of actual

³⁴ See: Wiener, J. (1995). "Hegemonic" leadership: naked emperor or the worship of false Gods? *European Journal of International Relations*, 1(2), 219-243

³⁵ Hard power can be defined as the ability of one actor to influence the actions of another through coercion (Nye, 2010, as cited in Helms, 2014:264)

³⁶ Vu (2017), among other examples, highlights France and Germany's role in European integration as leaders in that regional multilateral cooperation context.

policy measures; the *entrepreneurial leadership*, which is characterized by the negotiating and bargaining skill of the leader in order to foster agreements; and *cognitive leadership*, related with the definition or redefinition of interests of a specific group.

To complete the definition of *leadership*, the shift of this conceptualization will now briefly turn specifically to the existence of leadership in the EU, so the analysis of France's and Germany's leadership role will have a complete basis that will allow for its development and understanding. Hence, the following inputs are extracted from Wurzel and Connelly's (2011) leadership conceptualisation in the EU's context.

First and foremost, it is important to notice how political leadership is dispersed in the EU's institutional and functional framework. Indeed, the EU possesses several distinct sources of potential leaders and decision-makers: the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council of the EU. The Council of the EU provides the member-states with the opportunity of leading through agenda-setting for 6 months during their presidency, as Germany did successfully in its 2007 presidency (Konig, et al., 2008). Due to the constitution of this system, the EU finds itself constantly in stalemates which last for long periods of negotiations and often conclude in solutions that do not meet the initial goals. An example of a stalemate was the previously explored situation of the European "constitution" which lasted for several years, as explained by Dinan (2004 & 2008). Furthermore, matters that require unanimity in the Council of the EU in order for policies to be established provide even more instances where a stalemate can arise, which is the case of security, defence and foreign policy areas (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007).

Wurzel and Connelly (2011) also highlight the existence and impact of permanent or temporary coalitions by member-states that lead the EU in specific matters, either internally or externally. An example was provided regarding the "green trio" composed by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands in the case of environmental policies, and a comparison can be made with the Franco-German partnership in which bilateral meetings focused on defence and security matters take place on a consistent basis, and, consequently, influence community policies and strategies in these areas.

To summarise, regardless of the variety of perspectives towards *leadership*, a common understanding can be identified for the purpose of this dissertation. A leader is the actor who attempts to influence and direct the actions of its partners/allies towards a specific goal, usually to solve a shared problem or, often in the EU's case, to deepen and foster integration and cooperation amongst the member states. Henceforth, this is the main definition of leadership

that will be considered when analysing France's and Germany's leadership in the European security and defence project.

2.2 - Main goals and research questions

The focus of this dissertation is to critically analyse how the Franco-German partnership role previously explored is displayed in the area of European security and defence, particularly in the framework of the CSDP, while also considering some elements of the CFSP. However, it is important to underline that the aim is not to follow the development of the EU's security and defence policy itself, but to understand how France and Germany have affected and led that policy area through their actions, initiatives, influence, strategies and statements. Through this process, while analysing how that role has developed, we will also seek to understand how the CSDP has been established.

Thus, the main goal of the previous historical contextualization was to understand how France and Germany's role in the European community became a leadership role, capable of either directing the cooperation framework forward towards a more integrative security environment or slowing down that process due to, for instance, domestic issues. Nonetheless, the main point of the previous chapter was to reflect on the dynamics of that role since the establishment of the community and, consequently, provide the basis of the subsequent research.

This case study was chosen as the focus of this dissertation due to the importance that the Franco-German partnership has had in the history of the EU, as summarised in the previous historic contextualization. Indeed, through that chronological literature review, which focused on highlighting and reflecting on the most significant moments of French and German leadership in the European integration process, the conclusion that both countries have been crucial in this process is undeniable, regardless of the motivations behind that role. Thus, in attempting to analyse how the security and defence policy area has been developing and deepening in the EU, the Franco-German axis stands out as a particularly relevant intergovernmental cooperation dynamic. It is relevant to point-out that this dissertation does not intend to compare these two member states, but occasional comparisons focused on each country's perspectives and actions is required to fully understand how the partnership functions and why each country displays a different strategy.

Furthermore, regarding the timeframe of the research, the analysis will only focus on the events that have taken place since 2009, when the ESDP was transformed into the CSDP with the Lisbon Treaty. This moment precedes the establishment of a series of new institutional arrangements in the policy field of defence. Indeed, the majority of the current defence initiatives and programs in the EU's context have been established and developed since 2009. Prior to that year, EU's defence actions existed under the ESDP which, despite significant progress³⁷ in fostering EU cooperation in defence matters in an intergovernmental context, had not achieved what it initially aimed for. In the ESDP framework, the EU's capabilities were not strong enough to assure its ability in defending its "international security responsibilities" (Menon, 2009: 246). The CSDP was then institutionalised in the Lisbon Treaty with the purpose of propelling the European security and defence project forward by providing it with new military and civilian capabilities and with increased autonomy and impetus. These capabilities were implemented with the intention of enabling the EU to act more efficiently regarding international security, conflict prevention and peacekeeping as an integral part of the CFSP (European Union, 2008).

In order to achieve the objective of this dissertation, the research question that will guide the analysis is: *Bearing in mind the concept of leadership (Wurzel and Connelly, 2011), to what extent have France and Germany displayed a leadership role in the CSDP?* In addition, other secondary questions are established to support the main question and go further when it comes to understanding this phenomenon. *How have France's and Germany's actions and strategies shaped the CSDP? What specific actions have been relevant to the development of the CSDP? How successful have those actions been in achieving the established goals?*

Hence, the focus on leadership is crucial and, for that purpose, the previously established conceptualization provides the appropriate understanding of the concept of leadership in the context of the EU and of the Franco-German cooperation therein. In that regard, two elements need to be emphasised. Firstly, when it comes to the potential of leading and creating change, the EU's institutional framework is characterised by a dispersion of political leadership, meaning that each policy area is influenced by several distinct actors and, as a result, the action of one or two actors may not be enough to change or create something new (Wurzel & Connelly, 2011). And secondly, in order for an actor to be a leader, it needs to influence the actions of its partners towards the solving of a common problem. To achieve that, the leader may act by contributing with initiatives or strategies, proposing community policy measures and

³⁷ The EU also executed several civilian and military under the ESDP (EEAS, 2019)

adopting national policies, negotiating with other actors in order to create institutional arrangements, or leading through the direct use of its economic and military power (Young, 1991). The French and German actions in the area of security and defence will be analysed in connection with this institutional framework and conceptual understanding.

Following this overview of the dissertation's main goal and intentions, a few other questions are identified as fundamental in the overall analysis, particularly when it comes to the understanding of some elements that affect the focus of the research. Specifically: *What are the cultural and strategic divergences between France and Germany in security and defence? Considering the institutionalised cooperation dynamic between France and Germany, have their actions been displayed in a unilateral or bilateral approach?* These points are intrinsically linked with the heart of the main research questions due to the potential that these elements have in benefiting or damaging the strategies and actions of both countries.

2.3 - Methodology

In order to achieve the previously established goals, this study has a thematic character, thus being divided in topics such as the ones identified in the research questions. Simultaneously, it is developed in a chronological matter, particularly regarding the initiatives proposed or established by France and Germany, the missions that both states participate in and, for instance, the evolution of both countries' investment in defence and security matters, either domestically or in the EU context.

With that structure in mind, this dissertation will have a strictly qualitative approach. This study identifies the main documents and texts that have been published and followed by either France or Germany regarding their defence policies and strategies, and their proposals for the European security and defence project, in addition to the strategic priorities and defence cultures highlighted in several national documents. Thus, governmental and ministerial documents produced by each state as well as joint Franco-German documents and declarations will be used for the purpose of the analysis as well as relevant official documents produced by EU institutions, such as the European Parliament or the European Council. The purpose of analysing those documents is not only to identify the policies and institutional arrangements that have taken place in light of the CSDP, but also to spot patterns in the behaviour of both France and Germany in this policy area, thus understanding the direction of their national strategies, the compatibility between them and how they influence the European community's CSDP strategy and integration, ultimately taking into consideration these state's leadership.

Furthermore, speeches and statements by the French and German political leaders as well as Foreign Ministers or Ministers of Defence will be considered in this study as a complement due to the fact that those moments are a representation of a country's interests and strategies as well as instances of direct dialogue with the European community, thus being relevant for this research.

Thus, document analysis is utilised in this dissertation as means of identifying and following changes and development of actions and strategies by France and Germany, consequently tracking change in the EU's defence project. The goal is to also compare different documents and different perspectives in order to highlight those changes and identify the main elements and moments of divergence between those perspectives. Finally, this methodology allows for a clear understanding of the dynamics of a certain entity's strategy framework, mainly the French and Germany strategy interests and the actions undertaken in that regard (Bowen, 2009: 30).

In addition, this dissertation does not develop a quantitative analysis, but it identifies some of the most appropriate pre-existent statistical data related with the countries' investment and spending in defence as a complement to the qualitative methodology. The utilised data is mostly the one provided by the European Defence Agency (EDA), the main entity regarding European defence data. Hence, this study's methodology is qualitative, but it will be supported by quantitative data in order to acquire a more thorough understanding of the case study due to the diversity of sources being used. Finally, this study will also be supported by scientific literature, reports and studies on the subject that are in agreement with the findings and conclusions of the analysis or provide a different angle of analysis.

Considering the main objectives and research questions of this study, this dissertation establishes some hypotheses with the goal of either corroborating or refuting them depending on the results of the analysis. The following hypotheses are established based on the previous historical contextualization and on the goals of this study, which link France's and Germany's actions in the European security and defence project with the concept of leadership (Wurzel & Connelly, 2011) and the ability of leading the remaining member-states.

- France and Germany have displayed a leadership role in the EU's defence policy-area and succeeded in influencing European cooperation;
- France and Germany have attempted to display a leadership role in the EU's defence policy-area but have not been able to successfully influence European cooperation;

- France and Germany have displayed a leadership role in EU's defence policy-area but with a limited impact;
- France and Germany have not displayed a leadership role in EU's defence policy-area.

By "displaying a leadership role" what is being evaluated is the ability of both countries to deepen European integration and influence the participation of other member-states towards the creation of institutional arrangements or the increment of EU cooperation in defence matters (Nye, 2008, as cited in Wurzel & Connelly, 2011; Keohane, 2010, cited in Helms, 2014).

The first three hypotheses are based on the success or failure that both France and Germany have had in leading the EU towards an increasing European integration framework since the 1950s. Thus, those hypotheses assume that that ability to lead was transposed to the defence and security area, with either more or less success. The fourth and final hypothesis is required considering the possibility that neither France nor Germany have been able to lead the remaining member-states in that regard.

Chapter 3

3.1 – Analysis of the divergence between the French and German strategic and defence cultures

When evaluating the strategic path of both France and Germany in the process of European integration, regardless of the policy-area being considered, it is unquestionable that “no other bilateral partnership in the EU can combine similar resources, capability and industrial capacity” (Glegerich, 2019: 1). Indeed, due to those national abilities and characteristics, France and Germany display a dynamic partnership in which, if a common ground is met between the two countries and a consequent course of action is established, they are able to influence the EU’s political debate and policy-making process in a certain direction. Often, a Franco-German agreement is required in order for the EU to move forward in a particular policy area. However, a common position is hard to find due to national characteristics of each country or, in some cases, the agreement is reached but it does not produce the intended results (Kempin and Kunz, 2017: 8).

Thus, before identifying and reflecting on the initiatives, actions and strategies of the Franco-German axis in the area of European defence, it is crucial to underline and understand the main national strategies, intentions and perceptions of each country in that regard. Those national and national characteristics will then affect either positively or negatively the defence and security strategy of the country *vis-à-vis* the other and the EU overall, therefore influencing the results of that bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

The first, and perhaps the main difference when it comes to strategic cultures, is the perception and tradition that each country has regarding its role in the international system and the subsequent role of its armed forces. Indeed, the political institutions and the constitutional law set out distinct rules in each country, consequently leading to a different approach towards the respective armed forces. In Germany, the government is the entity that determines the actions and deployment of the Bundeswehr (the German armed forces), but the Bundestag (the German parliament) has to approve the deployment of the armed forces, as stated in the German constitution. In fact, “this practice of parliamentary consent has stood the test of time” (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 109).

This institutionalised tradition conveys a mentality of reluctance towards the use and deployment of the Bundeswehr, and the overall use of force, from the political elites and the German population (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 109). On the other hand, this authorisation process by the Bundestag leads to an added legitimacy and support towards the

country's operations. At the heart of that restraint, the German experience in military conflicts, such as the first and second World Wars, plays a huge role alongside the resulting scepticism regarding military interventions abroad. For that reason, Germany's participation in military operations is only existent in a multilateral framework (Kunz, 2018).³⁸

On the other hand, whereas the German parliament possesses a definitive influence over the Bundeswehr's actions, national security in France is first and foremost a Presidential prerogative, as stated in the French constitution. Thus, the French armed forces' actions and strategies are determined by the President. Their deployment abroad does not require the approval of the parliament, though a notification must be delivered indicating the intentions and characteristics of the missions (French Republic, 2008: 241-242).³⁹ This political system is established in this manner because "the (French) armed forces must be able to engage at very short notice, across the full spectrum of threats and conflict" (French Republic, 2017: 75).

This is an intrinsic characteristic of the French defence national culture and highly connected with the concept of "strategic autonomy", which consists on the idea that France "must preserve its capability to decide and act alone to defend its interests" (French Republic, 2017: 54). It is a concept and narrative that is used in order to defend the country's independence and autonomy in cooperating with other actors or when it comes to acting alone in the international system. It is a vital element of the French defence policy and unequivocally demonstrates the importance that the armed forces bear in France (Glegerich, 2019: 2).

This dichotomy is thus an obstacle in the cooperation between France and Germany because, while the former is able to and is willing to engage in CSDP missions, Germany shows a reluctance in doing so. Indeed, comparing the strategic documents of both countries, the French White Paper of 2017 considerably distinguishes itself from its German counterpart of 2016 in this regard. Indeed, France emphasises the country's ability and priority in intervening militarily abroad substantially more than Germany, to the point where geographic areas of actions are even highlighted⁴⁰ (French Republic, 2017).

³⁸ Internally, the Bundeswehr has a limited role that focuses mostly on assisting in emergency situations such as natural disasters. The armed forces possess no task of enforcing measures or sovereign powers, which reflects the German unwillingness to use force (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 109)

³⁹ The French parliament must approve of a deployment if the military intervention is extended for a period of more than four months (French Republic, 2008: 244)

⁴⁰ The Sahel-Saharan region, the Middle East and Eastern Europe are examples of geographic areas towards which France declares special attention and concern, resulting in the present or future deployment of French armed forces in those regions (French Republic, 2017: 20-24)

Despite not being as willing to engage military interventions as France, Germany underlines the importance of participating alongside its EU, NATO and UN allies in military or peace-keeping operations. Furthermore, the German White Paper (2016) specifically states that Germany “must enable the Bundeswehr to deliver effects across the entire operational spectrum and ensure that it is ready and capable” (ibid: 89), consequently showing that the country is aware of the need to display a bigger role in international security, particularly in the context of the EU’s CSDP. Regarding the EU, “Germany is willing to assume responsibility and leadership as a framework nation in alliances and partnerships” (ibid: 98).

Despite the relevance of strategic autonomy for the French, the term is perceived more cautiously by the Germans. Though Germany’s discourse and perception of itself and the EU’s defence has changed in recent years in light of events such as the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 (Major et al., 2018: 5), the German strategy and intentions regarding the CSDP has clearly distinguished itself from the French. On the one hand, France connects its national strategic autonomy with a European strategic autonomy, which France idealises. With that autonomy, the EU would possess a common strategic culture and awareness towards security issues and threats. This hypothetical framework would lead to a competent and credible joint military intervention capability and “common budget tools” (French Republic, 2017: 61).

On the other hand, Germany’s defence strategy highlights European capabilities, the defence industry and technologies, displaying thus a distinct interest towards the future of the CSDP – a future CSDP framework where European integration would be enhanced alongside its defence structures, the development of joint capabilities and the “strengthening of the European defence industry” (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 73). Hence, while France intends to ambitiously transform the CSDP into a structure focused on efficient military interventions and concrete outputs, Germany shows interest in heightening European integration through the development and expansion of the EU defence capabilities.

As stated in the French Senate report on European defence (2019: 71), strategic autonomy is constituted not only by defence, but by other elements such as the industrial, the commercial and digital areas. Regarding the defence industry in Europe, both Germany and France are in agreement regarding the fact that it is highly fragmented. That fragmentation causes drastic disadvantages and inequalities in the industrial defence competition in the EU internal market and leads to a lack of interoperability among the European armed forces, particularly when they are supposed to coordinate their actions in a military operation abroad (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 129).

In this regard, despite their distinct strategic interests towards the CSDP, France and Germany both emphasise the need for a “Europeanisation”⁴¹ of the defence industry in order to attain an increased European cooperation (German Defence Strategy, 2015: 2) and a “greater (defence) procurement⁴² policy coordination” (French Republic, 2008: 84). France goes a step further and mentions the French goal of fostering the creation of “European champions”, which would consist of industrial groups that would be able to operate in the European market as if it were a “company based in a single state” (ibid: 255). This would lead to a more coherent and unified European defence industry, which would consequently increase the EU’s defence capabilities.⁴³ It is notorious how France already had a high level of ambitions for the European defence industry in 2008, particularly considering that the CSDP was only re-created in 2009.⁴⁴

Nonetheless, regarding the defence industry, the Franco-German cooperation is characterised by the persistence of obstacles related mainly with the different industrial landscape in both countries. In fact, in France, the main defence firms and companies are state-controlled or, at least, supported by the state (French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2018). In contrast, Germany’s industrial scenery is mostly composed of small and medium-sized companies, which have been privatised (Marx, 2007: 20). The distinct role of the state in each country has thus led to a divergent industrial defence system. On the French side the state is a part of the industrial process, and on the German side the state intervenes less in the market, consequently allowing for a higher degree of liberalisation (Major et al., 2018: 4).

Hence, these discrepancies challenge and often do not allow the establishment of joint-industrial projects. Whereas Germany fears that the French companies would be in an advantageous position in comparison with the German firms, France fears that the limitation and restraints of the German political and industrial landscape would damage the development of those projects (Glegerich, 2019: 4).

Regardless of the divergent strategic interests between two countries, the awareness and willingness of both to take on the role of leadership in EU’s defence integration is evident,

⁴¹ Europeanisation consists on the process of “domestic adaptation to the pressures emanating directly or indirectly from EU membership” (Featherstone, 2003: 7)

⁴² Defence procurement consists of “any procurement carried out by contracting authorities in the field of defence” (Defence Procurement, OECD: 2)

⁴³ The competition between the wide spectrum of defence industries and companies within the EU increases the state of fragmentation that is predominant in the European defence market. As a consequence, European defence industries are in a disadvantage in comparison with US companies, for instance (Kempin and Kunz, 2017: 24).

⁴⁴ In fact, France already displayed high military ambitions in the Saint-Malo summit of 1998, hence its direct contribution in the ESDP’s creation.

as stated in the strategic documents of both countries. Furthermore, they understand how vital the cooperation with one another is in the European security and defence project, and the cultural differences are acknowledged and respected (French Senate, 2019: 65). The specific Franco-German efforts that attempt to tackle these issues and strengthen European defence cooperation will be identified and considered in another chapter later in this analysis.

Despite the contrast of positions and strategies within the Franco-German partnership, both countries are in accordance regarding several elements of EU's defence. First and foremost, it is paramount to mention NATO's role in Europe's security, towards which both countries emphasise their commitment. Furthermore, the caution that both states display in assuring that the CSDP is not an attempt to replace or compete with NATO is noticeable. Germany, for instance, states that "the EU and NATO are not competitors; both make vital contributions to our security" while adding that Germany continuously works to improve the relationship between the both organisations in order to also "avoid duplication" of their defence efforts (Federal Republic of Germany, 2006: 7).⁴⁵

The commitment of both states to deepen European cooperation regarding the defence industry and the development of more European capabilities in light of the CSDP's framework is another Franco-German strategic convergence. However, in that regard, a divergence is identified when comparing the most recent White Paper documents from both states and the ones that were published in the 2000s. Indeed, in Germany, whereas the 2006 White Paper did acknowledge the desire to strengthen the European defence industry and its capabilities, the 2016 version is substantially more critical and acknowledges the lack of integration and the fragmentation of the defence industry, for instance.

To provide a clearer perspective on this matter, while the 2006 German document states that "an opening-up of the defence market at European level is also expected to have positive implications for the defence industry" (Federal Republic of Germany, 2006: 64), the 2016 version declares that "Europe needs a strong and competitive defence industry of its own if it is to assume joint responsibility for security" and that a "further restructuring and consolidation of Europe's defence industries is therefore necessary" (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 74).

⁴⁵ The relations with the US remain crucial for EU's defence due to the continuous reality that the main defence contributor to NATO is the US. Thus, if the EU were to achieve a full strategic autonomy, the US could perceive it as a replacement to NATO, consequently meaning that the latter would no longer be needed. For that reason, France, Germany and the EU continue to affirm that EU's own defence capabilities do not question NATO's relevance, despite continuous efforts to improve the CSDP. This situation and the European caution is reflected on both German and French strategic documents (Dickow, 2015: 15)

This is a reflection of the state of the European defence cooperation and the fact that the goals established a decade before have not been achieved yet. Thus, the awareness of the German government regarding the lack of progress in this area is evident, and the 2016 document underlines that stance.

On the other hand, the 2008 French White Paper on defence already presented a similar level of ambition as the 2017 version. Indeed, the need for an autonomous strategic planning capability in the EU was already mentioned in 2008. In addition, the EU's defence industry was already identified as an issue, particularly regarding its fragmentation and the obstacles that the defence common market faced, which is a scenario that prevails nowadays (French Republic, 2008: 84-86). A difference between the 2006 German document and the 2008 French version is thus clearly noticeable and must be underlined when it comes to the ambition of both state's strategic interests at the time.

The intention of the previously developed analysis was to identify the main strategy interests and the priorities of France and Germany, and to understand how both states perceive the EU's defence and the CSDP in particular. From that point, we compared both perspectives and strategies with the goal of highlighting the main issues and divergences existent in the Franco-German defence partnership. This reflection is vital in order to understand the following chapters which will then focus on the actions of both state's and the steps they have taken in the CSDP's framework with the goal of achieving their unilateral and bilateral objectives. The evolution of the interests and contrasts identified in this section will be thoroughly analysed in the following chapter.

3.2 - Franco-German contributions following the Lisbon Treaty

With the establishment of the CSDP, transitioning from the ESDP's framework, the EU intended to provide a new source of impetus for further and deeper integration in the defence and security area. As a vital element to that endeavour, the "Member States shall undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities" while contributing to the establishment of a wide range of measures in order to achieve that (European Union, 2008: 38). The following chapters focus on identifying and scrutinising on what the Franco-German axis did in this regard with the ultimate goal of understanding whether it actually led the EU integration process in this area or not.

While the Lisbon Treaty was placed through the ratification process in each member state after being signed in the fall of 2007, France took the Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second semester of 2008 with the intention of contributing to the momentum that the defence and security policy was having at the time, among other priorities. Meanwhile, France undertook the process of re-approaching itself to the EU, a motivation expressed by Sarkozy himself (Giuliani, 2008). The French President at the time questioned how the EU can become a political power “able to make itself heard if it cannot defend itself and deploy resources in support of its policy” while acknowledging the persistent disagreements that is deeply embedded in this policy area (European Parliament, 2008). Furthermore, despite reaffirming that NATO and the EU are mutually complementary regarding defence and security, Sarkozy stated that the EU’s security cannot continue to depend on the efforts of some countries, internally or externally. In other words, the French Presidency emphasised the idea that the EU should strive to become more coherent and standardised in its defence policy, underlining the fragmentation that existed among the EU member states at the time (ibid).

Despite this momentum which opened a window of opportunity to strengthen the CSDP, the years following its establishment did not meet the expectations that one could have after the Lisbon Treaty and the new defence framework. The one event which stood-out in the aftermath of the treaty was the creation of the Lancaster House Treaties between France and the UK. Even though this compromise was not inserted in the framework of the EU, it is still notable due to the fact that it was implemented by the two biggest defence actors in Europe while representing France’s desire to increase defence cooperation, thus having relevance to the subject at hand (UK Government, 2017).

Established with the intent of strengthening the obligations and commitments towards NATO and the EU, the treaty focused mostly on coordinating the development and deployment of several facilities and equipment in order to improve the efficiency of the military missions, simultaneously reinforcing the defence industry of the two countries (French Republic & the UK, 2010:4). The similar strategic culture between the two participating countries is identified as a main cause for the creation of this treaty as both France and the UK are not only the two European countries with the most military resources but also the ones able and motivated to deploy their armed forces abroad either unilaterally or bilaterally (UK Government, 2017).⁴⁶ This

⁴⁶ In addition, both France and the UK possess independent strategic nuclear forces, which contribute to global deterrence and the security of the EU and NATO. France had also re-joined NATO’s integrated military command structures, towards which France had declared a renewed compromise (French Republic, 2013)

element is mentioned with the intention of providing further proof of how similar strategic cultures and perceptions are crucial to the existence of defence and military cooperation, a challenge that prevails in the context of the EU.⁴⁷

However, despite the positive elements of the treaty, this agreement represented a moment in the EU's history in which the Franco-German relationship was not at its strongest form, thus justifying the strategic choice of France in opting to cooperate with the UK. It also represents the lack of Franco-German defence cooperation in the years that followed the Lisbon Treaty's creation. As a result, the treaty was perceived by other EU member states, including Germany, as a shift in France's priorities and the possible distancing between the EU and France regarding defence (Maulny, 2016).

The treaty was considered by France as an agreement which "gradually led to close cooperation between France and the United Kingdom" (French Republic, 2013), despite the fact that the initial political impetus slowly dissipated into a smaller force. In addition, the treaty is also criticised due to the idea that the agreement established did not introduce any new commitment to the ones already placed before the treaty's creation (Maulny, 2016) or the fact that it has not led to the harmonisation of the two country's military cultures (2015, Pannier). Nonetheless, the treaty has had some success specifically regarding the 2011 military operation in Libya where France and the UK displayed their cooperation efforts. Furthermore, the Anglo-French agreement culminated in the institutionalisation of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) in 2016, a deployable force validated in the same year at the Amiens summit (UK Government, 2017).⁴⁸

The Lancaster House Treaties may not have met the goals and ambitions that were initially established in the document, but they remain a relevant framework of bilateral cooperation between France and the UK. Despite the latter's exit from the EU, which will be addressed later in this analysis, and the fact that this cooperation is not yet included in the CSDP's structure, it is still a pertinent subject for the focus of this dissertation because it represents France's desire in deepening cooperation and integration with EU member states. Indeed, these agreements

⁴⁷ That challenge was more recently tackled by France with the establishment of the E12, which attempts to improve EU cooperation in that regard. That initiative will be mentioned and analysed later in this analysis.

⁴⁸ In the Amiens summit, the two participating states agreed on several additional elements, in which the "deepening cooperation on armaments", the "building upon successful CSDP operations" and the "continuing cooperation on nuclear deterrence" can be highlighted (French Republic & the UK, 2016: 4)

are a “sign of the deepening cooperation between our two countries” (French Republic, 2013: 21).

As the member state most dedicated and keen on participating in military operations either unilaterally or in a EU dynamic, France has participated in several missions within the CSDP’s mandates. Two missions which were the catalysts for institutional change in the EU were the EU training mission in Mali, which was originated in 2013, and the mission in the Central African Republic in the same year. In Mali, for instance, the goal of the mission was to support the Malian armed forces by “making them autonomous and capable of contributing to the defence of their population and their territory” (EEAS, 2013). France was the first state to intervene in the operation, highlighting the need to protect and stabilise these regions that are considered “strategic priorities” of the EU (French Republic, 2013: 54).

However, France showed disappointment at the lack of military support by the EU towards this operation even though it possessed the capabilities to do so. As a result, France’s President François Hollande demanded to the EU the implementation of a permanent fund to finance operations such as these (Carnegy, 2013). France’s pressure and proposal, despite being rejected, culminated in a European Council meeting in which defence was debated for the first time since the Lisbon Treaty. In that European Council, the defence budget was indeed identified as a constraint to the CSDP’s action, thus affecting the cooperation among the member states. Consequently, the financial mechanisms, mainly the Athena⁴⁹ mechanism, were set to be reviewed in order to improve the efficiency when deploying EU civilian or military missions (European Council, 2013: 4). In addition, in 2014, France and Germany deployed parts of the Franco-German Brigade in Mali. The partnership hence reaffirmed their joint commitment towards the stabilization in Mali, consequently displaying their ability to coordinate in that regard (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

The process continued and the Athena mechanism was established in 2015 in order to finance military operations (European Council, 2015: 2). In addition, two years later, the EU Battlegroups⁵⁰ were included in the Athena framework, henceforth becoming funded by the mechanism (European Council, 2017: 10). Indeed, in order to “strengthen the EU’s rapid

⁴⁹ Athena is a mechanism focused on financing the joint-costs of the EU’s military operations in the framework of the CSDP (Council of the EU, 2020)

⁵⁰ The EU Battlegroups were created in the 1999 Helsinki European Council when the headline goal of the summit was to establish a rapid response unit able to be deployed quickly. Operation Artemis in 2003 was the first to be launched with the inclusion of a battlegroup (EEAS; 2013: 1)

⁵¹ Despite being operational since 2007, the EU Battlegroups have not yet been deployed due to the lack of political will or issues related with their usability and financial solidarity (EEAS, 2017)

response toolbox, the European Council agrees that the deployment of Battlegroups should be borne as a common cost by the EU-managed Athena mechanism on a permanent basis” (European Council, June 2017: 5). In hindsight, due to France’s criticism and pressure towards the EU’s efficiency regarding its military operations, a debate ensued within the EU resulting in the establishment of new institutional arrangements which altered the funding mechanism of the CSDP’s missions.

3.3 - A new Franco-German push for defence cooperation amidst a challenging international environment

Aligned with the lack of activity from the Franco-German axis, the somewhat stale defence integration in the aftermath of the Lisbon treaty undertook a drastic shift as the international system produced unpredictable and challenging events which questioned the EU’s security. First and foremost, at the heart of that change was the Russia annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol in 2014, which has direct implications for European security overall and also for Germany’s and France’s security (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 31).⁵² Indeed, Russia’s assertiveness in Eastern Europe violated international law and highlighted Europe’s defence vulnerability, as stated by France (French Republic, 2017: 19). Consequently, a reply by the EU member states in the shape of more cooperation was required in order to tackle these issues (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 32).

Facing this new challenge, the EU and other political entities such as the US placed economic sanctions on Russia (European Parliament, 2020). France and Germany took a step forward in an attempt to solve or at least mitigate the tense situation that arose from the annexation. Thus, a peace plan named the Minsk Protocol was signed in 2014 by Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia, and a year later a new ceasefire was agreed in the Minsk 2 agreement (ibid). Simultaneously, France and Germany were directly involved in the Normandy format, which was created in June 2014 alongside Russia and Ukraine’s leaders. This accord intended to strengthen the ceasefire and ensure the security of local elections in eastern Ukraine (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2016).

In 2016 and 2019, the Normandy format produced two more meetings in which new ceasefires were agreed upon (ibid). More recently, the German Presidency of the Council of the

⁵² The risk of Russia’s annexation regarding Europe’s security is also related with energy security due to the persistent European energy dependence on Russia’s resources and exports, and the latter’s dependence on the EU market for its energy resources (Koenig & Walter-Franke, 2017: 3)

EU stated that one of its priorities would be to revive the Normandy format and improve the strategic relations with Russia in order to end the violence in eastern Ukraine (Didili, July 2020).

Despite the good intentions of these agreements and the attempted ceasefires, the small progress achieved by this dialogue between the four states has been “hindered by the fact that there are still widely diverging positions among the four working groups in the Minsk process” (German Federal Foreign Office, n.d.). Indeed, success has been limited in this regard as the ceasefires have been violated continuously and deadly clashes persist (European Parliament, 2020). Nonetheless, it is important to note the role of the Franco-German axis in a situation which threatens the whole EU, regardless of the success that it has achieved or not. More notably, this situation has led to a certain strategic convergence between France and Germany as there was a common understanding that the situation could only be resolved if both contributed to the process (Koenig and Walter-Franke, 2017: 5). The plan has not come to fruition yet, due to the variety of interests in the conflict, but as long as France and Germany persist in their attempts a more efficient resolution may arise.

The strategic convergence that emerged in the Franco-German axis due to the conflict in Ukraine would soon become even stronger due to other phenomena that directly affected and continue to play a role in the European context. In addition to the Euro crisis, the rise of European populism, the subsequent Euroscepticism and the migration crisis which endanger the EU’s unity and thus can lead to more fragmentation, two other events were the catalyst for a new impetus in the EU’s defence cooperation: the election of Donald Trump as president of the US and Brexit (Daehnhardt, 2018: 97). Regarding the former, the Trump administration’s foreign policy aligned with its demands for more defence spending by European states that are members of NATO have created a sense of unpredictability and unreliability in the transatlantic relations (ibid: 97). Notwithstanding, the US and NATO remain vital allies and contributors to Europe’s security, as acknowledged by France and Germany (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 49).

With regard to the latter, the “divorce” between the UK and the EU, which began in 2016 with the British referendum, can be identified as the main source for the institutional changes that unfolded in recent years, despite the permanence of the strategic importance of the Anglo-Franco defence partnership (French Republic, 2017: 59). Regardless, even the French Strategic Review of 2017 acknowledges the question that arose with Brexit due to the fact that the EU lost one of its most powerful military actors and one of the biggest spenders on defence, thus weakening the EU’s defence overall. On the other hand, Brexit could also be considered an

opportunity as the veto power of the UK would cease to exist, which would represent a significant change considering the UK's inclination towards Atlanticism and a closer partnership with NATO and the US, a British strategic preference that is very likely to have hampered the EU's move towards a stronger and more independent defence force (Koenig & Walter-Franke, 2017: 6). Nonetheless, Brexit was immediately perceived as a threat to the EU as it challenged its defence capabilities and the overall unity among the member states.

In a scenario in which a multipolar international system was emerging, France and Germany understood that action was required in order to tackle this issue and assure that the EU would not crumble and give up on the defence ambitions it had, despite never doing enough to actually achieve it. As a matter of fact, immediately after the result of the British referendum, France's and Germany's ministers of foreign affairs published a document in which it is stated that both countries recognize their responsibility in reinforcing EU's cohesion, not just when it comes to security and defence. Furthermore, the document highlights that the EU must cooperate efficiently in order to achieve its ambitions (French and German Foreign ministers, 2016: 1). Regarding security, the document identifies the need to develop a common analysis of the EU's strategic environment and a common understanding of its interests. Additionally, France and Germany underline the need to improve certain defence capabilities, such as the ones regarding crisis prevention and management, an efficient planning of civil and military operations, and increase spending in research and technology, for instance (ibid: 4).

In the meantime, the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) was published in a communitarian attempt to establish the EU's strategic direction for the future in the midst of a challenging international environment. In this document, the EU presented a more ambitious perspective regarding its security and its role in the international system. Despite mentioning NATO as the prevailing main provider of collective defence for most EU member states, the document underscores that "Europeans must be better equipped, trained and organised to contribute decisively to such collective efforts, as well as to act autonomously if and when necessary" (EUGS, 2016: 19). It was the first time that the EU mentioned the term "strategic autonomy" and it resulted from a moment of crisis where the need for a stronger and more reliable EU arose. It represents the sense of urgency present within the EU and its member states at a time when several international challenges threatened EU's security and cohesion. Notwithstanding that attempted European response, the EUGS mentions the fact that defence policies and spending remain a prerogative of the member states, though it is highlighted that no state can face such challenges alone. Defence cooperation is thus crucial in the EU's context, as stated in the document (ibid: 20).

3.4 - The Franco-German defence proposal and the subsequent EU institutional reform

The previously mentioned documents clearly revealed the origins of a new strategic direction for the EU as an institution and particularly regarding foreign policy and defence, as revealed by the EUGS. France and Germany simultaneously displayed the same understanding regarding those policy areas of the EU. However, despite the positive contribution by the EUGS, further steps were required in order to produce the desired outcomes (French Republic & Federal Republic of Germany, 2016: 3). Therefore, the Franco-German partnership presented a proposal setting a joint vision and a plan for a stronger defence cooperation. The paper proposed a wide range of measures and initiatives, among which the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) can be highlighted. PESCO was a structure mentioned and proposed by articles 42.6 and 46 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) which state that “those member states whose military capabilities fulfil higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most demanding missions shall establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework” (European Union, 2008).

As implied by these statements, there is an intrinsic ambitious goal linked with the establishment of PESCO as per expressions such as “demanding missions” and “binding commitments”. Inevitably, these elements of this defence framework became a source of disagreement between France and Germany due to their strategic cultures and aspirations for the CSDP and PESCO. On the one hand, France desired the establishment of a PESCO in which there was a selective approach towards its participants, thus preferring a structure in which only the most ambitious and defensively capable member states would contribute in order to execute the most demanding missions (French Senate, 2019: 38). On the other hand, Germany favoured the creation of an inclusive PESCO where the ultimate goal was to deepen the defence integration amongst the EU’s member states. Thus, from a German perspective, PESCO’s establishment was perceived as the opportunity to drive European integration forward in this policy-area, while the French viewed it as an instrument to improve the EU’s operative efficiency which would enhance the community’s strategic autonomy. This contrast is thus a concrete example of the challenging different strategic cultures between both countries (Glegerich, 2019: 3).

The final result presented by the Franco-German partnership displayed a more modest PESCO in comparison with the structure envisioned in the Lisbon treaty, signifying that the German preferred approach was the adopted strategy for PESCO⁵³. Furthermore, even though

⁵³ The adoption of that German-like approach is not necessarily an example of German leadership as it could have been mostly a strategy that was adopted in order to make PESCO more accessible and

this cooperation framework was firstly mentioned in the 2009 treaty, it came to fruition mainly due to the Franco-German impetus, albeit in a different form from the one initially idealised (French Senate, 2019: 38). Besides PESCO's voluntary, inclusive and open approach, the document still underlines the need to create a "binding commitment allowing for a true step forward in CSDP" (French and German defence ministers, 2016: 2).

In addition to this defence structure, the Franco-German proposal mentioned several other measures and initiatives. The need to improve the deployment of the CSDP's military operations and the intervention of the EU battlegroups was highlighted as a crucial objective in relation to the preservation and increment of the EU's role in the international system. Thus, a permanent EU headquarters for military and civilian CSDP missions was proposed due to the improved planning and conduct ability that such a base would allow (ibid: 2). Furthermore, France and Germany proposed a common EU budget for military research and technology development in alignment with the European Commission's proposal. Also, in addition to increasing equipment procurement among the member states, the need to improve the competitiveness and coherence of the European defence industry was another focal point of the document, among other elements (ibid: 5; Rettman, 2016).⁵⁴

The Franco-German paper was set to be sent to the other member states before an informal summit in Bratislava where the proposals would be discussed and negotiated (Kornelius, 2016). The summit then produced a declaration where a roadmap for a stronger EU defence cooperation was established, which was put to the European Council's approval (Bratislava Declaration, 2016: 4). Thus, the institutional process towards a more efficient and ambitious defence structure in the EU began following the initial Franco-German plan.

The effects of this renewed integration and cooperation momentum were identified in the European Councils of November and December of 2016 where the establishment of PESCO was discussed and agreed upon, as well as the institution of several initiatives previously proposed by the member states. Initiatives such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), or the European Defence Fund (EDF), as well as the development of a more integrated and competitive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) were advanced in light of the previous cooperation roadmap (European Council, 2016a: 9). Regarding PESCO, the

appealing to the EU member states. Nonetheless, it was relevant to mention that that was the nature of PESCO's strategy.

⁵⁴ Prior to this proposal, the Franco-German Security and Defence Council had already called for the standardization of the European defence industry with the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises in the EDTIB, while pushing for more funding regarding research and development programs (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014)

Council crucially mentioned that the structure is “subject to the willingness of Member States to undertake concrete commitments” (ibid: 13), thus highlighting that this cooperation framework remains intergovernmental and not supranational. In other words, regardless of the progress achieved with these projects, its success will always be dependent on the will and commitment of the member states.

PESCO was officially created one year later in the European Council of December 2017, in which “the importance of quickly implementing the first projects” (European Council, 2017: 1)⁵⁵ was stressed. Over the course of the next couple of years, PESCO projects began to be developed and implemented on three different occasions with the approval of the European Council (Council of the EU, 2018a; Council of the EU, 2018b; Council of the EU, 2019a). The projects focus mainly on the improvement of training and on the development of defence capabilities towards operational efficiency on land, sea and air.⁵⁶⁵⁷

Despite the notable progress that has been witnessed under the PESCO framework with the establishment and development of a wide range of projects, the attempted evolution has not been exempt from criticism, which is a constant theme of the EU’s defence policy. In addition to the criticism related with the idea that PESCO is not as ambitious as supposed, a European Council recommendation encouraged the participating member states to “advance the work and focus on the swift and effective implementation of the projects (...) in order to deliver tangible outputs and products” while emphasising that it is paramount to “develop projects that aim to exploit cooperation between existing military capabilities, and make these capabilities available for missions and operations” (Council of the EU, 2019b: 9-10). This recommendation unequivocally highlights the ongoing criticism towards the CSDP as a whole, and PESCO in particular, by noting that the progress made is mostly focused on the development of defence capabilities and not an actual improvement regarding the efficiency and deployment of the CSDP missions. It is an element in which the contrasting strategic ambitions for this policy area is clear and consequently does not allow for a strategic autonomy to be achieved as quickly as France desired.

⁵⁵ With the exception of Denmark, all the member states participate and are bound to the commitments established under PESCO (Council of the EU, 2017: 4)

⁵⁶ In the first round of projects being established, the European Medical Command, the European Union Training Mission Competence Centre (EU TMCC) and the EUFOR Crisis Response Operation Core (EUFOR CROC) can be highlighted with the purpose of providing a broad picture of the type of projects being developed under PESCO (Council of the EU, 2018: 4)

⁵⁷ The third round consisted of projects focused on increasing collaboration between the member states regarding, for instance, joint-weapon systems and training regimes in order to improve the interoperability and efficiency of the CSDP missions and operations (Council of the EU, 2019)

Nonetheless, PESCO was not the only project being implemented in this phase of European integration. In fact, the EDF was one of the main initiatives established in this momentum following the Franco-German proposal for an increase in an EU budget for military and technological research (Kornelius, 2016). Simultaneously proposed by the European Commission, the EDF was created in 2017 with the goal of increasing national investments in defence research while reducing duplications in spending (European Commission, 2017: 1).⁵⁸

Furthermore, the European Council “has determined that it is necessary to strengthen the planning and conduct of EU non-executive military missions⁵⁹”, hence the creation of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) (Council of the EU, 2017). The importance of creating a centre for military planning was already mentioned by France in 2003 (Koenig & Walter-Franke, 2017: 9) and later in the 2016 Franco-German paper where a permanent EU headquarters for planning and conduct of military and civilian CSDP operations (French and German defence ministers, 2016: 2). It is an initiative which is perceived as an important step when it comes to being in accordance with France’s ambition of an EU strategic autonomy, while also supporting Germany’s intent to deepen the EU’s institutional integration (Koenig & Walter-Franke, 2017: 10).

It is also pertinent to mention CARD’s creation, which is an annual review that helps foster capability development by addressing shortfalls and deepening defence cooperation regarding coherent defence spending plans (European Defence Agency, 2018). CARD is another example of the initiatives created in accordance with France’s and Germany’s incentive for more coordination and transparency when it comes to the member states’ defence budgets and the capability development of the EU. Considering what it aims for, CARD was considered an “essential intermediate step in the overall EU capability development process” (ibid).

Finally, among several other notable projects, France and Germany, alongside Italy, Spain and Cyprus, are also pursuing the creation of the Crisis Response Operation Core (CROC) which is intended to “contribute to the creation of a coherent full spectrum force package, which could accelerate the provision of forces” (EEAS, 2017). CROC’s ultimate goal is to enhance the readiness and the preparation of the EU member states to engage in operations and missions (ibid). For that reason, CROC can be identified as one of the main cornerstones of PESCO in the

⁵⁸ This initiative marked the beginning of the Commission’s bigger role regarding European defence. Before this contribution, the commission was not involved in defence matters as much as it started doing in that moment (European Commission, June 2017: 2; Tocci, 2018: 133)

⁵⁹ Non-executive military missions are non-combat operations in non-EU countries (European Council, 2017)

sense that all the PESCO projects are supposed to make it at EU's disposal, though it is inevitably dependent on the efforts of the participating states (Biscop, 2019: 3).

3.5 - France's and Germany's recent unilateral and bilateral attempts at pushing the European defence cooperation forward

Emmanuel Macron's election as France's President in May 2017 brought a moment of hope for the EU's defence policy area due to the desire that Macron showed in deepening European cooperation. That ambition was evident in the president's visit to Germany where, alongside Merkel, Macron stated that the goal is to "breathe new dynamism" into the French-German partnership and develop a "roadmap" to strengthen the EU (DN News, 2017).

On the same year of the election, Macron attempted to galvanize European defence cooperation by stating that the EU should follow autonomous operating capabilities which, as mentioned, began with the establishment of PESCO and the possibilities of progress it provided. The French president took an additional step forward by announcing the creation of the European Intervention initiative (EI2) aimed at developing a shared strategic culture. Macron acknowledged the fact that that strategic culture has not yet been achieved due to the existence of different cultures, sensitivities and historical and political ideas (Macron, 2017).

As expressed in the EI2 document, the initiative is a "flexible, non-binding forum of European participating states which are able and willing to engage their military capabilities and forces when and where necessary to protect European security interests", though it is not included in the EU's defence framework⁶⁰ (Participating Member States, 2018: 1). Notwithstanding that characteristic, the EI2 remains a relevant initiative for European defence because its main goal is to develop a shared strategic culture, which would then improve the EU's ability to carry out military operations. Due to the clear focus on military operations and its position outside the institutional framework of the EU, the initiative was not received positively in Berlin though Germany ended up joining the initiative in order to avoid a Franco-German disagreement⁶¹ (Daehnhardt, 2018: 105).⁶²

⁶⁰ The EI2 has a European focus but it is not limited to EU member states, which resulted in the participation of the UK, for instance (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2018)

⁶¹ Germany's concern was also related with the fact that the EI2's framework was situated outside of the EU, thus raising concerns regarding the possible negative repercussions for EU's defence cooperation (Major & Molling, 2019: 13)

⁶² At the moment, the participating states in the EI2 are France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK. The participation of these states is based on their "willingness and their ability to swiftly deploy effective military capabilities and act together in various

Furthermore, there is a connection between the EI2 and the EU through PESCO. Indeed, some PESCO projects benefit from the EI2 when it comes to military mobility and support towards operations, for instance. On the other hand, if the EI2 succeeds in developing an European strategic culture, the benefit for PESCO and the EU overall would be considerable (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2017).⁶³ As stated: “EI2 participating states will strive to ensure that EI2 serves the objectives and projects of PESCO” (Participating Member States, 2018: 2).

A comparison between the French initiative and projects such as PESCO and the others previously mentioned is required in order to highlight the distinction between both types of initiatives. On the one hand, the EI2 focuses on improving the ability to act efficiently in military operations, thus focusing on increasing the EU’s presence in the international stage much like the French national strategic autonomy which France wants to see replicated in the EU context. On the other hand, the other projects adopted by the EU display a clear connection with the idea of capability development, hence attempting to improve the coordination between defence industries and weapons systems, for instance, between the EU member states. This contrast illustrates the continuing state of the EU’s defence structure where there are still divergent strategic interests regarding the CSDP and the CFSP (Major & Molling, 2019: 13; Daehnhardt, 2018: 106).

Another example which reveals that contrast was the creation of the Enable & Enhance Initiative by Germany which focuses on supporting third countries to be better prepared to deal with domestic security issues and to maintain national stability (German Government, 2016: 1). It distinguishes itself from the EI2 due to the nature of its character which focuses on capacity building and not on military interventions like the EI2. The initiative was initially proposed in 2013 with the goal of increasing the CSDP’s effectiveness, underlining that the EU’s training missions have often been hampered by a lack of equipment among local partners. Despite not being accepted by the EU due to the nonexistence⁶⁴ of a consensus regarding this initiative⁶⁴, the

scenarios across the whole range of potential conflicts and crisis affecting Europe’s security” (European Intervention Initiative, 2018: 1). Finland, Sweden, Romania and Norway joined the EI2 later in 2019 (Euractiv, 2019)

⁶³ Nonetheless, there is no possibility of a fusion between PESCO and the EI2 due to the Danish participation in the former and the British participation in the latter, for instance (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2018)

⁶⁴ There is a risk regarding the Enable and Enhance Initiative when it comes to its practical use. In troubled areas it is not straightforward to identify the partners that cooperation should be made with. There is a risk of not achieving the intended outputs and thus possibly worsening the situation. In addition, there is a lack of consensus when it comes to the equipment and the measures that should be financed by the common EU budget or not (Enable and Enhance Initiative, 2016: 2-3)

German federal government has taken a step forward by including an item of 100 million euros to its defence budget in order to support the project (ibid: 2).

In spite of these differences, there has been a slow but noticeable convergence between France and Germany with regard to European defence. That apparent confluence is well displayed in Chancellor Merkel's 2018 speech in the European Parliament where the German leader supported the idea of a future European army that would be a complement to NATO. The chancellor highlighted the EU's inefficiency as a global security actor due to the existence of "160 defence weapon systems (within the EU) and the United States has only 50 or 60" (Merkel, 2018). In addition, Merkel proposed the establishment of a European Security Council with the purpose of making crucial decisions more efficiently, while adding that a "fully capable European military force for rapid deployment to affected regions in times of crisis" is needed (ibid).⁶⁵

Taking advantage of this moment of partial strategic concurrence, a window was opened for further bilateral cooperation. Recognising the value of the Franco-German partnership to the EU, and in celebration of the Elysée Treaty's 56th anniversary, the two member states established the Aachen Treaty in 2019. The treaty includes elements such as economic and monetary, but it is mainly focused on strengthening the cooperation in matters of foreign policy, defence and internal security, with the ultimate goal of increasing the EU's ability to act autonomously (French Republic & Federal Republic of Germany, 2019: 5). At its core, the treaty intends to promote the competitiveness and consolidation of Europe's industrial and technological defence base, while developing a common approach on arms exports (ibid: 6).

In the fall of 2019, France and Germany attempted to ambitiously deepen the bilateral coordination in light of the Aachen Treaty by compromising to not transfer or export arms or equipment to a third party if requested by the other participant.⁶⁶ At the heart of this agreement is a clause which states that one of the parties has the right to determine the outcome of the other party's export if the former contributed more than 20% to the specific weapons system that is being exported (French Republic, 2019).⁶⁷ That condition also allows for one party to transfer or export one item to another manufacturer more easily because it does not require

⁶⁵ Merkel's support towards a European army and other ambitious ideas was received by both positive and negative reactions in the European Parliament (German Federal Government, 2018), representing the persistent division within EU's politics particularly in matters of defence.

⁶⁶ This rule applies to when the supposed transfer or export is detrimental to its direct interests or to its national security. If a party thus opposes a transfer or export, it shall inform the other party (French Republic, November 2019)

⁶⁷ Notwithstanding, several products and items are not included in this clause (Finabel, November 2019)

the other party's approval if that party's contribution to that item does not surpass the 20% threshold (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2019).

This compromise is particularly relevant in the context of the EU's defence system because it attempts to coordinatively regulate arms and equipment export, which is a particularly sensitive element within the EU due to the divergent actions and strategies by the member states (Finabel, 2019). The Franco-German agreement also intends to increase the integration between their defence industries and companies, thus possessing a component of defence procurement which, as mentioned previously, is another challenge for the EU. In 2009, a European directive on defence and security procurement set out the European rules for the procurement of arms and other defence materials. Due to the sensitivity and complexity of this matter, the directive established rules to the competition in the market with the added goal of creating opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (European Commission, 2016). A European Commission report on that directive concluded that it did help to open the internal market and increase EU-wide competition. However, the report also noted that the market's fragmentation persists, which negatively affects the efficiency and competitiveness of the EDTIB, undermining the EU's potential for strategic autonomy as a result (ibid).⁶⁸

Therefore, the Franco-German agreement on arms export and procurement can be perceived as beneficial for the EU's defence industry and overall cooperation due to the restrictions it attempts to reduce and the standards and procedures it harmonizes. It is an attempt to develop a common position. Nonetheless, it will only lead to an EU common stance on arms export if other member states agree on certain security issues and join measures such as the Franco-German one (Finabel, 2019).

Beyond these agreements, France and Germany have also worked on bilateral projects such as the development of next-generation fighters, which is one component of the Next Generation Weapons System, and is supposed to be ready by 2040 (DW News, 2019). That project is included in the Future Combat Air System. Nonetheless, difficulties have been noted regarding the leadership in specific components of the projects and the compatibility of the French and German industries (French Senate, 2019: 69). Regardless, these projects will only lead to further EU defence cooperation when these projects expand beyond their bilateral nature and include other member states (Daehnhardt, 2018: 106).

⁶⁸ The report highlights the challenges related to the SMEs' access to defence contracts due to legal, administrative and language reasons, in addition to the national regulations on exports, among other difficulties (European Commission, 2016)

Another example of a Franco-German joint-project is the “Eurodrone”, which is a PESCO initiative in which both France and Germany participate⁶⁹. In fact, the two countries have the biggest participation in PESCO projects, either as participants or as coordinators. Furthermore, it is important to mention that France has participated in all CSDP missions currently being executed, while Germany has only been absent in Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EEAS, 2020) and in the EUTM mission in the Central African Republic.⁷⁰

Finally, an analysis of the EU’s defence, and particularly of France and Germany’s contributions, would not be complete without considering the defence spending of both entities and the EU as a whole in order to identify possible variations that are worth noting.

Regarding defence expenditure, in 2009 France and Germany spent 39.1 and 36.1 billion euros respectively, accounting for 38,66% of the whole EU defence spending which in total consisted of 194 billion euros (EDA, 2011). In 2014, that Franco-German share of percentage stood at 31,74% vis-à-vis the whole EU defence expenditure which rose to 230 billion euros in comparison with 2009. France’s and Germany’s amount remained more or less the same at 39 and 34 billion respectively (EDA, 2016).⁷¹ In both years, the UK stood at the same level as France by spending 39 billion spent in 2009, while the volume rose to 48 billion in 2014, thus exhibiting the weight of the defence expenditure that the EU will eventually lack due to Brexit. To provide a clearer view of the weight that the UK had towards the EU’s defence, in 2017 the UK, France and Germany accounted for 62% of the EU’s defence spending (French Ministry of Armed Forces, 2018: 5).

The scenario was different in 2018⁷², where France and Germany rose their defence expenditure to 42.7 and 42 billion euros respectively, which accounted for 84.7 billion or 37,67% of the whole EU amount (223,4 billion). In comparison, the UK remained the EU’s biggest spender in defence as its amount stood at 50.4 billion in the same year (EDA, 2018). Overall, France and Germany’s defence expenditure combined rose 11,45% from 2009 to 2018, evolving from 75 to 84.7 billion euros in the last decade, with some fluctuations in past years such as 2014, for instance, where the sum decreased in comparison with the EU’s total volume.

⁶⁹ The project also includes Czech Republic, Spain and Italy (PESCO, 2019)

⁷⁰ A point of criticism towards Germany is often made in relation to the fact France and Germany present different approaches to the same missions. While France intervenes to tackle a certain issue, Germany is often accused of just supporting the operation and not engaging in it with the same motivation as France (Glegerich, 2019: 3)

⁷¹ It is important to mention that “all the EU Member States, except Denmark, are EDA participating members” (EDA, 2016)

⁷² This statistical analysis does not consider the years after 2018 because the EDA does not yet provide such data.

When it comes to defence expenditure as percentage of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), the value has decreased from 2009 to 2018, transitioning from 2,04% to 1,8% in France and from 1,5% to 1,3% in Germany. Comparing with other EU member states, countries such as the UK, Poland, Greece, Estonia and Cyprus spend more in defence in relation to their GDP (ibid).

Chapter 4

4.1 - Discussion of the results: A critical analysis of the Franco-German leadership role in the CSDP

As mentioned in the conceptualisation chapter, despite a dispersion of political leadership within the EU, one or two actors still possess the ability to create change, though the success of that process depends on other actors (Wurzel & Connelly, 2011). Furthermore, for the purpose of this dissertation it was established that the influence that one actor exerts over another actor will largely determine its ability to achieve a certain goal. That can be executed through a wide range of actions (Young, 1991). Thus, considering the purpose of this dissertation and the previously developed analysis, how can France's and Germany's role in the EU's defence policy area be classified in terms of leadership and how have those two countries determined the path of that policy area?

First and foremost, it is evident that France and Germany have attempted to lead the EU regarding defence matters since the Lisbon Treaty. They have been at the heart of most contributions that have attempted to deepen the cooperation amongst the members states. In order to achieve that, bilateral collaborations between them or interactions such as the one between France and the UK have taken place (UK Government, 2017). More importantly, the Franco-German axis has collaborated in specific moments with the goal of directing the EU's defence project towards more integration.

That strategy has mostly been witnessed in two specific moments: the attempt to solve or at least lower the tensions in the Ukraine conflict in the shape of the Normandy Format and the Minsk Agreements (European Parliament, 2020); and the Franco-German plan and proposal to strengthen the CSDP following the Brexit referendum, which culminated in the institutionalisation of PESCO and other initiatives (France and German defence ministers, 2016). These efforts consisted of moments of *institutional bargaining*, as defined by Young (1991), which are the attempts of actors to establish rules and arrangements that manage the interaction between them and other actors. These Franco-German inputs had the goal of establishing a common political stance and of redefining the interests of a certain group of actors, in this case the EU member states (ibid).

In that regard, France and Germany have displayed an unquestionable role of leadership by attempting to influence the actions of the EU as a whole, and the member states in particular, by establishing certain political stances and goals which have propelled the EU into specific institutional arrangements. Indeed, the partnership has been successful in that endeavour, as

PESCO, the EDF and the MPCC, among other initiatives, have been implemented following a Franco-German incentive.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that such initiatives did not come to life solely due to that incentive. As previously mentioned, the EU's institutional framework is constituted by a wide range of actors, from member states to supranational institutions. And, in order for a certain measure or group of measures to be implemented, it is required that more than one of those actors approves it (Wurzel & Connelly, 2011). For that reason, the member states met in Bratislava to informally agree on the future path of the EU's defence after the Franco-German defence proposals in 2016 (Bratislava Declaration, 2016). In addition, the approval of the European Council with regard to PESCO and the other initiatives was another required step to complete the institutional process (European Council, 2016). Thus, the nature of the EU's political process is unavoidable even when the EU's strongest bilateral coalition pushes the community in a certain direction. Furthermore, in 2016 there was already a shift in tone within the EU, as expressed by the EUGS, where the goal of reaching a "strategic autonomy" was mentioned for the first time (EUGS, 2016). This depicts how, in order for the EU to act or change in a certain way, the approval and consent of several EU actors is essential.

An element that must be underlined in these instances is the importance of the environment as a source of potential change or not. Indeed, Cox⁷³ (1969, as cited in Helms, 2014) highlights the effect that the circumstances have in an actor's action and how the "timing" of those efforts determines the success of the actor. In this case study, France and Germany did indeed act immediately after certain events that challenged the EU, which was the case of Brexit and the Russian annexation of Crimea, in addition to the change in the transatlantic relations, the terrorist attacks, among other factors (Daehnhardt, 2018: 97).

Despite the progress that was made as a consequence of those circumstances and the subsequent Franco-German actions, a criticism can be identified regarding the timing of those efforts. In fact, authors such as Major, et al. (2018) mention how those actions possess a reactive nature instead of proactive. In other words, it was the pressure provided by external events that propelled France and Germany to push for a stronger European defence cooperation. That behavioural change was evident in the German White Paper of 2016, in which the German government displayed a clear awareness regarding the challenging circumstances of the time and the required response that the EU needed to provide (Federal Republic of Germany, 2016).

⁷³ See: Cox, R. W. (1969). The executive head: an essay on leadership in international organisation. *International Organisation*, 23 (2), 205-230

France, on the other hand, had already displayed an ambitious desire for the EU's defence since its 2008 White Paper, which already mentioned the need for a European "strategic autonomy" (French Republic, 2008).

The behavioural component of leadership (Wiener⁷⁴, 1995, as cited in Helms, 2014) is thus a crucial element of this case study and highlights how the concepts of *behaviour* and *environment* are intrinsically connected. In that regard, Ikenberry's (1996) description of *situational leadership* is present in this analysis due to the Franco-German ability to make a difference in a specific context, particularly in challenging circumstances for the EU. Another important mention in this issue is the influence of individual leaders as potential difference makers (ibid). In fact, the country's political leaders had a predominate role in this case study, particularly François Hollande, Merkel and Macron. The first two began the process that culminated in the adoption of projects such as PESCO, and the latter contributed to a renewed impetus for a stronger EU defence by the creation of the EID in 2017, for instance. Furthermore, Merkel and Macron recently participated in the creation of the Aachen Treaty and the subsequent bilateral agreements which will potentially increase the defence integration between the two countries (French Republic & Federal Republic of Germany, 2019).

On the other hand, the evaluation of the success of these developments is more challenging. Success has been evident when it comes to the establishment of institutional arrangements and initiatives that deepen European integration and cooperation, which was the case of PESCO and the projects that have started under PESCO, the EDF, EID, the MPCC, and so on. Notwithstanding, a distinction must be made between defence capabilities and the ability to execute military operations. In that regard, a continue struggle remains in the EU as the mentioned initiatives contribute to the increase of defence capabilities, although they still fall short of what they aim for and what the Franco-German axis desires, as argued by Daenhardt (2018: 106). This struggle is one of the elements at the core of the Franco-German relations due to the divergent strategic cultures between the two. The establishment of PESCO was a great depiction of that distinction. While France intended to create a defence structure that would allow the EU to efficiently undertake military operations by integrating military capabilities, Germany envisioned a framework of further integration, thus possessing a nature of lower ambition in comparison with France's preferences (French Senate, 2019).

⁷⁴ See: Wiener, J. (1995). "Hegemonic" leadership: naked emperor or the worship of false Gods? *European Journal of International Relations*, 1(2), 219-243

Despite not achieving as much of actual military power as needed in order to achieve a European strategic autonomy, projects like PESCO have still produced a considerable impetus for closer defence cooperation amongst the EU member states (ibid). Indeed, even though results in these matters take longer to appear, “considerable progress has been made in addressing certain shortfalls” (Fiott, 2020). Authors such as Koenig and Walter-Franke (2017) argue that the EU and the Franco-German axis need to gather more support from the remaining member states for these matters in order to converge their actions and strategies. Ideas such as European White Paper for Defence or the creation of a European Security Council, which was proposed by Merkel (The German Federal Government, 2018), are often identified as measures that could positively impact European defence and increase cooperation in this regard (French Senate, 2019: 91). A Franco-German White Paper could also provide a stronger political impetus (Kempin and Kunz, 2017: 1).

Furthermore, regardless of the discrepancies between the two, a convergence has grown between France and Germany which has allowed for a push towards a stronger EU defence cooperation. The 2019 Treaty of Aachen is a proof of that, and it shows the increasing bilateral desire to deepen integration between the two states.⁷⁵ However, as previously mentioned, these agreements will only impact the EU overall if more member states enter those frameworks, which is the biggest challenge of the EU’s defence cooperation. The Franco-German case study perfectly highlights the persistent divergence within the EU member states in regard to strategic cultures, threat perceptions and defence interests. The Franco-German partnership is nonetheless a proof of how bilateral cooperation is possible despite the differences between the two countries and how that coalition can alter the path and structure of the EU’s defence framework. As Kempin and Kunz (ibid:8) mention, often a Franco-German agreement is required in order for the EU to move forward, even though a common position is hard to find and the agreement reached may not achieve its intended results. In the defence policy area, undoubtedly, France and Germany have attempted to increment policy changes by guiding the institutional debate towards a common goal. Thus, the strategy had a *transactional* nature instead of a *transformational* one which would target a more drastic systematic change (Nye, 2008, as cited in Wurzel & Connelly, 2011: 12).⁷⁶

⁷⁵ A common Franco-German strategy towards defence exports is identified as a crucial step in order to create a more efficient cooperation, though tough challenges remain due to the different strategic cultures (Kempin & Kunz, 2017: 26)

⁷⁶ See: Nye, J. (2008). *The Powers to Lead*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

An element in which a leader may have *legitimacy* to lead is in its ability to perform and set an example to the other members of its community (Kane & Patapan, 2012⁷⁷, as cited in Helms, 2014), thus affecting the former's perception of the leader (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006⁷⁸, as cited in Helms, 2014). In the EU's context, France and Germany have stood-out as the main providers of impetus for more cooperation by not only providing the necessary stances and debates that have led to actual institutional changes, but also by setting an example on the missions and projects in which they have participated in. When it comes to defence expenditure, however, the partnership does not set such a strong example to follow as the defence spending as a percentage of their GDP has slightly decreased and remains lower than the 2% threshold established by NATO, as previously verified (EDA, 2018). In addition, several member states invest more on defence in terms of percentage of their GDP, though the volume of investment is far below that of the French and Germans. Notwithstanding, France and Germany remain, by far, the main spenders and investors in defence within the EU alongside the UK (ibid).⁷⁹

All elements considered, this analysis has come to the conclusion that the Franco-Germany axis has evidently displayed a leadership role in the CSDP as the two countries have not only acted in specific moments to foster EU cooperation defence matters by proposing certain initiatives and measures, but also because those strategies have shaped the CSDP in the time-frame that was analysed. Indeed, the analysis identified several instances where Franco-German inputs led and increased institutional debate on defence and security issues, created platforms and frameworks for further cooperation amongst the member states and have contributed to the continued development of the CSDP. Though there has been an increase of defence capabilities and investment on defence within the EU, the desired strategic autonomy and the ambitious Franco-German goals such as a European army or a fully independent defence force still have not been achieved.

Hence, the third hypothesis established for the purpose of this dissertation is corroborated as a result of the analysis. In fact, it is confirmed that "France and Germany have attempted to display a leadership role in the EU's defence policy-area but with a limited impact". The remaining hypotheses are thus refuted because they either stated that the results would not identify any Franco-German leadership role, or that the actions of that partnership would

⁷⁷ See: Kane, J. & Patapan, H. (2012). *The democratic leader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

⁷⁸ See: Buchanan, A. & Keohane, R. O. (2006). The legitimacy of global governance institutions. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 20 (4), 405-437

⁷⁹ Even though the EU is the second largest military spending in the world, it is far from being the world's second largest military power due to its inefficiency in defence spending (Kempin & Kunz, 2017: 16)

be totally successful or not at all. The success of France's and Germany's actions have unquestionably been limited as previously concluded.

Chapter 5

5.1 - Concluding remarks

The main goal and ambition of this dissertation was to reflect on France's and Germany's role in the security and defence project of the EU, and consequently to understand if that has been a leadership role or not. The results of the analysis revealed that the Franco-German axis has played a crucial role in leading the EU's defence strategy since the Lisbon Treaty by providing it with the necessary steps to tackle specific challenges. In particular, challenges that threaten the EU's unity, cohesion and security. They have done so by recognising the importance of one another and how crucial the Franco-German cooperation is for the EU overall and definitely regarding defence and security matters.

In fact, the Franco-German axis has been at the heart of European integration from its very beginning in 1951 when the process of rapprochement between the two started in the shape of the ECSC. Throughout the long, difficult and unprecedented history of the European integration project, the Franco-German partnership has been at the heart of the major changes that have shaped the European community and the institutional framework that arose. As revealed in the historical contextualisation chapter, German and French leaders and strategies have influenced the direction of European integration. When it comes to defence and security, they were also the main contributors for the few moments of defence cooperation that emerged over time, from the EDC to the creation of the ESDP in Saint-Malo. That phenomenon is quite peculiar considering the different strategic interests, cultures and paths of each country, as highlighted in the initial chapter of the analysis. Despite those differences, France and Germany have made a clear difference in the EU's defence cooperation by acting bilaterally or unilaterally.

Following the definition of leadership that was identified prior to the analysis, especially the one developed by Wurzel & Connelly (2011), this dissertation was able to analyse the case study in connection with that concept and the distinctive leadership framework within the EU. Considering the dispersion of power in the EU and the several potential sources of leadership that its system allows, it is evident from the previous analysis that leading the community in a certain path is not easy to achieve. History has proven that only a total consensus amongst all the member states allows the EU to move forward in security and defence matters, and often a Franco-German coalition incentive is needed to provide the required impetus. Through unilateral or bilateral statements, speeches, proposals of initiatives and strategies, and by providing stimulus to the institutional debate, the partnership has attempted to lead the EU's defence and security project.

By reflecting on the Franco-German role in this regard, the ultimate goal of the dissertation was to consequently understand how the European political process functions with regard to defence and security and how the EU operates as a result of that process. At the core of the system is the interaction amongst the member states, which are inevitably the only entities that are able to lead the defence project forward. Notwithstanding the vital role of the EU's supranational institutions in the institutional framework, the policy-making process will only follow a certain strategy or implement a specific set of projects if the member states agree to it. In other words, the intergovernmental character of the decision-making process remains predominant in defence and security matters. And that justifies how, despite considerable success in leading the EU's defence project and strengthening European cooperation in that regard, the Franco-German partnership has not been able to achieve some of the goals that it aims for. Statements such as the one that the German Chancellor provided in the European Parliament in 2018 by claiming the need for an "European army" are not impossible to achieve, but they are unlikely to come to reality in the near future.⁸⁰ The challenge in achieving such goals is the difficulty to converge the interests and actions of all the member states towards that ambition.

Thus, the Franco-German case study provides a pertinent example of this context by depicting the exact elements in which the EU struggles. Indeed, despite the bilateral integration they have developed, France and Germany display contrasting defence strategic cultures, distinct interests and preferences regarding the CSDP and its cooperation projects, and different military capabilities. These discrepancies present in this bilateral relation are an appropriate depiction of the divergences that prevail between the EU member states, which consequently affects the community's possibilities of finding a common ground.

Simultaneously, the Franco-German case also provides an excellent example of how those differences can be surpassed and a common strategy can be agreed upon. The bilateral agreements that stimulated the EU's defence project such as the one in 2016 that culminated with the establishment of PESCO, the Aachen Treaty and the development of joint-projects for new weapon-systems, for instance, prove how a compromise can be reached despite the existence of divergent national interests. Furthermore, unilateral efforts such as the EI2, the Enable and Enhance Initiative or the pressure towards a more efficient funding by the French

⁸⁰ In addition, a wide portion of the European citizens perceive the prospect of a "European army" as troubling due to the idea that such a force would threaten the national sovereignty of their member states. NATO supporters may also consider it dangerous for NATO's structure which could be replaced by the European army (French Senate, 2019: 91)

government in 2013 are additional examples of how France and Germany have made a difference in the EU's defence framework, among several other examples. Even though strategic autonomy has not yet been reached, these inputs have provided the required impetus that the European defence needed in order to create the institutional framework that allows the development of the defence capabilities, the strengthening of the European defence industry, or the increasing funding for research.

The Franco-German's peculiar relationship has been possible due to the *Regularised Intergovernmentalism* that has been institutionalized between the two countries (Krotz, 2010). In fact, if it were not for the close and persistent interaction and dialogue between several French and German political entities, the inputs provided by the partnership might have not come to fruition. Organs such as the Franco-German Defence and Security Council, aligned with the remaining ministerial council meetings, provide the necessary platform that allows the two sides to communicate and coordinate their actions accordingly. Indeed, as consistently mentioned in official documents published by both states, both France and Germany recognise the importance of one another and how crucial their cooperation is to the European defence project and the European community overall.

This dissertation concludes by acknowledging the fact that the Franco-German leadership is essential to the development of European cooperation in matters of security and defence. In addition to the fact that no other EU bilateral partnership can "combine similar resources, capability and industrial capacity" to direct the institutional debate and the policy-making process (Glegerich, 2019), the support of the two biggest EU member states is paramount for any European defence endeavour.

5.2 - Research limitations and possible future analysis

Due to the complexity of this subject, this dissertation could not grasp every element that constitutes European defence. Indeed, further research could and should be developed regarding several components of this process.

Firstly, in order to acquire a full understanding of the success that the Franco-German leadership has had in the EU's defence policy area, a more extensive and thorough scrutiny of the initiatives and projects implemented would provide a clearer picture of its results. This dissertation did identify the focal points of the success and failures of those measures, but a specific analysis of each initiative would inevitably allow for a deeper insight.

Secondly, in connection with the first point, an analysis that considers the inputs of all the EU member states would lead to a broader and more complete view of the whole defence policy area within the EU. This dissertation focuses on France and Germany for their predominance in the EU and in the defence area. Nonetheless, a comparison with the remaining member states could be done in the future in order to understand if any other member states have attempted to display a leadership role as well. Furthermore, this is a field where new developments are constantly taking place. Hence, it is important to continuously analyse this topic and reflect on the impact of those events.

Despite the possibilities for further research of the subject, this dissertation identified and analysed the essential elements and instances that constitute the Franco-German relation and its efforts in the EU's defence and security. Although there is the opportunity for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon in future studies, the most impactful and pertinent aspects were considered in light of the main objectives of this dissertation.

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