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IRISH NEUTRALITY IN A CHANGING EUROPE

APRIL 2022 // PREPARED BY BARRY ANDREWS MEP

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The invasion of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin's Russia has already resulted in seismic geopolitical changes. War on the European continent seemed like a thing of the past, even if we as Europeans had turned a blind eye towards Russia's invasion of Georgia, its annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine.

In all this, Ireland finds itself at a crossroads. We are members of the European Union (EU), which has once again been buffeted by this crisis, in another of a series of major external shocks. Each of these shocks have forced the EU to recalibrate, to rethink but mainly to step in and act where necessary. While documents like the Strategic Compass and the Conference on the Future of Europe were pushing for a stronger European defence policy, there were many roadblocks. The events of the last month have given new meaning to this and there are growing calls for more progress on President Macron's 'open strategic autonomy' policies.

In response to this changing moment, I have published this report and have come up with 5 clear recommendations that I believe Ireland should undertake:

1. Calling for a Citizens Assembly on Irish Neutrality and EU Common Defence
2. Revising Ireland's Triple Lock System
3. No to NATO
4. Increased involvement with PESCO and CSDP
5. Increased spending on the Defence Forces

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INTRODUCTION

"There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen"
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Our membership of the European Union gives us many rights, freedoms and protections. It also comes with duties and obligations. During Ireland's first attempt to the join the then European Economic Community (EEC), Sean Lemass, the Taoiseach at the time, said that if Europe was worth joining, it was worth defending. As a mature, confident and prosperous member state, Ireland should raise its voice and make sure that its views are heard on how we defend and stand up for the Union that we helped build.

However, for us to raise our voice, we must first know what to say. Ireland is in the midst of a much-needed national debate on its security and defence. Russia's senseless and shocking invasion of Ukraine has shocked the world and the Irish public. The Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces has provided us with an honest account of the poor state of the Defence Forces and our current limitations. Nonetheless, this Report and the Irish debate in general, neglects to consider the European aspect of many of the decisions that we make.

Over the past month, the European Union has made more changes in foreign affairs and defence cooperation than it has in the last 15 years. The publishing of the EU Global Strategy in 2015 under High Representative Federica Mogherini was the first step in a move towards a more joined up and coherent foreign policy for the European Union. Since 2015, there have been a number of new policies in the domain of security and defences, notably: Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility.

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The world has changed irreversibly in the last few weeks. Russia's revisionist aggression and invasion in Ukraine as well as its posturing with other former satellite states are a huge concern for the peace and security of Europe and the world. Other major players are continuously seeking to undermine our European democratic process and we face new hybrid threats.

In essence, Ireland must adjust its thinking to this new world. We are no longer a small island on the western periphery of Europe. 75% of transatlantic underwater internet cables flow through or near Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone. We host over 30% of Europe's data and many of the largest tech companies European headquarters. We are therefore, a natural target for anyone who would wish to do harm to the European and transatlantic economies.

Across Europe, we have seen longstanding policies reversed in Germany, Sweden, Finland and Switzerland to name a few. Ireland is now in the process of this debate and I hope this report can contribute to it.

This report will seek to set out in plain terms the current state of the situation in four chapters:

1. Irish Neutrality and the Triple Lock
2. The European Union's Evolving Security & Defence Policy
3. Looking at Like-Minded Partners
4. Recommendations

IRISH NEUTRALITY AND THE TRIPLE LOCK

Neutrality and peacekeeping have formed a key part of Irish foreign policy for over 80 years.(1) I have dedicated the next few pages to briefly outlining:

1. Neutral States and Irish Neutrality
2. The Triple Lock System
3. Irish Engagement with International Missions
4. The Security Context for Ireland and the EU
5. State of Irish Defence Forces

Neutral States and Irish Neutrality

Neutrality means many things to many people. It is worth remembering in this content that Ukraine was and is a neutral, non-aligned country. Previous attempts to codify neutrality as a concept in international law, such as the Hague Convention on Neutral States 1907, have sought to define neutrality by the rights and duties of neutral powers e.g. a neutral Power resisting, even attempts to violate its neutrality cannot be regarded as a hostile act. Articles 2(3) and 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations, imposes upon its members the obligation to settle international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations.

Even within the United Nations, neutrality is a complicated issue as member nations may be called upon and are obligated to provide assistance to the United Nations. In addition to this, and contrary to what several Irish politicians have stated in recent weeks, the right of individual or collective self-defence is expressly provided for in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations:

"*Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security*"

Ireland's neutrality is not enshrined in its constitution or laws, nor in any international treaty. It is a policy choice that we have made since the Second World War and one that should be constantly re-evaluated like any other policy. While there have been many different interpretations of Irish neutrality since independence, the one overarching principle is that neutrality for Ireland has always meant non-membership of military alliances. Due to uneasiness about closer military cooperation with the United Kingdom and an ongoing political dispute around the status of Northern Ireland, Ireland did not join NATO in 1949. Is this policy still useful today? Are we happy remaining neutral when democracies are attacked around the world?

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There are two partial references to Irish neutrality in the Constitution, with neither of them explicitly mentioning neutrality. The first of these is Article 28.3.1°:

28.3.1° War shall not be declared and the State shall not participate in any war save with the assent of Dáil Éireann.

The second of these Article 29.1-Article 29.2, under the heading 'International Relations', states:

29.1. Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly co-operation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality.

29.2. Ireland affirms its adherence to the principle of the pacific settlement of international disputes by international arbitration or judicial determination.

Finally, and perhaps the most explicit, Article 29.4.9° was added to the Irish constitution following the 2nd referendum on the Nice Treaty in 2002:

29.4.9° The State shall not adopt a decision taken by the European Council to establish a common defence pursuant to Article 42 of the Treaty on European Union where that common defence would include the State.

Triple Lock System

The deployment of Irish forces overseas is subject to the 'triple-lock' mechanism. The three conditions for sending Irish troops abroad are as follows:

1. They must be part of an operation endorsed by the United Nations
2. It must be approved by a clear government decision
3. It must be approved by Dáil Eireann.

It must be noted that the triple lock is only formally defined within the national declaration appended to the Lisbon Treaty (see Annex 1). The phrase does not appear in Irish legislation. Due to a Chinese veto at the United Nations Security Council on a peacekeeping mission to FYR Macedonia in 2003, new legislation was brought in to broaden the United Nations 'lock'.

The Defence (Amendment) Act 2006 states: "International United Nations Force " means an international force or body established, mandated, authorised, endorsed, supported, approved or otherwise sanctioned by a resolution of the Security Council or the General Assembly of the United Nations"

As the Security Council is the UN body vested with the power to take action via peacekeeping operations, the 2006 legislative change did nothing to address the fundamental problem of Russia and China being able to veto Irish involvement in any peacekeeping mission. It is generally assumed that Russia will block any deployment of UN peacekeepers in Poland, thus meaning that Ireland will not be able to contribute under current rules.

Irish Engagement with International Missions

While Ireland is neutral, it remains deeply committed to international peacekeeping efforts. As of February 2021, Ireland had taken part in 18 EU Civilian Missions and 27 EU Military Missions. Ireland is the only nation to have a continuous presence on UN and UN-mandated peace support operations since 1958, with Irish peacekeepers highly respected internationally.

While Ireland is not a NATO member, it has participated in the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council since 1999. It also joined the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in 2019.

Active Overseas Missions (2)

Active Overseas Missions	Deployment Commenced	Tours Completed to Date
UNTSO (Israel)	Dec 1958	596
UNIFIL (Lebanon)	May 1978	38,218
OSCE (Vienna)	Jan 1984	48
UNDOF (Syria)	Sep 1991	2,352
OSCE (Bosnia)	Jan 1996	56
KFOR (Kosovo)	Jun 1999	2,866
CSDP/PfP Brussels (Belgium)	Jan 2000	72
EUMS Brussels (Belgium)	Mar 2001	95
MONUC / MONUSCO (DR Congo)	Jun 2001	106
EUFOR (BiH)	Dec 2004	534
EUTM Mali	Mar 2013	253
MINUSMA (Mali)	Sep 2019	56
EU NAVFOR MED IRINI (Italy)	April 2020	6
Total		45,258

The Security Context for Ireland and the EU

Both the Strategic Compass and the Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces have analysed the threats to Irish and European security.

The Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, in its chapter on "The Threat and Risk Environment looking out to 2030", summarised four main threats to Ireland:

a. Increased great power competition and geostrategic change
b. Continued instability on Europe's borders
c. Continued blurring of the lines between internal and external security
d. A more demanding peacekeeping environment (3)

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has now rendered this somewhat outdated and thus the recently approved Strategic Compass may be of more use for the sake of this analysis.

According to the Strategic Compass, the European Union faces an "overall security landscape [that] has become more volatile, complex and fragmented." First, it condemns the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine and accuses Russia of violating international humanitarian law and the UN Charter. Second, it states that the EU "is surrounded by instability and conflicts" before going on to describe the situation in the Western Balkans, Eastern Neighbourhood (4) , Eastern Mediterranean, Sahel region, Middle East and Gulf Region and others. Thirdly, it continues to list the emerging threats and challenges faced by the EU. It lists hybrid tactics such as disinformation, cyberattacks, increasing competition in space, climate change, environmental degradation, natural disasters and global health crises as threats that are transnational in nature and will have a direct impact on the Union's own security.

State of Irish Defence Forces

The Commission on the Defence Forces defined their vision for the Irish Defence Forces as the following:

The Defence Forces will be a joint military force capable of providing the people of Ireland with a safe and secure environment, and enforcing and protecting Ireland's sovereignty. It will uphold national values, reflect the diverse society that it serves, and remain poised to meet the challenges of an evolving and complex world.

The Defence Forces are currently unable to uphold this vision. Ireland is the only country on Europe's west coast that lacks a primary radar system. A Memorandum of Understanding with the UK gives the Royal Air Force the right to enter our airspace, something they have done multiple times as Russian planes test NATO's reaction time. We do not have enough boats to adequately patrol our territorial waters and we do not have enough personnel to staff the boats we currently have.

As seen in the table below, the Army, Naval Service and Air Corps are all understaffed. Significant issues with recruitment and retention have led to shortages across all areas. All three forces are understaffed but the Naval Service is particularly acute, missing 200 personnel out of the minimum 1,094 required.

Irish neutrality, security and defence spending does not exist in a vacuum. In the following chapter, I outline some of the most important and relevant aspects of the EU's security and defence policy.

Rank (Army/NS)	Army Strength/ Establishment	Naval Service Strength/ Establishment	Air Corps Strength/ Establishment	Total Strength/ Establishment
Commissioned Ranks				
Lieutenant General	1/1	0/0	0/0	1/1
Major General	2/2	0/0	0/0	2/2
Brigadier General/Commodore	6/6	1/1	1/1	8/8
Colonel/Captain	35/35	3/2	2/2	40/39
Lieutenant Colonel/Commander	106/112	13/13	16/14	135/139
Commandant/Lieutenant Commander	259/255	50/45	44/36	353/336
Captain/Lieutenant	232/306	59/81	41/65	332/452
Lieutenant/Ensign	293/167	37/41	56/48	386/256
Total Officers	934/884	163/183	160/166	1,257/1,233
Enlisted Ranks				
Sergeant Major/Warrant Officer	27/29	6/6	6/8	39/43
Brigade Quartermaster/ Senior Chief Petty Officer	31/32	6/7	4/4	41/43
Company Sergeant/Chief Petty Officer	107/115	71/75	47/56	225/246
Company Quartermaster/ Senior Petty Officer	165/169	14/15	14/14	193/198
Sergeant/Petty Officer	783/973	128/226	91/131	1,002/1,330
Corporal/Leading Seaman	1,176/1,438	144/180	138/183	1,458/1,801
Private/Seaman	3,592/3,880	341/402	280/324	4,213/4,606
Cadet (classified as enlisted in training)	83/0	12/0	16/0	111/0
Total Enlisted	5,964/6,636	722/911	596/720	7,282/8,267
TOTAL	6,898/7,520	885/1,094	756/886	8,539/9,500

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EVOLVING SECURITY & DEFENCE POLICY

In this section, I want to set the scene very clearly for what the European Union is currently doing in the domain of security and defence and to dispel some of the myths about European defence. I will focus on 4 main topical areas:

1. Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)
2. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)
3. European Defence Fund (EDF)
4. European Peace Facility (EPF)

Common Security and Defence Policy

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) provides the EU with the capacity to undertake peacekeeping and conflict prevention missions and to strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.(5)

CSDP, in practical terms, means military and civilian missions and operations. The EU has no assets of its own for these purposes. It relies on capabilities provided by the Member States, voluntarily and in accordance with their legislative framework and constitutional provisions.

A number of new instruments have been created in recent years in the area of CSDP including, the Coordinated Annual Review of Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Peace Facility (EPF) and the European Defence Fund (EDF).(6)

Current Defence Forces International Deployments (7)

Defence Forces International Deployments

UNIFIL	342
UNDOF	132
UNTSO	12
MONUSCO	3
MINUSMA	14
UNMAS	1
KFOR	13
BRUSSELS	17
EUTM-M	20
EUFOR BiH	5
OSCE	2
UNNY	3
EUNAVFOR MED	3
TOTAL	567

EUMS, PfP, NATO, 17

OSCE 2

EU BiH 5

KFOR 13

UNDOF FHQ: 8 64 Inf GP: 124

UN Mission

UNTSO 12

EU Mission

UNMAS 1

NATO Mission

EUNAVFOR MED OHQ Rome 3

UNNY 3

UNIFIL FHQ 9 CST 5 SWHQ 4 119 Inf Bn 324

MINUSMA MHQ: 2 SOTU 7: 12

EUTM - M No. 17 IRCON: 20

MONUSCO 3

International Deployments 567

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) (8)

On 11 December 2017, the European Council established Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). PESCO enables EU member states to work more closely together in the area of security and defence.(9) This permanent framework for defence cooperation allows willing and able member states to develop jointly defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces. It is not about spending more, it is about spending better.

The Council adopted an initial list of 17 projects to be developed under PESCO on 6 March 2018. The Council adopted a second batch of 17 projects to be developed under PESCO on 19 November 2018. A third batch of 13 additional projects to be developed under PESCO was adopted by the Council on 12 November 2019. One PESCO project from the first batch has been officially closed by its project members. Finally, in November 2021, 14 more projects were added, bringing the total number up to 60.

Each of the projects is carried forward by varying group of PESCO participating Member States (project members) and is coordinated by one or more PESCO participating Member States (project coordinators). The project members may agree among themselves to allow other participating Member States to join as a project member or to become observer to the project.

Ireland's participation in PESCO was agreed by Government and approved by Dáil Éireann prior to the adoption of the Council Decision establishing PESCO on 11th December 2017.

The below table shows the cooperation on PESCO projects between participating Member States. As we can, reading left to right, Ireland cooperates on one single project with Bulgaria, Hungary, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Spain. The white area shows where Ireland has no cooperation with these countries. As can be seen, Ireland is an outlier in how little it engages with PESCO projects.

PESCO Projects based on Cooperation between participating Member States after 60 projects (10)

Data compiled by Daniel Fiott, 2021

Data source: European Defence Agency 2021 https://pesco.europa.eu

PESCO PROJECTS (NOV, 2021)
Cooperation between participating Member States after 60 projects

	AT	BE	BG	HR	CY	CZ	EE	FI	FR	DE	EL	HU	IE	IT	LV	LT	LU	NL	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	ES	SE
Austria		1	1	3	1	1	2	1	6	4	3	2		4	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	1
Belgium	1		2	2	3	4	3	3	11	7	3	5		6	3	2	2	7	8	3	4	2	3	9	3
Bulgaria	1	2		3	3	1	2	2	6	2	4	2	1	4	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	3	1
Croatia	3	2	3		3	1	2	1	5	2	5	3	1	4	1	3	1	3	3	1	3	2	4	4	1
Cyprus	1	3	3	3			1	1	6	3	8	3	1	5	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	5	1
Czechia	1	4	1	1	1		3	2	6	7	1	3		4	2	1	2	5	3	1	2	2	2	5	2
Estonia	2	3	2	2	1	3		3	6	3	1	3		4	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	1	2	3	2
Finland	1	3	2	1	1	2	3		5	4	1	2		4	2	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1	4	1
France	6	11	6	5	6	6	6	5		21	10	8	1	21	4	4	6	12	10	9	12	5	4	21	7
Germany	4	7	2	2	3	7	3	4	21		4	6		11	2	3	5	11	8	7	6	5	3	15	3
Greece	3	3	4	5	8	1	1	1	10	4		3	1	11	1	2	2	3	4	5	2	3	7	6	3
Hungary	2	5	2	3	3	3	3	2	8	6	3			5	2	2	2	5	7	2	3	4	4	6	3
Ireland		1	1		1				1		1			1									1		
Italy	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	4	21	11	11	5	1		1	3	4	6	7	7	6	2	5	15	2
Latvia	1	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	4	2	2	2		1		1	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	1	1
Lithuania	2	3	3	3	2	1	3	2	4	3	2	2		3	1		3	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	1
Luxembourg	3	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	6	5	2	2		4	1	3		3	2	3	3	1	2	4	2
Netherlands	2	7	2	3	2	5	4	4	12	11	3	5		6	3	4	3		7	3	4	3	3	8	2
Poland	2	8	2	3	2	3	4	3	10	8	4	7		7	3	3	2	7		5	6	3	3	7	3
Portugal	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	8	7	4	2		7	1	1	3	2	4		5	2	1	10	2
Romania	3	4	2	2	1	2	4	1	12	6	5	2		6	3	2	3	4	6	6		2	2	5	3
Slovenia	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	5	5	2	4		2	1	2	1	3	3	2	2		2	3	3
Slovakia	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	4	3	3	4		5	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	2		3	3
Spain	3	9	3	4	5	5	3	4	21	15	7	6	1	15	2	3	4	8	7	10	5	3	3		5
Sweden	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	7	3	1	3		2	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	3	5	

European Defence Agency (11)

The European Defence Agency (EDA) was set up in 2004. It is located in Brussels and counts approximately 170 staff members across all departments. It helps its 26 Member States (all EU countries except Denmark) to develop their military resources. It promotes collaboration, launches new initiatives and introduces solutions to improve defence capabilities. It also helps Member States that are willing to do so to develop joint defence capabilities.

The EDA is a key facilitator in developing the capabilities that underpin the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The EDA supports its 26 Member States – all EU countries except Denmark – in improving their defence capabilities through European cooperation. It acts as an enabler and facilitator for ministries of defence that are willing to work on collaborative defence capability projects.

The agency is a European defence cooperation 'hub'. Its expertise and networks enable it to cover a broad defence spectrum, including:
- harmonising requirements to delivering operational capabilities
- research and innovation to developing technology demonstrators
- training and exercises to maintenance to supporting Common Security and Defence Policy operations.

European Peace Facility (12)

The European Peace Facility (EPF) is an off-budget funding mechanism for EU actions with military and defence implications under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). It has a total budget of €5.69 billion in current prices (€5 billion in 2018 prices) for the period 2021-2027, with annual ceilings from €420 million in 2021 to €1.132 billion in 2027. To put this in context, the current French defence budget is €40. 9 billion annually, which would be €280bn over the same period. The European Council agreed to create the EPF in 2021 to 'fill a gap' in the EU's external action by creating one instrument to finance Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) actions in military and defence areas.

It consists of two pillars - one for Military Operations and one for Assistance Measures. The Operations pillar covers the common costs of military CSDP missions and operations. The Assistance Measures pillar finances the military aspects of Peace Support Operations and supports capacity building of partner countries and international organisations in military and defence matters.

Following a proposal by the HRVP or a Member State, the Council of the European Union decides as to the type of assistance and equipment that may be supplied.

On the 28th February, the Council adopted a €500 million support package under the EPF, consisting of two assistance measures that will contribute to strengthening the capabilities and resilience of the Ukrainian armed forces. The assistance measures will finance the provision of equipment and supplies to the Ukrainian armed forces, including - for the first time - lethal equipment.

LOOKING AT LIKE-MINDED PARTNERS

Ireland is one of seven 'special status' EU member states when it comes to defence and security as seen in the above map. The others are Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Malta and Sweden.

These seven countries self-identify as "neutral" and / or "non-aligned". There is no agreed definition between these seven as to what this means. For instance, Denmark is a founding member of NATO but has opted out of CSDP until now. (13) Due to its position during the Cold War, Finland was forced to remain non-aligned but is now moving closer to NATO. Cyprus, divided, is blocked from joining NATO.

This chapter will briefly look at Austria, Finland and Sweden and compare the models of non-alignment in these like-minded countries
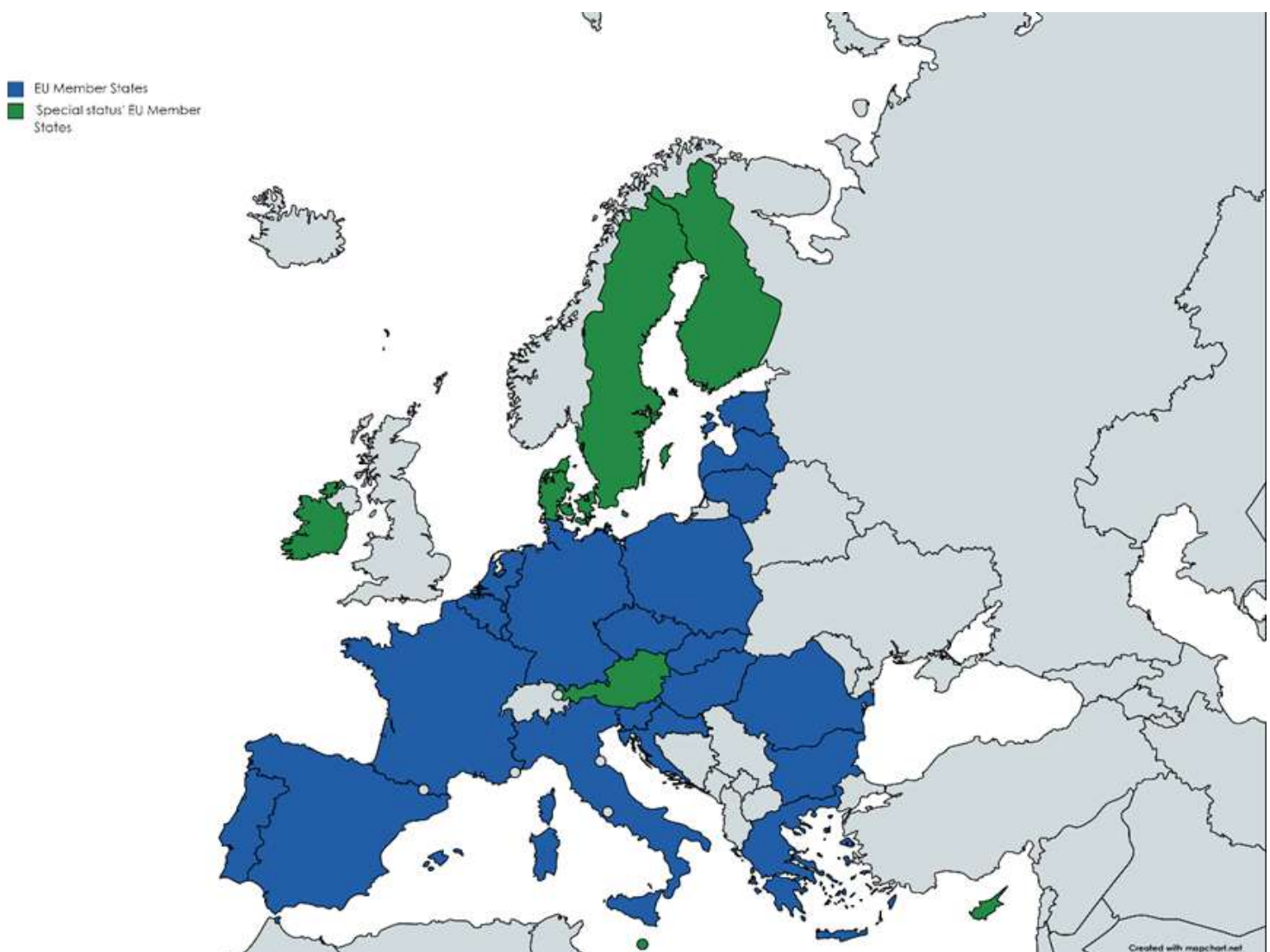
Austria

Non-alignment position:

The Constitutional Law on the Neutrality of Austria signed in October 1955 states that Austria would have "perpetual neutrality" and that concretely means that Austria will not join any military alliances and will not permit the establishment of any foreign military bases on her territory.

Military expenditure as % of GDP: 0.837% (2020 - SIPRI)

Has the Russian invasion caused a change of policy?

The Austrian Chancellor has pledged to 'significantly increase its military spending' to at least 1% of GDP.

Finland

Non-alignment position: From the mid-1950s to the early 1990s, Finland pursued a policy of neutrality as it attempted to remain non-aligned in the Cold War era

Sharing a 1,340km border with Russia, as well having memories of the 1939-1940 Winter War, Finland attempted to give itself a degree of independence from Russian foreign policy. Upon joining the EU in 1995, Finland began to pursue a less restrictive policy of military non-alignment. (16)

Military expenditure as % of GDP: 1.53% (2020-SIPRI)

Has the Russian invasion caused a change of policy?

Two recent polls have found that a majority of Finns now support joining NATO. A poll on February 28 found that 53% of the population was in favour of joining and this surged to 62% in a second poll on March 14. This is in addition to the unprecedented decision to supply Ukraine with lethal equipment which was a step-change from its usual position of military neutrality.

Military expenditure (% of GDP) - SIPRI (14)

Sweden

Non-alignment position:

Sweden, like Ireland, was neutral in the Second World War. In 2002, the Swedish the government declared that Sweden was militarily non-aligned and that neutrality had served it well in the past. (17) Nonetheless, Sweden has also stated that it "will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack" effectively referring to an EU Common Defence.(18)

Military expenditure as % of GDP: 1.22% (2020 - SIPRI)

Has the Russian invasion caused a change of policy?

In late February, a poll by broadcaster SVT found that 41% of the public supported NATO membership versus 35% opposed it. This was the first time ever that a poll had a net favourability for joining NATO. Much like Finland, Sweden has also broken with long-standing policy to supply weapons to Ukraine. It is the first time it has offered military aid since 1939, when it assisted Finland against the Soviet Union. Sweden's defence budget for 2021 is about 66 billion kronor (€6.4bn), and the country had already agreed to raise that level to 91 billion kronor ($9.3bn) by 2025. However, it has pledged to raise this spending to 2% of GDP as a result of the new security context.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Calling for a Citizens Assembly on Irish Neutrality and EU Common Defence**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has lit a fire under the debate around Irish neutrality. The subjects of defence and security have been taboo for too long in Ireland. This partial neurosis on the subject has left us where we are today: unable to defend our island against any prolonged or meaningful attack, unable to monitor our skies or our seas and no longer able to fully commit to our peacekeeping effort abroad. In order to combat this, we need a concrete, fact-based debate on what our neutrality means. For too long, we have avoided any serious debate on the topic by using the term "Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality." The last few weeks have shown the need for a comprehensive, depoliticised debate among citizens, politicians, Defence Forces personnel and academic experts. Ireland has developed an internationally recognised model for untangling difficult public policy issues through participative democracy.

Building off the successes of previous Citizens Assemblies on marriage equality and the 8th Amendment, I am calling for a Citizens Assembly to ensure a grounded debate, built on expert testimonies and experiences.

2. Revising Ireland's Triple Lock System

The triple lock system is no longer fit for purpose. Peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts are at the core of the international reputation of the Defence Forces. Why then, have we given control of where we deploy our peacekeepers to autocratic leaders in Russia and China? I do not see any circumstances in which Russia and China should continue to enjoy a veto over our defence and foreign policy decisions.

Of the three 'locks' of the system, it is really only the final lock, an endorsement by the United Nations, that is problematic. Already in 2003, we saw the effect that this self-imposed policy could have as Irish peacekeepers could not contribute to the 2003 mission to the FYR Macedonia due to a Chinese veto. Current events in Ukraine show that we cannot allow authoritarian leaders make our decisions for us.

We must give ourselves the flexibility to deploy our peacekeepers wherever we want, whenever we want. I call on the government to replace the triple lock system with a provision that requires a decision of the European Council.

In the context of the newly agreed European Union Rapid Deployment Capacity, speed will be of the essence and Ireland may be restrained if required to have any mission approved by the United Nations.

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3. <u>No to NATO</u>

If we are prepared to defend Ireland, I believe we also need to be able to defend our common European home. If Ireland was attacked, be that through conventional or more hybrid means such as cyber, we would hope that our EU counterparts would come to our aid.

Article 42.7 of the Treaty on the European Union already obliges EU countries to aid a fellow member state that becomes "the victim of armed aggression on its territory" by "all the means in their power." I believe that Ireland should affirm its commitment to coming to the aid of any EU member state which is the victim of aggression on its territory. There are two points of clarification that I would like to make. First, I believe any EU Common Defence should be limited to conventional, hybrid and cyber and that French nuclear weapons should not be included under any circumstances. Secondly, this should be limited to EU territory and would not extend beyond the 27 EU MS.
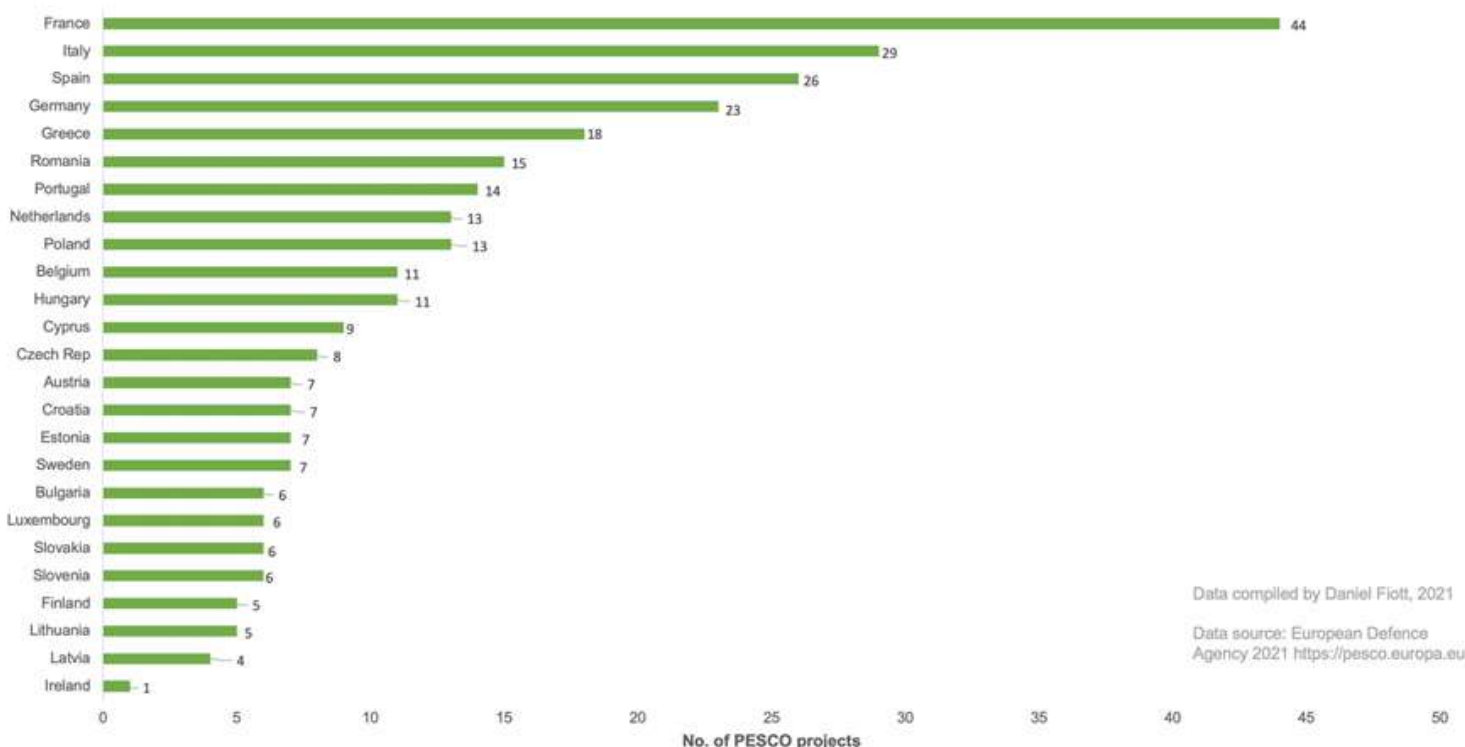
While I am in favour of an EU Common Defence, I see no circumstance where Ireland should join NATO. While Ireland should fight to protect the European Union, it should not interfere with sovereign countries in the way that NATO has done in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Therefore, I call on the government to emphatically reject any possibility of joining NATO.

4. <u>Increased involvement with PESCO and CSDP</u>

I firmly believe that we need to increase our involvement with PESCO and CSDP.

Ireland is the most reluctant member in terms of PESCO projects, by a long way. At the time of writing, we only participate in one project and observe 9 others. If Ireland wants to ensure that the men and women in our Defence Forces have access to the best training and equipment, we should become more involved

PESCO projects per participating Member State (Nov, 2021)

Member State	No. of PESCO projects
France	44
Italy	29
Spain	26
Germany	23
Greece	18
Romania	15
Portugal	14
Netherlands	13
Poland	13
Belgium	11
Hungary	11
Cyprus	9
Czech Rep	8
Austria	7
Croatia	7
Estonia	7
Sweden	7
Bulgaria	6
Luxembourg	6
Slovakia	6
Slovenia	6
Finland	5
Lithuania	5
Latvia	4
Ireland	1

Data compiled by Daniel Fiott, 2021

Data source: European Defence Agency 2021 https://pesco.europa.eu

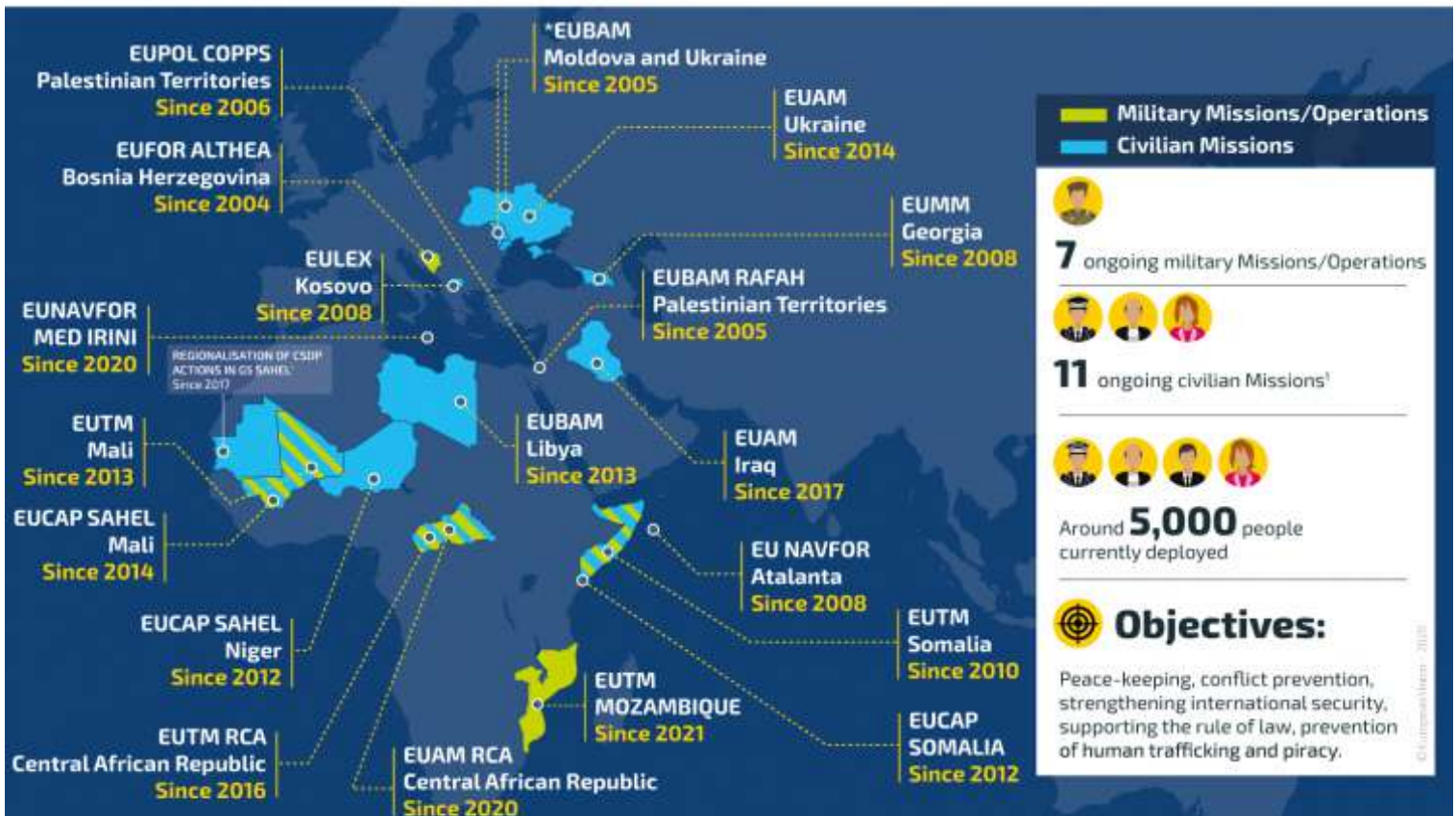There is a range of projects that should be of interest for the Defence Forces such as:

1.EU Cyber Academia and Innovation Hub (EU CAIH)
2.European Union Network of Diving Centres (EUNDC)
3.Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO)
4.Strategic Air Transport for Outsized Cargo (SATOC)
5.Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security (CRRT)

Similarly, while Ireland serves in four ongoing CSDP Missions (see table below), there is room to be more active in this field. There are a total of 18 EU CSDP missions currently taking place. We should engage with these missions as much as possible. However, to do this we must drastically increase our spending above the current 0.3% of GDP.

Name	Type of Mission	# of Irish Soldiers Involved
EUFOR	EU-led Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	5
EUTM Mali	EU-Led Training Mission	20
KFOR	International Security Presence in Kosovo	13
Op Irini	EU Naval Mission	3

EUROPEAN UNION CSDP MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

EUPOL COPPS
Palestinian Territories
Since 2006

*EUBAM
Moldova and Ukraine
Since 2005

EUAM
Ukraine
Since 2014

EUFOR ALTHEA
Bosnia Herzegovina
Since 2004

EUMM
Georgia
Since 2008

EULEX
Kosovo
Since 2008

EUBAM RAFAH
Palestinian Territories
Since 2005

EUNAVFOR
MED IRINI
Since 2020

REGIONALISATION OF CSDP ACTIONS IN G5 SAHEL
Since 2017

EUTM
Mali
Since 2013

EUBAM
Libya
Since 2013

EUAM
Iraq
Since 2017

EUCAP SAHEL
Mali
Since 2014

EUCAP SAHEL
Niger
Since 2012

EU NAVFOR
Atalanta
Since 2008

EUTM
Somalia
Since 2010

EUTM
MOZAMBIQUE
Since 2021

EUCAP
SOMALIA
Since 2012

EUTM RCA
Central African Republic
Since 2016

EUAM RCA
Central African Republic
Since 2020

Military Missions/Operations
Civilian Missions

7 ongoing military Missions/Operations

11 ongoing civilian Missions[1]

Around **5,000** people currently deployed

⊙ **Objectives:**

Peace-keeping, conflict prevention, strengthening international security, supporting the rule of law, prevention of human trafficking and piracy.

5.   Increased spending on the Defence Forces

The Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces provided 3 'levels of ambition' (LOA) for future defence spending in Ireland (see Annex 2). LOA 1 is clearly unacceptable, in that it endangers Irish citizens at home, but also endangers our peacekeepers on their missions abroad. LOA 2 moves Ireland in the right direction but I believe it does not go far enough. Finally, while I support a move toward LOA 3, I believe it is not feasible in the current climate and I feel that some aspects, notably the purchase of fighter jets are unnecessary and I therefore suggest an increased spending to somewhere between LOA 2 and 3,an LOA 2.5.

The one area where this is particularly pertinent and urgent is in the area of cyber defence. Along with an increased involvement in PESCO projects dealing with cybersecurity, I feel we must absolutely increase spending here. Ireland is unlikely to be attacked with conventional methods due to our geographical location, yet the nature of cyberattacks means that we are as vulnerable as other EU Member States. Furthermore, there is scope to become a leader in this field, something that we are unlikely to become in other defence domains.

Two final aspects that must be taken into account in any increase in defence spending must be pay conditions and an increased emphasis on culture change within the Defence Forces. The Commission on the Defence Forces identified a need for a fundamental cultural change process to build a much more modern, open Defence Forces that responds to change quickly and better reflects Irish society today in its culture, values and symbols. (19) I believe that in order to attract the best and brightest for our Defence Forces, we must pay them a competitive wage in line with industry standards.

CONCLUSION

This document is intended to serve as a basis for the ongoing debate around Irish security and defence policy in the European context. It is a debate that we need to have as a country and one that should be inclusive of all voices.

As we watch the multiple war crimes and breaches of international humanitarian law by Russia in Ukraine, as we watch them flee their homes and country, as we watch the humanitarian disasters in cities like Mariupol, I believe it is necessary to have a conversation about the country that we want to be.

Our proud peacekeeping tradition as well as our commitment to multilateralism and the pacific settlement of disputes should not stop us from defending our values, our democracy and our freedoms.

This document has sought to lay out the background to this debate as to well as to contribute some of my own thoughts and ideas.

We need a security policy that evolves with our ever changing world, not a rigid inflexible one.

renew europe.

Table 1: Ireland's PESCO Projects

Name	Status	Description	Lead	Co-Participants
Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance	Participant	The main objective of the program is to enhance the Maritime Surveillance, Situational Awareness and potential Response Effectiveness of the EU, by using the existing infrastructure, deploying assets and developing related capabilities in the future. The project on Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance will integrate land-based surveillance systems, maritime and air platforms in order to distribute real-time information to member states, so as to provide timely and effective response in the international waters. It aims to address timely and effectively new and old threats and challenges (such as energy security, environmental challenges, security and defence aspects); thus ensuring accurate Awareness and Rapid Response, so as to contribute to the protection of the EU and its citizens	Greece	Bulgaria, Ireland, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus
Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package	Observer	The project objective is to develop a Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package (DM-DRCP) through the establishment of a specialized military assets package deployable at short notice within both EU-led and non-EU led operations, in order to generate a mission tailored Task Force (TF), as a tool to properly face emergencies and exceptional events (public calamities, natural disasters, pandemics, etc.) within EU territory and outside of it.	Italy	Greece, Spain, Croatia, Austria
Maritime (semi) Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures	Observer	The Maritime (semi-) Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures (MAS MCM) will deliver a world-class mix of (semi-) autonomous underwater, surface and aerial technologies for maritime mine countermeasures. The project will enable member states to protect maritime vessels, harbours and off shore installations, and to safeguard freedom of navigation on maritime trading routes. The development of autonomous vehicles, using cutting-edge technology and an open architecture, adopting a modular set up, will contribute significantly to the EU's maritime security by helping to counter the threat of sea mines	Belgium	Greece, France, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania

Table 1: Ireland's PESCO Projects

Name	Status	Description	Lead	Co-Participants
Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform	Observer	Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform will develop more active defence measures, potentially moving from firewalls to more active measures. This project aims to help mitigate these risks by focusing on the sharing of cyber threat intelligence through a networked Member State platform, with the aim of strengthening nations' cyber defence capabilities.	Greece	Italy, Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal
European Secure Software Defined Radio	Observer	The European Secure Software Defined Radio aims to develop common technologies for European military radios. The adoption of these technologies as a standard will guarantee the interoperability of EU forces in the framework of joint operations, regardless which radio platforms are used, thereby reinforcing the European strategic autonomy. The European Secure Software Defined Radio project will provide a secure military communications system, improving voice and data communication between EU forces on a variety of platforms	France	Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Finland
Military Mobility	Observer	This project supports member states' commitment to simplify and standardize cross-border military transport procedures in line with the Council conclusions of 25th June 2018. It aims to enable the unhindered movement of military personnel and assets within the borders of the EU. This entails avoiding long bureaucratic procedures to move through or over EU member states, be it via rail, road, air or sea. Issues on which the project is currently focussed are th Observer e sharing of best practises, implementing the deliverables of the FAC-Defence Council conclusions of 25th June 2018 and strategic communication.	Netherlands	Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden

Table 1: Ireland's PESCO Projects

Name	Status	Description	Lead	Co-Participants
Energy Operational Function	Observer	Based on lessons learnt from recent operations, the project "Energy Operational Function" has a double objective: developing together new systems of energy supply for camps deployed in the framework of joint operations and for soldier connected devices and equipment and ensuring that the energy issue is taken into account from the conceiving of combat systems to the implementation of the support in operations, and including in the framework of operational planning.	France	Belgium, Spain, Italy, Slovenia
EU Radio Navigation Solution	Observer	The project is to promote development of EU military PNT (positioning, navigation and timing) capabilities and future cooperation taking advantage of Galileo and the public regulated service.	France	Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland
Counter Unmanned Aerial System	Observer	The aim is to develop an advanced and efficient system of systems with C2 dedicated architecture, modular, integrated and interoperable with C2 infrastructure, able to counter the threat posed by mini and micro Unmanned Aerial Systems. The system will be swift to deploy and reach operational status, to ensure protection to our troops in operational theatres, as well as employed for homeland defence, security and dual use tasks. The project will fulfil applicable certification and regulatory requirements, to allow homeland employment.	Italy	Czechia

Table 1: Ireland's PESCO Projects

Name	Status	Description	Lead	Co-Participants
Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre	Observer	The main objective is to establish a medical training and excellence centre focused on medical support for special operations. The overall aim would be to enhance medical capabilities supporting the Special Operations Forces (SOF) missions and operations, in terms of training, procedures and interoperability. The intent of the project is to expand the Polish Military Medical Training Centre in Łódź, which has the status of a certified National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) Training Center, into the Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTC) to provide medical training capability for SOF personnel, increase coordination of medical support for SOF operations, boost professional cooperation of participating member state in that field, enhance readiness and capability of participating member state regarding personnel and materiel and intensify harmonisation in the subject matter.	Poland	Hungary

Annex 1: Protocol on the concerns of the Irish people on the Treaty of Lisbon

TITLE III SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Article 3
The Union's action on the international scene is guided by the principles of democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The Union's common security and defence policy is an integral part of the common foreign and security policy and provides the Union with an operational capacity to undertake missions outside the Union for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

It does not prejudice the security and defence policy of each Member State, including Ireland, or the obligations of any Member State.

The Treaty of Lisbon does not affect or prejudice Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality.

It will be for Member States - including Ireland, acting in a spirit of solidarity and without prejudice to its traditional policy of military neutrality - to determine the nature of aid or assistance to be provided to a Member State which is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of armed aggression on its territory.

Any decision to move to a common defence will require a unanimous decision of the European Council. It would be a matter for the Member States, including Ireland, to decide, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon and with their respective constitutional requirements, whether or not to adopt a common defence.

Nothing in this Title affects or prejudices the position or policy of any other Member State on security and defence.

It is also a matter for each Member State to decide, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon and any domestic legal requirements, whether to participate in permanent structured cooperation or the European Defence Agency.

The Treaty of Lisbon does not provide for the creation of a European army or for conscription to any military formation. It does not affect the right of Ireland or any other Member State to determine the nature and volume of its defence and security expenditure and the nature of its defence capabilities.

It will be a matter for Ireland or any other Member State, to decide, in accordance with any domestic legal requirements, whether or not to participate in any military operation

Annex 2: Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces Levels of Ambition

LOA 1 current capability: Aiming to uphold sovereign rights and serving on peace support operations to the same extent as at present.

LOA 1 involves striving to maintain current capabilities of the Defence Forces with appropriate replacement and routine modernisation of equipment and infrastructure. It involves continuing the commitment to a Defence Forces' establishment of at least 13,5691. Some reforms and restructuring of the Defence Forces could be implemented within the resource limitations but the core capabilities will not keep pace with the increasingly challenging security environment, the diversification and broadening of threats and the growing complexity of the modern operating environment. In the Commission's view, this LOA would:

• Not be consistent with the more ambitious statements of defence policy contained in the White Paper 2015;
• Leave the Defence Forces unable to conduct a meaningful defence of the State against a sustained act of aggression from a conventional military force; and
• Be likely to require a reduced commitment to international peace support, crisis management and humanitarian operations due to capacity constraints.

LOA 2 enhanced capability: Building on current capability to address specific priority gaps in our ability to deal with an assault on Irish sovereignty and to serve in higher intensity Peace Support Operations.

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LOA 2 involves identifying specific additional capabilities needed to address key deficiencies in capacity to undertake current and foreseeable new tasks, within the broad terms of current national defence policy. Within the context of a decision being taken by Government to step up from LOA 1 to LOA 2, whether as a discrete step or as an interim position en route to LOA 3, the Commission has identified a range of key capability priorities in the land, air and maritime domains that would need to be prioritised for LOA 2 to be met. These include:

• Providing improved troop protection, fire power and air and coastal defence for land forces, particularly in the light of more demanding roles overseas;
• Enhanced situational awareness with recognised maritime and air pictures through the acquisition and development of primary radar, coastal radar and associated systems' to allow the development of a Recognised Air Picture to support national security;
• Significantly strengthening the military intelligence and cyber defence capabilities of the
• Defence Forces, including through the creation of a Joint Cyber Defence Command;
• Accelerating the upgrade of the naval fleet and operating it to an optimum level through double crewing and greater use of technology;
• Enhanced mobility and lift through an increased and enlarged fleet of fixed and rotary aircraft and access to appropriate multinational arrangements to enhance its troop transport, cargo and ATCA capabilities; and
• Enhanced contingent capability through the revitalisation of the Reserve Defence Force as part of a genuine single Defence Force across the domains of land, air and sea, and in the newer domains of cyber and space.

LOA 3 conventional capability: Developing full spectrum defence capabilities to protect
Ireland and its people to an extent comparable to similar sized countries in Europe.

LOA 3 would require Ireland to develop significantly strengthened capabilities in all domains, with commensurately higher levels of defence spending – of the order of two and a half to three times overall defence spending in recent years. These significantly stronger capabilities would also allow for a deeper engagement in international peace and humanitarian missions and would deliver benefits in terms of aid to the civil power (ATCP) and aid to the civil authority (ATCA) capacity. The capabilities for LOA 3 could involve, inter alia:

• Developing a substantial mechanised component of the Army offering state of the art force protection, communications, ISTAR2 and firepower;
• A balanced fleet of at least 12 naval ships, supported by appropriate technology;
• Air combat and intercept capability through the acquisition of a squadron of combat aircraft;
• Combat aircraft, pilots and support personnel to provide organic intra-theatre mobility based on tactical transport helicopters to support overseas deployment of air assets;
• Maturing a Joint Cyber Defence Command; and
• The Army Ranger Wing (ARW) having an organic self-sustainment capability which would include dedicated combat helicopter assets

Footnotes:

1. More recently, Ireland's international development policy has played an enormous role in Ireland's vision for a more equal and sustainable world.
2. This list includes UN, EU and NATO missions, and is correct as of 01 April 2021.
3. Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, p.5
4. The eastern neighbourhood are those countries to the east of the EU with who the EU is hoping to have closer ties to. These countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.
5. https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/common-security-and-defence-policy
6. Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, p.13.
7. Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, p.184
8. https://pesco.europa.eu/
9. The only EU Member States who do not participate are Denmark and Malta.
10. Source: Daniel Fiott, Nov 2021, PESCO Secretariat.
11. https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/institutions-and-bodies-profiles/eda_en
12. https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/what-we-do/european-peace-facility_en
13. This may change in an upcoming referendum in September
14. SIPRI is the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control, and disarmament. https://www.sipri.org/about
15. European Council on Foreign Relations, "Ambiguous Alliance: Neutrality, Opt-outs, and European Defence.' p. 19
16. European Council on Foreign Relations, p.34
17. Ibid.
18. Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces, p. xi