



EU foreign, security and defence policy co-operation with neighbours: Mapping diversity

by Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Ian Bond and Luigi Scazzieri

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The European Union's neighbours are a diverse group of countries, including candidates for membership, countries that are NATO members and are not seeking EU membership, and countries that aspire to join both the EU and NATO. The EU has a variety of arrangements for co-operating in foreign and security policy with its neighbours.

This new Centre for European Reform policy brief '[EU foreign, security and defence policy co-operation with neighbours: Mapping diversity](#)' by Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Ian Bond and Luigi Scazzieri assesses how the EU works with its neighbours in foreign and security policy and makes recommendations on how co-operation can be improved. The study looks at ten countries: Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Turkey, the UK and Ukraine. The EU's neighbours make important contributions to EU foreign policy: increasing its effectiveness and legitimacy, contributing to military and civilian operations and helping build military capabilities.

The overall degree of co-operation between the EU and each partner country depends on how closely their views align. Being a candidate for EU membership, or a NATO member, does not necessarily lead to a close foreign policy partnership, as exemplified by the breakdown in relations between the EU and Turkey. The EU's current arrangements allow for relatively limited involvement from its partners in foreign, security and defence policy. Many partners have signalled they would like deeper and more frequent consultations with the EU, and more of a say over how the civilian and military operations that they participate in are organised and carried out. But the EU is wary of formally giving partners more influence, concerned that this could compromise its decision-making autonomy or create unhelpful precedents.

The authors argue that there is significant scope for the EU to deepen foreign and security defence co-operation with partner countries in its neighbourhood. This would afford the EU greater access to its partners' specialist knowledge and would allow the EU to maximise the effectiveness and legitimacy of its words and actions by enacting more co-ordinated responses with partners. The policy brief concludes with recommendations on how the EU and its partners can strengthen co-operation in practical terms, increasing the effectiveness of EU foreign and security policy.

One of the authors of the report, Luigi Scazzieri said: "*Working closely with partners makes EU foreign policy stronger. It is in the EU's interest to develop even closer co-operation with partners in its neighbourhood, for example holding more frequent consultations with them on foreign policy issues, and involving them at an earlier stage of planning for military and civilian missions*".

Note for editors:

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