



# CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY IN A CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT: NEXT STEPS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Scientific evidence is mounting that ‘human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe’.<sup>1</sup> The 2022 floods in Pakistan and heatwaves in Southern Europe illustrate that climate change impacts human security and can have adverse social, economic and political effects in both developing and developed countries. Climate- and environment-related security risks tend to be exacerbated by shared geographic features and transnational movements of people, goods and capital.<sup>2</sup> Hence, international organizations, at global and regional levels across various policy areas, are increasingly seeking to strengthen the resilience of states and societies to such risks through prevention and preparedness, early warning, crisis management and disaster relief.<sup>3</sup>

The European Union (EU) was among the first major international actors to acknowledge the nexus between climate change and security within its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).<sup>4</sup> The EU’s most recent policy frameworks for responses to conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation include the 2020 Climate Change and Defence Roadmap (Defence Roadmap), the 2021 Concept for an Integrated Approach

## SUMMARY

● This policy brief analyses current initiatives and ways forward to address the nexus between climate change, peace and security within the European Union’s (EU) foreign, security and defence policies. Considering Sweden’s reputation and credibility in advancing international cooperation on climate security and in light of the 2023 Swedish presidency of the Council of the EU, there is an opportunity to address the current lack of alignment between the climate and conflict-sensitizing work of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the climate adaptation and mitigation work of the European Commission. Closer collaboration between the EEAS, the European Commission and EU member states to align resources and tools would allow for a qualitative leap forward by fostering actions that are preventative rather than reactive to climate-related security risks in the short to medium term.

<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), ‘Summary for policymakers’, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2021), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Hedlund, J. et al., ‘Quantifying transnational climate impact exposure: New perspectives on the global distribution of climate risk’, *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 52 (Sep. 2018). For a comprehensive definition of climate-related security risks, see Remling, E. and Barnhoorn, A., ‘A reassessment of the European Union’s response to climate-related security risks’, SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security no. 2021/2, Mar. 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Bremberg, N., Mobjörk, M. and Krampe, F., ‘Global responses to climate security: Discourses, institutions and actions’, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Dec. 2022); Busby, J. W., ‘Beyond internal conflict: The emergent practice of climate security’, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 58, no. 1 (Jan. 2021); and Dellmuth, L. M. et al., ‘Intergovernmental organizations and climate security: Advancing the research agenda’, *WIREs Climate Change*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2018).

<sup>4</sup> Bunse, S. et al., ‘Advancing European Union action to address climate-related security risks’, SIPRI Research Policy Paper, Sep. 2022.



to Climate Change and Security (Integrated Approach) and the 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (Strategic Compass).<sup>5</sup>

Complementing SIPRI's research on EU member states' efforts to mainstream climate security, this SIPRI Policy Brief analyses current initiatives and ways forward to address the nexus between climate change, peace and security developed within the EU's foreign, security and defence policies. It builds on the recent European External Action Service (EEAS) Joint Progress Report on Climate Change, Security and Defence, 10 interviews with EU civil servants and national foreign affairs officials, and a workshop on mainstreaming climate and the environment in the EU's civilian crisis management that was held at the 2022 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.<sup>6</sup>

The policy brief argues that despite important progress since 2020, a lack of alignment between the climate and conflict-sensitizing work of the EEAS and the climate adaptation and mitigation work of the European Commission remains. This is particularly noticeable within the European Green Deal—the EU's framework to become climate neutral and more resource efficient—in spite of its acknowledgment of global climate and environmental challenges as a source of instability.<sup>7</sup> Closer collaboration between the EEAS and relevant European Commission directorates-general to align resources and tools would allow for a qualitative leap forward by fostering actions that are preventative rather than reactive to climate-related security risks in the short to medium term.

EU member states have an important role in this regard. EU foreign, security and defence policy frameworks are still largely intergovernmental. Better alignment of European Commission and EEAS resources, as well as the pooling of national resources, is important to achieve positive outcomes in relation to CSDP missions and operations. In addition, other aspects of the Defence Roadmap, the Integrated Approach and the Strategic Compass should be aligned or pooled to make sure that the EU can assist not only fair but also peaceful transitions to more sustainable societies at home and abroad. The nexus between climate, security and peace is increasingly relevant in discussions on EU 'strategic autonomy'. Securing access to rare earth minerals and other critical raw materials is as important for Europe's transition to a carbon neutral economy as it is for the task of 'greening' its armed forces.<sup>8</sup>

This policy brief is divided into five sections. Section II explains the current action gap related to climate change, peace and security in the EU. Section III analyses progress in responding to conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation within the EU's foreign, security and defence policies. Section IV looks at opportunities for

<sup>5</sup> Council of the European Union (EU), 'Climate Change and Defence Roadmap', 12741/20, 9 Nov. 2020; Council of the EU, 'Concept for an Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security', 12537/21, 5 Oct. 2021; and Council of the EU, 'A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence', 7371/22, 21 Mar. 2022.

<sup>6</sup> European External Action Service (EEAS), 'Joint Progress Report on Climate Change, Defence and Security (2020–2022)', WK 15770/2022 INIT, 16 Nov. 2022.

<sup>7</sup> European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Green Deal', COM(2019) 640 final, 11 Dec. 2019, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Council of the EU, 'A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence' (note 5), p. 12.



the 2023 Swedish presidency of the Council of the EU. Section V concludes with recommendations for how to address the current challenges and translate policy objectives into actions.

## II. TIME TO ADDRESS THE ACTION GAP

Analysing how the EU translates climate security from a policy objective into tangible actions that prevent and respond effectively to security and conflict risks related to climate change is timely for two reasons. First, Sweden is holding the presidency of the Council of the EU from 1 January–30 June 2023. It has previously played an active role in the area of climate security as chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2021 and during its elected United Nations Security Council membership in 2017–18. Sweden is also part of the Group of Friends for an Ambitious EU Climate Diplomacy (Group of Friends) launched in October 2022, which calls for prioritizing the ‘nexus between climate and security within EU foreign policy, including through systematic . . . assessments on the effects climate change has on stability, peace and security in specific contexts’.<sup>9</sup>

Second, recent research on the EU and the nexus between climate change, peace and security suggests that there is an ‘action gap’.<sup>10</sup> This gap is not only a case of policy discourse/objectives versus implementation/operationalization but also involves a conceptual mismatch related to military and non-military aspects of security, spurred by the increasing complexity of sustainable development and geopolitics. Many concrete initiatives have focused on enhancing long-term prevention of climate-related risks to human security through climate mitigation or short-term reactive crisis response and disaster relief.<sup>11</sup> While important, these types of responses are unable to prevent the risks that are currently manifesting. Moreover, the transition from fossil-dependent to green societies carries its own risks to peace and stability.<sup>12</sup> Such risks are underacknowledged in current efforts to accelerate just transitions. Finally, Russia’s war against Ukraine highlights how geopolitical dynamics are increasingly intertwined with climate, energy and environmental concerns in ways that expose vulnerabilities related to energy supplies and critical infrastructure in many EU member states.

At least three factors have contributed to the current action gap in terms of climate security in EU foreign, security and defence policies.<sup>13</sup> First, the need to proactively address conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation is not a political priority for all EU member states. Hence, resources dedicated to delivering on declared objectives in the climate security field are limited. Second, there is a perception that climate

<sup>9</sup> German Federal Foreign Office, ‘Launch of the Group of Friends for an Ambitious EU Climate Diplomacy’, Press release, 17 Oct. 2022. The Group of Friends includes Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. See also Mobjörk, M. et al., ‘Advancing United Nations responses to climate-related security risks’, SIPRI Policy Brief, Sep. 2019; and Bremberg, N. and Barnhoorn, A., ‘Advancing the role of the OSCE in the field of climate security’, SIPRI Policy Brief, Sep. 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Bunse et al. (note 4); and Remling and Barnhoorn (note 2).

<sup>11</sup> Bunse et al. (note 4); and Remling and Barnhoorn (note 2).

<sup>12</sup> Black, R. et al., *Environment of Peace: Security in a New Era of Risk* (SIPRI: Stockholm, May 2022).

<sup>13</sup> Bunse et al. (note 4); and Remling and Barnhoorn (note 2).



mitigation and adaptation are sufficient to address climate-related security risks. Third, institutional constraints between the EEAS, the Council of the EU and the European Commission hamper the task of tackling cross-cutting climate change, foreign, security and defence, and development issues. Siloed approaches remain the norm.

### III. PROGRESS TO DATE AND WAYS FORWARD

Climate security is not a specific policy field within the EU but rather a cluster of initiatives within EU foreign, security and defence policies, brought together by the EU's declared ambition to address climate change, peace and security.<sup>14</sup> Among the concrete objectives for the next 5–10 years is to 'mainstream climate change and environmental considerations throughout . . . civilian and military CSDP missions and operations [and strengthen] analysis capacities and early warning systems as to the specific security challenges triggered by climate change and the global transition towards a climate-neutral, resource-efficient and circular economy'.<sup>15</sup>

Progress since 2020 has concentrated mainly on the implementation of the Defence Roadmap and the Integrated Approach, as well as on shifting the climate security debate towards more technical discussions on the linkages between the two and initiatives that can counter conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation.<sup>16</sup> The Defence Roadmap proposes more than 30 actions to tackle the security and defence implications of climate change in operations, capability development and partnerships. The Integrated Approach and the Strategic Compass complement this by, respectively, creating a framework to approach climate impacts in the EU's work on peace and security and asking EU member states for national action plans that 'green' their militaries and prepare them for climate impacts.

The most promising policy initiatives are those that are currently being implemented, focus explicitly on climate- and environment-related security risks, cut across or integrate different policy dimensions, and have short- to medium-term impacts.<sup>17</sup> Short-term policy responses are those expected to see effects within three years, medium-term responses within three to five years, and long-term responses not until after five years. This section analyses these different types of policy initiatives in the EU's foreign, security and defence realm.

#### Current initiatives with short- to medium-term impacts

Among the EU's promising current initiatives with short- to medium-term impacts, progress has been made on: (a) deploying environmental advisers in CSDP civilian missions; (b) developing climate security training modules at the European Security and Defence College (ESDC); (c) launching mechanisms for assessing the environmental footprint of CSDP missions

<sup>14</sup> Bremberg, N., Sonnsjö, H. and Mobjörk, M., 'The EU and climate-related security risks: A community of practice in the making?', *Journal of European integration*, vol. 41, no. 5 (2019).

<sup>15</sup> Council of the EU, 'A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence' (note 5), p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> EEAS (note 6); and EU officials, Interviews with authors, 20 Oct. and 21 Oct. 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Bunse et al. (note 4).



and humanitarian operations, with a view to reducing them; and (d) screening systematically for conflict risks related to climate in external action programming.

### *Environmental advisers*

Environmental advisers in civilian CSDP missions currently have a technical role, which includes assessing missions' environmental footprint, mitigating pollution, training mission staff to raise environmental awareness, and supporting host countries in identifying environmental vulnerabilities and combatting environmental crime.<sup>18</sup> Thus far, environmental advisers have been deployed in civilian CSDP missions in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR).<sup>19</sup> In addition, a short-term environmental expert accompanied the EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger) and an environmental crime expert was deployed in the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS).<sup>20</sup> However, the pace of deployment has been slow. Only 3 out of the 11 currently active civilian missions have or have had environmental advisers. After only a few months the position of environmental adviser in CAR was cut from the budget.<sup>21</sup> No environmental advisers have yet been deployed in military operations. Going forward, environmental issues need a more prominent place in missions and operations and not to be seen as just 'nice to have'.<sup>22</sup> Short-term expert visits by environmental advisers may be a way to bridge immediate budget constraints.<sup>23</sup> In the longer term, greater political buy-in to support the deployment of environmental advisers is needed.

Crucially, it is necessary to address the unrealistic expectations currently related to the profile and portfolio of environmental advisers.<sup>24</sup> Environmental advisers cannot feasibly combine engineering, climate science, peace and conflict, and legal expertise in specific geographical settings. Hence, their current technical role should be rethought. More like the UN's environmental security advisers, they should be political bridge builders who convene all the relevant technical experts and local stakeholders to tackle specific issues related to climate change, peace and security. This would make the work of environmental advisers more effective and the goal of having them for all CSDP missions and operations by 2025 more realistic.<sup>25</sup> Current exchanges with the UN to learn how to support the work of environmental advisers and link it more closely to conflict prevention should be deepened in this context.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>18</sup> EEAS, 'Operational guidelines for integrating environmental and climate aspects into civilian Common Security and Defence Policy missions', Working document, EEAS(2022)769, 24 June 2022.

<sup>19</sup> EU Capacity Building Mission in Somalia; EU Capacity Building Mission in Mali; and EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. EUPOL COPPS, 'Environmental crimes are a threat to coming generations. It's a motivation to do better', 20 Oct. 2020.

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of all civilian CSDP missions, see Smit, T., 'Delivering the compact: Towards a more capable and gender-balanced EU civilian CSDP', SIPRI Research Policy Paper, Nov. 2022, p. 4. EU official, Interview with authors, 21 Oct. 2022.

<sup>22</sup> EU official, Interview with authors, 20 Oct. 2022.

<sup>23</sup> EU official, Interview with authors, 21 Oct. 2022.

<sup>24</sup> EU officials, Interviews with authors, 20 and 21 Oct. 2022.

<sup>25</sup> EU official, Interview with author, 21 Oct. 2022.

<sup>26</sup> EU officials, Interviews with authors, 20, 21 and 28 Oct. 2022.



### *Training*

The EU has made notable progress in training, with the ESDC co-organizing courses on climate and security at least twice a year. Training for EU staff on environmental peacemaking and the climate–environment–security nexus has also been ongoing. These are important steps in raising awareness among civilian and military practitioners of the overarching implications of climate change for security. However, as one interviewee noted, ‘We have to get away from the very strategic courses highlighting the nexus between climate change and security. Instead, we must provide skill sets for how to incorporate environmental considerations into procurement and programming’.<sup>27</sup> In addition, climate change has not yet been mainstreamed into the curriculum of the mandatory pre-deployment ESDC training for CSDP missions and operations.<sup>28</sup> This is needed in the immediate perspective. The forthcoming updates to the curriculum in 2023 are an opportunity to address some of these shortcomings.

Further, the EEAS has identified the need for training activities targeting environmental crime experts, environmental engineers and climate risk analysts.<sup>29</sup> This aligns with the goal of deploying environmental advisers in all CSDP missions and operations. However, according to the EEAS, most EU member states do not train their armed forces to understand the linkages between climate impacts, environmental degradation and security. This is another area in which improvements are necessary.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the ESDC, the European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management is well placed to provide EU member states with a deeper understanding of the climate–conflict nexus and guidance on the secondment of environmental advisers.

### *A reduced environmental footprint and conflict-sensitized programming*

Operational guidelines for civilian missions and minimum environmental requirements for EU-funded humanitarian operations have been launched to assess and reduce their environmental footprint.<sup>31</sup> These include energy use monitoring and water and waste management. Since January 2022, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) within the EEAS has a dedicated environmental coordinator who is responsible for integrating environmental aspects into CSDP missions and operations. The CPCC serves as the operational headquarters for the EU’s civilian CSDP missions.<sup>32</sup>

Another concrete action likely to inform and impact conflict prevention and security strategies in the short term is the work on conflict-sensitizing external programming. Climate change aspects have been integrated more systematically into the conflict screening undertaken by the EEAS and the European Commission’s Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).<sup>33</sup> The FPI funds the EU’s external programming, including actions addressing the climate, peace and security nexus, through the Neighbourhood,

<sup>27</sup> EU official, Interview with author, 20 Oct. 2022.

<sup>28</sup> EU official, Interview with author, 20 Oct. 2022.

<sup>29</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> See Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), ‘Ms Johanna Lauritsen takes us to Brussels’, [n.d.].

<sup>32</sup> EEAS ‘The Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability’, 3 Oct. 2022.

<sup>33</sup> EEAS (note 6).



Development and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe).<sup>34</sup> NDICI-Global Europe has an allocated budget of about €80 billion for 2021–27, covering more than 70 per cent of EU external relations funding.<sup>35</sup> As part of the EU’s multiannual financial framework, 30 per cent of the NDICI-Global Europe funding is meant for climate action.<sup>36</sup>

However, as one interviewee mentioned, it is not always easy to find projects that seek to tackle the climate, peace and security nexus explicitly, given that they are not often framed as such.<sup>37</sup> It is important to keep in mind that enhancing climate security may not be the main objective of a project. Nevertheless, the links between climate, peace and security, how they may be affected by a project and how potential risks can be prevented or mitigated should be made explicit. More generally, the difficulty of identifying projects that address climate security may be linked to resistance by the climate community to analyse the conflict sensitivity of investments in energy transitions, for example, and by the peacebuilding community to focus on long-term climate change issues.<sup>38</sup>

### Current initiatives with medium- to long-term impact

Among the EU’s initiatives with medium- to long-term impacts, the focus has been on: (a) revising mandates for CSDP missions and operations; (b) improving climate-related situational awareness, early warning and strategic foresight; (c) strengthening EU civil protection capabilities to anticipate and respond to human security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation; and (d) fostering international partnerships.

#### *Revised mandates for CSDP missions and operations*

In early 2022, the EEAS surveyed all CSDP missions and operations about the possibility of including climate- and environment-related aspects in operational tasks and activities. In their answers, the majority of respondents underlined the close links between climate change, environmental degradation and the security context in which the mission or operation is conducted.<sup>39</sup> However, few missions and operations today actually address climate change or environmental degradation as part of their operational mandate. Numerous interviewees for this paper recognized the potential of doing more, either within the current mandates or, ideally, in revised mandates.<sup>40</sup> Linking climate- and environment-related conflict and security risks, where deemed necessary, to the success of CSDP engagements would increase climate security in the medium to long term. Revised mandates would also increase the capacity of EU delegations (who represent the EU in 140 countries around the globe) and of special representatives (who promote the EU’s policies in specific regions and countries and play an active

<sup>34</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> EEAS, ‘The new NDICI-Global Europe (2021–2027)’, 17 Mar. 2022.

<sup>36</sup> European Commission, ‘Climate mainstreaming’, accessed 1 Feb. 2023.

<sup>37</sup> EU official, Interview with authors, 4 Nov. 2022.

<sup>38</sup> EU expert, Informal exchange with authors, 27 Jan. 2023.

<sup>39</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 7; and EU official, Interview with authors, 28 Oct. 2022.

<sup>40</sup> EU officials, Interviews with authors, 20 and 21 Oct. 2022; and National official 1, Interview with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.



role in peacebuilding efforts) to address conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation through systematic engagement with these issues. Moreover, such revisions would most likely increase the capacity of CSDP missions and operations to address climate-related security risks on an operational level, as well as relate the work more closely to EU delegations and the European Commission.

#### *Improved climate-related situational awareness and early warning*

The EEAS, the European Commission and the European Defence Agency (EDA) have started exploring synergies to improve climate-related situational awareness, early warning and strategic foresight.<sup>41</sup> Their main focus is on how climate change might impact the EU's security and how geopolitical shifts triggered by climate change might affect the European defence sector. The Joint Progress Report by the EEAS also considers assessing climate change impacts on maritime security, as rising sea levels and marine degradation threaten the livelihoods of coastal communities and might make piracy and other transnational crimes more profitable.

Overall, the EU's aim is to make better use of available data by tailoring it more closely to user needs. Interviewees pointed out that quality data on climate risks abounds, but how to analyse and translate it into coordinated action able to cut across policy silos in the EU is problematic.<sup>42</sup> Enhancing climate-informed planning and decision making for operational actions and capability investments is important for achieving positive results in the medium to long term. The work by the EEAS and EDA is also crucial for establishing a coordinated process to support EU member states in developing national strategies to prepare armed forces for climate change.<sup>43</sup>

#### *Strengthened civil protection capabilities regarding climate change*

In March 2022 the Council of the EU adopted conclusions on EU civil protection and climate change. They call on EU member states and the European Commission to strengthen their approach to prevent, prepare and respond to large-scale, multi-sectoral and cross-border emergencies estimated to occur with increasing frequency both within the EU and beyond.<sup>44</sup> Some of the concrete actions underway to improve the EU's capacity to help member states and partner countries deal with climate-related security risks in the medium to long term include strengthening the anticipation and response capabilities of the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre in the light of climate risks, developing training and exercises for environmental and climate-related disasters within the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and fostering the exchange of experiences with civil protection authorities in neighbouring regions.

<sup>41</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> EU officials, Interviews with authors, 21 and 28 Oct. 2022.

<sup>43</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Council of the EU, 'Draft Council conclusions on civil protection work in view of climate change', 6528/22, 24 Feb. 2022.





### *International partnerships*

Finally, the EEAS has reported on partnerships, meetings and exchanges between the EU and various international actors in 2021–22.<sup>45</sup> The EU–UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Climate Change and Security Partnership, seeking to integrate climate change in peacebuilding efforts and reduce conflict risks in climate change-related programming in Nepal and Sudan, is worth mentioning in this context.<sup>46</sup> The EU is also engaged with the UN Climate Security Mechanism in discussions on training, in view of the need to recruit environmental or climate security advisers in both the EU and the UN.<sup>47</sup>

Further, meetings on climate change and security have been held with the African Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the OSCE, as well as with Canada and the United States. In January 2023, a joint declaration on EU–NATO cooperation was signed, mentioning the need to commonly address the security implications of climate change.<sup>48</sup> Fostering these exchanges might increase the shared assessment of risks and help pool and coordinate resources to cope with the adverse effects of climate change in the medium to long term. As one interviewee argued, ‘We need a shared understanding, not exactly the same language’.<sup>49</sup>

### **Translating climate, peace and security policy objectives into EU action**

The EU’s vulnerability to conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation is not only exacerbated by geophysical processes (e.g. the increasing frequency of weather and climate extremes) but also changing geopolitical dynamics (e.g. the increasing contestation between Western powers and China, India and Russia)—and to an extent that might have been underestimated until now.<sup>50</sup> Climate security in the EU thus requires a conceptual change and a holistic approach. Hard aspects of security combined with societal vulnerabilities cannot be dealt with effectively at the national level alone or within a single policy area, such as the CSDP.<sup>51</sup>

Recognizing the increased conceptual complexity of such risks, several interviewees stressed the need to focus on ‘concrete [operational] steps rather than long-term strategies’ to respond to climate insecurity.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, one interviewee argued that focusing on concrete operational steps might limit the EEAS and EU member states to actions reducing environmental impacts because environmental outcomes are easier to measure.<sup>53</sup> Importantly, these ambitions need not contradict each other. For example, EU environmental experts could be sent to conflict areas to help build local climate risk assessments as part of CSDP training missions, but at the same time increase the EU’s capacity for assessment of those risks. For such initiatives to have a real impact, however, the EEAS, EU member

<sup>45</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 21–22.

<sup>46</sup> EEAS (note 6), p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> EU official, Interview with authors, 21 Oct. 2022.

<sup>48</sup> European Council, ‘Joint declaration on EU–NATO cooperation’, Press release, 13 Jan. 2023.

<sup>49</sup> EU official, Interview with authors, 28 Oct. 2022.

<sup>50</sup> National official, Interview with authors, 24 Oct. 2022.

<sup>51</sup> National official, Interview with authors, 24 Oct. 2022.

<sup>52</sup> EU official, Interview with authors, 20 Oct. 2022.

<sup>53</sup> National official 1, Interview with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.



states and the European Commission would need to work much more closely together to ensure positive feedback loops, so that experiences from missions and operations can inform strategic decision making.<sup>54</sup>

In this regard, the Civilian CSDP Compact, which currently does not make any mention of climate-related security risks, should be further developed.<sup>55</sup> A window of opportunity to do so exists with its expiration in 2023. According to the Strategic Compass, EU member states should agree a new Civilian CSDP Compact by early summer 2023. Developing civilian CSDP capacities in the climate security realm may help better align EU foreign, security and defence policies with EU development and humanitarian policies and tools. This is important since the European Commission has extensive expertise and resources, and climate impact and risk analysis are more developed today.<sup>56</sup> The establishment of the new Civilian CSDP Compact is also a priority of the Swedish presidency of the Council of the EU.

#### IV. THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

With Sweden in the EU's rotating Council presidency role, there is an opportunity to narrow the action gap regarding climate, peace and security. Russia's war on Ukraine has made the nexus between climate, peace and security clearly visible as many European economies' dependence on Russian fossil fuel has exposed EU member states to a form of weaponized energy interdependence.<sup>57</sup> In response, the EU is seeking to speed up the transition to renewable energy sources and rapidly reduce its dependence on Russian gas, which means increased costs for European businesses and citizens. This dilemma not only puts pressure on the Swedish Council presidency to keep the unity among EU member states on how to deal with Russia and support Ukraine, but also reveals how climate security is not limited to managing and reducing the risks in less developed countries that might spill over into the EU and its member states.<sup>58</sup>

However, the current trend in CSDP seems to be a narrowing focus on defence and military capacity, partly because this places the initiative firmly in the hands of EU member states. Today, few EU member states are explicitly resisting the ambition to further mainstream climate security, but some are neglecting climate security and are instead emphasizing traditional aspects of security and defence within the CSDP.<sup>59</sup> There is a risk that the Russian war against Ukraine might exacerbate this trend in the short to medium term. Through its Council presidency, Sweden has an opportunity to stress that although 'climate and security' and 'climate and defence' are interlinked, they are also different. 'Security' broadly encompasses EU foreign, humanitarian and development policies, whereas 'defence' relates

<sup>54</sup> Bremberg, N. and Hedling, E., 'EU missions and operations: Practices of learning lessons in the CSDP', eds N. Bremberg et al., *The Everyday Making of EU Foreign and Security Policy: Practices, Socialization and the Management of Dissent* (Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham, 2022), pp. 131–48.

<sup>55</sup> National official 1, Interview with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.

<sup>56</sup> National official 2, Interview with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.

<sup>57</sup> Drezner, D. W. et al. (eds), *The Uses and Abuses of Weaponized Interdependence* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, DC, 2021).

<sup>58</sup> National official, Interview with authors, 24 Oct. 2022.

<sup>59</sup> National official 1, Interview with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.



mainly to national military capacities.<sup>60</sup> While most national armed forces understand that energy concerns (including their carbon footprint) and changing climate conditions have geopolitical and security implications, ministries of defence in EU member states do not always prioritize addressing these links—and the same ministries are influential in the development of policy initiatives within the EU’s CSDP.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, the war in Ukraine heavily affects current discussions among EU member states on resources, capacities and prioritization in the CSDP.<sup>62</sup> Several member states have provided substantial military support to Ukraine and now need to stock up on military equipment. This provides an opportunity for Sweden to invite EU member states to let climate and sustainability concerns guide the purchase of new equipment and further mainstream climate concerns into national defence planning.<sup>63</sup> This should be done not despite the war in Ukraine but rather due to it. The 2023 Swedish presidency of the Council of the EU places a heavy emphasis on advancing EU climate action and energy transitions, and on providing support to Ukraine. Most recently the Swedish government’s 2023 Statement of Foreign Policy recognized that ‘the link between climate policy issues . . . and security policy is becoming increasingly important’.<sup>64</sup> Given Sweden’s credibility and longstanding engagement in responding to climate insecurity and considering the increased intertwining of climate-related security risks, sustainable transitions, resource scarcity and geopolitics, there is now a real opportunity to emphasize the importance of closing the EU’s current action gap related to climate change, peace and security.<sup>65</sup>

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Advancing EU responses to conflict and security risks related to climate change and environmental degradation depends on various factors, including member states’ priorities and preferences, the resources and capacities of the EEAS and European Commission, how EU officials and member state representatives perceive what the EU can and should do to reduce climate insecurity, and how relevant actors align their initiatives and work together to shape EU action in the field.<sup>66</sup> In particular, members of the Group of Friends that are currently in or moving into the rotating Council presidency seat (e.g. Sweden and Spain in 2023) have the possibility to spotlight the current action gap and generate political momentum to close it in collaboration with the European Commission and the EEAS.

To foster actions that are preventative rather than reactive to climate-related security risks in the short to medium term, this paper makes the following recommendations:

- *Co-ownership by the EEAS and the European Commission.* The EEAS’ work on climate change and security should be bridged

<sup>60</sup> National officials 1 and 3, Interviews with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.

<sup>61</sup> National official 1, Interview with author, 25 Oct. 2022.

<sup>62</sup> National officials 1 and 3, Interviews with authors, 25 Oct. 2022.

<sup>63</sup> National official 1, Interview with author, 25 Oct. 2022.

<sup>64</sup> Billström, T., ‘Statement of Foreign Policy 2023’, Speech at the Swedish parliament, 15 Feb. 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, ‘Priorities’, accessed 31 Jan. 2023.

<sup>66</sup> Bunse et al (note 4).

with the European Commission's conflict-sensitive climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. This should be done by factoring in changing geopolitical dynamics and without reducing concrete actions in the CSDP to solely lowering the carbon footprint of the armed forces of EU member states. There is a growing realization that the CSDP is increasingly important, but that the European Commission is pivotal for advancing EU efforts to prevent conflict related to climate change and environmental degradation, as well as to promote energy transitions. This is mainly due to its expertise and funding assets. Genuine co-ownership by the EEAS and the Commission is essential to achieve effective, lasting and peaceful outcomes. The admittedly bold ambition should be to conflict-sensitize the European Green Deal further, at the same time as gearing it towards coping with the geopolitical effects of actions undertaken by China, India, Russia and the USA.

- *Matching EU and member state political leadership.* The political commitment to climate security seems stronger in some member states (where ministers are involved) than within the EU (where EEAS civil servants are working on the issue). National political leadership should be matched at the EU's highest political level. Federica Mogherini's role in mobilizing partners around the world on climate security during her time as High Representative/Vice President is an example to follow.<sup>67</sup> The EU might need its own climate security envoy in the shape of a designated special representative to align actions on climate-related security risks with EU climate diplomacy. At some point it should also be discussed whether, and in what capacity, civilian and military CSDP missions could be deployed to address climate- and environment-related security risks.
- *Enhanced advice and training on climate security.* CSDP missions and operations should be equipped with environmental advisers in tandem with the further development of training modules. This requires political buy-in from EU member states so that advisers are seconded and training modules updated and made available. The EU should adjust its expectations of environmental advisers and think of them as political rather than technical actors, who bring the relevant stakeholders (e.g. engineers, climate scientists, peacebuilders and legal experts) in conflict areas together to improve the implementation of policies on the ground and prevent climate-related conflict and security risks and environmental degradation. This is an area in which EU–UN cooperation is advancing and should be further supported, not least when it comes to training.
- *Incorporating climate and environment in the Civilian CSDP Compact.* Building on the EU's Strategic Compass, the new

<sup>67</sup> EEAS, 'Climate, peace and security: Time for action', 22 June 2018.



Civilian CSDP Compact currently under negotiation should prominently include climate and the environment. It should not only mention climate- and environment-related conflict and security risks, but also encourage cooperation with host countries and other international actors on stemming counterproductive climate practices, preserving scarce resources, addressing environmental crime and strengthening conflict-sensitive climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

- *Systematic engagement by EU delegations and special representatives.* EU delegations and special representatives should be systematically engaged in the work conducted by missions and operations. Mainstreaming climate security into CSDP mandates and throughout the planning process should continue, and the experiences of missions in responding to climate- and environment-related security risks should inform future programming.
- *Aligning operational and tactical aspects of climate security training.* The EEAS, the ESDC, the EDA and EU member states should further deepen their collaboration on the operational and tactical aspects of climate security training to ensure that it is mainstreamed into national curricula for armed forces. The potential for further EU–NATO cooperation in this area should also be explored, building on the recent joint declaration.<sup>68</sup> This is an important step to foster a common understanding of climate security in the EU and among member states and partners, at the same time as it might ensure that vulnerabilities vis-à-vis climate-related security risks within as well as beyond the EU are thoroughly reflected on from different national perspectives.

<sup>68</sup> European Council (note 48).



## ABBREVIATIONS

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| CAR                 | Central African Republic   |
| CPCC                | Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability   |
| CSDP                | Common Security and Defence Policy   |
| EDA                 | European Defence Agency  |
| EEAS                | European External Action Service   |
| ESDC                | European Security and Defence College  |
| EU                  | European Union   |
| FPI                 | Service for Foreign Policy Instruments   |
| NATO                | North Atlantic Treaty Organization   |
| NDICI-Global Europe | Neighbourhood, Development and International<br>Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe |
| OSCE                | Organization for Security and Co-operation in<br>Europe                              |



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