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Trouble with the Neighbors: A Case Study of the Political Relationship Between the Baltic States and Euro-Atlantic Security Institutions After Russia's Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula

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**TROUBLE WITH THE NEIGHBORS: A CASE STUDY OF THE POLITICAL
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BALTIC STATES AND EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY
INSTITUTIONS AFTER RUSSIA'S ANNEXATION OF THE CRIMEAN PENINSULA**

An honors paper submitted to the Department of Political Science and International Affairs
of the University of Mary Washington
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Departmental Honors

Girard Louis Bucello IV
April 2016

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Girard L Bucello IV

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04/28/16

TROUBLE WITH THE NEIGHBORS:

A CASE STUDY OF THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BALTIC STATES
AND EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY INSTITUTIONS AFTER RUSSIA'S ANNEXATION OF
THE CRIMEAN PENINSULA

Girard Bucello IV
22 April 2016
INAF 491H—Dr. John Kramer

In the Baltic region, the cold weather in wintertime comes not from the Arctic. It comes from the east—from Russia.

Raimonds Vējonis
President of Latvia

Nobody in Europe will be abandoned. Nobody in Europe will be excluded.
Europe only succeeds if we work together.

Angela Merkel
Chancellor of Germany

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the current state of the European security community in the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea from the perspective of the three Baltic countries. The research qualitatively analyzes government documents, official statements, and publications by, and interviews with, scholars and policymakers to determine how recent Russian behavior has affected the perspective of the Baltic states, and how they have affected NATO and the EU. This paper finds that the annexation of Crimea vindicated those in the Baltic who had expected such behavior, and determines that the Baltic states have leveraged the EU and NATO to refocus attention on their eastern flank.

INTRODUCTION

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the lynchpin of Euro-Atlantic security since its founding in 1949, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While its role has changed, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and ongoing Russian support for separatists in Ukraine's Donbas region not under Kiev's control, have brought the Alliance's collective defense functions back to the forefront of discussion. There are also questions surrounding the increased role for the European Union (EU) in the realm of security—in particular, those aspects of security that concern domestic or internal security. Crimea's annexation greatly alarmed both NATO and the EU, and called into question their roles in the provision of security in Europe. This paper seeks to address the fundamental issue of how Russia's annexation of Crimea affected the stance of NATO and the EU, the two pillars of the European security community, towards protecting the continent. The research focuses on this question through the lens of the three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—as the three members of Europe's security architecture most directly affected by any changes in Russo-European relations.

It is of foremost importance to determine what comprises the European security community—and, before that, to determine the scope of the term *security community*. Karl Deutsch defines a security community as one “in which there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way.”¹ Deutsch's definition is rather loose, so I will add a corollary: a security community is also one in which members agree, through formal institutions, to use said institutions as a mechanism both for dispute resolution and for cooperation on matters of defense as they pertain to those outside of the community. One analysis, accepting Deutsch's definition, contends that “Western

Europe is an established pluralistic security community, institutionalised as NATO (through transatlantic links with the United States and Canada as European powers), and the EU.”² I also accept that these two institutions comprise the core of the European security community, as they meet the aforementioned requisites. I exclude the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as it fails to meet Deutsch’s definition of a community “in which there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically.”³ Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine are all OSCE members, yet Russia has used military force against both Georgia and Ukraine within the last ten years. Therefore, there is no real assurance against the use of force among and between all OSCE members.

Historically, balance of power theory has been the dominant school of thought regarding the affairs of European nations. The establishment of the NATO at the start of the Cold War would appear to be one more example of power balancing, as Western European nations organized, under security guarantees from the United States, against a perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union and its allies. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the security threat to Western Europe that had loomed over the continent appeared to evaporate. However, NATO did not dissolve, despite the absence of its initial *raison d’être*. Indeed, NATO engaged in an enlargement campaign, adding twelve new members (excluding the German Democratic Republic, which joined the Alliance upon its reunification with the NATO member-state of the Federal Republic of Germany). NATO, as a result, expanded its defense commitments well into former Warsaw Pact territory. This, coupled with the increasing degree to which NATO has involved itself in European political affairs—matched by increased involvement by political organizations such as the EU taking on additional matters of defense

and foreign policy—underscores the increasing complexity of the European security community. As such, it is all the more important to understand the mechanisms by which it operates.

The unique geographic position, ethnic composition, and political history of the Baltic republics renders this focus worthy of study in pursuit of an understanding of the European security community's behavior. With the exception of Poland's border with Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, and Norway's small and sparsely populated border with extreme northwest Russia, the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania represent the main contact point between NATO and the Russian Federation. Though NATO has engaged in a deliberate effort to integrate former Warsaw Pact nations into the Alliance, the Baltic republics are also the only former Soviet republics to become members of both NATO and the EU. Additionally, Estonia and Latvia have significant ethnic Russian populations (see Figure 3), in part stemming from the Soviet Union's occupation of their territory until the Cold War's end. These factors make the consequences of NATO policy more grave for the Baltic states than any other NATO member state. Changes in NATO-Russia relations will impact the Baltic states more quickly and in greater measure than any other member-state. As such, it is critical to assess the position of the Baltic states within NATO and, more broadly, in Europe's security architecture overall.

This research is qualitative in nature, consisting of an analysis of scholarly publications, official government statements and documents, and interviews with current and former European security officials and academics. This paper first discusses the relevant historical context, then provides a lengthier analysis of documents, statements, and interviews. It will then present the conclusions reached on the nature of Europe's security architecture as recent Russian behavior has affected it. It will also offer a prognosis on the future of European security. Throughout, the

paper will demonstrate the applicability of the Baltic states' perspective towards understanding the historical and contemporary European security community more broadly.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Cold War Origins

The contemporary security architecture in Europe has its roots in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Concerned over the prospect of Soviet influence in Europe and the Atlantic region, the United States and its allies in Western Europe founded NATO in 1949.⁴ The Alliance's founding had the almost immediate effect of moving the line of defense against the Soviet Union further west, relieving a great defense burden on many of the European member-states.⁵ The Alliance had the added effect of tethering the United States to the defense of Europe, assuaging concerns that, just as after the First World War, the United States would retrench and draw down its military presence. Historian Tony Judt writes, "NATO thus became a major military commitment, drawing on the seemingly limitless resources of the US economy and committing Americans and their allies to an unprecedented peacetime build up of men and matériel."⁶ Concurrent with, yet distinct from, NATO's military coordination effort was a European economic and political integration effort, beginning with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. Beyond the creation of a common market for coal and steel in Western Europe, as well as a measure to ensure that the valuable resources of the Ruhr were not solely in German hands, its greatest value was as a vehicle for overcoming Franco-German enmity, a major barrier to interstate integration in Europe.⁷

In 1958, the Rome Treaty, which established the European Economic Community (EEC), entered into force.⁸ Building upon the successes of the ECSC, it expanded on the principles

enshrined therein. Among other actions, it established a customs union, eliminating duties on goods between member-states and imposing common tariffs on non-EEC goods;⁹ laid the groundwork for the free movement of persons;¹⁰ and established the forerunners to modern EU institutions such as the European Commission.¹¹ In 1985, European states signed the Schengen Treaty which entered into force a decade later, implementing the principles set out in the Rome Treaty on the free movement of persons within the EEC by gradually abolishing border controls.¹² With NATO charged with the defense of Western Europe through American security guarantees, joint exercises, and an integrated military command structure, the several European states had used this respite to forge a framework for political and economic integration.

The End of the Cold War and the New Order in Europe

The Baltic states were the first of the Soviet republics to declare independence from the USSR in 1991. The United States had never considered the three Baltic republics to have been a part of the Soviet Union after their annexation during the Second World War, and viewed their independence as the conclusion of an illegal occupation.¹³ Those events were only the latest in a cascading effect that ultimately led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact by the end of that same year. German reunification ultimately dispelled any doubt concerning the future of NATO: as the German Democratic Republic (GDR) reunified with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) under the latter's constitution, it joined the Alliance as well.¹⁴ Though the number of member-states in the Alliance did not increase, as the GDR ceased to exist upon reunification, NATO did expand its shared border further east. The Alliance integrated tens of thousands of GDR soldiers into its command structure as well. Moreover, governments in Europe were not keen to dissolve NATO. American diplomat Ronald Asmus writes, "The instinct

of nearly every government in Europe was to opt to maintain the Alliance in some form, if only as an insurance policy. German unification in NATO was the first post-Cold War enlargement of the Alliance and an early sign that NATO's role in Europe was growing, not shrinking."¹⁵ NATO would well outlast the conflict that its founders had established for it to fight.

The Alliance's continued operation came with a shift in focus as NATO began a political outreach campaign to former Soviet and Warsaw Pact states. In 1994, NATO launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, allowing for limited forms of cooperation in defense-related fields without any defense commitments on the part of the Alliance to PfP nations.¹⁶ The following year saw another major shift as the Alliance began to undertake major combat operations in non-NATO territory. Though the Alliance involved itself in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia as early as 1992, it was not until 1995 that NATO conducted a campaign of airstrikes in Bosnia and Herzegovina intended to support United Nations (UN) peacekeepers, who had requested the airstrikes. Operation Deliberate Force, as the Alliance termed the mission, forced the Bosnian Serb Army to sue for peace, resulting in the Dayton Accords in December of 1995. NATO subsequently deployed an Implementation Force (IFOR) of 60,000 troops, followed a year later by a Stabilization Force (SFOR) of 32,000 troops.¹⁷ NATO intervened in the Balkan states again in 1999, conducting an aerial bombing campaign against Serbia to halt violence in the breakaway region in Kosovo. NATO maintains a Kosovo Force (KFOR) of nearly 5,000 troops.¹⁸ The Alliance has since engaged in several other operations outside the scope of Article V, the section of the North Atlantic Treaty that outlines the mutual defense arrangement of NATO. Among them are the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, and intervention in Libya in

2011.¹⁹ These missions represented a profound expansion of the Alliance's profile beyond what its creators had envisioned in 1949. Even the Alliance's invocation of Article V in 2001 and subsequent mission, Operation Eagle Assist, was a counterterrorism operation—a function that the Alliance was not intended to react to at its inception.²⁰

As with NATO, the EU also grew its mandate far beyond its economic roots. The Union had already done this to an extent through the Schengen Treaty: though it had the primary goal of facilitating economic transaction through the free movement of people and goods within the Schengen Area, there was an obvious security dimension as well in adopting common entry requirements to the open borders zone. 1993 saw the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty which, among other things, established a Common Foreign and Security Policy, allowing the European Council to “define a common position” and stating that “Member States shall ensure that their national policies conform to the common positions.”²¹ In 1999, the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), later renamed the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), became operational.²² Spurred by, among other events, the chaotic and violent breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the EDSP sought to give the EU “the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, [...] to respond to international crises.”²³ In 2003, the Union established EU Battlegroups comprised of battalion-sized (approx. 1,500 soldiers) contingents of rapidly deployable troops from donor EU member-states.²⁴ The EU founded the European Defence Agency a year later to further foster defense cooperation among EU member-states.²⁵ The Union has deployed military assets in Bosnia and Herzegovina after IFOR's withdrawal, as well as in the Mediterranean and off the

coast of Somalia, to name a few.²⁶ All of these actions represented an expanded effort to integrate on matters of security under the auspices of the EU.

During this time, both NATO and the EU pursued policies of expansion. As their mandates grew, so too did their membership. While the first decade after the fall of the Soviet Union saw moderate expansions of both bodies—three new members to each by the turn of the century—it was 2004 that saw the largest rounds of accession. In the newly expanded EU, the Baltic states joined together with Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, and Cyprus in the largest round of the Union’s expansion.²⁷ The Baltic states also acceded to NATO, alongside Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia—the Alliance’s largest round of expansion since its founding.²⁸ At the time of the Soviet Union’s dissolution, the EU had eleven members, while NATO had sixteen. Both now have twenty-eight members.²⁹ NATO’s expansion encompassed only former Soviet and Warsaw Pact states, and while the EU’s various rounds of expansion included neutral states such as Austria, Finland, and Sweden, most of the EU’s members who joined after 1991 are former Eastern Bloc states. The Baltic States remain, in both organizations, the only former Soviet republics to be full members.

Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine

The first crisis to the peaceful order in Europe originated in the 1990s. Russia had backed a separatist movement in South Ossetia, a region of Georgia, in an effort to see it united with the Russian province of North Ossetia.³⁰ The ceasefire that ended the fighting called for a joint Georgian, Russian, and Ossetian peacekeeping force in the disputed region. On August 1 and 2, 2008, South Ossetian paramilitary forces began shelling ethnic Georgian settlements in South Ossetia. On August 7, the Georgian military assaulted South Ossetian positions in response,

triggering an immediate reaction from Russia. Over the course of five days, the Russian military routed Georgian forces, affirming the *de facto* independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, another breakaway region in Georgia.³¹ Russia subsequently recognized both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states,³² establishing formal diplomatic relations despite an absence of recognition from the rest of the international community. Earlier in the year, Georgia had petitioned NATO to establish a Membership Action Plan (MAP), a formal step before an invitation to begin accession talks with the Alliance. Despite lobbying from the United States on Georgia's behalf, the Alliance ultimately refused to extend such a measure to Georgia.³³ Though subsequent NATO summits have yielded closer NATO-Georgia cooperation, the Alliance has still not approved Georgian MAP involvement.³⁴

The Russo-Georgian war provoked a strong reaction from many states, including the three Baltic republics, which roundly condemned Russia's conduct in a joint statement.³⁵ NATO itself, however, was largely silent. The Secretary General of the Alliance released the following statement: "The NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, is seriously concerned about the events that are taking place in the Georgian region of South Ossetia and said that the Alliance is closely following the situation. The Secretary General calls on all sides for an immediate end of the armed clashes and direct talks between the parties."³⁶ Aside from an increase in naval deployments in the Black Sea,³⁷ reaction from the US and other Alliance members was fairly muted and the rhetoric largely restrained. Both NATO and the EU issued statements condemning Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, with Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer stating that "Russia's actions in recent weeks call into question Russia's commitment to peace and security in the Caucasus," and that "NATO firmly supports the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of Georgia.”³⁸ Neither body, however, took substantial action beyond the aforementioned measures.

Early 2014 saw another, more impactful shock to the post-Cold War order. The Euromaidan movement in Ukraine swept a pro-EU government into power in Kiev, triggering a backlash from Crimea, an autonomous republic subordinate to Ukraine. By February 27, after several days of anti-Ukraine and pro-Russia demonstrations on the Crimean Peninsula, unidentified armed men seized the Crimean Parliament.³⁹ Those members of parliament that gunmen had permitted to enter voted for separatist Sergei Aksyonov as Prime Minister of Crimea, ousting Anatoly Mogilyov, who had supported Crimea remaining in Ukraine.⁴⁰ As more anonymous armed men seized critical infrastructure on the peninsula, denying its use to Ukrainian military forces, the Crimean Parliament voted, again behind closed doors, on an appeal to Russia to annex the peninsula and incorporate Crimea into Russia.⁴¹ Official results from the referendum in mid-March showed overwhelming support for Crimea’s union with Russia, with claims of 95 percent of voters backing secession from Ukraine and accession to the Russian Federation.⁴² By March 20, the Russian Duma had formalized Crimea’s annexation, approving a treaty between Russia and Crimea to that effect and amending the Russian constitution to reflect the territorial change.⁴³ Subsequently, Russia admitted to the presence of its armed forces during the unrest in Crimea.⁴⁴ In the spring and summer of 2014, unrest had spread to the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in eastern Ukraine, referred to collectively as the *Donbas*. There, pro-Russian separatists, with indeterminate levels of support from the Russian government, began waging a conflict against the government in Kiev, intending to break away

from Ukraine.⁴⁵ A ceasefire is in place, though violations thereof are frequent, and the conflict remains stagnant.⁴⁶

Unlike the case of Georgia, the reaction from the EU and NATO was far more stern with regards to Russian activity in Ukraine. NATO indefinitely suspended cooperation with Russia through the NATO-Russia Council, a body established during the Alliance's period of outreach to Russia after the end of the Cold War.⁴⁷ The Alliance also announced a scaling-up of its NATO Response Force (NRF), from 13,000 soldiers to 40,000 soldiers comprised of a rotation of forces from member-states. NATO also announced the creation of a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) of 5,000 troops, capable of deploying within days of a crisis, as part of the NRF.⁴⁸ The EU, the United States, and Canada have imposed sanctions on the Russian Federation in direct response to the annexation of Crimea.⁴⁹ Compared to the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, Russia's operations in Crimea and support for separatism in the Donbas have greatly altered the strategic discourse in Europe and galvanized a far stronger response from NATO and the EU.

EXAMINING THE BALTIC PERSPECTIVE

As noted, it is essential to know the Baltic perspective on Europe's security architecture if one is to understand the response of European institutions to Russian behavior in Crimea. This paper will demonstrate that, while many in the West had envisioned a future of cooperation with Russia, the Baltic states did not share wholeheartedly in this assessment, with policymakers characterizing it as naïve. Their position on NATO's frontier and their painful history with Russia during the Soviet era make their view of NATO-Russia relations more pessimistic than those in Western Europe. Additionally, though Russia's annexation of Crimea shocked the European security community overall, it was less surprising in the Baltic states. There, many had come to

expect such behavior, even if it was unclear what form Russian aggression would take or who would feel the impact thereof most strongly.

Perspective on Europe's Security Architecture

A discussion on the Baltic states' perspective on their security environment, their threat assessments of Russia, and their expectations of the European security community in dealing with those specific threats must first examine how the three Baltic republics view the security architecture in which they participate. One can begin with an examination of the military capacity and defensibility of the Baltic states. The topography of the region is flat, with few natural defensive barriers, which favors a rapid offensive by an adversary. The small geographical size of all three countries further advantages an aggressor. The militaries of all three countries are small—slightly over 12,000 soldiers on active duty in Lithuania, and less than 6,000 in Latvia and Estonia, as of October 2013—and rely heavily on calling up reserves in times of crisis.⁵⁰ All of the Baltic states lack air defense assets, and have limited infrastructure to support the air operations of states from outside of the Baltic region due to the poor condition of former Soviet facilities that Russian forces held for several years after the collapse of the USSR.

These factors, taken together, demonstrate significant gaps between the capabilities that the Baltic states require to defend themselves and those that they actually possess. Therefore, they see one of the key functions of NATO as a mechanism for filling these capability gaps. Martin Hurt, the deputy director for the International Center for Defence and Security (ICDS) in Tallinn, said,

You join NATO, and you bring whatever assets you have. It was evident that the Baltic states didn't have, and would never have, all capabilities, but [...] I think that's something that goes for every ally. Probably not the U.S., but most of the others have capability gaps

for which other allies need to step in and cover them. That's the whole essence of NATO. I mean, if everybody were able to defend themselves, then NATO wouldn't exist.⁵¹

Kalev Stoicescu, a research fellow at ICDS, echoed these sentiments, stating that only the nuclear states of the Alliance had the military strength to defend themselves independently of NATO and adding that membership in the Alliance has enhanced Baltic security beyond what policymakers imagined in the years prior to their accession.⁵² These notions are explicitly stated at the policy-making level. The Latvian State Defense Concept of 2012 declares, "Military integration of the Baltic States makes it possible to jointly develop military capabilities that Latvia would not be able to develop separately."⁵³ The document adds that such integration enhances all of the Baltic countries' ability to participate in NATO. The Estonian National Security Concept of 2010 also explicitly references the capability gap, stating, "Estonia's military defence is based on the capability of initial independent defence and NATO's collective defence," and that "capabilities which are required for military defence and deterrence but which cannot be achieved by Estonia on its own will be ensured in co-operation with Allies in NATO."⁵⁴ There is a recognition at an official level, therefore, that certain capabilities are unobtainable by the Baltic states, yet are integral to their defense. NATO explicitly operates in this domain.

Though there are undeniable hard security implications of NATO membership, the Baltic states also note an ideological and institutional dimension to Alliance participation that compelled them to seek accession. In their view, NATO is an alliance of shared values, especially in the post-Cold War environment, and transcends the Cold War narrative of two opposing military-political blocs to continue to exist and thrive long after the opposing bloc, the Warsaw Pact, had dissolved. The Estonian National Security Concept of 2010, in discussing the

Alliance's enlargement, argues that NATO expansion "has widened the area based on common democratic values, thus reinforcing European security."⁵⁵ In 2001, the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced a fact sheet promoting NATO accession. In it, the Ministry prominently declared two of its main reasons for seeking membership as Latvia's European identity and its respect for democracy. The document states, "Latvia is an integral part of Europe, not only geographically, but also economically, politically and culturally. [...] For Latvia, joining NATO is a practical way to contribute to the rebuilding of a new Europe, whole and free, for the 21st century."⁵⁶ More explicitly, the publication argues, "The reason for NATO's existence is the defence of certain territories and common values—democracy and the market economy. Purely military considerations about which countries are entitled to be 'defensible' and which are supposedly 'indefensible' should not determine which nations can thereby enjoy the security and stability that NATO membership brings."⁵⁷ A joint statement by all three presidents of the Baltic republics, together with President Barack Obama, similarly highlighted the shared transatlantic values of the Alliance.⁵⁸

Tempting as it may be to dismiss these statements as rhetorical, and therefore without policy implications, there is evidence to indicate that policymakers at the decision-making level hold these beliefs, and that said beliefs motivated Baltic accession to the Alliance. Stoicescu contends that shared core values underpin the modern Alliance, arguing, "NATO has proven that it is not simply a military alliance, but it is a political alliance too, and it is a bond [...] that glues the transatlantic community together. Of course, you always have to think of interests. You have to look at risks. But the question of common values is the one that is so important."⁵⁹ Closely linked with shared values is a shared identity between states. Stefanova writes, "A strong identity

(a Western European not a Slavic one), and the idea of the historical and legal continuity of their nation-states are central elements of the political thinking in all three [Baltic] countries.”⁶⁰ Stefanova further argues, “As former Soviet republics, issues of national sovereignty and distinctiveness, of a complete and irreversible breakaway from their Soviet past, and any possibility of being submerged into a new Russia sphere of influence, have for the Baltics become the measure and substance of statehood.”⁶¹ Professor Karmo Tüür of the University of Tartu spoke similarly of this rejection of a Slavic identity and embracing of a European one. He argues that, in discussing the national identities of the three Baltic countries, “it is not so much about who we, but who we are not. We are not Russia. This comes first.”⁶² Hurt approached the aspect of Estonian national identity in a distinct yet parallel way. Rather than framing accession to NATO as a rejection of Russian influence, he argues, “I think that it was a way of trying to join the Western community [...] I think we wanted to join the democratic club of free countries. That was the purpose.”⁶³

While some may phrase the same idea differently, there is clear evidence that NATO membership for the three Baltic republics springs both from security concerns regarding their Russian neighbor and a view of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian national identities as European. NATO membership both offers security guarantees to the Baltic states that augment their standing defense capabilities and affirms their European history, identity, and heritage. Furthermore, these two concepts are not mutually exclusive. The concept of national sovereignty in all three Baltic states is firmly rooted not only in their security, but also in their national identity. Both factors motivate NATO membership because they are inseparable—the Baltic states’ history of occupation by the Soviet Union under Russian leadership shapes their

contemporary views on security. Occupation also further entrenched their view of their nations as European, compelling them to seek security by aligning not with their eastern neighbors, but with their western ones. One cannot, therefore, view ideology and security in isolation.

The Baltic countries generally accept that membership in NATO was necessarily linked with membership in the EU—that, from a politically and militarily strategic point, to be a member of one organization or the other would be far less effective than to be a member of both. Stoicescu remarked, “It didn’t make sense for us [in Estonia] to join one without the other,” adding that Estonia would have joined both organizations regardless of Latvia or Lithuania’s decisions on their own to accede.⁶⁴ Stefanova similarly observes, “Throughout the 1990s [the Baltic] countries pursued a comprehensive strategy of integration with NATO and the EU as the dominant institutions of Western democracy.”⁶⁵ While she qualifies this observation, stating that much of Eastern Europe adopted a similar mindset, she notes that the Baltic perspective on both institutions was more intense than other former Eastern Bloc nations due to the unique geopolitics of the Baltic region.⁶⁶ The three Baltic republics also see a bifurcation of roles between NATO and the EU. The Latvian government stated officially in its push for NATO membership, “As with other European members of the Alliance, Latvia considers that being a member of both is entirely compatible. Indeed, as the contours of European security architecture are being re-drawn, there is logic in aligning EU candidate aspirations with their aspirations to join NATO.”⁶⁷ All three republics understood membership in both organizations to be essential in their EU and NATO accession efforts, a view prevailing today.

This view of dual membership as essential stems from a recognition that membership in one without the other would result in gaps in security. In discussing the European security

community, Stefanova writes, “A particular security organisation (NATO) is the main security provider, and in Europe’s case the security institution is not coterminous with the actual network of most transaction flows (the EU).”⁶⁸ To phrase the same sentiment differently, while NATO deals in security, the main advantage of EU membership to the Baltic states is economic.⁶⁹ This view is common among those with a peripheral interest in, and knowledge of, the Baltic states’ membership in both groups. Such a view does not, however, fully carry over to decision-making levels in those countries.

While the Baltic states undeniably view NATO as a guarantor of their security, they ascribe a security function to the EU as well. However, this view is not universally shared, and most see the EU’s security role as less central than that of NATO. The manner in which the Baltic states (and other states near Russia) view the union is noticeably distinct, however, from the manner in which states in Western Europe view the union. Hurt observes,

When other countries join the EU [...], it’s much about economic growth and so on, to be part of a single market. I think that, if you look at the Baltic states, [...] there was another reason, and that was to become a member of the club so that we could say that we’re together with our neighbors and friends, and we left our enemy behind us. Now, the economic growth and [...] the other benefits from joining the EU are also there, and they’re important, but I think that we also saw a security dimension that many countries had not really seen who want to join the EU—especially, the further you go from Russia, the more you see the other reasons for joining the EU.⁷⁰

The State Defense Concept of Latvia also explicitly references the security functions of the EU through the Solidarity Clause, stating that “the EU for Latvia is an additional instrument for strengthening national security and defence.”⁷¹ Additionally, the Baltic states view the EU as a mechanism tying together non-NATO states whose security is still intertwined with, and integral to, that of the Baltic region as a whole—namely, Finland and Sweden.⁷² The Nordic states engage in defense cooperation that excludes the Baltic states, yet the participation of all five

Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden—is integral to Baltic regional security, and other regional initiatives such as the Council of Baltic Sea States take little to no substantive action to bridge the division between states in the Nordic-Baltic region.⁷³

Therefore, the Baltic states perceive that the provision for the common welfare of EU states creates incentives for EU members to enhance the security, in a limited sense, of other members.

Despite the Baltic states' view of a security role for the EU as outlined above, they do not ascribe the same weight to the EU's perceived security functions as they do to NATO. A number of those at the decision-making level have historically seen EU membership as insufficient to guarantee their security. Hurt plays down any expectation that the Union would act in a manner similar to NATO in the event of open conflict, saying that the Baltic states "were not looking at the EU as some kind of legal framework, saying that [...] we believe that if somebody were to attack us, that the EU would come and help us."⁷⁴ Latvia argued fervently in the years prior to its accession to both the EU and NATO that membership in the Union, though it would bolster their security, was not sufficient and "excludes the important trans-Atlantic link," stating, "There can be no regional solutions to the security of the Baltic region. There is a broad consensus in the region that involvement of North American partners in the Baltic area is indispensable."⁷⁵ The Estonian National Security Concept makes no mention of the EU in its section on defense policy.⁷⁶ The Latvian State Defense Concept references the union once, and only in passing, in its section on "Strengthening of National Defence Capabilities,"⁷⁷ while in Lithuania's National Security Strategy, the only reference to security in the section pertaining to EU participation pledges to "contribute to the creation of an effective EU foreign, security and defence policy" and "to the development of European civilian and military capabilities."⁷⁸

There is an obvious gap between the rhetoric on the EU's security role and the value that policymakers in the Baltic states assign it. The reasons behind this stem from the differences in how the security roles of NATO and the EU have manifested themselves. NATO members routinely train and cooperate in preparation for Article V missions that require the defense of the territory of member-states, something for which there is no analogous EU endeavor. The EU can fill a crucial security role that NATO does not address, but largely in matters that one can classify as internal security. Two major elements are the Schengen Area, which establishes common standards for admission of foreigners to the EU, and criminal intelligence sharing through Europol. These can augment the security of the Baltic states when one considers the hybrid nature of Crimea's annexation, in which the Russian armed forces infiltrated Ukrainian territory under the pretext of supporting ethnic Russian minorities.⁷⁹ Should an aggressor state employ similar tactics against the Baltic states, the quasi-covert nature of such an operation would necessitate the aid of internal security services, such as border security or counterintelligence services. With regards to these assets, the EU is better equipped to provide them than NATO. The Estonian National Security Concept explicitly references the internal security benefits of membership in the EU and their role in Estonian security and defense policies.⁸⁰

The Baltic states clearly distinguish between the benefits of EU membership and participation in NATO, assessing the Alliance as the primary guarantor of their security. Their assessment of the EU as an essential aspect of the security of Europe generally—and, consequently, of the Baltic region in particular—separates them from their other European counterparts. Baltic concerns about a hybrid threat from Russia, particularly one that incorporates Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia, furthers the Baltic republics' belief in the

necessity of the EU as a security institution, especially in matters of internal security that are more suited to respond to a threat that is not overtly military in nature. Additionally, the confluence of security concerns and shared ideals among member-states motivated the accession of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the EU just as it motivated their pursuit of NATO membership—indeed, citing shared values as a catalyst for the pursuit of EU membership would appear to be an obvious assertion given the frequent rhetoric of the EU as a project of European common values. There is overlap in the Baltic states, therefore, between the perspectives on EU membership and on participation in NATO. As demonstrated, however, the benefits of membership in the Union are not seen as interchangeable with the benefits of NATO membership, though the Baltic perspective on the EU's roles differ measurably from those of their European neighbors.

Assessing the Threat

As diverse as the history and domestic politics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania may be, the nature of their security environment regarding Russia ties the three Baltic republics together. In particular, their absorption into the Soviet Union after the Second World War unified the Baltic states in their attitudes on what threatens their nations and the region as a whole. Consequently, an anti-Russian attitude persists in all three countries and permeates political decision-making regarding foreign policy. The accession of the Baltic states to NATO and the EU in 2004, as well as the decision to pursue this course of action in unison rather than unilaterally, is indicative of this common assessment of Russia's stance as it pertains to the three countries and to the region in general. It would be a mistake, however, to characterize the position of the three Baltic republics as monolithic or uniform. As noted, there is great overlap in

their stances. Even so, one must do well to note the differences in specific threat assessments. The extent to which those in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania see threats from Russia against their territory and sovereignty specifically in a varied manner, to say nothing of the many assessments regarding the nature of such a threat. Generally, there is considerable agreement at the decision-making levels in the Baltic capitals that Russia has the capacity to threaten all of the Baltic republics in isolation, and that Russia's views on the expansion of NATO and the EU foster a paranoid vision of what such an expansion might entail. Whether Russia will ever strike the Baltic states, either overtly or covertly, and what method it will use should it decide to do so, is very much in dispute.

Examining Russian Motives and Strategic Culture

Positive characterizations of Russia's motives and mindset by the three Baltic states are sparse; the portrait they paint of their neighbor is one of a paranoid state, engaged in patterns of deceptive and destabilizing behavior while convinced that their foes engage in the same behavior against them—and, in no uncertain terms, leaders in the Baltic states see Russia as a threat. Latvian President Raimonds Vējonis, in remarks delivered in Washington, DC, stated, “We could very precisely use the allegory of a cold climate to describe what is happening in Europe and security today. In the Baltic region, the cold weather in wintertime comes not from the Arctic. It comes from the east—from Russia.”⁸¹ Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves spoke similarly lines, stating that Russia's recent behavior in seeking to block nations— including by force— from freely joining NATO and the EU threatened international principles granting nations a right to choose their alliances.⁸² Additionally, he characterized Russia's annexation of Crimea as an Anschluss, evoking the memory of Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria before the outbreak of

World War II in Europe, claiming that it was “the proper term for what happened in Crimea.”⁸³ Ilves’ repeated use of the term Anschluss to describe events in Crimea demonstrates a concerted effort to depict Russia’s behavior both as morally reprehensible and as dangerous to the Baltic region and to the entire international community. The Lithuanian government has printed and disseminated a preparedness guide, for civilians and military personnel alike, should open conflict arise.⁸⁴ Elaborating on the guide, Lithuanian Defense Minister Juozas Olekas declared that Russian behavior directly motivated its production and distribution, stating, “When Russia started its aggression in Ukraine, our citizens here in Lithuania understood that our neighbor is not friendly.”⁸⁵ Even if the Lithuanian government does not see the likelihood of war with Russia as high, the guide still serves to characterize Russia as an existential threat to Lithuania.

While shying away from the Nazi imagery invoked by Ilves, Stoicescu does share the assessment that Russia poses a threat to the Baltic states, saying, “It’s not anything hypothetical anymore, unfortunately. Having seen President Putin’s and Russia’s behavior since Russia against Georgia in 2008, and in Ukraine just early last year[...] I think there is enough reason to believe that everything that we considered as the darkest and very theoretical scenarios, we have to count them as being realistic these days.”⁸⁶ He cites the Kremlin’s pursuit of policies intended to weaken its neighbors as evidence of a Russia engaging in destabilization, arguing, “In their traditional sense, [Russia] would like to see neighboring countries vulnerable, prone to Russian manipulation. They hate seeing small neighbors that are independent from them.”⁸⁷ Hurt argues that there was never a time in which the Baltic political leadership entertained the notion of cooperation with Russia, observing, “There was no thinking in the Baltic states that Russia [...] since 1991 is a friendly nation, comparable with Germany and Portugal and Norway and all

those other democratic states. For us, what is happening right now is [...] not a surprise by any means.”⁸⁸ The consistent and strong distrust of Russia’s motives and intentions, even in the immediate post-Cold War environment and at a time when NATO reached out earnestly to Russia in an effort to foster cooperation, indicates a belief that Russia is both intrinsically opposed to and incapable of cooperation.

Policymakers in the Baltic states tend to view Russia’s mindset as paranoid in relation to their assessment of NATO intentions. Russia made explicitly clear its distrust for the Alliance when Putin signed a document designating the Alliance and its expansion as a threat to Russian security, a designation panned by the Baltic states and by NATO as a whole.⁸⁹ Russia has often characterized the Alliance’s expansion as a provocation towards Russia, and Putin has used rhetoric that very strongly insinuates that if Russia believes conflict to be inevitable, it will not wait for the beginning of hostilities, but rather will strike first.⁹⁰ This position, combined with a haste to consider worst-case scenarios and a confrontational (if not outright aggressive) foreign policy in its neighborhood, is a trait that many in the Baltic states believe can lead to a dangerous confrontation. In discussing the Kaliningrad Oblast, a Russian exclave bordering Lithuania, Stoicescu opines, “The Russians may think in their own terms, given the way that they are spoiled, that the West thinks as they do—that when they [i.e. Russia] grab Crimea, the West, using this crisis situation, will try to grab Kaliningrad Oblast from them. Of course, that is not the case, because we don’t think like them and we don’t act like them, but they may think like that.”⁹¹ One should note that the Lithuanian National Security Strategy expresses the need to “seek to enhance mutual trust with the Russian Federation in the field of security,”⁹² which would appear to undercut the notion of Baltic mistrust of Russia. However, Lithuania produced

the document prior to the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and may simply reference cooperation with Russia for diplomatic purposes, rather than out of a genuine belief in the feasibility of building trust.

Closely linked to this characterization of Russia as paranoid is the impression that Russia views itself as mistreated by the West. There is a prevailing belief in the Baltic states that Russia feels itself maligned by NATO and its standing in the world denigrated by western nations. Tüür argues, “Russia actually and really [believes] that they are mistreated, that the West humiliates them—humiliated, at least until now, but now they have real options to fight back, to stand up from their knees.”⁹³ There is also a consistent Russian narrative that NATO has, through its policy of enlargement, broken promises made in the immediate post-Cold War aftermath. Mary Elise Sarotte writes, “Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggressive actions in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 were fueled in part by his ongoing resentment about what he sees as the West's broken pact over NATO expansion.”⁹⁴ She further notes that this narrative is misleading, as there was never a formal agreement on limiting NATO expansion, with officials from Alliance member-states only implying that such an agreement would be possible.⁹⁵ There is evidence, therefore, to support the Baltic states’ impression of a Russia that considers the West to have betrayed or otherwise maligned them.

Determining the Nature of Potential Threats

The unified assessment of Russia’s worldview contrasts with the varied opinions on the exact manner in which a threat against the Baltic states in particular will arise. The distinctions here are not necessarily among the three Baltic republics, but rather within the policymaking ranks of all three states. There is disagreement over whether Russia is likely to come into conflict

with any of the Baltic republics at all, and even more so with respect to the manner in which such a conflict, should one occur, might manifest itself. Fears range from a hybrid operation of the sort executed in Crimea to an overt military attack under the cover of a military exercise. Concerns exist as well about the means by which Russia might provoke conflict—particularly, by leveraging issues of energy and of Russian minority populations. There is also disagreement over what the most likely target for Russia might be—be it Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, or somewhere outside of the Baltic region entirely. Such a varied range of opinions has not yielded a consensus on what would be the most likely avenue for Russia to take, or even what the likelihood of Russian action against the Baltic states might be.

Russia's annexation of Crimea made use of what many have referred to as hybrid warfare, characterized by the use of conventional military assets in unconventional manners. Defining the term, Pauli Järvenpää writes, "The increased popular focus on hybrid warfare and an emphasis on its non-physical dimensions have tended to mislead us into thinking of warfare as mainly stealth operations by 'little green men,' information operations, cyberattacks, and applications of political or economic pressure. In reality, however, hybrid actions have most often been supported by the use of conventional methods of warfare."⁹⁶ In other words, hybrid warfare is not simply the application of military force, or the application of covert methods of coercive force, but rather the application of the two in concert.

Observers now understand that Russian soldiers did participate, in some capacity, in the initial actions in Crimea that spurred the independence referendum. Armed gunmen established roadblocks and positioned themselves at or near critical government and civil infrastructure, significantly undercutting the control of local Ukrainian authorities. Many considered these

forces to be Russian soldiers without identifying insignia.⁹⁷ Such a threat has drawn the attention of analysts and policymakers in the Nordic-Baltic region. Edward Lucas, Senior-Vice President at the Center for European Policy Analysis, notes that a significant vulnerability exists in Russian transit rights across Lithuania to Kaliningrad. He argues that passenger trains crossing Lithuania do not receive the same levels of scrutiny as others entering the Schengen Area, further noting that “this could therefore be a way of introducing irregular military forces” to Lithuania.⁹⁸ Järvenpää, noting the threat, argues, “It is important to react quickly and decisively to hybrid threats. Therefore the [Nordic-Baltic-Poland Nine] countries, allied and non-allied alike, would benefit from jointly designing and executing complex ‘comprehensive security’ or ‘total defense’ plans that would bring together these countries’ civilian and military authorities to work and integrate their separate efforts into a common response plan.”⁹⁹

This is not the only mechanism by which Russia might attack the Baltic states that policymakers in the region fear. Numerous analysts and military planners have openly expressed concerns that Russia may use military exercises as cover for the movement of large numbers of combat-ready forces who are, in reality, preparing for combat against the Baltic States. Lucas notes several extremely provocative exercises carried out by the Russian Armed Forces: Zapad-09 and Ladoga, two concurrent exercises, rehearsed the invasion of the Baltic region and the use of nuclear weapons in support of military operations—including Warsaw as one of the potential targets.¹⁰⁰ A snap exercise (i.e. one called with little advance notice) conducted by Russia rehearsed the seizure of Finland’s Åland Islands, Sweden’s Gotland Island, and Denmark’s Bornholm Island (see Map 4), the capture of which would have rendered reinforcement of the Baltic states nearly impossible.¹⁰¹ Disturbingly, in June of 2014, the Russian

Air Force conducted a simulated attack against Bornholm as the bulk of Denmark's political elite had gathered there for a public policy event—a real attack of that nature would have eliminated much of Denmark's political leadership and crippled the nation's ability to respond.¹⁰²

Drills such as these have been a major cause for concern in the Baltic states. Hurt argues that it is rational to predict that Russia would use snap drills as cover for a surprise attack, stating, “Why wouldn't you camouflage your behavior with something that you do almost every week anyway? [...] That would be a perfectly logical move to make. Now we don't really know if they are going to attack somebody or not, but since they do exercises on a weekly basis anyways, I think that would be a perfect way of camouflaging it.”¹⁰³ Hurt also does not view the use of hybrid warfare as an option mutually exclusive with the use of a snap drill as cover for a surprise assault, saying, “I wouldn't say that there is option one and option two [...] Both could be used together or independently.”¹⁰⁴ It is evident, therefore, that policymakers in the Baltic consider the aforementioned potential forms of aggression as similarly realistic and dangerous. The threat assessment is not equal, however; where consideration of the use of a snap drill as cover for an attack is more speculative, hybrid attacks have played a part in both the Crimea annexation and the ongoing Donbas crisis. Therefore, if Russia is establishing a pattern of behavior, it will mirror their actions in Ukraine, rendering the hybrid threat a greater concern for the defense of the Baltic region.

If past actions are any indication of Russian behavior, one must consider the realm of cyberspace—an area in which Russia has threatened a number of its neighbors, the Baltic states included. In 2007, after the Estonian government relocated a Soviet-era monument against the wishes of its ethnic Russian population, Estonian websites experienced a crippling attack. The

distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack, which flooded the target websites with overwhelming requests for information from many malicious servers, hit government, financial, and media websites hard.¹⁰⁵ The crude nature of the attack led many analysts to determine that the Russian government was not at fault.¹⁰⁶ The Estonian government, however, found the Kremlin responsible, citing the fact that Estonian investigators traced the attacks back to locations in Russia with ties to the Putin administration, as well as obstinacy from the Russian Public Prosecutor's Office when Estonia requested legal cooperation on its behalf.¹⁰⁷ Even if Putin's administration was not directly responsible for the DDoS operation, the attack still underscored the vulnerability of the Baltic states to an attack if Russia should decide to carry one out. A year later, the Russo-Georgian War underscored this vulnerability when a wave of cyberattacks directed against Georgia struck critical websites as hostilities were unfolding.¹⁰⁸ As in Estonia, Russia denied responsibility. By its nature, cyber warfare allows the Kremlin (or any other aggressor) to have near total deniability in the course of an attack, making retaliation all but impossible.

Russia has also historically used the dependence of its neighbors on natural gas against them, a fact not lost on policymakers in the Baltic. Europe saw a particularly salient example of this in late 2005 and early 2006, when the Russian state-owned company Gazprom accused Ukraine of siphoning natural gas intended for Central and Western Europe and more than quadrupled the price of gas that they had charged Ukraine, from \$50 to \$230 per 1000 cubic meters.¹⁰⁹ When Ukraine denied the charges and refused to pay the inflated rates, Gazprom halted shipments of gas to Ukraine—a move that left Ukraine and the rest of Europe without Russian natural gas during a particularly frigid winter.¹¹⁰ Ukraine ultimately had little choice but

to accept Gazprom's terms to resume normal imports. It also admitted to siphoning gas shipments not intended for Ukrainian consumption.

Episodes such as the 2006 Ukraine gas crisis underscore the security and political dimensions of energy dependence. Rojnas Masiulis, Lithuania's Minister of Energy, stated bluntly in remarks delivered in Washington, D.C., "Energy is being used as a political weapon."¹¹¹ In particular, the Baltic states are extremely exposed to disruptions in supply. None of the three Baltic countries have natural gas deposits, and as of 2014, all three imported natural gas from Gazprom exclusively.¹¹² An EU-led stress test gauged the ability of member-states to cope with a complete cessation of Russian transport of natural gas. In such an instance, all of the Baltic countries would only be able to cope with the disruption for one week before the crisis would necessitate what the EU report termed *non-market measures*, or government intervention to mitigate the damage.¹¹³ Estonia would be among the countries hardest hit: assuming a lack of cooperation among EU member-states to address a shortfall, supplies of natural gas in Estonia would last only five days.¹¹⁴ The particular vulnerability of the Baltic countries and their complete dependence on Russia for access to natural gas makes the issue of energy security particularly salient, and underscores the dire consequences if Russia chooses to leverage this dependency against the three Baltic states.

The varied opinions on how Russia might leverage the Baltic states, should it choose to do so, match equally varied assessments of if and where they might apply pressure. In examining the vulnerabilities of an overt attack, numerous analysts consider the greatest vulnerability to lie just south of Lithuania, as the narrowest point between Kaliningrad and Belarus, Russia's ally, crosses roughly 65 kilometers (\approx 41 miles) of Polish territory.¹¹⁵ An attack of that nature would

completely separate the Baltic states from their NATO allies. Stoicescu, in describing the situation, argues that the stretch of territory connecting Lithuania and Poland “is the new Fulda Gap,” referencing the city of Fulda, West Germany through which Alliance planners had considered a Soviet attack most likely during the Cold War.¹¹⁶ Ilves expressed a similar sentiment, who also called Belarus “the new Fulda Gap.”¹¹⁷ Not all share this view, however: Radosław Sikorsky, the former Foreign Minister for Poland, argued that “politics will trump geography” in the case of Kaliningrad due to the standing transit agreement with Lithuania regarding free passage to the exclave, as well as the generally weaker and smaller nature of Lithuania vis-à-vis Poland.¹¹⁸ Former Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius agrees, saying, “We are afraid of any kind of possible provocations on transit routes, both railways, or gas pipeline, or electricity transit routes, which can be organized [...] to have some type of pretext from Moscow's side [...] to begin some aggressive actions.”¹¹⁹

Others, in examining the threat to the Baltic states, look at the heavy presence of Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia. State statisticians recorded that 25 percent of Estonia’s residents,¹²⁰ and almost 27 percent of Latvia’s residents,¹²¹ were ethnically Russian at the end of 2011. In contrast, only 5.8 percent of Lithuania’s population was ethnically Russian at the time of the 2011 census (see Figure 3).¹²² While a quick assessment of the ethnic composition of the three countries might lead one to conclude that both Latvia and Estonia are more likely to suffer from the sort of hybrid takeover experienced in Crimea, such a conclusion would hinge on a premise that lacks the nuance required to understand how ethnic minorities factor into the Baltic threat assessment. Stoicescu cautions, “These are very different regions, obviously. You cannot compare one to the other. You can’t compare the Baltics and Ukraine by far, even if people tend

to think in terms of analogies and, ‘Oh, there were Russians in Donbas [...], and there are Russians here in eastern Estonia and Latvia.’ They’re very different things.”¹²³ A more cautious assessment of the situation in Latvia and Estonia would yield evidence suggesting that there are differences in opinion among ethnic Russians in both countries. Those in Latvia, for example, are more inclined to show disillusionment with the government in Riga and express greater enthusiasm for Moscow, whereas residents of the Estonian border city of Narva, while they may not consider themselves to be truly Estonian, have developed a unique regional identity and are less sympathetic to the Russian government.¹²⁴

One must note, however, that these statements playing down the threat from ethnic Russian minorities does not indicate an absence thereof. In the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s collapse and the independence of the former Soviet republics, each new state crafted laws concerning citizenship. In Latvia and Estonia, these laws largely barred ethnic Russians from attaining citizenship through requirements pertaining to language proficiency and genealogy. While both countries have since taken steps to remedy this, approximately 6 percent of Estonian residents¹²⁵ and 10 percent of Latvian residents¹²⁶ are non-citizens without citizenship of any other state (see Figure 4). Though numerous organizations label this demographic as *stateless*, the Estonian and Latvian governments, as well as the EU, avoid this term. A 2004 EU report stated, “In Latvia, non-citizens under the 1995 *Law on Status of citizens of the former USSR* who are not citizens of Latvia or any other country are neither citizens, nor foreigners, nor stateless persons. A great proportion of the large Russians-speaking population of the country falls within this category, unknown in public international law. The same applies to non-citizens in Estonia.”¹²⁷ The lack of supranational legal protection heightens the potential vulnerability of

those without citizenship of any state. In both Estonia and Latvia, the government issues so-called alien's passports to non-citizens.¹²⁸ Consequently, they have freedom of movement not afforded to other stateless persons. Even so, there remain fewer legal protections for non-citizens in both states.

The legal dimension of non-citizenship and other issues that disproportionately affect ethnic Russians have social implications. This treatment can serve as a catalyst for resentment on the part of the minority population, with many expressing a sense of a lack of belonging in their own country and a sense of disappointment in and betrayal by their government.¹²⁹ Whether this resentment might reach openly hostile levels is uncertain. It is not, however, without precedent, as seen in the 2007 relocation of a Soviet-era monument in Estonia. The Estonian government moved the monument, a bronze statue of a Soviet soldier, out of the center of Tallinn, provoking a furious response from the city's Russian population. The ensuing riots resulted in scores of injuries and hundreds of arrests.¹³⁰ This flare-up of civil unrest underscores not only the sensitivity of ethnicity in the Baltic states, but also the possibility that similar unrest might present a pretext for Russian intervention. Even if there is not an organic threat from a Russian fifth column in Latvia or Estonia, Russia may still use the grievances of ethnic Russians as a justification for action.

When one does not consider the Baltic states in isolation, there are those who argue that the threat to any of the three republics is very small when compared against threats to Russia's other neighbors. Indeed, any threat assessment cannot look at one region in isolation, and must instead consist of a holistic view of the security position both of one's own country and of one's potential adversaries. The three Baltic republics engage in such an assessment. While references

to potential Russian targets aside from the Baltic states are absent from the stated security and defense policies of the three nations, all state that the likelihood of war is low, but present. The Estonian National Security Concept states, “A military attack against Estonia is unlikely in the present and near future. Nevertheless one cannot exclude this possibility in the longer perspective.”¹³¹ Similarly, the Latvian State Defense Concept notes, “While the potential for direct military confrontation on Latvian territory is relatively low, it cannot be completely ruled out.”¹³² Lithuania’s National Security Strategy states, “Although there is no direct military threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State, a dynamic, complex and difficult to predict security environment poses certain external and internal risks, dangers and threats to the national security interests of the Republic of Lithuania.”¹³³ Thus, the official position of all three Baltic states is that the risk of war is low. Here, the agreement ends, however, as the nature of what specific threats are most likely to arise, and where, are still debated.

THE IMPACT ON BRUSSELS

Given that the Baltic states’ perception of the threat from Russia is both acute and persistent, policymakers in those countries were more vindicated than surprised at Russia’s behavior. Hurt describes Russia as “still very much similar to the Soviet Union in 1945 and 1989,” and dismissing notions that NATO could have feasibly cooperated with Russia.¹³⁴ Erkki Tori, the deputy defense counselor for the Estonian delegation to NATO, remarked that the sort of hybrid warfare that Russia employed in Crimea was not a novel concept to the Baltic countries, even as other NATO member-states reacted with shock to Russia’s actions.¹³⁵ Estonia and Latvia had lobbied for Georgian participation in NATO’s MAP in 2008 and 2014 as well.¹³⁶ Though the delegations of those countries did not explicitly declare in 2008 that efforts at

countering or containing Russia motivated their support, the fact that they had far less concern for antagonizing Russia than their Western European counterparts is telling. At the 2015 NATO summit, Baltic delegations did state that “NATO should send a tough message to Moscow by inviting Georgia to join the MAP.”¹³⁷ With their ex-Warsaw Pact allies in NATO, the Baltic republics have pressed NATO consistently for greater attention on Russia and the security of Eastern European members of the Alliance. The extent to which NATO—and the EU—will assuage their concerns, however, is less clear.

Moving NATO’s Focus to the East

Central to the defense of the Baltic states is the credibility of NATO’s security guarantees. Though many within the Alliance consider the likelihood of an overt attack against the Baltic states to be low, the question of whether NATO would defend the region in such an instance is nevertheless important for reasons of credibility. The more likely a potential aggressor is to see NATO’s intentions to defend the region as genuine, the less likely an overt attack will be. Consequently, the likelihood of any invocation of NATO’s mutual defense clause would decrease as well. Hurt notes, “If you asked the question of whether Article V actually will be invoked if there is a need to invoke it [...] I would say all [NATO] nations are prepared or ready to make the preparations so that this situation would never occur, because if you imagine what is the worst outcome, it is a situation where we [in NATO] need to go to war for each other.”¹³⁸ The Baltic states, together with other Eastern European NATO member-states, have long pushed the Alliance to adopt a credible defense and deterrence posture along its eastern flank. Within NATO, however, what constitutes a credible posture is in dispute.

Beginning in 2014, the United States undertook Operation Atlantic Resolve in an effort to bolster NATO readiness and reassure the Baltic states, as well as other Eastern European allies, that the Alliance stands ready to act on their behalf and remains committed to their defense.¹³⁹ Baltic governments acclaimed the announcement of the operation, viewing it as a concrete American guarantee of their security. Jesse Granger wrote of the announcement in Tallinn, “As he [Lt. Gen. Donald Campbell] addressed those in attendance, Campbell departed from his scripted remarks to confirm to the crowd that American forces were inbound to their country, to stay and train with their Estonian counterparts for an indefinite period. The audience expressed relief as they stood in applause of the general. Some in the crowd openly wept.”¹⁴⁰ As a public political gesture, Atlantic Resolve had immediate positive effect in the Baltic countries from the moment of its unveiling.

Atlantic Resolve encompasses a number of US and Alliance operations and exercises to this effect. As part of the operation, NATO augmented its Baltic Air Policing mission with additional aircraft to conduct patrols of the airspace over the three Baltic republics.¹⁴¹ Concomitantly, the United States, together with other Alliance members, rotated military detachments through Baltic and other Eastern European countries, prepositioning equipment in the region for quick use in the event of a crisis.¹⁴² In the spring of 2015, a detachment of the United States’ 2nd Cavalry Regiment undertook an 1,800 kilometer (≈ 1,100 mile) road march from Estonia to Germany in a demonstration of Alliance resolve.¹⁴³ A similar operation, Bayonet Thrust, moved elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Estonia to Italy across 2,600 kilometers (≈ 1,600 miles) in early November of the same year.¹⁴⁴ Operations such as these were a highly visible demonstration of American and Allied commitment to the security and defense

of the Baltic countries. The Alliance also announced an expansion of its NRF in direct response to Russian activity in Ukraine. Previously at a strength of 13,000 personnel, NATO announced its intentions to boost its strength to 40,000 personnel.¹⁴⁵ NATO also announced the establishment of the VJTF, a land component of 5,000 troops with air and maritime assets as needed to support it, intended to be a rapidly deployable spearhead force for the NRF.¹⁴⁶

All of these NATO measures have assuaged fears in the Baltic region, reassuring policymakers of the Alliance's commitment to their territorial defense and to deterring aggressive behavior on the part of Russia. Stoicescu, in describing the NATO's deployments and exercises, states that the Baltic republics "have been successful thus far in NATO in [their] relationship with the United States in terms of defense," adding that the American prepositioning of military equipment for a brigade-sized contingent of troops was a positive development for Alliance deterrence posture.¹⁴⁷ Hurt echoed Stoicescu's sentiments, describing the overall trend as positive, though he observed that NATO still tends to be more reactive to Russian behavior than proactive.¹⁴⁸ The Baltic states, however, sought stronger assurances. In mid-2015, all three Baltic republics announced that they would call upon NATO to station a brigade in the Baltic region permanently, a measure that the Alliance has been wary of entertaining.¹⁴⁹ Jan Techau, the director of Carnegie Europe, spoke at length about the perceived importance of a permanent NATO presence in the Baltic region:

In the Baltic states [...], there are tremendous doubts [about NATO's security guarantees]. They're not entirely sure whether the security guarantee is 100% reliable. And this is why they eagerly want other NATO member's troops on their ground, stationed permanently, because they understand the very old rule inside NATO, which is that Article V is a piece of paper, and that the actual security guarantee comes from the fact that you have troops on the ground so that an attack on one is quite physically an attack on all. [...] *That's* what triggers a response. Article V in itself doesn't trigger a

response. [...] Their point of view [in the Baltic states] is that, as long as we don't have this, as long as the Americans and the Germans and the French and the British are not here on a permanent basis, Article V is only a theoretical guarantee.¹⁵⁰

Techau noted further that the current rotational deployment scheme that NATO has adopted would fulfill this physical security requirement, and that the argument for a permanent stationing of troops in the Baltic region does not carry the day in NATO.¹⁵¹ Even so, the Baltic states will likely continue to argue alongside their Eastern European neighbors for just such a policy on the part of the Alliance.

Relevant to concerns in the Baltic region over the reliability of NATO's defense commitments in the Baltic region is the debate over burden-sharing: the question of which state or states is responsible for the defense of Europe. The issue has manifested itself in the relative defense spending of Alliance member-states. At the 2014 NATO summit, members pledged to raise their defense spending to two percent of gross domestic product, or to maintain defense spending above that level if already doing so.¹⁵² As discussed, the Baltic countries view NATO as integral to their defense, filling gaps in their security that would otherwise leave them vulnerable. The question of what the Alliance and its members consider a fair burden, however, is distinct from whether raising defense spending to such levels would actually result in benefits for NATO's effectiveness. Techau argues:

The [two] percent metric looks weak when held against qualitative standards. It says nothing about the ability of a country to absorb the funds in such a way that produces concrete additional military capability. It also falls short in relating to actual threat assessments and other strategic requirements a government might define. For any of these requirements, the [two] percent metric is simply too static and too simplistic.¹⁵³

In Techau's view, this metric has value as a vehicle for discussing issues of burden-sharing within the Alliance that one should not conflate with the practicality or efficacy of raising

defense spending.¹⁵⁴ Though two percent of GDP spent on defense does not represent beneficial military expenditure, the fact that the Alliance has codified the issue, albeit in a non-binding way, highlights the contention that burden-sharing has caused in the alliance and sends a signal that the United States in particular does not wish to underwrite the full cost of Europe's defense. Though the Baltic states do not interpret this request as an affront to the alliance's defense commitments—indeed, Estonia had already increased its military budget in 2014 (see Table 1)¹⁵⁵ and has pledged to exceed two percent—it is an unambiguous assertion that the Alliance expects the Baltic states, and other NATO allies, to share more of the burden in European defense, at least in a symbolic sense.

Even if not fully satisfactory to the Baltic states, and in spite of debate over whether certain states contribute too much or too little to Europe's defense, NATO's posture on conventional threats is well-defined, and does offer reassurances for the region's security. The Alliance's ability to respond to hybrid or unconventional threats, however, is in question, as there is a mismatch between the pressure that NATO faces in responding to such threats and its ability to do so. To foster cooperation on cyber security, NATO established the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) in Tallinn one year after the cyber attack against Estonia.¹⁵⁶ Even so, the efficacy of this, and other measures to address softer aspects of defense, is in question. In discussing pressure on NATO to react to unconventional threats, Paul Ivan, a senior policy analyst with the European Policy Centre, remarks, "The pressure is there, but it's true that in terms of capability and means of reacting to that, they're not up to the job. [...] The cyber security cooperation has increased, and NATO is developing capabilities which concern propaganda and other measures that they can take, but I don't think that NATO is ready for

that.”¹⁵⁷ Techau describes the difficulty for NATO to coordinate responses to hybrid threats, noting, “If you look at hybrid and cyber, these are security problems for which you need not only the military, but the private sector to a large extent, because the infrastructure is all owned privately [...]. [You would need] the police forces [and] the interior ministries, because the hybrid threat touches on so many various fields that are not military [...]. You basically need a sort of comprehensive cooperation that is very difficult to organize.”¹⁵⁸ In short, NATO recognizes the changing nature of the threat to its member-states. Its capacity to address such a dynamic threat adequately, however, may require time to cultivate—if it is within NATO’s capabilities at all.

Untapped Potential for the EU to Fill Security Gaps

NATO’s history constrains the options available to the Alliance in deterring and responding to softer, less conventional threats, even as NATO’s structure has evolved in an effort to meet these challenges. As stated, these gaps deal in aspects of what one can term *homeland security*: border protection, criminal intelligence sharing, and counter-propaganda, to name several. NATO also lacks the ability to insulate its member-states from economic shocks; as Russia uses trade and energy to pressure its neighbors, the ability to weather the disruption is crucial. Yet while NATO’s institutions do not appear to address these facets of homeland security, there are numerous EU institutions that deal exclusively in them. At least on paper, therefore, there is a tremendous amount of untapped potential for the EU to increase its role in the provision of security on the continent. Whether this will materialize in a coherent and robust fashion, however, is in serious doubt, as is the prospect of EU-NATO cooperation in a joint effort to close these security gaps.

In examining covert and hybrid threats, border security is essential to the security of the Baltic states. The 2007 kidnapping of an Estonian security official on the Russia-Estonia border underscores the potential for small border transgressions to become a tool for leverage against any of the Baltic governments.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, any insertion of irregular forces necessitates the exploitation of weaknesses in a nation's border security. An institutionalized example of just such a weakness is in the transit of Russians across Lithuania bound to and from Kaliningrad; this group of travelers does not receive the same scrutiny to which other entrants to the Schengen Area are subject.¹⁶⁰ Small states only have so much in terms of resources to manage their borders, though the comparatively short stretches of border for which they are responsible does lessen the burden of their obligations. The EU established Frontex as the Union's external border service to better pool European resources and coordinate border security operations.¹⁶¹ Though it is largely dependent on Schengen-participant countries for its resources, it does have European Border Guard Teams (EBGTs) that offer fast response capabilities.¹⁶² The EU can deploy these to bolster security along the Union's eastern border and safeguard Eastern European states against infiltration. However, the EU has largely tasked Frontex with addressing the migrant crisis currently affecting Europe, with the EU's announcements regarding the agency and EBGTs largely concerning their increased role in detecting, processing, and often deporting asylum-seekers.¹⁶³ An increased Frontex presence would likely require a boost in the number of personnel working for the organization, which currently has only 300 staff members at its Warsaw headquarters,¹⁶⁴ as well as an expanded focus of Frontex's mission.

The EU has other tools at its disposal to address other aspects of homeland security: the European External Action Service (EEAS) has an Intelligence Analysis Centre (INTCEN)

intended “to provide intelligence analyses, early warning and situational awareness to the [...] EEAS.”¹⁶⁵ It has also embarked on a campaign to counter Russian propaganda in Europe, working to dispel misinformation about the EU.¹⁶⁶ The Union can also mobilize the criminal intelligence sharing network established through Europol in a manner parallel to that of INTCEN, focusing on any internal destabilization efforts within the Baltic states. Tori specifically identified border security, criminal intelligence sharing, and strategic communications as areas of potential strength for the EU in the realm of European security.¹⁶⁷

The actual prospects for cooperation within the Union on these issues, however, may not be as high as they are on paper. There is a gap between the EU’s mandate and the willingness of member-states to give Brussels power. In large part, this is due to a perception that these matters have been hallmarks of state sovereignty. Ilves states, “There are certain structural problems in the EU in that we have a High Commissioner for a Common [Foreign and] Security Policy, and at the same time [...] a number of members do not want to actually give genuine foreign policy power to the European Union and [...] with members not wanting to do anything on their own. Everything is falling in between the cracks.”¹⁶⁸ Techau observes that homeland security issues tend to remain the prerogative of the member-states themselves, with little appetite for EU management thereof.¹⁶⁹ Steven Blockmans, the head of the EU Foreign Policy section at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels, echoed those sentiments, noting that while mechanisms exist for collaboration and the sharing of intelligence, this is largely carried out at a bilateral level and on an *ad hoc* basis due to a lack of trust in an EU-wide intelligence-sharing scheme.¹⁷⁰ He added, “Everything stands or falls with this level of trust through which a member

state either under attack or the one holding information is willing to actually show solidarity or ask for cooperation of another member state.”¹⁷¹

EU-NATO cooperation is even less likely. In part, this is due to the reasons outlined above: NATO and the EU cannot coordinate on the defense of Europe if the EU is unable to take stock of its capabilities and make full use of them. Cooperation within the EU on security is therefore a necessary prerequisite for cooperation between the EU and NATO. Beyond this, however, despite the importance of both institutions in Europe’s security community, the EU and NATO seldom cooperate. While EU-NATO cooperation is not necessary in closing the gap between conventional and unconventional security, it would raise the efficacy thereof. Despite the potential benefits, there is little evidence to suggest that the two institutions will increase their cooperation sufficiently. Techau states bluntly, “NATO and the EU do not really work together. They work at the technical level as an exchange of information—they have some meetings at the technical level—but in terms of a really coordinated political approach to problems [...] that’s not happening, and its not going to happen anytime soon.”¹⁷²

The nonconventional security area in which the EU excels is in the economic realm. Together with the United States, the EU adopted a sanctions regime against Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea. Among other measures, the EU forbade the purchase or sale of financial products from or to Russian energy firms, defense companies, and state-owned banks; the sale of weapons or dual-use equipment to Russia; and importation from or investment in Crimea.¹⁷³ Russia retaliated with counter-sanctions against EU agricultural products, prompting the Union to allocate funding totaling €500 million to compensate farmers adversely affected by the sanctions regime.¹⁷⁴ This has not been without contention. Blockmans notes the difficulty in

reaching a consensus on a sanctions regime that ultimately forces some member-states to suffer economic harm:

Any compromise entails almost in all cases a package deal, and as we've seen also in the context of the adoption of the sanctions against Russia, certain member states [...] have shown their reluctance in adopting those sanctions or in supporting them, and have [...] tried to extract benefits from other member states or from the European Commission in being compensated for the negative economic fallout that they've suffered whilst already being in negative growth, for example, for Italy or Greece. That has worked up until now [...] but the sanctions] would have to be prolonged if indeed the intention was to effectuate behavioral change on the side of Russian decision makers in Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine.¹⁷⁵

Despite these difficulties, the EU proved an effective forum for the establishment of a robust sanctions regime and a capable guarantor of economic well-being for those states hardest hit by both the EU sanctions and the Russian counter-sanctions.

Closely linked to the question of economics is energy security, another area in which the EU has been active. In 2014, all EU member-states carried out stress tests of their energy infrastructure and consumption to determine the possible effects of a Russian suspension of gas shipments to EU states or a disruption in the gas pipeline routes through Ukraine.¹⁷⁶ The European Commission, based on the results of these stress tests, issued a communiqué assessing mitigation tools, both at an EU level and on the basis of the needs of individual member-states.¹⁷⁷ Among the main findings was that unity among EU states, as well as neighboring European countries outside of the Union, would mitigate the impact of an energy supply shock, whether benign or malicious.¹⁷⁸ The EU has taken steps to foster cooperation of this sort through the Third Energy Package, an effort to, among other things, open the energy market among the Union's member-states and facilitate cross-border energy trade.¹⁷⁹ Where the Union has faltered in areas of security in which it had great potential to succeed, it has demonstrated its capacity to

act as an instrument of both economic leverage against Russia and economic protection of its member-states. At least in this area, the EU fills a critical security role that NATO cannot meet.

CONCLUSIONS

One finds few surprises in the assessment of the Baltic states of their security situation. In all three of the Baltic republics, both NATO and the EU are essential pillars of the security architecture in Europe, indispensable to the security of their own nations. Of the two, NATO has primacy of importance, having had the longest and clearest mandate for guaranteeing the security of its member-states. Even so, the Baltic states see aspects of their security that neither organization, in isolation, can meet in their totality. Additionally, though EU or NATO membership does confer intrinsic security benefits, these cannot guarantee the security of the Baltic countries—or any member-state—and both institutions must take concrete steps to back up any security guarantees that they offer. While the view of the EU as a potential security organization does depart from that of other Union member-states, it is understandable given the security environment of the Baltic states.

Similarly unsurprising is the Baltic states' assessment of Russia's intentions and motivations for its behavior. Given the long and painful shared history of the three Baltic republics with regards to Russia, especially during the post-World War II Soviet occupation, their interpretation of Russian behavior has been one of an antagonistic and revanchist Kremlin. Furthermore, this is a long-held view, not simply a reaction to Russian involvement in Georgia in 2008, or in Ukraine beginning in 2014. Perhaps the only surprise is that Baltic governments reacted with less shock than their counterparts in Western Europe to Russia's annexation of Crimea. One might expect the opposite to hold true, given the greater perception of danger on the

part of those states closest physically and historically to Russia. Yet one can best characterize the reaction less as one of shock (though the annexation of Crimea was a very unexpected event and did come as a surprise to, among other states, the Baltic republics) and more as one of vindication. The varied assessment within the Baltic states of the specific nature of the threat is understandable, and the disparity is likely more attributable to differences in personal assessments of the threat, rather than distinctions based on the perspectives of individual Baltic states. Overall, the three republics have a unified assessment of the EU and NATO's role, and in their belief that Russia poses a grave threat to European security. Their unity on these issues makes the three Baltic states a more potent diplomatic force within those organizations.

There is clear evidence that both NATO and the EU have begun to move in the direction that the Baltic states have wanted. This is most apparent in NATO: the Alliance suspended activity on the NATO-Russia Council and announced an increase in rotating deployments to Eastern Europe, including very public displays of American military power. Baltic and Eastern European calls for more permanent bases for NATO forces on the Alliance's eastern flank, however, met a colder reception in Brussels. With regards to the EU, its main contributions to the security of the Baltic states have been participation in the sanctions regime against Russia, the provision of economic assistance to lessen the effects of Russian counter-sanctions, and the measures taken to promote energy security. By no means are the Baltic states the only beneficiaries. Indeed, the sanctions and counter-sanctions had hit hardest those countries with close economic ties to Russia—including the three Baltic states. Yet a robust response from the EU was and remains to the clear benefit of the Baltic states' firm position against Russia's annexation of Crimea and continued involvement in Ukraine's Donbas region.

At present, the security architecture in Europe has sufficed in responding to the dynamic threats that have faced members of the European security community. Hybrid warfare as carried out in Crimea, however, does appear to have taxed the flexibility of the two institutions in their responses, exposing gaps in need of closing to best ensure the security and stability of Europe in the future. As NATO remains firmly grounded in the application of conventional military power, it may find itself limited in its ability to respond to instances of hybrid warfare. There are steps that the Alliance can take, however: improving its information warfare and psychological operations capabilities to meet the evolving threat is essential, as is training its forces to secure and retain both hard and soft points of control. The failure of Ukraine to secure locations of political significance, most notably the parliament building in Simferopol, hamstrung its credibility throughout the crisis. With training, NATO can avoid making similar mistakes.

There is tremendous untapped potential for the EU to fill gaps that NATO cannot. The Union has institutions that, on paper, have the ability to respond to homeland security issues that would comprise the covert side of any hybrid operation. However, the EU's border security, foreign intelligence gathering, and criminal intelligence sharing mechanisms can only be effective if member-states lend adequate support. While funding of these organs of the EU is essential, what is even more critical is cultivating the political will of member-states to engage in cooperation on this level and share certain powers, which have traditionally been the prerogative of sovereign states, with EU bodies. Absent this, a coordinated, EU-wide effort to bolster homeland security will necessarily fall victim to a stratification of internal policing and counterintelligence work along state lines. The consequences of this are not only apparent in countering hybrid operations, but also in other homeland security issues that confront European

states, from terrorism and non-state organized violence to migration to the transfer of illicit goods and laundered money across international boundaries.

It would be a gross overstatement to describe the security situation between Russia and the European security community as grave or as precarious. As of now, NATO, the EU, and the states that comprise them both have managed effective reactions to activities that threaten the security of Europe. While one could find fault with the steps that NATO has taken to reassure its Eastern European members, the Alliance has had to balance the needs and perspectives of Western European allies who, by virtue of their position, do not see the threat with a sense of severity, urgency, or immediacy analogous to that of their counterparts to the east. This is a balance that NATO has struck well, as has the EU, and there is reason to believe that both institutions will continue on this trend, with a stronger focus on the East than in years past as a lasting consequence of Russia's behavior in Ukraine. Barring any major changes in Europe's security environment, one can expect NATO to continue its efforts on securing its former Soviet and Warsaw Pact alliance members, particularly those most concerned by recent Russian behavior, in the near future.

This does not mean, however, that one should accept the current state of affairs in European security. To close the security gaps that hybrid warfare has exposed, EU member-states must be willing to cooperate and integrate more robustly on issues of homeland security. Furthermore, the EU and NATO must deepen their cooperation to ensure that they can fill all security gaps, and that each organization is capable of marshaling its strengths to cover the weaknesses of the other. In their own ways, NATO and the EU are responsible for the peace and prosperity that Europe has enjoyed since the end of the Second World War. The challenge from

Russia that Europe faces today may not be of the same existential nature as in the Cold War. Yet it is a challenge that, if not met properly, will be a tremendous opportunity missed for the European security community to deepen its integration, and will leave the frontier of Europe needlessly vulnerable. The Baltic perspective on Europe's security environment not only demonstrates the situation as it is, but also as it could be. It now falls upon the members of Europe's security community to determine its future.

NOTES

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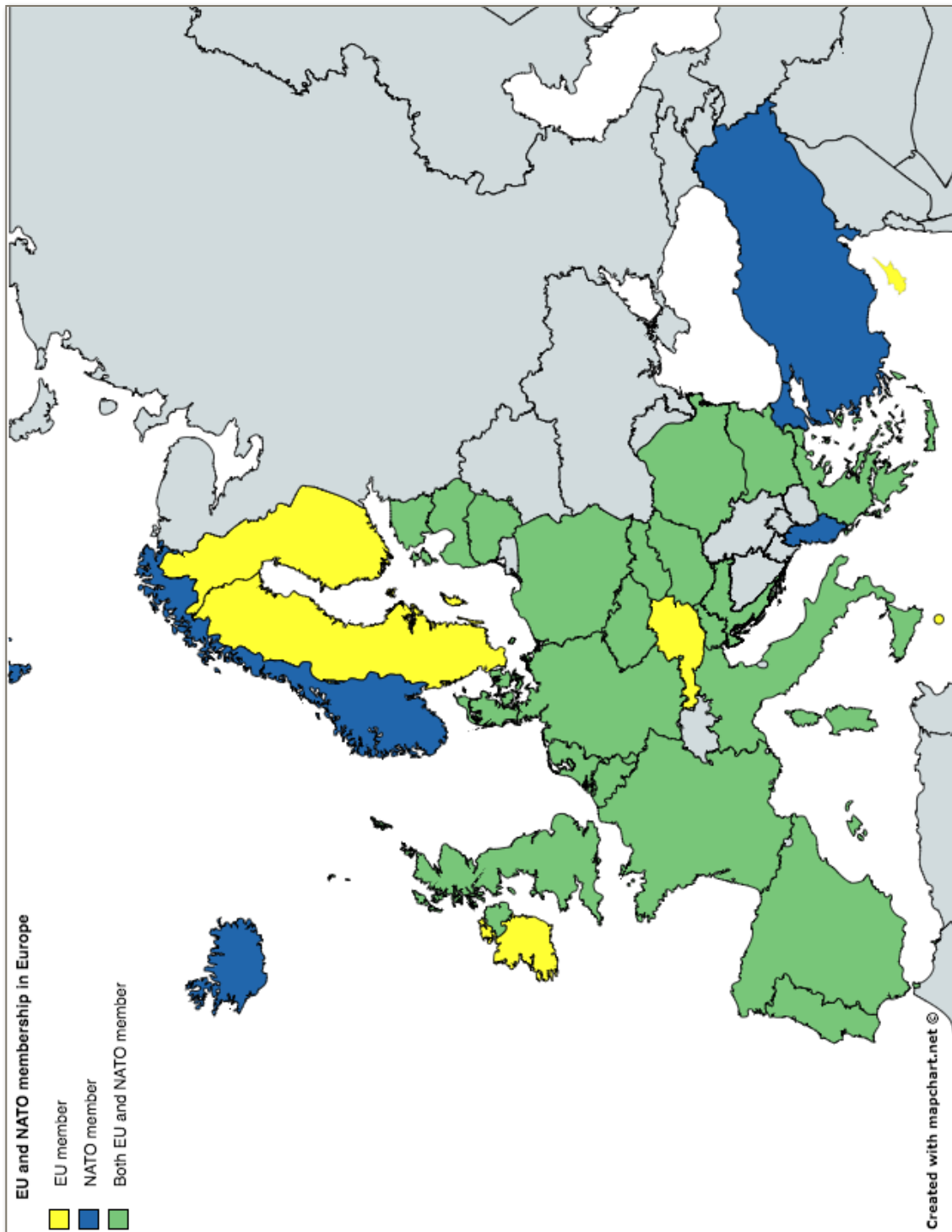
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APPENDICES

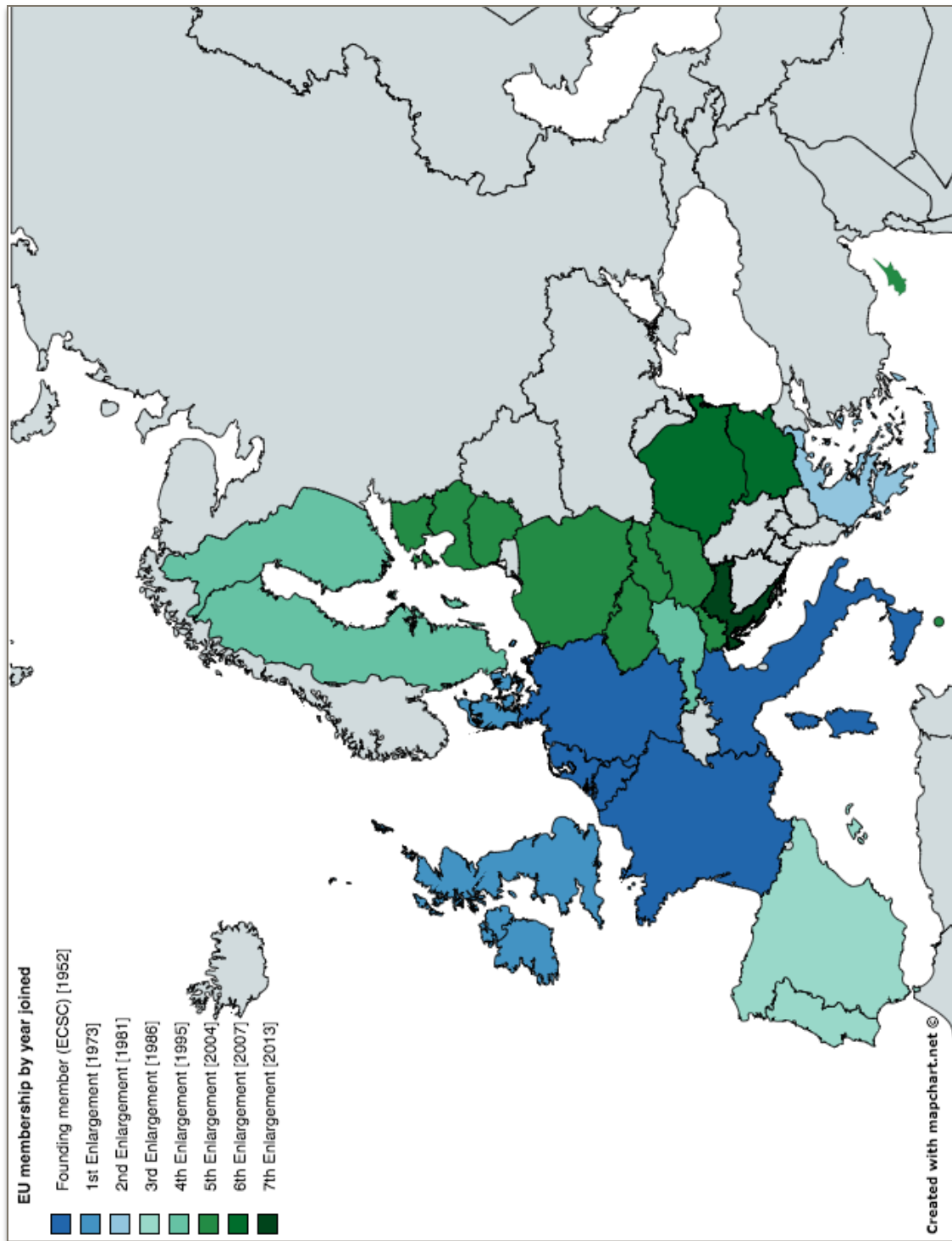
Appendix A — Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Initialisms

CCDCOE	Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DDoS	Distributed denial of service
EBGT	European Border Guard Team
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
Europol	European Police Office
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
GDR	German Democratic Republic
ICDS	International Center for Defence and Security
IFOR	Implementation Force
INTCEN	Intelligence Analysis Centre
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRF	NATO Response Force
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SFOR	Stabilization Force
UN	United Nations
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

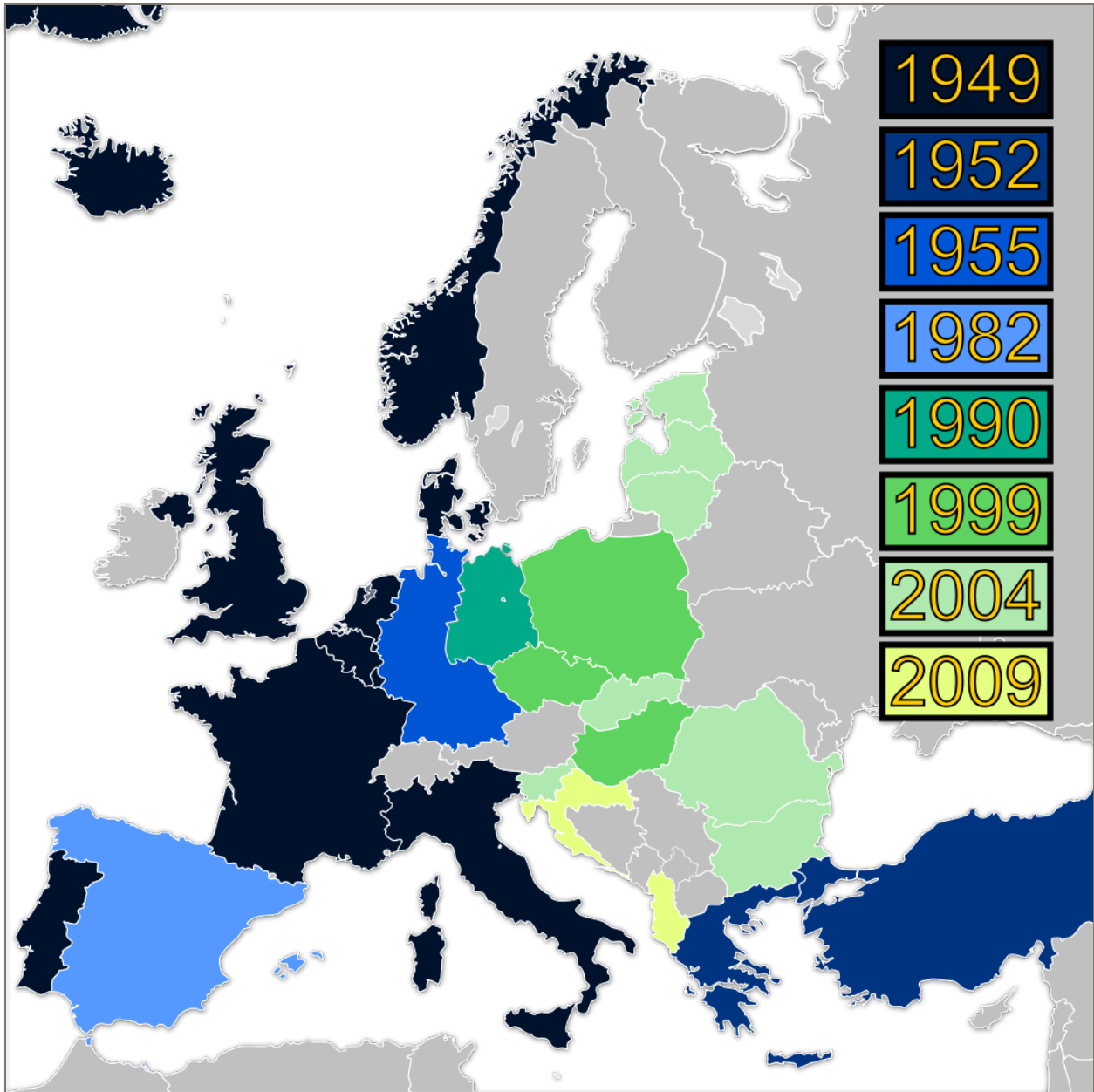


Map 1: A thematic map showing European states based on their membership in either NATO or the EU, or in both organizations.

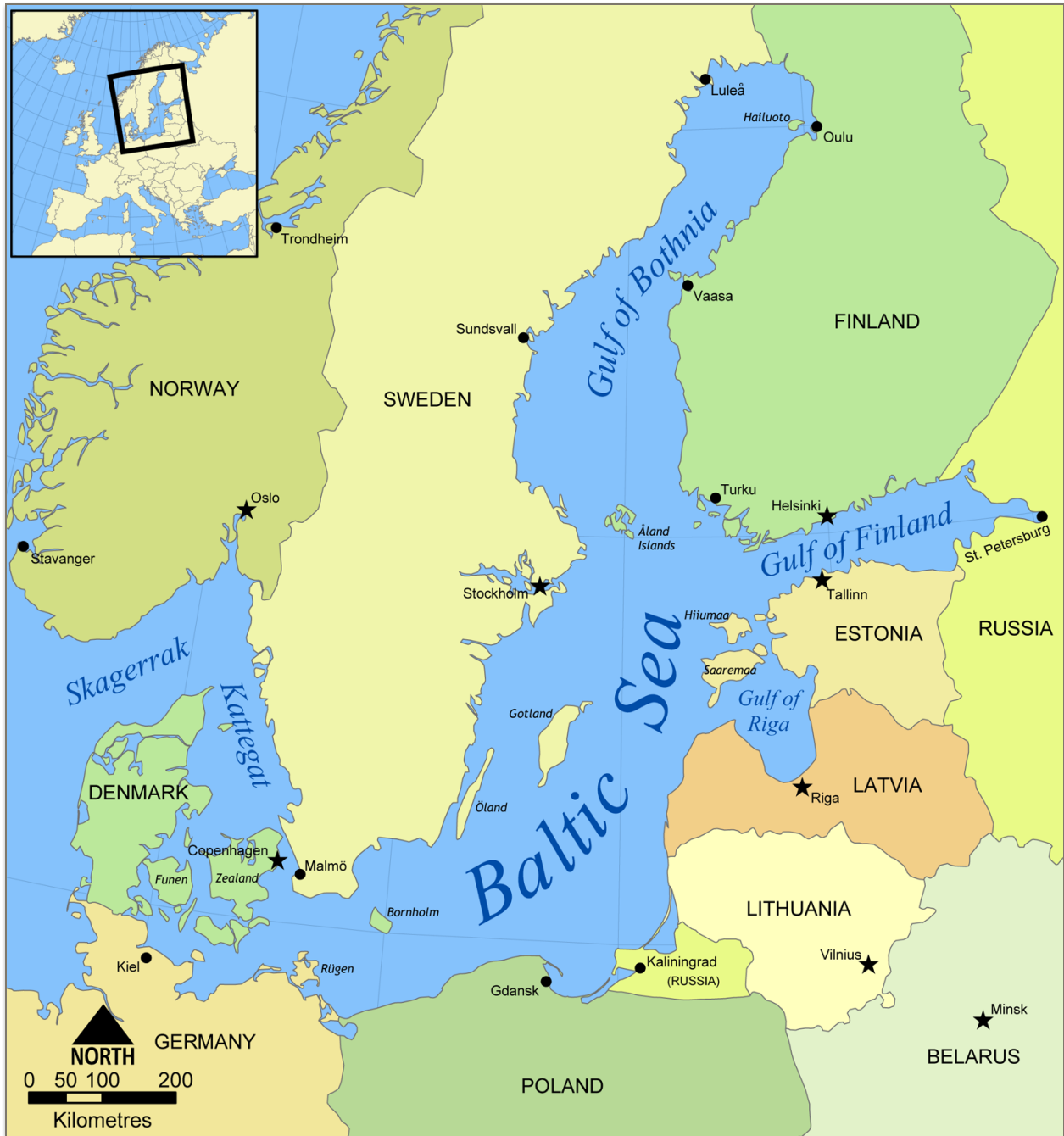
Girard Bucello IV, “EU and NATO Membership,” Thematic map, (March 26, 2016).



Map 2: A thematic map showing membership in the EU by date of accession to the Union. East and West Germany are not divided on this map. German reunification in 1990 resulted in East German accession to the EU immediately upon reunification. Girard Bucello IV, “EU Membership by Year,” Thematic map, (March 26, 2016).



Map 3: A thematic map showing membership in NATO by date of accession to the Alliance. East and West Germany are divided on this map, reflecting German reunification in 1990. Patrick Neil, “History of NATO Enlargement,” Thematic map, (September 15, 2008), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/45/History_of_NATO_enlargement.svg/1024px-History_of_NATO_enlargement.svg.png.



Map 4: A map of the Baltic Sea region, with bodies of water, islands, political boundaries, national capitals, and other key cities labeled.

Norman Einstein, "Baltic Sea Map," Political map, (May 25, 2006), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/92/Baltic_Sea_map.png.

Appendix C — Figures

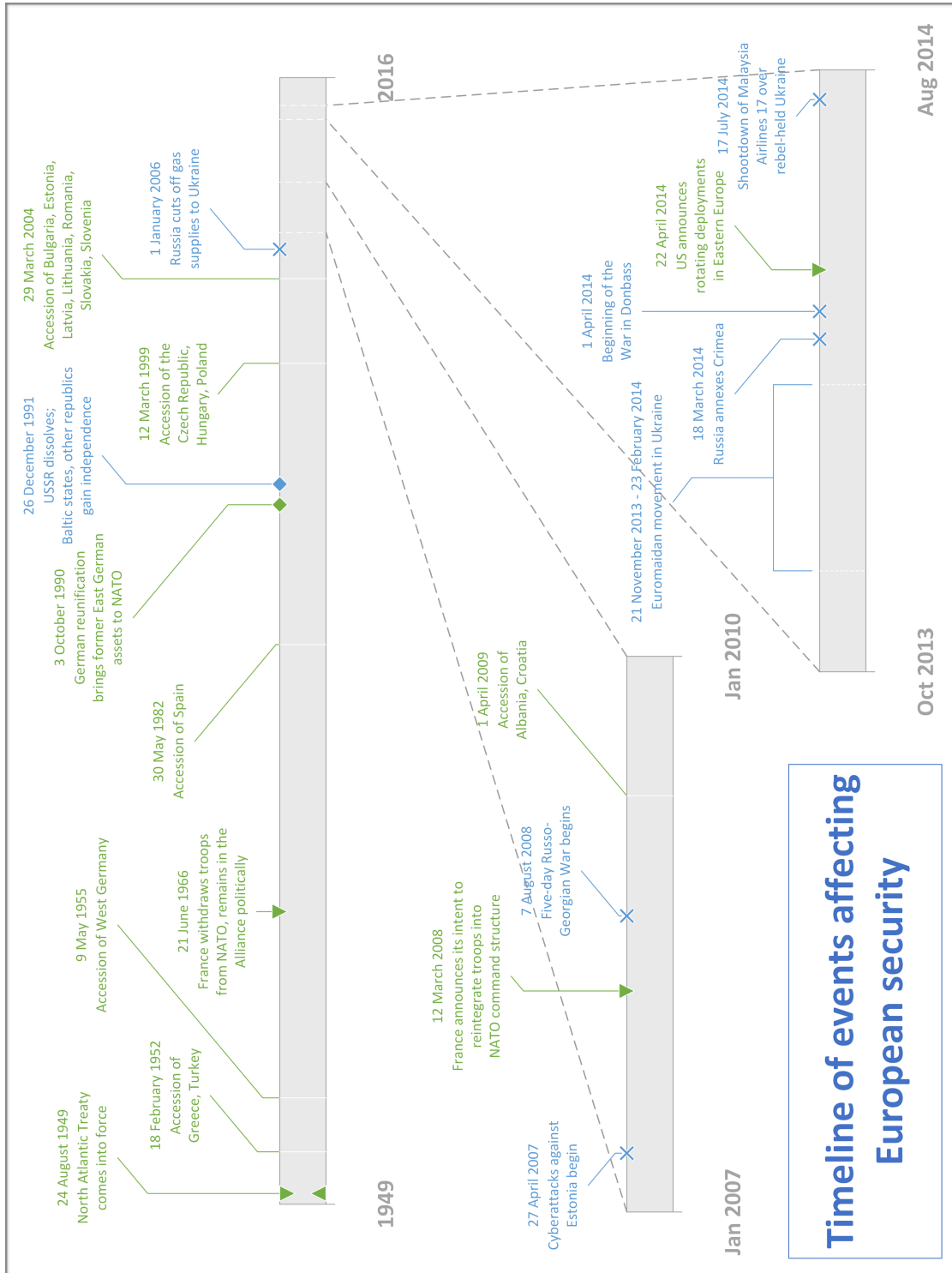


Figure 1: A timeline of events in NATO’s history, with the accession of member-states and with other events in European security relevant to the scope of this paper labeled. Girard Bucello IV, “Timeline of events affecting European security,” (April 4, 2016).

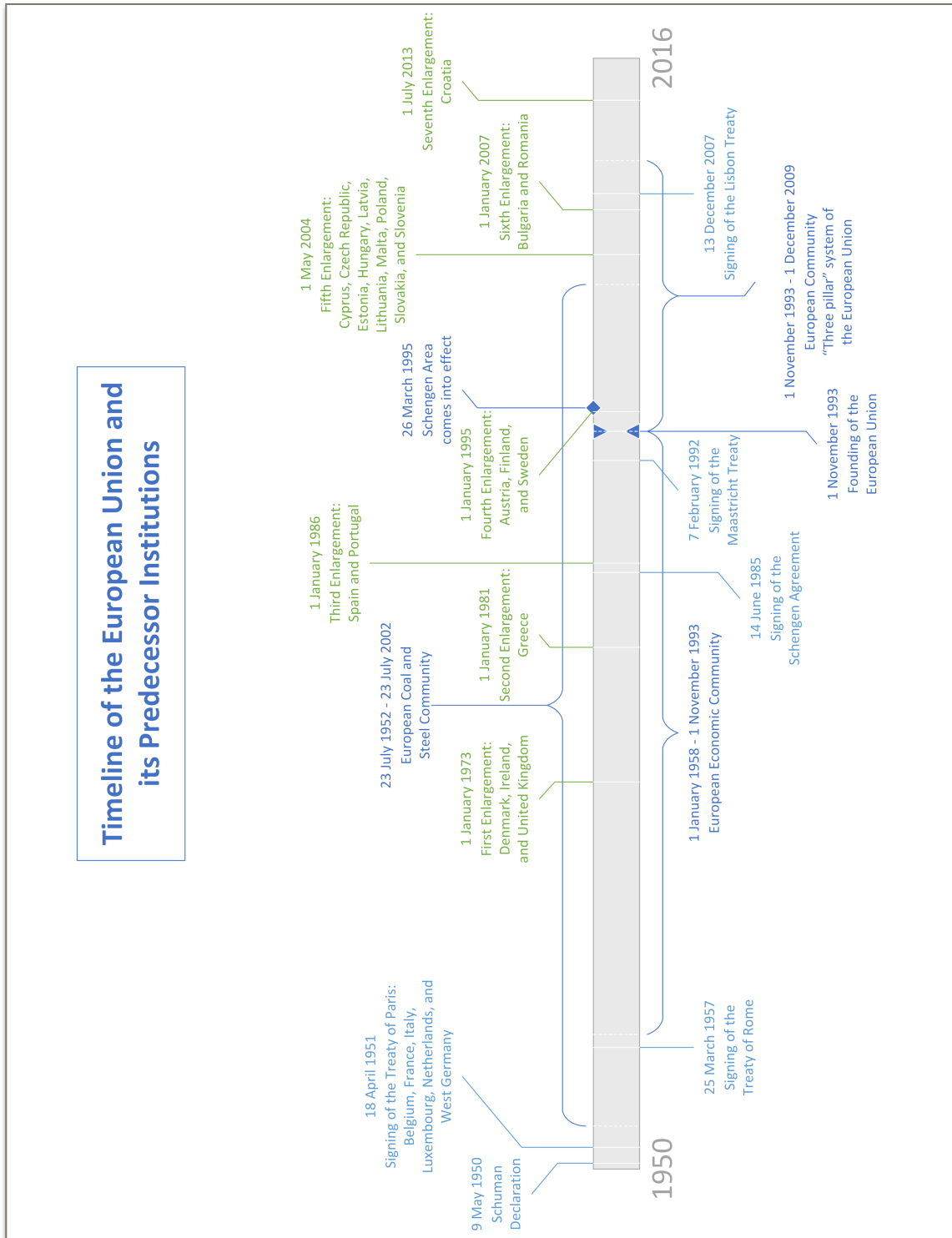


Figure 2: A timeline of the history of the EU and its key predecessor institutions, with the accession of member-states labeled.

Girard Bucello IV, "Timeline of the European Union and its Predecessor Institutions," (April 4, 2016).

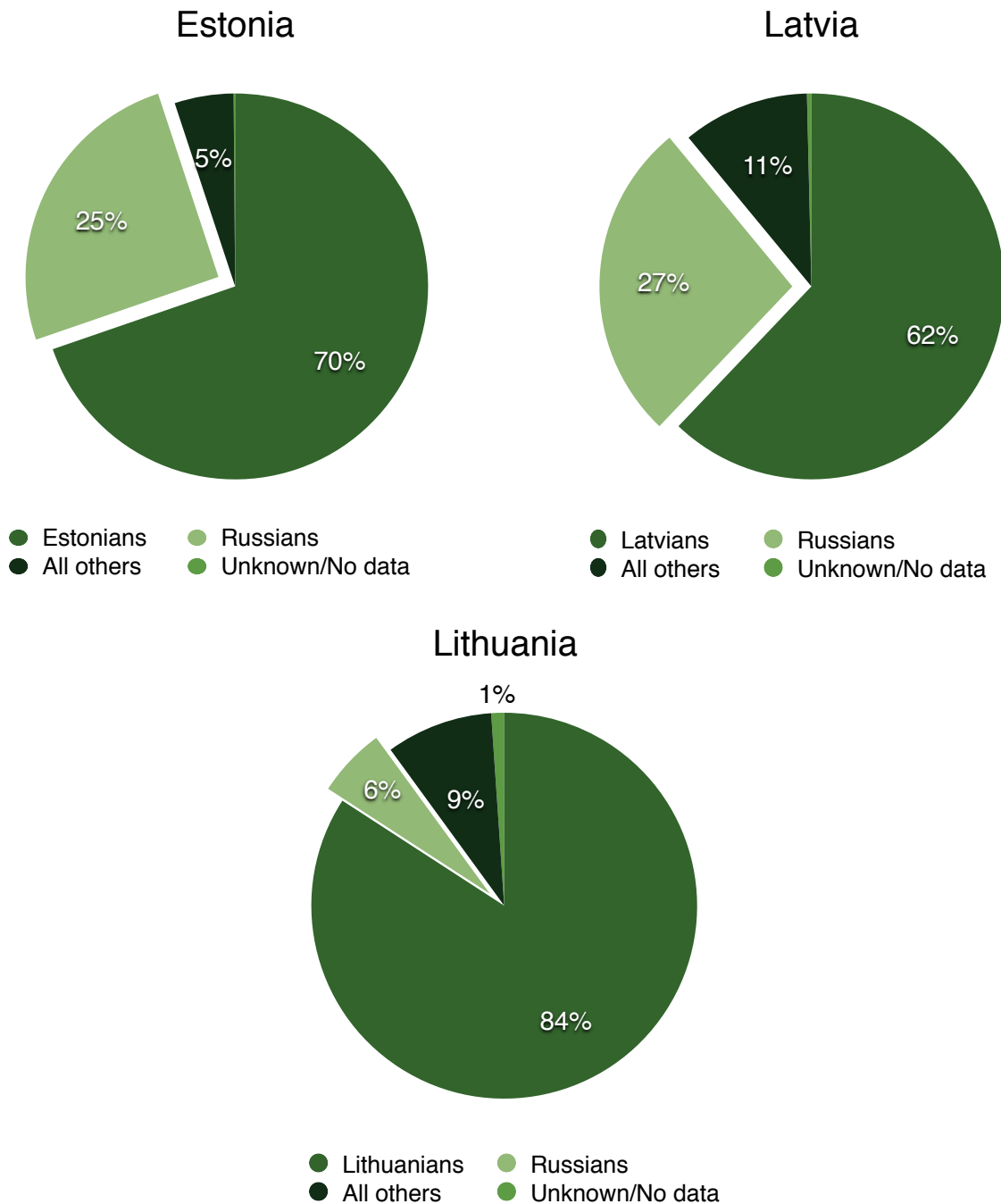


Figure 3: The ethnic composition of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as of 2011.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, “Ethnic Composition of Population,” Latvijas Statistika, 2011, http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/tautassk_11/tautassk_11__tsk2011_provizor/TSK11-03.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=a79839fe-11ba-4ecd-8cc3-4035692c5fc8.

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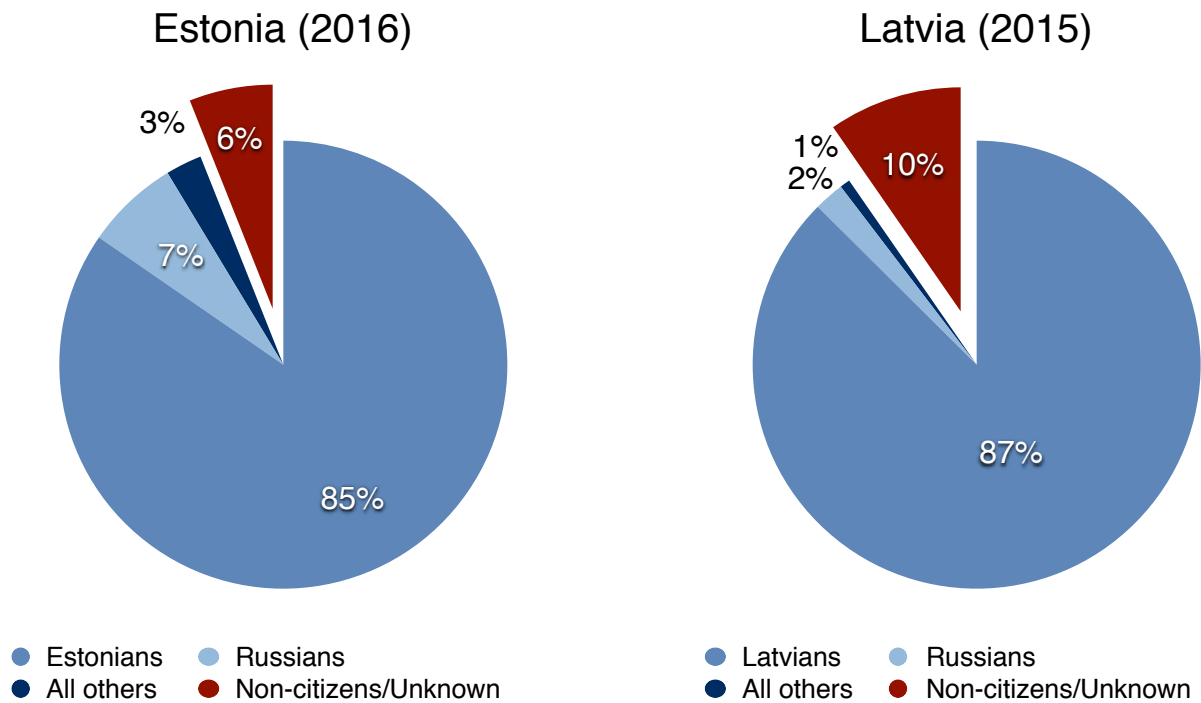


Figure 4: The population of Estonia and Latvia by citizenship of residents.

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, “Population of Latvia by Citizenship at the Beginning of the Year,” Latvijas Statistika, 2015, http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/Sociala/Sociala_ikgad_iedz_iedzskaitis/IS0090.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=a79839fe-11ba-4ecd-8cc3-4035692c5fc8.

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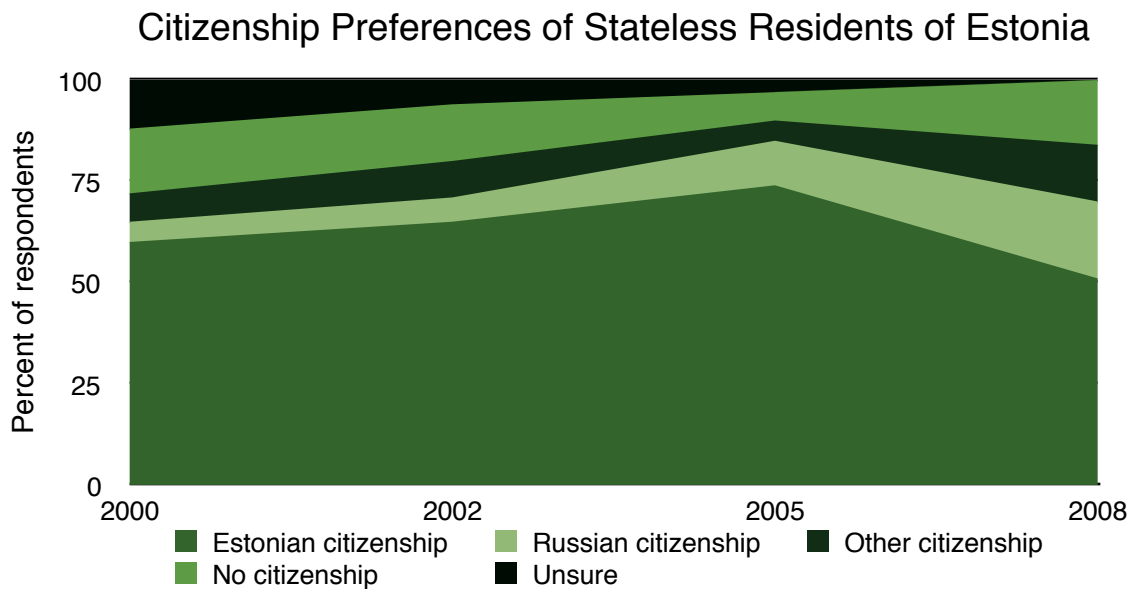


Figure 5: The preferred citizenship of stateless residents of Estonia as of 2008.

Priit Järve and Vadim Poleshchuk, “Country Report: Estonia” (European Union Democracy Observatory, 2010), <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/19611>.

Appendix D — Tables

Country	2010 military expenditure (% of GDP)	2014 military expenditure (% of GDP)	Change in mil. expenditure (pp)
Albania	1.6	1.3	-0.3
Belgium	1.1	1.0	-0.1
Bulgaria	1.8	1.5	-0.3
Canada	1.2	1.0	-0.2
Croatia	1.7	1.6	-0.1
Czech Republic	1.2	1.0	-0.2
Denmark	1.4	1.2	-0.2
Estonia	1.7	1.9	0.2
France	2.3	2.2	-0.1
Germany	1.4	1.2	-0.2
Greece	2.7	2.3	-0.4
Hungary	1.0	0.9	-0.1
Iceland	0.2	0.0	-0.2
Italy	1.7	1.5	-0.2
Latvia	1.1	1.0	-0.1
Lithuania	0.9	0.9	0
Luxembourg	0.5	0.4	-0.1
Netherlands	1.3	1.2	-0.1
Norway	1.5	1.5	0
Poland	1.8	1.9	0.1
Portugal	2.0	1.8	-0.2
Romania	1.2	1.4	0.2
Slovakia	1.3	1.0	-0.3
Slovenia	1.6	1.0	-0.6
Spain	1.4	1.2	-0.2
Turkey	2.5	2.2	-0.3
UK	2.4	2.0	-0.4
US	4.7	3.5	-1.2

Table 1: Military expenditures of NATO member-states as a percentage of GDP.
 “Military Expenditure (% of GDP),” World Bank, 2016, <http://beta.data.worldbank.org/?end=2014&indicators=MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS&start=2010>.

Country	Natural gas (mil m ³)			
	Total production	Total consumption	Total exports	Total imports
Austria	1,224	7,764	2,373	7,797
Belgium	0	15,800	845	16,850
Bulgaria	278	2,975	0	2,697
Croatia	1,805	2,810	422	1,079
Cyprus	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	245	7,508	1	7,249
<i>Denmark</i>	4,612	3,160	2,093	625
Estonia	0	530	0	530
Finland	3	3,082	0	3,080
France	18	35,760	3,544	41,180
Germany	10,060	77,480	19,240	86,840
Greece	5	2,924	0	2,931
Hungary	1,854	8,348	740	8,941
Ireland	152	4,408	0	4,246
Italy	7,149	61,910	237	55,760
Latvia	0	1,410	0	1,410
Lithuania	0	3,240	0	3,240
Luxembourg	5	983	0	979
Malta	0	0	0	0
<i>Netherlands</i>	70,250	39,980	59,300	29,100
Poland	6,080	17,860	76	11,820
Portugal	0	4,005	0	4,069
Romania	11,400	12,100	242	801
Slovakia	100	4,014	3	4,236
Slovenia	3	770	0	767
Spain	24	27,160	8,219	36,390
Sweden	0	892	0	892
United Kingdom	38,520	70,240	10,550	42,830
TOTAL	153,787	417,113	107,885	376,339

Table 2: Total production, consumption, importation, and exportation of natural gas among EU members in 2014. Net exporters are shown in italics.

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