Out In the Cold? Germany's Emerging Role in Northern European Security

by Minna Ålander

Resumé

Tysklands geografiska läge mitt i Europa, med gränser som delas med nio länder (det högsta antalet grannar i hela Europa) är på både gott och ont. På den positiva sidan är Tyskland omgivet av vänner och har inga direkta hot mot sin säkerhet från något av grannländerna. Utmaningen är dock att Tyskland, som är Europas största ekonomi och den viktigaste handelspartnern för många europeiska länder, ständigt utsätts för förväntningar och önskemål från alla sina grannar och även från partner utanför landets gränser. Den resulterande bristen på strategisk riktning och fokus i Tyskland har lett till att landet ligger efter utvecklingen i den europeiska maktdynamiken, där småstaterna grupperar sig, Storbritannien gör comeback och Frankrike tar tillfället i akt i den strategiska förändringen.

GERMANY'S GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION in the very middle of Europe, sharing a border with nine countries (the highest number of neighbours in all of Europe) is both a blessing and a curse. On the blessing side, Germany is surrounded by friends and does not have any direct threats to its security emanating from any of the countries neighbouring it. On the curse side, being Europe's largest economy and the most important trading partner to many European countries, Germany is constantly pestered with expectations and wishes from all its neighbours, as well as partners beyond its imminent borders. The resulting lack of strategic direction and focus in Germany has left it behind developments in European power dynamics, with the small states grouping together, UK making a comeback, and France seizing the moment in the strategic shift.

The Nordics and Franco-German leadership: Damned if you do, damned if you don't

Among all its neighbours, France has remained Germany's most important significant other, given the centrality of the Franco-German reconciliation for the initiation of the European integration project. For a long time, it was a proven formula for building consensus in the EU that if France and Germany—after initially having represented opposite views—agreed on something, most other countries could at least live with the result.

However, the Franco-German origin story is mostly an intriguing history lesson for the countries that joined the EU in the 1990's and later, including most of the Nordic EU

members (Finland and Sweden joined in 1995, Denmark had joined together with the UK and Ireland in 1973, and Norway and Iceland remain outside of the EU) and all three Baltic States Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For the countries that joined the EU when the integration project had already progressed to a fairly mature stage, the Franco-German "engine of integration" has often been seen as a suspicious collusion of larger countries, potentially against the smaller ones.

In Finland, an EU-themed version of the George Orwell quote "all countries in the EU are equal, but some are more equal than others" is often mentioned in the context.[1] The Franco-German tandem and their perceived power to set the EU's course, especially into a more federalist direction and possibly against smaller countries' wishes, has also been a useful threat for Eurosceptic politicians' rhetoric in Finland.[2] Denmark has traditionally been closely aligned with the United Kingdom (UK), not joining the European integration project before the path to membership became clear for the UK.[3] For Sweden and Denmark, which have not introduced the euro as currency, the UK was considered an important counterweight to France and Germany, both core members of the Eurozone.

At the same time, smaller countries tend to have contradictory expectations toward the Franco-German tandem: they should lead, but no too much.[4] The centrality of the Franco-German tandem became more emphasised again after the Brexit, when the fiscally frugal Northern Europeans directed their leadership expectations towards Germany, after the loss of their traditional larger partner UK whom they could trust to block the initiatives they did not agree with either.[5] It is therefore a delicate balance for the Franco-German tandem: when their leaders do not get along and domestic crises cause inability to take the lead in Europe, smaller states are concerned about a leadership vacuum and inability to act in Europe.[6] But if France and Germany agree too much, and on the wrong things (if you ask the Northern European countries), anxiety about their overpowering others is triggered.

Germany's benign neglect of the Nordic region

The tragedy for Germany's smaller neighbours and partners is the lack of attention from Germany's side. To an extent it is understandable that one country cannot stretch into a 360 degrees attention span. However, given that Germany has Europe's largest population and would have resources to devote to all directions, it is also a choice on Germany's part how to prioritise partnerships. And the Nordic countries, every so often, got the short end of the stick on Germany's priority list. Among the countries in the Nordic-Baltic region, the Baltic states occupied Germany's attention in the 1990's and 2000's and after the acute questions of their EU membership (which Germany supported) and NATO membership (which Germany opposed) have been better at making themselves impossible to ignore.[7]

Germany's lack of attention to the Nordic region is not so much due to a disinterest per se—the German word for a Nordic-style holiday home is *Schwedenhaus*, after all—but rather a benign neglect of a region where very little is expected to happen generally, and especially on the negative side of things. As Marlene Riedel suggested in an analysis of the rise of right-wing populism in the Nordic countries in 2021, this positive image is a product of successful branding by the Nordic countries. Riedel asked, "why else could this be—are they really that

small and unimportant?".[8] Johan Eellend pointed out in a study from 2014 at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) that "Germany views the Baltic Sea Area as a calm and friendly corner of the world, where most states share German priorities of multilateral cooperation and stable economic policies".[9]

The result of this benign neglect is that expertise on Northen Europe is not widespread in the German think tank and research institute community. For instance, a major research project on the Nordic countries at the German Institute for Security and International Affairs (SWP) ran out of funding in 2018, just on time when things did start happening in the Nordics, and has not been resumed. The Nordic countries have been and continue to be a role model for Germany to look up to in many ways, but knowledge about the countries remains superficial.

> *Germany tends to expect a leadership position in Northern Europe.*

At the same time, Germany tends to expect a leadership position in Northern Europe. This is partly because the Nordic countries have sought close alignment with Germany – given the high workload of EU legislation and processes and very limited human resources in the Nordic countries with small populations, it has seemed a safe bet to back German initiatives and rely on Germany to represent and safeguard the wider frugal North's interests. In some European crises German leadership was warmly welcomed by its Nordic partners, such as in the euro crisis, where especially Finland was a loyal partner to Germany.[10] In the initial post-Crimea conflict management effort in 2014–2015, then-Chancellor Angela Merkel's central role enjoyed approval.[11]

But two recent shocks changed the view of Germany in the region: first, the Next Generation EU Covid-19 economic recovery package, including the EU common bonds vehemently opposed by the Nordic EU members. And second, realising how deep Germany's energy dependence on Russia went after the latter launched the full-scale invasion on Ukraine. The unfulfilled promise of a *Zeitenwende*, a profound security and defence policy change and a leadership ambition that remained up to the next German government to materialise, further cemented the impression that in urgent situations, not only does Germany not share the threat analysis prevalent in the Nordic-Baltic countries but there is also no time to wait for Germany.

When Global Britain came back to Europe

While Germany has struggled to convince the Nordic-Baltic small states of its ability to lead in the field of security and defence, in the wake of Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, the UK has made a comeback to centre stage in Europe. The UK has been intensely involved in supporting Ukraine, starting from the decision to publish intelligence on the impending Russian invasion and providing Ukraine with crucial anti-tank weaponry ahead of the invasion. Germany and France were far behind the curve and especially Germany under Chancellor Olaf Scholz remained so throughout the hitherto three years of war. France under President Macron has displayed more adaptability and learned from his mistaken performance in the early stages of the full-scale war, which was ill perceived in especially the Northeast of Europe.[12] The UK, therefore, has enjoyed

a Ukraine-related boost in the Nordic-Baltic region, as it is "seen as a serious security provider with a genuine interest in Northern European security".[13]

What comes to security and defence beyond supporting Ukraine, the Brexit did not change the UK's long-standing role as the Nordic-Baltic countries' most trusted larger ally. As a report by Haugevik et al., published by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in 2021 sums it up, "the UK's exit from the EU—Brexit—does not appear to have changed the Nordics' view on security and defence ties with London. In all four states studied here, the UK features in political debate as the most significant European partner outside the Nordic region".[14] On Germany, the report notes that "[w]hile Germany is often highlighted as one of many likeminded security allies, none of the four Nordic states identify Germany as the key European security and defence partner".[15] Tomas Jermalavičius and Alice Billon-Galland confirm the earlier NUPI report's finding to apply not only for the Nordic countries but the wider Nordic-Baltic region in a report published by the International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS) in 2023: "Even the UK's exit from the European Union (EU)—although disruptive and frustrating for many—did not put a major dent in its appeal as a security and defence partner for the Nordic and Baltic countries."[16]

As reasons for the positive perception of the UK in the Nordic-Baltic region, the ICDS report lists the "similar outlook on the security environment, transatlantic relations, utility of military force, and the threat from Russia".[17] On Germany's efforts to establish itself as a more relevant partner in the region, the ICDS report gives a rather doubtful assessment: "Germany may lack the necessary political capital, interest and desire to lead, as well as the right strategic culture to assume a leadership role in the Nordic-Baltic area in the short- or even medium-term."[18]

An important reason for the vastly different perception of the UK and Germany in the field of security and defence is that the UK has been building up its contribution and leadership role for a long time. The UK has been visibly present in the region, as leader of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), a flexible format encompassing the five Nordic, three Baltic countries and the Netherlands. While the JEF enjoys a very positive perception in the participating states, Germany does not seem too appreciative of the UK-led initiative: A German vice admiral called the JEF a "distraction" from NATO activities at the Lennart Meri Conference in Tallinn in 2024.[19] The JEF participating states, on the other hand, see JEF as a useful middle layer between their national defence and NATO and as a potentially faster mover than the NATO collective of 32 members, capable to act as a "sub-threshold" actor below NATO's Article 5 and thus complimentary to it.[20]

On the bilateral level, in 2023 the UK opened a new Arctic operations base, called "Camp Viking", in Northern Norway.[21] Norway's long-term policy has not allowed permanent NATO or foreign bases on its soil, but the 10-year-agreement with Norway is permanent enough for all intents and purposes. In 2022, the UK also signed bilateral security assurances with Finland and Sweden, with the purpose of establishing deterrence for the interim period while the two Nordic countries awaited their NATO accession.[22]

Germany's enhanced role in the Nordic-Baltic region

In the past couple of years, Germany has invested significantly in its security and defence

partnership with Norway, as Norway became its main gas supplier after Russia shut off the gas tap for Germany. Major bilateral projects include a joint submarine project, advanced missiles systems, and a recently signed cooperation agreement on space.[23]

Germany responded to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine by pledging a permanent brigade to Lithuania, which was officially established on 1 April 2025 and is planned to reach full operational capacity in 2027.

Norway and Germany have also pushed forward cooperation on the protection of critical undersea infrastructure within NATO, where Germany has an urgent self-interest as a gas-reliant country.[24] Jakobsen, Etzold and Svendsen nevertheless add the caveat in NUPI report from 2024 that "there is an inherent volatility in the German willingness and ability to pursue its ambitions"[25] especially vis-à-vis smaller countries, where German engagement has been "rather ad hoc and driven by external events".[26] The NUPI report also notes the risk of overstretch if Germany continues to pursue global deployments at the same time as it tries to increase its regional presence and take on a greater role in European security.[27]

Germany's other priority partner in the region is Lithuania. Germany responded to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine by pledging a permanent brigade to Lithuania, which was officially established on 1 April 2025 and is planned to reach full operational capacity in 2027. While Germany's responsiveness to its Baltic partner's security needs has been appreciated in Lithuania, the process has been marked by mutual misunderstandings about expectations and ability to deliver.[28] The communication difficulties may to an extent be the result of a path dependency, as Germany's attempts at taking a greater role in the Baltics after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 created the impression that "Germany has not clearly understood its role in the region, and that the countries in the region have no clear understanding of what they can expect from Germany".[29] But given that the impression in the Baltic states post-2014 was that Germany had taken the lead "in areas where the risk of having to take real action is very low",[30] initially drawing a clear line between upholding the integrity of the Baltic states and real or permanent security reassurances through rotating or permanent forces in the frontline countries, the mental leap to pledging a permanent brigade to Lithuania is quite monumental.

A report by Särkkä et al., published by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in 2024, finds that despite otherwise good and close relations between Finland and Germany, operational defence cooperation has been limited in volume and is unlikely to change radically even after Finland's NATO accession.[31] Germany has become more active in participating in exercises in Finland after the Finnish NATO accession, but it is clear that Germany's priority partners in the Nordic-Baltic region are Norway and Lithuania. This is further emphasised by the fact that Germany is interested in Finland as a potential training ground for its Lithuania brigade, as Finland has much more space especially for live-fire exercises.[32] Hagström Frisell and Sundberg also noted the lack of suitable cooperation formats and an unreciprocated prioritisation of Germany as a potential security partner in Sweden as challenges for closer Swedish-German defence cooperation, despite mutu-

ally positive expectations, prior to Sweden's NATO accession.[33]

Neither is there a need for Germany to be present everywhere in the region; given the still, despite the *Zeitenwende* efforts, limited resources of the German Bundeswehr. A clear focus and prioritization would be a more productive and tangible contribution to the emerging security arrangements in the Nordic-Baltic region than pledging more than Germany in fact can deliver. Overpromising and underdelivering is a certain way to undermine Germany's credibility as a potential lead nation. That Germany often has not put its money where its mouth is, has been noted over the past decade of German attempts to take on a more central role in security and defence.[34]

The Nordic-Baltic region, a new integration centre

Germany was for a long time an important integration centre to gravitate towards for its wider neighbourhood. Among others, the Nordic and Baltic countries thus oriented themselves towards Germany after their EU (and NATO) accession in the 1990's and early 2000's. The Russian full-scale war against Ukraine has, however, jolted a new dynamic into the region that has now become much more integrated among itself rather than with and through a continental centre.[35] The NATO accession of Finland and Sweden in 2023 and 2024, respectively, was a game changer for Nordic cooperation. The Nordic countries have been working on integrating and amplifying their military capability, creating both a military force and industrial capability comparable with Germany. Politically, region-building including the Baltic states in the NB8 format has progressed swiftly, boosted by alignment on both the threat assessment of Russia and a sense of urgency to support Ukraine.

These two drivers have also underlined the fact that Germany is less aligned with the region than other big European countries like the UK and Poland and, as of late, even France. The Polish government under Prime Minister Donald Tusk has made the Nordic-Baltic countries a foreign policy priority. France under President Macron has also recognised the momentum in the Northeast of Europe and invested into intensifying relations with the Nordic-Baltic countries, as well as into the revival of the Franco-German-Polish Weimar triangle. Next to Americans, Brits and Swedes, French troops have become one of the most present nations in exercises in Northern Finland.[36] Furthermore, France has identified Sweden as a promising defence industrial partner: the new French ambassador to Sweden is an engineer general and had his previous posting as the number two at the Direction générale de l'armament (DGA), the French defence procurement and technology agency. The new ambassador offered in an interview to replace the American-made motor of the Swedish JAS Gripen fighter jet with a French one, to partner with Sweden for European strategic autonomy.[37]

Despite Germany's acknowledged and highly appreciated support for Ukraine, in its relations with the Nordic-Baltic countries, the Russian elephant is still in the room. Germany's relationship with Russia has always shaped both its relations with the countries in Russia's close neighbourhood, as well as the countries' perception of Germany. Indeed, Germany's approach to the Baltic Sea region has been strongly shaped by its view of how relations with Russia should be managed, and especially its relations with the Baltic States have been subordinate to that consideration.[38]

This tendency has been well noted also beyond the Baltic States. A cursory literature review of Finnish and Swedish research institutes' (FIIA and FOI) Germany-related publications from the past decade indicates that most of them include an assessment of the German-Russian relations (with energy relations especially as a concern) and their possible impact on Finland and Sweden.[39] Apart from previous government policy under Chancellor Scholz, prioritising escalation management above all else, a cause for concern from the Nordic-Baltic point of view is the ambivalent public opinion in Germany. In all the Nordic and Baltic countries, the populations stand firmly behind their governments' support for Ukraine, while in Germany the far-right party AfD and, for a while the new populist party BSW, were able to gain in polls with their pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian stance.[40]

A chance for Germany: Post-transatlantic leadership

In Germany, while the emergence of the Nordic-Baltic group and its new coherent profile have been well noted in expert discourse,[41] the previous government missed opportunities to engage more with the region. The incoming federal government under Chancellor Friedrich Merz should invest in relations with Germany's smaller partners, as the Franco-German tandem alone is not anymore sufficient for consensus-building in Europe. Otherwise, Germany will risk becoming less relevant in the Nordic-Baltic region, where the small countries are integrating with each other to maximise their combined economic and military power and other big European players are showing an increasing interest in the region. The Nordic-Baltic countries have many alternatives now and do not have to gravitate towards Germany as a reflex if Germany is not perceived to represent their interests.

The new German government should treat the Nordic-Baltic 8 (NB8) as a welcome development that enables the small states to take a more proactive and constructive stance in European affairs by developing their own vision for the future of the continent instead of simply opposing Franco-German initiatives. The EU stands to gain from a more dynamic consensus-building process that does not depend on the quality of personal relations of the French and German leaders. There is a clear need to complete the post-Cold War transition from a Western European-centric vision of the European integration process to one that takes the interests of newer member states, previously considered peripheral, into consideration.[42] Small state cooperation is a positive development in this regard, as their relations with each other are on a more equal basis than with larger partners like Germany. More coordination among the smaller ones and more streamlined articulation of interests therefore also reduces the burden of contradictory expectations on Germany.

The incoming Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, has already made an impression in the North with his remarks advocating not only European strategic autonomy, but even independence of the United States.

Finally, Germany has a real chance to make a comeback in style. The incoming Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, has already made an impression in the North with his remarks advocating not only European strategic autonomy, but even independence of

the United States. The Nordic-Baltic countries are all struggling to come to terms with what seems like an outright American betrayal of the transatlantic partnership under President Donald Trump, as the small states have heavily relied on the American extended nuclear deterrence as their security guarantee (not unlike Germany, too).

Chancellor Merz has credibility as an advocate of a more European security arrangement, as he has a personal track record of being a life-long atlanticist. It gives his statements special weight and can thus help reassure the Nordic-Baltic countries, as he is unlikely to have ulterior motives even if he now sounds outright Gaullist. In Northeast Europe, France has often been suspected of simply wanting a greater role for itself, at the expense of the transatlantic relationship, when French presidents have advocated for European strategic autonomy. Merz therefore has potential to develop into a credible and trusted post-transatlantic leader in Europe—if he manages to keep the domestic front together.

The author is an Associate Fellow at Chatham House Europe Programme, a Non-resident Fellow at CEPA Transatlantic Defense and Security programme, and a Senior Fellow at the Stockholm Free World Forum. Previously, she worked at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Notes

1. Jäätteenmäki, Anneli: "Euro, tasa-arvo ja Euroopan idea", 2012-07-12, *https://annelijaatteenmaki.net/euro-tasa-arvo-ja-euroopan-idea/*, (2025-04-20).
2. "Taipuuko Suomi EU:n yhteisvelkaan? Hallaaho: 'Kun Saksa ja Ranska ovat yhteisen sävelen löytäneet, niin siinä pienempää viedään'", *Yle*, 2020-05-20, *https://yle.fi/a/3-11362854*.
3. Larsen, Henrik; Jokela, Juha and von Sydow, Göran: "Chapter 8—Nordic Member States: Denmark, Finland, and Sweden" in: Oliver, Tim (ed.) *Europe's Brexit. EU Perspectives on Britain's Vote to Leave,* Agenda Publishing, 2018, pp. 125-146.
4. Iso-Markku, Tuomas: "EU:n turvallisuus- ja puolustuspolitiikka saksalais-ranskalaisen yhteistyön aallokossa", *Maanpuolustus*, 2020-03-03, *https://www.maanpuolustus-lehti.fi/eun-turvallisuus-ja-puolustuspolitiikka-saksalais-ranskalaisen-yhteistyon-aallokossa/*, (2025-04-21).
5. Etzold, Tobias and Opiitz, Christian: "Nordic Europe after the Brexit Vote", *SWP Comments* 42, September 2016, *https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2016C42_etz_opt.pdf*, (2025-04-21).
6. "Kriser skapar maktvakuum i EU", *TV4*, 2024-12-09, *https://www.tv4.se/artikel/tt-241209-eu-maktvakuum-07e3a4e4/kriser-skapar-maktvakuum-i-eu*, (2025-04-21); Sjöblom, Johnny: "Tyskland och Frankrike är inte överens om mycket just nu – frågor om energi och Kina skapar konflikt", *Yle Svenska*, 2022-11-07, *https://yle.fi/a/7-10022608*, (2025-04-21); "Fransk krise truer med at trække beslutningskraften ud af EU", *Berlingske*, 2024-12-05, *https://www.berlingske.dk/internationalt/fransk-krise-truer-med-at-traekke-beslutningskraften-ud-af-eu*.
7. Eellend, Johan: *En stillastående förändring. Tysk säkerhetspolitik och dess betydelse för Östersjöområdet*, Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut rapport FOI-R--3912-SE, 2014, p. 58, *https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI-R--3912--SE*, (2025-04-20).
8. Riedel, Marlene: "Nordic discomfort: How Denmark, Sweden, and Finland could harm the European project", *ECFR Commentary*, 2021-08-07, *https://ecfr.eu/article/nordic-discomfort-how-denmark-sweden-and-finland-could-harm-the-european-project/*, (2025-04-21).
9. Eellend, *En stillastående förändring. Tysk säkerhetspolitik och dess betydelse för Östersjöområdet*, p. 5.
10. Stenroos, Maria: "Sääntömaa Saksa ja kuriton Ranska päättävät vaalien jälkeen uudesta Euroopasta – Onko Suomelle enää paikkaa Saksan kainalossa?", *Yle*, 2017-09-24, *https://yle.fi/a/3-9846057*, (2025-04-21).
11. Raik, Kristi: "EU:n ulkopoliittisten toimijoiden ei pidä kilpailla keskenään", *FIIA Comment*, no. 8 2015, *https://fiia.fi/julkaisu/eun-ulkopoliittisten-toimijoiden-ei-pida-kilpailla-keskenaan*, (2025-04-21).
12. Särkkä, Iro and Ålander, Minna: "Franco-German leadership in European security: Engine in reverse gear?", *FIIA Briefing Paper* 377, November 2023, *https://fiia.fi/en/publication/franco-german-leadership-in-european-security*.
13. Pesu, Matti and Wallenius, Tomas: "Two Years in NATO, Finland is Searching for a Plan B", *Rusi Commentary*, 2025-03-17, *https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/two-years-nato-finland-searching-plan-b*, (2025-04-20).
14. Haugevik, Kristin et al.: "Nordic partnership choices in a fierier security environment", *NUPI Policy Brief*, no. 9 2021, *https://www.nupi.no/en/publications/cristin-pub/nordic-partnership-choices-in-a-fierier-security-environment-towards-more-alignment*, p. 3.
15. Ibid.
16. Jermalavičius, Tomas and Billon-Galland, Alice: "British Power in Baltic Weather: The UK's Role in Nordic-Baltic Security and UK-Estonia Defence Cooperation", *ICDS Report*, July 2023, *https://icds.ee/en/british-power-in-baltic-weather-the-uks-role-in-nordic-baltic-security-and-uk-estonia-defence-cooperation/*, (2025-04-22), p. 1.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 10.
19. Bon, Ian: "All at Sea? UK-German Cooperation in the Nordic-Baltic Area", *CER Policy Brief*, 2024-09-26, *https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/policy-brief/2024/all-sea-uk-german-*

co-operation-nordic-baltic-region#section-7, (2025-04-22).
20. Larsson Hultin, Therese: "Tänker lika – alla förstår hotet från Ryssland", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2024-12-19, *https://www.svd.se/a/rPGzXa/sa-ska-jef-agera-mot-ryssland-nar-nato-tanker*, (2025-04-22); Pihlajamaa, Antti: "The Joint Expeditionary Force in Northern Europe: Towards a more integrated security architecture?", *FIIA Briefing Paper* 389, May 2024, *https://fiia.fi/en/publication/the-joint-expeditionary-force-in-northern-europe*, (2025-04-22).
21. Royal Navy: "New Arctic operations base for UK commandos", 2023-03-08, *https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news/2023/march/08/230308-campvikingnorway*, (2025-04-21).
22. Government of the United Kingdom: "Prime Minister signs new assurances to bolster European security: 11 May 2022", 2022-05-11, *https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-signs-new-assurances-to-bolster-european-security-11-may-2022*, (2025-04-21).
23. Government of Norway: "Norway and Germany sign agreement on space cooperation", 2024-12-18, *https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-and-germany-sign-agreement-on-space-cooperation/id3079293/*, (2025-04-22); Government of Norway: "Norway and Germany signed a new declaration of intent agreed to enhance the bilateral co-operation in the area of security and defence", 2023-09-12, *https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-and-germany-signed-a-new-declaration-of-intent-agreed-to-enhance-the-bilateral-co-operation-in-the-area-of-security-and-defence/id2993637/*, (2025-04-22).
24. Government of Norway: "New Norwegian-German initiative to strengthen critical undersea infrastructure in Europe", 2024-10-17, *https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/new-norwegian-german-initiative-to-strengthen-critical-undersea-infrastructure-in-europe/id3061340/*, (2025-04-22).
25. Jakobsen, Eskil; Etzold, Tobias and Svendsen, Øyvind: "The Maritime Zeitenwende: Germany in the Northern Waters", *NUPI report*, no. 14 2024, p. 7, *https://www.nupi.no/en/news/german-norwegian-maritime-security-cooperation-is-strengthened*, (2025-04-22).
26. Ibid., p. 21.
27. Ibid., p. 21.
28. Jermalavičius and Billon-Galland, "British Power in Baltic Weather: The UK's Role in Nordic-Baltic Security and UK-Estonia Defence Cooperation", p. 10; Lang, Kai-Olaf: "Deutschland und Litauen: Von der Verteidigungskooperation zur Sicherheitspartnerschaft", *SWP-Aktuell* 2023/A 39, 2023-06-06, *https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/deutschland-und-litauen-von-der-verteidigungskooperation-zur-sicherheitspartnerschaft*, (2025-04-22).
29. Sundberg, Anna; Eellend, Johan and Rossbach, Niklas: *The Russian wake-up call to Europe. French, German and British security priorities*, Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut rapport FOI-R--4270--SE, 2016, p. 68, *https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI-R--4270--SE*, (2025-04-21).
30. Ibid., p. 69.
31. Särkkä, Iro; Ålander, Minna; Linnainmäki, Joel and Pihlajmaa, Antti: "Finland's partnerships as a NATO member: Prospects for defence cooperation in a multilateral framework", *FIIA Report* 76, June 2024, p. 80, *https://fiia.fi/en/publication/finlands-partnerships-as-a-nato-member*, (2025-04-22).
32. Ibid.
33. Hagström Frisell, Eva and Sundberg, Anna: *Tyskland – en ny bundsförvant för Sverige i Europa?*, FOI MEMO 6168, 2017, *https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI%20MEMO%206168*, (2025-04-22).
34. Hagström Frisell, Eva and Sundberg, Anna: *En försiktig balansgång – Tysklands nya roll inom säkerhets- och försvarspolitiken*, Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut rapport FOI-R--4399--SE, 2017, p. 57, *https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI-R--4399--SE*.
35. Lang, Kai-Olaf: "Regionale Kooperationsinitiativen im östlichen Teil von EU und Nato", *SWP-Aktuell* 2022/A 32, 2022-04-22, *https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/regionale-kooperationsinitiativen-im-oestlichen-teil-von-eu-und-nato*, (2025-04-22).
36. Stenroos, Maria: "Suomessa harjoittelee nyt kymmenen kertaa enemmän ulkomaisia sotilaita kuin ennen – seurasimme jättiharjoi-

tusta Lapissa", *Yle*, 2024-11-19, *https://yle.fi/a/74-20124458*, (2025-04-21).

37. Larsson Hultin, Therese: "Franska oron: Gripens motor är ett 'problem'", *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2025-04-12, *https://www.svd.se/a/kwOdna/franska-oron-problem-att-jas-plan-har-motor-fran-usa*, (2025-04-22).
38. Eellend, *En stillastående förändring. Tysk säkerhetspolitik och dess betydelse för Östersjöområdet*, p. 60.
39. Helwig, Niklas (ed.): "Europe's New Political Engine. Germany's role in the EU's foreign and security policy", *FIIA Report* 44, April 2015, *https://fiia.fi/julkaisu/europes-new-political-engine*, (2025-04-22); Martikainen, Toivo and Vihma, Antto: "Dividing the EU with energy? Unpacking Russia's energy geoeconomics", *FIIA Briefing Paper* 191, March 2016, *https://fiia.fi/julkaisu/dividing-the-eu-with-energy*, (2025-04-22); Helwig, Niklas: "Onko Saksa valmis kovaan linjaan suhteessa Venäjään?", *FIIA Comment*, no. 4 2014, *https://fiia.fi/julkaisu/onko-saksa-valmis-kovaan-linjaan-suhteessa-venajaan*, (2024-04-22); Sundberg, Eellend and Rossbach, *The Russian wake-up call to Europe. French, German and British security priorities*; Eellend, *En stillastående förändring. Tysk säkerhetspolitik och dess betydelse för Östersjöområdet*; Engström, Alina and Emerson, Petra: *Rysk gas till vilket pris? Tyskland och Nord Stream 2*, FOI MEMO 7798, 2022, *https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI%20Memo%207798*, (2025-04-22).
40. "BSW legt in Wählergunst zu – AfD verliert", *Handelsblatt*, 2024-10-13, *https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/sonntagsfrage-bsw-legt-in-waehlergunst-zu-afd-verliert/100078693.html*, (2025-04-22).
41. Bialecki, Martin and Hoff, Henning: "Die Antwort kann nur lauten: Ein stärkeres Europa" (interview with Christoph Heusgen), *Internationale Politik*, 2025-02-10, *https://internationalepolitik.de/de/die-antwort-kann-nur-lauten-ein-staerkeres-europa*, (2025-04-22); Leonard, Mark: "Auf dem Weg zu einer neuen europäischen Sicherheitsordnung", *Internationale Politik*, 2025-04-17, *https://internationalepolitik.de/de/auf-dem-weg-zu-einer-neuen-europaeischen-sicherheitsordnung*, (2025-04-22).
42. Karjalainen, Tyyne and Ålander, Minna: "A new European security architecture should learn from the peripheries", *Helsinki Security Forum Report* 2024, pp. 14-15, *https://fiia.fi/en/publication/helsinki-security-forum-2024-report*.