

## **The role of the institutions of the European Union in the building of the European Strategic Autonomy**

The main goal of this project is to determine the role of the institutions of the European Union (EU) in the process of implementation of the European Strategic Autonomy (ESA). The notion of European Strategic Autonomy appeared for the first time in the Franco-British declaration issued during the St. Malo summit in 1998 and referred to the EU's ambition in foreign and security policy. Originally, the concept of ESA meant, first and foremost, an ability to conduct military operations independently. As such, it was supplemented by the industrial and technological components. Remaining on the margins of the debates on European security for nearly a decade, the concept of ESA began to catch attention after 2013, when it was presented in the Conclusions of the European Council as the goal of EU's actions within the Common Security and Defence policy (CSDP). Since then, the concept of ESA has appeared in almost every important document regarding the CSDP and in 2016 it was recognized in the new EU's Global Strategy as the main level of ambition for the EU in fields such as foreign, defence, space or cybersecurity policies. Through this, the concept of ESA was deepened and broadened to include new policy sectors, such as: military & defence, space policy, cybersecurity, digital policies and emerging technologies, industry and supply chains, public health & pharmaceuticals, trade and Foreign Direct Investments, diplomacy and other external policies. At the same time, the institutions of the European Union undertook enhanced efforts to formulate and implement ESA, acting as the main promoters of the concept.

This project aims at implementing four major objectives. First, it will develop a comprehensive definition of strategic autonomy that will include all of the policy sectors considered to be crucial for ESA. Second, it will analyze the factors that shape the process of broadening and the implementation of ESA. Third, it will determine the role that the institutions and agencies of the European Union – European Council, Council of the European Union, European Commission, European Parliament, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, European External Action Service, European Defence Agency, European Agency for Cybersecurity, EU Satellite Centre and the European Medicines Agency – play in the process of implementation of ESA. Especially, this project aims to determine how these institutions define ESA and what actions are they undertaking to implement it within specific policy sectors. Finally, this project will investigate how implementation of ESA affects European Union as a global actor.

The first stage of the research will include a profound review of academic literature from the field of European studies, as well as the research conducted at the Historical Archives of the European Union. In the next step an analysis will be conducted, of the official documents issued by the EU institutions that refer to the concept and implementation of ESA. This research will be supplemented with consultations with globally renowned scholars and experts associated in research centers and think-tanks that focus on the European foreign and security policies, with the particular concentration on the strategic function of new technologies. During the next stage, a series of interviews will be conducted with the representatives of the EU institutions, that will be used as a base for the verification of initial assumptions and for the formulation of conclusions. This project will result in a first comprehensive and detailed elaboration of the political processes that determine European undertakings to build strategic autonomy. This subject is becoming increasingly important in the light of the transformation of the world politics, where the European Union must look for its place between the weakening United States and strengthening China. The main fields of rivalry between the two powers are the very policy sectors that the concept of European Strategic Autonomy refers to. It is the aim of this project to track all of the complicated relations that link the aforementioned policy sectors into the concept of strategic autonomy. Author believes that it will allow for a better understanding of what constitutes sovereignty in the 21st century in regard to the challenge posed by the emergence of new technologies that affect how states and societies function. This project will also provide answer to the question of whether European Union is capable of retaining its sovereignty despite the growing rivalry of major global powers and negative consequences of globalization.