

## INFOCUS

### **New members states in NATO and their implications on European defence capabilities**

C4EP analysis on the subject – *De-valuation of classic neutrality: Finland and Sweden in the NATO*

„Sweden – and Finland – had started to express interest in joining the NATO in 2022, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and while the vast majority of NATO members welcomed the intention, Turkey and Hungary were reluctant to formally approve their accession for a long time – while consented to their formal invitation by all NATO member states, which is a necessary requirement.

The accession protocols between Finland, Sweden and the NATO member states – separate international treaties about their accession – have been quickly signed and sent for ratification to the member states. In Hungary that has meant two separate laws (on the accession of the two states) have been submitted to the Hungarian Parliament in July 2022. The Finnish accession was ratified by the Parliament at the end of March 2023 with an overwhelming majority (182 yes, 6 no votes and no abstentions), but the Swedish accession has got stuck for a long time. Just as in Turkey.”

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*Hungary president signs Sweden's NATO membership ratification*

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*Sweden officially joins NATO*

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*Sweden's Contributions to NATO: Bolstering the Alliance's Defense Industry and Air Capabilities*

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*What Sweden will bring to NATO*

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*Sweden and Finland Add Both Muscle and Risk to NATO*

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*Sweden joins Nato as Europe is warned of new arms race*

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*What future European defence and technological industrial basis do we want/ need?*

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*Stronger European defence*

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## C4REPORT

*C4EP: Legal Implications of an EU Top Official Stepping Down Early – 21 February 2024*

*„The surprising announcement of Charles Michel’s early resignation, followed by a reversal decision two and a half weeks later, has triggered Europe’s attention, raising questions about institutional stability and political consequences within the EU. The announcement marked a significant milestone. It prompted us to closely consider the legal and constitutional procedures governing the succession of top EU officials, such as the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, or the President of the European Parliament.”*

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*CEPS: Ideas Lab 2024 – 4 March 2024*

*„The panel opened with the question: What does it mean to be European? Timothy Garton Ash answered quoting Kalypsa Nicolaidis, saying “to feel at home abroad in Europe”. Garton Ash expressed how the Ukraine-Russia war is the biggest in the post-war period since the second World War. He posed the question whether Europe is at war or not, advising to take the more dramatic view to prevent it from happening.”*

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*EPC: The run-up to the US elections: Where do things stand? – 6 March 2024*

*„The year 2024 is shaping up to be the most significant electoral year in history, with an unprecedented voter turnout of over half the global population. No date holds as much crucial importance, both nationally and internationally, as November 5, 2024. The results of the American elections could not only shape the future of liberal democracy and its institutions but also fundamentally redefine transatlantic relations and our security environment. In this context, the conference organized by EPC, held the day after Super Tuesday, aimed to deeply explore the issues of American elections.“*

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*FEPS: Reinforcing European cohesion – 7 March 2024*

*„Together with EU Commissioner Elisa Ferreira and a panel of policy-making experts, the discussion organised by FEPS (Foundation for European Progressive Studies) elaborated on the added value and performance of the Cohesion Policy and tried to anticipate some of the difficult debates on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).“*

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## C4EPOSITION

Borbala Totth, young professional in the field of security and defence

Disclaimer: The author's views are her own. They do not reflect the official position of the represented organisation.

Even though Sweden has been a member of the European Union since 1995, in a military sense the country maintained its neutrality, casting its vote on the side of non-alignment for the past two centuries. Parting with this longstanding position and seeking to join a defensive alliance such as NATO – against the backdrop of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022 – signals a major shift in the country's perception on how to best promote their own defence interests, as well as to contribute to strengthen the regional security architecture.

The last remaining Nordic flag finally being raised at NATO Headquarters this week, besides being an important symbol of unity in the face of aggression, also comes with many practical benefits for the Euro-Atlantic area. Despite its longstanding preference for neutrality, Sweden is far from being militarily unprepared. To the contrary. The country holds advanced military capabilities in the land, air and sea domains as well as in cyberspace. Moreover, Sweden possesses a modern and capable defence industry, while also having boosted their defence spending to reach 2% of their GDP this year. Furthermore, Sweden has regularly exercised with Allied forces – including more recently within the framework of “Steadfast Defender 2024”, NATO's biggest exercise with 90,000 troops deployed, from all of the now 32 NATO Allies. It has contributed personnel to NATO-led past missions in Afghanistan; and continues to do so with respect to the ongoing peace-keeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR) – NATO's longest and biggest operational undertaking – and to NATO's advising and capacity-building mission in Iraq.

Due to its geographical location, Sweden is an important force multiplier in the Baltic Sea and the Arctic regions – both of which are key in terms of their strategic importance. Finally, Sweden brings to the table centuries of knowledge in dealing with Russia, and important defence concepts such as Total Defence that might benefit other countries as well.

In conclusion, Sweden joining NATO and standing with 31 other Allies in strengthening regional security is a huge step in the right direction when preparing Europe for continuing to support Ukraine upholding its UN-sanctioned right to self-defence against Russia, or any other potential threats. The Euro-Atlantic area is already not at peace today, and uniting this way helps ensure that we will be even more ready, capable, and knowledgeable when faced with future issues.