

Abstract

The thesis explores the use of the term European Strategic Autonomy in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP) of the European Union. The security environment around Europe has become increasingly unstable in the last 15 years. The EU Commission has tried to take account of the deteriorating geopolitical landscape by publishing an EU Global Strategy document in 2016 to share its vision for a stronger Europe. The document calls for strategic autonomy without properly defining it. Since then, many policy papers have captured the term and used it as a popular buzzword. Because it has not been properly defined on the political level, European Strategy Autonomy (ESA) was subject to speculations and national interpretations which did not help to advance the debate. Based on an extensive literature review the paper provides a comprehensive understanding by giving an historic overview and presenting different configurations of ESA in the contemporary context. A comparative case study, including France, Germany, and the Czech Republic has been conducted to assess their interpretation of the notion. The result of the case studies showed inherently different perceptions underlaid by different motivations and identifies the political layer to be the biggest challenge for moving forward with the topic. Politicians need to concretize and to amend the concept of ESA in the strategic, capability, and institutional dimension to yield fruitful debates in the future.