

Closer relations between EU and NATO have been desired for a long time. In spite of the fact that European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, created in 1998) was not meant to be a rival to NATO, the reality has been different. ESDP had its opponents, especially the USA, that were convinced that ESDP would weaken NATO. Turkey has also become „an obstacle“, especially after the accession of the southern part of divided Cyprus into the EU in 2004. Turkey's counterpart has been France seeing ESDP and NATO as a „zero-sum game“. However, some kind of limited cooperation has been achieved. The possible impetus for a change could be the reintegration of France into the NATO military structure.

The main thesis is that the French reintegration into the NATO military structure might result in a new beginning of closer EU – NATO relations.

In order to confirm or falsify this thesis, the study shall focus on empirical analyses of the changed context in relations between European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after the French reintegration into the NATO military structure. The element of comparison between France and the United Kingdom shall therefore be used for them being the main European security actors. Their attitudes shall be examined with regards to the possible influence of the change on the two crucial obstacles in EU-NATO relations. These obstacles are the unsolved Turkey-Cyprus dispute and the issue of the permanent military headquarters of the EU.