



Decode the crises of today and anticipate the threats of tomorrow

Safer Together

Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness by **Sauli Niinistö**

October 2024

Building block #1

Since the start of this decade, the EU has experienced the most severe pandemic in a century; the bloodiest war on European soil since the Second World War; and the hottest year in recorded history.

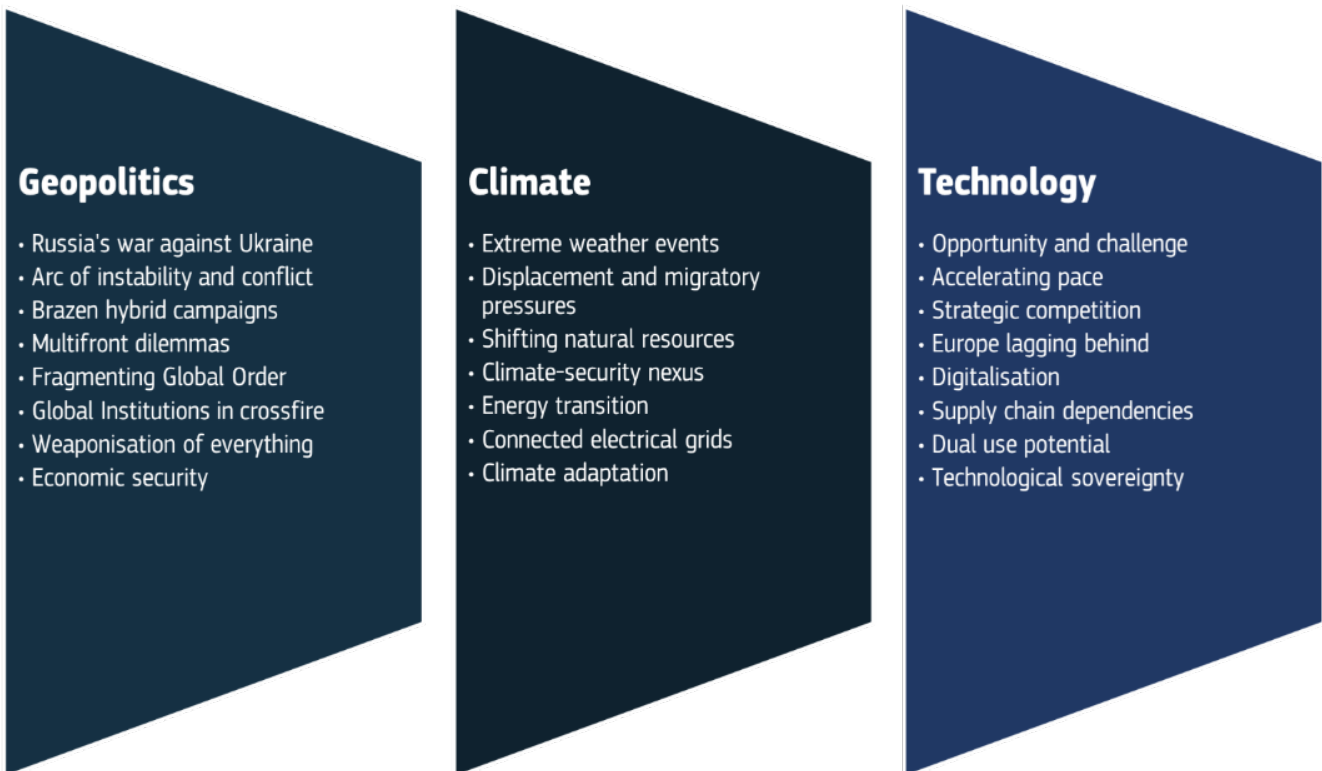
These are not just transitory phenomena. They reflect deeper fault lines that severely undermine the fundamentals of the international rules-based order, as well as our planet's biosphere. They also occurred simultaneously. And in different ways they exacerbated each other.

- **The rules-based global order is fragmenting** narrowing the basis for effective multilateral cooperation to address transnational challenges through global multilateral institutions.
- **Extreme weather events driven by climate change** will become more frequent and intense, in Europe and around the world, destabilising in particular communities in fragile contexts.
- **Since Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine**, the security threat on our Eastern border is at its highest since the end of the Cold War, even more so when considering the multi-front implications of growing tensions in East Asia and the Middle East.
- **Our open and connected societies and economies** are increasingly subject to brazen hybrid campaigns including cyberattacks, Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), sabotage and the instrumentalisation of migration.
- **Strategic competition** over raw materials, disruptive technologies and global influence is intensifying, blurring the lines between the economy and security.
- **An arc with major areas marked by fragility**, instability, conflict and war stretches from our south to our east, with spill-over effects on the European Union that blur the lines between internal and external security.
- **Another pandemic remains a distinct possibility** to be prepared for, given the possibility of transmutations of animal viruses, as well as accelerating biotechnological innovation facilitating the development of synthetic pathogens.

“This unstable mix of growing contestation and deep interdependence will define the global landscape for years to come, affecting both Europe's security and its prosperity.”

We need a real sense of urgency, but also a sense of agency. Stepping up our preparedness and readiness for extreme scenarios will shape, adapt and lower the driving factors that have led to crises and disasters in the first place. It will help to deter aggressors and contribute to lowering the scale and impact of climate change, for example.

“Russia’s 2024 defence expenditures are not much lower than NATO’s European member combined spending, when weighted according to purchasing power parity (PPP). In 2024, NATO’s European members spent around **USD 428 billion on defence while the estimate for total Russian military expenditure comes to an equivalent of **USD 388 billion.**”**



Macro-level shifts transforming the EU’s risk environment

“Climate change and environmental degradation will only further exacerbate instability, the human cost and the potential for internal and inter-State conflict among less climate resilient countries.”