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The Sources of a Changing European Security Architecture: the Symbolising, Hedging, Offsetting and Bridging Functions of New Security Guarantees in Europe

While NATO remains the primary alliance for collective defense in Europe, security guarantees have multiplied at the bilateral or minilateral level across the continent in recent years. In 2019, France and Germany signed the Treaty of Aachen, and in 2021, France and Greece formed a strategic partnership, both documents including a mutual defense clause between their respective parties. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, the US, UK, and other Western countries offered unilateral security guarantees, in various forms, to Finland and Sweden before their accession to NATO. Finally, Western countries have begun to provide security guarantees to Ukraine not only to help it during the current conflict but also to ensure peace afterwards, until Kyiv's eventual Euro-Atlantic integration. While some of these recent developments have already been analysed individually in the literature, they have not yet been considered as a whole, either empirically or theoretically. This article maps these developments and proposes four different sources for them, each contributing to varying degrees: symbolising political solidarity, hedging against US abandonment, offsetting deficiencies in existing security arrangements, and bridging the interim period before integration in an existing security framework. This article thus contributes to the literature on alliance formation, adding certain theoretical nuances to it, as well as to the analysis of a changing European security architecture.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?

Political science, international relations

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Yes

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