Monika Sus, sus@hertie-school.org

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Exploring the dynamics of policy change in EU security and defence: Policy entrepreneurs behind the Strategic Compass.

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has fundamentally changed Europe's security landscape. It has prompted shifts in the security outlook of the European Union triggering the it to 'take more responsibility for its own security and, in the field of defence, pursue a strategic course of action and increase its capacity to act autonomously' (2022, p. 3). Yet, the worsening of Europe's security environment started a decade ago with security crises in the wider Sahel region, including Mali, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. Furthermore, the transatlantic relationship under President Trump deteriorated as he questioned the US commitment to NATO, pushing the EU into the debate on its strategic autonomy (Helwig & Sinkkonen, 2022). EU´s reaction to the changing geopolitical environment was to advance its EU foreign policy, and specifically its security and defence capabilities[1]. Since the publication of the EU's Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016 (European External Action Service 2016), and its operationalization by the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence (Council of the European Union, 2016), 'exceptional developments of EU institutions and capacities' (Ekengren & Hollis, 2020, p. 618) occurred. Several new policy instruments were adopted, such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European Peace Facility (EPF) or the European Defence Fund (EDF) (Molenaar, 2021; Sus, 2019).

To improve coordination between these instruments (Council of the European Union, 2021a, p. 2), member states launched the process of strategic reflection (Parly et al., 2020). The resulting Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (European External Action Service, 2022) has been adopted by the European Council in March 2022 marking the first time in the history of the Union that heads of states and governments have formally committed themselves

[1] In this article, the EU security and defense policy is understood as part of the EU foreign policy.

to such a comprehensive arrangement on security matters (Biscop, 2021). Recognizing the prominence of the formal adoption at the highest political level, as well as the binding nature of this document, the study perceives the Compass as a manifestation of policy change. It examines the political and institutional dynamics and drivers that have led to the recent policy shift.

Analysing policy change in the EU foreign policy constitutes an empirical and conceptual challenge. This policy domain has, since its inception, seen a gradual centralisation and the emergence of new instruments that go beyond the traditional supranational and intergovernmental divide (Sjursen, 2011). This policy domain is characterised by a hybrid institutional setting with issue- and institutional complexity (Stetter, 2004). It covers a broad spectrum of issues ranging from military and civilian operations within the framework of the Common Security and Defense Policy, crisis management, , cyber security, non-proliferation, arms export control, restrictive measures, to joint defence procurement. This plurality of issues implies the involvement of multiple actors who vary in their institutional position and resources, resulting in multifaceted distribution of formal and informal powers. Consequently, policy change in this field is determined by the interaction between domestic pressures coming from member states, who remain in control of the decision-making, and institutional pressures emerging from the EU institutions such as. the European External Action Service (EEAS) chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) and the European Commission. This complex web of issues and institutions leads to intertwined dynamics that make it difficult to grasp how policy change in EU foreign policy occurs.

The scholarship on the recent change in EU foreign policy, is predominantly focused on the role of single stakeholders (Haroche, 2020; Riddervold, 2016; Rosén & Raube, 2018; Sus, 2021) or the dynamics behind a single policy instrument (Blockmans & Crosson 2022; Haroche 2018; Martins & Mawdsley 2021). The concurrent impact of different actors on policy change and the interactions between them remain under-researched. To provide a better understanding of the recent progress, this article applies the Multiple Streams Approach (MSA) developed by John Kingdon (Kingdon 2014). From the MSA perspective, policy change happens when certain stakeholders act as policy entrepreneurs and successfully exploit windows of opportunity by bringing together three streams: *problems, politics,* and *policy*. Specifically, this article focuses on policy entrepreneurs building on the assumption demonstrated elsewhere

(Ackrill & Kay, 2011; Sus, 2021), that there is a causal relationship between the activities of policy entrepreneurs and their footprint on policy change.

Based on preliminary research, four actors were identified as potentially driving the process of change in a decisive way: Germany, France, the HR supported by the EEAS[2], and the European Commission. Against this backdrop, the article conceptualizes them as policy entrepreneurs and unpacks their footprints on the recent policy change, embodied in the adoption of the Strategic Compass. To this end, it engages in process tracing and it looks for observable evidence for the deployment (or lack thereof) of entrepreneurial strategies by four distinct actors across various stages of the policy process that led to the adoption of the strategic document. Studying multiple policy entrepreneurs goes in line with Zito´s argument that a single policy entrepreneur is hardly able to influence change and that only by considering various policy entrepreneurs and their mutual interactions, one can provide a better understanding of the policy change (2001, p. 600). Expanding on this premise, this study unpacks the entrepreneurial strategies of multiple stakeholders, shedding light on their mutual interactions and demonstrating their impact on policy change.

The article proceeds as follows. After a brief review of the MSA and its application to EU foreign policymaking, the article delves into a case study on the Strategic Compass. It begins by exploring, through the MSA lens, the policy process that led to the development of the document. To this end, it analyses the three policy streams that emerged between 2020 and 2022 and created opportunities for key stakeholders to push for policy change. Next, the study introduces the conceptual tool – the entrepreneurial strategies – and unpacks the policy process leading to the adoption of the Compass. It looks for observable evidence of the entrepreneurial strategies deployed by the four stakeholders in different phases of the policy process that took place between March 2020 and March 2022. By doing so, the article pays particular attention to the interactions among policy entrepreneurs and their impact of on policy change. The conclusion summarizes the findings and reflects on the usefulness of MSA in exploring the role of multiple stakeholders in delivering policy change.

Apart from the secondary literature, the research draws on primary documents obtained from the EU institutions and national foreign and defence ministries. In addition, 12 semi-structured

[2] In order to streamline the analysis, in this study the HR and the EEAS are considered as a single actor.

interviews were conducted with officials from the EEAS, the European Commission, and representatives of national diplomacies, who were involved in the development of the Compass.

This article offers a twofold conceptual contribution to the scholarship on policy entrepreneurs. First, by studying various types of policy entrepreneurs, the study explores which types of policy entrepreneurs drive change at different stages of the policy process. Second, it sheds light on inter-entrepreneurial dynamics and their implications for policy change. Both aspects remain largely unexplored.

MSA and EU foreign policymaking

The MSA was developed to explain policy change in American policy under highly ambiguous conditions, manifested through the absence of clear policy goals, time constraints, and the fluidity of actor participation (Copeland and James, 2014, p. 2). Subsequently, the MSA has proven useful in studying EU policy processes, due to its capacity to capture the complexity of EU policymaking. Despite the fact that ambiguity and the high complexity of issues, and institutions are intrinsic features of the EU foreign policy, the majority of the MSA applications to EU policymaking have thus far circumvented this policy domain, focusing instead on environmental or economic issues (see e.g. Schreurs and Tiberghien, 2007; Schön-Quinlivan and Scipioni, 2017; Steinebach and Knill, 2017; Thierse, 2019), with only a few exceptions (Bicchi, 2002; Krause, 2003; Roth, 2011; Sus, 2021). This article argues that the merits of the MSA make it particularly apt for studying EU foreign policymaking and proposes its application to this policy domain.

Kingdon identifies three policy streams: *problems, politics,* and *policies*. The *problem stream* refers to the conditions that policymakers and citizens want to be addressed and often 'need a little push to get attention' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 94). Within EU foreign policy, the push can be provided by focusing on events such as political or military crises and natural disasters both on the international (e.g. Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2022) and the national level (e.g. Brexit). The political *stream* constitutes the broader environment within which policy is created. In Kingdon's original model, it includes public mood, group pressure campaigns, election results, partisan and ideological distributions in Congress (Kingdon, 2014, p. 145). In the EU context, three factors play a crucial role: the balance of the European Council members' partisan affiliation, the ideological balance of parties in the European Parliament, and the European

mood. The first two elements are expected to illustrate the level of support by the members of EU institutions for proposals aimed at deepening integration. In turn, the European mood can be portrayed as the 'climate of the times' (Zahariadis, 2008, p. 518), expressing a sense of urgency and openness for policy change. In case of the EU foreign policy, it can be captured by the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) conclusions, speeches by national leaders, and by tangible decisions. The European mood can be also illustrated by the level of public support levels for more integration of security and defence. Another factor is the emerging politicisation of EU foreign policy (Angelucci & Isernia, 2020; Karlović et al., 2021) which causes increased attention to the policy domain in question from voters across the Union. The third stream, the *policies stream,* consists of ideas and solutions developed to address existing problems. Concerning EU foreign policy, the ideas can come from various sources, including actors who enjoy formal decision-making power such as the member states, other stakeholders who do not enjoy a formal mandate in decision-making such as the HR with the EEAS, and from expert and academic community.

In the *problems* and *politics* streams, policy windows may open. They are 'fleeting opportunit[ies] for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 165), and provide the context and stimulus within which the three streams can be coupled (Zahariadis, 2008, p. 519). Both predictable (e.g. determined by the outcome of national or European elections) and unpredictable (e.g. determined by outbreaks of war in the EU´s direct neighborhood), they can be extended by focusing on events or entrepreneurs' activities (Natali, 2004).

Finally, an indispensable component of Kingdon's approach is policy entrepreneurs. These skilled and resourceful actors, 'characterized by energy and talent', couple the three streams during a window of opportunity and 'are capable of producing unexpected changes´ (Natali, 2004, p. 1080). In line with the reasoning presented elsewhere (Sus, 2021; Stevenson 1987; 1997; Ackrill & Kay, 2011), the article claims that policy entrepreneurs can come from both outside and inside of the decision-making process. It defines them as individuals or groups of individuals who exploit opportunities to influence policy outcomes without having the necessary resources required for achieving this goal alone (Cohen, 2016; Mintrom 1997). Such conceptualisation allows examining the agency of both individual and collective actors. In case of the EU foreign policy, policy entrepreneurs can thus emerge among member states acting

independently or via institutions such as the European Council, officials of EU institutions with or without limited formal power, such as the HR.

Setting up the scene: The Strategic Compass through the MSA lens

Drawing on the demonstrated application of the MSA to the EU foreign policy, the article now turns to the policy process that led to the development of the Strategic Compass. The following section summarizes the developments of the three policy streams prior to 2022, which created a window of opportunity to push for policy change. It also briefly characterises the selection of the four potential policy entrepreneurs.

Three streams

In the case of the Strategic Compass, the three streams came together in 2020 creating favorable momentum for key stakeholders to push for policy change. The *problem stream* was constituted by a deteriorating security environment and growing demand for a stronger EU capacity to act within the security realm. As indicated earlier, due to the geopolitical challenges which have been mounting since 2011, the EU has reached a critical juncture in terms of its performance as a security provider. Apart from wars and security crises of the recent decade (Donbas, Sudan, Congo, Syria, Afghanistan, Mali, and Myanmar to name a few), the global pandemic of COVID-19 broaden policy window in the *problem* stream by triggering a social, economic and political crisis. Among others, it accelerated competition between the US and China, pushing the EU to strive for more strategic autonomy.

The *politics stream* was characterised by an overall favorable mood towards the strengthening of EU security. In the 2019 European Parliament elections, the pro-European parties gained more than 500 seats out of 751 and most of the European Council's members shared the same attitude. Also, the newly elected president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen declared her intention for Europe to develop 'a stronger and more united voice in the world' (von der Leyen, 2019, p. 18) Additionally, the new HR, Joseph Borrell called to take further steps for the EU to become a geostrategic actor (Barigazzi, 2019). The strengthening of EU security integration was also supported by public opinion with 75 percent of EU citizens endorsing the CSDP (European Commission, 2017). In addition, as indicated above, following the publication of the EUGS, the EU institutions and the member states embarked on the implementation of several new instruments, frequently highlighting their commitment

to enhancing the Union's capacity to act as a security provider (Council of the European Union, 2018, 2019; European Council, 2016, 2017, 2018).

The third stream - *the policy stream* involved proposals by both the EU institutions (e.g. Mogherini & Katainen 2017) and by the think tank community (Biscop, 2018; Drent & Zandee, 2016; Fiott, 2018; Fiott et al., 2017) for further advancement of Union's security performance. Furthermore, the *policy* stream was strongly fed by the Franco-German duo that since 2016 'shaped the EU's defence and security agenda' (Koenig & Walter-Franke, 2017) and delivered a range of joint-non papers (see e.g. von der Leyen & le Drian 2016) as well as political declarations (Merkel & Macron, 2017, 2018; Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2019).

This brief analysis shows that the Compass has not been developed in a vacuum (Major & Mölling, 2020). The external context and the security momentum that has been developing in the EU since 2016 (Dijkstra, 2016) provided favourable conditions to push for policy change.

Policy entrepreneurs

Based on preliminary research, four stakeholders were identified as 'agents of change' (Mintrom & Norman, 2009, p. 655) who pushed for policy change in a decisive way: Germany, France, the HR supported by the EEAS, and the European Commission. The first two stakeholders – Germany and France – have been described as frontrunners in the development of the Compass (Zandee et al., 2020, p. 24). Indeed, the process started during the German Presidency of the Council of the EU (July to December 2020) and ended during the French Presidency (January to June 2022). The framing of the process by these two countries reflected the 'traditional centrality of the Franco-German axis for EU affairs, also including security and defence aspects' (Engberg, 2021, p. 8). In turn, the inclusion of institutional stakeholders as possible policy entrepreneurs is attributed to the decisions of the member states. The HR with the EEAS were entrusted as pen-holders of the Compass, and the European Commission was designated to contribute within its competences concerning the external portfolios (Council on the European Union, 2020; Latici & Lazarou, 2021; Nováky, 2020).

There is one caveat to be made: in line with numerous studies this article considers the above-mentioned policy entrepreneurs as collective actors (Meijerink & Huitema, 2010; Schreurs & Tiberghien, 2007; Zito, 2001). However, it strives to identify specific actors within a collective entrepreneur that have implemented entrepreneurial strategies to shape policy change.

Explaining the dynamics behind the Strategic Compass: tracing the footprint of key stakeholders

Under laying out the background of the Compass from the MSA perspective , the article moves on to the empirical analysis. It begins by outlining entrepreneurial strategies, then goes on to explore the use of these strategies by the four distinct policy entrepreneurs during the policy process, and concludes with a discussion of the findings.

Entrepreneurial strategies as the conceptual tool

This article proposes to explore policy entrepreneurs' performance through the strategies they deploy to influence policymaking and to secure the support of the veto players and other stakeholders for their proposals and ideas (Mintrom & Vergari, 1996; Zahariadis & Exadaktylos, 2016). The three most widely recognised entrepreneurial strategies are: *framing problems and sparking interest; venue shopping; and mobilising support by creating teams and coalitions*.

At the core of the first strategy – *framing problems and sparking interests* – lies the ability of policy entrepreneurs to present an issue in a way to be beneficial for their interests. As scholars argued, 'skilled entrepreneurs use frames because they provide narratives that help them articulate what the collective interest will be in a particular situation' (Stone-Sweet et al., 2001, p. 20). Moreover, a framing strategy can manifest also by claiming ownership of ideas developed by other stakeholders (Copeland and James, 2014; Sus, 2021). In this way, policy entrepreneurs seize control of the agenda. Another technique, which follows the same aim, is to combine ideas that relevant actors put in the *policy stream* with the entrepreneur's own ideas and to frame it as a joint solution (Zohlnhöfer et al., 2016, p. 251-252). A component of the framing strategy is furthermore to gradually build up interest in the issue at hand (Mintrom and Norman, 2009; Princen, 2011).

The second strategy is *venue shopping* – that is, strategically selecting, modifying and/or creating different settings to increase the chance of gaining support for a proposed solution (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Within the EU foreign policy, there are not only national (27 countries), institutional (all EU stakeholders) and cross-national (minilateral forms of cooperation between the member states) venues, but also several venues within the expert community. By selecting a more sympathetic venue, policy entrepreneurs impact the formation

of preferences among decision-makers (Zahariadis, 2008, p. 523). Furthermore, 'agents of change' can create new venues that serve their purpose.

Finally, the third entrepreneurial strategy is *the mobilisation of support* and the various techniques ascribed to it. The strength of policy entrepreneurs stems from their ability to work effectively with others (Mintrom and Norman, 2009, p. 653), which they can do via tools such as building a trusted team, looking for support from various stakeholders and developing coalitions. According to the first technique, policy entrepreneurs surround with people who complement their expertise and allow them to reach a larger audience. The second technique is to look for backing not only from actors directly involved in the decision-making process, but also from those, who are 'beyond the immediate scope of the problem' (Mintrom and Norman, 2009, p. 652) and can contribute to the *politics stream* and impact the general mood towards the issue in question. Lastly, mobilising support can be also encouraged by developing coalitions (Mintrom and Vergari, 1996). Coalitions can be formed with like-minded veto players or with stakeholders who enjoy considerable public status and whose support might help convince decision-makers of the value of a proposal brought up by policy entrepreneurs.

Policy entrepreneurs and the Strategic Compass: tracing the footprint

Having presented the conceptual tool – the entrepreneurial strategies – the paper now turns to the process of tracing the footprint that policy entrepreneurs left on the policy change. The following section outlines the policy process that culminated in the adoption of the Compass, within which four parts can be distinguished. It looks at the empirical manifestations of the entrepreneurial strategies of each of the selected stakeholders during the respective parts of the process and at the inter-entrepreneurial interactions.

Part 1: Council conclusions on the development of threat assessment and the Strategic Compass (June 2020)

The first phase of the policy process started with the decision of the Council in June 2020 to launch the development of the Strategic Compass. The Council invited the HR to present by the end of 2020 through the EEAS´s Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) a comprehensive, 360 degree analysis of threats, which will provide the background for the Member States to develop a Strategic Compass (Council on the European Union, 2020). The

Ministers also tasked the European Commission and the European Defence Agency (EDA) to be part of the process according to their competencies (Latici & Lazarou, 2021).

The decision of the Council was an outcome of the process that German Federal Ministry of Defense initiated a few months prior, as a part of its preparations for the EU Council Presidency. It was the German defense minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrebauer, that proposed the idea for this strategic document, later described as the "German initiative" (Nováky, 2020, p. 2). One can find traces of the application of two entrepreneurial strategies by Federal Ministry of Defense: framing problems and sparking interest and mobilization of support. Within the first strategy, gradually building interest in the idea of the Compass was most visible. German defence minister, presented the idea to a German audience in 2019 (Kramp-Karrenbauer, 2019), at the same time drawing on and contributing to the above-mentioned security momentum (Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021, p. 8). After a series of bilateral conversations between the Ministry and its counterparts in other EU countries, most prominently in France (Deschaux-Dutard, 2022, p. 597; Nováky, 2020, p. 5), Kramp-Karrenbauer publicly announced that Germany wants to start a 2-year process labelled the "Strategic Compass" at the meeting of defence ministers in Zagreb on 4-5 March 2020 (Council of the European Union, 2020; Fiott, 2020; Kramp-Karrenbauer, 2020), aimed at providing strategic direction for EU security. The Compass was then officially included in the programme of the German EU Council Presidency (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020).

Within the second entrepreneurial strategy, in terms of mobilisation of support, Germany reached out to France, its long-standing partner in bringing the EU integration forward (Deschaux-Dutard, 2022). President Macron has been very vocal in his support for the strengthening of EU security and defence policy and France has long been perceived as 'the staunchest proponent of European strategic autonomy' (Zandee et al., 2020, p. 1). Hence, it was crucial for Federal Defense Ministry to secure the support of the French Ministry of Armed Forces for the document to guarantee its successful implementation. This is why Germany sought to initiate the Compass during its EU Council Presidency and to conclude it during the French EU Council Presidency (Zandee et al., 2020, p. 2.). Furthermore, Berlin not only successfully created a trusted team with Paris, but it also managed to develop a coalition with like-minded member states like Italy and Spain. In May 2020 Germany, France, Italy and Spain's defense ministers expressed their commitment for a new strategic document (Parly et al., 2020). Having three big EU countries on board helped Germany obtain other member states' support, including many of which were initially sceptical regarding the idea due to their

fear of the risk to produce another paper-tiger (Nováky, 2020, p. 5). Thus, the mere launch of the process at the Council meeting in June 2020 can be perceived as German success (Koenig, 2020, p. 2) and attributed to its entrepreneurial strategies.

Part 2: Threat analysis (July 2020 – November 2020)

The second phase of the process started in July 2020. It concluded four months later, when a classified threat analysis was finalised by the SIAC, which consists of the EU Intelligence Centre and EU Military Staff Intelligence and is located within the EEAS. The threat analysis was an outcome of contributions from the 27 member states' intelligence services. This included more than 60 national agencies covering both internal and external security aspects (Interview #1).

Due to the technical nature of this part of the process, the room for deploying entrepreneurial strategies by other stakeholders was limited. The EEAS, and specifically the SIAC, was the key entrepreneur here since it was responsible for organising the process according to the above-mentioned Council decision (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2020). Against this backdrop, the SIAC circulated a template among national intelligence units, providing them with a tool to submit their intel, and then combined their input into a comprehensive threat analysis (European External Action Service, 2020; Interview #1). The SCIA merged the national contributions into a "360º intelligence report, describing the risks and threats to the EU in 5-10 years" (Satué De Córdova, 2021, p. 3). Hence, EU diplomacy was perceived as neutral in this process (Interview #1, Interview #7). Furthermore, the classified document was not negotiated on the political level, and it was taken into account by the member states without having been officially approved. In this way, the prioritisation of threats was avoided as it they were proven to be perceived very differently from one country to another (Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021, p. 7; Interview #10). The lack of threats' prioritisation was criticised by some member states which expected the document to set priorities for the work on the Compass (Interview #5, Interview #8, Interview #10). At the same time, the lack of political discussion limited room for the deployment of entrepreneurial strategies.

Part 3: Strategic dialogue (December 2020 – October 2021)

The third part of the policy process witnessed the deployment of entrepreneurial strategies by several stakeholders as well as intense interactions between them. Once the threat assessment was finished, the work on the Compass entered the strategic dialogue. The consultations were

mostly conducted during the Portuguese EU Council Presidency in the first half of 2021, whereas the summer and early autumn were devoted to drafting the document (Portugal's Presidency of the Council of the EU, 2021). According to the above-mentioned Council's decision, the process was organised by the HR and EEAS. In February 2021, the EEAS produced an initial synthesis of the ideas organised into four baskets: crisis management, resilience, capability development and partnerships (European External Action Service, 2021), as pre-determined by the Council (Council on the European Union, 2020, p. 17). The EEAS document also posed a series of questions to member states structured around the baskets and invited the national capitals to provide their ideas through non-papers, and seminars. Altogether, more than 50 events were organised and over 30 non-papers by individual countries or groups of them were circulated (Interview #1, Interview #9; Biscop, 2021; The Defence Post, 2021). Drawing on this input, the EEAS came up with four working papers and shared them for further discussion (Fiott & Lindstrom, 2021, p. 52). The progress of the work was punctuated by FAC meetings, and also in so-called jumbo-sessions, including both foreign and defence ministers that were supervised by the European Council (European Council, 2021, p. 6). Also, Political and Security Committee and Politico-Military Group were engaged in discussing the priorities and the parts of the texts of the Compass.

Turning to the exploration of the strategies that the respective policy entrepreneurs used to impact the course of the consultations and the Strategic Compass content, there is empirical evidence pointing to the use of two entrepreneurial strategies by the HR and the EEAS: framing problems and venue shopping. The latter was executed by the creation of a setting that enabled the EEAS to control the process while simultaneously ensuring that the member states were actively involved since the national political 'buy in' was critical. Therefore, a small drafting team of three people was created around the Deputy-Secretary General for CSDP and Crisis Response, Charles Fries who had prepared the text, under the supervision of the HR. They regularly consulted both with the European Commission and with the member states through the channels mentioned above, but did not release the full draft until November 2021, fearing a leak (Interview #1). This allowed them to remain in control of the process. As for the framing strategy, the HR and the EEAS drafting team made use of narratives regarding the EU's capacity to act that have been floating the *policy* stream. They used them to push the member states for a high Level of Ambition by reminding them about the commitment they made in 2017 to use PESCO projects to develop a 'coherent full spectrum force package' (Interview #1, #7, # 9; European External Action Service, 2021). Despite ongoing criticism of the political

weakness of the EEAS (Interview #3, #2, #6), it has proved to be an efficient manager, serving as a hub and coordinating input from the national capitals as well as from the European Commission and the EDA, while at the same time controlling the drafting process.

As for France and Germany, the former was actively deploying various entrepreneurial strategies aimed at leaving its footprint on the document, whereas the latter was less pro-active. The Directorate General for International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS) that leads the international action of the Ministry for the Armed Forces and contributes to the foreign policy coordinated by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, was a key actor on the French side. From the beginning of the strategic dialogue, DGRIS focused on mobilising support for French priorities such as the 'first entry force' (Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021, p. 11). Moreover, the fact that in the text of the Compass 'EU's security and defence policy goes beyond the treaty framework of the CSDP what can be seen in the passages on space and satellite policy, which Paris uses to channel EU funding to its space industry' (Kaim & Kempin, 2022, p. 6) provides another example of the success of entrepreneurial strategies used by French officials and diplomats. They managed to build coalitions of EU countries which supported French ideas (Interview #7, #8) and in this way promoted e.g. a proposal to give concrete form to the obligation to provide assistance according to article 42.7 TEU (Håkansson, 2021, p. 81; Kaim & Kempin, 2022, p. 7).

Germany's role in this part of the process was considerably less than that of France. The inactivity was attributed to the parliamentary elections which took place in September 2021 and resulted in a change of the personnel in charge of defence policy (Interview #4, #8) and to a general "inertia" (Interview #6, #12) of German administration regarding the EU security and defence policy. The empirical manifestation of entrepreneurial strategies was observed mostly with regard to mobilising support by developing coalitions with like-minded partners and the Federal Defense Ministry reached out for this strategy to convince other member states to support a German-Dutch non-paper on close relations between the EU and NATO (Herszenhorn, 2021; Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021; Interview #5, Interview #9).

As for the European Commission, the examination of the process showed that its role was rather that of a supplier than of an entrepreneur (Gnesotto, 2022, p.1). The Commission's Secretariat-General (Unit for Coordination of Foreign, Security and Defence Policy) gathered input in particular from DG for Defence Industries and Space DEFIS, headed by a French

official, Thierry Breton, as well as from DG MOVE and DG CLIMATE (Interview #8, #9, #10). It was regularly consulted by the EEAS drafting team throughout the preparation process and proposed formulations within the realm of the Commission's areas of competence (Interview #9; Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021), yet the central contribution by the Commission was delivered in February 2022.

Part 4. Presentation of the draft & revision of the draft and adapting to the external shock (Nov 2021-March 2022)

In November 2021 the HR presented the draft of the document (Council of the European Union, 2021c). It was met with mixed feelings, as some member states appealed for full transparency, the consideration of all EU countries' voices, and for strengthening the EU's with NATO (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021; Interview #12). One thorniest issue was the language in which the draft described Russia as a country that should be engaged by the EU on some specific issues highlighting common interests and a shared culture that link the EU and Russia (Barigazzi, 2021; Barigazzi et al., 2022; Council of the European Union, 2021b) Given the military build-up on the Ukrainian border and the growingly assertive cyber-attacks on the EU by Moscow, such language was not acceptable for countries like Poland, the Baltic states, Romania and Bulgaria (Interview #4, #7). Hence, the EEAS drafting team started to rewrite the Compass with its scheduled publication for March 2022 in mind (Interview #1). In the middle of revising the text, Russia invaded Ukraine. This focus event contributed profoundly to both the *problem* and the *politics* stream. The mood towards Moscow has changed dramatically, creating an additional sense of urgency for the strengthening of the Union's capacity to act, an issue that had to be addressed by the revised text (Interview #1, #9).

During this final part of the process, the HR and the EEAS drafting team continued to control the venue it created during the strategic dialogue phase, collecting contributions, and remaining in control of the drafting process. The Russian invasion enabled the HR and the drafting team to push for a high level of ambition, something that they have been aiming at since the beginning of the process.

At the same time, the entrepreneurial strategies applied by French diplomatic and defense circles around DGRIS intensified. The French Council Presidency created more opportunities to deploy entrepreneurial strategies and leave a footprint on the policy change. As a report by

the French Senate noted 'Thankfully, France has the presidency next year. With precaution and, above all, an inclusive approach, it can instil a new dynamic towards the autonomy that we desire' (Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021, p. 91). Apart of moblizing support for the Compass at various events organised within the Council Presidency framework, French officials engaged in venue shopping and decided to take over most defence-related issues from the PSC (which was chaired by the EEAS) to COREPER (chaired by the Council Presidency) (Interview #4, #7). The decision was motivated by the deteriorating security situation, and it provided Paris with additional possibilities to impact the work on the Compass (Interview #1).

As to Federal Defense Ministry it continued its limited involvement during the revisions of the Compass. Additionally, the Russian invasion forced Germany to fundamentally rethink its foreign policy in the mid-and long term perspectives (Bunde, 2022). Berlin's support for the Compass remained unchanged but it stayed focused on the internal challenges brought by the need of a strategic reorientation (Interview #12).

The European Commission, in turn, advanced its involvement in the policy process leading to the Strategic Compass and published two documents with proposals for parts of the Compass that dealt with capabilities and investments (European Commission, 2022b, 2022a). Especially engaged in the preparations of the Commission's input was DG DEFIS which is in charge of the EDF, providing the Commission a strong footing in the capability domain. It proposed further tools to incentivise joint defense procurement (Interview #1, #10, #11, Le Gleut & Conway-Mouret, 2021). The Russian invasion facilitated the member states to declare its willingness to increase defence spending 'with a significant share for investment, focusing on identified strategic shortfalls, and with defence capabilities developed in a collaborative way within the European Union' (European Council, 2022b, p. 3). Hence, the heads of states and governments not only agree on the proposals developed by the Commission but additionally task it to propose further initiatives for the strengthening of the European defence industrial and technological base (Interview #10, #11; European Council, 2022b, p. 4).Therefore, nearly all proposals suggested by the Commission were included in the final text of the Compass. At the same time, despite the awareness of the need to boost the defence industry, some member states seem concerned with the expanding competences of the Commission in the field of security and defence, claiming that the Commission is approaching the brink of exceeding its treaty powers (Interview #4, Interview #5, Interview #7).

The outcome: The adoption of the Strategic Compass (March 2022)

On March 21, the Council formally approved the Strategic Compass (Council of the European Union, 2021c) and a few days later, the European Council added its endorsement (European Council, 2022a, p. 3). The agreement at the highest political level indicates that all 27 member states support the Compass, which offers promising prospects for its implementation (Interview #4, 5, 7). At the same time, however, the final text of the Compass demonstrates a strong footprint of the French diplomatic efforts, the result of the successful application of the entrepreneurial strategies explored above. For example, the prominence of the Indo-Pacific as one of the regions that the EU wants to close bilateral ties with and the announcement to conduct, by 2023, live maritime exercises with partners from the region, is one of the French footprints in the document (Interview #4, #7; Kaim & Kempin, 2022, p. 7). Besides, the Compass is perceived to be an ambitious and actionable document that delivers a push for the EU's strategic autonomy (Shea et al., 2022) which is what both Macron and the French Ministry of Armed Forces were aiming for from the beginning of the process (Terlikowski, 2021; Interview #1, #3, #6, #7).

Discussion

As the above analysis demonstrates, during the policy process leading to the adoption of the Strategic Compass, two policy entrepreneurs – the HR with the drafting team and French Ministry of Armed Forces and the diplomatic circles – had managed to leave their footprints on the policy change through the document's content. The following table presents an overview of the entrepreneurial strategies deployed by particular stakeholders thought the policy process.

Table 1. Policy entrepreneurs and their strategies during the development of the Strategic Compass

Part 1 Council conclusions on the development of threat assessment and the Strategic Compass (June 2020)	Threat analysis (July 2020 – November 2020)	Part 3 Drafting & Strategic dialogue (December 2020 – October 2021)	Part 4 Presentation & revision of the draft and adapting to the external shock (Nov 2021-March 2022)

Federal Defense Ministry: *framing problems and sparking interest; mobilization of support*	SCIA (EEAS): *no particular strategy*	HR & EEAS drafting team: *framing problems and venue shopping* DGRIS: *mobilizing support and building coalitions*	HR & EEAS drafting team: *venue shopping* DGRIS & French EU Council Presidency: *venue shopping, mobilizing support* European Commission (SG & DG DEFIS): *no particular strategy*

Source: Own elaboration

The HR and the EEAS drafting team skilfully created a venue that allowed them to control the drafting process, playing a key coordinating role. This policy entrepreneur also successfully coupled the window of opportunity that opened in the *problem* stream in 2016 which was widened by the Russian invasion with ideas floating in the *policy* stream. By pushing for a high level of ambition, the HR and the EEAS drafting team succeeded in getting member states to commit to the most far-reaching set of initiatives to deepen security and defense integration in the history of the EU. At the same time, the drafting team respected the fact that the Compass must be steered by the member states to be officially adopted at the highest political level and avoided taking too much leadership (Major & Mölling, 2020, p. 13).

The second stakeholder who greatly influenced the preparation process of the Strategic Compass was France (Interview #4, #5, #8, #9, #11). As illustrated above, the French Ministry of Armed forces in particular reached out for a range of entrepreneurial strategies to feed the process with its ideas and to control the narrative and it succeeded in leaving a decisive footprint on the final document. The analysis revealed that France had both a material advantage as the most vocal EU country in proposing ideas for a more integrated defense and security policy and an institutional advantage not only due to the above-presented role of the French Council Presidency. Key figures in the formation of the Compass, such as Charles Fries and Thierry Breton have had careers in French politics and business. Despite the supranational mandate of their offices in both the EEAS and the Commission, their awareness of French interests facilitated the French efforts to impact the content of the Compass (Interview #12). The Federal Defense Ministry, on the other hand, while being the author of the initial idea, appeared not to act as a policy entrepreneur except in the first phase of the preparation of the Compass. Thereafter, their involvement was less visible and limited to a few key issues. Also,

as the empirical analysis has shown, the European Commission has not actively embraced the role of the policy entrepreneur. Working within the framework provided by the HR, the Commission focused on proposing a series of initiatives, the logical culmination of projects developed in the *policy* stream since 2016 to strengthen the European defense industry (Interview #9, #11, Håkansson, 2021b). Like the EEAS, it took advantage of the sense of urgency to strengthen the defense industry, triggered by the war in Ukraine, and used the opportunity to push for change in areas within the Commission's portfolio.

As for the inter-entrepreneurial interactions, the study allows to make three observations. First, it showed that French diplomates and officials have 'been running the EU agenda on security and defense' (Interview #6). Once convinced by their German counterparts of the idea of the Compass, French diplomacy skilfully coupled three streams of *problems, politics,* and *policy*, and pushed for change that was in line with French priorities. The successful pursuit of entrepreneurial strategies by DGRIS was facilitated by the fact that the *policy* stream was dominated by French ideas regarding the advancement of the EU security and defense policy. The Russian invasion also favoured French entrepreneurial efforts since it made more member states eager to match Paris' ambitious vision for the further development of European defense.

Second, the study demonstrated the inertia of German diplomacy during the process and indicated that the parliamentary elections and then the shock caused by the Russian war, contributed to this inactiveness. Berlin's limited involvement was in stark contrast to France's with interlocutors pointing to the lack of German vision for the EU security and defense integration (Interview #12). Therefore, it can be claimed, that by not actively contributing to the *policy* stream, Germany made room for French diplomacy to pursue its entrepreneurial strategies and form the policy change according to French priorities.

Finally, the interests of French diplomacy and the HR with the EEAS drafting team (and to some extent also of the European Commission, specifically DG DEFIS) were to great extent aligned – they aimed to produce an ambitious document, with clear and tight deadlines for the implementation of individual proposals. Hence, the successive drafts of the Compass presented by the EEAS largely coincided with the French vision for this policy document, further strengthening the entrepreneurial role of French diplomacy in the process of achieving policy change. Having the backing of the HR and EEAS drafting team (not unconditional, however, as the drafting team pushed back on some French proposals, in particular concerning art. 42.7,

(Interview #1, #9) and being aware of the necessity of the broad buy-in in the national capitals for the Compass, French diplomats and officials could focus on building coalitions with like-minded countries and on getting their support for its proposals and did it successfully

Conclusions

The paper aimed to examine the impact of four stakeholders, conceptualized as policy entrepreneurs on the process leading to the introduction of the Compass, by tracing their deployment of entrepreneurial strategies across all stages of the policy process.

The presented analysis offers both empirical and theoretical findings. Regarding the empirical input, the study revealed the significance of France, as a collective entrepreneur with formal decision-making power, in its ability to shape advances in EU foreign policy. It seems to be a function of two dynamics. Firstly, the structure of the delegation in EU foreign policy from the member states to the supranational EU institutions (specifically to the HR with EEAS or the European Commission) limits the possibilities of the latter to decisively shape change. The analysis demonstrated the skillful deployment of venue shopping strategy by the HR and the EEAS drafting team, but also indicated that their actions were bounded by the Council's mandate. Secondly, there seems to be no other EU country as capable of pushing for change in EU foreign policy as France and this is due to its military and diplomatic power, the political will of French leadership, and the efficiency of the French administration, in terms of influencing the EU agenda and building coalitions. Despite other countries' worry that Macron's idea of EU strategic autonomy effectively means promoting French security interest (Brzozowski, 2021), there seems to be no meaningful alternative to the French leadership.

Regarding the theoretical findings, the article demonstrates, the MSA scope conditions, make it apt to study EU foreign policymaking. Kingdon's framework turned out to have valuable explanatory power regarding the complex domain of EU foreign policymaking, offering new insights into the dynamics between various stakeholders and their contribution to policy change. Furthermore, the study showed the dominance of policy entrepreneurs with formal power resources, such as decision-making powers, over institutional policy entrepreneurs without such resources throughout the policy process. It also demonstrated that similar interests among policy entrepreneurs reinforce their respective impact on policy change and that the disengagement of one policy entrepreneur from trying to actively influence change increases the scope for action for other policy entrepreneurs. Admittedly, the ability to generalise

conclusions from a single case study is limited, so further research is needed to verify these findings.

List of the interviews

Interview #1 with an EU official (EEAS), 1.07.2022

Interview #2 with an EU official (EEAS), 19.07.2022 (zoom)

Interview #3 with an EU official (European Commission), 26.07.2022 (webex)

Interview #4 with a national diplomat, 27.07.2022 (zoom)

Interview #5 with a national diplomat, 7.09.2022 (phone)

Interview #6 with an EU official (European Parliament), 13.09.2022 (phone)

Interview #7 with a national diplomat, 15.09.2022 (zoom)

Interview #8 with a national diplomat, 16.09.2022 (zoom)

Interview #9 with an EU official (EEAS), 19.09.2022 (zoom)

Interview #10 with an EU official (European Commission), 27.09.2022 (MS Teams)

Interview #11 with an EU official (European Commission), 29.09.2022 (MS Teams)

Interview #12 with a national diplomat, 12.10.2022 (zoom)

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