



## FEATURES OF THE FORMATION OF A REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM IN EASTERN EUROPE

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*Received: 07 July 2022; Accepted: 07 September 2022; Online Published: 19 September 2022*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The formation of a new world order is primarily caused by new conditions and military operations on the European continent. The intensification of military-political tension led to the formation of new centers of power and gravity, which in turn led to the concentration of weapons and general militarization. Changes in the world order as a result of military conflicts and an increase in hot spots in the world, an increase in threats and the formation of centers of military gravity, the inability of existing institutions to resolve the situation lead to the need to develop new security mechanisms. The main purpose of the article is to identify the key features of regional militarization in the modern world, to identify key centers for the formation of regional associations, and especially in Eastern Europe. The Methods/Approach of the article is a comparative analysis of regional characteristics and levels of militarization. Conclusions. Studies show that in recent years there has been an increase in the level of militarization of individual countries and the highest level is demonstrated by the countries of Eastern Europe (including the Baltics). This is primarily due to the increase in threats and the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine from Russia, as well as the increase in the intensity of previously unleashed conflicts. The increase in the degree of military-political tension leads to the need to form centers of power that could deter certain forces and threats in the regions. Previously, only weapons of mass destruction were defined as such forces, but in the modern world a new world order is being formed that could ensure the stabilization of the situation in Europe, given the presence of a fairly strong center of military power and the threat from Russia. Militarization trends indicate an increase in the quantity and quality of weapons in a region that could potentially be in the circle of Russia's geopolitical interests. Studies show that in the current situation, the countries of Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries are especially actively increasing their level of technologization of the army and militarization in general.*

**Keywords:** *Innovation, regional security, Baltic-Black Sea Union, security system, prerequisites for the formation*

**JEL classification:** F01, F15, F42

**Paper type:** **Research article.**

**Citation:** Kaspars, K. (2022). Features of the formation of a regional security system in Eastern Europe. *Access to science, business, innovation in digital economy*, ACCESS Press, 3(3): 253-263. [https://doi.org/10.46656/access.2022.3.3\(5\)](https://doi.org/10.46656/access.2022.3.3(5))

### **INTRODUCTION**

The formation of the collective security system takes place in the new conditions of world formation. Changes in the world order as a result of military conflicts and an increase in hot spots in the world, an increase in threats and the formation of centers of military gravity, the inability of existing institutions to resolve the situation lead to the need to develop new security mechanisms. In turn, this requires studying the possibilities of individual countries to participate in the formation of regional associations.



**Previously unsettled problem constituent.** However, the change in the modern world order in view of the Russian invasion and the formation of a new military-political association requires research into the prerequisites and possibilities for such cooperation.

**The main purpose** of the article is to identify the key features of regional militarization in the modern world, to identify key centers for the formation of regional associations, and especially in Eastern Europe.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** The study of the formation of defense economics is the basis of a significant number of works by the following scientists: Fabrizio Tassinari analyzed the key features of militarization in the European region (Tassinari, 2005); Mustafa Aydin (Aydin, 2005) studied the features of the Eastern European region within the framework of the concept of the Baltic-Black Sea region; Jovana Georgievska (Georgievska, 2020) explored the possibilities of building a kind of "shield" in Europe, which will be designed to limit the influence of Russia; the formation of the defense economy is studied in the work of Barry Watts (Watts, 2015); the historical aspects of the formation of the European defense system are studied in the works of Andrew K. Rose and Mark M. Spiegel (Rose & Spiegel, 2009).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to experts (Abuseridze et al, 2022; Jukna & Grasis, 2022), the key prerequisites for the formation of a new world order are the strengthening of political confrontation and, accordingly, the strengthening of militarization in certain regions of the world. It should be noted that individual regions of the world are the most dynamic in increasing the level of militarization, among which Eastern Europe occupies a special place in the modern world, which becomes a bridge of protection against Russian aggression. World experts are trying to assess the level of militarization of countries, their military power, level of training and capabilities in military conflicts. The key indices that assess the potential of countries and regions for military conflicts are the Global Military Power Index and the Global Militarization Index. Each of these indices takes into account the characteristics of the regions and is based on different approaches. Thus, the first index considers the natural indicators of militarization, while the second compares the level of attention to the military sector in relation to medicine.

In general, the key players in the arms market are countries with the highest level of power and security is ensured through the support of global leaders in military affairs, including the United States, Russia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, France, Great Britain, Pakistan, Brazil (Table 1).

One can note a rather high level of dynamism of this index and the absence of certain types of weapons in the index itself, for example, weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, biological and other types of weapons), including a new type of high-tech.



**Table 1.** TOP-10 countries according to the Global Fire Power rating

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Value</b>
1	USA	0,0453
2	Russia	0,0501
3	China	0,0511
4	India	0,0979
5	Japan	0,1195
6	South Korea	0,1261
7	France	0,1283
8	Great Britain	0,1382
9	Pakistan	0,1572
10	Brazil	0,1695

*Source: Author's own calculation, based on 2022 Military Strength Ranking*

In general, the Index includes a significant number of indicators that determine the country's capabilities in one form or another of military activity, in addition, for countries that do not have a water border, the presence of maritime transport is not taken into account, since it does not take part in the formation of the country's military power. In general, the rating analyzes more than 50 individual indicators to assess the military power of the country. At the same time, the indicators quite widely analyze the country's capabilities, from macroeconomic indicators to geographical ones. In this context, the chances of countries are equalized in the format of competition, the lower the indicator, the closer it is to 0, the higher the military potential of the country (2022 Military Strength Ranking).

The key security countries in the Eastern European region are Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland. Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has significantly updated the construction of a new security model, in general, we are talking about building the Baltic Sea - Black Sea model. At the same time, all countries of the Eastern European region occupy fairly high positions in the global ranking of military power, but large countries occupy high positions (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Positions of individual European countries according to the Global Fire Power ranking

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Value</b>
22	Ukraine	0,3266
24	Poland	0,4179
38	Romania	0,5938
52	Belarus	0,8169
67	Bulgaria	1,1071

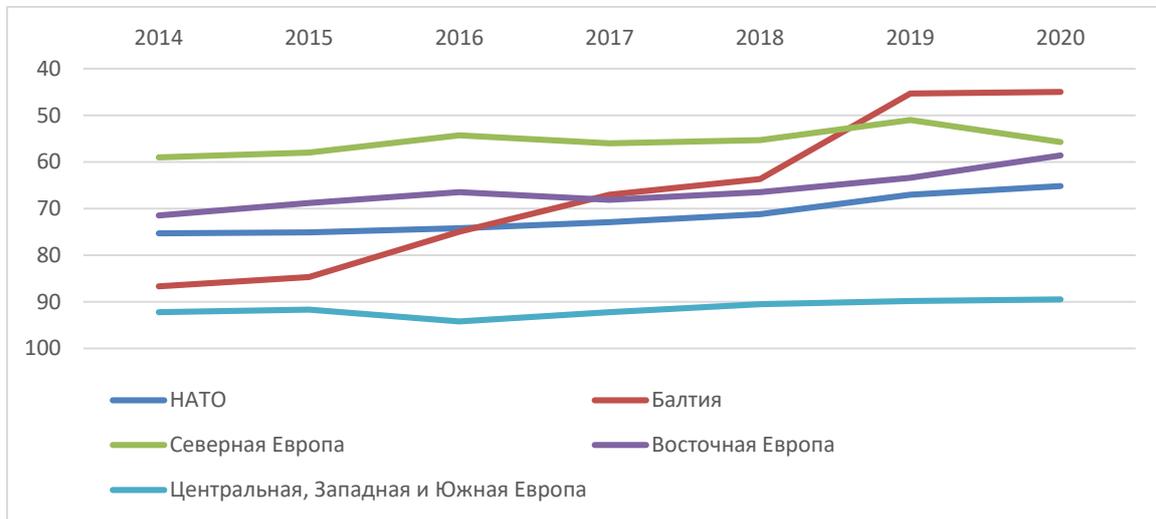


85	Lithuania	1,7083
94	Latvia	2,2758
105	Moldova	2,5799
108	Estonia	2,6558

Source: Author's own calculation, based on 2022 Military Strength Ranking

As we can see in the global index, individual countries of Eastern Europe (including the Baltics) do not occupy the highest positions, however, it is worth noting that the countries are quite small and cannot represent great power at the global level, however, the dynamics of strengthening their positions is clearly visible when analyzing the Global Index militarization (GMI), which is researched and developed by the Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies (Global Militarization Index, 2020). This index assesses the level of military spending and GDP and health care spending. Thus, the total number of armed forces is compared with the number of doctors, and the object of study is the quantity and quality of heavy weapons (Global Militarization Index (a), 2020).

It is worth noting that the presence in the region of a large militarized player, which is Russia, which poses a threat both in the military and political dimensions, contributes to an increase in the level of militarization of countries that are in a potential circle of conflict, especially post-Soviet ones (Fig. 1)



**Figure 1.** Dynamics of the positions of regions in the Global Militarization Index, 2021<sup>1</sup>

Source: Author's own calculation, based on Global militarisation index 2021 (Bayer, 2021)

<sup>1</sup> **Baltic countries:** Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania; **Northern Europe:** Denmark, Finland, Sweden; **Eastern Europe:** Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary; **Central, Western and Southern Europe:** Belgium, Germany, France, UK, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Spain



We can note that the Baltic countries demonstrate the greatest dynamics and increase in the level of militarization, the countries of Eastern Europe are in second place in terms of dynamics. However, the presence of a sufficiently strong aggressive country like Russia contributes to the growth of militarization and the level of weapons in the bordering countries. For example, Finland improved its position from 33rd to 29th place, which is facilitated by the presence of more than 1000 km border with Russia, having spent more than 4.1 billion dollars on armaments in 2019. (1.5% of GDP), however, Finland has planned an increase in funding by 41% (2 billion dollars), primarily for the purchase of fighter jets and heavy weapons. At the same time, Norway invested more than 7.4 billion dollars in weapons systems and the army, which is 1.7% of GDP (increasing its figures compared to 2014, when spending was 1.5% of GDP), which were spent, including for the purchase of heavy weapons systems (increasing their number to more than 800), fighters (F-35), armored personnel carriers. Moreover, in 2020, Sweden adopted the Defense Law, which is designed to protect and strengthen the readiness to defend the country from an aggressor Russia, given the growing tension and confrontation in the waters of the North Atlantic, the Baltic Sea, as well as in the airspace over Scandinavia. In general, Sweden decided to increase the military budget by 40% by 2025 and to purchase the latest weapons systems, fighters, submarines, cyber defense and cyber troops, although in 2010 Sweden abolished the mandatory conscription into the army (Cancellation of conscription into the army, 2009), however, already in 2018, this provision was revised towards the resumption of conscription and an increase in the reserve by 10 thousand people, by 2035 the number of troops should be increased by 30 thousand active soldiers (Sweden Returned Conscription Due to The Russian Threat, 2017).

There is also an increase in the level of militarization throughout the Eastern European region, programs have been launched to strengthen government orders and purchases, modernize the army and equipment, switch from Soviet weapons standards to NATO standards, the Czech Republic has improved its position from 98th to 89th place since 2014, including through investment in military equipment, vehicles (infantry, light combat, helicopters, radar systems). Hungary moved from 92nd to 78th place, having improved its air defense systems, increasing the number of missiles, combat helicopters and transport, self-propelled howitzers, battle tanks. Romania improved its position from 46th to 36th place, including through the purchase of new fighters and armored personnel carriers, increasing military spending from 1.3% to 2%. Slovakia moved up from 79th to 64th place and increased spending to 1.8% of GDP in 2019 from 1.0% in 2014. Bulgaria moved up 20 positions from 60th to 40th place, offering the army 3.2%, up from 1.2 % in 2014. A similar strategy was implemented in Croatia, which moved from 53rd to 44th place, which was facilitated by the purchase of heavy weapons systems and an increase in army personnel and reserves (Mutschler & Bales, 2020).

A fairly high level of militarization also remains in Belarus, which ranks 17th, with almost 50,000 active soldiers, 110,000 paramilitaries and about 290,000 reservists, with a total population of 9 million people. Belarus imports the bulk of weapons from Russia, military budget expenditures amount to 1.2%.



Ukraine also significantly increased the level of militarization, ranking 6th in Europe in 2021, increasing its military spending by 9% (5.9 billion dollars), in 2020 the level of spending was 4.1% of GDP for 209 thousand militaries. This led to an improvement in the position of Ukraine by 3 points in 2020, it is worth noting that since 2014 the country has risen from 41st place in the world ranking to 19th in 2020. Ukraine has significantly increased the number of military and paramilitary personnel, modernized weapons systems, increased the budget by 62 % to the amount of 4.6 billion dollars. in 2019, which amounted to 3.4% of GDP (in 2014 it was 2.2%).

The active party to the conflict in the Donbas is Russia, which ranks 8th in terms of the level of militarization. Russia owns one of the largest armies in the world, which includes more than 70,000 heavy weapons systems and about a million soldiers, as well as 2 million reservists. The peak value of government spending on the maintenance of the army reached in 2016, but in 2017 and 2018 they significantly decreased. It is worth noting that in 2019 spending on the maintenance of the army increased significantly (64.1 billion dollars or 3.9% of GDP) (Mutschler & Bales, 2020), which may be evidence of preparations for an invasion of Ukraine. In 2020, Russia's spending on the army decreased slightly and amounted to 62.7 billion dollars. (Bayer, 2021). Russia is investing heavily in modernizing its air force and has upgraded more than two-thirds of its weapons systems since 2008. An alarming factor is the renewal of the strategic nuclear forces. Experts note that the army in 2019-2020 was at the highest level since 1992, which was the result of the purchase of high-precision weapons and automated command and control systems. Network-centric control systems have also been formed, which is a combination of automated electronic control systems, information collection and processing (Network Centric Operations: Background and Oversight Issues for Congress, 2007). A high level of training has already manifested itself in the wars in Libya, Syria, Ukraine, over the past decade, more than 684 billion dollars have been spent on these wars. It is planned to upgrade for another 306 billion dollars. as part of the GPV 2027 program, where, among other things, it is planned to purchase another 76 Su-57 fighters. It was also planned to strengthen the naval forces, but the sanctions destroyed the opportunity to receive ships from France. It should be noted that in Europe the most militarized countries are Armenia, Russia, Greece, Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Montenegro, Turkey, Ukraine and Finland (Table 3).

**Table 3.** The most militarized countries in Europe, 2020

Country	global Expenditure Index		global Personnel Index		global Heavy Weapons Index		GMI value		Rank	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Armenia	2,2	3,1	1,7	1,9	2,3	2,4	310,1	377	2	5
Russia	2,1	3,2	0,9	0,9	2,7	2,8	285,1	353	8	10
Greece	1,6	2,3	1,1	1,2	2,7	2,7	269,1	318	12	14
Cyprus	1,2	1,8	1,5	1,6	2,7	2,8	268,2	316	13	15



Azerbaijan	2,1	4,1	0,9	0,6	2,1	2,1	254,8	389	16	3
Belarus	1,0	1,4	1,4	1,5	2,3	2,3	231,8	269	17	24
Montenegro	1,0	1,9	1,5	1,5	1,3	1,6	226,4	258	18	26
Turkey	1,8	2,7	0,7	0,7	2,0	2,0	223,8	278	20	22
Ukraine	1,9	3,0	0,8	0,5	1,8	1,9	221,6	305	22	16
Finland	1,1		0,7		2,3		203,0		29	
Estonia		2,1		0,6		2,1		247		30

*Source: Author's own calculation, based on Global militarisation index 2020 (Mutschler & Bales, 2020)*

Russia regularly conducts military exercises along with China, Pakistan, Belarus, Armenia and Myanmar. At the same time, the EU and NATO countries are conducting their multilateral exercises, the total number of personnel involved can reach 37 thousand military personnel. In 2020, such exercises were limited due to the coronavirus pandemic. Relations between NATO countries and Russia deteriorated due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and the military conflict in the eastern regions. In general, tensions in relations between Russia and NATO have been constantly growing in recent years, which is also related to previous conflicts. Thus, in 2021, in the Black Sea, Russian forces announced that they fired warning shots at a British destroyer, which, according to Russia, violated territorial waters, but the destroyer was near Crimea, which is recognized as Ukrainian in international law (Russia claims to have opened fire on the course of the British destroyer Defender, Britain denies this, 2021). The confrontation continued during military exercises that were held by both Russia and NATO, the latter held DEFENDER-Europe 21, in which military personnel from 26 countries were involved (in total, more than 28 thousand military). Russia, together with Belarus, held "West-2021", in which about 200 thousand soldiers and about 300 tanks took part, the main purpose of which was to test the level of defense capability of Belarus and Russia.

We can see an increase in the level of militarization in the region, which ultimately led to an open war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022. In general, three countries in Eastern Europe are in the top 10 most militarized countries in the world, and three more are included in the top 20. In the European Union, militarization has increased in 22 out of 27 countries since 2014, moving the average EU Militarization Index in 2019 by 10 positions (from 82 in 2014 to 72 in 2019). An increase in the level of militarization can also be observed in the Baltic countries, so Latvia in 2014 ranked 129th, in 2019 the country took 60th place, significantly improving its performance. Lithuania has increased its position by 50 points (from 82 in 2019 to 32 in 2019). Both countries have significantly increased their spending on military needs, and if in 2014 they invested 0.9% of GDP, then in 2019 this figure is 2%. Estonia improved its position during this period by 10 places (from 42 to 32) and increased by 0.2% in spending (from 1.9% in 2014 to 2.1% in 2019). In general, for NATO countries, military spending is 2% (Mutschler & Bales, 2020).



It is worth noting that the economy of the military sector makes up a fairly large part of government spending, the study of financial investments in the military sector is actively conducted by SIPRI based on open resources. In general, we can note that the largest amount of financial resources in the military sector is concentrated in North America, compared with other regions of the world, which was noted, but not taken into account in the GIM (table 4).

**Table 4.** Military expenditure in Europe in constant US dollars, 2021

Region	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>World total (including Iraq)</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>1443</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>1767</b>	<b>1774</b>	<b>1796</b>	<b>1842</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>1960</b>
<b>World total (excluding Iraq)</b>		<b>1440</b>	<b>1785</b>	<b>1758</b>	<b>1768</b>	<b>1789</b>	<b>1836</b>	<b>1902</b>	<b>1953</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>378</b>
<i>Central Europe</i>	17,7	20,2	19,5	22,3	22,6	24,4	27,5	31,1	33,0
<i>Eastern Europe</i>	25,3	38,2	54,5	82,4	87,0	71,9	70,5	74,3	76,8
<i>Western Europe</i>	242	244	256	231	239	243	248	258	268

Source: (SIPRI Arms Industry Database, 2021)

Overall, North America accumulates the highest amount of military complex funding, followed by East Asia in second place by region, followed by Western Europe. Thus, we can note the formation of key centers of military power, which, in turn, are characterized by the presence of centers of gravity, which are countries with the highest level of funding for the military sector (table 5).

**Table 5.** Military expenditure by country, in constant (2019) US\$ m., SIPRI 2021

Country	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 Current
USA	475217	698019	865268	683678	681580	674557	694860	734344	766583	778232
Russia	23584	35165	49834	74649	80027	64848	62404	65201	66838	61713
Poland	5350	6534	7887	10594	10007	10233	11591	11786	12815	13027
Ukraine	1185	1847	2239	3905	3990	3988	4744	5419	5995	5924
Romania	1857	2272	1939	2647	2793	3789	4214	4613	5579	5727
Czech	2916	3413	2423	2069	2243	2240	2641	2910	3187	3252
Hungary	1461	1734	1176	1189	1358	1473	1721	2051	2463	2410
Bulgaria	871	946	806	686	734	761	940	2159	1210	1247
Lithuania	290	417	326	523	701	852	1025	1094	1135	1171
Belarus	186	384	556	710	668	642	730	774	785	845
Latvia	134	397	256	310	447	507	692	692	739	757
Estonia	175	284	343	513	551	567	597	637	687	701
Moldova	15,1	22,1	21,7	30,6	36,3	35,5	37,9	43,0	43,1	44,5



*Source: SIPRI Arms Industry Database*

As we can see, the United States of America has the highest spending on weapons, while they are ahead of China, which is in second place, more than three times, and spending is 10 times higher than, for example, Russia. At the same time, even in relative terms, for example, as a share of GDP, the United States is significantly ahead of all other countries, and given the size of the US GDP, we can note that financing is at an extremely high level.

## CONCLUSIONS

The increase in the degree of military-political tension leads to the need to form centers of power that could deter certain forces and threats in the regions. Previously, only weapons of mass destruction were defined as such forces, but in the modern world a new world order is being formed that could ensure the stabilization of the situation in Europe, given the presence of a fairly strong center of military power and the threat from Russia. Militarization trends indicate an increase in the quantity and quality of weapons in a region that could potentially be in the circle of Russia's geopolitical interests. Studies show that in the current situation, the countries of Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries are especially actively increasing their level of technologization of the army and militarization in general.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, K.K.; methodology, K.K.; formal analysis, K.K.; investigation, K.K.; project administration, K.K.; data curation, K.K.; resources, K.K.; supervision, K.K.; validation, K.K.; writing - original draft preparation, K.K.; writing - review and editing, K.K.

The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** Not applicable

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

## Conflicts of interests:

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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