



European Parliament

Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide

Normandy Index 2023



STUDY

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Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide

Normandy Index 2023

With war having returned to the European continent, measuring the level of threats to peace, security and democracy around the world – as the 'Normandy Index' does – is more important than ever. The annual Index was presented for the first time at the Normandy Peace Forum in June 2019, as a result of a partnership between the European Parliament and the Region of Normandy. The Index has been designed and prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), in conjunction with and on the basis of data provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace. This paper sets out the findings of the 2023 exercise, which draws on data compiled in 2022, and explains how the Index can be used to compare peace – defined on the basis of a given country's performance against a range of predetermined threats – across countries and regions. It is complemented by 61 individual country case studies, derived from the Index.

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The Normandy Index is also available in an [online version](#). The present paper was finalised in July 2023. It updates and expands the [2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#) and [2022](#) editions of the Normandy Index, all available on the European Parliament's Think Tank website.

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Foreword



Last year was a painful reminder that peace and democracy can never be taken for granted. Over a year into Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war on Ukraine, with an end still not yet in sight, the value and importance of peace, freedom and democracy continue to underlie every policy and strategy developed by the European Union. At the same time, the past year has also been a reminder of our strength, solidarity and unity, and our capacity to counter malign forces, as well as of the power that we, the European Union, together with our partners, can harness when acting together with collective resolve.

Peace, and the pursuit of a world in which peace abounds, is at the core of our European identity; it is the essence of our Treaties. Yet, as this study confirms, the world has continued to become less peaceful and secure in the past year. We have witnessed day by day how, in Ukraine – in our very neighbourhood – lives, families and futures have been torn apart. Elsewhere, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, victims of violent conflicts and other types of oppression are fleeing their homes. In certain

parts of the world, women's basic rights are being put into question. Defenders of democracy, of human rights and of the truth are imprisoned, or worse.

These few and tragic examples illustrate that peace is a concept with many aspects and meanings: it is not just about the absence of conflict, as this study highlights. But it is true that the absence of security definitely means the absence of peace. And as the notion of security changes, so does the prerequisite for peace.

In the European Union, the definition of security has expanded to include climate security, economic security, resilience to disinformation, and cybersecurity. Meaning that they have now become inextricably linked with our policies on peace and security. As this study shows, our work on these multiple challenges is not limited to the European Union itself: our partners in the world, including some of the most vulnerable countries, are subject to threats in these domains. Our mission as an actor in international affairs is to continue supporting those countries – bilaterally, and through a robust multilateral system – in countering these threats.

The war on Ukraine has been a cataclysm of our times. One that has also proven how much we can achieve when we act together. During this past year and a half, we have mobilised numerous tools to support Ukraine: politically, financially, militarily, in humanitarian terms, and through adopting robust sanctions against Russia. We have also included Ukraine in one of our most successful policies for peace: enlargement.

At the same time, with the European Parliament's strong support, the European Union has increased its engagement with regions and countries across the world through trade, assistance and diplomacy, ensuring the promotion of peace and democracy. The inclusion of climate, gender equality and social standards in trade agreements; the decision to impose sanctions for human rights violations; the support for enlargement – all these are examples of actions for peace.

This is why, again, I welcome the Normandy Index. Now in its fifth edition, the Normandy Index is a tool for policy-makers to obtain a global overview of key threats to individual countries, going beyond the narrow understanding of peace. Its eleven indicators bring together geopolitical analysis; security; political and economic factors; human development; and also vulnerability to threats such as climate change and cyber-attacks. These are precisely some of the key areas that we continue to work on – in our internal and external policies – in the European Union and the European Parliament.

In our plenary sessions, our committees and our inter-parliamentary delegations we continue every day to debate and decide on how the European Union can effectively use the tools at its disposal to tackle the root causes of insecurity, to build and to support sustainable peace in Europe, in our neighbourhood and in the world. Understanding threats as early as possible and pre-empting their destructive implications remains key for everlasting peace and democracy.

'World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it', is the iconic first sentence of the Schuman Declaration. Over 70 years later, this remains the most important part of our work. And here I am confident that this year's Normandy Index will again provide useful insights and remain a trustworthy source of information and inspiration, for the continuation of that work.

Roberta Metsola

President of the European Parliament

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1. Pursuing peace in a more connected, contested and complex world

The European Union's foreign policy has long been the subject of varied and contested academic debate – on subjects ranging from the Union's capacity and legitimacy to act, to its need for a strategy, vision and objectives. In response, in part, to some of those questions, the 2016 Global Strategy, launched by the then High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) Federica Mogherini,¹ set out a structured and coherent vision for European Union (EU) foreign policy in an increasingly complex geopolitical and socioeconomic global environment. Building on the provisions of the founding Treaties of the EU – and more specifically the Treaty of Lisbon – the Global Strategy raises the EU's level of ambition as a foreign policy actor in pursuit of the objectives defined in the Treaty. Key among those is the pursuit of peace, both in the EU and globally.

While the Global Strategy is not a classic threat assessment exercise, its approach captures a number of threats to global peace and security and goes beyond traditional understandings of security by including in those threats traditional and emerging issues that challenge peace. It also draws on the crucial links between developments that hold the potential to exacerbate, catalyse and magnify the threats identified. Thus, with regard to health security (without doubt the most notable security threat of 2020-2021), while the strategy did not analyse the EU's approach to pandemic preparedness explicitly, it did state that the EU will redouble efforts 'on prevention, monitoring root causes, such as human rights violations, inequality, resource stress, and climate change – which is a threat multiplier that catalyses water and food scarcity, pandemics and displacement'. It also committed to working 'more effectively for the prevention, detection and response to global pandemics' through global governance structures.

In 2020, the EU's 27 Member States (EU-27) undertook the challenge of carrying out the first ever independent joint analysis of the full range of threats and challenges the EU currently faces or might face in the near future, as the first part of the two-year Strategic Compass process. The Compass, which was adopted by the Council and endorsed by the European Council in March 2022,² in the shadow of Russia's war on Ukraine, aims to guide the EU's strategic culture and sets out an ambitious plan of action with concrete deliverables, aiming at strengthening the EU's security and defence policy by 2030. The threat analysis currently in the Compass sets out the range of threats and challenges the EU will face in the next five to ten years (in the Compass, Member States commit to return to the threat analysis periodically, at least every three years). The presentation of threats is formulated in four sections: the first describes the return of power politics and the contested multipolar world; the second identifies threats and challenges linked to specific geographical focal points in the world – from China to Latin America; the third lays out emerging and transnational threats; and the fourth and final part concludes with the strategic implications for the EU. Interestingly, the third part, whose substance looks specifically at the types of threats, coincides largely with the categories identified in the Global Strategy, while adding emphasis on emerging and disruptive technologies, health, maritime and space as domains of pronounced threat. It also identifies the weaponisation of natural resources as a threat. As the Global Strategy before it, the threat analysis carried out in the Strategic Compass highlights the interconnectedness of threats and the hybridity of the threat environment. An update of the common threat analysis was carried out in December 2022, to adapt it to the changing strategic and security context, including the

¹ [A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy](#), EEAS, November 2016.

² [A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence](#), Council of the European Union, March 2022.

global consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Going forward, the first annual progress report by the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the implementation of the Strategic Compass envisages regular updates with the support of a reinforced Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity.³

Following the logic of the interconnectedness of threats, the Normandy Index, a product of a 2018 memorandum of understanding between the region of Normandy and the European Parliament, aims to provide a holistic picture of the world – regions and countries – through the prism of the pursuit of peace, measured against threats explicitly defined in the Global Strategy. Its objective is to provide a tool to help EU policy-makers design targeted external action instruments. It is deliberately framed to be concise and easy to understand, in order to serve as a communication tool for the wider public – in terms both of understanding threats across the world, and also of providing information about EU external action. It complements the annual Peace and Security Outlook produced by the European Parliamentary Research Service.⁴

1.1. Measuring peace

The modern definition of peace refers not only to an absence of war, but also includes elements of well-being, social order and justice for individual persons: people demand and expect more from peace.⁵ Peace also encompasses the right to bodily integrity and rights pertaining to moral and cultural values. All humanity has the right to life and the right to the means necessary for the proper development of life. This positive dimension of peace is difficult to measure as it is a continuum, stretching from inter-state war to positive public perceptions. This continuum includes international violence (i.e. wars, hybrid conflicts) and intra-national violence (i.e. gang or police violence, forced displacements and civil wars).⁶ Therefore, any measure of peace has to take numerous dimensions into account. A 2022 report by SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, argues – among other things – that a systems-thinking understanding of peace is needed to understand fundamental issues related to peacebuilding, including 'what version of peace is being built' and how to make it sustainable.⁷ The same paper also posits that 'because of the complexity, mixed methods approaches that use both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as triangulation from multiple sources are important parts of the evidence base for measuring peace impact'.

Another way to measure peace is to consider the level of threats to peace, in order to address them and avoid possible deterioration. Indeed, several states in the world are faced with multiple threats that not only affect peace individually but can also merge to create new challenges – and hybrid threats. In the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its global domino effects, energy insecurity has re-emerged as one of those threats and as a driver of conflict and deterioration in the quality of peace.

Recognising the interconnectedness of threats, the rationale behind the Normandy Index is twofold. First, the Index focuses on the realm of EU external action, by selecting and measuring those threats perceived as such by the EU, and that EU action aims to tackle, prevent, resolve or address. Second, the Normandy Index aims to monitor the probability (or existence) of conflict (or destabilisation of peace and security) in a given country on the basis of the aggregate level of these threats.

³ [Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence](#), EEAS, March 2023.

⁴ E. Lazarou, E. Pichon, [Peace and Security in 2023: Overview of EU action and outlook for the future](#), EPoS, European Parliament, July 2023.

⁵ [Declaration on a Culture of Peace](#) adopted at the UNGA 107th plenary, United Nations Digital Library, September 1999.

⁶ M. Caparini, G. Milante, [Sustaining peace and sustainable development in dangerous places](#), SIPRI, 2017.

⁷ E. Brusset, G. Milante, M. Riquier, C. Delgado, [Measuring Peace Impact](#), SIPRI, 2022.

1.2. Identifying threats and shaping policy: Indices and policy-making

Indices can be used as early-warning systems and are designed to give policy-makers insights into potential risks and developments in economic, social, environmental, security and political factors. Quantitative indices are also good tools for aggregation and comparison purposes, as well as demonstrating change, evolution and the degree of that evolution in a standardised manner. Depending on their make-up, indices can quantify possibilities of an event occurring in the near/foreseeable future, thus acting as foresight tools. Foresight, as defined in the Global Trends to 2030 report from the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) is 'an intellectual exercise where we imagine different alternatives of the future ... tracing how we end up there'.⁸ In that sense, foresight is a tool to help determine and choose a path for action; it is 'an organising yet selective principle'. Part of the European Commission's stated rationale for embedding strategic foresight into policy-making is 'to build and use collective intelligence to anticipate developments and prepare for new opportunities and challenges earlier and more effectively'.⁹ Composite indicators (or indices) can bring together this collective intelligence to provide policy-makers with 'the big picture', crucial in shaping policy.

An index can also offer a comprehensive overview of a situation made up of a basket of contributing factors. Existing indices relating to peace and security present differing versions of such baskets, taking selected variables into account to build their measurements of conflict and peace. Some function as conflict trackers, focusing specifically on the prevention of deadly violence and its particular relevance for a region or country's foreign policy.¹⁰ Others aim to be broadly informative about the levels of a multitude of factors, such as societal safety and security, domestic and international conflict and degree of militarisation. A third category, including the Fragile States Index (FSI), highlights areas of vulnerability contributing to the risk of state fragility. The limits to policy implementation are naturally marked in terms of resources, time and politics. Yet, even in hindsight, indices can provide an understanding of the elements that contributed to a policy response's adequacy to face critical events. For example, well before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Health Security Index indicated limited global capacity to deal with a large scale epidemic or pandemic and that all countries had important gaps to address in health security.

Overall, these data-sets and indicators aim to measure the comparative level of pre-defined variables across a region or the world; to make political risk assessments for the future; and to contribute to the work of policy-makers and other foreign policy actors. The vision of the Normandy Index is to perform these functions in the service of EU foreign policy, in a way that is consistent with its objectives and aims. This is particularly timely, given new challenges and opportunities, such as requests by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, to become EU members, and consequent designation of new candidate and pre-candidate countries in June 2022. In addition, knowledge of the countries in the EU's immediate neighbourhood provides additional information for decision-makers and can certainly facilitate European integration of these countries and further cooperation with southern and eastern neighbours. Beyond the EU neighbourhood, the Normandy Index provides a clear and strategic vision of global policy developments, using cross-cutting geographic and sectoral approaches.

⁸ [Global Trends to 2030](#), European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS), April 2019.

⁹ [Strategic Foresight Report](#), European Commission, September 2020.

¹⁰ [Global Conflict Tracker](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 2023.

2. The Normandy Index

The Normandy Index differs from other indices in that it adopts an approach tailored by and to the action of the EU. It also defines conflict and the numerous stages between perfect peace and total war as a product of factors linked to the main threats identified by the EU in its external action strategy. The EU Global Strategy identifies the following 11 threats as the main current challenges to peace and security.¹¹

terrorism	hybrid threats	economic crises	climate change
energy insecurity	violent conflicts	cybersecurity	disinformation
fragile states	trans-border crime	weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)	

The index uses 9 of these 11 threats as factors assigned equal weight in the final result for 137 United Nations (UN) countries (with the EU-27 counted as one). A major innovation of the Index is to blend geopolitical indicators with economic and social data. In 2021 and 2022, in light of new threats to peace, new sub-indicators were added, measuring the impact of public debt and energy consumption. Rising inflation, following unconventional monetary policy decisions, as well as a historically high level of public debt, are compounding concerns regarding the rise of global borrowing costs, a balance of payments crisis and the potential for a flurry of new defaults, following the technical default of Russia and Belarus in 2022. In June 2022, credit rating agency Fitch, which monitors over 100 countries, confirmed that Russia's war on Ukraine was accelerating problems including inflation, trade and energy disruptions, and weaker emerging market economies, which all have a negative impact on sovereign credit conditions. These trends continued in 2023, when some currencies, such as the Turkish lira attained historic lows. Global gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed in 2022 to 3.2 %, more than 1 percentage point weaker than expected at the end of 2021, mainly weighed down by Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projected global growth in 2023 at 2.6 %. General government gross debt to GDP has also increased on the long-term trajectory: from 73.2 % 10 years ago in 2013, to 112.4 % in 2023 for advanced economies; emerging and developing economies debt increased from 49.7 % to 67.5 % (IMF, 2023).

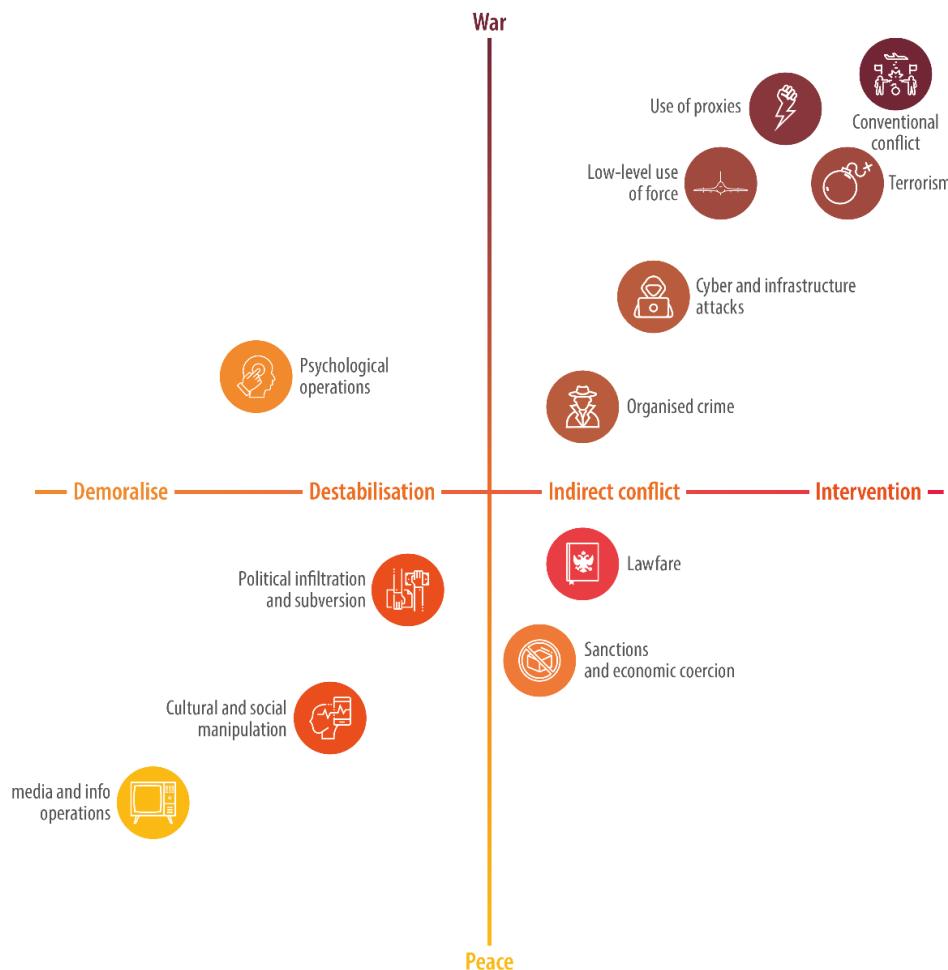
The Normandy Index therefore now includes three composite indicators: energy insecurity, economic crisis and crime. On crime, while no solid dataset measuring trans-border crime on a global scale is currently available, the level of criminality in the 137 entities measured is assessed by means of a component indicator consisting of a global measurement of organised crime: the number of homicides (75 % of the composite indicator) and an indicator on perceptions of criminality (25 %). The threat category hybrid threats is excluded from the Normandy Index, as hybrid threats are, by their very nature, multi-faceted, comprising a combination of factors (see Figure 1).

The index therefore assesses hybrid threats indirectly by examining the accumulation of their various dimensions (energy insecurity, economic crises, disinformation, cyber-attacks) but, to avoid duplication, does not explicitly include a 'hybrid threat' category. In its online version, the Normandy Index allows the user to view a ranking of the 137 entities based on the basket of threats that

¹¹ Note that these same threats are also included in the 2022 Strategic Compass threat analysis, with only one difference: the indicator 'transborder crime' is labelled as 'organised crime'.

together constitute 'hybrid'.¹² Quantifying or even estimating the level of disinformation in a given country remains a contentious issue among specialists, as new knowledge about this field continues to be generated. For this reason, the initial version of the Normandy Index used a measure of 'press freedom' in its place, in spite of the recognition that the media landscape is merely one of many factors affecting resilience to disinformation. Data on the spread of misleading views and false information by governments and political parties have become available through the Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) project. While not exhaustive of all sources of disinformation, the data collected by VDEM has been used for the measurement of the disinformation threat in the Normandy Index.¹³

Figure 1 – Means of hybrid warfare



Source: CEPA, 2021.

To the above 10 factors, the Normandy Index adds the quality of the democratic process, as democracy support is a core dimension of EU external action. In addition, there is a strong correlation between weak democratic processes and threats to peace and security. Given the complex and multidimensional nature of the domains, the methodology chosen for the Normandy Index is based on the selection of key representative indicator(s) for each domain, based on current academic and policy literature and the available data.

¹² [Normandy Peace Index](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2023.

¹³ Note that the 2022 Normandy Index has been retroactively calculated to include new indicators on economic crises (public debt to GDP) as well as a more precise calculation of other indicators, such as energy insecurity (through calculation of annual electric power consumption per capita). Retroactive calculations have been used in all graphics included in this publication. For more on the methodological approach, see the annex to this study.

Table 1 – Summary of domains, indicators and sources

Domain	Indicators	Definition	Source	Number of countries covered	Latest year of data
Climate change	INFORM Global Risk index	INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters.	United Nations	191	2023
Cybersecurity	Cybersecurity Index	The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) is a survey measure capturing the commitment of Member States to cybersecurity to raise awareness. It is the only open-source cybersecurity index available.	International Telecommunication Union	194	2020
Democratic processes	Participatory democracy index	A measure of the extent that the ideal of participatory democracy achieved within a country.	VDEM	179	2021
Economic crises	Financial vulnerability - Non-performing loans as % of total loans	Nonperforming loans to total gross loans ratio is calculated by using the value of nonperforming loans (NPLs) as the numerator and the total value of the loan portfolio as the denominator. It is often used as a proxy for asset quality.	World Bank	143	2021
	Central government debt, total (% of GDP)	Central government debt, total (% of GDP)	International Monetary Fund	135	2022
Energy insecurity	Energy imports	Energy imports, net (% of energy use). Banded to be 0 if country is a net exporter of energy.	World Bank, Enerdata	143	2021
	Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)	Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)	World Bank	142	2019
Fragile states	Fragile States Index	The Fragile States Index (FSI) is an annual ranking of 178 countries based on the different pressures they face that impact their levels of fragility. The Index is based on The Fund for Peace's proprietary Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) analytical approach. Based on comprehensive social science methodology, three primary streams of data – quantitative, qualitative, and expert validation – are triangulated and subjected to critical review to obtain final scores for the FSI.	Fund For Peace	179	2022
Crime	Homicide rate per 100 000	Homicide rate per 100 000 – used as a proxy for crime	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	192	2018
	Perceptions of criminality banded	Responses to the Gallup question 'Do you feel safe walking alone'	Gallup/IEP	163	2022
Resilience to disinformation	Resilience to disinformation	A measure of how often domestic and foreign governments and political parties use social media and advertising to spread disinformation within the country.	VDEM	179	2021
Terrorism	Global Terrorism Index	A composite score in order to provide an ordinal ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism. The impact of terrorism includes incidents, deaths, injuries, and property damage caused by terrorism.	Institute for Economics and Peace	163	2023

Domain	Indicators	Definition	Source	Number of countries covered	Latest year of data
Violent conflict	Conflict sub-indicators of the Global Peace Index	Worst score of the following indicators from the Global Peace Index: (1) Intensity of internal conflict, (2) Deaths from internal conflict, (3) Number of internal conflicts, (4) Intensity of external conflict, (5) Deaths from external conflict	Institute for Economics and Peace	163	2022
WMD	Nuclear Threat Index	The Nuclear Threat Index assesses countries' progress on nuclear security, highlights security gaps, and recommends actions for governments to better protect nuclear materials and facilities and build an effective global nuclear security architecture.	EIU	176	2018

Source: Institute for Economics and Peace, EPRS, 2023.

The Normandy Index is therefore a tool to be used by EU policy-makers to assess countries most at risk in the world according to the EU's Global Strategy, and to target EU action. It is not a ranking of countries according to their peacefulness, but rather a ranking of specific threats to peace per country. As new data become available, the Normandy Index evolves in accuracy, geographical spread and precision, thus serving policy-makers and analysts ever more effectively in their work. In addition, events such as the coronavirus crisis or eruption of new armed conflicts in Europe's east may cause security strategists around the world to reconsider policy tools when it comes to security and peace. As events unfold, the Normandy Index will adapt as the EU's strategic approach to peace and security evolves, with the potential inclusion of new threats in future versions.

As mentioned earlier, the endorsement of the Strategic Compass and of a new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Concept has bolstered European states' capacity in security and defence.¹⁴ In April 2023, Finland became NATO's 31st member, while Sweden has also applied for membership. However, not all threats can be confronted with military means alone. Beyond classic defence strategies, the EU consistently aims to develop capabilities to promote peace, security and resilience internally and abroad through an array of policies. The pandemic and war in Ukraine have demonstrated the tools for the preservation of peace go far beyond traditional understandings of security, to include, for example, progress towards a European Health Union, and the European Green Deal to counter climate-related security threats, such as energy security, among other things. The new economic security strategy unveiled by the European Commission in June 2023, also addresses concerns about security and democracy. According to the Commission, the observation that 'risks presented by certain economic linkages are evolving quickly in the current geopolitical and technological environment and are increasingly merging with security concerns' underpins the de-risking spirit of the strategy.

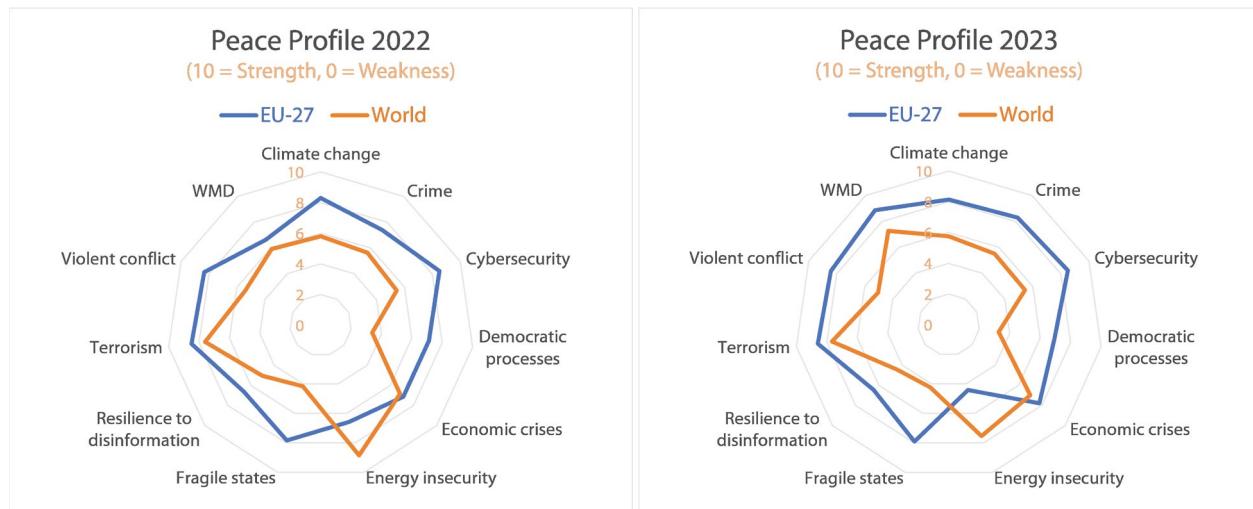
An additional value of the Normandy Index, lies in its potential to pinpoint the key threats for each country and region it assesses, providing understanding for the policy mix needed to support peace and security in that given area. The comparisons across regions, countries and time offered by the online version of the Normandy Index will enable EU policy-makers to grasp which areas need to be given greater consideration when assisting partners all over the world at national and regional levels, while also potentially monitoring improvement (or absence of improvement) in resilience to those threats in countries where the EU is already engaged.

¹⁴ [NATO 2022 Strategic Concept](#), NATO, June 2022.

2.1. The Normandy Index 2023: Findings and functions

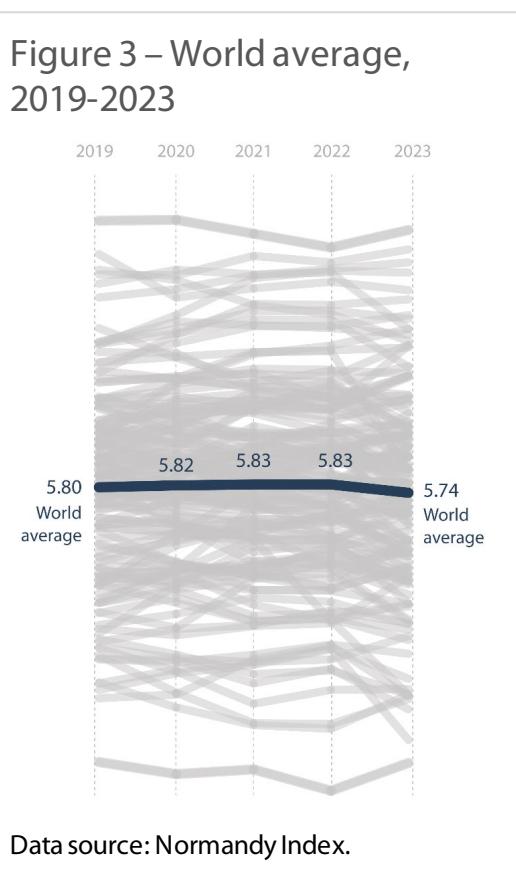
For each of the 136 countries and the EU-27, the Normandy Index uses the 11 threats to peace and compares them to the same 11 dimensions for other countries in the same region (or to the world), as the regional environment is assumed to play a major role in countries' resilience to threats.

Figure 2 – EU-27 Peace profile for 2022 and 2023



Source: Normandy Index, 2022 and 2023.

Figure 3 – World average, 2019-2023



For each dimension, 10 represents no risk and 0 a major threat. In the example shown above (Figure 2), the EU-27 appears less at risk in 10 out of 11 dimensions in 2023, while being more at risk in the area of energy security than the rest of the world. The comparison between the two years indicates that for the EU-27, as opposed to other countries and regions, there is no significant change in the peace profile between the two years.¹⁵ After a slight improvement from 2019 to 2022, the global peace profile (5.74 average in 2023) has declined in the past year – unsurprisingly given the global destabilising impact of Russia's war on Ukraine (considering that data used for the 2023 iteration dates back to 2022).

¹⁵ Note that health security is not included in the Normandy Index, as the threat is not explicitly referred to in the EU Global Strategy.

Figure 4 – Highest and lowest scoring countries in 2023

Top 10				Lowest 10			
country	rank 2022	rank 2023	rank change	country	rank 2022	rank 2023	rank change
Switzerland	1	1 ➔	0	Chad	129	128 ➜	1
Norway	2	2 ➔	0	Somalia	134	129 ➜	5
Iceland	3	3 ➔	0	Mali	124	130 ➜	-6
Australia	4	4 ➔	0	South Sudan	133	130 ➜	3
New Zealand	6	5 ➜	1	Syria	136	130 ➜	6
Canada	7	6 ➜	1	Iraq	128	133 ➜	-5
EU-27	11	7 ➜	4	Yemen	135	134 ➜	1
South Korea	8	8 ➜	0	Democratic Republic of the Congo	132	135 ➜	-3
Malaysia	13	9 ➜	4	Central African Republic	130	136 ➜	-6
Singapore	5	9 ➜	-4	Afghanistan	137	137 ➔	0

Data source: Normandy Index 2022 and 2023.

At the same time, the results of the 2023 Normandy Index (Figure 3) indicate a stable average of around 6 (on a scale of 0 to 10) of world threats, suggesting that the threats to peace and security included in the dataset have not changed dramatically, despite the coronavirus pandemic and other crises, including rising inflation and the energy crisis. However, the launch of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has had an impact on global security and peace: most notably, the global average for energy security has fallen, suggesting that energy-related threats have increased. Furthermore, in focusing on the top 10 and lowest 10 scoring countries (Figure 4), it is evident that change is marginal for the highest performers and very slow for lower performers. This indicates that the process of transformation in peace and security takes place across a generally longer interval than the single-year period.

Figure 5 – Rising or falling behind? Main changes in the 2023 ranking

Top 10 risers				Bottom 10 fallers			
country	rank 2022	rank 2023	rank change	country	rank 2022	rank 2023	rank change
Nepal	79	38 ➜	41	Jamaica	15	60 ➜	-45
Bahrain	86	53 ➜	33	El Salvador	44	86 ➜	-42
Malawi	60	30 ➜	30	Namibia	52	80 ➜	-28
Türkiye	114	90 ➜	24	Guinea	79	106 ➜	-27
China	68	46 ➜	22	Eswatini	76	102 ➜	-26
Zambia	69	48 ➜	21	Azerbaijan	45	70 ➜	-25
Liberia	79	58 ➜	21	Guatemala	66	91 ➜	-25
Bangladesh	99	78 ➜	21	Panama	24	48 ➜	-24
Palestine	115	94 ➜	21	Guyana	41	65 ➜	-24
Sri Lanka	91	71 ➜	20	Cuba	39	61 ➜	-22

Data source: Normandy Index 2022 and 2023.

An additional observation is that there is no significant evolution or change among those countries scoring lowest compared to those that demonstrate high levels of peace and security. However, the explanation for this could differ: high scorers are by default more resilient and build on their success in a process of positive reinforcement, whereas low scorers may remain stable due to a negative feedback loop that is difficult to overcome through internal reform or external aid. Nevertheless, some countries, such as Libya, Türkiye and Syria, signal a positive evolution, due to the ongoing peace processes, normalisation of bilateral relations and regional reconciliation. This observation further justifies the EU's focus on building resilience, both internally, in its neighbourhood, and beyond. The EU itself rose 4 places in the Index between 2022 and 2023, suggesting a verifiable impact of policies put in place over the years to counter the threats identified in the Index.

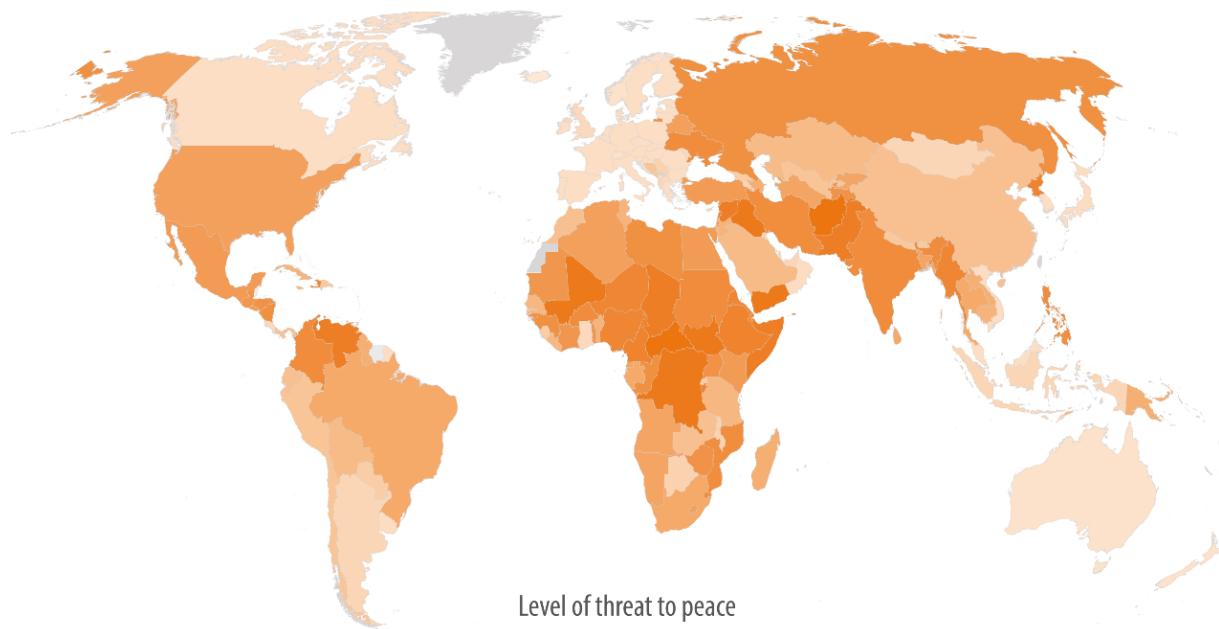
It is perhaps even more interesting to focus on those countries that exhibit the biggest positive or negative movement in their ranking (Figure 5). In the 2023 ranking, Jamaica and El Salvador stand

out for their descent by 45 and 42 places respectively, while Nepal and Bahrein change rank, rising 41 and 33 places. Some global and regional powers, such as China and Türkiye, manifested resilience in adverse conditions, advancing 22 and 24 places. War in Ukraine affected Ukraine (-11) more negatively than the Russian Federation (-3) in the categories included in the Index. An examination of the individual factors that lead to these changes in position (for example a stark change in a specific indicator or merely a relative lack of change compared to other countries), can be carried out through a meticulous deconstruction of the component indicators on the Normandy Index website, as well as qualitatively through the production of individual country studies, such as the 61 examples included in this study.

The online interactive version of the Normandy Index also offers the possibility for comparison between countries, individual countries and regions and across time. In addition, rankings of countries on the basis of only one or a set of more threats are also available, using the source indicators.¹⁶

¹⁶ [Normandy Peace Index](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2023.

Figure 6 – Normandy Index, 2023



more at risk			moderate risk			less at risk					
Rank	Country	NI	rank change	Rank	Country	NI	rank change	Rank	Country	NI	rank change
1	Switzerland	8.58	0	47	Morocco	6.24	▲ 8	91	Mauritania	5.22	▼ -4
2	Norway	8.37	0	48	Zambia	6.23	▲ 21	91	Guatemala	5.22	▼ -25
3	Iceland	8.23	0	50	Panama	6.23	▼ -24	94	Palestine	5.19	▲ 21
4	Australia	8.12	0	51	Ecuador	6.16	▲ 7	95	Togo	5.14	▼ -6
5	New Zealand	7.93	1	51	Bolivia	6.14	▲ 3	96	Guinea-Bissau	5.13	▼ -8
6	Canada	7.83	▲ 1	51	Kazakhstan	6.14	▼ -14	97	Uganda	5.11	▼ -1
7	EU-27	7.66	▲ 4	53	Bahrain	6.13	▲ 33	98	Zimbabwe	5.10	▲ 7
8	South Korea	7.62	0	53	Timor-Leste	6.13	▲ 8	99	Tajikistan	5.09	▲ 10
9	Malaysia	7.51	▲ 4	55	Saudi Arabia	6.12	▲ 18	100	Honduras	5.06	▼ -18
9	Singapore	7.51	▼ -4	56	Tanzania	6.05	▼ -5	101	Philippines	5.05	▼ -4
11	Mauritius	7.45	▲ 1	57	Senegal	6.02	▼ -10	102	Eswatini	4.99	▼ -26
12	Uruguay	7.38	▼ -3	58	Liberia	6.01	▲ 21	103	Mozambique	4.95	▲ 14
13	Vietnam	7.34	▲ 5	59	Israel	6.00	▼ -2	104	Iran	4.92	▲ 12
14	Oman	7.33	▲ 18	60	Jamaica	5.98	▼ -45	104	Djibouti	4.92	▼ -9
15	Japan	7.31	▼ -1	61	Tunisia	5.95	▼ -2	106	Guinea	4.87	▼ -27
16	United Kingdom	7.11	▲ 4	61	Cuba	5.95	▼ -22	107	Congo	4.86	▼ -3
17	Costa Rica	7.10	▼ -7	63	Cambodia	5.89	▲ 14	108	Nicaragua	4.84	▼ -7
18	North Macedonia	7.03	▼ -1	64	Jordan	5.86	▲ 2	109	Libya	4.83	▲ 17
19	Qatar	7.01	▲ 13	65	Benin	5.84	▬ 0	109	Russia	4.83	▼ -3
19	Ghana	7.01	▲ 10	65	Guyana	5.84	▼ -24	111	Sudan	4.79	▼ -3
21	Indonesia	6.99	▲ 9	67	Papua New Guinea	5.83	▼ -3	112	India	4.78	▼ -5
21	Argentina	6.99	▲ 3	67	Laos	5.83	▼ -19	113	Ukraine	4.77	▼ -11
23	Mongolia	6.80	▼ -1	69	Madagascar	5.75	▲ 4	114	Burkina Faso	4.75	▼ -5
24	Albania	6.79	▲ 2	70	World average	5.74	▬ 0	115	Colombia	4.64	▼ -4
25	United Arab Emirates	6.77	▲ 11	71	Azerbaijan	5.74	▼ -25	116	Haiti	4.55	▼ -19
26	Serbia	6.75	▲ 4	72	Sri Lanka	5.73	▲ 20	117	Myanmar	4.54	▲ 7
27	Armenia	6.72	▬ 0	73	Thailand	5.70	▲ 12	117	Eritrea	4.54	▲ 1
28	Kuwait	6.70	▲ 7	73	Gabon	5.66	▲ 17	119	Niger	4.51	▲ 2
29	Botswana	6.61	▼ -13	73	Brazil	5.66	▼ -10	120	Nigeria	4.37	▼ -8
30	Malawi	6.60	▲ 30	76	South Africa	5.66	▼ -11	121	Lebanon	4.35	▼ -8
31	Paraguay	6.51	▲ 11	77	Kyrgyzstan	5.61	▼ -5	122	Cameroon	4.33	▼ -2
32	Moldova	6.50	▼ -11	78	Angola	5.59	▲ 15	123	Burundi	4.32	▼ -4
33	Rwanda	6.48	▲ 5	78	Bangladesh	5.58	▲ 21	124	Ethiopia	4.26	▼ -2
34	Sierra Leone	6.46	▲ 19	78	Turkmenistan	5.58	▼ -7	125	North Korea	4.19	▲ 6
35	Georgia	6.45	▼ -7	80	Namibia	5.54	▼ -28	126	Venezuela	4.15	▼ -3
35	Dominican Republic	6.45	▼ -13	81	Equatorial Guinea	5.52	▲ 4	127	Pakistan	4.00	▬ 0
37	Trinidad and Tobago	6.42	▼ -18	81	United States	5.52	▲ 1	128	Chad	3.73	▲ 1
38	Nepal	6.41	▲ 41	83	Algeria	5.51	▲ 16	129	Somalia	3.62	▲ 5
39	Bhutan	6.40	▲ 16	84	Belarus	5.47	▼ -9	130	Syria	3.56	▲ 6
40	Montenegro	6.37	▼ -6	85	Lesotho	5.43	▼ -15	130	South Sudan	3.56	▲ 3
41	The Gambia	6.36	▲ 7	86	El Salvador	5.40	▼ -42	130	Mali	3.56	▼ -6
41	Uzbekistan	6.36	▲ 5	87	Kenya	5.38	▲ 6	133	Iraq	3.54	▼ -5
43	Chile	6.35	▼ -4	88	Egypt	5.33	▲ 15	134	Yemen	3.51	▲ 1
44	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.32	▲ 4	89	Mexico	5.24	▼ -11	135	Democratic Republic of the Congo	3.40	▼ -3
45	Peru	6.30	▼ -3	90	Türkiye	5.23	▲ 24	136	Central African Republic	3.07	▼ -6
46	China	6.26	▲ 22	91	Côte d'Ivoire	5.22	▲ 3	137	Afghanistan	2.82	▬ 0

3. The Normandy Index and its relevance for the European Parliament

According to Eurobarometer surveys, the majority of European citizens would like to see increased EU involvement in all policy areas relating to peace and security. The most recent Eurobarometer (Spring 2023)¹⁷ pictures citizens' continued attachment to democratic values. Some 71 % of Europeans say that EU actions have an impact on their daily lives. The EU actions with which citizens are the most satisfied are support for Ukraine (69 %), democratic rights and respect for rule of law (64 %), and foreign policy (54 %). Fully 77% of EU citizens would like to see a common security and defence policy among EU Member States.

While EU foreign and security policy remains in the intergovernmental sphere to a much larger extent than other policy areas, the Lisbon Treaty has contributed to a considerable increase in the supranational EU institutions' contribution in this area. For the European Parliament, the most relevant provisions relate to consultation, oversight, accountability and budgetary functions. Article 36 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), obliges the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) to consult Parliament regularly on the main aspects and choices relating to common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and common security and defence policy (CSDP) and to keep Parliament informed of policy developments, requiring that Parliament's views be taken 'duly into consideration'. The European Parliament therefore holds annual debates on the state of play of the CFSP and of the CSDP, on the basis of annual progress reports on the implementation of these policies. Parliament also votes on two annual own-initiative reports (INI) on the implementation of the CFSP and CSDP respectively, asks questions of the HR/VP (including through the dedicated Question Time during plenary sessions), and makes recommendations to the HR/VP and to the Council on related matters. Parliament exercises authority in security and defence matters through its function as budgetary authority. Most notably perhaps, the Parliament oversees civilian aspects of CSDP that are financed by the EU budget (Article 41 TEU).

The Normandy Index aims to contribute to the European Parliament's role in foreign policy oversight. It offers Members of the European Parliament a measure of threats to peace throughout the world that is consistent with the EU's Global Strategy and, as has been shown, the Strategic Compass. Consequently, it serves as a tool responding to increased demand for accountability from actors involved in CFSP and CSDP, as well as an empirical argument in support of demand for attention to be paid to regions and countries at risk. At a time of growing demand for EU institutions to demonstrate greater legitimacy and transparency, the gradually growing involvement of the European Parliament in CFSP has helped increase democratic accountability in this policy area. Although Parliament's formal powers in CFSP are relatively limited, it nonetheless has growing influence as a 'norm entrepreneur' in human rights and democracy, both through its relationship with the HR/VP and as a diplomatic player through its delegations, mediation activity and parliamentary diplomacy. Importantly, in other areas of policy-making that are increasingly linked to peace, such as research (for example on defence or energy technologies) and climate, the European Parliament has the full power to co-legislate.

¹⁷ [Spring 2023 Survey: Democracy in action – One year before the European elections](#), Eurobarometer, European Parliament, June 2023.

Finally, the Conference on the Future of Europe, which concluded its work on 9 May 2022, provided a unique opportunity to engage with European citizens. Their recommendations on foreign policy demonstrated citizens' desire for the EU to assert itself as a geopolitical actor by fostering political dialogue, multilateralism, human rights and international cooperation, to address issues of common interest, and to strengthen the security, stability and prosperity of the European continent.¹⁸

¹⁸ [Conference on the Future of Europe. Report on the final outcome](#), European Union, May 2022.

4. The added value of case studies

To illustrate the use and potential of the Normandy Index, 61 case studies are set out in the following pages. For each case study, the reader will find an analysis of traditional sources of instability and threats to peace, a graphic representation of the situation in the country compared with other countries from the same region, and notable points of interest regarding the country's performance in the index. In addition, there is a focus on new sources of insecurity, and an analysis of the EU's contribution and assistance in building resilience through its involvement with the country in question.

The latter can take many different forms (development cooperation, support for democracy and human rights, cooperation within the European Neighbourhood or regional cooperation, pre-accession assistance, peacekeeping, trade agreements and now also the provision of military equipment), and varies from country to country, depending on the degree and type of cooperation put in place with the country concerned. The case studies have been chosen to represent key EU partners (strategic partners or trade partners); countries in which the EU operates military or civilian missions; countries that are part of the G20; and countries with notable vulnerabilities or achievements in one or more of the Normandy Index variables. New case studies have been added, the aim being to increase their number every subsequent year.

All case studies are made available in interactive form on the Normandy Index website.¹⁹ The website provides users with the possibility to produce comparative graphs for each of the 137 entities studied.

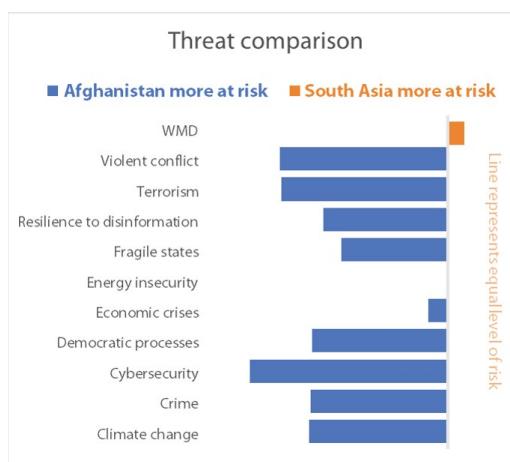
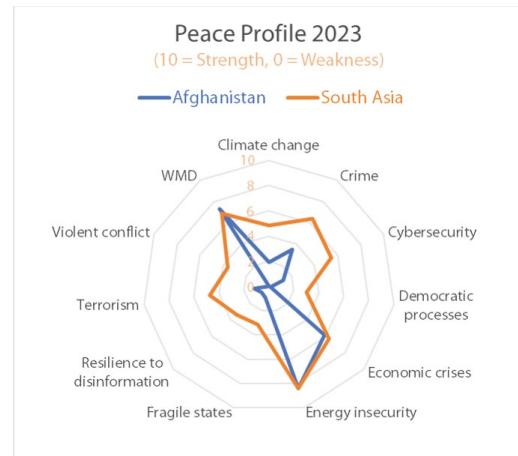
¹⁹ The online version can be found at:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/infographics/peaceandsecurity/index.html>

Afghanistan

Afghanistan ranks last, at 137th place, in the Normandy Index. Following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, and the subsequent withdrawal of United States and NATO troops, the country is suffering from widespread instability and economic collapse. The crisis is compounded by the effects of climate change, and the country is at risk of widespread famine.

Background and key issues

The Cold War saw an unsuccessful and protracted Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, with 10 years of war ending in Soviet troop withdrawal in 1989. Nevertheless, the conflict between the Soviet-backed Afghan government and the Mujahedeen continued, leading to the [rise of the Taliban](#), who took power in 1995, on the promise of bringing peace. The events of 11 September 2001 and the Taliban's response to this attack, reignited an intensely violent conflict in the country, as United States (US) forces invaded in a bid to oust the Taliban. For 20 years, US-backed governments ruled Afghanistan, but following a renewed Taliban takeover of the capital Kabul in August 2021, US and allied NATO forces left Afghanistan. No country has recognised the Taliban government, and large sums of Afghan government funds abroad remain frozen. The Afghan economy is in freefall and the political situation has led to a humanitarian crisis considered one of the worst in the world, with an estimated 28.3 million people in [need](#) of humanitarian assistance in 2023. Some 4 out of 10 Afghans face acute hunger.



New security and hybrid threats

Afghanistan increasingly suffers from the effects of climate change and natural hazards, which exacerbate existing tensions. It is the eighth most vulnerable country to climate change on the [2021 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index](#). Since 2018, the country has faced several climate-related disasters such as [extreme drought](#) and [flash floods](#), both significant drivers of displacement and food insecurity. Extreme weather and conflict have led to the [internal displacement](#) of more than 5.8 million people since 2012. In 2020, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimated that [80%](#) of conflict in Afghanistan concerned land, water and resources. In 2023, Afghanistan remained the country

most impacted by [terrorism](#) for the fourth consecutive year, despite attacks and deaths falling by 75 % and 58 % respectively.

EU involvement

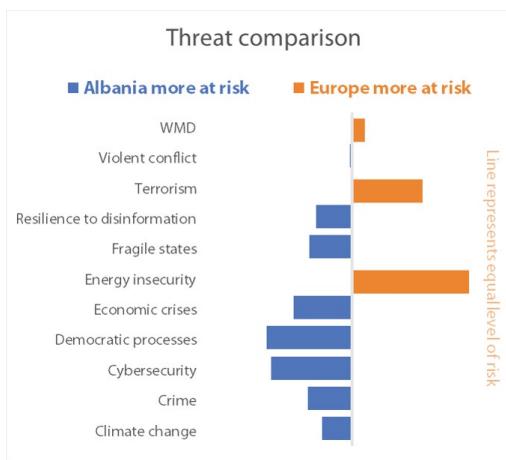
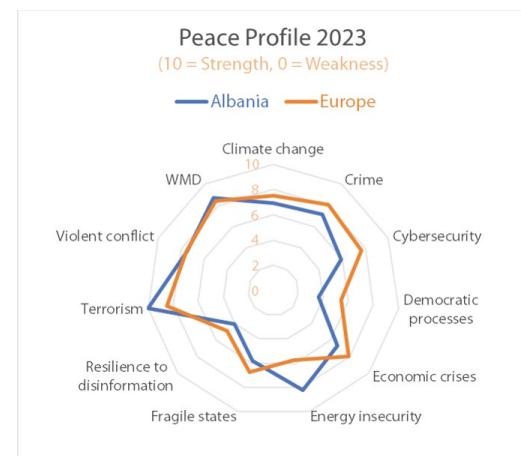
The EU has [supported](#) Afghanistan with development and humanitarian aid for decades. Since the return of the Taliban regime in mid-August 2021, the EU has changed the terms of its engagement. While it has ruled out recognising the new Taliban government, the EU [established](#) a minimum presence on the ground in Kabul in January 2022. That said, the EU has suspended its regular development assistance, but continues to provide humanitarian aid, livelihood and basic needs support, in coordination with international partners, in particular the UN and its agencies. As for EU operational [engagement](#), this is conditional on the behaviour of the new Afghan government – measured according to five benchmarks, including the Afghan government commitment that Afghanistan will not serve as a base for the export of terrorism to other countries; and to the respect for human rights, in particular [women's rights](#), the rule of law and freedom of the media.

Albania

Albania ranks 24th in the Normandy Index. Since the end of the Balkan Wars in the early 1990s, the country has made significant progress on political and economic reforms, to the extent that it joined NATO in April 2009, and opened talks with the EU on accession in March 2020. Albania is a clear example of religious tolerance and diversity. Despite this, the country still faces significant economic and democratic hurdles, as well as challenges linked to democratic processes.

Background and key issues

Enmeshed in the Balkan Wars of 1990 to 1993, Albania continued to suffer from [domestic civil unrest](#), which erupted in 1997 in the 'pyramid crisis', alongside military involvement in the Kosovo conflict against Serbia. Albania is also a hub for organised crime, with one of the highest human-trafficking rates in Europe. The clandestine nature of human trafficking, however, means that Albania lacks reliable [data](#) on the phenomenon. Nevertheless, Albania has been ranked by Eurostat among the top 10 countries in terms of numbers of trafficking victims for several years in a row. In 2019, the value of marijuana trafficking alone was [estimated](#) to equal about half of Albania's GDP.



New security and hybrid threats

[Democratic backsliding](#) has been evident since elections held in 2017 were deemed fraudulent, leading to outbreaks of anti-government protest in 2018 and 2019. Local elections took place on 14 May 2023. A new decentralisation strategy beyond 2022 remains to be adopted and upstream consultation at local level will be essential. In November 2022, [Reporters without Borders](#) noted that media freedom in the country continues to deteriorate, but welcomed recent government initiatives to address this. In 2022, Albania experienced a [major cyber-attack](#) attributed to Iran; it expects to complete the creation of a military cyber defence unit in 2023.

EU involvement

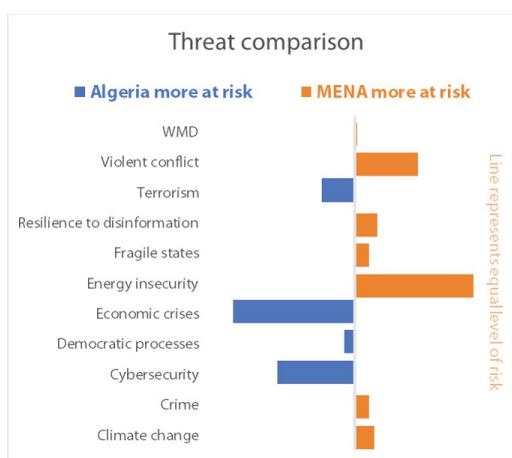
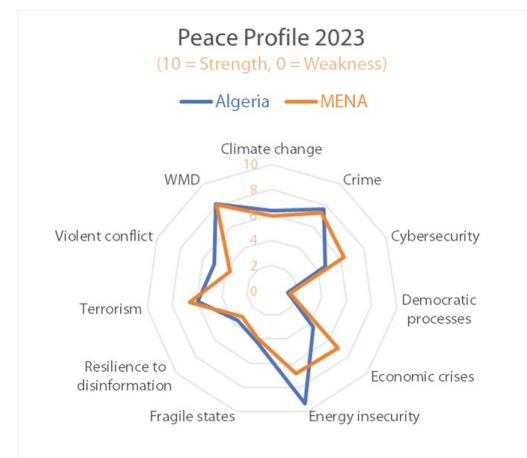
Albania was identified as a potential [candidate](#) for EU membership as early as the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Thessaloniki in 2003 and became a candidate country in June 2014. In March 2020, a political agreement was reached to [open accession negotiations](#) after the country had made progress towards meeting the political criteria and the five key priorities that need to be fulfilled to become an EU Member State. Negotiations [started](#) on 19 July 2022. Albania takes part in the EU-Western Balkans summits, most recently in June 2022. The EU is the largest provider of [financial assistance](#) to the country. In October 2020, the Commission approved the [economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans](#) (€9 billion). As a non-permanent member since January 2022, Albania has been actively engaged in the UN Security Council as a co-penholder for resolutions condemning the Russian aggression against Ukraine, thus aligning with the EU position when co-sponsoring and voting on UN resolutions on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its humanitarian impact, and also when voting on the suspension of Russia in the Human Rights Council.

Algeria

Algeria ranks 83rd in the Normandy Index, with a score below the average for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries in the field of economic crises, terrorism and crime. Political life in Algeria has long been dominated by a closed elite based in the military and the ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN). While there are multiple opposition parties in Parliament, elections are distorted by fraud, and electoral processes are not transparent. Other concerns include the suppression of street protests, legal restrictions on media freedom, and rampant corruption.

Background and key issues

Algeria has suffered from internal political instability and deteriorating bilateral relations with several countries, in particular Morocco. The 2019 presidential elections were marked by fraud; Wassini Bouazza, former director of Internal Security was [sentenced](#) to 16 years imprisonment for fraud. In November 2020, the Algerian Presidency [announced](#) that the 2020 constitutional referendum was successful, with an approval rate of 66.8 %. Although constitutional reform was one of the key demands of the 'Hirak' [protest movement](#), the perceived lack of consultation with protesters' representatives, many of whom remain detained, is likely to reinforce protesters' perception of the government's unwillingness and inability to meet their demands. In 2023, Algeria [reinforced](#) its relations with the Russian Federation.



New security and hybrid threats

On 30 October 2021, Algeria's Abdelmadjid Tebboune [ordered](#) the cessation of commercial relations between Algeria's Sonatrach and the Moroccan Office for Electricity and Drinking Water (ONEE) and announced plans to terminate the agreement on the Europe-Maghreb gas pipeline with Morocco. In April 2022, Algeria officially threatened to [withdraw](#) its gas export deal with Spain, in retaliation for Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's endorsement of Morocco's Western Sahara autonomy plan. Since then, Algeria has reduced its gas supplies to Spain. Amnesty International has [highlighted](#) fair trial violations (including in death sentence cases) and torture claims reported by activists. The extradition of

[Mohamed Benhalima](#), a dissident and whistleblower who fled the country in 2019 after participating in the Hirak protests, and was subsequently charged with dubious terrorism charges and sentenced to 12 years in prison in August 2022, received significant media attention in this context.

EU involvement

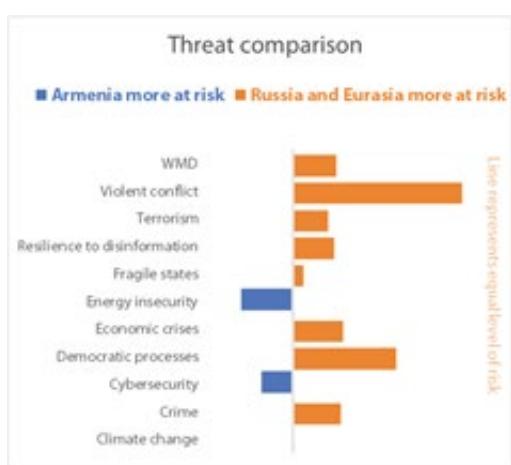
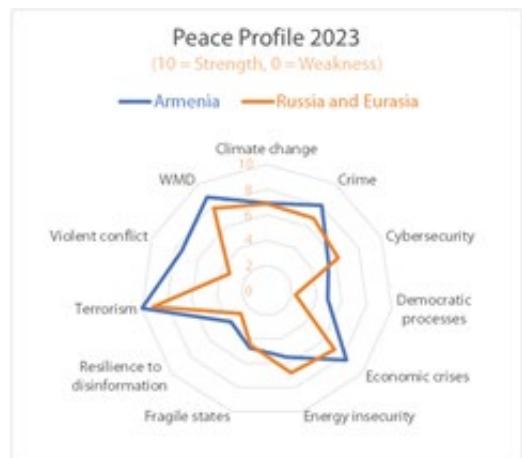
The EU-Algeria [Association Agreement](#) (AA), signed in 2002, entered into force in 2005. The EU and Algeria [adopted](#) new Partnership Priorities on 13 March 2017, in the framework of the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy. Together with the joint assessment of the implementation of the AA, the partnership priorities identified joint areas of cooperation and guided dialogue between the EU and its Member States and Algeria up to 2020. The EU and Algeria continue high-level dialogue on energy and security sectors, as well as an informal dialogue on migration. A revised strategy for the Southern Neighbourhood was [adopted](#) on 9 February 2021, accompanied by an [economic and investment plan for the Southern Neighbours](#); which supports Algeria in the area of climate and energy efficiency. The EU has funded three projects under its [Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace](#) (IcSP) in Algeria, including on counter-terrorism. The EU receives almost two-thirds of Algeria's exports, making it Algeria's main trading partner.

Armenia

Armenia ranks 27th in the Normandy Index. The country's conflict with its neighbour Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region continues. Armenia remains fragile in energy security and cybersecurity and faces a number of hybrid threats, although there has been recent progress in peace negotiations under EU and US mediation.

Background and key issues

[Armenia](#) has been in [conflict](#) with Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region ever since the end of the Cold War, in the [longest-running](#) conflict in the post-Soviet space. Two bloody episodes, in 1992 and in 2020, have alternated with periods of [frozen conflict](#) over three decades, amidst the international community's inability to reach a political settlement. A Russian-brokered [ceasefire](#) put an end to the 2020 war after 44 days and over 6 000 casualties. The 9 November 2020 [agreement](#) imposed that Armenia return to Azerbaijan seven districts previously under Armenia's control, and provided for Russian Federation peacekeeping troops to remain in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone until 2025 (with possible extension for subsequent five-year periods). Violent clashes in September 2022, including an incursion by Azerbaijan into Armenian territory, evidence the fragility of the November 2020 agreement. The [blockade](#) since December 2022 of the Lachin corridor (the only route connecting Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh) by pro-Azerbaijani activists, followed by Azerbaijan's establishment of a [checkpoint](#) in the corridor in April 2023, create additional pressure. Although peace negotiations have restarted under EU and US leadership, tensions persist.



New security and hybrid threats

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has created new security challenges for Armenia, a traditional Russian ally. The role of Russia as security guarantor is questioned, with Armenia [threatening](#) to leave the Collective Security Treaty Organization ([CSTO](#)). The 2020 war already highlighted the increasing role of hybrid threats, particularly in the information [space](#). Armenia has been subject to significant [disinformation](#) campaigns, and the conflict increasingly takes place in [cyber space](#). A recent investigation evidenced the extensive use of [Pegasus spyware](#) across Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia also ranks low on energy security, reflecting its [dependence](#) on Russian energy, which the long-term [energy security strategy](#) aims to address. Armenia scores highly (above the regional average) in economic resilience and resilience to terrorism. Armenia also scores highly on democratic process, with [improvements](#) in democratic governance, electoral process and the judicial framework.

EU involvement

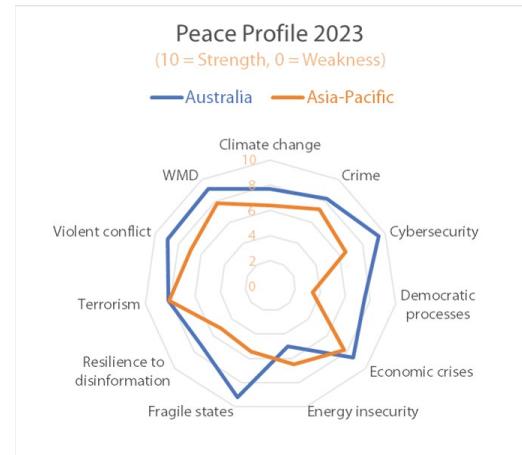
The EU has a strong interest in a politically stable Southern Caucasus region, including Armenia, which is part of the EU's [Eastern Partnership](#), and has stepped up its presence in the region significantly, against the backdrop of Russia's waning role as security guarantor. A new fully fledged civilian mission in Armenia ([EUMA Armenia](#)) was deployed in February 2023. Under EU mediation, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a longer-term negotiation plan for a comprehensive peace agreement on 14 May 2023. Armenia's relations with the EU are based on the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement ([CEPA](#)) which entered into force in 2021.

Australia

Australia ranks 4th in the Normandy Index, indicating low levels of risk. It performs particularly well in democratic processes, state resilience and the management of economic crises, thanks to its robust democratic system. However, recent geopolitical events have increased its energy insecurity.

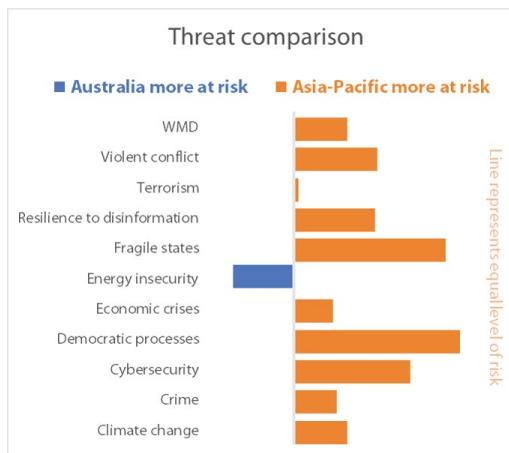
Background and key issues

Australia has a long-standing democratic tradition in the form of a parliamentary system, enhanced by strong levels of education and a high per capita GDP. In the 2021 [Human Development Index](#), it ranked 5th out of the 191 countries measured. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2022 [Democracy Index](#), Australia ranks 15th overall, after Germany and before Japan. In addition, it is the world's 6th most stable country according to the Normandy Index, as measured by the fragile states' indicator. This is largely due to strong perceptions of state legitimacy, effective public services and low levels of external intervention. Australia performs well on most indicators of traditional conflict. However, it followed its previous years' [trend](#) in higher [temperatures and rainfall](#), signalling the increasing threat from climate change.



New security and hybrid threats

Thanks to its resilient democratic institutions, high standard of living and public services, and relative remoteness from the world's most densely populated regions, Australia has long been somewhat insulated from traditional security and hybrid threats. However, climate change is [exacerbating](#) resource stress and fire risks in an already-arid climate. In addition, relations with its largest trade partner, China, have grown more complex in recent years, and there are concerns that growing US-China strategic [rivalry](#) could spill over into the South Pacific, making Australia's strategic near environment less benign.



EU involvement

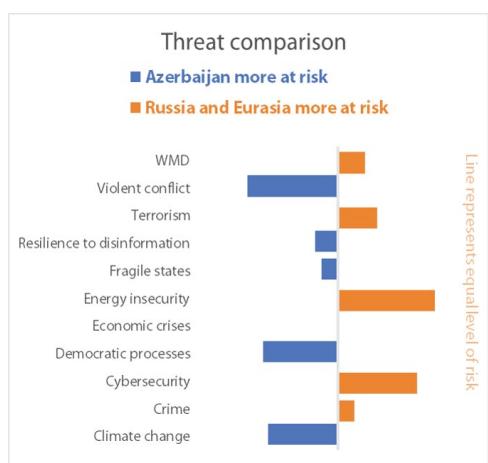
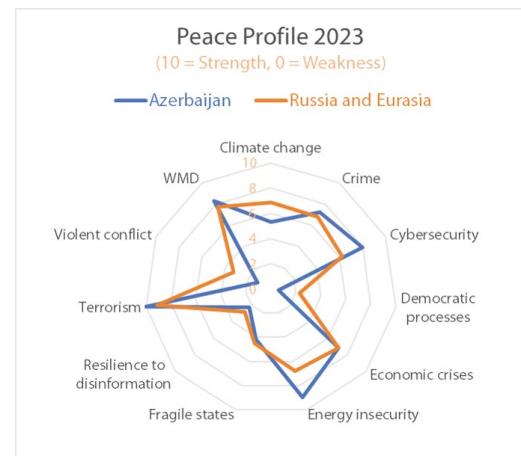
The EU's bilateral political relationship with Australia is based on the 2017 EU Australia Framework Agreement (currently under provisional application). It builds on existing scientific, technical, trade, air travel and customs cooperation to enable the further expansion of relations. In 2018, the EU launched negotiations with Australia on a bilateral [free trade agreement](#), the last round of negotiations was held in June 2023. The EU is Australia's third largest [trade partner](#) after China and Japan, and the third biggest investor in Australia. There is a [Mutual Recognition Agreement](#) between the EU and Australia to facilitate trade in industrial products by reducing technical barriers. The agreement creates mutual recognition of conformity assessment procedures, thus reducing the cost of testing and certifying of exports and imports. Australia has [contributed](#) to the EU Maritime Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP NESTOR – now EUCAP Somalia), an EU-led maritime capacity building mission in the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean, and the EU Advisory Mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq). Australia is mentioned as a regional partner in the [EU strategy for the Indo-Pacific](#). There is also cooperation between the European and Australian Parliaments.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan ranks 70th in the Normandy Index. Azerbaijan, a country with weak democratic processes, remains embroiled in a conflict with its neighbour Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region and faces a number of hybrid attacks, although there has been recent progress in peace negotiations under EU and US mediation.

Background and key issues

Azerbaijan has been embroiled in a conflict with its neighbour Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region since the break-up of the Soviet Union. In September 2020 a full-blown war erupted once again, lasting 44 days. As the result of a further Russian-brokered ceasefire, Azerbaijan emerged as the clear victor and regained control of several districts under Armenian control for 26 years. Azerbaijan now encompasses a part of Nagorno-Karabakh, while Russian peacekeepers patrol the remaining part of the region. The ceasefire is very fragile and a spate of flare-ups continue to test it to breaking point – Azerbaijan seized an ethnic Armenian-populated village in March 2022. This long history of conflict is reflected in Azerbaijan's ranking in the risk of violent conflict index (92nd). However, as the EU has stepped in to replace Russia as a mediator, for the first time in years, the parties now have some space to negotiate peace.



New security and hybrid threats

The return to fully fledged war in September 2020 accentuated the increasing use of hybrid war tactics in the conflict. Azerbaijan has suffered disinformation campaigns, primarily through the use of Twitter as a tool for information warfare. The conflict also increasingly involves cyber-attacks. For instance, in September 2020, hackers took down a plethora of Azerbaijani government sites and also hacked Azerbaijani government officials. A recent investigation evidenced the extensive use of Pegasus spyware across Armenia and Azerbaijan. The situation of human rights and democratic freedoms in Azerbaijan continues to be of concern, as detailed in the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World.

Accordingly, the country scores very low, at 0.81 in terms of democratic processes (122nd globally). However, due to its vast energy sources, Azerbaijan ranks high on energy security. The country also scores highly when it comes to resilience against terrorism, ranking 93rd in the 2022 Global Terrorism Index.

EU involvement

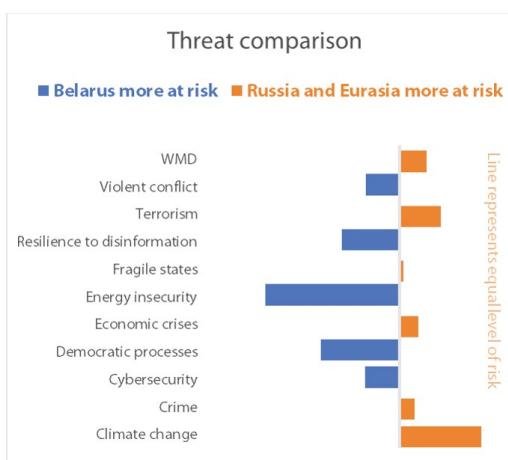
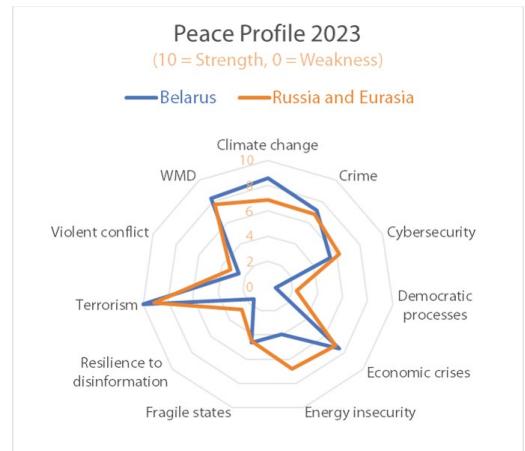
The EU has a strong interest in a politically stable Southern Caucasus region, including Azerbaijan, which is an EU Eastern Partnership country, and has stepped up its presence in the region significantly against the backdrop of Russia's waning role as security guarantor. A new fully fledged civilian mission in Armenia (EUMA Armenia) was deployed in February 2023. Under EU mediation, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a longer-term negotiation plan for a comprehensive peace agreement on 14 May 2023. Relations between the EU and Azerbaijan are based on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, in force since 1999, and negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement were launched in 2017. On 18 July 2022, the European Commission signed a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan to double imports of Azerbaijani natural gas, to at least 20 billion cubic metres a year by 2027.

Belarus

Belarus ranks 84th in the Normandy Index. The country's involvement in Russia's war on Ukraine, preceded by the brutal crackdown against its citizens protesting against electoral fraud, as well as the regime's dependency on Russia's support, are some of the key factors of its peace profile.

Background and key issues

Belarus gained independence in 1991, when it signed the treaty dissolving the Soviet Union. In 1994, Alexander Lukashenko was elected President for the first time. With a poor human rights record over many years, the August 2020 falsified [presidential elections](#), were followed by a brutal [crack-down](#) against protesters, costing lives. Continued and increasing repression against Belarusian civil society and independent [media](#), as well as the Lukashenko regime's [support](#) for Russia's war in Ukraine, lead to a high risk of violent conflict and an extremely poor assessment for democratic processes in the country. With Belarusian state media repeating governmental propaganda, frequently aligned with Russia, the country also scores poorly in the resilience to disinformation category. Belarus' geographical location in the northern part of Europe means that this landlocked country scores high in resilience to climate change.



New security and hybrid threats

Belarus's involvement in Russia's war on Ukraine includes granting permission for the firing of ballistic missiles from Belarusian territory and the transport of Russian troops and military equipment, which initially enabled Russia to attack Kyiv from the north. The constitutional [referendum](#) of 27 February 2022, among other [changes](#), [renounced](#) a [paragraph](#) stating that 'The Republic of Belarus aims at making its territory a nuclear-free zone, and the state neutral'. In March 2023, Russia [announced](#) its decision to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. While Vladimir [Putin](#) and Alexander Lukashenko stated that transport of nuclear warheads has started, this has [not](#) been confirmed by Western intelligence services at the time of writing. Moreover, should the presence of Wagner group fighters be confirmed, this would create additional security challenges for the current [regime](#). A new destabilisation in Russia may lead to a quickly [evolving](#) and potentially violent internal situation in Belarus.

EU involvement

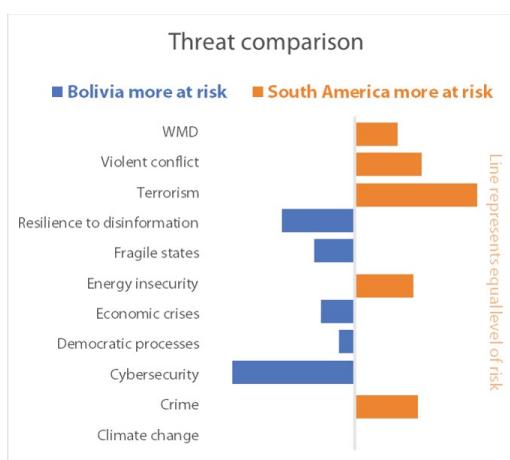
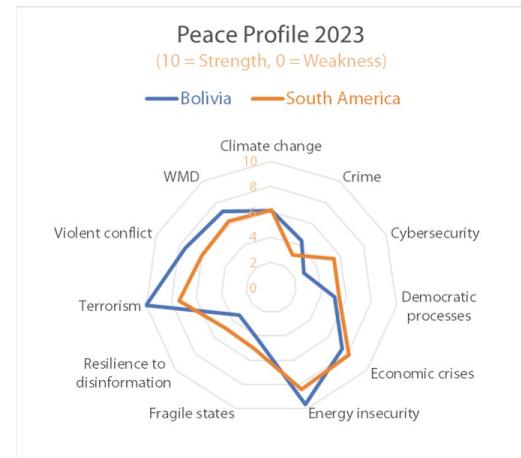
The EU does [not recognise](#) the results of the August 2020 elections. Consequently, the EU has gradually [sanctioned](#) Belarus for the increasing human rights abuses following the elections. The EU [condemned](#) the country's participation in Russia's war in Ukraine and has imposed further, much stronger, [economic](#) sanctions. The EU [supports](#) Belarusian civil society and [outlined](#) a €3 billion [economic support package](#) for a future democratic Belarus, available upon the country's democratic transition. Under this condition, the package's flagship initiatives are also included in the [Eastern Partnership](#) (EaP) post-2020 agenda (Belarus suspended its participation in the EaP in June 2021). A February 2022 statement by the HR/VP [criticises](#) the deletion of reference to Belarus's non-nuclear status from its constitution as a further worrying element. The [European Parliament](#) has called on the EU institutions to support international prosecution against the Lukashenko regime for war crimes and crimes against humanity relating to the Russian war on Ukraine. The European Parliament [denounces](#) the regime's repression of the Belarusian people and [calls](#) for the EU to admit Belarusian democratic forces and civil society to take up empty seats previously occupied by representatives of the Belarusian authorities.

Bolivia

Bolivia ranks 51st in the Normandy Index. The country has been challenged by instability, political and social polarisation, in particular since 2019, when the results of presidential elections were nullified, following significant social unrest. Demonstrations and protests continued long after new elections in 2020, which saw the victory of Evo Morales' party candidate Luis Arce. Drugs are a major instability driver. Violence remains high, mainly touching vulnerable people such as indigenous communities and women.

Background and key issues

Bolivia remains strongly polarised, both politically and 'ethnically' between its indigenous population, peasant farmers, and those considered of Spanish colonial descent, including rich agro-business owners. Land and natural resources rights and tenure have remained drivers of conflict, linked with power and identity issues. The marginalisation of Bolivia's [36 groups of indigenous inhabitants](#) has a long history; indigenous rights were not formally recognised until [1994](#). This changed with the election of Evo Morales in 2005, the first indigenous democratic president in South America. Morales introduced land redistribution and rights reforms, reallocating land away from non-indigenous Bolivians and [commercial farmers](#).



New security and hybrid threats

Presidential elections held in October 2019 were marred by [contested](#) accusations of fraud. New elections were held peacefully on 18 October 2020 and won by Morales party candidate [Luis Arce](#). In March 2021, the government detained Jeanine Áñez, who proclaimed herself the country's interim president in November 2019. On pre-trial detention until 10 June 2022, a Bolivian Court found Áñez guilty of organising a coup against Morales and sentenced her to [10 years'](#) imprisonment. [Human Rights Watch](#) has found no evidence for these accusations. Like much of the region, Bolivia [demonstrates](#) high vulnerability to cyber-attack, and faces [disinformation](#) challenges. The country ranks 129th in the [Climate Vulnerability Index](#) (21 February 2023 update).

A massive anti-drugs operation took place in May 2023, leading to the destruction of laboratories and drug factories, affecting a drugs trade of about US\$2 million, in what was officially presented as the [largest operation](#) ever in the fight against drug trafficking in the country.

EU involvement

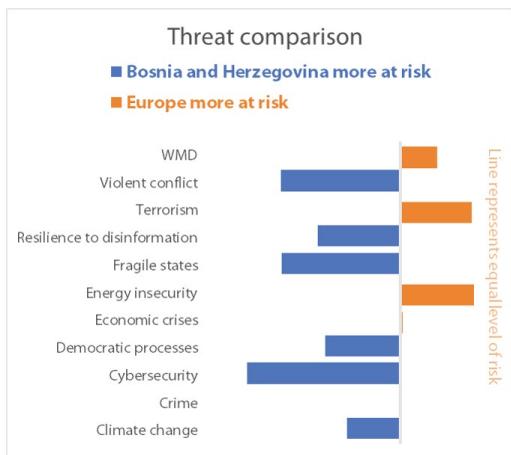
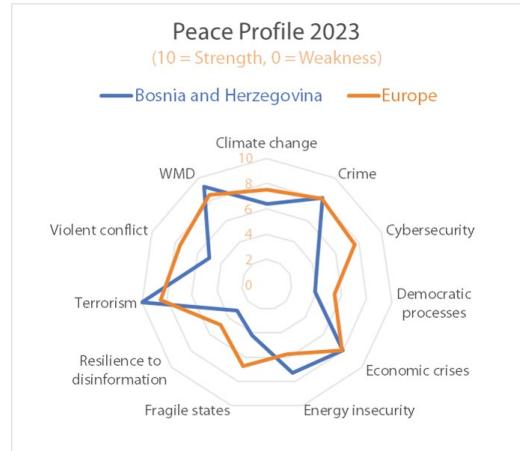
Bolivia benefits from the EU's regional cooperation programmes, with a focus on the [security-development nexus](#). It is also a beneficiary of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+). The EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace ([IcSP](#)) has funded four ongoing projects in Bolivia. Under the Global Europe Instrument, the current multi-annual indicative programme ([MIP](#)) for Bolivia sets out an allocation for 2021-2024 of €104 million, split between: environment, climate change and inclusive economic development focusing on working with women and young people (€83 million, 80%), and governance and human rights (€14 million, 13.5%). After the interruption of regular bilateral meetings in 2018, the [8th High Level Dialogue](#) between Bolivia and the EU resumed in La Paz on 31 May 2022.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina ranks 44th in the Normandy Index, remaining more at risk than the European average. It performs significantly less well than the European average in democratic processes and fragile states, but nevertheless scores well on energy security.

Background and key issues

Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced armed conflict between 1992 and 1995, triggering several international peacekeeping missions. In 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement resulted in a decentralised government system, dividing the country into two semi-independent federal units, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This decentralised governance is partly the reason for Bosnia and Herzegovina having the second lowest [Fragile States Index](#) score in Europe. Efficient cooperation between the country's constitutional entities is impeded by mistrust among ethnic groups and political parties and also differing foreign policy orientation. The country is [heavily dependent on coal](#), at 54 % of total electricity production, but is investing in renewable energies, with vast hydro and non-hydro renewable energy potential.



New security and hybrid threats

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has some vulnerabilities to new security threats, owing to resources still being allocated to rebuilding following the conflict and a highly decentralised state structure. In 2021, Milorad Dodik, the Serbian member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, and leader of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) party, [threatened](#) to withdraw Bosnian Serbs from the country's key institutions. On 21 and 27 June 2023, the Republika Srpska National Assembly [adopted](#) the Law on Amendments to the Law on Publication of Laws and Other Regulations of Republika Srpska and the Law on the Non-Enforcement of Decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH. High Representative for BiH, Christian Schmidt decided to revoke both laws. Another risk is related to the

unaccomplished [electoral and constitutional reforms](#). The country is also highly vulnerable to disinformation and ranks 67th out of 180 countries in the [2022 Press Freedom Index](#). [Undocumented migration](#) has strained local and state authorities, especially in areas that shoulder most of the burden of migration management.

EU involvement

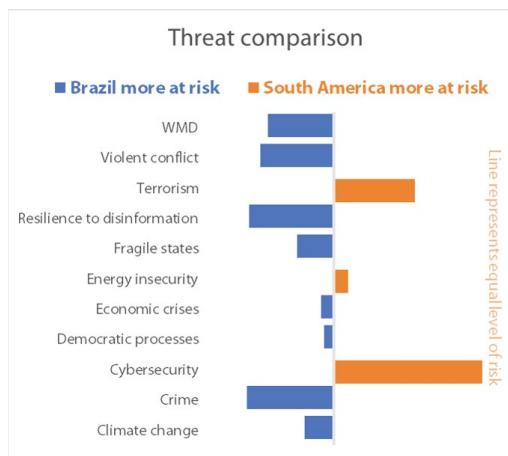
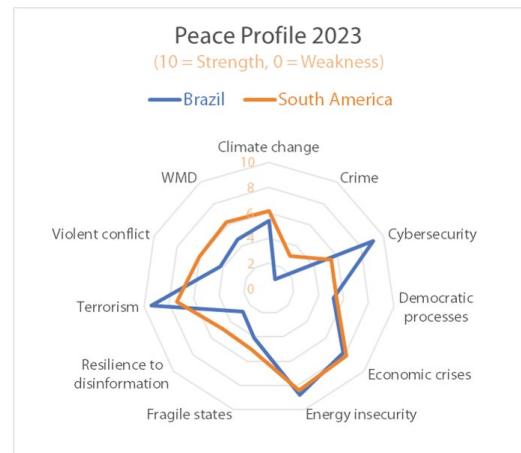
The leaders of the European Union unanimously decided to grant EU candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 December 2022. Since 2004, the EUFOR [Althea](#) mission has supported the country's efforts to secure peace, following the [Dayton Peace Agreement](#). In its opinion on Bosnia's EU membership application, the European Commission recommended moving towards opening EU accession negotiations. Other priorities include the need to ensure effective coordination of border management and migration management capacity, and to ensure the functioning of the asylum system. The EU is [assisting](#) with a number of building and twinning programmes. The EU is also supporting environmental and climate transition through the [Pre-accession Instrument](#). The EU has committed [over €80 million](#) to tackle pandemic-related challenges in the country, including disinformation. During 2021-2023, the EU [contributed](#) to military and medical capabilities, financed through the European Peace Facility.

Brazil

Brazil ranks 63rd in the Normandy Index, its position deteriorating further against previous years. The country performs lower than the South American average for the indicators measuring climate change, crime, violent conflict and disinformation.

Background and key issues

Brazil's profound economic recession from 2014 to 2017 exacerbated deep-rooted social inequalities, translating into a steep rise in homicides: the country has the 16th highest [homicide rate](#) globally, with 27.38 deaths per 100 000 people. The high levels of homicide and violent crime are also connected with [organised crime](#), with most homicides occurring near the main drug-smuggling routes. Brazil scores well on democratic processes, with the 28th highest score globally.



New security and hybrid threats

At global level, Brazil's performance is above average, in particular for cybersecurity. At the same time, [disinformation](#) in the country remains a risk, while a new draft [disinformation](#) and 'fake news' bill has raised concerns among both human rights groups and the business community. [Amazon deforestation](#) also poses a risk, as it induces climate change, and endangers Brazil's energy and water security; Human Rights Watch recently [pointed out](#) that the previous administration was responsible for the [highest annual deforestation](#) of the Brazilian Amazon rainforest of the past 15 years. Moreover, despite measures taken by the new government to reverse policies that were harmful to the environment and to

reactivate the Amazon Fund to tackle deforestation, figures for 2022 and early 2023 show that it is [still rampant](#) in the country.

EU involvement

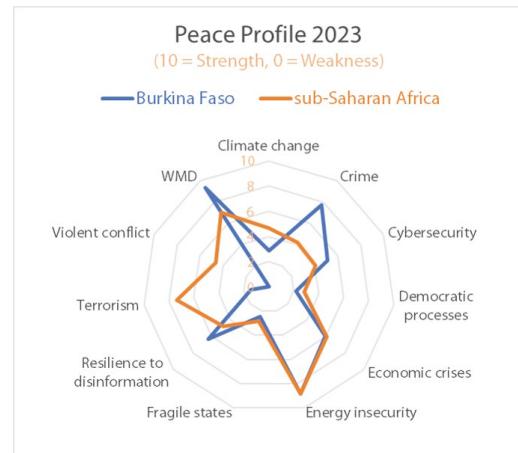
The EU and Brazil entered a strategic partnership in 2007. Through a large array of [sector dialogues](#), the EU [supports](#) Brazil, among other things, to strengthen the protection of [human rights defenders](#) and the human rights of particularly vulnerable groups, and to counter violence, notably [domestic violence](#) against [women](#). To enhance Brazilians' resilience to disinformation, the EU provides funding for [projects on fake news](#) and fosters transparency in areas such as [public procurement](#). The EU's Partnership Instrument [funds](#) a wide variety of sustainability projects in Brazil. Moreover, Brazil [benefits](#) from the EU programme for Latin America EUROCLIMA+. In June 2019, the EU and the four founding members of Mercosur, including Brazil, reached an agreement in principle on a comprehensive [trade agreement](#). In early June 2023, the HR/VP and the Commission adopted a joint communication setting out a new [agenda for relations](#) between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean. Following up on this communication, Commission President von der Leyen travelled to Brazil a few days later, in the context of a wider trip to Latin America to strengthen relations with key partners in the region ahead of the July 2023 EU-CELAC Summit in Brussels.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso ranks 114th in the Normandy Index. It experienced two coups in 2022 and has become a new epicentre of Islamist extremist activity, as regional terrorist groups infiltrate the country, taking advantage of local grievances.

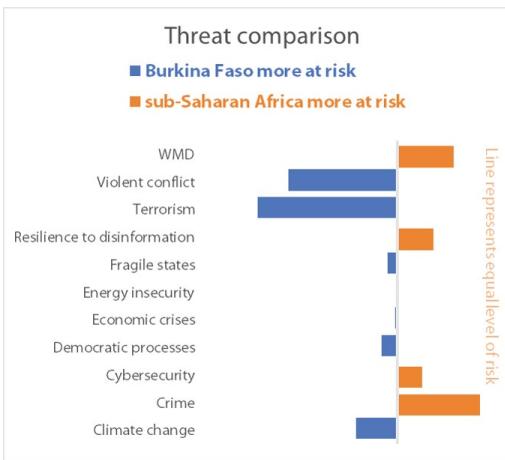
Background and key issues

Burkina Faso enjoyed a period of relative security and stability at the price of a narrow democratic space and widespread security sector abuses, which eventually boiled over into the overthrow of President Blaise Compaoré (in office 1987-2014). The dismantlement of Compaoré's security structures led to a series of violent militant attacks under Roch Marc Christian Kaboré (in office 2015-2022). The incumbent's failure to address the deteriorating security situation was the reason invoked for two successive military coups in January and September 2022.



New security and hybrid threats

Burkina Faso faces an overwhelming threat of violent extremism. Jihadist groups based in Mali, such as the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims – an umbrella coalition of al-Qaeda-affiliated movements, and domestic terror groups such as Ansar ul Islam, flourish and perpetrate an increasing number of attacks. Islamist armed groups control about 40% of the country's territory. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, severe insecurity had forced 1.4 million people to leave their home by December 2022. Interim President Captain Ibrahim Traoré terminated military cooperation with France in January 2023.



EU involvement

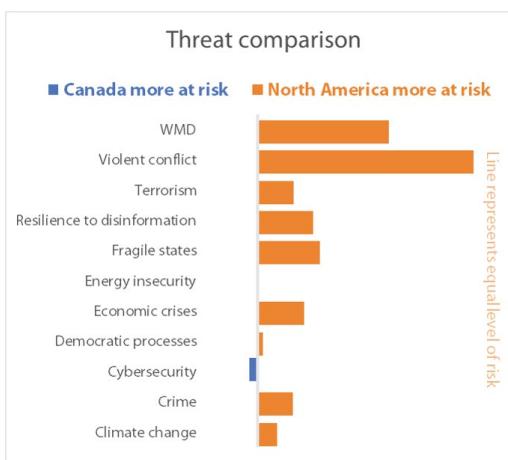
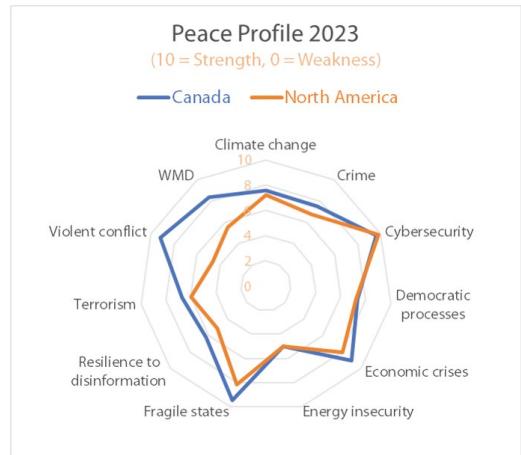
A new strategy for the Sahel was adopted in April 2021, strengthening the political dimension of the EU's partnership with the G5 Sahel countries, including Burkina Faso, and the emphasis on sustainable development beyond military engagement. The EU supports Burkina Faso to achieve durable peace and security through a mix of national and regional initiatives, some focusing on security, and others with a broad development objective. Direct support for the most vulnerable populations, for stronger institutional capacities and democratic culture in support of the democratic transition process, and for setting response mechanisms against disinformation campaigns aimed at undermining EU action are among the objectives of the 2023-2025 multi-annual action plan for Burkina Faso. In 2022, the EU provided €58.7 million for humanitarian actions in Burkina Faso; in 2023, the humanitarian allocations amount to €25.5 million (as of 6 February). In several resolutions, notably in October 2022, the European Parliament condemned the coups and called for a return to constitutional order. It also called on the EU and Member States to increase their support, notably for displaced persons. Parliament expressed its concerns about Russian disinformation campaigns and the involvement of the Russian Wagner private security company in gross human rights violations in Burkina Faso.

Canada

Canada ranks 6th in the Normandy Index, indicating low levels of risk. It performs better than the world average on nearly every indicator, and scores notably well in democratic processes and cybersecurity.

Background and key issues

Canada has a long-standing democratic tradition in the form of a parliamentary system enhanced by strong levels of education and a high GDP per capita. In the 2021-2022 [Human Development Index](#), it ranked 15th out of the 191 countries measured. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's [Democracy Index](#), Canada comes 12th overall, performing exceptionally well in electoral process and pluralism and political participation, but its ranking has suffered as a result of curbs on civil liberties imposed in response to the pandemic. Canada is the world's fifth most stable country according to the Normandy Index, as measured by the fragile states' indicator. Canada performs well on most indicators of traditional conflict, yet was ranked 54th in the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#). In 2022, Canada recorded no attacks or deaths related to terrorism for the first time since 2013.



New security and hybrid threats

Canada has high levels of both economic development and human capital, and is the [9th largest economy](#) (current US\$) and second most stable economy globally, as measured by the economic crises indicator. Canada is one of only a few developed countries to be a net exporter of energy. Canadian society enjoys a high level of press freedom, ranking 15th in the 2023 [Press Freedom Index](#). [Cybercrime](#), in the form of online fraud and attempts to steal personal, financial, and corporate information, continues to be the most significant threat to Canada's cybersecurity. [Human Rights Watch](#) included widespread violations of the rights of indigenous peoples among the challenges to be tackled.

EU involvement

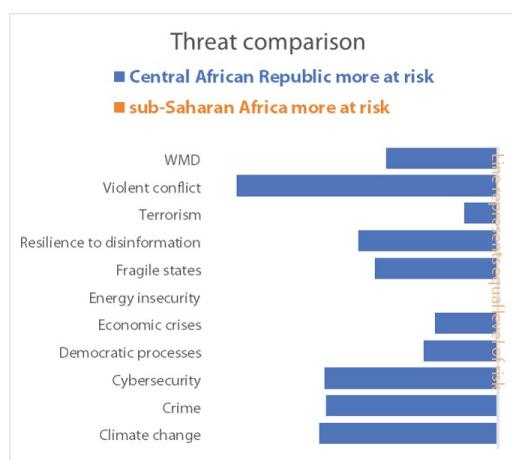
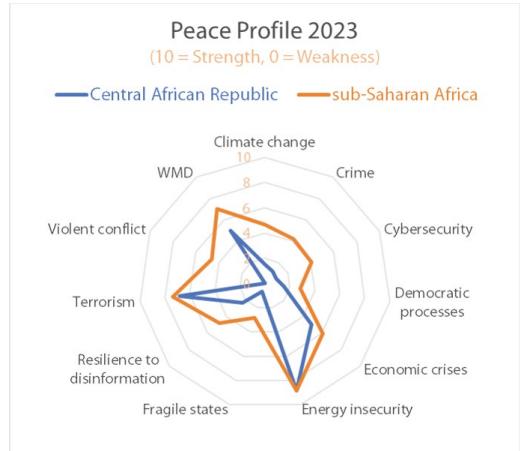
Canada has been a formal [strategic partner](#) for the EU since 2016. Since then, the partners have strengthened their [foreign policy and sectoral cooperation](#), with a view to upholding their joint commitment to advance democratic principles and human rights and to work together to strengthen international peace and security and rules-based multilateralism. As one of the steadiest contributors to the CSDP, Canada joined the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) military mobility project in 2021 and, made progress in joining the PESCO 'Network of Logistics Hub in Europe and Support to Operations' project in 2023. The EU and Canada have also concluded a security of information agreement for the exchange of classified information. Canada and the EU are also strong economic partners. In 2017, the [Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement](#) (CETA) between the EU and Canada provisionally entered into force, and aims at setting a high standard for sustainability chapters in trade agreements. In 2021, the two sides also set up a [strategic partnership](#) on raw materials. In March 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the President of the European Commission and the Prime Minister of Canada set up a dedicated working group on the green transition and liquefied natural gas (LNG), to contribute to greater sustainability and ensuring energy security. Lastly, the EU and Canada joined forces as leaders in the international fight against climate change, including by co-convening meetings of the Ministerial on Climate Action (MoCA) with China (the most recent was held in 2022).

Central African Republic

At 136th, the Central African Republic (CAR) ranks last but one in the Normandy Index. The country has struggled through ongoing episodes of civil war since 2003. Foreign fighters, including the Wagner group, are very active. The political and particularly the security situation remains highly fragile, with serious risk of escalating violent conflicts.

Background and key issues

Although President Faustin-Archange Touadéra was democratically elected in 2016, violence between politically motivated armed groups remains a common threat. The Anti-Balaka alliance dominates the southwest and the ex-Seleka militia the northwest of the country. The CAR ranked 8th globally on the 2023 [Fragile States Index](#). The security vacuum that has emerged contributes to the country's high violent conflict score. The CAR ranks 55th/163 in the 2022 [Global Terrorism Index](#). Elections in December 2020 exacerbated instability, as armed groups mobilised and [disrupted the electoral process](#). For [President Touadéra](#) to run for a third mandate, in elections planned for late 2023, [constitutional change](#) is required. The CAR has a strong energy potential, including green energy.



New security and hybrid threats

The CAR is vulnerable to the emerging threats that affect weak states, including threats to cybersecurity and press freedom. Attacks on the media are frequent. The CAR is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in Africa, leading to massive population displacement and violent conflict between [farmers and herders](#) over water and pastures. A [Rwandan intervention force](#) (over 2 000 troops) is present in the country. The insecurity challenge has worsened, with the presence of Russian Wagner group mercenaries, and the CAR's alignment with Russian foreign policy. The CAR abstained from voting in the UN General Assembly's 2 March 2022 resolution condemning the

Russian aggression against Ukraine, while its President issued harsh words against the West in [March 2023](#), as he called to lift the arms and diamond embargo, while the UN accused the CAR army and Wagner of exactions against the population and elected representatives.

EU involvement

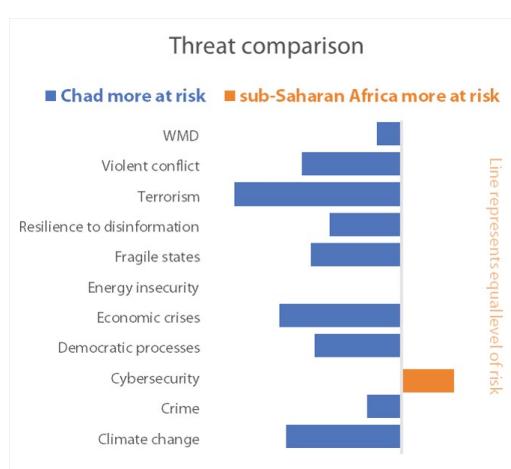
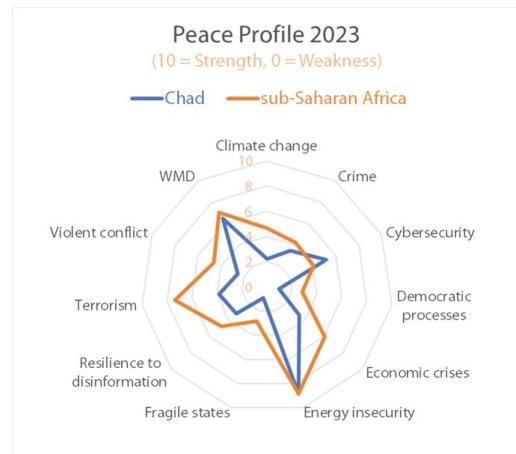
One EU military mission, [EU Training Mission in the Central African Republic](#) (EUTM CAR), is still present in the country, advising national forces. A civilian advisory mission, [EUAM RCA](#), launched in 2020 to support reform of the internal security forces, also remains. However, Wagner group activities might threaten the future of these missions. On 5 May 2022, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on threats to security in the Sahel, condemning the increasing presence of the Wagner group (in the Sahel), deeming it incompatible with security and defence cooperation with the EU, and calling upon all countries to examine Wagner's track record in the CAR. The CAR benefits from duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market ('[Everything but Arms](#)'). In December 2020, the EU mobilised €14 million in response to the [coronavirus pandemic](#). Under the Global Europe Instrument, the 2021-2024 multi-annual indicative programme ([MIP](#)) for CAR allocates €172 million, mainly split between: peace, security, justice and governance (€57 million), green transition (€57 million) and human development (€51.5 million). EU [sanctions](#) are also markers of the state of bilateral relations.

Chad

Chad ranks 128th in the Normandy Index. The country suffers from the spill-over effects of Boko Haram activity, particularly around Lake Chad. This is further compounded by climate fragility and food insecurity.

Background and key issues

Chad has a turbulent history of civil war, coups and democratic suppression. President Déby's death soon after his re-election in April 2021 was followed by the nomination of his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby to replace him as transitional leader of a military council, occupying the combined functions of the president and head of the armed forces. The organisation of elections has been delayed until October 2024. Largely dependent on oil revenues, the country's economy remains fragile and vulnerable to increased pressures on natural resources due to climate change and population displacement.



New security and hybrid threats

Boko Haram attacks and their repression by the military have triggered internal population displacements. In addition to internal security risks, Chad has been involved in conflicts in its border regions. Lake Chad is notably the epicentre of complex internal displacement and refugee movements. At least 5 million (local population, internally displaced persons and refugees) face food insecurity across the country, with nearly 2 million severely affected. Only a third of the population can access clean drinking water. Since April 2023, the crisis born from power conflict in Sudan has caused mass refugee movements into Chad, pushing the country into a humanitarian catastrophe. The government's limited capacity to address the humanitarian

needs could further increase [Chad's instability](#).

EU involvement

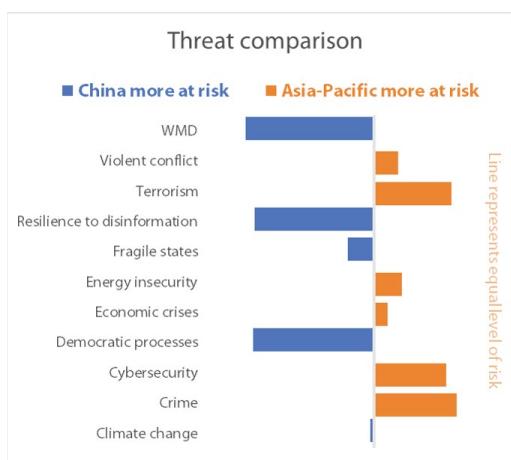
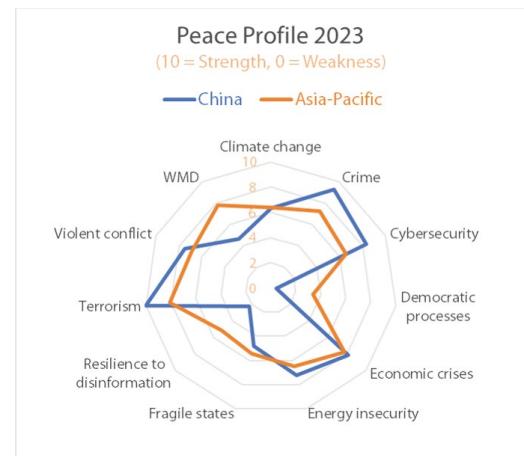
The EU adopted a [new strategy for the Sahel](#) in April 2021. Beyond military engagement, the new strategy strengthens the political dimension and the emphasis on sustainable development of the EU's partnership with the G5 Sahel countries, including Chad. The EU supports the democratic transition process through the €280 million 2021-2024 multiannual indicative programme, in particular through security and justice sector reform and democratisation. To address the humanitarian needs triggered by the impacts of conflict and climate change, the EU provided over €50 million in humanitarian aid to Chad in 2022 and activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to respond to the severe impacts of floods; the EU has also allocated €26.5 million in humanitarian aid as of 23 January 2023.

China

Since last edition of the Normandy Index, China has advanced 22 positions to rank 46th, and is no longer more at risk than the Asia-Pacific average. Since the start of economic reforms in 1978, China has become the world's second largest economy in terms of nominal GDP after the USA. There are, however, increasing signals that rising structural challenges to China's economy will imply a (much) more moderate growth performance in the medium-term.

Background and key issues

China is still [entangled](#) in border disputes with two of its neighbours, India and Bhutan. Moreover, China's [claims](#) to sovereignty over Taiwan and several maritime areas in the East and South China Seas are increasingly heavily contested. In support of these claims, China fields the world's [largest](#) army and second largest [defence budget](#). China also possesses active nuclear weapons. While China is considered less of a [fragile state](#) than in the past, it scores very badly on the criterion 'human rights and rule of law' and 'state legitimacy' in the Fragile States Index. This is largely a result of the Chinese government's ongoing [authoritarian state repression](#) in Hong Kong and its oppression of religious and ethnic minorities, in particular in Tibet and in Xinjiang province, which some states have labelled as [genocide](#).



New security and hybrid threats

China's rapid economic growth has had a negative impact on its natural resources and environment, severely undermining water quality and leading to erosion and widespread pollution. China's still high [dependency](#) on coal has dangerous implications for the environment and human health, coal combustion being the single largest source of air pollution-related health impacts in the country. Ahead of COP26 in November 2021, China officially [submitted](#) its 'carbon neutrality before 2060' target, but did not go further at COP27 at the end of 2022. China relies on new technologies for its authoritarian model of social surveillance and conformity, which it portrays as an alternative to liberal governance models. It

consequently ranks 179th (out of 180) in the 2023 World Press Freedom [Index](#). A one-party state, its score for the criterion 'democratic processes' (0.42) is far below the Asia-Pacific average (8.07), ranking the country 131st (of 138 countries surveyed) globally.

EU involvement

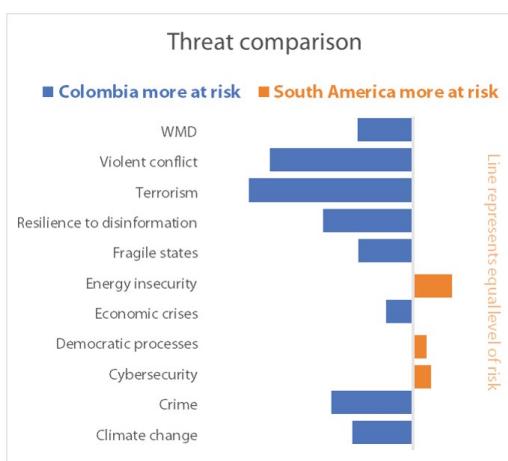
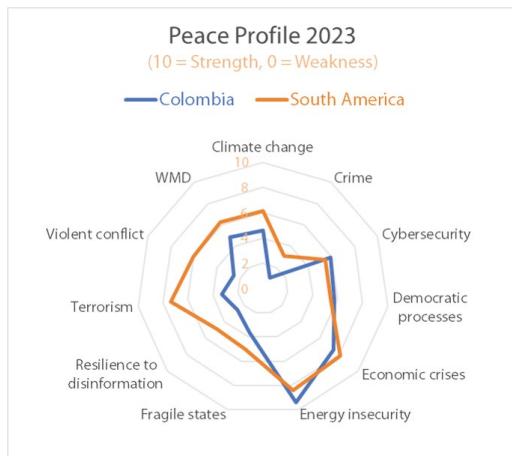
EU and China established a strategic partnership in 2003 through more than [60 dialogue formats](#), including on non-proliferation and disarmament. These have contributed to the implementation of the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. The regular EU-China [human rights dialogue](#) also raises issues such as freedom of expression and of religious belief, although with very limited progress on these issues. In 2019, the European institutions issued a joint communication on [EU-China – A strategic outlook](#), in which China is simultaneously described as a 'cooperation partner ... an economic competitor ... and a systemic rival'. In December 2020, the EU and China concluded, 'in principle', a [Comprehensive Agreement on Investment \(CAI\)](#), which is 'frozen'. In March 2021, the EU imposed [sanctions](#) on Chinese officials accused of perpetrating human rights abuses against the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang. The European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the human rights situation in Xinjiang on 9 June 2022; on the [arrest of Cardinal Zen](#) in Hong Kong on 7 July 2022; and on the (deteriorating) [situation in the Taiwan Strait](#) on 15 September 2022.

Colombia

Colombia ranks 115th in the Normandy Index. It is considered more at risk than the South American regional average, and performs below the regional average for terrorism, violent conflict, and resilience to disinformation.

Background and key issues

A peace agreement between the government and the biggest terrorist group, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), was signed in 2016. However, an [estimated](#) 2 500 FARC dissidents remain active. Between June 2021 and May 2022, there were 147 events of [mass displacement](#), affecting nearly 60 000 people, with the major causes of displacement being armed conflict and the issue of land, often related to organised crime violence. The remaining second largest terrorist organisation, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) is also behind significant violence and displacement, both in Colombia and neighbouring Venezuela. Colombia's left-wing President [Gustavo Petro](#), who came to power in August 2022, promised to bring peace and reconciliation to the country.



New security and hybrid threats

The [homicide rate](#) in Colombia is the 18th highest in the world. Colombia performs below the South American regional average for new security threats. However, it does show resilience in a number of areas, including energy security. In 2021, Colombia was South America's [largest coal producer](#) and second-largest petroleum producer. It also performs higher than the South American regional average in cybersecurity. The country ranks 145th in the 2022 [World Press Freedom Index](#), owing to high numbers of death threats towards journalists and the resulting self-censorship.

EU involvement

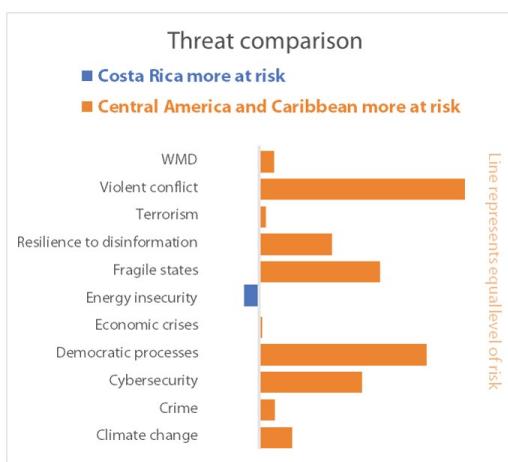
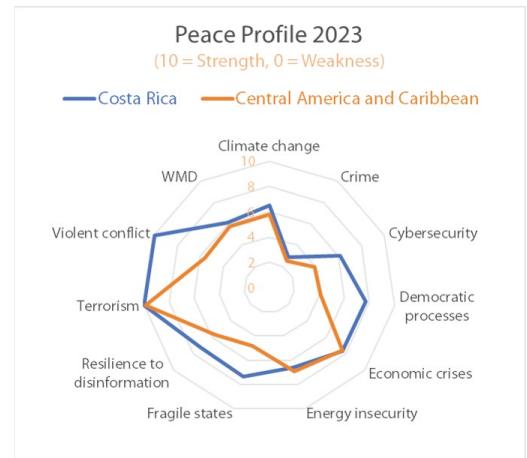
The EU has [supported](#) the Colombian peace process with an overall investment of more than [€645 million](#). This includes action such as the Peace Laboratories and the Peace Territories project, the [Trust Fund](#) for Colombia (to which 21 EU Member States and Chile have pledged [€125 million](#)); European Investment Bank loans; and the IcSP, which mobilised an [extra €40 million](#) for critical elements of the peace process, such as transitional justice. EU cooperation covers areas such as victims' rights, reintegration of ex-FARC guerrillas into civilian life, de-mining, rural development, land restitution, environment, conflict resolution, peace post-conflict projects, and the establishment of a special investigation unit in the prosecutor-general's office to combat crime and protect activists. [Eamon Gilmore](#), special EU envoy 2015-2019, considered the EU's role in the peace process a success. [Development cooperation](#) between EU and Colombia totalled €127 million for 2014-2020. The EU has a [Comprehensive Trade Agreement](#) with Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, applied provisionally since 2013. Regional cooperation between the EU and the Andean Community aims to help cement regional ties in Colombia's neighbourhood. On 26 April 2021, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the fifth anniversary of the peace agreement in Colombia, requesting increased EU political and financial support for the process. Parliament's observation mission assessed the 2022 general election as [transparent and credible](#). The HR/VP [visited](#) on 25-30 April 2023, representing the EU at the International Conference on Venezuela, and held bilateral talks with President Petro.

Costa Rica

Costa Rica ranks 17th in the Normandy Index, indicating relatively low levels of risk. In contrast to several other countries in the Central America and Caribbean region, Costa Rica has high levels of peace and political stability. Costa Rica enjoys a stable and uninterrupted democracy, with 14 presidential elections since 1948. However, it shares high crime rates with its region.

Background and key issues

Costa Rica abolished its military in 1948, following the end of an intense civil war. This has had positive ramifications for its score on violent conflict and weapons of mass destruction. There is a limited threat of armed conflict within the country, and it enjoys good relations with neighbouring states. Additionally, it ranks among the countries suffering the lowest impact from terrorism. While Costa Rica performs well on other indicators of traditional conflicts, it has relatively [high homicide rates](#). [High homicide rates](#) are attributed to [organised crime](#), which also affects many other countries within the Central American and Caribbean region.



New security and hybrid threats

Costa Rica has a relatively high level of resilience to new security threats. It has a long-standing and stable democracy and benefits from high levels of press freedom and human rights. It ranks 18th in the [2022 World Press Freedom Index](#), owing to low levels of violence against journalists and state interference. As such, it performs above the regional average for the indicators measuring democratic processes and fragile states. Although Costa Rica performs better than the regional average for climate change, it ranks 61st among the countries most [vulnerable to climate change](#), with 182 being the most vulnerable. Costa Rica is making significant efforts to achieve carbon neutrality, and is the only country to have met all five of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) environmental stability measures. It already [generates](#) its entire electricity consumption from renewables.

EU involvement

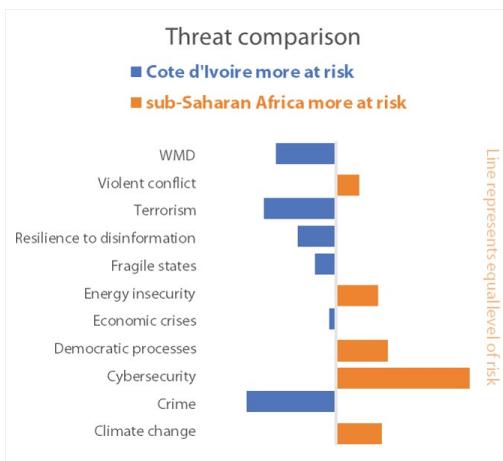
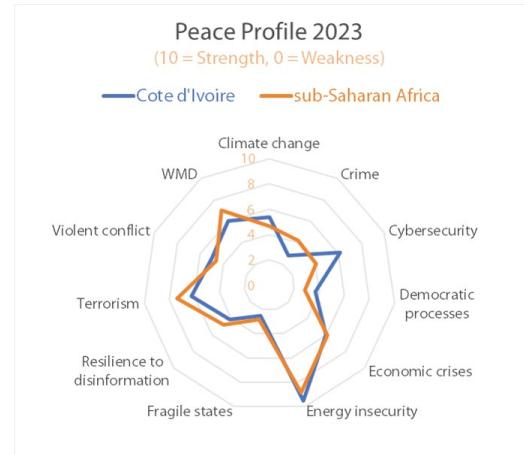
The EU has traditionally maintained strong political relations with Costa Rica. Both parties played an active part in the 1984 [San José dialogue](#), in support of the peace process and democratisation efforts in Central America. Cooperation agreements were concluded in 1985 and 1993, and a political dialogue and cooperation agreement in 2003. The [3rd EU-Costa Rica High Level Dialogue](#) was held in November 2019. [Costa Rica](#) is also a signatory to the EU-Central America Association Agreement concluded in 2012. Under the regional 2021-2027 [multi-annual indicative programme](#) (MIP) for the Americas and the Caribbean, Costa Rica benefits from EU support on three priorities, including decarbonisation and climate change, digitalisation and migration management. Under its [EUROsociAL+](#) programme, the EU [supports](#) public policies in Costa Rica to improve social cohesion and reduce inequality gaps. The EU [Global Gateway](#) initiative specifically fosters the production of green hydrogen in Costa Rica, the conversion of urban buses to electric and the development of vaccine production. The EU also supports new regional approaches through triangular cooperation schemes; for instance, it is working with Costa Rica, Colombia and Mexico on strengthening [restorative justice](#).

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire ranks 91st in the Normandy Index, roughly the same rank as the region to which it belongs, sub-Saharan Africa. The country suffers political polarisation and is exposed to climate change risks, while terrorism and violent conflict remain issues of serious concern.

Background and key issues

Côte d'Ivoire was one of Africa's most stable and prosperous countries in the first decades after independence. After the death of its first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, in 1993, the country plunged into a spiral of instability and violent conflict between the Christian south and the Muslim north. The 2010 electoral victory of current President [Alassane Ouattara](#), who needed the backing of UN and French troops to assume the function, put an end to the civil conflict. President Ouattara continues to pursue reconciliation with rival politicians, to avoid social unrest ahead of elections in 2025. Côte d'Ivoire faces a threat from [Islamist insurgents](#) along its borders. The country has a mostly equatorial climate and is potentially exposed to flooding. Côte d'Ivoire is the second biggest economy in West Africa after Nigeria and the world's main supplier of cocoa.



New security and hybrid threats

The participation, for the first time since 2010, of opposition forces in the March 2021 parliamentary [elections](#), and former president Laurent Gbagbo's [return](#) to the country following his acquittal at the International Criminal Court marked important [steps](#) towards national reconciliation. The political tensions created by the re-election, in November 2020, of President Alassane Ouattara for a controversial third term have largely [subsided](#). On the other hand, the risk of terrorist attacks from jihadist organisations such as Malian-based groups Ansar al-Dine (AAD) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has grown, with a [risk](#) of local radicalisation also present. The country experienced its first major terrorist [attacks](#) in 2016,

in the beach resort of Grand-Bassam. From 2020 on, [jihadists](#) have attacked security forces at the northern border with Burkina Faso several times. These new threats also create intercommunal [tension](#). Due to its geographical position, the country is vulnerable to organised crime, particularly trafficking in human beings and drugs, as well as to [maritime piracy](#) in the Gulf of Guinea. Côte d'Ivoire has started exploiting offshore gas and oil reserves and, given its [potential](#), hopes to become a major producer.

EU involvement

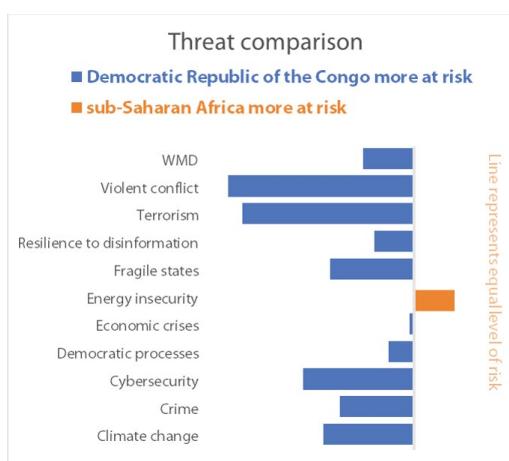
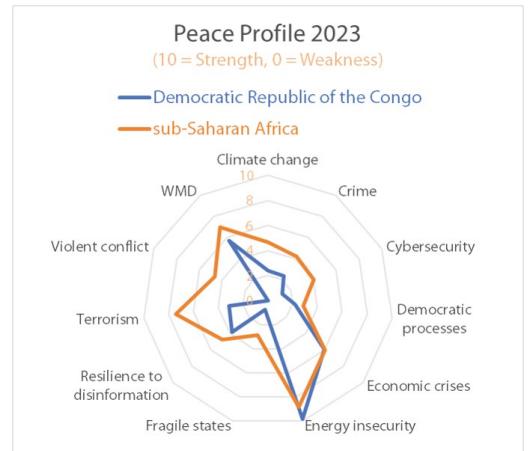
The EU's 2021-2024 [multiannual indicative programme \(MIP\)](#) for Côte d'Ivoire amounts to €228 million. The EU has agreed [three main priorities](#) with Côte d'Ivoire to structure the flow of EU development aid to the country from the Global Europe Instrument: develop human capital, foster sustainable, inclusive and digital growth, and strengthen the rule of law, democratic governance and preserve peace and security. The third priority is endowed with €45.60 million (20 %) for 2021-2024. The EU support aims at upholding Côte d'Ivoire as a major stability pole in the West African region, while aiming at increasing women's participation in peace and security matters. A total €149.1 million in further funding for peace is provided under the Team Europe 'Peace and Stability' initiative: the EU contributes €29.4 million, France, Germany and Italy being the other main contributors. Since 2016, Côte d'Ivoire has been one of only two countries in West Africa to implement an [Economic Partnership Agreement](#) with the EU, which aims at liberalising trade and encouraging economic diversification and development in Côte d'Ivoire.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The resource-rich Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) ranks towards the bottom of the Normandy Index at 135th position. The country suffers from the political crisis triggered in 1997, when President Joseph Kabilo took over power from his father, assassinated in 2001. The crisis persists under President Félix Tshisekedi, who is running for a second mandate in the presidential, legislative and local elections set for 20 December 2023.

Background and key issues

Despite the ongoing efforts of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo ([UN MONUSCO](#)), which is set to gradually leave the DRC, and President Tshisekedi's (contested) election in January 2019, the DRC still ranks 5th in the [2023 Fragile State Index](#). The DRC ranks 14th in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#), falling from 17th in 2022. Despite the state of siege in the eastern provinces of Ituri and North-Kivu decreed in April 2021, the security situation has worsened across large swathes of the country. The DRC remains one of the world's most complex and protracted [humanitarian crises](#), with 5 million internally displaced persons and 1 million seeking asylum, mostly in other African countries. In April 2022, DRC became the 7th member of the East African Community (EAC), an enlargement that sharpened [existing rivalries](#) between Uganda and Rwanda.



New security and hybrid threats

Joseph Kabila's unconstitutional long term of office took its toll on democratic processes and on press freedom. The country is still considered at risk, with particular vulnerability to corruption and depletion of its natural resources, including two critical raw materials, tantalum and cobalt, extracted from DRC mines largely controlled by [Chinese companies](#). In the eastern Province of North-Kivu, M23 rebels returned to fight the DRC Army (the FARDC) in spring 2022, taking control of several cities and rural areas. Rwanda systematically denies DRC accusations of its support for M23. All de-escalation, peace plans and cease-fire attempts have [failed](#) to date. The DRC remains marked by the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and [climate change](#) severely impacts food security. President Tshisekedi visited China in May 2023, aiming to forge a partnership in security and economic matters and to renegotiate the 2008 '[Chinese contract](#)' ('minerals for infrastructure' scheme).

EU involvement

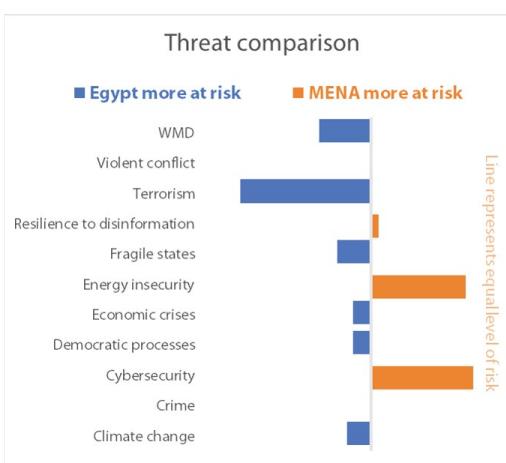
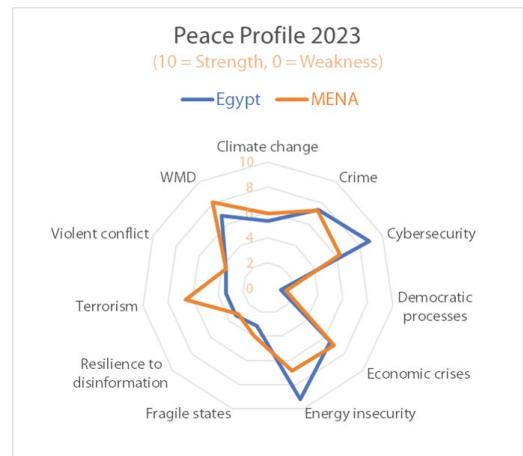
EU-DRC [relations](#) are strained on account of sanctions against several Congolese for human rights violations. The DRC benefits from duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market ('[Everything but Arms](#)'). In 2023, the EU's humanitarian aid to DRC amounted to [€80 million](#) ([€44 million in 2022](#)). The DRC received [Team Europe](#) support to respond to the [coronavirus pandemic](#). In the past, EU development aid to the DRC was financed primarily through the [European Development Fund](#), with €620 million for 2014-2020. The EU also allocated €54 million through the IcSP (2020-2015). The EU financial allocation to DRC under the 2021-2024 Global Europe Instrument amounts to [€424 million](#), mainly split between human development (40 %) the alliance for sustainable development (40 %), and governance, peace and security (15 %). Under the latter, the EU plans to earmark €30 million in civilian support to the FARDC for the 'United for Security' programme, in addition to further possible military support that might be funded from the European Peace Facility ([EPF](#)). In [July 2023](#), a €20 million assistance measure under the European Peace Facility was agreed to support the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The EU again condemned Rwanda's support for M23, Rwanda's military presence in eastern DRC, and the DRC's support for armed groups in [July 2023](#).

Egypt

Egypt ranks 88th in the Normandy Index. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was elected in 2014 and re-elected in 2018. Egypt is rich in hydrocarbon resources and strong in energy security. Security issues, in particular the Islamic terrorist threat within the North Sinai governorate, remain high.

Background and key issues

Egypt ranks 50th in the [2023 Fragile States Index](#), particularly due to its human rights record and Islamic terrorism. The [military](#) remains the predominant political force in the country. Since 2014, the [terrorist group](#) Wilayat Sinai, or 'Sinai Province' (ISIL/Da'esh in the Sinai Peninsula), has conducted a prolonged insurgency against Egyptian authorities. In 2022, the Cairo Criminal Court and the Emergency Supreme State Security [sentenced](#) former presidential candidate Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh and the Muslim Brotherhood's ex-supreme guide Mahmoud Ezzatto to 15 years in prison. Egypt holds 77 trillion cubic feet of proven [gas reserves](#), ranking 16th in the world. In line with the [REPowerEU plan](#), the EU and Egypt will accelerate and intensify their [energy partnership](#).



New security and hybrid threats

Egypt's [ongoing internal security threats](#) have led to the detention and sentencing of journalists and political opponents of the government. The country is one of the biggest jailers of journalists, ranking 166th out of 180 countries in the [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#). The vast majority (98 %) of Egypt's population of approximately 95 million people are concentrated around the arable Nile valley and delta, which represents only 3 % of the country's total landmass. [Soil salinisation](#) also threatens 15 % of the country's farmland. President al-Sisi has been pushing for economic and political reform, at the core of which lies [Egypt's Vision 2030](#). Economic reform and strong investment in urban and green development shielded Egypt relatively well in 2020-2021, with GDP growth of 3.6 % and 3.3 %

respectively. However, inflationary pressures (annual core inflation rose to 40.3 % in May 2023) augur a challenging future environment. To mitigate these risks, the Central Bank of Egypt [devalued](#) the pound by 17 % and raised its main interest rate in 2022. In May 2023, the [Central Bank](#) left its lending rate at 19.25 % and deposit rate at 18.25 %. On 19 July 2023, President al-Sisi pardoned a two prominent human rights activists, Patrick George Zaki and Mohammed el-Baker.

EU involvement

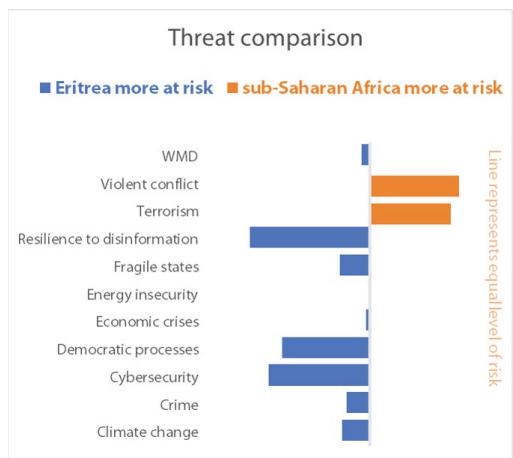
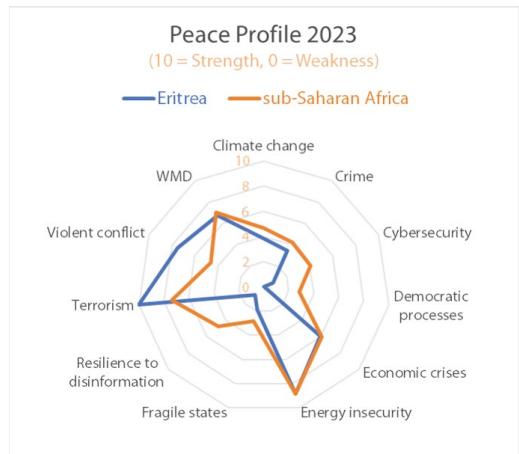
A 2001 Association Agreement, which entered into force in June 2004, forms the legal basis of EU-Egypt relations. Relations were further strengthened through the jointly agreed [EU-Egypt action plan](#) adopted in 2007, which helped to develop bilateral relations in the political, social and economic realms. In the context of the [revised European Neighbourhood policy](#), the EU and Egypt have adopted [partnership priorities](#) that guided the partnership in 2017-2020. The EU's [assistance](#) to Egypt will now focus on economic modernisation, energy sustainability and the environment; social development and social protection; as well as governance. In February 2021, the EU adopted a [new agenda for the Mediterranean](#), including an Investment Plan for the region worth €7 billion. On 19 June 2022, the 9th meeting of the [EU-Egypt Association Council](#) adopted new partnership priorities to guide the relationship until 2027, in line with the new agenda for the Mediterranean and its economic and investment plan and Egypt's sustainable development strategy, Vision 2030. The HRVP [visited](#) Egypt on 17-19 June 2023, holding high level meetings with President al-Sisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Hassan Shoukry and other officials.

Eritrea

Eritrea ranks 117th on the Normandy Index. Despite the historic peace deal signed with Ethiopia in 2018, as a fragile state, Eritrea suffers from a total lack of political freedom, and continues to have little tolerance for press freedom and democratic practices.

Background and key issues

The conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia reignited in 1998 over a border dispute. A state of [frozen war](#) followed for the 20 years to 2018. Despite the peace deal signed with Ethiopia in 2018 and other indications that Eritrea was emerging from international diplomatic isolation, domestic repression remains intense. Any Eritrean hopes for a relaxation of the security state and opening up of personal freedoms have faded, leading many citizens to [voice their criticism](#) in public places. The revolution in neighbouring Sudan in 2019, which toppled Omar al-Bashir, and subsequent democratic reforms (although not unproblematic), have led some to suggest that a similar [popular uprising](#) could take place in Eritrea and that President Isaias Afwerki is concerned about such a possibility.



New security and hybrid threats

Eritrea remains a [militarised authoritarian](#) state that has not held a national election since independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), headed by President Afwerki, is the sole political party. [Arbitrary detention](#) is commonplace, and citizens are required to perform national service, often for their entire working lives. The government shut down all independent media in 2001. [Freedom House](#) gave Eritrea 3 out of 100 points in its 2021 report, stressing the country's religious persecution of Evangelical and Orthodox Christians. In May 2021, the government interfered in the recognised Eritrean Orthodox Church (EOC) by installing a new patriarch. Eritrea ranks as the 19th most fragile country in the [2023 Fragile States Index](#).

[The country](#) ranks 174th out of 180 on the [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#). Eritrea's dire score on democratic processes reflects the total [lack of political freedom](#). Its low score in energy insecurity results from its dependency on oil imports. Less than half of the country's population have [access](#) to electricity. In June 2023, Eritrea [joined](#) the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa (IGAD), an organisation it left in 2007 in protest against the deployment of Ethiopian troops to Somalia to force out al-Shabab fighters; IGAD [cooperates](#) with the UN, including on migration and climate change.

EU involvement

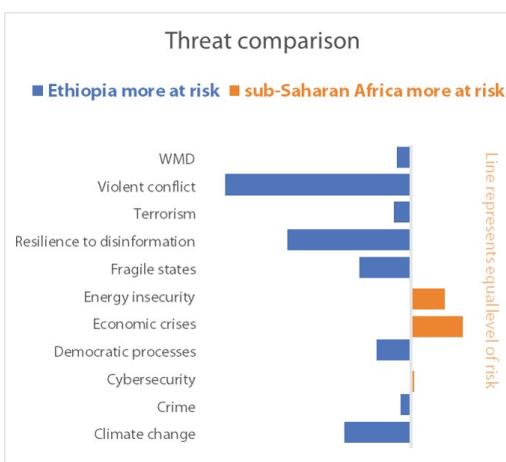
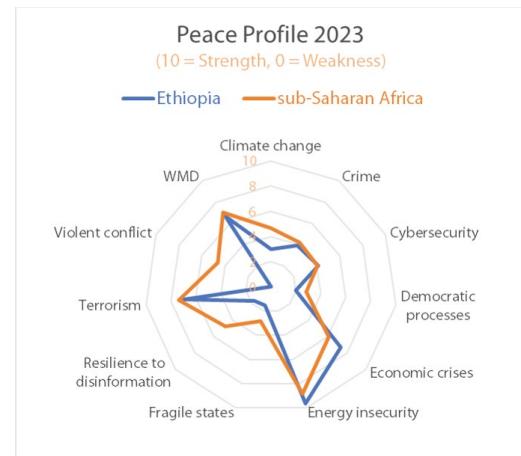
In the framework of its [comprehensive strategy for the Horn of Africa](#), the EU promotes regional cooperation on migration and displacement, security, and the fight against violent extremism. The EU and Eritrea are part of the [EU-Horn of Africa migration route initiative](#), a policy dialogue on the fight against irregular migration. Following the Eritrea-Ethiopia peace deal in 2018, the EU and Eritrea redefined priority cooperation areas in support of peace, regional integration and sustainable development. Eritrea benefits from duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market for '[Everything But Arms](#)'. The new [Development Cooperation Strategy for 2019-2020](#) focused on social and economic development. The EU allocated €10.7 million in funding through the IcSP in 2015-2020, for crisis response and preparedness projects. The Emergency Trust Fund for Africa has [contributed](#) €151 million since 2016, for better governance and conflict prevention, and support for resilience and economic projects.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia ranks 124th in the Normandy Index. While Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's first months in office were marked by efforts to resolve ongoing disputes with Eritrea and introduce wide-ranging political and economic reforms, the armed conflict in the Tigray region has severely affected risk levels in the country.

Background and key issues

With over [80 different ethnic groups](#), speaking as many languages, Ethiopian politics are structured around the notion of ethnic federalism. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed [received](#) the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his efforts to resolve long-standing disputes with Eritrea. However, after the Tigrayan regional government held a regional election in September 2020, considered illegal by the federal parliament, the federal government cut budgetary allocations to Tigray. On 3 November 2020, Abiy Ahmed ordered a military offensive against Tigrayan forces, who had taken command of the military headquarters in Mekelle, Tigray's regional capital. The conflict escalated into [civil war](#), with a death toll of possibly over half a million. Nearly 3 million people have been displaced, either internally or into neighbouring countries. The conflict has resulted in a severe deterioration of the already fragile situation in Tigray and northern Ethiopia, while across Ethiopia, 20 million people were already in need of assistance due to violence, locust invasion, drought or floods.



New security and hybrid threats

Despite the [peace agreement](#) signed between the Ethiopian government and Tigrayan forces in November 2022, and some steps towards implementation, several important issues remain [pending](#): the scale of the Tigray Forces disarmament is not clear; efforts to set up transitional justice are problematic and immense reconstruction and humanitarian needs are hard to meet.

The attempt by the federal government to dismantle regional security forces have resulted in violent protests in the [Amhara](#) region since April 2023.

The filling of the [Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam](#) on the River Nile remain a point of tension with [Egypt](#), while Sudan hopes this dam will help regulate floods.

EU involvement

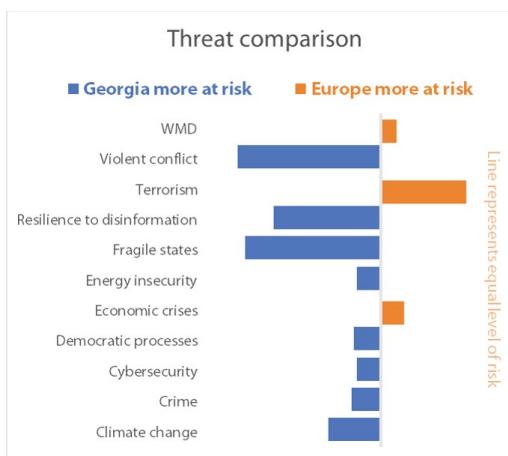
Ethiopia is a key partner for the renewed [EU strategy in the Horn of Africa](#)— adopted in March 2021, but prepared before the outbreak of the Tigray conflict. The EU's partnership with Ethiopia is based on a 2016 [Joint Strategic Engagement Agreement](#), providing for annual ministerial meetings and for high-level dialogue in six sectors: regional peace and security; countering terrorism and violent radicalisation; migration, social and economic development; investment and trade; governance and human rights; climate change and environmental cooperation. Due to the conflict in Tigray, the EU [suspended](#) its €88 million budget support to Ethiopia and increased humanitarian funding in parallel. On 24 April 2023, the Council of the EU announced that the EU will progressively return to full engagement with Ethiopia, commensurate with the implementation of the peace deal. The total humanitarian support for Ethiopia in 2022 was €76 million. A further €82.5 million has been allocated as of 2 May 2023. The European Parliament has expressed its condemnation and concern regarding the humanitarian situation in several [resolutions](#) since the outbreak of the conflict in Tigray. A [delegation of Members](#) discussed the situation in the country with Ethiopian representatives in September 2022.

Georgia

Georgia ranks 35th on the Normandy Index, a significant fall from 28th place the previous year. The country stills performs better than the regional average in indicators including terrorism and economic crisis, while it performs poorly in violent conflict indicators, due to conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Background and key issues

Ever since Georgia became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991, its central government has faced strong resistance in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In August 2008, Russia fought a [war](#) with Georgia, on the pretext of protecting separatists. Although fighting ended after a few days, the causes of the conflict have not been resolved and Georgia lost effective control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, [recognised](#) by the Russian Federation as sovereign entities. The country has experienced relatively low levels of terrorism in the past five years, ranking 93rd in the 2022 [Global Terrorism Index](#). Georgia has been [embroiled](#) in political instability since contested parliamentary elections in November 2020, where the ruling party, Georgian Dream (in power since 2012), maintained its majority. Protests in March 2023 forced the government to [withdraw](#) the bill 'on transparency of foreign influence', inspired by a similar Russian law, denounced by human rights organisations, and seen as [incompatible](#) with EU values and standards.



New security and hybrid threats

Georgia ranks highest among the Eastern Partnership countries on the economic crisis indicator, and although hard-hit by the pandemic, its economy is resilient. [Reforms](#) over the past 15 years have focused on globalising the business sector and boosting economic growth. Over the past decade, Georgia also diversified its trade. While neighbouring countries Russia, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan and Türkiye remain the main export destinations, it has expanded its ties with China and boosted links with the EU through an [Association Agreement](#) (AA), including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), and committed to the NATO Response Force. Georgia has also increased its resilience in other areas, such as

cybersecurity. The February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has raised security [fears](#) in Georgia, which has followed a [cautious](#) and pragmatic approach towards Russia. Georgia [sided](#) with the EU in UN resolutions against Russia, but has [refused](#) to apply EU sanctions so far. Georgia has [applied](#) for EU membership and was granted pre-candidate country status in June 2022.

EU involvement

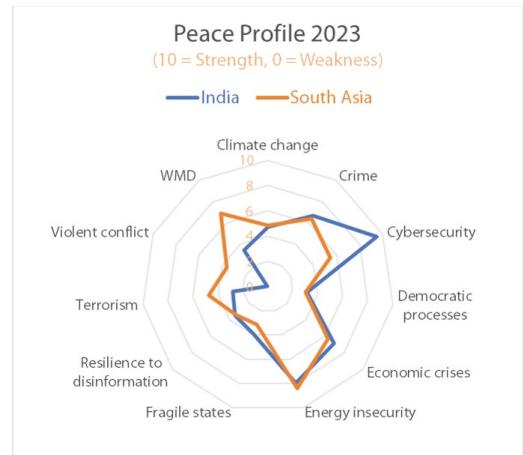
The EU continues its firm [support](#) for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including through the efforts of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia (EUSR), the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), and through the European Peace Facility (€12.75 million) allocation to help strengthen the Georgian Defence Force's medical, engineering and logistics units. Georgia was granted pre-candidate status in June 2022 following the European Commission's [opinion](#) on Georgia's EU membership application. With the [EU-Georgia AA/DCFTA](#), the EU supports the modernisation of the Georgian economy and institutions. Since the entry into force of the visa-free regime in 2017, Georgian citizens holding biometric passports have visa-free entry to the Schengen area. The EU [funding](#) for Georgia in 2017-2020 totalled €453 million, including €183 million to help tackle the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India

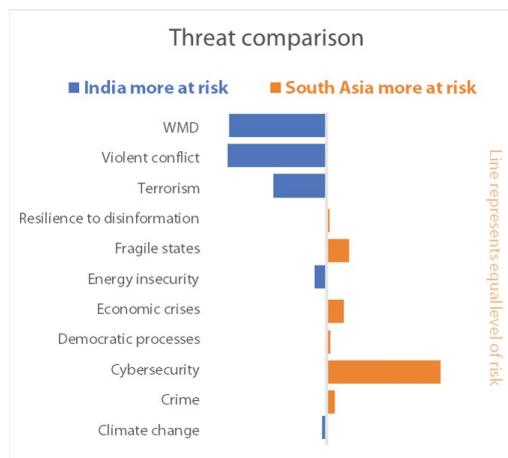
India ranks 112th on the Normandy Index. It is considered more at risk than the average for southern Asia, except for cybersecurity and democratic processes. Unresolved territorial disputes with China and Pakistan, both of which are also nuclear powers, largely explain India's relatively low ranking.

Background and key issues

Despite strong economic growth and modernisation since the 1990s, an [estimated](#) 44 million Indians live in extreme poverty. Domestically, India is challenged by [ongoing](#) inter-religious, inter-caste and inter-ethnic disputes, such as clashes in [Manipur](#) state. [Gender inequality](#) is also a challenge. In 2023, India ranks in the bottom 50 % of countries in the [Liberal Democracy Index](#), having suffered a substantial [decline](#) in democratic freedom over the past decade due to discriminatory policies affecting the [Muslim](#) population and barriers to political opposition. Externally, there is a [dispute](#) over the Himalayan border with China and [tensions](#) with Pakistan, mainly over the Jammu-Kashmir region, which have also given rise to a number of Islamist terrorist groups operating from Pakistani territory. India ranked 13th in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#). India is opposed to signing the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty ([NPT](#)) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty ([CTBT](#)), giving it a low score for the WMD indicator. Finally, India, which imports most of its arms from Russia and remains the [largest importer](#) of Russian arms, has [not condemned](#) Russia's invasion of Ukraine. India's imports of Russian oil [rose](#) tenfold in 2022.



New security and hybrid threats



Government efforts to limit 'anti-national' discourse have led to India falling to 161st place in the [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#). While India is a target of cyber-attacks, it [performs strongly](#) on cybersecurity, with a stronger cybersecurity [infrastructure](#) than average for southern Asia. India is at [high risk](#) from climate change, with [some regions](#) and sectors, such as [agriculture](#), especially vulnerable to flooding, rising temperatures and declining rainfall. India ranked at 8th best country in the 2023 [Climate Change Performance Index](#), with high ratings in the [emissions](#) and energy use categories. At the COP26 Summit in 2021, India (with China and the island nations) succeeded in changing the text of the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) to call for 'phasing down' rather than 'phasing out' of [unabated coal power](#).

EU involvement

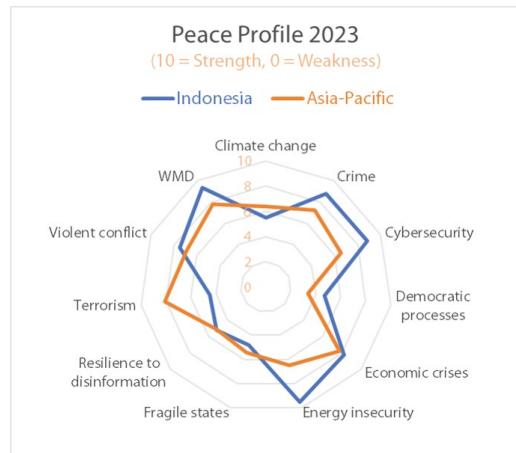
With 60 years of diplomatic relations, India and the EU have been strategic partners since 2004. A middle-income country, [India](#) is not eligible for bilateral EU assistance, however it can benefit from the thematic and [Asian](#) regional programmes. The July 2020 [15th EU-India Summit](#) endorsed the 'EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025', [reviewed](#) in May 2023. The EU is India's [3rd largest](#) trade partner, accounting for almost 11 % of Indian trade. The May 2021 [16th EU-India Summit](#) agreed to [resume negotiations](#), frozen since 2013, on a free trade agreement. The June 2022 [17th EU-India Summit](#) agreed the aim of concluding the negotiations by the end of 2023. In February 2023, an [EU-India Trade and Technology Council](#) was set up, with the aim of tackling new trade, technology and security challenges. Artificial intelligence was one of the subjects addressed at its [first ministerial meeting](#) in May 2023.

Indonesia

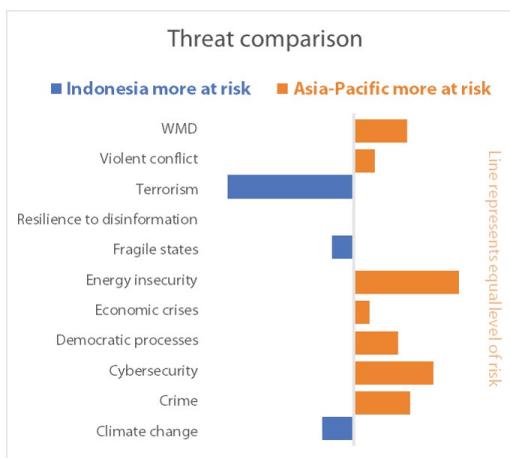
Indonesia ranks 21st in the Normandy Index. Significant economic growth in this populous country of 270 million inhabitants has raised its political prominence in the region in particular inside ASEAN. This rise has not been without issues: ongoing Islamic fundamentalism, sectarian unrest and terrorism each pose significant challenges.

Background and key issues

Indonesia has faced a number of separatist and militant movements since its independence in 1949, and ranks 24th in the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#). A long-running insurgency [continues](#) in Papua. In Aceh, a 2005 agreement granting special autonomy brought peace. The former Portuguese colony of East Timor (occupied by Indonesia since 1975) gained independence in 2002. Indonesian counter-terrorist forces have been mostly effective in containing Islamist movements such as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a Sunni Islamist, religiously-motivated and violent extremist group, inspired by anti-Western jihadist ideology. Its most recent leader, Para Wijayanto, was [arrested](#) by Indonesian authorities in June 2019 and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in July 2020. Although law-enforcement activities over the past decade have significantly impaired the group's leadership, it [remains](#) a distinct organisation with a highly compartmentalised structure and 6 000 members, operating primarily in Indonesia, with a small number in Malaysia and the Philippines.



New security and hybrid threats



Despite its success in instituting democratic practices, including the conduct of the 2019 general election, Indonesia ranks 108th in the 2023 [World Press Freedom Index](#) and 98th in the 2023 [Fragile States Index](#), with a particularly high score in the 'group grievances' category. This is largely due to ongoing unrest in the province of Papua, where media access is restricted. The 2004 Aceh earthquake and tsunami, in which over 160 000 people were killed, demonstrated Indonesia's vulnerability to environmental and climate factors. Increasing drought frequency is [predicted](#) to threaten Indonesia's monsoon-based agricultural practices and lead to food shortages, while rising ocean levels are forecast to threaten approximately 42 million low-lying households, especially around the capital, Jakarta.

EU involvement

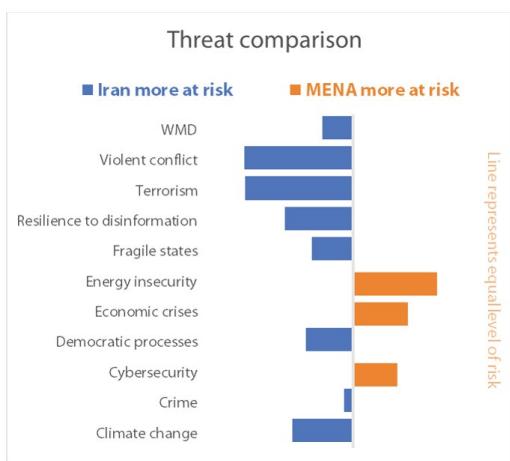
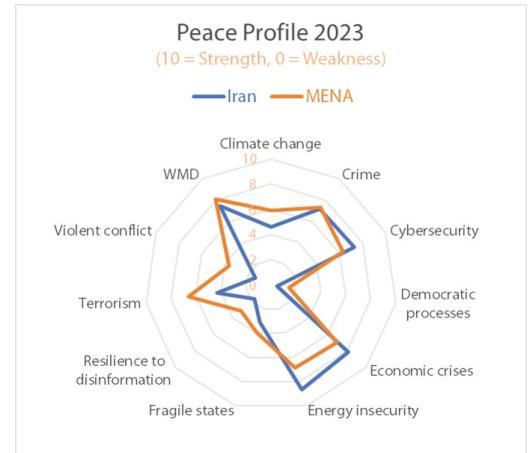
In 2014, Indonesia became the first south-east Asian country to [sign](#) a partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU, and a free trade agreement is currently being negotiated. The 11th negotiation round on the free trade agreement took place in November 2021, in a virtual format, after some delay due to the pandemic. As a middle-income country, Indonesia no longer receives EU bilateral [aid](#), but it continues to participate in programmes such as [Erasmus+](#) for higher education; EU funding also supports Indonesia's foreign trade through the ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU ([ARISE Plus](#)) facility. The EU and Indonesia conduct a wide range of policy dialogues on topics such as [human rights](#) and [security](#). As a regional leader, Indonesia is key to the EU's strategic partnership with the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Iran

Iran ranks 104th in the Normandy Index. The country is currently experiencing the deepest and longest economic crisis in its modern history, exacerbated by US economic sanctions, re-imposed at the end of 2018, and the subsequent impact on oil exports, inflation and unemployment. Political protests that broke out in September 2022 were the largest the country has seen in decades.

Background and key issues

Tensions around Western interference in Iranian domestic affairs date back to the early 1900s, when the British government took control of Persian [oil production](#). The 1953 overthrow, with US backing, of democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, set off a wave of unrest that ultimately led to the revolution of 1979 and subsequent [US hostage crisis](#). Since then, Iran has found itself embroiled in several conflicts in neighbouring countries, beginning with the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, and continuing to this day in the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. The country came under increasing [international pressure](#) over its WMD capabilities and intentions, which were held in check by the Iran [nuclear deal](#) (the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#), or JCPOA), signed in 2015, until the USA withdrew from the agreement and re-imposed wide-ranging [economic sanctions](#) in 2018. Iran's break-out time – the time required to produce enough enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb – is believed to be down to a [few weeks](#), or less.



New security and hybrid threats

Since the re-imposition of US economic sanctions, Iran has suffered tremendous [economic](#) and social consequences. [Real GDP growth](#) shrank to 2.9% in 2022/2023, and average inflation stands at 50 % year on year. A wave of massive protests broke out in September 2022, following the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini, a young woman arrested for violating the female dress code. After months of widespread [demonstrations](#) against the [Islamic Republic system](#), and following a harsh crackdown by the security forces which left at least 500 people dead, protests have diminished. However, experts expect [outbreaks](#) of public unrest to continue, with demands for fundamental political change.

Improved economic governance and the fight against widespread corruption are among the country's [key political challenges](#). According to the [2022 Corruption Perception Index](#), Iran ranks 148th out of 180 countries. Iran has further ramped up its [nuclear programme](#), increasing the possibility that UN sanctions against Iran, lifted under the nuclear agreement, might be re-imposed. Preparations for a potential [military strike](#) against Iran's nuclear facilities are reported to have [accelerated significantly](#).

EU involvement

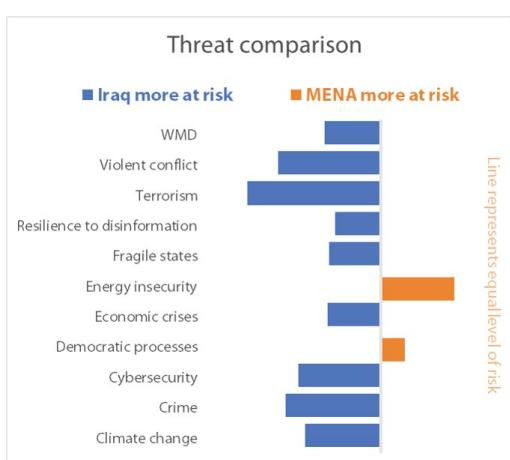
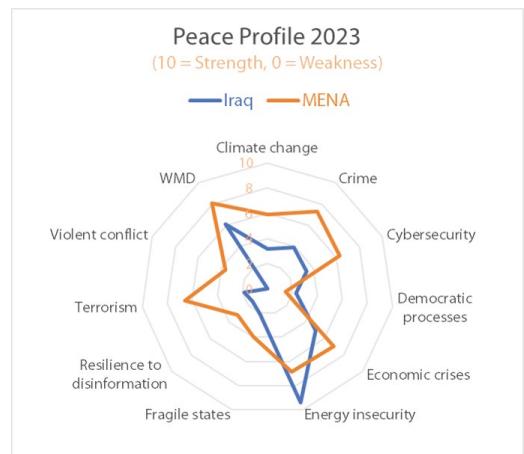
The EU played an important role in facilitating the [nuclear agreement](#) between Iran and the EU3+3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom, plus China, Russia and the USA). Following the [endorsement](#) of the JCPOA in July 2015, the EU established an Iran Task Force (now called the [Iran Division](#)), to coordinate the different strands of action in relations with Iran (including the implementation of the JCPOA and the development of bilateral relations). The EU was also closely involved in [efforts](#) to bring the USA and Iran back into compliance with the JCPOA, which are now on hold. In 2021, the EU adopted a [multiannual indicative programme](#) to govern relations with Iran in 2021-2027. However, due to political constraints, joint programming is not currently taking place.

Iraq

Iraq ranks 133rd in the Normandy Index. Fully 20 years after the beginning of the US invasion in March 2003, the country is characterised by economic crises, corruption, energy shortages and growing sectarianism and violence.

Background and key issues

Iraq has a [history of military coups and revolutions](#). When Saddam Hussein seized power in 1979, Iraq began a new chapter of brutal authoritarianism, becoming embroiled in a series of conflicts to establish regional hegemony, starting with the Iran-Iraq war in 1980. In 1989, Iraq invaded neighbouring Kuwait, beginning the first Gulf War. In the aftermath, the international community, led by the USA, continued to impose devastating economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure on the country, to which Saddam Hussein responded with increasing domestic repression. In 2003, claiming Iraq had WMD capabilities, the coalition led by the USA once again invaded the country, provoking a power struggle among rival factions that continues today. The [US troops](#) left in 2011, but returned in 2014, as part of the US-led coalition fighting ISIL/Da'esh. In the months leading up to their [withdrawal](#) in [December 2021](#), US troops and interests in Iraq were the target of dozens of [attacks](#), attributed to pro-Iranian Iraqi factions. Since 2003, [Iran](#) has [established](#) a strong and [destabilising](#) influence over its neighbour Iraq. Moreover, in 2022, the country was the [most affected](#) by [ISIL/Da'esh](#) terrorist attacks. Some [1.2 million civilians](#) remain internally displaced and 2.5 million people need some form of humanitarian assistance.



New security and hybrid threats

From 2019 to 2021, Iraq witnessed [massive protests](#) against ineffective governance, which were often [violently suppressed](#). In [response](#) to the protests, early parliamentary elections took place in October 2021. However, a new prime minister was only appointed in October 2023, after a paralysing year-long [government-formation process](#). The government continues to struggle to deliver improved public services and employment opportunities. Iraq also faces a continued threat of terrorism, as the seventh most terrorism-impacted country in the world, according to the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#), even though the country witnessed a 68% reduction in terrorist deaths in 2022. Iraq

is also considered one of the Arab countries most [vulnerable to climate change](#), and will likely face reduced [water and food availability](#) and extreme temperatures in the future. Finally, Iraq risks undermining a fragile inter-religious peace, as on 3 July 2023, Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid [revoked](#) special presidential decree 147 of 2013, issued by late-president Jalal Talabani granting Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Raphaël Sako power to administer Chaldean endowment affairs as the head of the Chaldean Church.

EU involvement

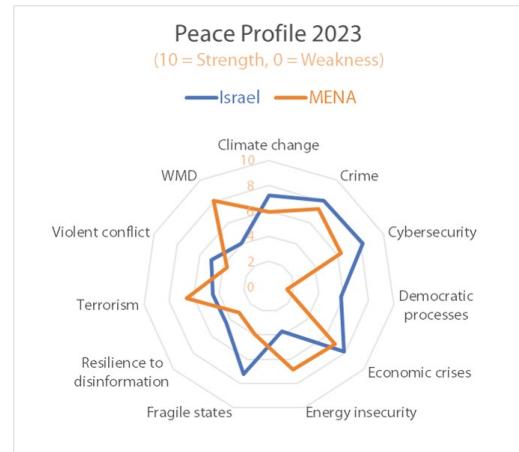
Under the 2018 [EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement](#) (PCA), the EU [cooperates](#) with Iraq in many areas, including humanitarian assistance, stabilisation, reconstruction, human rights, migration, security, and the political, social and economic reform agendas. The EU adopted an [EU strategy for Iraq](#) in January 2018, to respond to the specific challenges Iraq faces following the territorial defeat of ISIL/Da'esh. Iraq has benefited from over €1.3 billion in EU assistance since 2014. In October 2017, the Council set up a CSDP EU advisory mission, [EUAM Iraq](#), to assist the Iraqi authorities with the implementation of its national security strategy.

Israel

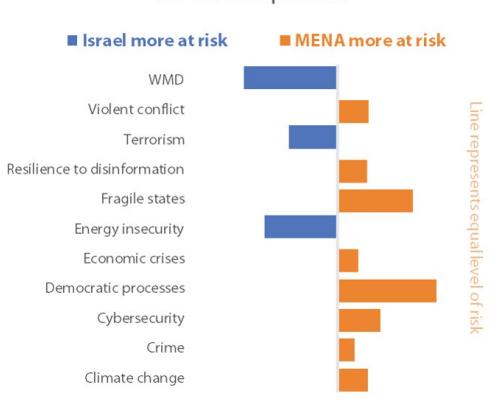
Israel ranks 59th in the Normandy Index, with an above-average score for the MENA region. While Israel is a relatively stable democratic country and scores high in resistance against crime, cybersecurity and economic crises, its continued occupation of Palestinian territory remains a significant weakness, as does the country's possession of WMD.

Background and key issues

Since the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine in 1947, followed shortly after by the unilateral declaration of an independent state of Israel, Israel has been embroiled in [conflict](#) with the Palestinians and its other Arab neighbours. Following earlier peace treaties with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994), Israel [normalised](#) relations with four other Arab states in 2020. However, relations with its direct neighbours [Lebanon](#) and [Syria](#) remain fraught. The [2023 Freedom in the World Index](#) categorises Israel as a free country, but notes that the 2022 elections resulted in a new government with far-right elements, and warns that its policy agenda could undermine judicial independence and other core elements of democracy, as well as Palestinian's basic rights. In 2023, Israeli continued its decade-long occupation of the West Bank, where Israeli security forces had [killed 110 Palestinians](#), including civilians, by the end of May 2023. Israel ranks 25th in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#). [Terrorist groups](#) that target Israel include Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the [Sinai Province of ISIL/Da'esh](#).



Threat comparison



New security and hybrid threats

Violence in the Israel-Palestine [security situation](#) increased in 2023, continuing a trend that began in 2022, which saw the highest number of [conflict-related deaths](#) for both Israelis and Palestinians since 2015. Armed attacks inside Israel left 19 Israelis and foreigners dead by May 2023. During a [new round of conflict](#), Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired 1 469 rockets at Israel, most of which were intercepted. Iran has [threatened](#) Israel with destruction on numerous occasions. Iran's [nuclear](#) and advanced missile programmes constitute a major [strategic threat](#) to Israel. [Hezbollah](#), Iran's proxy army in Lebanon and Syria, regularly targets northern Israel. Israel is [not party](#) to any of the major treaties governing the non-proliferation of WMD, including the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The country has signed, but not ratified, the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#). Israel has a policy of non-transparency regarding its nuclear capabilities, but it is widely estimated that it possesses a sizeable nuclear weapons arsenal, as well as ballistic and cruise missiles. Its position in a high-conflict region makes WMD a significant threat.

EU involvement

EU-Israel relations are governed by the 2000 [EU-Israel Association Agreement](#) and focus mainly on strengthening economic and social cooperation, as well as regular political dialogue. The [European Neighbourhood Policy](#), the main framework guiding political and economic relations with Israel, aims at promoting Israel's integration into European policies and programmes. [EU funds](#) are predominantly used to support the approximation of Israeli norms and standards in public administration with those of the EU. The EU also supports civil society initiatives that promote human rights. Israel is an important [partner](#) in [Horizon Europe](#), the [EU's key funding programme for research and innovation](#). The EU continues to [advocate](#) a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including an end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian [territories](#). On 15 June 2022, the EU, Egypt and Israel signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) on cooperation related to trade, transport and export of natural gas to the European Union.

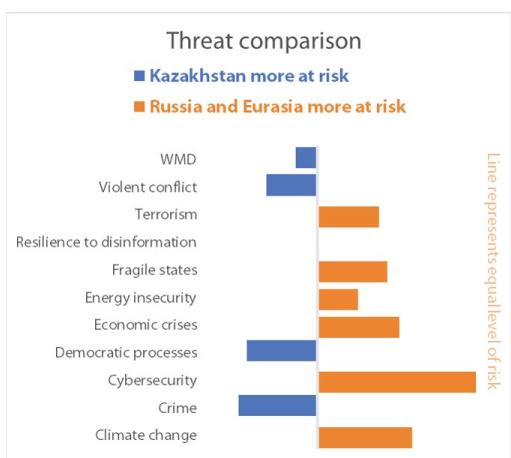
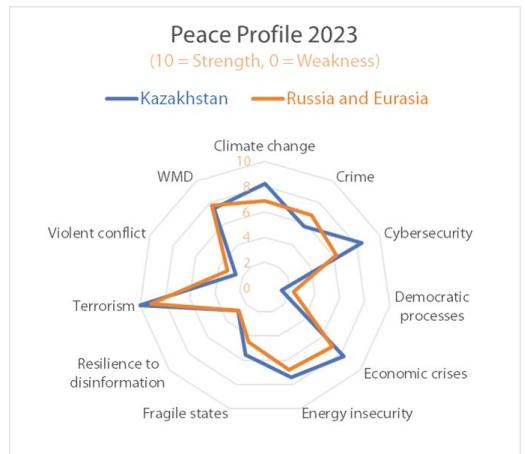
Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan ranks 51st in the Normandy Index. Although long seen as an island of stability in a very unstable and volatile region, the country was rocked by violent protests in the beginning of 2020.

Background and key issues

Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic, gained independence in 1991. For almost three decades the country was ruled by President Nursultan Abishuly Nazarbayev, who stepped down in March 2019 but retained significant influence until 2022, when constitutional reforms instigated by his successor removed his remaining powers. Kazakhstan is dominated by its ruling party, 'Nur Otan', now renamed 'Amanat', leaving little room for political opposition, which has been routinely repressed. In March 2023, parliamentary and local elections were held under a reformed system, but Amanat retained its majority. The country remains far from a liberal democracy, ranking in the bottom 20-30% globally.

However, some have hailed the Kazakh leadership as an 'island of stability and prosperity' in an unstable region. The Kazakh economy is highly dependent on oil exports, which is an economic risk and potential source of instability. A key challenge for Kazakhstan is managing its relationship with its neighbour, Russia. Around 23% of the Kazakh population is ethnic Russian, a fact that experts have cautioned could be used as a pretext for Russia to annex territory. Russia's war on Ukraine has revived fears that Kazakhstan's territorial integrity is under threat and made the country a target for Russian disinformation.



New security and hybrid threats

In January 2022, Kazakhstan experienced major civil unrest when the removal of fuel subsidies sparked anti-government protests that spread across the country, escalating into violence in several cities. At least 238 people died during the protests, which ended after the imposition of a state of emergency and military support from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). One year on, human rights organisations are still calling for independent investigation into violations of human rights by the authorities during the protests. Concerns about corruption, political choice and living standards persist and could spark further protests if the pace of reform is slow or if high inflation continues. More positively, Kazakhstan abolished the death penalty in 2020. The country scores highly when it comes to resilience against terrorism, ranking 93rd in the Global Terrorism Index.

EU involvement

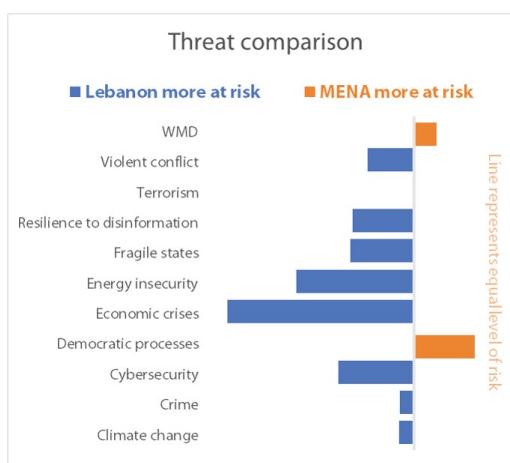
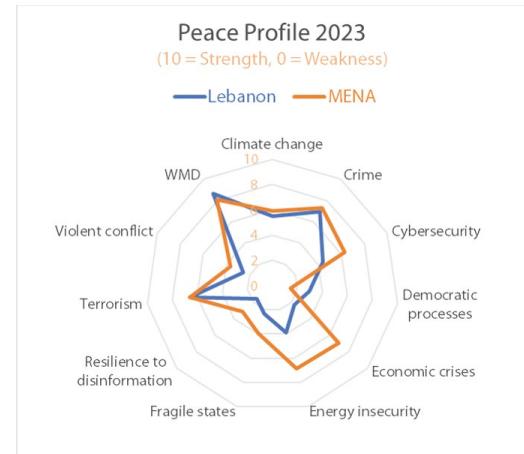
The EU has supported Kazakhstan's development since it gained independence in 1991. The EU is Kazakhstan's largest trade partner. In 2015, the EU signed an enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), with Kazakhstan, the first of its kind with a Central Asian partner. The agreement, which entered into force in 2020, enables cooperation in key policy areas such as justice and home affairs, as well as economic and financial cooperation. The EU and Kazakhstan are also implementing a strategic partnership in the field of raw materials, batteries and renewable hydrogen. The country is covered by the EU's Central Asia strategy and Special Representative for Central Asia. Here, areas of cooperation include security, rule of law, environment, water, climate change, education, and human rights.

Lebanon

Lebanon ranks 121st in the Normandy Index. The collapse of the country's currency and economic upheaval have fostered social discontent since October 2019. The massive explosion that destroyed large parts of Beirut in August 2020 epitomises the decline of the country's public and political institutions since its civil war ended in 1990.

Background and key issues

Lebanon's history of conflict dates back at least to the civil war that erupted in 1975. A small state, Lebanon is at the centre of regional power struggles led today by Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the 2005 Syrian-assisted assassination of then Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, [ongoing Iranian support for Hezbollah](#), and the spill-over of fighting and millions of refugees from the current Syrian crisis, among other events, not only perpetuate [political and violent conflict](#) in the country, but have also led to deep economic crisis. Around 1.5 million Syrian refugees (one quarter of Lebanon's population) have sought refuge in the country since 2011.



New security and hybrid threats

Lebanon is facing an economic crisis not seen since independence in 1943. Since October 2019, when nationwide protests broke out against the deepening economic crisis and perceived corruption, the situation has deteriorated steadily. The currency is at an [all-time low](#), having lost around 90 % of its value. The country's economic model has been described as 'broken', and poverty has spread dramatically. The IMF has described the situation in Lebanon as '[very dangerous](#)'. In July 2022, the country was [downgraded](#) to a lower middle-income country for the first time in 25 years. Lebanon has struggled to deal with emergencies such as the Beirut port blast, COVID-19, the 2021 [fuel crisis](#) and the latest [cholera outbreak](#) declared in October 2022 for the first time since 1993. In addition, a [food security](#) crisis is developing as a result of the Russian war on Ukraine. There are fears that these overlapping crises could lead to '[societal collapse](#)'.

Lebanon held parliamentary elections in May 2022, but has been unable to form a government. As of June 2023, the country remains without a president or a fully empowered cabinet.

EU involvement

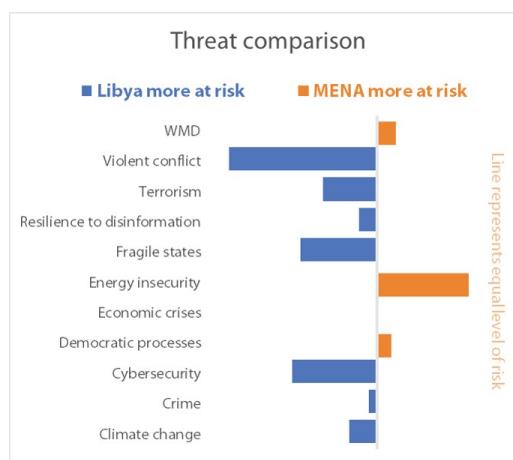
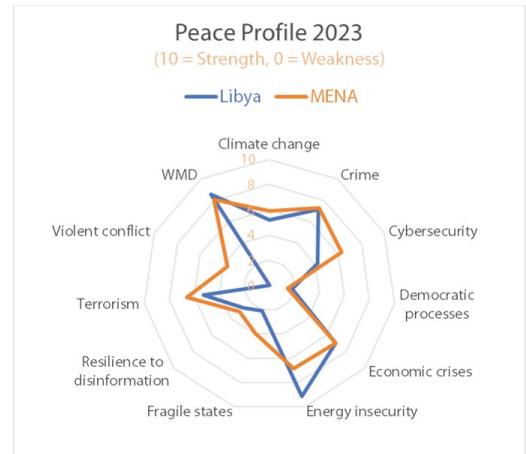
The EU supports Lebanon's efforts to accommodate the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world. The EU has allocated more than €2.7 billion in [assistance](#) to Lebanon since 2011. The EU also provides direct [humanitarian assistance](#) to Syrian refugees, as well as resilience assistance to both Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees. In 2023 alone, the EU has allocated €60 million in humanitarian aid. Bilateral assistance was allocated under the [European Neighbourhood policy](#), to cover local social and economic development, investment in infrastructure and support to civil society, among other things. The EU also helped [Lebanon](#) fight the COVID-19 [pandemic](#). Providing Lebanon with assistance continues to be a priority under the EU's new external funding instrument adopted in 2021, the [Global Europe Instrument](#). Multi-annual programming for Lebanon under the Global Europe Instrument is focused on funding to build a sustainable state, able to meet the citizens' needs, reinforcing the economy and ensuring security and stability.

Libya

Libya ranks 109th in the Normandy Index, with a score below the average for the MENA region, with the exception of energy insecurity. Since the January 2020 Berlin Conference on Libya and the approval of the interim government in February 2021, there are hopes that a political process leading towards elections could bring the country closer to reconciliation and democratic transition.

Background and key issues

Libya has been divided into [rival military and political camps](#) since 2014, based respectively in the capital, Tripoli, and in the east. Libya's third civil war in a decade began when Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) launched an offensive on Tripoli in April 2019. In an effort to remain in power, leader of the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA,) Fayez al-Sarraj, turned to Türkiye for military help. The failed [December 2021 elections](#) suspended political processes, once again forcing the country to the brink of chaos, political instability and social unrest. The rifts between the western factions based in Tripoli and the eastern factions based in Tobruk, resurfaced in February 2022, following the [appointment](#) of Fathi Bashagha as the new Prime Minister, in a [flawed vote](#) at the House of Representatives in Tobruk. Popular anger [culminated](#) on 1 July 2022, when a mob set fire to the parliament building. The African Union [held](#) a peace conference to address the instability in Libya on 18 April 2023.



New security and hybrid threats

Crime and violent conflict remained high in Libya, and also affect the economy. The UN estimates [economic losses](#) in Libya due to the civil war at €400 billion; [rebuilding costs](#) were assessed at €500 billion. Despite the cessation of violence, tens of thousands of foreign military personnel and mercenaries remain in Libya, supporting both sides. They were due to leave by the end of January 2021. In April 2021, the UNSC [adopted](#) resolution 2570 (2021), urging member states to withdraw 'all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya without delay'. In July 2022, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) [announced](#) the suspension of services at several oil ports. The threat of terrorism, human trafficking and illegal migration remain high. On 16 March 2023, The Libyan National Army announced the discovery of two and a half tonnes of [uranium](#) ore contained in ten drums, near the border with Chad, which had been reported missing by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

EU involvement

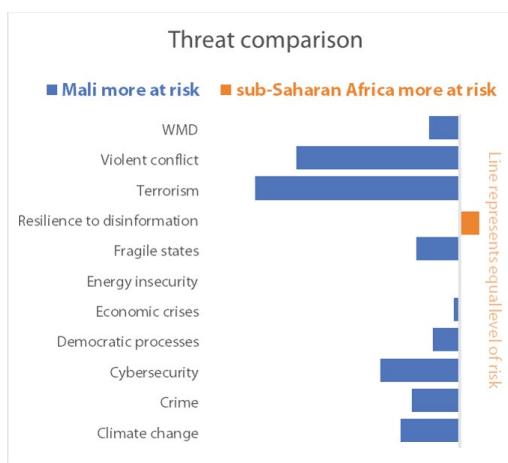
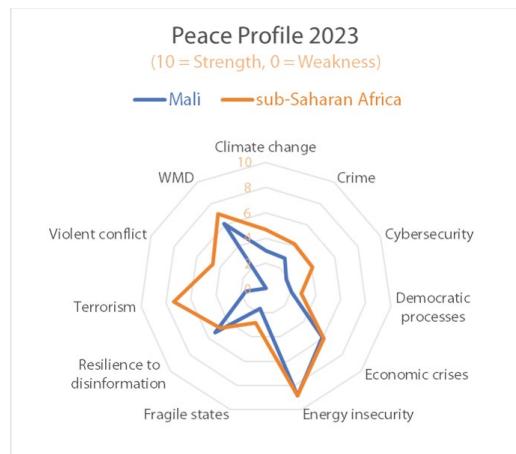
The EU is committed to the [Berlin Process](#) under the auspices of the UN. Following the January 2020 Berlin Conference on Libya, the EU launched a new military mission, [Operation Irini](#), with the goal of implementing the UNSC-imposed arms embargo. The European Union Integrated Border Assistance Mission in Libya ([EUBAM Libya](#)) supports the Libyan authorities in their efforts to disrupt organised criminal networks and terrorism. Libya has received support under the Neighbourhood Policy Instrument, as well as under the EU [Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) (EUTF Africa). Particular attention was dedicated to full compliance with the UN arms embargo and support for the most vulnerable people – migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. A revised strategy for the Southern Neighbourhood was adopted on 9 February 2021, marking 25 years since the Barcelona Declaration and 10 years since the Arab Spring. Under the [IcSP](#), the EU has funded, and continues to fund, projects worth over €65 million, aimed at contributing to stability and peace. A second Berlin Conference on Libya (June 2021) [relaunched](#) the political process and the implementation of the ceasefire agreement reached in October 2020.

Mali

Mali ranks 130th in the Normandy Index. The country faces continued threats from violent jihadist groups, as well as climate change-related challenges, including increased resource scarcity.

Background and key issues

Mali scores significantly under the sub-Saharan average in the violent conflict and terrorism domains, due to attacks from [jihadist groups](#). New political unrest erupted in the second half of 2020 when, following public protests over electoral irregularities, military officers overthrew President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta's government. Mali experienced another coup in [2021](#). The interim military-led government had initially scheduled democratic presidential elections for March 2022. However, in February 2022, the 121-seat, army-dominated interim parliament [voted](#) to allow the military government to postpone elections and to rule for up to five years. In July 2022, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regional authority agreed to lift the sanctions it imposed after the transitional government submitted a timetable for a return to civil order in March 2024.



New security and hybrid threats

In May 2022, Mali left the [G5 Sahel](#) – a regional, intergovernmental organisation between Sahel countries – due to the refusal of the other Members (Chad, Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso) to allow Malian transitional authorities to lead the rotating presidency. Mali's authorities [decided](#) to terminate the Defence Cooperation Treaty between France and Mali, as well as the Status of Forces Agreement governing Canadian and European partner forces involved in the Takuba Task Force (which [ceased](#) operations in 1 July 2022). On 14 July 2022, Mali's government [announced](#) that it was 'temporarily suspending' UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) troop rotations.

At the same time, Mali's government strengthened its links with Moscow, and the Russian Wagner group deployed to Mali to train local forces, in exchange for Russian access to natural resources.

A combination of [climate change](#) and resource-scarcity is leading to a severe humanitarian crisis. Armed groups are [spreading from northern Mali](#) into the central region around Bamako and to neighbouring countries (notably Niger and Burkina Faso, in the Liptako-Gourma tri-border area.)

EU involvement

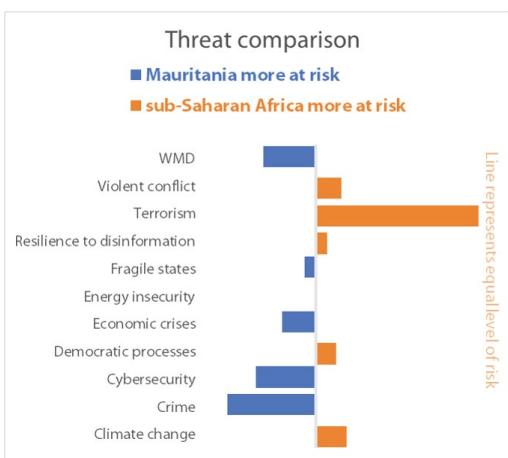
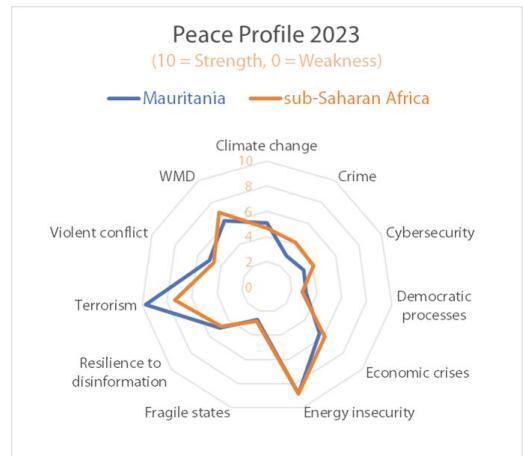
The EU adopted a [new strategy for the Sahel](#) in April 2021. This strengthens the political dimension and the emphasis on sustainable development in EU's partnership with the G5 Sahel countries. Mali hosts two EU CSDP missions: [EUCAP Sahel Mali](#), a capacity building mission, and [EUTM Mali](#), a training mission for the G5 Sahel armed forces. In March 2020, the Council of the EU decided to extend the mandate of the EUTM Mali until May 2024. However, EUTM-Mali suspended its operational action for the country in April 2022.

Mauritania

Mauritania ranks 91st in the Normandy Index. It is considered more at risk in crime, energy insecurity and state fragility, while the country is at low risk in terms of terrorism and energy insecurity.

Background and key issues

In recent decades, Mauritania's political life has been marked by several [military coups](#), the most recent led by General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz in 2008, followed by his election in 2009. In June 2019, Mauritania [saw](#) the first peaceful transfer of power since independence in 1960, with the election of the ruling party candidate and former defence minister, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani. Mauritania ranks 37th in the [2023 Fragile States Index](#) and 130th in the [2022 Corruption Perception Index](#). In February 2020, the national parliament formed a committee of enquiry to investigate [alleged corruption cases](#) during the former president's mandate. Despite increasing numbers of attacks in the Sahel, Mauritania has proved to be remarkably [resilient](#) against jihadism.



New security and hybrid threats

Parliamentary elections were [held](#) in Mauritania on 13 and 27 May 2023, alongside regional and local elections. The ruling El Insaf (Equity Party) managed to secure a majority in the National Assembly. [Failure to eradicate slavery](#), despite its abolition in 1981, explains the country's particularly low score in state legitimacy. Mauritania faces the second highest risk of drought according to the [Global Risk Index](#), as it experiences recurring cycles of drought that exacerbate resource scarcity and food insecurity. The country passed its first data privacy laws in 2017, but is still at the early stages of addressing cybersecurity, ranking 145th in the [Global Cybersecurity Index](#). Mauritania fell from 72nd to 97th place in [the World Press Freedom Index](#) between 2018 and 2021;

but [rose](#) slightly in 2022 to 86th place. In 2020, President Ghazouani appointed a national commission for press reform, in view of [consolidating press freedom](#). Finally, Mauritania represents a certain potential for the [export](#) of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) to European markets, with reserve volumes estimated at 15 trillion cubic feet present on the maritime border with Senegal, leading to the development of the US\$4.8 billion Grande Tortue Ahmeyim (GTA) floating LNG project.

EU involvement

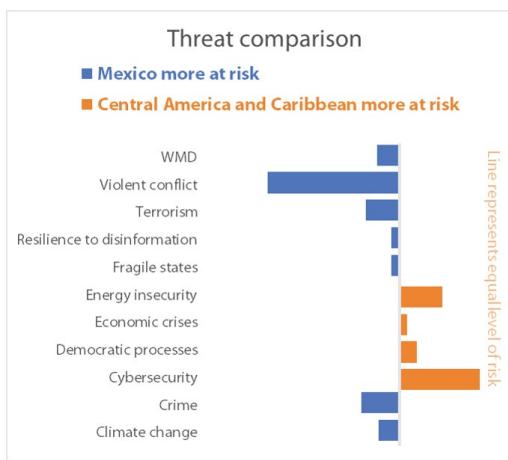
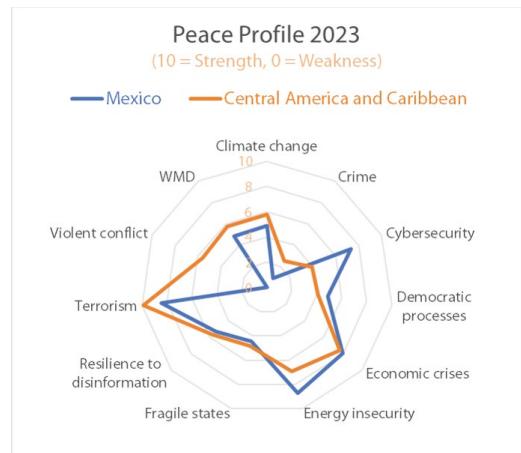
The EU adopted a [new strategy for the Sahel](#) in April 2021. Beyond military engagement, the new strategy strengthens the political dimension and the emphasis on sustainable development of EU's partnership with the G5 Sahel countries, including Mauritania. In 2019, the EU reinforced and moved its [Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell](#) for the Sahel to Mauritania, where the G5 Sahel permanent secretariat is based. Mauritania benefits from a duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market for '[Everything but Arms](#)'. The [European Development Fund](#) provided up to €160 million during 2014-2020 for food security and sustainable agriculture; the rule of law; and improvement of the health system in Mauritania. Since 2017, the EU [Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) has [contributed](#) €79 million for conflict prevention projects in the country.

Mexico

Mexico ranks 89th in the Normandy Index. Despite the progress made in combating organised crime, Mexico continues to suffer high levels of violent conflict and homicide. With 13 journalists killed in 2022, Mexico is the second most deadly country for journalists, behind Ukraine.

Background and key issues

Mexico has suffered from large-scale organised criminal activity including drug-trafficking, kidnapping and extortion since at least the 1980s, when Mexico's crime groups started coordinating and assigning distinct regional areas of control and establishing trafficking [routes](#). The ensuing violence emanated not only from inter-cartel competition, but also the Mexican State's officially declared 'War on Drugs' in 2006. It is estimated that more than [100 000](#) people have 'disappeared' since [2006](#), most of whom were victims of drug-related crime.



New security and hybrid threats

According to the Global Peace Index, [Mexico's peacefulness](#) improved by 0.9 % in 2022. Although there was a slight drop in [homicides in 2022](#), the total number of murder victims in Mexico topped 30 000 people for the fifth consecutive year. In 2022, Mexican authorities recorded at least 30 968 homicide victims, or 85 people per day, according to government [data](#). The organised crime rate reached its highest recorded level in 2022, with 167 crimes per 100 000 people. In the past decade, Mexico has become a much more dangerous place for social activists. A [2022 report ranked Mexico](#) as the deadliest place in the world to be an environmental activist, with

54 activists killed the previous year. Between 2019 and 2022, the number of seizures of [fentanyl at the Mexico-US border](#) rose by 300 %. Mexico's geography, situated between two oceans, makes it [vulnerable](#) to severe weather events and climate change. In rural areas, extreme temperatures and erratic rainfall damage crops and harm livestock (which represent 80 % of weather-related financial losses since 1990). The country has had a climate change [law](#) since 2012 (last reformed in [2020](#)).

EU involvement

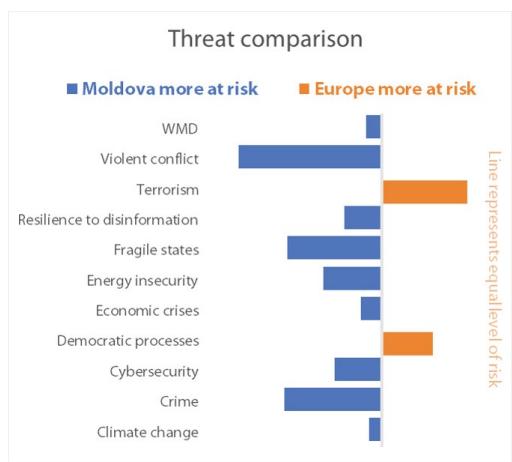
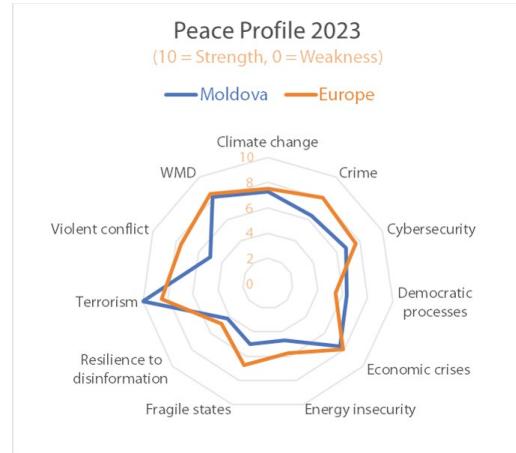
The EU has a long-standing comprehensive partnership with Mexico, established through the EU-Mexico Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in December 1997 and entered into force on 1 October 2000. This 'Global Agreement', also includes a free trade agreement, which is currently being [updated](#) (an agreement 'in principle' has been reached). It was the first EU agreement to create a free trade area and the first partnership agreement with a country in Latin America. The Global Agreement established a political dialogue and broad cooperation between the parties. In 2008, the EU agreed a [strategic partnership](#) with Mexico that introduced new high-level dialogue issues, such as on security, law enforcement and human rights. The EU is stepping up cooperation with Mexico on combating organised crime. [Negotiations](#) concluding a working arrangement between Mexican authorities and Europol began in February 2020, and an agreement entered into force in [July 2020](#). Mexico has participated in a total of 25 [IcSP projects](#), with funding totalling more than €66 million. The [29th meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-Mexico](#) took place on 27 and 28 April 2023 in Brussels. Mexico has condemned Russian aggression and stands up for Ukraine's sovereignty and its democracy at the UN Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

Moldova

Moldova ranks 32nd in the Normandy Index, and is performing well in crime, cybersecurity and economic indicators. However, war in Ukraine and Russian hybrid actions against Moldova have negative impact on the country. To counter them, Moldova progresses on its path to European integration and increases its security.

Background and key issues

In November 2020, pro-European candidate [Maia Sandu](#) – leader of the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) – won the second round of presidential [elections](#). The PAS received 52.8 % of votes in the July 2021 [parliamentary elections](#) and won a 63-seat majority of the 101-seat parliament. Consequently, all Moldovan branches of government (including the president, the government and the parliament) are aligned and support a common ambitious reform agenda with the main objective of European integration. Moldova is part of a [frozen conflict](#) over the Russian-backed breakaway region of [Transnistria](#). Moldova also welcomed the highest number of Ukrainian [refugees](#) per capita of any country.



New security and hybrid threats

While not currently under imminent military [danger](#), Moldova remains under constant Russian hybrid attack. On 13 February 2023, President [Sandu](#) revealed a Russia-orchestrated planned coup against the [country](#). One month later, a reportedly Russian intelligence [document](#) revealing a 10-year plan to take control of Moldova was made [public](#). Russia has also used its gas deliveries to Moldova to [blackmail](#) the country. To [reduce](#) these dependencies, Moldova started [importing](#) natural gas through reverse flow from the [Slovak](#)-Ukraine border in November 2022, and as of December 2022, through the [Trans-Balkan](#) corridor. Moldova is increasing its electricity independence as Moldova's (and Ukraine's) electricity grids were

[synchronised](#) with the continental European grid on 16 March 2022. Russia's war on Ukraine impacts the Moldovan economy, with GDP continuing to [fluctuate](#).

EU involvement

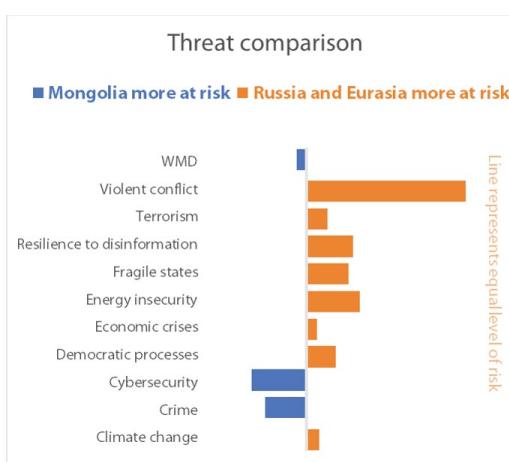
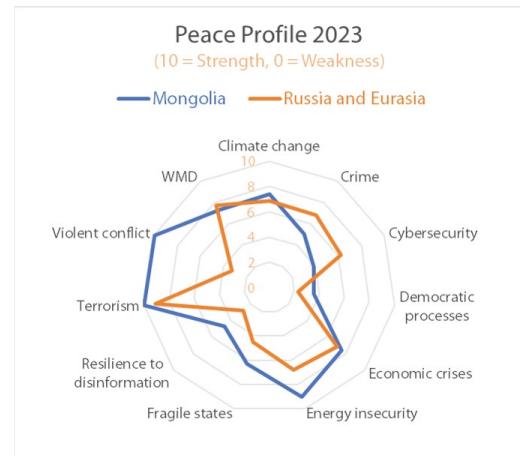
Moldova and EU signed an [Association Agreement](#) and a [DCFTA](#) in 2014. Following Moldova's requests on 4 January 2022 and [24 January 2023](#), the European Commission adopted proposals for disbursing up to €295 million in new macro-financial assistance (MFA) to the country. Overall support for Moldova from the EU and European financial institutions is [estimated](#) at €1.2 billion since October 2021. On 3 March 2022, President Sandu [signed](#) Moldova's formal application for EU membership, a decision hastened by Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine. On 23 June 2022, EU leaders [granted](#) the status of a candidate country for EU accession. Moldova [hopes](#) to start accession negotiations in 2023. On 24 April 2023, the EU set up the EU Partnership Mission in Moldova ([EUPM Moldova](#)) under CSDP. This is the second mission to Moldova, as the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine ([EUBAM](#)) was launched in 2005. Moreover, the [European Peace Facility](#) (EPF) provides €47 million in support for Moldovan army modernisation.

Mongolia

Mongolia ranks 23rd in the Normandy Index, but is performing relatively poorly on cybersecurity, and on crime and democratic processes, as well as in the regional context.

Background and key issues

Mongolia only reaches 60th place for democratic process in the Normandy Index, not least due to a below-average performance in the [World Press Freedom Index](#) (90th place). Furthermore, according to a 2021 survey, the [population's trust](#) in the independence of the judicial system and in the [Independent Agency Against Corruption](#) is rather low. However, the [Economist Intelligence Unit](#) stresses the high degree of protection for civil liberties and the high degree of media freedom. Given Mongolia's wealth in natural resources including coal, gold, copper, zinc, fluorspar, iron ore, tungsten, oil and gas, one of the driving forces of the country's economic development has been the mining and extraction sector. In 2020, the [sector](#) represented 22 % of Mongolia's GDP, 71 % of its direct foreign investment, and 94 % of exports. Additional revenue could stem from [gas transit](#), although the construction of the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline has not yet been officially agreed between Russia and China.



New security and hybrid threats

Mongolia is one of the countries [most affected](#) by climate change, as observed temperatures have increased by 2.1°C over the past 70 years, a trend [strengthened](#) by overgrazing and over-mining. According to the UN, changes have also been observed related to the frequency and intensity of extreme events. Mongolia performs poorly on criminality, where the [Organised Crime Index](#) places it 143rd (out of 193 countries).

EU involvement

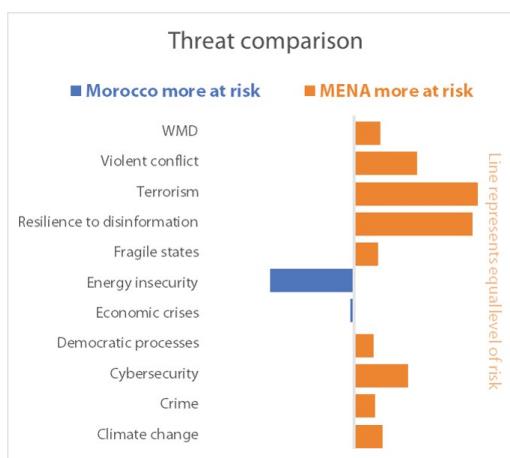
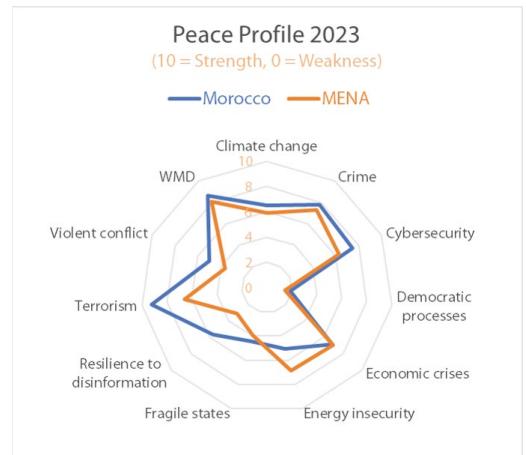
[Diplomatic relations](#) between the EU and Mongolia were established in 1989 and are now based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which entered into force in 2017, the same year the Delegation of the EU to Mongolia [moved](#) to Ulaanbaatar. The EU continued to [focus](#) on support for vulnerable groups and the empowerment of civil society. The fight against child labour and other forms of exploitation of children continued to figure prominently among the EU's priorities. Other priorities included: gender equality; non-discrimination; the rule of law; and building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies; as well as the promotion of human rights and democracy. In 2020, the EU launched its first [budget support programme](#) with UNDP technical support, to boost employment and improve transparency in public finances. The EU also continued to support [small and medium-sized enterprise](#) finances, human rights and democracy. On 17 June 2022, the EU and Mongolia held their annual [Joint Committee meeting](#), as planned under the [EU-Mongolia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement](#). The EU in particular expressed its willingness to assist Mongolia to diversify its economic and commercial structures and both sides agreed to strengthen their cooperation within the EU's Global Gateway Strategy.

Morocco

Morocco ranks 47th in the Normandy Index, with an above-average score for the MENA region on several indicators. While Morocco is a relatively stable country and scores high on resistance against crime and terrorism, irregular migration remains a significant weakness, as do the country's energy insecurity and democratic processes.

Background and key issues

The Moroccan government announced a US\$12.8 billion [Economic Relaunch Pact](#) on 6 August 2020. Austerity measures as part of the 2021 Finance Bill increased social discontent, and protests and strikes organised by healthcare and transport unions occurred throughout 2020. On 1 July 2022, protests were organised in several cities following the deaths of at least 23 migrants at the border with the Spanish enclave of Melilla on 24 June 2022. Morocco's Human Rights Association [contested](#) the official death toll, reporting instead that 27 migrants had died, while the Spanish non-governmental organisation Walking Borders reports 37 fatalities. A long-awaited ministerial meeting of the Negev Forum (established in March 2022 between the USA, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Morocco and Bahrain, seeking to expand economic ties and bridge regional divides) is now expected to take place during summer 2023, after the Moroccan government [postponed](#) it four times due to concerns about publicly engaging with the right-wing Israeli government.



New security and hybrid threats

In 2020, Morocco [slipped](#) into its first recession since 1995, with GDP falling by 6.3 % due to the impact of drought on agricultural revenue. The economy grew by 7.9 % in 2021 and 1.1 % in 2022 (African Development Bank [data](#)). In 2021, growth was driven by an exceptional cereal crop after two consecutive years of drought, solid exports and remittances (the latter estimated at €3.3 billion annually). Slowdown was accentuated in 2022 by falling agricultural output (-17.3 % from 2021), due to the worst drought of the past 40 years.

EU involvement

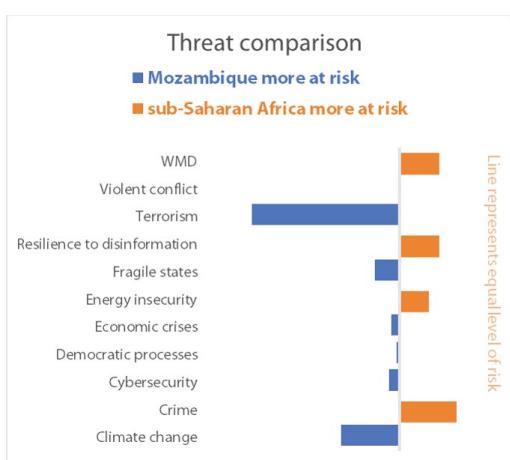
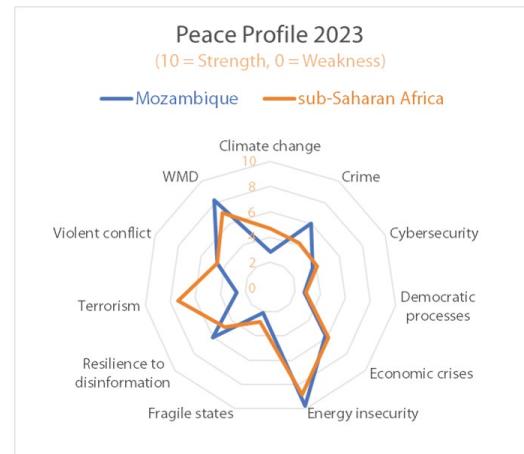
EU-Morocco relations are based on the [Association Agreement](#) which entered into force in 2000, creating a free trade area between the EU and Morocco. The Association Council, which brings together the EU and Moroccan ministers, frames the EU-Morocco relationship, including the political dialogue and cooperation priorities. The last (14th) [Association Council](#) meeting took place on 27 June 2019, and adopted a [Joint Declaration](#), which gave new impetus to the strategic, multidimensional and privileged EU-Morocco relationship. Morocco is one of the main countries of origin and transit for migrants to the EU. The Council [granted](#) the European Commission a negotiating mandate to conclude a re-admission agreement with Morocco in 2000, but work is still ongoing. On 8 July 2022, the European Commission vowed to step up its work with Morocco to fight irregular migration. The Commission presented a revised strategy for the Southern Neighbourhood on 9 February 2021, marking 25 years after the Barcelona Declaration and 10 years after the Arab Spring. Morocco is the [largest recipient](#) of EU funds in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). For 2014-2020, €1.6 billion in assistance was allocated to the country.

Mozambique

Mozambique ranks 103rd in the Normandy Index, an improvement compared to 2022, when it ranked 117th. However, over the last decade, its overall level of fragility has deteriorated, partly due to the jihadist threat in the Cabo Delgado province, a threat that has nevertheless been less acute in 2023. The country faces serious threats from violent extremism, lack of political participation and inclusion, climate change and cyber insecurity.

Background and key issues

The independence movement against the Portuguese began in the 1960s, with the establishment of the Liberation Front of Mozambique (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, or Frelimo) in 1962. Following independence in 1975, the country was ravaged by a guerrilla war between 1977 and 1992, against the one-party system established by Frelimo. A 1992 [peace agreement](#) temporarily ended this conflict, launching a political and economic opportunity. Frelimo has governed the country, without a break, since independence. The opposition is politically and economically marginalised and has repeatedly criticised elections 'won' with large majorities by Frelimo. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per capita GDP of €491.8 in 2021 ([World Bank](#)).



New security and hybrid threats

Since 2017, an [Islamist insurgency](#) has destabilised the Northern province of Cabo Delgado, causing numerous civilian casualties, massive displacement and disruption to the economy. The national army proved relatively ineffective in fighting back, and in 2020-2021, Islamists temporarily took control of regional port towns, forcing foreign [companies](#) to put a huge offshore gas extraction project on hold. Since July 2021, southern African Development Community (SADC) member states' troops and (seemingly more decisive), 2 500 [Rwandan troops](#) have deployed to Cabo Delgado and helped [stabilise](#) the situation. In the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#), the country ranks 12th (11th in 2022). The government hopes gas revenues from offshore extraction in Cabo Delgado could improve the dire state of public finances.

The country is exposed to extreme climate events, which in recent years have caused [devastation](#), exacerbating [food insecurity](#). General insecurity remains high, the country remaining 21st in the 2023 [Fragile States Index](#), as in 2022.

EU involvement

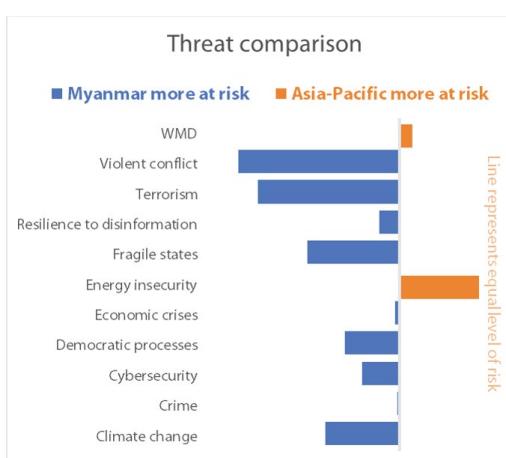
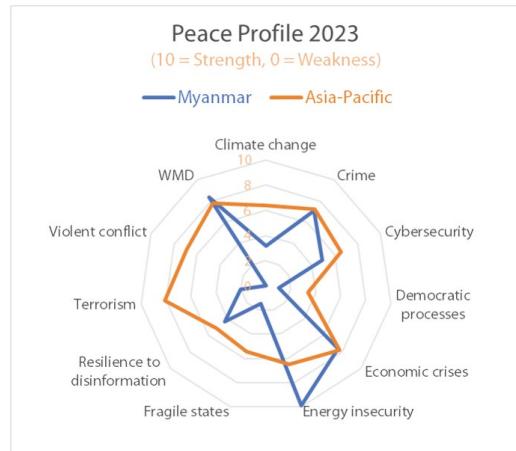
Mozambique ratified the [EU-SADC economic partnership agreement](#) in 2017, enjoying additional safeguards to protect it from disruptive trade liberalisation. In November 2020, the EU [restored](#) its budget support to the country to help it deal with the impact of COVID-19, after a four year suspension of this aid in response to massive corruption. In 2021, the EU and Mozambique agreed [common objectives](#) for their development cooperation under the Global Europe Instrument for the next seven years (MIP). The EU established a military training mission in Mozambique ([EUTM Mozambique](#)), providing training to the army in protecting the civilian population and restoring security in Cabo Delgado. Through the [European Peace Facility](#), the EU has committed equipment and training worth a total €124 million: €4 million in July 2021 (first mobilisation of the EPF since its creation), [€40 million](#) in November 2021 and [€45 million](#) in April 2022 for the army, via the EUTM; [€15 million](#) for the SADC mission (SAMIM) in September 2022; and [€20 million](#) in December 2022 for the Rwandan Defence Force in Mozambique.

Myanmar

Myanmar ranks 117th in the Normandy Index, marked by a steep drop in rank since the February 2021 military coup, which brought violence and chaos. The country has long been plagued by poverty, ethnic conflict and severe human rights abuses. Myanmar also performs badly on climate change and disinformation.

Background and key issues

Tensions between the Bamar majority and over 135 ethnic groups have caused decades of instability in Myanmar. Conflict between ethnic armed groups and government forces have cost thousands of lives and displaced hundreds of thousands. Some 50 years of military rule have seen horrific human rights abuses and grinding poverty. Constitutional reforms that began in 2008, and the election of a civilian government in 2015, looked like positive developments. Democratic reform also brought economic development, with a ten-fold increase in GDP per capita in 2000-2020, from around €146 to €1 450, ([World Bank](#)). In 2016-2017, the military killed thousands from the persecuted Rohingya minority, who live in northern zones of Rakhine State, resulting in a mass exodus of refugees, and genocide charges brought against Myanmar to the International Court of Justice (see [The Gambia v Myanmar](#), filed in November 2019).



New security and hybrid threats

The February 2021 military coup ended five years of uneasy co-existence between the civilian government and the still-powerful armed forces. Civilian leaders, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, were imprisoned or placed under house arrest, and the country descended into chaos following violently repressed protests against military rule. In December 2022, Aung San Suu Kyi was sentenced by a military court to a further seven years in prison, bringing her total sentence to 33 years. Unsurprisingly, Myanmar counts among the most fragile states on the planet. Political instability already hampered economic growth even before the coronavirus pandemic, and Myanmar remains one of the poorest countries in Asia. Strikes led by the anti-junta Civil

Disobedience Movement have brought entire sectors of the economy to a halt, disrupting supplies of food and energy. The outlook for the country remains extremely uncertain. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis hit the country, killing nearly 100 000 people and causing damage that affected millions, a reminder of the threat posed by climate change.

EU involvement

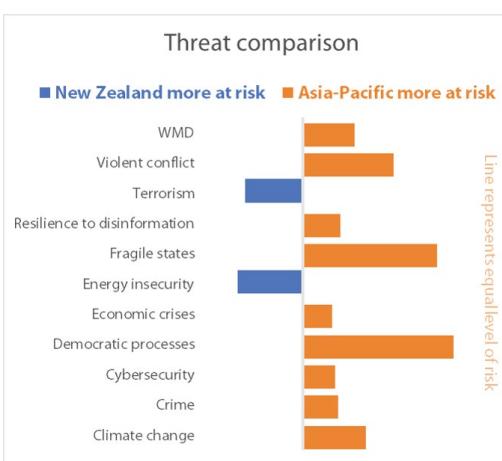
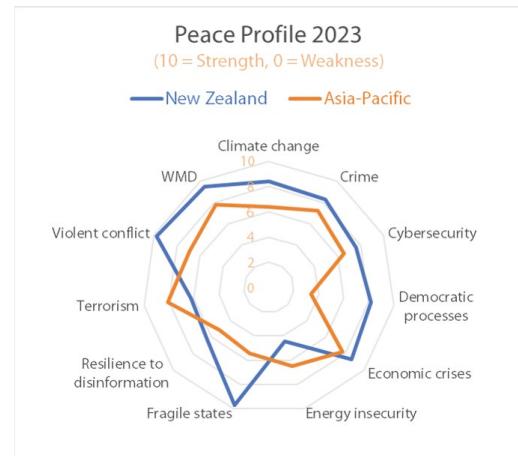
The EU adopted economic sanctions and an arms embargo against Myanmar in the 1990s. Following democratic reform, the economic sanctions were lifted in 2013, although the arms embargo remained in place. The EU already re-imposed some sanctions against military officers in 2018, following the Rohingya massacres, and broadened sanctions in February 2022. Some development projects have also been suspended. The European Parliament has repeatedly adopted resolutions condemning the military coup and the frequent human rights' violations, demanding the reinstatement of the civilian government and asking for additional sanctions. One of the Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament is the co-chair of the International Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the coup, which published a report entitled 'Time is not on our side: The failed international response to the Myanmar coup' in November 2022.

New Zealand

New Zealand ranks 5th in the Normandy Index, indicating low levels of risk. It performs better than the Asia-Pacific average on nearly every indicator, and scores notably well on the management of economic crises and democratic processes, a reflection of its relative success in managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background and key issues

New Zealand has a long-standing democratic tradition in the form of a parliamentary system, enhanced by strong levels of education and high per capita GDP, at €48 800 in 2021 ([World Bank](#)). In the 2021-2022 [Human Development Index](#), it ranked 13th out of the 191 countries measured, on a par with Belgium. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2022 [Democracy Index](#), New Zealand ranks second overall, and first equal with Norway in electoral process and pluralism, as well as political participation. In addition, it is the third most stable country according to the Normandy Index, as measured by the fragile states' indicator. This is largely due to strong perceptions of state legitimacy, effective public services and low levels of external intervention. New Zealand performs well on most indicators of traditional conflict, and has moved up six rankings to 46th place in the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#) (41st the previous year). New Zealand suffered the most lethal terror attack in its modern history in 2019, when 51 people were killed and 49 injured in shootings at two mosques in the city of Christchurch.



New security and hybrid threats

Thanks to its resilient democratic institutions, high standard of living and public services, and extreme remoteness from the world's most densely populated regions, New Zealand has long been relatively insulated from traditional security and hybrid threats. However, an uptick in cyber-attacks in recent years, combined with a high level of trade dependency on China, and concerns that growing US-China strategic [rivalry](#) could spill over into the South Pacific, have made the strategic environment less benign.

EU involvement

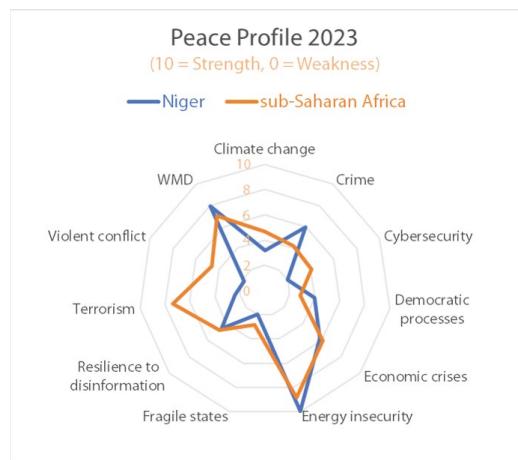
The EU's bilateral political relationship with New Zealand is based on the 2016 [Partnership for Relations and Cooperation](#) (PARC). The agreement provides a framework for regular political dialogue, including consultations at ministerial, senior officials' and parliamentary levels. In 2018, the EU launched negotiations with New Zealand on a bilateral [free trade agreement](#) (FTA). On 30 June 2022, the EU and New Zealand [concluded](#) negotiations on an FTA that includes climate and labour commitments with sanctions available in case of their non-performance. The FTA was signed on 9 July 2023. The EU is New Zealand's third largest [trading partner](#) after China and Australia, and the second largest source of FDI for New Zealand. Within the EU, important bilateral trade partners for New Zealand include Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. New Zealand has [participated](#) in the EU's anti-piracy mission off the Horn of Africa, [EUNAVFOR Atalanta](#), as well as its [EUPOL](#) police mission in Afghanistan, and is an important development aid partner to the EU in the South Pacific.

Niger

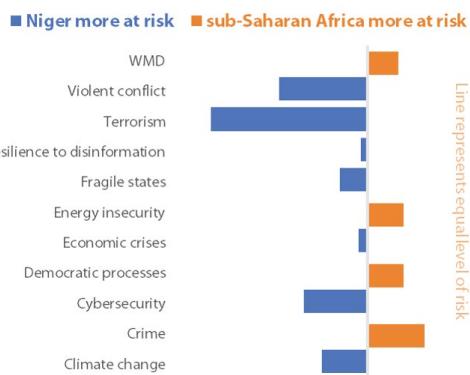
Before the July 2023 coup, Niger ranked 119th in the Normandy Index. Regional instability saw violent jihadist groups proliferate, causing a surge in refugees and internally displaced people. This compounds the already dire effects of climate change on access to resources, a further trigger for conflict. The coup further destabilises the Sahel and calls into question the EU and Western partners' strategy to invest in Niger as the main security hub in the region, following their February 2022 withdrawal from Mali.

Background and key issues

Niger ranks 189th of 191 countries in the [UN Human Development Index](#) and is the third most vulnerable country to climate change in the [ND-GAIN index](#). Its riches (5 % of the world's [uranium](#) resources) still overwhelmingly benefit [foreign mining interests](#). Climate change and poorly adapted [agricultural practices](#), combined with rapid population growth, have contributed to scarcity. While Niger had a relatively peaceful transition in 2021, with [Mohamed Bazoum](#), former Minister of the Interior, elected President, the opposition challenged [the election results](#) and an [attempted coup](#) was reportedly thwarted in March 2021. On 26 July 2023, elements of the presidential guard removed President Bazoum from office, in a [coup](#) later supported by army Chief of Staff, Abdou Sidikou Issa. On 28 July, the head of the presidential guard, [General Abdourahamane Tiani](#), declared himself president of the 'National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland' (CNSP, the military grouping which took power).



Threat comparison



New security and hybrid threats

The coup further destabilises the Sahel and calls into question the EU and Western partners' strategy to invest in Niger as the main security hub in the region (see box below). President Bazoum had continued Niger's [military cooperation with Russia](#) – although opposing any presence of the Russian [Wagner](#) paramilitary group. The coup, welcomed by Wagner's Yevgeny Prigozhin, may increase Russian influence in Niger. Food insecurity, aggravated by the pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine, as well as population displacement across the country, exacerbate [tensions](#) between communities and grievances against the government. [Violent extremist groups](#) (including Boko Haram, the Islamic State in the Sahel, ISIL/Da'esh West Africa, and Al-Qaeda) exploit these

tensions, especially in the border areas with Chad and Nigeria (Lake Chad) and with Mali and Burkina Faso (Liptako-Gourma). Niger reportedly devotes more than [17 %](#) of its budget to security and defence, which has allowed it to prevent too wide [control of its territory](#) by non-state armed groups.

EU involvement

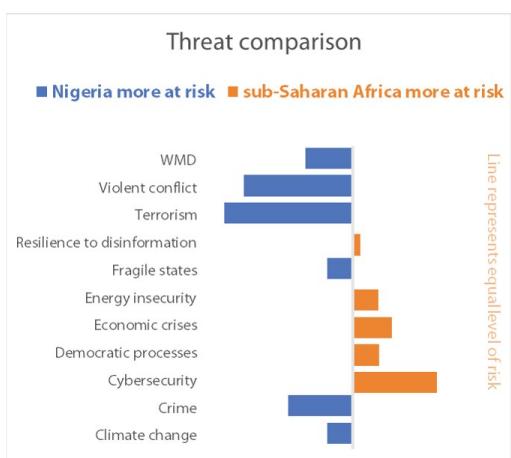
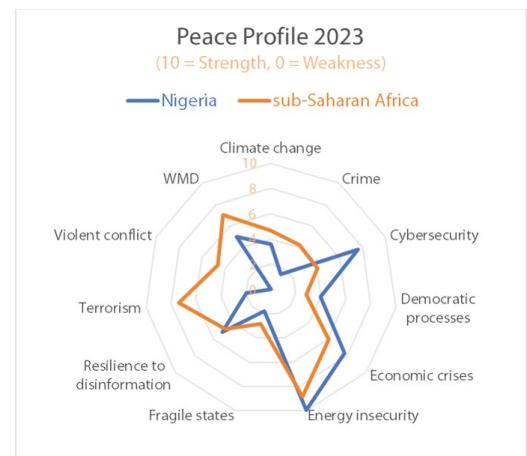
The EU has '[condemn\[ed\] the coup](#)' in the strongest possible terms' and supports [efforts](#) by West-African regional organisation ECOWAS for a return to constitutional order in Niger. The EU, which adopted a [new strategy for the Sahel](#) in April 2021, [has suspended](#) security cooperation and budgetary aid. Niger is the most populous country in the Sahel and a key partner for the EU. Its role in regional security cooperation was strengthened in 2022, as Mali left the G5 Sahel regional group and France's Barkhane and Euro-Canadian Takuba forces withdrew from Mali. European military anti-terrorist support efforts in the Sahel then shifted to Niger and the Gulf of Guinea. A new CSDP mission, the [EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger](#) funded by the European Peace Facility, was launched in December 2022 to provide expert advice and training to the Nigerien armed forces. The EU and Member States together are the [main ODA donor](#) to Niger, and its [second main trading](#) partner after China. On several migration routes, Niger has strengthened its policy to combat [irregular migration](#) with EU support, as part of the EU's [new partnership with third countries](#) (2016).

Nigeria

Nigeria ranks 120th in the Normandy Index. It is considered more at risk than the sub-Saharan African average and is particularly vulnerable to the threat of terrorism. Ethnic tensions date back to colonial times. While the 1967-1970 civil war was primarily concerned with the equitable distribution of oil revenues between ethnic groups, recent conflict has assumed more sectarian overtones.

Background and key issues

Despite an overall improvement on the previous year, Nigeria ranked sixth in the [2022 Global Terrorism Index](#), the country experiencing a halving of terrorism deaths in 2021, due to military efforts against Boko Haram and the death of its leader Abubakar Shekau. The ISIL/Da'esh in West Africa Province (ISWA) overtook Boko Haram as the deadliest terror group in Nigeria in 2021. Terrorist attacks by jihadist Fulani herders against Christian farmers also claimed numerous victims. In [May 2023](#), militants linked to Fulani herders reportedly killed up to 100 people. In the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#), the country ranks 8th (5th in 2022). Nigeria's federal model provides a large degree of state autonomy between the predominantly Muslim north and the largely Christian south, but endemic corruption has prevented the country from reaping the full benefits of its enormous oil wealth. A [giant oil refinery](#) was inaugurated in May 2023, with a view to exporting to African partners. Nigeria ranks 15th in the [2023 Fragile States Index](#). On 1 March 2023, [Bola Tinubu](#), of the All Progressives Congress ruling party, was declared winner of the [25 February 2023](#) presidential elections.



New security and hybrid threats

Despite being Africa's biggest economy by national GDP, Nigeria's economic situation is fragile, owing to its over-reliance on oil. After experiencing its deepest recession since the 1980s in 2020, due to COVID-19, Nigeria's [economy](#) has returned to moderate growth. The country's very young population is a largely untapped economic potential. However, coupled with climate change and land degradation – a severe threat particularly in the north – demographic growth can also be a [driver](#) of severe social instability. Nigeria ranks 115th in the [2020 World Press Freedom Index](#). While internationally supported elections allow for a high degree of political competition, they often involve large-scale disinformation campaigns. Organised

[oil crime](#) in the Niger delta – covering theft and illegal refining and sale – affects up to 20 % of Nigeria's oil output and perpetuates corruption.

EU involvement

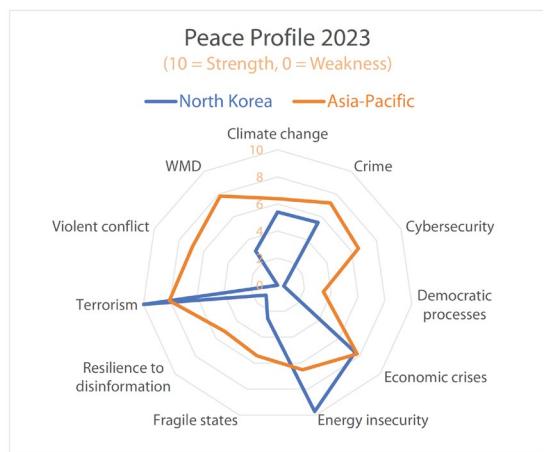
To help fight terrorism, the EU continues to [fund](#) an initiative grouping several Lake Chad countries – the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) – against Boko Haram. In 2021, Nigeria and the EU agreed [new common objectives](#) for their development cooperation under the new Global Europe Instrument for the next seven years (MIP). The EU's support for the governance system aims at addressing the causes and consequences of conflict and violence. The EU has negotiated a regional [economic partnership agreement](#) with Nigeria and other West-African countries, aimed at liberalising trade and fostering regional integration and sustainable development, but Nigeria is reluctant to implement it. In 2022, the [Team Europe](#) initiative, 'Nigeria Green Economy' project [committed](#) €1.3 billion to the energy sector. An [EU election observation mission](#) was deployed for the February 2023 presidential elections.

North Korea

North Korea ranks 125th in the Normandy Index, clearly below the Asia-Pacific average. Talks since 1948 on reunifying the Korean peninsula have consistently failed. The country performs very badly on democratic process, fragile state, disinformation and weapons of mass destruction.

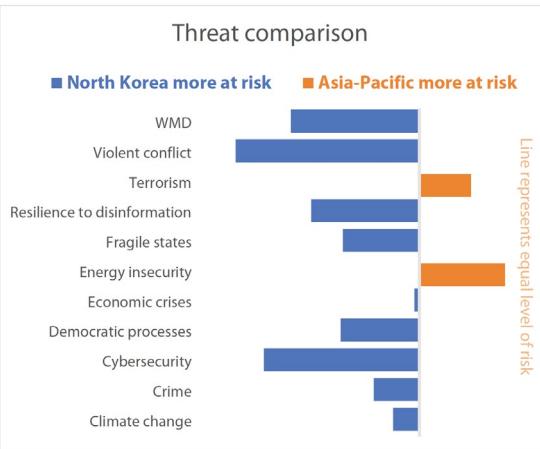
Background and key issues

A vestige of its 'military first' policy, North Korea has the [third largest](#) military on active duty in the world, with a standing army of [1 469 000](#) soldiers. In 2013, this policy was replaced with the 'progress in tandem' policy, which emphasises economic progress and guaranteed security against South Korean or American incursion by nuclear development. The country has [nuclear weapons](#) and ballistic missile [programmes](#), and is believed to have chemical and biological weapon capabilities. Its [nuclear-capable](#) intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) are considered capable of [reaching](#) Japan, South Korea and the United States. North Korea continues to develop its [nuclear arsenal](#) and to [increase missile testing](#). The country has used cyber-attacks and cyber theft to amass [up to US\\$1.3 billion](#) in foreign and virtual currency, circumventing international sanctions. North Korea ranks 37th in the [2023 Fragile States Index](#), with a particularly weak score for state legitimacy. Its government ranks 171st out of 180 in the [2022 Global Corruption Perception Index](#). Thousands of political prisoners are known to be [interned](#) in prison camps.



New security and hybrid threats

North Korea ranks bottom (180th) in the [2023 Global Press Freedom Index](#). The state security apparatus is extensive, maintaining control over citizens' residence, travel, employment, clothing, appearance, food and family life. The population is classified according to their '[Songbun](#)' – a status system assessing a citizen's loyalty to the government based largely on their family's history (up to the third generation). Furthermore, the importance attributed to the nuclear programme and the [ideology](#) of self-reliance, mismanagement and corruption have significantly impeded long-term growth and resulted in North Korea's ongoing difficulty in meeting development objectives. On 14 July 2022, North Korea [recognised](#) the non-government controlled Donetsk and Luhansk areas in eastern Ukraine as independent states (only the third country to do so, after Russia and Syria).



EU involvement

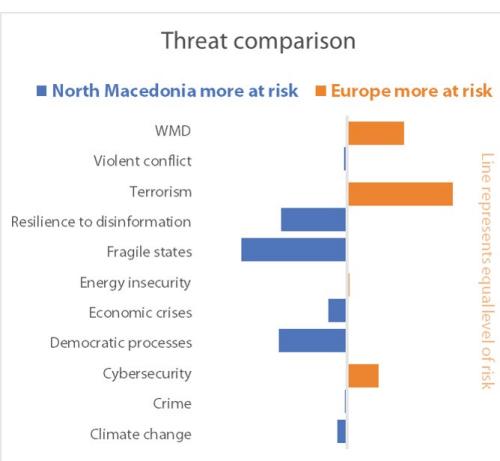
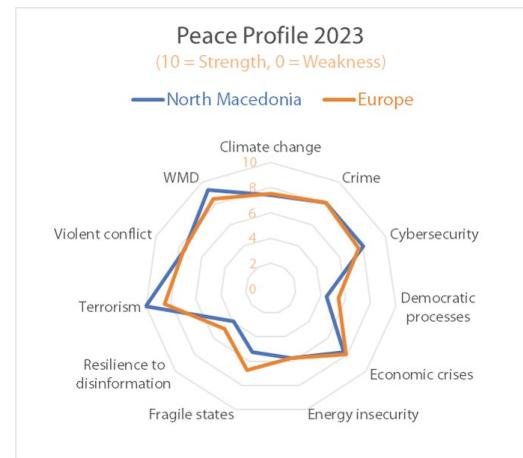
The EU has a policy of 'critical engagement' towards North Korea, with a view to diminishing tensions in the Korean peninsula, upholding a nuclear non-proliferation regime and improving the human rights situation. It has applied [sanctions](#) against Pyongyang, implementing the UN Security Council Resolutions and adopting autonomous restrictive measures (the [latest](#) on 21 April 2022). Meanwhile, it has contributed over €135.7 million in [aid funding to North Korea](#) since 1995, mostly for food assistance, but also disaster relief and poverty alleviation. EU-North Korea trade in goods fell dramatically after 2013. In 2019, the last year before the pandemic, it amounted to a mere [€7 million](#) (0.2% of North Korea's external trade). The EU has maintained diplomatic relations with North Korea since 2001, but has no delegation in Pyongyang. On 30 May 2022, G7 countries and the HR/WP [condemned](#) 'in the strongest terms' a further intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test, conducted on 25 May 2022.

North Macedonia

North Macedonia ranks 18th in the Normandy Index. Although it performs less well than the European average on democratic processes and fragile states indicators, it outperforms the average for terrorism and WMD.

Background and key issues

North Macedonia gained independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. Today, the country scores within the top quartile of countries in the democratic processes indicator. The Macedonian Social Democratic Party (SDSM) [government](#), currently led by Prime Minister Dimitar Kovačevski, has improved relations with the EU and, in particular, with Greece. Through the June 2018 [Prespa Agreement](#), the country changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia, in exchange for Greece ending its veto on its EU and NATO accession. Following the signature of North Macedonia's accession protocol in February, the country officially joined NATO as the Alliance's 30th member in March 2020.



New security and hybrid threats

Since independence, North Macedonia has made progress in developing a democratic society and open-market economy. This has included reforms such as registering property, gaining credit access and protecting minority investors. North Macedonia is the only middle-income country ranked by the [World Bank](#) among the top 20 countries globally when it comes to [ease of doing business](#). Its progress on economic reform is demonstrated in its strong economic crisis score. North Macedonia significantly progressed on press freedom: from 57th in the 2022 [Press Freedom Index](#) to 38th in [2023](#). To foster the development of a safe, secure, reliable and resilient digital environment, the government adopted a 2018-2022 [National Cyber Security Strategy and Action Plan](#) in 2018.

EU involvement

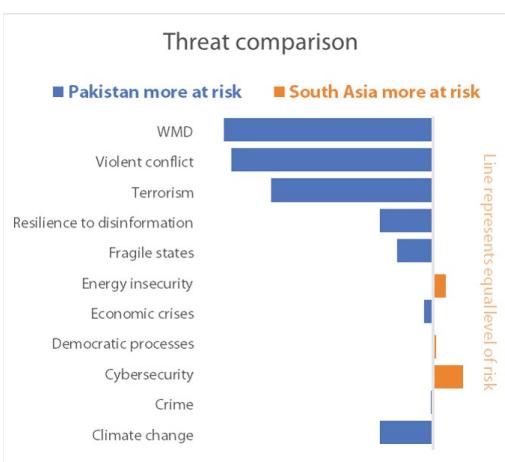
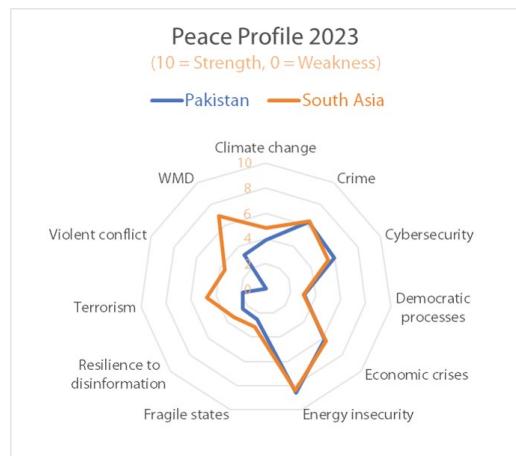
[North Macedonia](#) was the first Western Balkan country to sign a stabilisation and association agreement with the EU (in 2004); just one year later, it became a candidate country. On 26 March 2020, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia. The accession negotiations were officially launched on 19 July 2022. The EU allocated [€664 million](#) of funding to North Macedonia through the IPA II instrument for 2014-2020, and some €14.162 billion under [IPA III](#) for the six Western Balkans countries for 2021-2027. The EU is supporting the [strengthening of transport and energy connectivity](#) within the Western Balkans and with the EU, through a new connectivity package, road improvements and the implementation of the regional rail strategy, under the [Western Balkans Investment Framework](#).

Pakistan

Pakistan ranks 127th in the Normandy Index. Relations with terrorist groups, military interference, strained relations with India, separatism, vulnerability to climate change and a critical financial situation, all contribute to the instability of a country affected by religious intolerance.

Background and key issues

Pakistan, home to the world's second-largest Muslim population, was the first [Islamic republic](#). The country has undergone phases of military rule and political instability. Pakistan ranks at 31st most fragile among 179 states in the 2023 [Fragile State Index](#). The chronic dualism between political and military powers, with the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency playing a controversial role, has prevented civilian institutions from taking direct control of the state. This has impacted relations with Pakistan's neighbour India, which remain strained and volatile, despite a rapprochement in early 2021, due in particular to the unresolved Kashmir territorial conflict. Pakistan is [accused](#) of active terrorism sponsorship and of providing a safe haven for terrorist groups. The [Global Terrorism Index](#) has placed the country among the [10 countries](#) most impacted by terrorism without interruption since 2003; in 2023, it [ranked](#) 7th. It ranks 167th of 170 countries in the most recent [Women, Peace and Security Index](#).



New security and hybrid threats

Pakistan faces further separatist threats: the most critical situation is in the south-western province of Balochistan, where the [terrorist threat](#) is also high. The 2023 [World Press Freedom Index](#) ranks Pakistan 150th, underlining the severe risks to journalists. Pakistan is particularly [vulnerable](#) to climate change, as it is hit repeatedly by [extreme weather events](#), including unprecedented flooding in 2022. This has contributed to high [food price inflation](#), which, together with the wider [economic situation](#) and [tension](#) around elections due in 2023, risks creating political and civil [unrest](#). However, due to progress in improving its anti-money-laundering regime, Pakistan was taken off the [Financial Action Task Force's Grey List](#) in October 2022, which had hampered the country's access to international financing.

EU involvement

The EU and Pakistan strengthened their political and security relations through the 2019 EU-Pakistan strategic engagement plan ([SEP](#)), building on a 2004 [cooperation agreement](#). Beyond traditional areas such as peace and security, democracy, rule of law, good governance, human rights, migration, and trade, the SEP also covers energy and climate change. An [EU-Pakistan Joint Commission](#) meets annually to review progress on the agreement, with sub-groups for specific areas. At the [12th Joint Commission meeting](#) in October 2022, both sides agreed to cooperate further on a number of issues, including climate change. In 2023, the EU [committed](#) around €500 million to help the country recover from the severe flooding it experienced in 2022. In April 2023, the EU and Pakistan held the first [EU-Pakistan counter-terrorism dialogue](#) since 2018. Pakistan is the [largest beneficiary](#) of the generalised system of preference plus ([GSP+](#)) scheme, giving preferential access to the European market, subject to compliance with 27 international conventions on human and labour rights, good governance, environmental protection and climate change. However, Pakistan has been under threat of suspension due to [concerns](#) over human rights abuses. Its GSP+ status was [extended](#) to the end of 2023, but Pakistan will need to comply with new GSP+ conditions for [2024-2034](#) to retain its eligibility beyond that date.

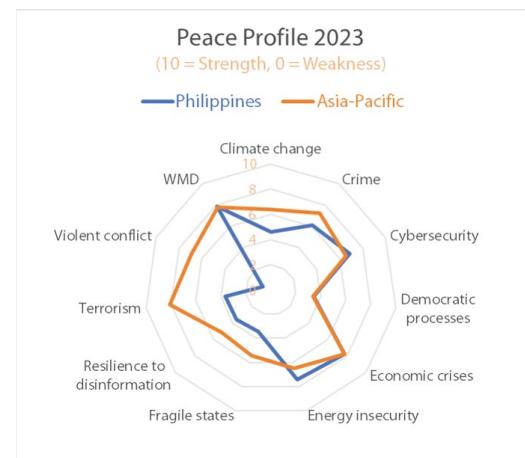
Philippines

The Philippines ranks 101st in the Normandy Index, lower than the Asia-Pacific average, in particular on terrorism and violent conflict. Crime rates are high, and thousands have died in a controversial 'war on drugs'; there is also violence from rebel groups and terrorists. It is ranked as one of the more democratic countries in the region, but faces a range of political, economic and environmental challenges.

Background and key issues

The Philippines has a more pluralist political system than most of its neighbours in south-east Asia. However, it ranks among the top quarter of most fragile countries in the world. Ranking 61st in the [2023 Fragile States Index](#), one reason for this fragility is the relatively high level of terrorism. The Philippines ranks 18th in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#). The country has faced a number of insurgencies since independence, by Communist, Islamist, separatist and other movements. In 2016, ISIL/Da'esh-affiliated actors sought to establish an 'East-Asia province' in the country, occupying and holding the city of [Marawi](#) for five months. The violent crackdown on drug-related crimes, launched in 2016 under then President Rodrigo Duterte, has been widely criticised.

On 30 June 2022, Ferdinand Marcos Jr was sworn in as 17th President of the Republic of the Philippines.



New security and hybrid threats

The Philippines ranks 132nd in the [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#) and 116th in the [2023 Corruption Perception Index](#). Typhoon Haiyan caused the loss of 6 300 lives, the displacement of over 4 million people and US\$2 billion in damage in 2013, highlighting the threat posed to the country by climate change. Extensive mangrove deforestation has been [noted](#) as a factor that exacerbates this risk. Disinformation also remains a challenge: 51 % of the population find it difficult to spot [fake news](#) in the media.

EU involvement

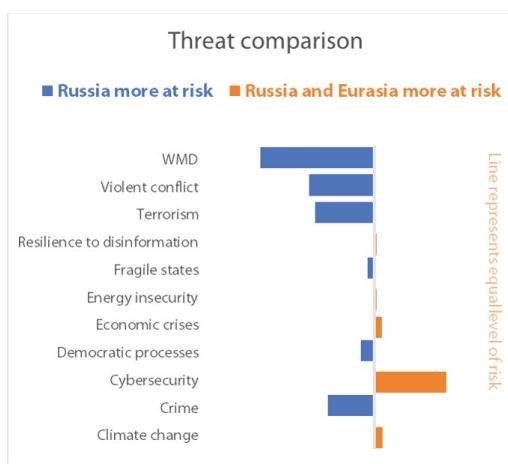
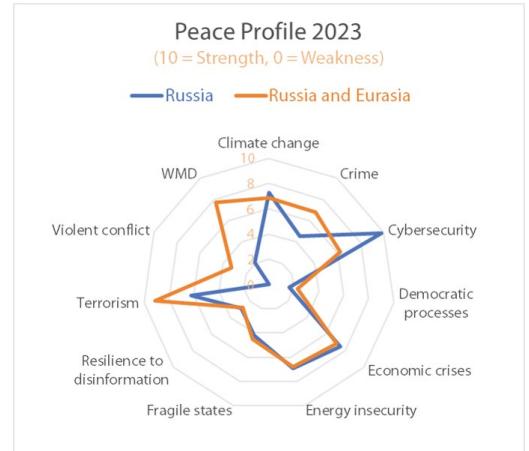
Together with its Member States, the EU is the Philippines' largest aid donor. During 2014-2020, the EU allocated [€325 million](#) of development aid, focusing on two areas: the rule of law and inclusive growth (promoting renewable energy). Since 1996, the EU has also provided nearly [€125 million](#) in humanitarian aid, helping the country to respond to conflicts and natural disasters. The EU-Philippines Partnership and Cooperation Agreement came into force in 2018; talks on a free trade agreement were launched in 2015, but have been stalled since 2017. In 2023, the Philippines [trade](#) minister stated that he hopes for an EU free trade agreement before 2028. At present, the Philippines enjoys duty-free access to EU markets for most of its exports under the GSP+ scheme. The EU remains the Philippines' [fourth-largest trade partner](#). The EU attaches high importance to its strategic partnership with ASEAN. The Philippines took part in the [EU-ASEAN commemorative summit](#) held in Brussels on 14 December 2022.

Russia

Russia ranks 109th²⁰ in the Normandy Index, performing worse than the Eurasian average, except on the cybersecurity, economic crisis and energy insecurity indicators. This is largely owing to elevated risks related to WMD, terrorism, violent conflict and crime. Security threats are likely to continue increasing against the backdrop of Russia's ongoing full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Background and key issues

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia rebuilt or altered many of its institutions. However, democratic processes are very weak, and the regime has become increasingly [authoritarian](#). Russia [inherited](#) the Soviet Union's entire stock of [nuclear weapons](#). Russia has a total stockpile of some 6 257 nuclear warheads as of January 2022, according to the [Arms Control Association](#) (SIPRI [estimates](#) the stock at 5 889 as of January 2023). Russia also retained the UN Security Council Permanent Seat. Russia has the highest [homicide rate](#) in the Eurasian region, at 8.21 per 100 000 people in 2022, higher than the global average. Russia has a high energy security level, owing to its vast oil and gas [reserves](#), which it has long used as a [tool](#) to achieve its foreign policy goals.



New security and hybrid threats

Russia's full-scale and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, met with widespread global [condemnation](#), and significantly increased security threats for Russia itself and the whole continent. While indicators do not reflect 2023 developments, Russia's indicators in violent conflict, terrorism and WMD have deteriorated. Russia is [considered](#) one of the main sources of online disinformation campaigns, targeting both domestic and foreign audiences. Together with [severe restrictions](#) on independent media and civil society organisations, this has had a severe [impact](#) on public opinion and in propagating Russia's narrative globally. Russia is considered to have advanced [cyber-attack capabilities](#). The

24 June 2023 [mutiny](#) initiated by the owner of the Wagner paramilitary group, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, is seen as the biggest threat to Putin's 22-year rule so far. Although it lasted only 36 hours, the mutiny revealed serious discontent with the Ministry of Defence and Russian elites in general. Its [ramifications](#), both domestically and internationally, are still to be evaluated.

EU involvement

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU applied unprecedented [sanctions](#) on Russia, including individual restrictive measures, economic sanctions, and restrictions on media. Especially relevant has been the EU [diversification](#) of fossil fuels supplies, resulting in Russia's share of EU energy imports [falling](#) by more than 10 percentage points between the first and third quarter of 2022, from 25.5 % to 15.1 %. The EU also took the unprecedented step of [financing](#) military assistance for Ukraine (including lethal) from the [European Peace Facility](#). Prior to February 2022, the EU imposed sanctions on Russia after the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, as well as for the use of chemical weapons, cyber-attacks and [human rights violations](#). The European Parliament, in its resolutions of [9 March 2022](#) and [1 June 2023](#), identified Russia as a major actor in [foreign interference](#) in democratic processes, disinformation campaigns, and intelligence activities, both in the EU and its neighbourhood, including the [Western Balkans](#).

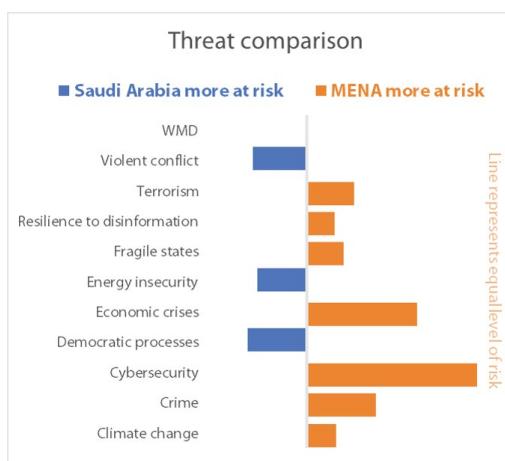
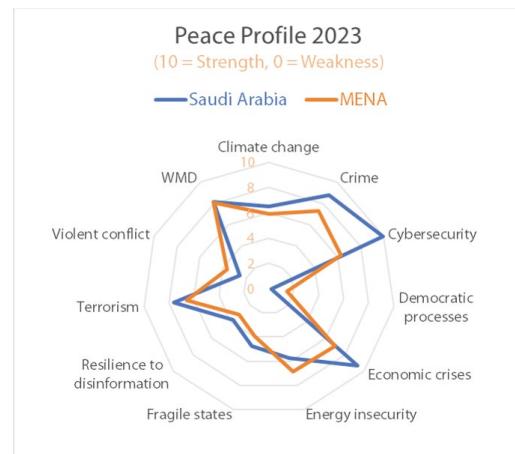
²⁰ The ranking does not take 2023 developments in the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine into account, as data collected refer to 2022.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia moved up 18 places to 55th in the Normandy Index. In April 2023, capitalising on improved relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia persuaded the Yemeni coalition government to agree an eight-month ceasefire with Houthi rebels, in parallel with UN-brokered peace talks on the future of the country.

Background and key issues

Saudi Arabia has been engaged in a [decades-long proxy war with Iran](#) since the Iranian revolution of 1979. Relations were broken off in 2016, after protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran over the execution of a dissident Saudi Shia cleric. The reconciliation, nominally driven by Saudi Arabia's 37-year-old crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, and Iran's 83-year-old supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – was formally [announced](#) in China on 10 March 2023, when the two sides set out a two-month plan to normalise diplomatic and economic relations. Tehran's embassy in Riyadh [reopened](#) for the first time since 2016 in June 2023. Saudi officials also arrived in Iran to discuss procedures for re-opening Riyadh's embassy in Tehran. The Iran-Saudi Arabia rapprochement had a positive spill-over effect on conflicts in Yemen, Lebanon and Syria, but represents a potential challenge for Israel. Israel fears that the Saudi-Iranian deal may [set back](#) its efforts to build a regional anti-Iran coalition, a main driver of the [Abraham Accords](#).



New security and hybrid threats

Crown Prince since 2017, Mohammed Bin Salman instituted several economic and social reforms, including the wide-ranging plan '[Vision 2030](#)' managed by the [Economic and Development Affairs Council](#). Many had hoped reforms would also lead to greater democratic freedom. However, this has [failed to materialise so far](#). The Kingdom, which has a poor [human rights record](#), has repeatedly come under scrutiny for its treatment of dissidents, human rights activists, including women's rights activists, and independent clerics. The country permits no independent media and ranked 170th in the [2023 World Press Freedom Index](#).

EU involvement

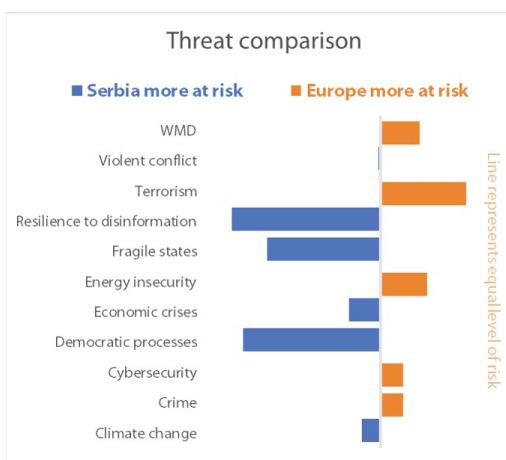
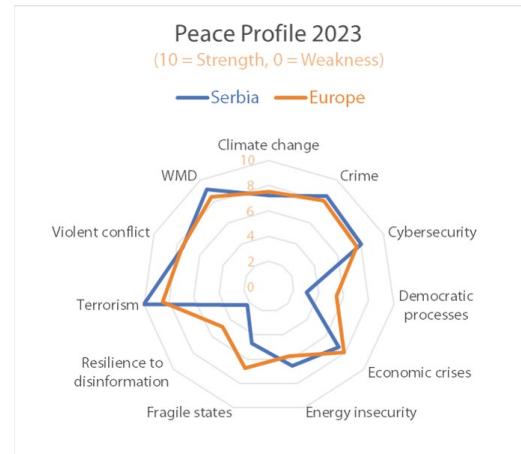
In 1988, the EU entered into a [cooperation agreement](#) with the Cooperation Council for Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), which comprises Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A regular EU-GCC dialogue aims to strengthen the stability of countries in the strategically important Gulf region, broaden economic and technical cooperation and strengthen existing cooperation on energy, industry, trade and services, agriculture, fisheries, investment, science, technology and the environment. The EU and Saudi Arabia [signed a cooperation arrangement](#) in 2021. Moreover, in May 2022, the EU adopted plans to create a [strategic partnership](#) with the GCC countries, aimed at strengthening relations in six key policy areas, including the green transition and sustainable energy security, as well as regional stability and global security. The EU, and the [European Parliament](#) in particular, have been critical of Saudi Arabia's [human rights](#) record and have condemned and expressed grave concerns over [Saudi Arabia's role in Yemen](#).

Serbia

Serbia ranks 26th in the Normandy Index, with a score in line with the Western Balkan regional average. In addition to high scores on terrorism and energy insecurity, the country is facing urgent challenges, such as the normalisation process with Kosovo,²¹ resilience to disinformation and democratic processes.

Background and key issues

The 1990s break-up of the former Yugoslavia remains a source of fragility in Serbia today, as it continues to affect relations with neighbours. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, as a basis for resolving bilateral problems, including the [Belgrade-Pristina dispute](#) are pre-conditions for Serbia's EU accession. Belgrade and Pristina have engaged in the EU-mediated dialogue since 2011. However, a comprehensive normalisation of relations remains out of reach, despite some encouraging developments, such as the engagement in Ohrid, North Macedonia, to implement the EU-mediated deal, announced on 18 March 2023.



New security and hybrid threats

[Strategic competition](#) and [disinformation campaigns](#) between global powers are on the rise in Serbia. Russia is a traditional [geopolitical ally](#) of the country and has provided diplomatic support for Belgrade, backing Serbia's position on non-recognition of Kosovo. Serbia is also involved in the tense situation in northern Kosovo, where the EU has [called](#) for 'immediate de-escalation, early elections with the participation of Kosovo Serbs, and a return to dialogue on normalisation'. Serbia has so far [resisted](#) aligning with the EU to apply sanctions on Russia over its aggression in Ukraine. In addition, Serbia is a founding member of the [16+1 initiative](#), led by China. Due to insufficient political dialogue between the ruling coalition and the opposition,

the country [democracy rating](#) has also fallen. [Russia](#) remains Serbia's biggest arms supplier, although in increasing [competition with China](#). On 29 May 2022, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, announced an [agreement](#) on a new three-year gas supply contract with Russia.

EU involvement

Serbia officially applied for EU membership on 22 December 2009. Serbia's [accession negotiations](#) began in 2014. Some 18 out of 35 chapters of the [acquis](#) have been opened, including all in [cluster 1](#) on the fundamentals, and two chapters have been provisionally closed. [Pre-accession support](#) for Serbia and other countries amounts to €12.9 billion for 2021–2027 (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance III funds). Serbia and Kosovo have been engaged in the [EU-mediated dialogue](#) since 2011, following the adoption of 2010 [UN General Assembly Resolution 64/298](#). Serbia would need to implement the agreement made in Ohrid in March 2023 as part of the requirements under Chapter 35 ('Other Issues') of the country's EU accession negotiations, which include, among other things, normalisation of relations with Kosovo. Serbia's (non-)alignment with EU foreign policy became evident in February 2022. Serbia adopted [conclusions](#) in which it voiced support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine, but refrained from applying sanctions.

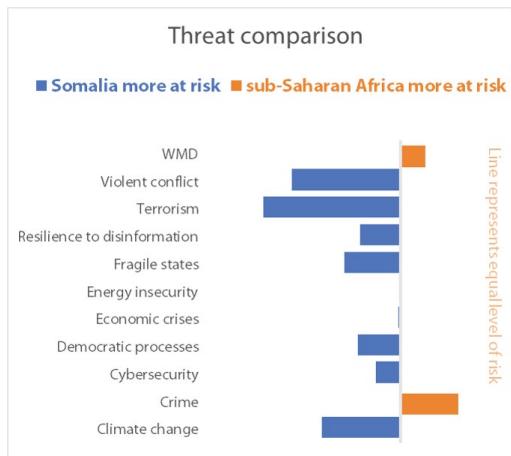
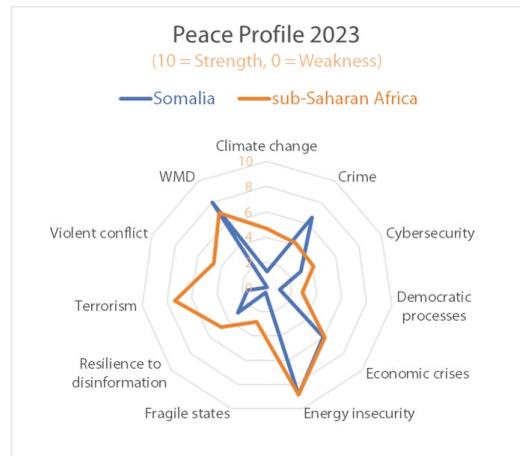
²¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Somalia

Somalia ranks 129th in the Normandy Index. The country is plagued by drought and its humanitarian consequences. Al-Shabaab and other armed groups carry frequent and massive attacks on civilians.

Background and key issues

Somalia has struggled with the impact of civil war, which began in 1991, with the overthrow of dictator Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre. The country is also responding to the jihadist and al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist Al-Shabaab insurgency that has plagued the country since 2008. In part as a result of this instability, the country is divided into autonomous and semi-autonomous regions. In the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#), Somalia ranks third worst, mainly due to the activities of different [jihadist networks](#). Somalia's central government has little practical control over much of its territory, in particular, but not only, in the self-declared state of Somaliland.



New security and hybrid threats

In response to the weakness of the central government, Somalia has adopted a decentralised federal model. Somalia ranks 141st of 180 countries in the 2023 [World Press Freedom Index](#), being one of the most dangerous countries in Africa for journalists. Somalia is highly vulnerable to climate change and ranks as the country least adaptable to climate change – 172nd of 180 in the [Notre Dame Adaptation Index](#). Extreme climate events such as droughts and floods are exacerbating existing issues, including intercommunal tension and displacement. Over 8.25 million people need humanitarian assistance and 6.5 million face a food security crisis. Trouble following the first democratic local elections since 1967 in the semi-autonomous Puntland might also threaten the stability of this oil-rich regional state. Similarly, tensions over the postponement of the presidential election scheduled for November 2022 have arisen in Somaliland.

EU involvement

Somalia is a major focus of the [EU strategy for the Horn of Africa](#), which aligns several external policy programmes and instruments to tackle insecurity and its root causes in the area. Two EU military operations and one CSDP civil mission are based in Somalia: [EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta](#), [EUTM Somalia](#) and [EUCAP Somalia](#). Atalanta maintains a wide area of operations, despite the fact that UN Security Council did not extend its and other international forces' mandate to fight piracy and armed robbery within Somalia's territorial waters. Efforts to help improve Somali military and political governance, to which the EU has made a [significant contribution](#), have yet to succeed. In 2023, the EU allocated €72 million in humanitarian aid (as of 28 March 2023).

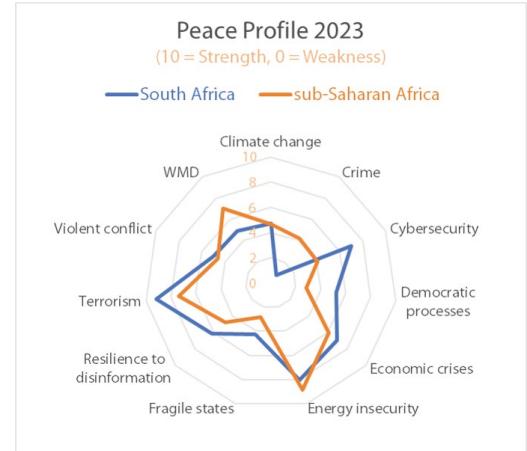
South Africa

South Africa ranks 73rd in the Normandy Index, scoring higher than the sub-Saharan African average, but 11 places below its 2022 position. While it is considered low-risk, and despite the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa still struggles with extremes of inequality and high crime rates and is very vulnerable to climate change.

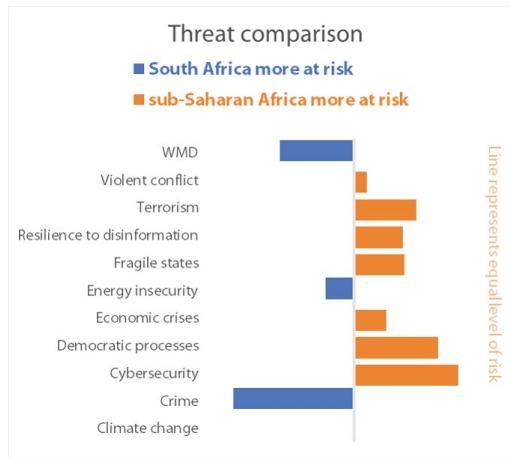
Background and key issues

South Africa has one of the consistently highest income inequality index scores in the world and approximately 25 % of the country's population live below the poverty line. Despite South Africa's strong democratic processes and status as the second largest African economy, it therefore ranks 78th in the 2023 [Fragile States Index](#) (79th in 2022). South Africa's high violent crime rates contribute to this fragility. The homicide rate is rising, with [statistical projections](#) showing that the 2022/2023 annual homicide rate may be over 44 murders per 100 000 people – among the highest murder rates in the [world](#) for countries not at war and for which reliable data is available.

South Africa ranked 79th globally in the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#), facing no particular risk. In 1991, South Africa became the first country to voluntarily dismantle its nuclear weapons programme. Although South African [energy security](#) is generally much better than the sub-Saharan African average, the country is facing an energy crisis, including rolling blackouts, due to mismanagement at the state-owned enterprise Eskom and an ageing generating capacity.



New security and hybrid threats



Owing in part to its pluralist political foundations, South Africa exhibits strong resilience to disinformation. It ranks 35th in the [2022 World Press Freedom Index](#) and has a relatively high score on the cybersecurity indicator for the sub-Saharan African region. Climate change poses particular risks for South Africa, as heatwaves, drought, floods and bushfires all threaten the country's agricultural and urban areas. South Africa ranks 95th on the [2022 Climate Vulnerability Index](#). In 2021, South Africa [committed](#) to carbon emission neutrality by 2050. President Cyril Ramaphosa led an [African mediation mission](#) of six African heads of state to Kyiv and Moscow in June 2023, to pave the way for a negotiated diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine, but this mission was [unsuccessful](#).

EU involvement

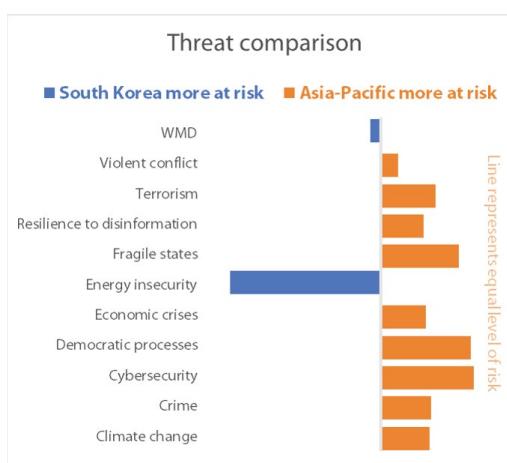
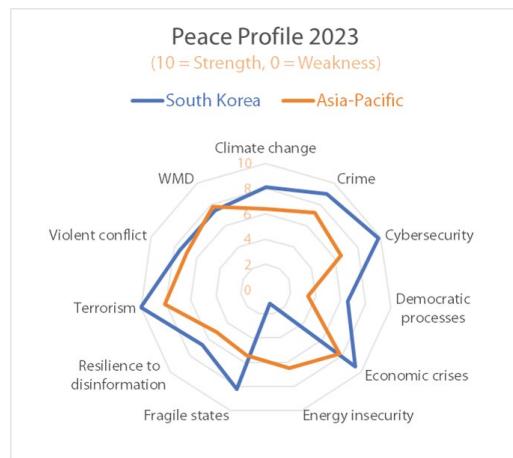
The EU [considers](#) South Africa one of its ten strategic partners in the world. Their strong relationship is based on the bilateral [Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement](#) (2000) and the [EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement](#) (provisionally in force since 2016). In 2021, the EU and South Africa agreed new [common objectives](#) for their development cooperation over the next seven years: sustainable, resilient, transformative and inclusive growth; reducing inequalities; and partnerships. The third objective includes the peace/security dimensions of promoting rule of law, partnerships and alliances to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; peace negotiation, and international crime.

South Korea

South Korea ranks 8th in the Normandy Index, making it the second-best-performing country in Asia after Singapore. The country performs very well in particular on climate change, crime, cybersecurity and the economy. However, due to high crude oil and natural gas imports, it is vulnerable on energy insecurity.

Background and key issues

When the Korean War ended in 1953, the Republic of Korea counted among the [poorest](#) countries in the world. According to the [World Bank](#), its 2021 GDP per capita reached €34 757. The country ranks 19th in the [Human Development Index](#) and 47th in the [World Press Freedom Index](#). South Korea also ranks 24th in the [EIU Democracy Index](#). South Korea's First [Nationally Determined Contribution](#) announced at COP26 and submitted to the UNFCCC in December 2021 sets a [target to reduce emissions](#) by 40 % below 2018 levels by 2030. Since then, no major new targets have been announced. The revised Renewable Energy Law, passed in March 2021, strengthens South Korea's renewable portfolio standard, requiring major electricity utilities to increase their renewables share from 10 % by 2023, to 25 % by 2034. Faced with the ongoing military threat from North Korea (with a standing army of [1 469 000](#)), South Korea has a [standing army](#) of 613 000 and spends around [2.8 % of GDP](#) on defence.



New security and hybrid threats

The ranking for cybersecurity in the [ITU index](#) is explained by South Korea's top score for legal measures, capacity development and cooperative measures and its very good score for technical and organisational measures. According to the [VDEM](#), South Korea is also one of the few countries not to have experienced violations of democratic standards during the pandemic. On 29 September 2021, the Democratic Party, which currently holds a clear majority inside the Korean National Assembly, [decided not](#) to pursue amendments to the press law which would undermine media freedom. South Korea is vulnerable in the [energy sector](#), as it imports

almost 93.5 % of its energy and natural resource consumption. In 2022, Korea spent US\$190.8 billion on importing energy and resources, equivalent to nearly 26.1 % of its total imports.

EU involvement

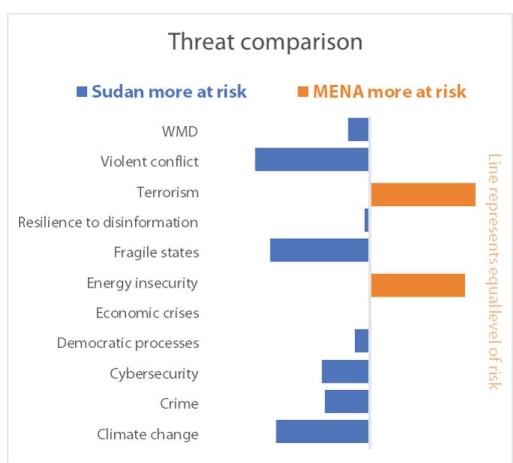
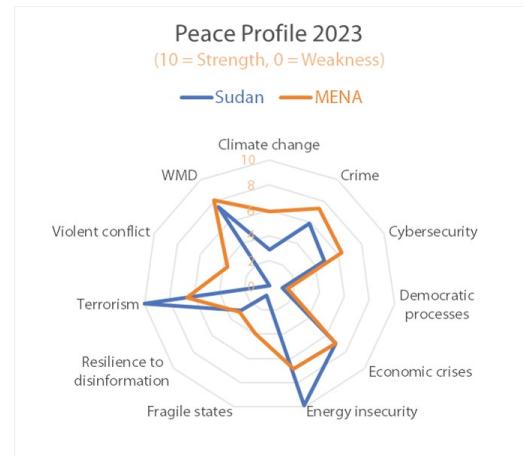
Trade and [diplomatic relations](#) between the EU and South Korea go to 1963. Since 2010, South Korea is also one of the EU's strategic partners in Asia. The [EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement](#) was not only the first of the EU's new generation of trade agreements, but also the first [submitted to the European Parliament](#) for its consent, under the Treaty of Lisbon; it [entered into force](#) on 13 December 2015 (having applied provisionally from July 2011). South Korea is the EU's [ninth largest](#) export destination for goods, while the EU is South Korea's third largest export market. In 2019, the EU was the [largest foreign investor](#) in South Korea in cumulative terms; EU investment in South Korea stood at US\$122.8 billion. The EU and South Korea have a strong joint interest in a nuclear-free Korean peninsula and work together to achieve lasting peace and stability. An agreement establishing a framework for South Korea's participation in EU crisis management operations was [signed](#) in 2014. The Republic of Korea is one of the EU's [priority partners](#) in Asia for enhanced security cooperation, working more closely together on crisis management operations, maritime security, cyber security and the fight against terrorism.

Sudan

Sudan ranks 111th in the Normandy Index. The armed conflict between the two military factions in power compromises the path to democracy and is a serious threat to regional stability.

Background and key issues

At the beginning of 2023, one third of the population of Sudan required [humanitarian assistance](#) due to floods, droughts, diseases and a precarious security situation within the country and in neighbouring countries, leading to multiple displacements. Acute food insecurity is at its highest in ten years, affecting one in four Sudanese. This has been aggravated by the collapse of the democratic transition process. After President Al-Bashir was deposed by a coup in April 2019, a [transitional government](#) led by a civilian Prime Minister, Abdalla Hamdok, shared power with a Sovereign Council, headed by General Al-Burhan, a former Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) commander, and General 'Hemedti' Dagolo, chief of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – a paramilitary group in control of the mining sector (mainly gold in Darfur). In November 2021, the military dissolved the Sovereign Council and the transitional government fell. Fighting between SAF and RSF reached a [new level of violence](#) in the capital in April 2023.



New security and hybrid threats

The fighting quickly spread across the country, with massive population displacements within Sudan and to [neighbouring countries](#), such as Egypt, Chad, Ethiopia or the Central African Republic. Both sides have been trying to strengthen [alliances](#) inside and outside the country. Al-Burhan has the support of veteran Darfuri rebels and some Islamist groups. Hemedti won 'the favor of some democrats by criticizing the [Islamists' strong return](#)'. Egypt has sided with Al-Burhan, while Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have sided with Hemedti. China and Russia have invested heavily in extracting Sudanese natural resources and it is expected that they will try to preserve their [economic and security](#) interests. The

[humanitarian needs](#) are escalating rapidly as [65%](#) of Sudan's population lived below the poverty line even before the latest clashes.

EU involvement

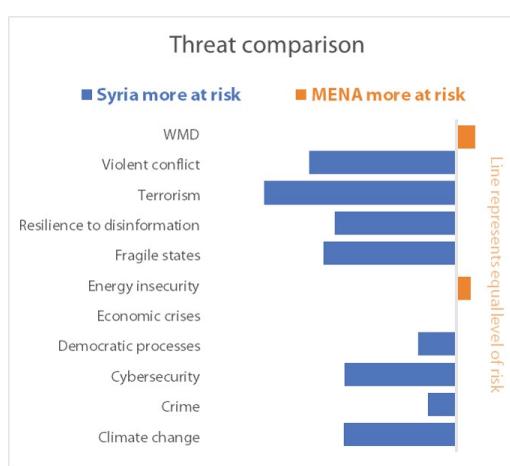
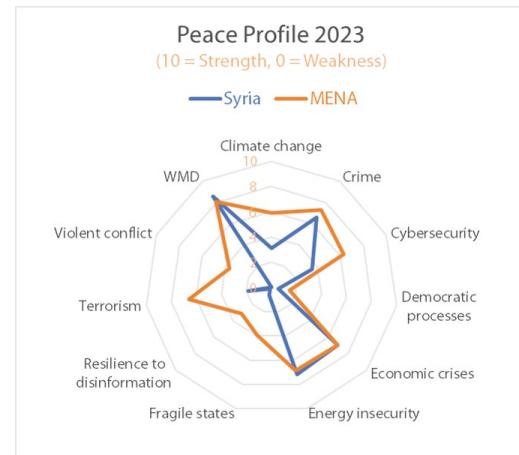
On 24 April 2023, the [EU Foreign Affairs Council](#) discussed evacuation plans and mediation possibilities to prevent escalation of the conflict. EU Member State-led operations have [evacuated](#) most of the 1 700 EU citizens present in Sudan, as well as non-EU citizens. Humanitarian supply distribution and refugee corridors are among the first EU humanitarian [priorities](#). During the 24 April 2023 Council meeting, Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs Pekka Haavisto, (Special EU Envoy to Sudan in 2021), [highlighted](#) the risks of further Wagner group engagement in the region, considering the lack of Western democracies' involvement. Members from the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) [visited Sudan](#) in September 2022, to urge 'all parties to come to an agreement' to resume the path to democracy. The EU development [cooperation strategy](#) with Sudan is being revised due to the unrest.

Syria

Ranking 130th in the Normandy Index, Syria is the seventh least peaceful country in the world. It is a fragile state for which indicators on democratic processes, terrorism, resilience to disinformation and violent conflict are particularly low.

Background and key issues

Syria's low position in the Normandy Index is largely due to the ongoing impact of the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011. This war is [estimated](#) to have resulted in over half a million deaths and has caused massive population displacement and destruction of infrastructure. From 2011 to 2016, the World Bank estimated cumulative [GDP losses](#) at US\$226 billion, about four times the Syrian GDP in 2010. Over 90 % of the Syrian population [suffers](#) from [poverty](#). Nearly 5.7 million Syrians are [registered as refugees](#) in neighbouring countries, and an estimated 6.8 million are [internally displaced](#); an [estimated](#) 15.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria. Several global and regional actors, in particular the USA, Iran, Türkiye and Russia, intervene in the ongoing war. The level of violence has receded, and the terrorist attacks in Syria almost halved in 2022, from 354 in 2021 to 197, largely due to the territorial defeat of ISIL/Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. However, Syria still ranks 5th in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#) and continues to suffer the long-term effects of instability as a result of the conflict. The [Global Coalition to Defeat ISIL/Da'esh](#) still has work to do to ensure the 'enduring end' of ISIL/Da'esh in the region.



New security and hybrid threats

The economic and social situation further deteriorated following the 7.8 magnitude [earthquake](#) that hit the country in February 2023. In May 2023, Arab countries initiated [normalisation](#) with Bashar al-Assad's regime, inviting him to the Arab League meeting in Saudi Arabia. This was the first time the Syrian President had participated in an Arab League meeting since the body suspended Damascus in 2011. A major challenge remains reconstruction of the country. Western [sanctions](#), in particular those [applied](#) by the USA since 2020 under the [Caesar Act](#), which not only blocks [reconstruction funding](#) but also imposes secondary sanctions, [are seen](#) as blocking potential investment and reconstruction.

EU involvement

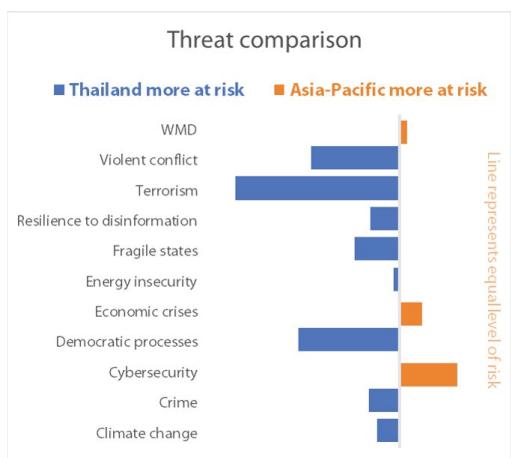
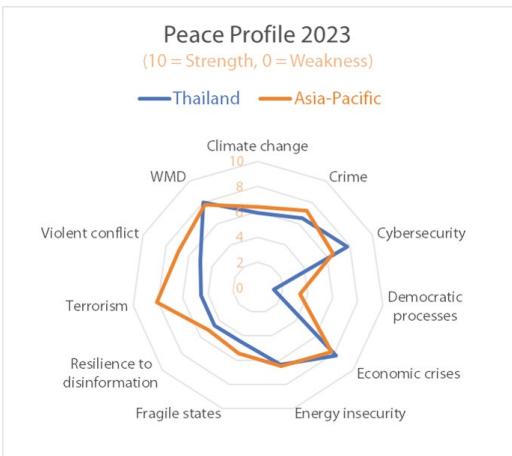
The EU suspended cooperation with the Syrian government under the European Neighbourhood policy in 2011, in response to the repression of anti-government protests. In parallel, the EU has adopted sanctions against the Assad regime. The EU and its Member States are the largest contributors to the international response to the Syrian conflict, having [mobilised](#) over €27.4 billion since 2011, for [humanitarian aid](#) inside Syria and in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Türkiye). In the wake of the earthquake in February 2023, the EU mobilised €75 million in humanitarian assistance for Syria, sent supplies from the [European Humanitarian Response Capacity](#) warehouses, and activated the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#). The EU also temporarily [amended](#) sanctions in place in February 2023, to facilitate the speedy delivery of humanitarian aid. On 15 June 2023, the EU [pledged](#) €1.5 billion in support for Syrians and host communities at the Brussels Conference VII. While normalisation of relations with the regime in Syria without progress in implementing UN Security Council [Resolution 2254](#) is not an option for the EU, the EU is working closely with Arab and international partners to address common objectives in Syria such as lowering levels of violence.

Thailand

Thailand ranks 72nd in the Normandy Index. Rapid economic growth has lifted the country from the low-income to upper-middle bracket in just a few decades, but its development has been marred by political instability and recurrent military coups.

Background and key issues

A long-running insurgency in Muslim-majority southern Thailand has claimed [over 7 000 lives](#) since 2004, affecting the country's security. Peace talks between the government and main rebel group, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), have been ongoing since January 2020, but with no sign of a breakthrough. One month after [national elections](#) held in May 2023, there is little clarity as to whether the most popular progressive 'Move Forward' party will be able to take power. The Election Commission is pursuing an investigation into the Move Forward leader, Pita Limjaroenrat, to determine whether he ran despite being aware that he was ineligible. Move Forward campaigned on a promise of removing the military from politics, reducing its budget and scrapping mandatory conscription. It also promised to tackle the powerful monopolies that dominate the economy.



New security and hybrid threats

Recent years have seen frequent [clashes](#) between reformers and pro-monarchy conservatives. After five years of military rule, elections in 2019 installed a nominally civilian government, continuing the rule of the former junta. Since 2020, there have been large-scale but mostly peaceful protests demanding the resignation of the government and reform of the monarchy. Reflecting restrictions on freedom of expression, Thailand ranks 106th in the [2023 Press Freedom Index](#). The [2023 Fragile States Index](#) ranks Thailand in 91st place, with political instability and the role of the military identified as particular areas of weakness. Thailand's energy policy currently [focuses](#) on reducing energy dependencies, seen as a big challenge. Thailand ranks as the 26th worst country in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#).

EU involvement

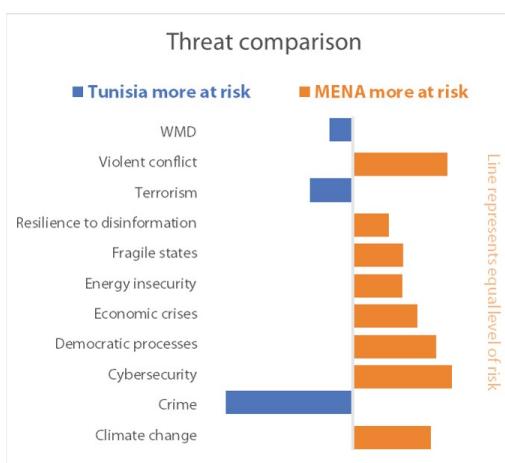
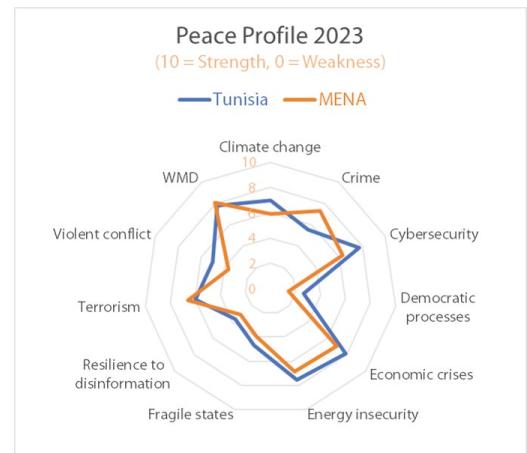
After the 2014 military coup, the EU broke off talks with Thailand on a partnership and cooperation agreement and a free trade agreement. The restoration of civilian rule in 2019 opened the door to [renewed engagement](#); talks have resumed on the partnership and cooperation agreement, and are expected to resume soon on the free trade agreement. The overall EU approach to bilateral relations with Thailand is set in [Council conclusions of 2019](#). Thailand participates in a number of EU international [programmes](#) such as Erasmus+ and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. EU bilateral aid includes projects supporting Thai exporters, refugees from Myanmar, and workers in the fisheries sector. The EU is Thailand's fourth [trading partner](#) (after China, Japan and the USA), accounting for 7.5 % of the country's total trade. Thailand is the EU's 26th largest trading partner worldwide. The EU is the second-largest investor in Thailand after Japan. Thailand is also an important member of [ASEAN](#), cooperating with the EU in multilateral fora.

Tunisia

Tunisia ranks 61st in the Normandy Index. It is considered less at risk than the MENA country average. Its performance is stronger than the MENA average for the indicator measuring energy insecurity, climate change and violent conflicts. However, Tunisia performs poorly on crime and terrorism.

Background and key issues

Since the removal of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali during the Jasmine Revolution of 2011, Tunisia has undergone a range of democratic reforms. The fallout from the 2011 revolution has, however, pushed the country up the [Fragile States Index](#), from 118th place in 2010, to 96th in 2023. Tunisia has also been [affected](#) by instability and conflict in the region, in particular in neighbouring Libya. President Kais Saïed dissolved the Assembly in July 2021. A constitutional referendum [took](#) place on 25 July 2022, a year to the day after Saïed seized broad powers in a move his opponents have called a coup. Tunisia held [run-off elections](#) on 29 January 2023 (the first round was held on 17 December 2022). Critics of the government saw the 11.2 % turnout as a rejection of Saïed's policy orientations and post-revolution political system, which gave him new powers and made him virtually unimpeachable.



New security and hybrid threats

Tunisia ranks 121st out of 180 countries in the 2023 [Press Freedom Index](#). The country ranks well on energy security, as it [currently sources](#) approximately 85 % of its needs from domestic oil and gas. Energy is heavily subsidised, but the country's reserves are expected to decline, leading to a sharp rise in energy prices. In April 2022, the Energy Ministry [announced](#) a 3 % monthly rise in fuel prices, corresponding to a 30 % annual increase by the end of 2022. The heterogeneous [regional development](#) and equality gap between the north and south of the country is a permanent source of internal instability. A disillusioned youth, as well as an economically fragile population in the south, is inclined to anti-government

rebellion and terrorist action. In 2015, the country suffered two major terrorist attacks in tourist hotspots, leading to a drastic [decline](#) in the tourist economy. A nationwide [state of emergency](#), first imposed after a suicide attack on a police bus on 24 November 2015, remains in place. In 2020, three people died in a suicide bombing attack near the US embassy. Tunisia ranked 85th in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#).

EU involvement

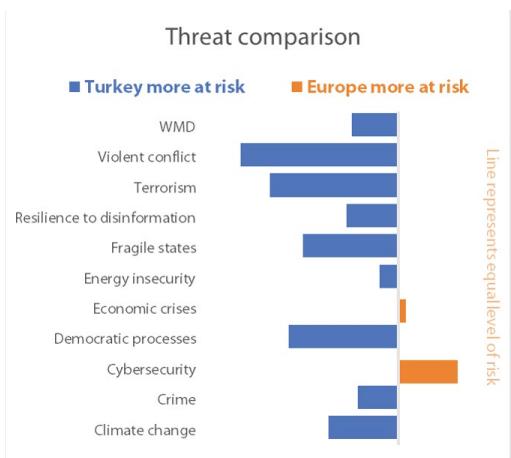
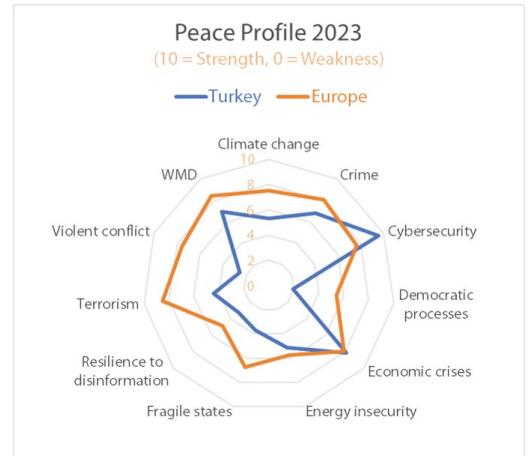
The EU-Tunisia Association Agreement was signed in 1995. The 2011 revolution marked a turning point in [EU-Tunisia relations](#) and led to the establishment of a privileged partnership in 2012. Between 2011 and 2017, EU assistance to Tunisia amounted to €2.4 billion. The EU and Tunisia are also currently negotiating a free trade agreement. From 2017 to 2020, the EU's bilateral assistance averaged €300 million per year. Tunisia is also eligible for funding under the IcSP and Erasmus+. On 10 September 2020, the HR/VP met President Saïed in Carthage. Following the announcement of the referendum and new elections in 2022, the European External Action Service (EEAS) [stated](#) that the EU was monitoring the situation in the country and 'took note' of the decisions made by its president. On 12 February 2022, the HR/VP [outlined](#) the possibility of suspending macro-financial assistance to Tunisia. The HR/VP also expressed concerns following the 2023 elections, stressing the need to include broader civil society and political parties in governance of the country. On 16 July 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding was [signed](#), under which, among other things, the EU agreed to give Tunisia financial and technical support to deter Europe-bound irregular migration.

Türkiye

Türkiye ranks 90th in the Normandy Index, up 24 positions compared with 2022, notably due to a (fragile) macroeconomic stabilisation. However, the ranking also reflects substantial security threats, failures of democratic processes and risks of terrorism and conflicts.

Background and key issues

The failed [military](#) coup in 2016 was followed by constitutional reform and strengthening of the presidential regime, [repression](#) of political opposition and participation in foreign conflicts and maritime disputes in the [eastern Mediterranean](#) with EU Member States. Türkiye ranks 62nd in the [Fragile States Index](#) and 23rd on the impact of terrorism in the [2022 Global Terrorism Index](#). This ranking reflects attacks by ISIL/Da'esh and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Democratic failures and bilateral conflicts with some EU Member States have effectively frozen accession negotiations with EU, as well as modernisation of the [EU-Turkey customs union](#). President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) was re-elected in May 2023 with 52.18 % of the vote. The main campaign issues revolved around the deadly February 2023 earthquake and macroeconomic stabilisation.



New security and hybrid threats

Türkiye is faced with major insecurities, having been involved in foreign [military interventions](#) in Syria, Libya and in northern Iraq. The country's resilience to disinformation and media freedom is amongst the lowest globally, reflective of its ranking at 165th in the [2023 Press Freedom Index](#). [Imprisonment](#) of journalists continues to be a major issue. Türkiye has a 74 % energy [import dependency](#); [local oil production](#) meets only 7 % of the demand. However new discovery of natural gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean might provide substantial energy resources. The new government [appears](#) to be abandoning costly 18-month strategy of keeping the currency on a tight leash by any means necessary. Late nominations of [Hafize Gaye Erkan](#) as Governor of the Turkish Central Bank and [Mehmet Simsek](#) as Minister of Finance indicates that the country is moving away from unorthodox '[Erdoganomics](#)' towards more rational economic decisions.

EU involvement

Türkiye has been in a [customs union](#) with the EU since 1995 and an [accession country](#) since 2005. The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) funding adopted in 2021-2022 amounts to €453.4 million. Relations with the EU have deteriorated in recent years. In 2017, the co-legislators agreed to cut pre-accession funds owing to failing democratic standards. In 2020, following Türkiye's military action in [Syria](#) and [Libya](#) and illegal drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean, the EU put Türkiye's accession application on hold. In total, Türkiye has received approximately €10 billion in EU aid under the [EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#) and other refugee assistance since 2011. Following the February 2023 earthquake, the International Donors' Conference [pledged](#) a total €7 billion, of which €6.05 billion was grants and loans for Türkiye. Türkiye's '[non-binary policy](#)' in Russia's war on Ukraine has enabled the country to strike a delicate balance between NATO expectations, Russia's economic lifeline, and domestic political pressures.

Ukraine

Ukraine ranks 113th in the Normandy Index. Since February 2022, Russia's illegal and unjustified war of aggression is deeply disrupting the human, economic and political domains. The EU remains committed to providing further political, military and financial support to help Ukraine exercise its right of self-defence.

Background and key issues

In 2013, President Viktor Yanukovych's decision [not to sign](#) an association agreement with the EU sparked major [pro-European protests](#). In February 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament [voted](#) to remove Yanukovych from power, citing abandoning office as grounds. Russia responded by annexing the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014, launching a hybrid war, including limited military aggression in eastern Ukraine and [repetitive](#) military build-up at the country's borders. Up to January 2022, the war had [cost](#) over 14 000 lives. Russia then launched a full-scale war on Ukraine on 24 February 2022, in violation of international law. Since then, over 6.3 million [refugees](#) have left the country.



New security and hybrid threats

In 2022, [Ukraine](#) has lost control of around 17% of its territory, including the Crimean peninsula, regions bordering the Azov Sea, the major part of Luhansk region, and large parts of the Donbas region and the Black Sea coastline. However, Ukraine has [regained](#) control of wide north-east and southern parts of the country. The regained territory [uncovered](#) the scale of Russian forces' atrocities. The war has [caused](#) the loss of thousands of lives and massive destruction of infrastructure, including civilian housing. According to an April 2023 [World Bank](#) assessment, the damage inflicted during the first year of conflict is estimated at US\$135 billion, and economic losses at US\$290 billion. The [military expenditure](#) remains high, with

US\$44 billion spent by Ukraine (and US\$86 billion by Russia) in 2022. As war has disrupted both production and distribution of electricity, with Europe's biggest [nuclear](#) power plant at Zaporizhzhya [occupied](#) by Russia, energy insecurity [remains](#) a serious concern. The detrimental impact of war on the environment, including destruction of the [Kakhovka](#) dam on 6 June 2023 and consequent [flooding](#), could further [worsen](#) Ukrainian resistance to [environmental](#) factors and climate change.

EU involvement

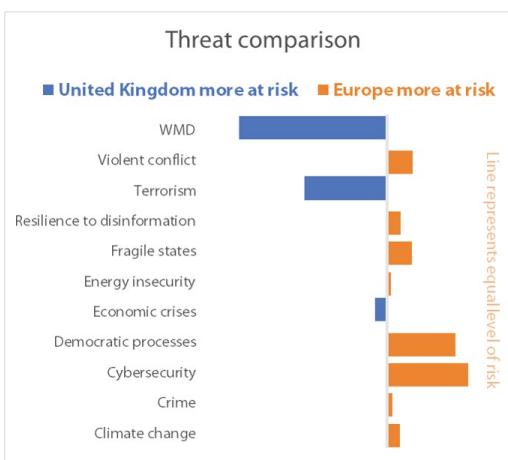
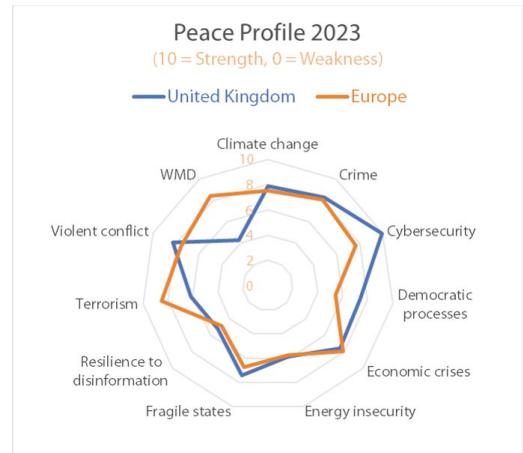
EU-Ukraine relations are based on an [Association Agreement](#), including a DCFTA, signed in 2014. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU introduced broad [sanctions](#) against Russia. Since February 2022, the EU, its Member States and its financial institutions have allocated [€53 billion](#) to Ukraine, including €37.8 billion in a form of [macro-financial assistance](#), budget support, emergency assistance, crisis response, humanitarian aid and other things, as well as around €15 billion of military assistance measures, of which [€5.6 billion](#) has been mobilised under the [European Peace Facility \(EPF\)](#). To support the country's army, the EU established a Military Assistance Mission ([EUMAM Ukraine](#)). Initially established for a period of two years, EUMAM is expected to train [30 000](#) Ukrainian soldiers in 2023 alone. To reduce [energy](#) insecurity in Ukraine, its power grid was synchronised with the continental European power grid in March 2022. The EU leaders [agreed](#) to recognise Ukraine's European perspective and decided to grant the country [EU accession candidate](#) status in June 2022. One year later, the European Commission proposed to create [Ukraine Facility](#), an instrument aimed at providing predictable financial support in 2024-2027. Worth up to [€50 billion](#), the Ukraine Facility will support both [reconstruction](#) and the country's reform agenda.

United Kingdom

United Kingdom ranks 16th in the Normandy Index, indicating rather low levels of risk. It performs slightly better than the regional average in nearly every indicator, scoring markedly low in the WMD domain and terrorism. It ranks particularly well globally on cybersecurity.

Background and key issues

The United Kingdom has a well-established democratic tradition in the form of a parliamentary system. While it is characterised by a strong [education](#) system and a [high GDP](#) per capita, it is also a country with one of the highest levels of [income inequality](#) in Europe. In the 2021 [Human Development Index](#), it ranked 18th out of the 191 countries measured. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's [Democracy Index](#), the United Kingdom comes 18th overall, performing exceptionally well in electoral process and pluralism. While ranked 34th in the 2022 [Global Peace Index](#), it is the world's second largest [arms and defence exporter](#) and possesses an arsenal of [nuclear weapons](#). Consequently, it has the seventh lowest score on the WMD indicator in the Normandy Index. The UK performs well on most indicators of traditional conflict, yet was ranked 42nd in the 2023 [Global Terrorism Index](#).



New security and hybrid threats

The [cost of living](#) grew sharply in the UK over the last two years, with high inflation, and soaring prices for food, energy and rent. The 2023 [Human Rights Watch](#) report noted inadequate social protection for many vulnerable groups and an increased number of laws that violate human rights. As a net [importer of energy](#) reliant on [gas](#), the UK has been hit hard by the war in Ukraine. Following the 2021 Integrated Review (IR) of the strategic defence and security policy, the UK decided to increase its [nuclear stockpile](#) from 225 to 260 warheads for the first time since the Cold War. Modernising the UK's nuclear enterprise has been prioritised in the 2023 IR update as 'a [critical national endeavour](#)' and attracted more funding. While the country has a high level of press freedom, ranking 26th in

the 2023 [Press Freedom Index](#), it scores below Europe in resilience to misinformation and has been an object of [Russian interference](#) in its political processes. Notably, the UK is the second most protected country in the world from cyber-threats, according to the Normandy Index cybersecurity indicator.

EU involvement

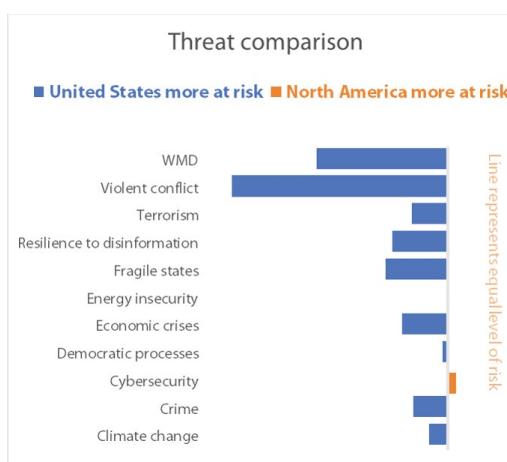
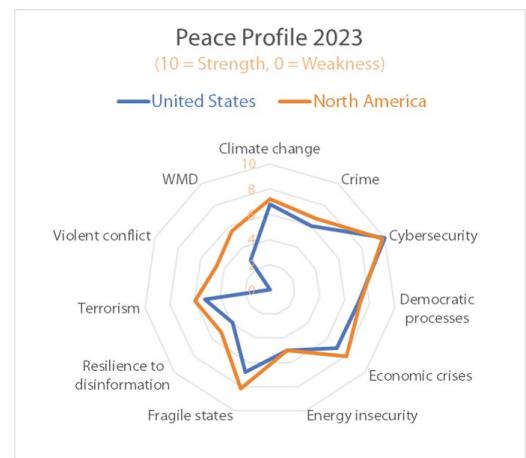
Since 31 January 2020, the UK is no longer a Member State of the EU. Mutual relations are now governed by the EU-UK [Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) (TCA). While the TCA does not [provide](#) a Treaty-based framework for foreign policy or security and defence cooperation, it refers to mutual recognition of 'the importance of global cooperation to address issues of shared interest'. These include upholding the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, combating terrorism and countering proliferation of WMDs and the illicit weapons trade. The TCA also establishes a framework for EU-UK cooperation on cybersecurity and sharing of classified information. Furthermore, EU-UK cooperation takes place through NATO, in the areas defined by the three [NATO-EU joint declarations](#). Both sides cooperated successfully, including through the G7, in the context of [Russia's war on Ukraine](#), providing aid, weaponry and coordinating sanctions. Notably, the UK has recently joined EU's permanent structured cooperation (PESCO). [Economic ties](#) are also strong, with the EU the [UK's](#) largest [trading partner](#). After years of [tense relations](#), the [Windsor Framework](#) agreement may herald a new era of rapprochement.

United States of America

The USA ranks 81st in the Normandy Index. It faces new threats in the WMD domain, after Russia suspended its participation in the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) – and continues to experience a rise in right-wing and lone-wolf terrorism.

Background and key issues

The United States ranked 129th out of 163 countries in the 2022 [Global Peace Index](#), falling from 122nd place in 2021. The economic crisis indicator could deteriorate further, as the Fitch agency downgraded long-term US ratings to 'AA+' from 'AAA' on 1 August 2023. Large military expenditure relative to GDP, continued engagement in external conflicts, high levels of weaponry import and export, considerable incarceration rates, and ongoing partisan disagreement about the functioning of the country's democratic institutions, all contribute to the continued low level of peacefulness relative to other high-income countries. The USA has the [highest rate](#) of gun violence amongst this group of countries. In 2022, [20 270 firearm homicides](#) and 646 mass shootings were committed, only slightly down from 2021 levels.



New security and hybrid threats

The USA is a nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Its 2019 withdrawal from the [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty](#) with Russia and 2020 withdrawal from the 1992 [Open Skies Treaty](#) were alarming new developments. Although the Biden Administration extended the [New START](#) with Russia, the latter [suspended](#) the treaty in February 2023 and the parties no longer share data on nuclear weapons. The USA has seen an overall drop in fatalities from terrorism since 2002, but is suffering from an [increase](#) in domestic terrorism, mostly racially/ethnically motivated. The USA takes cybersecurity very seriously and in 2023 issued a [Cybersecurity Strategy](#) in addition to its 2022 [National Security Strategy](#).

EU involvement

The USA is an EU strategic [partner](#) in the promotion of peace and security globally. In 2011, the USA signed a [Framework Partnership Agreement](#) on participation in CSDP operations and on 26 April 2023, the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the US Department of Defense [signed](#) an [administrative agreement](#) that provides for stronger transatlantic cooperation in specific areas of defence. The USA has taken the [lead](#) on supplying weapons to Ukraine. US-EU cooperation also takes place through NATO, in the areas defined by the [NATO-EU](#) joint declaration. On counter-terrorism, bilateral agreements include: an [Operational Agreement](#) between the USA and Europol, the EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) [Agreement](#), and the EU-US Passenger Name Record (PNR) Agreement. The EU-US [Umbrella Agreement](#) provides a framework of rules governing transatlantic data exchange. In March 2022, an [agreement in principle](#) on a new EU-US Data Privacy Framework was announced. In October 2022 President Biden signed [Executive Order 14086](#), which introduces new rules to address the points raised in the 2020 [Schrems II](#) Court of Justice of the EU ruling. At parliamentary level, the EU and USA hold a regular [Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue](#). In December 2020, the EU issued a new [transatlantic agenda for global change](#), which includes new forms of cooperation in trade and technology, democracy, security and on the environment. The [EU-US Trade and Technology Council](#), [EU-US dialogue on security and defence](#), the dialogue on China and consultations on the Indo-Pacific were launched in 2021, with dialogue on Russia following in 2022. The US-EU Task Force on Energy Security, [announced](#) in March 2022, builds on long-standing, transatlantic cooperation under the US-EU Energy Council, and has [contributed](#) to reducing the EU's dependence on Russian energy.

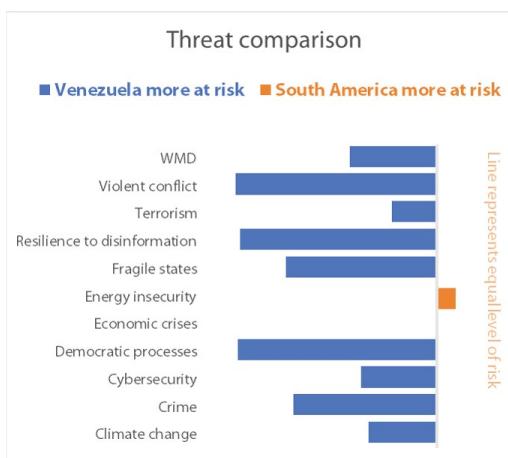
Venezuela

Venezuela ranks 126th in the Normandy Index and is considered more at risk than the South American average. It performs worse on every indicator except energy insecurity at regional level, with international sanctions exacerbating the situation in this domain.

Background and key issues

Since 2010, Venezuela has seen an economic and political [downturn](#) caused by a heavy reliance on oil exports and excess spending. President Nicolás Maduro was re-elected in May 2018, in elections contested due to irregularities. Legislative elections – [not recognised](#) by the EU and other international actors – were held in December 2020. Former opposition leader Juan Guaidó served as the interim president of Venezuela's transitional government from 2019 until late 2022. The EU [downgraded Guaidó's status](#) in 2021 to 'privileged interlocutor' after he lost his position as head of parliament on 30 December 2022 and the National Assembly voted to terminate Guaidó's interim presidency.

Following changes of government in Brazil and Colombia towards the political left, key countries in Latin America are striving to re-engage with Venezuela. The Biden Administration loosened some sanctions against the Maduro government in 2022, and granted Chevron limited authorisation to resume [oil imports](#) from Venezuela in November 2022.



New security and hybrid threats

From 2013 to 2022, Venezuela fell by 63 places in the [Fragile States Index](#), largely as a result of falling state legitimacy and increased group grievances. Venezuela has one of the highest [homicide](#) rates globally. The number of [refugees and migrants from Venezuela](#) has surpassed 7 million, creating a [humanitarian crisis](#) in the region. Venezuelans have become the [second largest group](#) of displaced people in the world. Venezuela has the largest known [oil reserves](#) in the world. However, [power outages](#) and lack of gasoline plague the population. Adding to the many facets of the lack of democracy in the country, the Maduro regime has [used digital disinformation as a political strategy](#) and continues to crack down on [journalists](#) and freedom of expression.

EU involvement

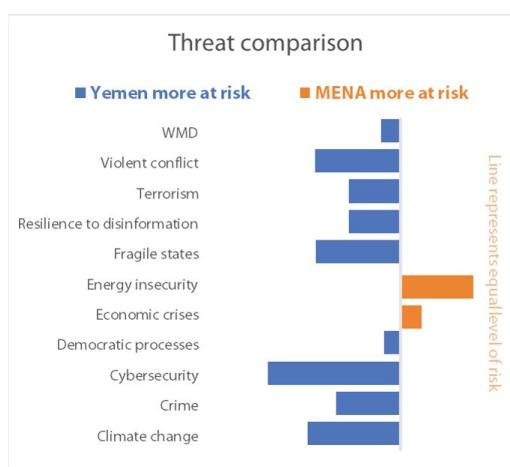
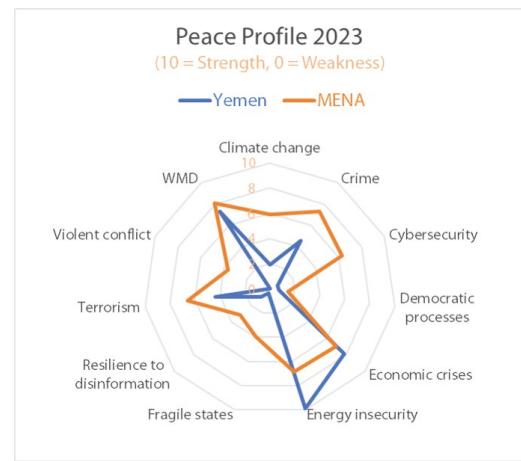
The EU supported the failed dialogue efforts between the government and the parliamentary majority, and reiterated the need for transparent [elections](#) in 2018, and again [in 2020](#). It also imposed [targeted sanctions](#) and an embargo on arms and related material that could be used for internal repression. By the end of 2019, [EU assistance](#) totalled over €170 million. Venezuela has benefited from 10 [IcSP projects](#) (totalling more than €21 million). In 2020, the EU [promoted](#) an International Donors' Conference to help Venezuelan refugees and migrants, pledging an additional [€147 million](#) for them in 2021. It established an [International Contact Group on Venezuela](#), which is working to [facilitate conditions](#) for a [peaceful and democratic solution](#) to the Venezuelan crisis and the rapid delivery of [humanitarian aid](#). In March 2023, the European Commission released over €75 million in humanitarian aid, reaffirming its continued support for Venezuelans and to respond to their most urgent needs. The [2023 International Conference](#) in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants took place in Brussels in March 2023. On 21 January 2021, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the latest developments in the National Assembly of Venezuela. The EU deployed an EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the regional and local [elections](#) of November 2021.

Yemen

Yemen ranks 134th in the Normandy Index, making it the fourth least peaceful country in the world. The conflict between the Saudi-backed government and Iran-backed Houthi forces that erupted in 2014 has killed hundreds of thousands, displaced millions and created severe food shortages. A truce negotiated in April 2022 continues to deliver beyond its expectations, strengthened by the China-brokered rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran announced in March 2023.

Background and key issues

Yemen has suffered [decades](#) of internal conflict, economic mismanagement and extreme weather conditions. A popular uprising in 2011 led authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down. Taking advantage of the ensuing period of [political instability](#), the Houthi movement, tied to the Shia Muslim minority and supported by Iran, took control of northern parts of the country in 2014, sparking a [civil war](#) with the Yemeni Government backed by Saudi Arabia. An [estimated](#) 151 000 people have since been killed and 4.5 million [displaced](#) as a direct result of the [conflict](#). Furthermore, over 226 200 people are believed to have died due to the indirect consequences of the war, including food shortages and a lack of health services. Yemen ranks 22nd in the [2023 Global Terrorism Index](#). Both al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIL/Da'esh are active in Yemen.



New security and hybrid threats

In 2023, Yemen ranks second in the [Fragile States Index](#). This is mainly due to the lack of central government control in large swathes of its northern and western territories, dominated by Houthi forces. The compounded threats of a fragile state and violent conflict have exacerbated issues including food and health shortages. In 2023, [21.6 million](#) people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance, including 13.4 million in acute need. The country has a cereal import [dependency ratio](#) of 97 %, and imports about a third of its [wheat](#) from Ukraine. While since [August 2022](#), the UN Black Sea Grain Initiative allowed for grain exports to Yemen, [prices](#) remained high. The country also ranks 12th worst in the [2023 Notre Dame Adaptability Index](#), a reflection of high vulnerability to climate change coupled with low levels of preparedness.

EU involvement

Since the beginning of the war in 2015, the EU has [contributed](#) over €1.4 billion to respond to the crisis in Yemen. This includes €998 million in humanitarian aid and €487 million in development assistance. In 2023, the EU allocated a further €136 million in humanitarian aid. The EU humanitarian aid includes food assistance, healthcare, education, water, and shelter. It also includes improved hygiene services in areas of high food insecurity and malnutrition, conflict-affected areas, and for displaced populations.

5. ANNEX – The Normandy Index: Methodology

This annex explains the components and the methodology of the index developed by the Institute for Economics and Peace.

Normandy Index of the European Parliament – Methodology

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5.1. The Normandy Index Methodology

5.1.1. Background

Humanity is now facing challenges unparalleled in its history. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has caused an immediate crisis globally and crystallised the interconnectivity of a globalised world. This is occurring in the backdrop of 'mega trends' caused by climate change, ever-decreasing biodiversity, depletion of the earth's fresh water, and overpopulation. All of these are occurring in a socio-political time of great uncertainty, with shifting power dynamics amongst global superpowers, the breakdown of traditional alliances and a widespread crisis of democracy.

Such challenges, whether they be short or long term, call for global solutions and require cooperation on a scale unprecedented in human history. In a hyper-connected world, the sources of many of these challenges are multidimensional, increasingly complex and span national borders.

These challenges, if not addressed, increase the strain on resources, infrastructure and society, all of which can affect levels of peace in nations and the world. The United Nations and World Bank *Pathways for Peace Report* released in 2018 recognised the interconnectivity of these challenges and called for risks to be considered multi-dimensional in nature ([World Bank & United Nations, 2018](#)).

To contribute to the field between the European Parliament and the Region of Normandy seeks to produce the 'Normandy Index' (NI) on an annual basis, starting with the 2019 initial launch. The purpose of the NI is to produce a measurement tool to allow policy makers and civil society be able to grasp different aspects of the threats facing the globe. It aims to capture threats to peace and offer insights into the multidimensional risks faced by countries. Annual updates will allow the tool to track how dynamics shift from year to year and assess positive and negative changes in risks.

The NI has three main aims:

1. To assess the state of conflict and potential for conflict in each given country considering the current state and potential future state;
2. To provide a tool for measuring and monitoring trends across time;
3. To provide a mechanism to link the aforementioned categories of threats with an actual ranking of 'state and risk of conflict' that can be quantified and used for policy-making purposes.

Text Box 1 – The Normandy Index in context

The NI is intended to contribute to the field in being to identify different factors that the EU Parliament believes pose threats to peace in the coming years. As such, the NI is capturing and conveying a unique angle to existing composite indices such as the Institute for Economics and Peace's (IEP) Global Peace Index (GPI).

The GPI produced annually by IEP, ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peace as defined by the absence of violence and absence of fear of violence ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019a](#)). It is as such a measure of levels of *negative* peace today. IEP also explores the *positive* aspects of peace in its Positive Peace Index (PPI), which measures the levels within the 163 countries of the attitudes, institutions and structures that are known to create and sustain peaceful societies ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019b](#)).

Both the GPI and PPI are measuring levels of peace in the world *today*. The NI however is capturing *threats* to peace in the world today making it a useful contribution to the suite of tools used for quantitative analysis of peace and security.

The Normandy Index (NI) covers 137 countries and regions. The EU is considered one bloc and is given the average score of each country member.

5.1.2. Methodology Overview

In the EU Global Strategy 2016, the EU has prioritised a number of domains as being threats to peace in the coming years ([European Union, 2016](#)).

Each domain is in and of itself a complex system with multiple, interconnecting dimensions that are hard to quantify. Recognising this, the NI seeks to simplify many of these domain concepts by selecting one key representative indicator, rather than delving into the more complex and subjective exercise of selecting, weighting and aggregating multiple indicators for each domain. The indicators that were selected for each domain were done so based on current academic and policy literature, data availability, and in consultation with the European Parliament.

Table 1 presents the indicators selected to capture these domains.

TABLE 1 – Normandy Index – indicators

IEP research is directly relevant to the Normandy Index (NI).

Domain	Indicators	Definition	Source	Number of Countries Covered	Latest Year of Data
Climate Change	INFORM Global Risk index	INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters.	United Nations	191	2023
Cybersecurity	Cybersecurity Index	The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) is a survey measure capturing the commitment of Member States to cybersecurity in order to raise awareness. It is the only open source Cybersecurity Index that can be found.	International Telecommunication Union	194	2020
Democratic Processes	Participatory democracy index	A measure of the extent that the ideal of participatory democracy achieved within a country.	VDEM	179	2021
Economic Crises	Financial Vulnerability - Non-performing loans as % of total loans	Nonperforming loans to total gross loans ratio is calculated by using the value of nonperforming loans (NPLs) as the numerator and the total value of the loan portfolio as the denominator. It is often used as a proxy for asset quality.	World Bank	143	2021
	Central government debt, total (% of GDP)	Central government debt, total (% of GDP)	International Monetary Fund	135	2022
Energy Insecurity	Energy Imports	Energy imports, net (% of energy use). Banded to be 0 if country is a net exporter of energy.	World Bank, Enerdata	143	2021
	Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)	Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)	World Bank	142	2019

Domain	Indicators	Definition	Source	Number of Countries Covered	Latest Year of Data
Fragile States	Fragile States Index	The Fragile States Index (FSI) is an annual ranking of 178 countries based on the different pressures they face that impact their levels of fragility. The Index is based on The Fund for Peace's proprietary Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) analytical approach. Based on comprehensive social science methodology, three primary streams of data — quantitative, qualitative, and expert validation — are triangulated and subjected to critical review to obtain final scores for the FSI.	Fund For Peace	179	2022
Crime	Homicide Rate per 100 000	Homicide Rate per 100 000 - used as a proxy for crime	UNODC	192	2018
	Perceptions of Criminality Banded	Responses to the Gallup Questions 'Do you Feel Safe Walking Alone'	Gallup/IEP	163	2022
Resilience to Disinformation	Resilience to Disinformation	A measure of how often domestic and foreign Governments and Political Parties use social media and advertising to spread disinformation within the country.	VDEM	179	2021
Terrorism	Global Terrorism Index	A composite score in order to provide an ordinal ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism. The impact of terrorism includes incidents, deaths, injuries, and property damage caused by terrorism.	Institute for Economics and Peace	163	2023
Violent Conflict	Conflict sub-indicators of the Global Peace Index	Worst score of the following indicators from the Global Peace Index: (1) Intensity of Internal Conflict, (2) Deaths from Internal Conflict (3) Number of Internal conflicts, (4) Intensity of External Conflict, (5) Deaths from External Conflict	Institute for Economics and Peace	163	2022
WMD	Nuclear Threat Index	The Nuclear Threat Index assesses countries' progress on nuclear security, highlights security gaps, and recommends actions for governments to better protect nuclear materials and facilities and build an effective global nuclear security architecture.	EIU	176	2018

The EU Global Strategy 2016 also discusses the importance of *hybrid threats* in coming years. Hybrid threats combine conventional and unconventional, military and non-military activities that can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific political objectives. They can range from cyberattacks on critical information systems, through to the disruption of critical services such as energy supplies or financial services, to the undermining of public trust in government institutions or the deepening of social divisions. Given the combined nature of hybrid threats, it is not possible to capture the risk posed to a country in any one measure. By capturing the potential components of hybrid threats in the NI domains, no separate 'hybrid threat' domain is calculated.

5.1.3. Detailed Domain and Indicator Descriptor

Domain 1 – Climate Change

Full Description: The INFORM Global Risk Index gives an annual per country score between zero and ten, where ten is 'very high risk'.

Rationale: INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters, based on three dimensions of hazard & exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. It recognises climate change and the risks associated with it as having both natural and man-made components, and that the risk resulting from climate change is also dependent on how countries are able to cope with the effects of climate change.

Source: INFORM ([European Commission, 2019](#))

URL: <http://www.inform-index.org/>

Domain 2 - Cybersecurity

Indicator: Global Cybersecurity Index

Full Description: The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) is a measure of the commitment of Member States of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to cybersecurity, assessed along five dimensions: legal measures; technical measures; organizational measures; capacity building; and, cooperation.

Rationale: The threat from cybersecurity can only be countered by a systemic and cross-sectoral regulatory approach grounded in technological capabilities. If a country is not currently taking active steps to protect financial and physical infrastructure, personal or government data, it leaves itself open to attacks. Examining the action and measures a country takes to try and minimize threats from cyber-attacks, via this GCI, is a viable, open source quantified measure of future threat.

Source: ITU ([International Telecommunication Union, 2017](#))

URL: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Pages/global-cybersecurity-index.aspx>

Domain 3 – Democratic Processes

Indicator: Participatory democracy Index

Full Description: The Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) database is a set of country level indicators of political or governmental organization; a society or institution with an organized government; the state; and the body politic.

The Participatory Democracy Index used in the NI is a measure of the extent to which the ideal of participatory democracy achieved within a country.

Rationale: Democratic processes are widely recognised as contributing to peace. Well-functioning democracies themselves have institutions to deal with societal grievances in a non-violent way. It is also believed democracies are less likely to engage in armed conflict with other democracies.

Democratic countries on average have the highest levels of peace globally in the Global Peace Index ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019a](#)). Furthermore, with the exception of relatively infrequent 'black swan' political or conflict events, a country's current democratic status tends to be a good predictor of future democratic status.

Source: Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) ([University of Gothenburg, 2020](#))

URL: <https://www.v-dem.net>

Domain 4 – Economic Crises

Indicator: Financial Vulnerability- Non-performing loans as % of total loans

Full Description: Nonperforming loans to total gross loans ratio is calculated by using the value of nonperforming loans (NPLs) as the numerator and the total value of the loan portfolio as the denominator. It is often used as a proxy for asset quality.

Rationale: Non-performing loans are a good predictor of financial crises, with broader social consequences. Most immediately, high levels of debt may affect the state's ability to provide basic public services, which in turn is a key source of legitimacy for a government. Excess borrowing, particularly external debt, means increased exposure to global market risks, and creditor decisions, both of which can make a state vulnerable to external economic shocks ([Weltwirtschaftsforum & Zurich Insurance Group, 2019](#)). Unsustainable borrowing and debt may exacerbate underlying societal cleavages, particularly if real or perceived inequalities grow.

Source: World Bank ([World Bank, 2020, Trading Economics, 2021](#))

URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FB.AST.NPER.ZS>

Indicator: General government net debt (% GDP)

Full Description: General government net debt to GDP ratio is calculated by using the value of General government net debt as the numerator and the total GDP as the denominator.

Rationale: Sovereign debt crisis have been found to be correlated with civil unrest (Reinhart, 2010), and some have argued that sovereign debt crisis followed by extreme austerity measures were a contributing factor to the outbreak of World War II in Germany, and genocide in Rwanda ([Goldmann, 2012](#)).

Source: International Monetary Fund

URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/April>

Domain 5 – Energy Insecurity

Indicator: Energy Imports

Full Description: Energy imports, net (% of energy use).

Rationale: Energy independence, that is self-reliance on domestic sources of energy including oil, natural gas, other minerals as well as clean energy sources, has been a defining component of energy security since at least the oil price crisis of October 1973 ([Cohen et al., 2011](#)). Although it is but one aspect of energy security, along with measures such as source diversity and distance to consumption, it is a measure for which open source, comparable data exists at a global scale, and is hence minimally sufficient to capture the conceptual threat of energy insecurity.

IEP has supplemented the World Bank data with more recent data obtained from the Global Energy Statistical Yearbook 2020. This covers 60 countries up to 2019.

Source: World Bank ([World Bank, 2020, Enerdata, 2021](#))

URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/eg.imp.cons.zs>

<https://yearbook.enerdata.net/>

Indicator: Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)

Full Description: Electric power consumption (kWh per capita)

Rationale: Countries that consume more energy and have high dependence on imports will be more fragile than countries with a different profile.

Source: World Bank ([World Bank, 2022](#))

URL: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.USE.ELEC.KH.PC>

Domain 6 – Fragile States

Indicator: Fragile States Index

Full Description: A score between 0 and 120, where 120 is the highest level of fragility. Each country is scored annually based on 12 conflict risk indicators grouped into four dimensions: cohesion, economic, political and social.

Rationale: The Fragile States Index is based on a conflict assessment framework – known as 'CAST' – that was developed by FFP nearly a quarter-century ago for assessing the vulnerability of states to collapse. The CAST framework was designed to measure this vulnerability in pre-conflict, active conflict and post-conflict situations, and continues to be used widely by policy-makers, field practitioners, and local community networks. The methodology uses both qualitative and quantitative indicators, relies on public source data, and produces quantifiable results.

Source: The Fragile States Index

URL: <https://fragilestatesindex.org/>

Domain 7 – Criminality/Homicide

Indicator: Homicide rate

Full Description: Country Homicide rate per 100 000 population

Rationale: High homicide rates are associated with high risks to security of persons within a country and reflects a diminished capacity of government to perform its duties to protect people within its borders.

The EU Global Strategy highlights trans-border crime as a significant potential threat to peace in the world. Transnational organised crime, by its very nature, affects all countries. The nature of trans-border crimes vary greatly, from Class A drug smuggling to human trafficking. Crime recording varies from country to country, and so there is no one database that captures interdictions of trans-border crimes. While UNODC publish a 'transnational organized crime threat assessment', these are meant to be applied at the local level and do not provide a platform to be able to create a globally comparative ranking of countries.²² Further complicating the issue is that the factors which enable trans-border crime also enable all other types of economic activity: communications, trade, interconnectedness, globalisation and new technologies.

In the absence of a relative country measure for transnational/transborder crime, the NI uses a countries homicide rate per 100 000 as a proxy for levels of crime. While this is a crude measure, the link between homicide and organised crime is widely explored,²³ it has been used in the literature as an indicator of organised crime in a country.²⁴

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

URL: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/statistical-activities.html>

Indicator: Perceptions of Criminality

Full Description: Responses to the Gallup World Poll Question: 'Do you Feel Safe Walking Alone?'

Rationale: Perceptions of Criminality in a society affect citizens' sense of security and identity with broader implications to businesses, security spending and security policies. Perceptions of high levels of criminality can have a destabilising effect on the social contract between a Government and its population. The Institute for Economics and Peace has found that the cost of violence containment, which is influenced by perceived threats, costs around US\$1 800 per person per year ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019](#)).

Source: IEP ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019](#))

URL: <http://www.visionofhumanity.org>

A final country score is calculated by a weighted sum of 0.75 Homicide Rate + 0.25 Perceptions of Criminality.

²² (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010)

²³ (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011)

²⁴ (Alberto Alesina, 2019)

Domain 8 – Resilience to Disinformation

Indicator: Resilience to Disinformation

Full Description: The Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) database has four indicators of the presence of disinformation:

1. Government dissemination of false information domestic: How often do the government and its agents use social media to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence its own population?
2. Party dissemination of false information domestic: How often do major political parties and candidates for office use social media to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence their own population?
3. Foreign governments' dissemination of false information: How routinely do foreign governments and their agents use social media to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence domestic politics in this country?
4. Foreign governments' ads: How routinely do foreign governments and their agents use paid advertisements on social media in order to disseminate misleading viewpoints or false information to influence domestic politics in this country?

Each country is ranked on a Likert scale of (0) Extremely often to (4) Never, or almost never. The Resilience to Disinformation indicator used in the NI is the country average of each of these four indicators.

Rationale: There is a growing concern over the ability of both state and non-state actors to not only restrict the free flow of information, but also to actively interfere in the functioning of civil society through the use of disinformation campaigns. Research into resilience to disinformation is a relatively new field of quantification with a number of emerging sources in recent years ([Eurasian States in Transition Research Center, 2018; Global Disinformation Index, 2020](#)). The NI will continually monitor the literature to build on these measures in forthcoming releases.

Source: Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) ([University of Gothenburg, 2020](#))

URL: <https://www.v-dem.net>

Domain 9 – Terrorism

Indicator: Global Terrorism Index Score

Full Description: A composite score that provides an ordinal ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism. The impact of terrorism includes incidents, deaths, injuries, and hostages caused by terrorism

Rationale: This is a core indicator of the multidimensional impact of terrorism on a country. This is the most reliable and consistent data source, available across more than 163 countries and updated on an annual basis, starting in 2007.

Source: IEP ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023](#))

URL: <http://www.visionofhumanity.org>

Domain 10 – Violent Conflicts

Indicator: Violent Conflict

Full Description: A composite indicator of the number, intensity and fatalities of both internal and external violent conflicts.

Rationale: The Institute for Economics and Peace in its annual Global Peace Index measures the following four indicators relating to violent conflict:

Number and Duration of Internal Conflicts

This indicator measures the number and duration of conflicts that occur within a specific country's legal boundaries. Information for this indicator is sourced from three datasets from

Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP): the Battle-Related Deaths Dataset, Non-State Conflict Dataset and One-sided Violence Dataset.

Number of Deaths from Organised Internal Conflict

This indicator uses the UCDP's definition of conflict. UCDP defines conflict as: 'a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year.' Statistics are compiled from the most recent edition of the IISS ACD, which has the following definition of armed conflict-related fatalities: 'Fatality statistics relate to military and civilian lives lost as a direct result of an armed conflict'.

Number, Duration and Role in External Conflicts

This indicator measures the number and duration of extraterritorial conflicts a country is involved in. Information for this indicator is sourced from the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset. The score for a country is determined by adding all individual conflict scores where that country is involved as an actor in a conflict outside its legal boundaries. Conflicts are not counted against a country if they have already been counted against that country in the number and duration of internal conflicts indicator.

Number of Deaths from Organised External Conflict

This indicator uses the UCDP's definition of conflict as 'a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year'. When no data were provided, several alternative sources have been used: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Armed Conflict Database; the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, and the EIU.

Each of these are scored out of 1-5. The NI uses a country's worst score across all of these indicators for the Violent Conflict domain.

Source: IEP ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019a](#))

URL: <http://www.visionofhumanity.org>

Domain 11 – Weapons of Mass Destruction

Indicator: Nuclear and Heavy Weapons Capabilities Indicator

Full Description: The Global Peace Index Nuclear and Heavy Weapons Capabilities Score (HWC): a categorised system for rating the destructive capability of a country's stock of heavy weapons. Holdings are those of government forces and do not include holdings of armed opposition groups. Heavy weapons numbers were determined using a combination of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Countries are given a score of 1 for low military capabilities. Nuclear countries are scored 5.

Rationale: This indicator is a categorised system for rating the destructive capability of a country's stock of heavy weapons.

Source: IEP ([Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019a](#))

URL: <http://www.visionofhumanity.org>

Indicator: Nuclear Threat Index

Full Description: The Nuclear Threat Index assesses countries' progress on nuclear security, highlights security gaps, and recommends actions for governments to better protect nuclear materials and facilities and build an effective global nuclear security architecture.

Normandy Index Score is calculated by the minimum country score in the following three indicators:

1. Nuclear Threat 1: Scores for 22 countries with 1kg or more of weapons-useable nuclear materials
2. Nuclear Threat 2: Scores for 153 countries and Taiwan with <1kg of weapons-useable nuclear materials
3. Nuclear Sabotage: 46 countries and Taiwan with nuclear facilities including power plants and research reactors with a capacity >2MW

In addition, to capture potential fallout or tensions posed by a country by the Nuclear Threat of neighbouring or regional countries, the NI calculates a country score incorporates the average regional score.

A final country score is calculated by a weighted sum of 0.75 Country Score + 0.25 Regional Score.

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

URL: <https://www.ntiindex.org/>

5.1.4. Data Availability and Imputation

The methodology developed has been designed to align with other prominent global indicators, and substantial effort has been made to populate the index with the best existing country information. However, the major challenge to developing a harmonised composite index is in attempting to overcome the paucity of consistent and comprehensive data across very diverse countries around the world. They vary significantly not just in terms of demographic and geographic characteristics, but also in terms of socio-economic characteristics, which can often impact data collection and quality. The issue of data gaps is a common challenge to creating an index. The OECD recommend a number of statistical techniques for dealing with data imputation to fill in data gaps (OECD et al., 2008). Table 2 lists the approaches used in the NI. Using the combination of these techniques, the NI represents the use of the best possible data without an overly complex methodology.

TABLE 2: Data Imputation methods

Method	Description	Application in NI
Cold Deck Imputation	Replacing the missing value with a value from another source.	The NI uses this either when it uses the most recent data point in a series as the current data point, or uses additional country statistics to fill in gaps.
Hot Deck Imputation	Replacing the missing value with a regional average.	The NI uses hot deck imputation for data that is not available for all countries.

5.1.5. Weighting the Indicators

As the EU Global Strategy 2018 does not rank domains in order of priority, the NI uses an equal weight of 1 across all domains, simplifying the calculation of the final NI score.

The only NI domain with more than one indicator is that of Crime which includes Intentional homicides (per 100 000 people) and Perceptions of Criminality Banded, which are weighted at 0.75 and 0.25 respectively.

5.1.6. Domain Calculations

This section illustrates how each indicator, and hence each domain is treated. The Domain process is in two stages: 1) data collection, and 2) imputation and banding.

Banding data in the case of the NI is a way of dealing with comparing otherwise incongruous information. It takes each indicator and scales them to a score between 0 and 1, relative to the whole data set. To do this, appropriate minimum and maximum values for the data set are decided such that anything below the minimum is assigned 0, and anything above the maximum is assigned 1, and everything else is scaled evenly between the two. Therefore, in year y , after data imputation, the banded score is calculated for indicator i by Equation 1.

Equation 1: Banding Equation

$$\text{Banded}_i = \frac{\text{Country Indicator Value in Year } y_i - \text{mininum cutoff}_i}{\text{maximum cutoff}_i - \text{mininum cutoff}_i}$$

Banding this way indicates the implicit assumption that higher levels of the indicator are better. However, higher levels of some indicators, such as the Global Terrorism Index score, represent a less desirable case for countries. In such cases, the banded score is reverse and is calculated by Equation 2.

Equation 2: Reverse banding equation

$$\text{Reverse Banded}_i = 1 - \frac{\text{Country Indicator Value in Year } y_i - \text{mininum cutoff}_i}{\text{maximum cutoff}_i - \text{mininum cutoff}_i}$$

The banded indicator score for each country is then the domain score, as each domain is measured by only one indicator. Each domain score lies between zero and one.

An integral part of this process is to set appropriate minimum and maximum cut-off values for the banded scores. There are empirical and normative methods available for doing this. While some data may be distributed normally and therefore lend itself well to standard and well-defined mathematical techniques such as defining outliers as those greater than three standard deviations from the mean, other data sets do not follow well-behaved trends. The final choice of which technique is used must depend on a number of considerations: the nature of the data, the underlying distribution, the purpose of the index, what information is being conveyed, etc. Upon investigation of the global datasets used in the YDI, very few of the distributions can be classified as normal. The presence of outliers affects not only the average, but the variance, skewing both the minimum and maximum.

To account for this, IEP in some instances set artificial minimums and maximums to ensure results are not too heavily influenced by outliers. In the cases where outliers are present, the lower bound set for the banding process are set as the lowest data point that is within 1.5 times the interquartile range below the first quartile (where the interquartile range is defined as the distance between the first and third quartiles). Similarly the upper bound set for the banding process are set as the largest data point that is within 1.5 times the interquartile range above the third quartile.

5.1.7. Aggregating Domain Scores to Final NI Score

Since each domain is weighted equally in terms of threat significance, the final aggregated NI score can be calculated as the average of the eleven domain scores. Thus the final NI score is a value between zero and ten for each country in each year.

$$NI\ Score = 11 \times \frac{\sum_{i=D1}^{D11} Country\ Indicator\ Banded\ Score_i}{11}$$

5.1.8. Bibliography

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With war having returned to the European continent, measuring the level of threats to peace, security and democracy around the world – as the 'Normandy Index' does – is more important than ever. The annual Index was presented for the first time at the Normandy Peace Forum in June 2019, as a result of a partnership between the European Parliament and the Region of Normandy. The Index has been designed and prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), in conjunction with and on the basis of data provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace. This paper sets out the findings of the 2023 exercise, which draws on data compiled in 2022, and explains how the Index can be used to compare peace – defined on the basis of a given country's performance against a range of predetermined threats – across countries and regions. It is complemented by 61 individual country case studies, derived from the Index.

The paper forms part of the EPRS contribution to the 2023 Normandy World Peace Forum. It is accompanied by two papers, one on the EU's contribution to peace and security in 2022, and the other on EU peace-building efforts in Iraq.

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