

NATO Members' Burden Sharing Behaviour in the Aftermath of Russia's Annexation of Crimea, 2014-2021

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Abstract

In 2014, NATO condemned Russia's primary acts of aggression against Ukraine in the Crimea region, whilst firmly supporting Ukrainian sovereignty. NATO took several steps in response to the changed security environment. By July 2014, economic sanctions were in place and, by 2016, battlegroups to enhance its forward presence were employed in Eastern Europe. In February 2022, these actions did not prevent Russia from invading Ukraine. To learn about mutual threat perceptions and ideas on counter-threat, this chapter examines and compares NATO member states' individual contributions to counter Russian threats. We aim to provide insights into how NATO members shared the burden of actions against Russian threats upon the annexation of the Crimea from 2014 until 2021. Our analysis includes NATO members' defence spending, including contributions to Enhanced Forward Presence, the Baltic Air Policing mission and endeavours to reduce dependency on Russian gas and oil. Our findings show NATO members responded heterogeneously to the changed security environment. For instance, whereas some decreased their Russian gas imports, other members did the opposite. Although most member states did increase their defence spending, the levels varied.

Keywords: NATO, Burden sharing, Military expenditure, Enhanced Forward Presence, Baltic Air Policing, Russian energy, Responsibility sharing

1. Introduction

Since the establishment of NATO, in 1949, the burden sharing question has been central to allied political discussions.¹ Most burden sharing debates revolve around defence spending, the United States accusing Europe of spending too little on defence. Usually, it is a combination of burden sharing determinants that

¹ Bogers, Beeres, and Bollen, "NATO burden sharing research," 534; Haesebrouck, "NATO burden sharing after the Wales summit," 637.

explains the contributions of NATO member states. A low threat perception often goes hand in hand with less domestic support for higher defence spending. In times of conflict, governments tend to raise defence spending.² In times of peace, when national security does not play an important role on voter choice, governments tend to invest less money in defence.

In 2014, NATO's members collectively condemned Russia's primary acts of aggression against Ukraine in the Crimea region, and firmly supported Ukraine's sovereignty. NATO took several steps in response to the changed security environment. At the Wales summit in 2014, NATO members agreed to move their defence spending towards 2 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) within a decade. Facing Russian threat, NATO states also collaborated on additional dimensions. By July 2014, economic sanctions were in place and, by 2016, NATO deployed battlegroups to enhance its forward presence in the Eastern European region. Ultimately, in February 2022, these actions proved unable to prevent Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Did some NATO members fail in the follow up to Russia's annexation of the Crimea? Would the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 have been prevented if NATO Europe invested more in the military instead of doing business with Russia? These questions are difficult to answer, as it is difficult to predict the Russian response to other policies. However, we can examine and compare NATO member states' individual actions after Russia's annexation of Crimea and learn more about their burden sharing behaviour, threat perception and ideas on counter-threat.

However, to construct a meaningful narrative on burden sharing, one needs to understand that states do not always have the same threat perception, nor do they agree on any one scenario pursuing shared strategies.³ After Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 each NATO member made its own tradeoff between 'guns and butter.' Some members substantially increased their defence spending, other members' defence spending only increased to a limited extent. And, although Germany expressed concerns about Russia's annexation of Crimea and took part in the European sanctions against Russia, Germany decided to continue the Baltic Sea gas pipeline deal. German politicians justified these actions referring to a policy known as *Wandel durch Handel* (i.e., Change through Trade) arguing that economic exchange would help Russia to become less authoritarian and more democratic. After Russia invaded Ukraine the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated that Germany was wrong about this policy.⁴

² George and Sandler, "NATO defense demand, free riding, and the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022," 795-800; Kim, and Sandler, "NATO at 70," 406-411.

³ Bogers, Beeres, and Bollen, "Burden-sharing for global cooperation on safety and security," 31.

⁴ Deutsche Welle, "German President Steinmeier admits mistakes over Russia."

This chapter aims to provide insight into how NATO members shared both military and non-military burdens regarding actions against Russian threats upon the annexation of the Crimea from 2014 until 2021. To this end, we examine each member states' defence spending during this period. As using an indicator focused solely on expenditure provides no insight into the deployability and efficiency of member states' defence systems, we apply output measures as well. To this end, we incorporate member states' troop contributions to Enhanced Forward Presence and the Baltic Air Policing mission. Finally, we find, studying NATO member states' burden sharing behaviour solely in military terms does not account for political and societal complexities at the core of security. Therefore, in our research, we measure how far member states have been able to reduce their import and export dependencies on energy trade with the Russian Federation.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The next section draws on burden sharing theory. We elaborate on selected measures to express burden sharing behaviour amongst NATO members over the relevant period. In the third section we present our research methodology. Section four presents and discusses NATO's burden sharing behaviour. Finally, section five concludes our chapter.

2. Operational burden sharing

Cimbala and Forster define burden sharing as the distribution of costs and risks among members of a group in the process of accomplishing a common goal.⁵ Dependent on the common goal, burden sharing can be operationalised differently in diverse contexts. Given the research goal, it is possible to narrow the focus of the burden down to, for instance, military expenditures within a military alliance.⁶ Of course, while investigating national contributions to international safety and security, the focus can be broadened, for example, to encompass foreign aid, combatting terrorist finance, carbon dioxide reduction and refugee protection, amongst others.⁷

In this chapter, we focus on the common goal: the deterrence by NATO members of Russian aggression regarding annexation of Crimea, from 2014 until 2021. Given this perspective we find three dimensions relevant to analyse the allies' burden sharing behaviour in response to the changed security environment upon the annexation of Crimea. First, the increase in military expenditures over the period 2014-2021. At the Wales Summit 2014, all NATO members pledged to increase

⁵ Cimbala and Forster. *Multinational Military Intervention*, 320

⁶ Becker and Malesky, "The continent or the "grand large"?", 164.

⁷ Bogers, Beeres, and Bollen, "Burden-sharing for global cooperation on safety and security," 28.

their defence spending to at least 2 per cent over the next decade; second, the contributions towards the Enhanced Forward Presence and Baltic Air Policing missions and, finally, the decrease in use of Russian energy from 2014. At the time, Secretary General Rasmussen, in the context of the Crimean annexation, urged NATO members to turn energy diversification into a strategic transatlantic priority to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian gas and oil.⁸

3. Research methods

In this section we provide an overview of the parameters used for measuring the three dimensions introduced in the previous section. These parameters are selected based on:

- 1) literature regarding burden sharing⁹
- 2) availability of reliable data underlying the parameters¹⁰

Table 15.1 summarises the parameters to express the burden sharing behavior of NATO members. Furthermore, Table 15.1 extends an overview concerning the period of data collection, data sources, and the tables that hold the results.

Parameters	Period	Source	Table
Defense expenditures as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	2014-2021	NATO (2023a); SIPRI (2023)	2
Contributions to Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP)	2017-2022	IISS (2023); NATO (2023b)	3
Contributions to Air Policing mission	2014-2021	IISS (2022); Janes (2021); NATO (2019a,b,c; 2020a,b,c,d,e; 2021a,b, c); The Baltic Times (2021); Werkman (2023)	4
Imports of Natural Gas from Russia	2014-2021	Eurostat (2023a); EIA (2023a),	5
Import of oil and petroleum from Russia	2014-2021	Eurostat (2023b); EIA (2023b); Canada Energy Regulator (2023)	6

Table 15.1: Summary of parameters

⁸ NATO. “NATO’s energy security agenda.”
⁹ Bogers, Beeres, and Bollen, “NATO burden sharing research along three paradigms,” 4-6,
¹⁰ Bogers, Beeres, and Bollen, “Burden-sharing for global cooperation on safety and security,” 34-38;
Chalmers, *Sharing Security*; Zyla, “Who is free-riding in NATO’s peace operations in the 1990s?,” 416-441.

4. Results

In this section an analysis of empirical findings aims to provide insight into the burden sharing behaviour displayed by 31 NATO members and 2 NON-NATO (Finland and Sweden) member states regarding their actions after the annexation of Crimea by Russia. We will do so according to each dimension and corresponding measure presented in Table 15.1.

4.1 Defense expenditures

Table 15.2 presents an overview of the defence expenditures of the NATO allies. In 2014, Greece, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) spent more than 2 per cent of their GDP on defence. Several states (Croatia, Estonia, France, Poland) came very close to the 2 per cent goal. Belgium, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain spent less than 1 per cent of their GDP on defence in 2014. Seven years later nine states spent more than 2 per cent on defence. In 2021, Luxembourg is the only NATO member to spend less than 1 per cent of its GDP on defence.

Table 15.2 also reveals that all states, except the US, have increased their defence spending as a percentage of national income after the annexation of Crimea. The last two columns show to what extent a state has increased its spending. East European states Latvia (128.8 per cent), Lithuania (130.8 per cent), Hungary (96.6 per cent), Slovakia (75.5 per cent) and Southern European state Greece (61.7 per cent) have increased their spending the most. Portugal (1.6 per cent), Albania (4.4 per cent) and the UK (5.6 per cent) show the lowest increase, and in the case of the US (-4.0 per cent) there is a decline.

In 2021, there are states that still spend less than 1.5 per cent of their GDP on defence. Until Russia's invasion in Ukraine in 2022 those states seemed not to be in a hurry to meet the 2 per cent goal. Since Russia's invasion in Ukraine many member states have committed to invest more in defence at a faster pace. The Netherlands expects to reach the 2 per cent goal in 2024-2025,¹¹ Germany in 2025,¹² Denmark in 2023,¹³ and Czechia in 2024.¹⁴ There are also states that expect not to meet the NATO goal in 2024. Italy expects to reach it in 2028,¹⁵ Spain in 2029.¹⁶ Finally, Portugal does not expect to reach the goal in this decade.¹⁷

¹¹ Rijksoverheid, "Voldoen aan de NAVO-norm van 2%."

¹² The Defence Post, "Germany says will reach NATO spending target by 2025."

¹³ Reuters, "Denmark to boost defence spending and phase out Russian gas."

¹⁴ Reuters, "Czech Senate backs setting NATO spending target of 2% of GDP as law."

¹⁵ Reuters, "Denmark to boost defence spending and phase out Russian gas."

¹⁶ AP News, "Spain boosts military spending to close gap with NATO goal."

¹⁷ Governo da República Portuguesa, "NATO Summit 'started off in the best manner.'"

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2014-21 (%)	Rank
Albania	1.35	1.16	1.10	1.11	1.16	1.28	1.32	1.41	4.4	29
Belgium	0.97	0.91	0.89	0.88	0.89	0.89	1.02	1.07	10.2	25
Bulgaria	1.31	1.25	1.24	1.22	1.45	3.13	1.60	1.62	23.3	17
Canada	1.01	1.20	1.16	1.44	1.30	1.30	1.44	1.36	34.7	12
Croatia	1.82	1.76	1.60	1.64	1.55	1.61	1.71	2.16	18.5	19
Czechia	0.94	1.02	0.95	1.03	1.10	1.18	1.30	1.40	48.9	6
Denmark	1.15	1.11	1.15	1.14	1.28	1.28	1.38	1.40	21.8	18
Estonia	1.93	2.03	2.07	2.01	2.02	2.05	2.35	2.16	11.7	23
Finland	1.45	1.45	1.42	1.35	1.36	1.35	1.53	2.03	39.8	10
France	1.82	1.78	1.79	1.78	1.81	1.82	2.00	1.93	6.0	27
Germany	1.19	1.19	1.20	1.23	1.25	1.35	1.53	1.49	25.2	15
Greece	2.22	2.31	2.40	2.38	2.54	2.45	2.91	3.59	61.7	5
Hungary	0.86	0.90	1.00	1.19	1.01	1.34	1.78	1.69	96.6	3
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	1.14	1.07	1.18	1.20	1.23	1.17	1.60	1.54	35.1	11
Latvia	0.94	1.03	1.44	1.59	2.06	2.02	2.20	2.16	128.8	2
Lithuania	0.88	1.14	1.48	1.71	1.97	2.00	2.08	2.03	130.8	1
Luxembourg	0.37	0.42	0.38	0.50	0.50	0.54	0.58	0.54	46.0	7
Montenegro	1.50	1.40	1.42	1.34	1.37	1.33	1.73	1.63	8.7	26
Netherlands	1.15	1.13	1.16	1.15	1.22	1.32	1.41	1.45	26.1	13
North Macedonia	1.09	1.05	0.97	0.89	0.94	1.16	1.25	1.54	41.0	9
Norway	1.55	1.59	1.74	1.72	1.73	1.86	2.00	1.74	12.3	21
Poland	1.86	2.22	1.99	1.89	2.02	1.98	2.24	2.34	25.8	14
Portugal	1.31	1.33	1.27	1.24	1.34	1.37	1.43	1.43	1.6	30
Romania	1.35	1.45	1.41	1.72	1.81	1.84	2.03	1.95	45.2	8
Slovakia	0.99	1.11	1.12	1.11	1.23	1.71	1.95	1.73	75.5	4
Slovenia	0.97	0.93	1.00	0.98	1.01	1.06	1.06	1.22	25.1	16
Spain	0.92	0.93	0.81	0.91	0.93	0.91	1.00	1.03	12.0	22
Sweden	1.13	1.07	1.05	1.02	1.03	1.09	1.16	1.28	13.4	20
Turkey	1.45	1.38	1.45	1.51	1.82	1.85	1.86	1.60	10.3	24
UK	2.13	2.01	2.06	2.06	2.08	2.06	2.30	2.25	5.6	28
US	3.72	3.52	3.52	3.31	3.29	3.52	3.72	3.57	- 4.0	31

Sources: NATO (2023a); SIPRI (2023)

Table 15.2: Defence expenditure (as a percentage of GDP)

4.2 Contributions to the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP)

During the Warsaw summit in 2016, NATO members decided to respond to Russian threat to security in the Baltic region. NATO enhanced its presence in 2017 in the eastern part of Europe with four multinational battle groups, led by the UK (stationed in Estonia), the US (stationed in Poland), Germany (stationed in Lithuania) and Canada (stationed in Latvia). Other states contributed to the four battle groups. After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, NATO members agreed to establish four more multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. These four battlegroups are led by Italy, Hungary, France, and Czechia. According to NATO the eight battlegroups demonstrate the alliance's solidarity, determination, and ability to respond to any Russian aggression.¹⁸

Country	AVG 2017-21 (troops)	REL 2017-21** (%)	Rank	ABS 2022 (troops)	REL 2022** (%)	Rank
Albania	20	0.69	12	51	2.17	10
Belgium	106	1.08	8	249	2.93	3
Bulgaria*	0	0.00	21	803	4.72	2
Canada	481	2.09	1	639	2.84	4
Croatia	147	1.35	3	64	0.58	18
Czechia	95	0.74	11	349	2.37	7
Denmark	83	1.09	7	217	2.71	5
Estonia*	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
Finland	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
France	236	0.21	18	769	0.67	17
Germany	560	0.90	9	1315	2.09	11
Greece	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
Hungary*	0	0.00	21	710	6.79	1
Iceland***	2			3		
Italy	176	0.18	19	250	0.27	20
Latvia*	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
Lithuania*	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
Luxembourg	6	0.85	10	6	1.46	13
Montenegro	5	0.41	15	11	0.86	15
Netherlands	257	1.47	2	395	2.57	6

¹⁸ NATO. "Italian Air force deploys Eurofighter in support of enhanced air policing."

Country	AVG 2017-21 (troops)	REL 2017-21** (%)	Rank	ABS 2022 (troops)	REL 2022** (%)	Rank
North Macedonia	0	0.00	21	9	0.11	22
Norway	111	1.32	4	188	2.27	8
Poland*	176	0.28	17	407	0.70	16
Portugal	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
Romania*	120	0.34	16	120	0.34	19
Slovakia*	81	1.15	5	152	1.48	12
Slovenia	46	0.65	13	143	2.23	9
Spain	322	0.46	14	504	0.70	16
Sweden	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
Turkey	0	0.00	21	0	0.00	23
UK	936	1.11	6	1122	1.34	14
US	809	0.17	20	1165	0.25	21

Sources: IISS (2023); NATO (2023)

Notes: AVG is Average; REL is relative; ABS is absolute; *the multinational battlegroups are stationed in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia;

** the relative troop contribution is calculated by dividing the EFP contribution by the number of active army forces of the relevant country; *** Iceland has no army.

Table 15.3: Contributions to Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) 2017-2022

Table 15.3 shows states contributions to EFP for the period 2017-2021 and year 2022. During the period 2017-2021 battlegroup leaders Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States contributed most troops to EFP in absolute terms. In relative terms Canada, the Netherlands, and Croatia carried most of the burden. NATO members Greece, North Macedonia, Portugal, and Turkey contributed no troops during this period. The '0' contributions of eastern Europe states can be explained by the fact that they share a border with Russia. After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 most countries raised their contributions to EFP. In absolute terms Bulgaria, Germany, the UK and the US contributed most troops. In relative terms Hungary, Bulgaria and Belgium contributed the most. Over the period 2017-2022 NATO members Greece, Portugal and Turkey have not contributed to EFP.

4.3 Contributions to the Baltic Air Policing mission

When the Baltic States joined NATO in 2004 a NATO Air Policing capability was established in Lithuania at Šiauliai Air Base with the intent to defend NATO territory and in particular the Baltic airspace against intruders. The Baltic states do not possess the necessary air policing capability, so other NATO members cover their airspace on a rotating basis. After Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, a second Air Policing capability was established at Ämari Air Base, Estonia. NATO states also deployed additional aircrafts to Poland, and augmented the capabilities of the Romanian and Bulgarian air forces.¹⁹ NATO states contribute voluntarily to the Baltic Air Policing mission. The mission is a collective task and involves the continuous presence of fighter aircraft and crew, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.²⁰

Country	Number of rotations per year								Total	Rank	Capability 2021
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Albania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Belgium	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	1	53
Bulgaria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	14
Canada	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	110
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Czechia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	7	14
Denmark	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	4	5	52
Estonia*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	62
France	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	5	208
Germany	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	7	2	138
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	231
Hungary	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	6	14
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Italy	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	3	7	2	148
Latvia*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Lithuania*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0

¹⁹ NATO, "Germany to fly NATO Air Policing sorties out of Estonia."

²⁰ NATO, "NATO Air Policing: securing Allied airspace."

Country	Number of rotations per year								Total	Rank	Capability 2021
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Montenegro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Netherlands	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	6	82
North Macedonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Norway	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	66
Poland	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	6	3	94
Portugal	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	5	30
Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	39
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	11
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Spain	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	2	172
Sweden (NON-NATO)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	96
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	306
UK	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	5	4	167
US	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	6	1316

Sources: IISS (2022); Janes (2021); NATO (2019a,b,c; 2020a,b,c,d,e; 2021a,b,c); The Baltic Times (2021); Werkman (2023).

Notes: *the air forces of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania contribute to the Baltic Air Policing mission with host nation support.

Table 15.4: Contributions to the Baltic Air Policing Mission 2014-2021

Table 15.4 presents NATO members' contributions to the Baltic Air Policing mission. It provides an overview of the number of rotations per state during the period 2014-2021. The last column gives an indication of states' capability to contribute, showing the number of fighter and fighter ground attack aircraft by country. The last column reveals that nine states do not have the capability to contribute to the Air Policing mission. Of the states that possess the required capabilities, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain show the most active behaviour by doing seven or eight rotations during the period 2014-2021. Canada, Greece and Turkey have the required capacity to contribute, but with respectively zero and one rotation they dangle at the bottom. Greece takes responsibility with Italy to cover Western Balkans airspace, as

both states keep fighter jets ready 24/7 for this NATO air policing mission. Slovenia's airspace is permanently covered by Hungary and Italy.²¹

4.4 Energy imports from Russia

In 2021, Russia was the world's leading exporter of gas, exporting 201.7 billion cubic metres of gas via pipelines and 39.6 billion cubic meters of liquefied natural gas.²² Russia is also the third largest producer of oil behind the US and Saudi Arabia.²³ The Russian oil and gas industry accounted for around 17 per cent of Russia's GDP in 2021. In 2014, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen stated, 'We must make energy diversification a strategic transatlantic priority and reduce Europe's dependency on Russian energy.'²⁴ With this statement he declared that energy security was a strategic issue, which could have implications for NATO security. After this statement European states could have opted for more diversification of suppliers to become less dependent on Russia. We consider actions to become less dependent on Russian gas a burden for European states. In this section we analyse to what extent NATO member states responded to the Rasmussen call and managed to reduce their gas imports from Russia.

Country	Import in million cubic metres				Import as a percentage of total gas import		Change 2014-2021	
	AVG 2014-18	2019	2020	2021	2021 (%)	Rank		
Albania	0	0	0	0	0%	1	-	-
Belgium	767	3903	3020	2546	12%	5	*	↑
Bulgaria	3033	2342	2201	2627	80%	18	-2%	↓
Canada	0	0	0	0	0%	1	-	-
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0%	1	-	-
Czechia	7783	9508	7590	8719	100%	19	33%	↑
Denmark	0	0	0	0	0%	1	-	-
Estonia	509	481	207	58	11%	4	-89%	↓
Finland	2634	2517	1730	1922	75%	16	-37%	↓
France	7639	10542	7635	9923	22%	7	66%	↑

²¹ NATO, "NATO Air Policing: securing Allied airspace."

²² Statista, "Leading gas exporting countries in 2021, by export type (in billion cubic meters)."

²³ IEA [International Energy Agency], "Frequently asked questions on energy security."

²⁴ NATO, "NATO's energy security agenda."

Country	Import in million cubic metres				Import as a percentage of total gas import		Change 2014-2021	
	AVG 2014-18	2019	2020	2021	2021 (%)	Rank		
Germany	48937	46250	52464	55443	65%	14	49%	↑
Greece	2484	1686	2305	2604	41%	11	52%	↑
Hungary	7765	11086	7539	7105	95%	19	-16%	↓
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0%	1	-	-
Italy	28895	33449	28716	29171	40%	10	21%	↑
Latvia	1208	1354	1115	1187	100%		25%	↑
Lithuania	1630	1191	1196	887	37%	9	-64%	↓
Luxembourg	219	212	140	86	11%	4	-65%	↓
Montenegro	0	0	0	0	0%	1	-	-
Netherlands	10028	15832	15166	10731	35%	8	68%	↑
North Macedonia	200	292	334	423	100%	20	216%	↑
Norway	0	0	10	128	80%	18	*	↑
Poland	9734	9603	9558	10468	57%	13	17%	↑
Portugal	0	97	670	780	14%	6	*	↑
Romania	932	990	960	2766	78%	17	431%	↑
Slovakia	4466	6707	3675	3536	69%	15	-26%	↓
Slovenia	261	106	78	129	14%	6	-54%	↓
Spain	174	3168	3387	3220	9%	3	*	↑
Sweden	0	0	184	33	2%	2	*	↑
Turkey	26126	15196	16178	26342	45%	12	-2%	↓
UK	326	3180	NA	NA	NA	-	NA	-
US	0	0	0	0	0%	1	0%	-

Sources: Eurostat (2023a), EIA (2023a).

Notes: *Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Norway and Sweden have been purchasing gas from Russia since respectively 2017, 2019, 2018 and 2020. Notes: AVG is average.

Table 15.5: Import of Natural Gas from Russia by NATO members (million cubic metres)

Table 15.5 shows the absolute import of Russian gas by NATO members during the period 2014-2021 and the import of Russian gas as a percentage of a state's total gas import. The figures show that Germany, Italy and Turkey imported in absolute

terms most gas from Russia. For Czechia, Latvia and North Macedonia, Russia was the only gas supplier in 2021. Also, for Bulgaria (80 per cent), Finland (75 per cent), Hungary (95 per cent), Norway (80 per cent) and Romania (78 per cent) there was little import diversification, and the import of Russian gas supply was above 75 per cent. We also compared states' absolute import figures in 2014 with states' absolute import figures in 2021. These figures show that nine states were able to decrease their gas imports from Russia during the period 2014-2021 and fifteen states increased their gas imports. Except for Latvia, Poland and Romania, all Eastern European states were able to decrease their gas imports. Large consumers of Russian gas, Germany and Italy, increased their gas imports with respectively 49 per cent and 21 per cent. Other Western European states, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands also increased their imports. Turkey was able to decrease its gas import at 2 per cent.

Country	Absolute contribution				Import from Russia as a percentage of total import		Change 2014-2021	
	AVG 2014-18	2019	2020	2021	2021	Rank		
Albania	13	52	87	74	7%	5	*	
Belgium	17058	14062	11708	11770	20%	13	-30%	↓
Bulgaria	5389	5037	572	662	10%	8	-89%	↓
Canada	21	1320	376	493	1%	2	380%	↑
Croatia	777	365	393	266	6%	4	-75%	↓
Czechia	3963	3843	3027	3429	31%	17	-18%	↓
Denmark	3110	1261	1736	1696	17%	12	-31%	↓
Estonia	469	534	715	803	39%	19	180%	↑
Finland	12213	13246	11243	8651	64%	22	-24%	↓
France	13030	12087	10156	11510	15%	11	-15%	↓
Germany	39302	33795	34902	34592	29%	16	-5%	↓
Greece	7563	6665	8244	6647	20%	13	-22%	↓
Hungary	5200	5381	4293	4060	41%	20	-34%	↓
Iceland	6	5	0	NA	NA			
Italy	11157	11712	8184	8374	12%	10	37%	↑
Latvia	530	433	402	448	24%	15	29%	↑
Lithuania	7453	8018	6155	7025	76%	23	0%	

Country	Absolute contribution				Import from Russia as a percentage of total import		Change 2014-2021	
	AVG 2014-18	2019	2020	2021	2021	Rank		
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0%	1	0%	
Montenegro	0	1	3	4	1%	2	*	
Netherlands	43397	33510	27246	32850	23%	14	-9%	↓
North Macedonia	17	33	26	5	0%	1	-58%	↓
Norway	967	1178	961	988	12%	10	100%	↑
Poland	24074	22647	22223	20432	60%	21	-13%	↓
Portugal	2594	1710	571	800	6%	4	-39%	↓
Romania	4176	4656	3558	3745	33%	18	17%	↑
Slovakia	5621	5183	5712	5477	77%	24	3%	↑
Slovenia	209	745	520	110	3%	3	-57%	↓
Spain	6024	4113	4096	6764	9%	7	-28%	↓
Sweden	9649	6635	3475	2663	11%	9	-72%	↓
Turkey	8607	16661	9080	10961	22%	13	102%	↑
United Kingdom	8494	10484	NA	NA	NA		NA	
United States of America	15933	21727	22635	28124	8%	6	104%	↑

Sources: Eurostat (2023b), EIA (2023b), Canada Energy Regulator (2023)

Notes: *Albania and Montenegro did not import oil and petroleum from Russia in 2014.

Notes: AVG is average.

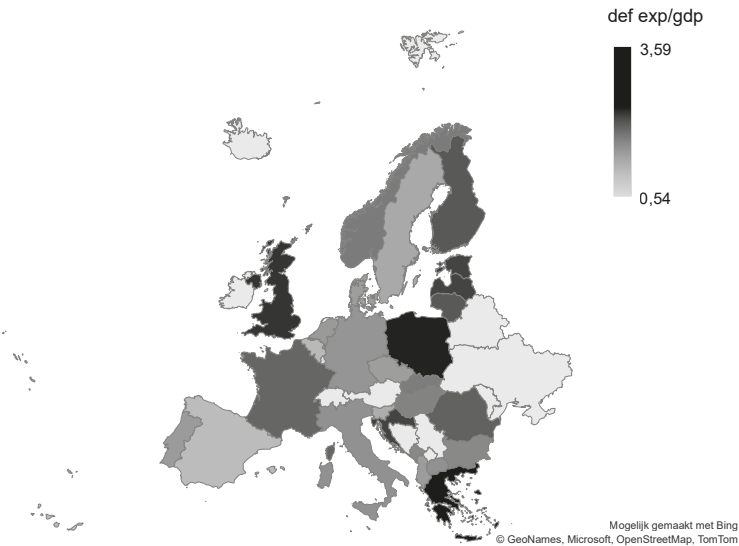
Table 15.6: Import of oil and petroleum from Russia by NATO members (thousand tonnes)

Table 15.6 shows the absolute import of oil and petroleum from Russia by NATO members during the period 2014-2021. It also shows the import of Russian oil and petroleum as a percentage of states' total import. The figures show that Germany, the Netherlands, the US and Poland imported in absolute terms most oil and petroleum from Russia. Finland (64 per cent), Lithuania (76 per cent), Slovakia (77 per cent) and Poland (60 per cent) show the highest import rates in 2021. Luxembourg (0 per cent), North-Macedonia (0 per cent), Canada (1 per cent) and Slovenia (3 per cent) have the lowest import rates. We also compared states' absolute import figures in 2014 with states' absolute import figures in 2021. These figures show that seventeen

states were able to decrease their imports and nine states increased their imports. Bulgaria (-89 per cent), Croatia (-75 per cent) and Sweden (-72 per cent) show the largest reductions and the figures of Canada (380 per cent), Estonia (180 per cent) and the US (104 per cent) show the most significant increase. Although Canada has not imported any Russian crude oil since 2019, its import of petroleum increased. Due to the low amount of petroleum purchased from Russia, this increase had less impact on the Russian treasury. Germany, the Netherlands and Poland, states with high absolute import figures, were only able to decrease their oil imports to a limited extent, respectively -5 per cent, -9 per cent and -13 per cent. The US doubled its import in the period 2014-2021.

4.5 Analysis

In this section we discuss the main findings of our research per European region. The US and Canada are not included in this analysis. Therefore, we only discuss NATO European members' reaction after the annexation of Crimea. Figure 15.1 synthesises the results of Tables 15.2-15.6 by using a map.



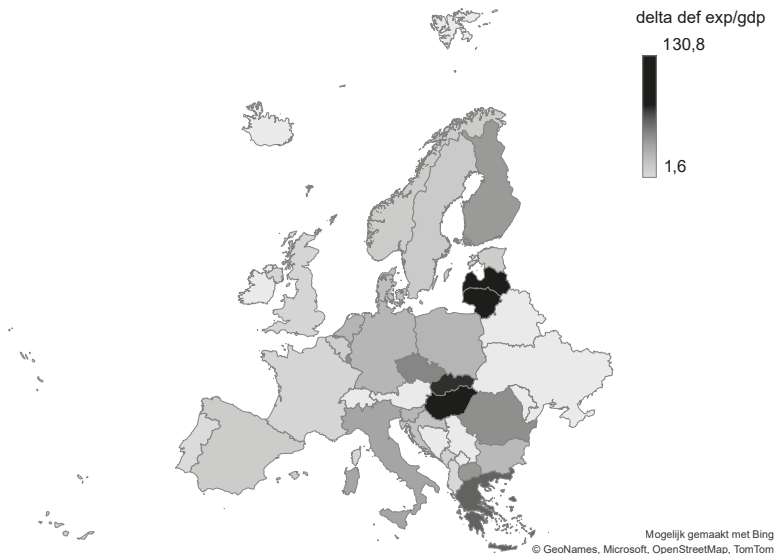


Figure 15.1b: Delta Defence Expenditures as a percentage of GDP 2014-2021 (%)

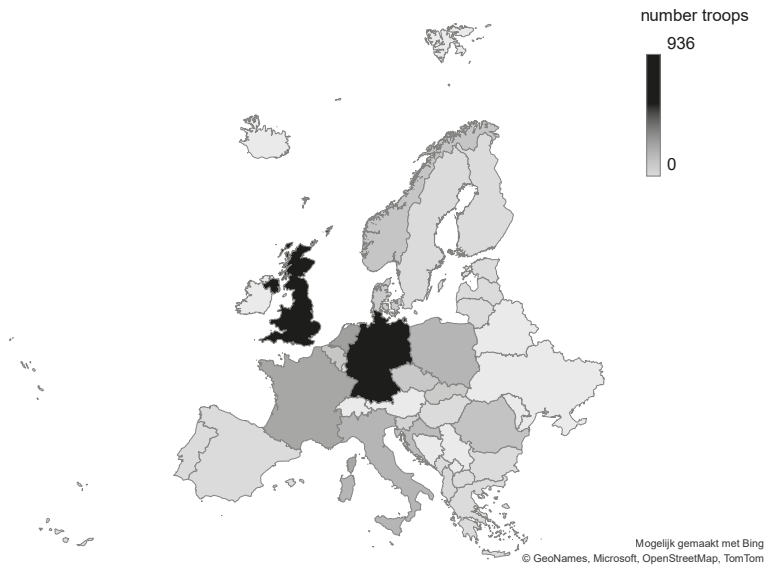


Figure 15.1c: Average contribution EFP 2017-2021

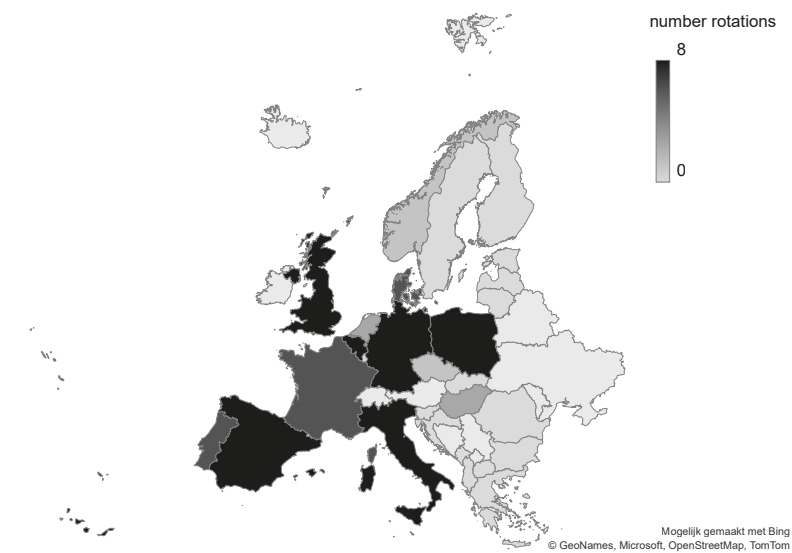


Figure 15.1d: Total contribution to Baltic Air Policing 2014-2021

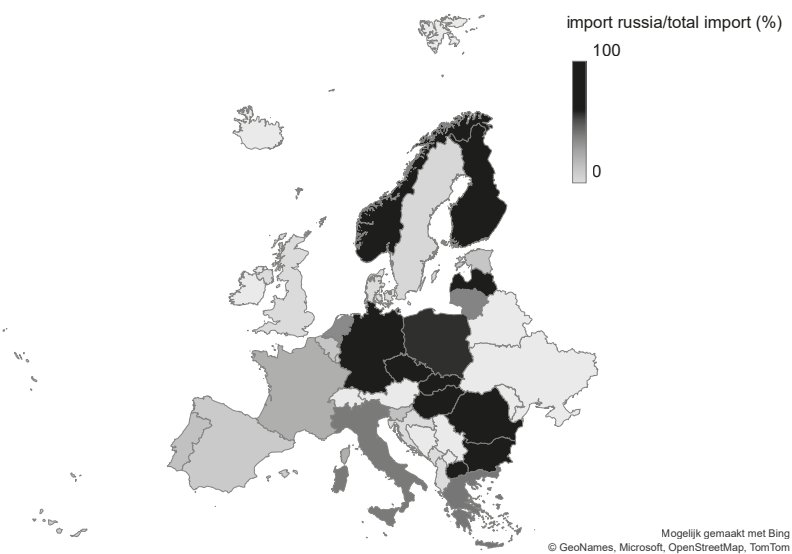


Figure 15.1e: Import gas from Russia as a percentage of total gas import 2021 (%)

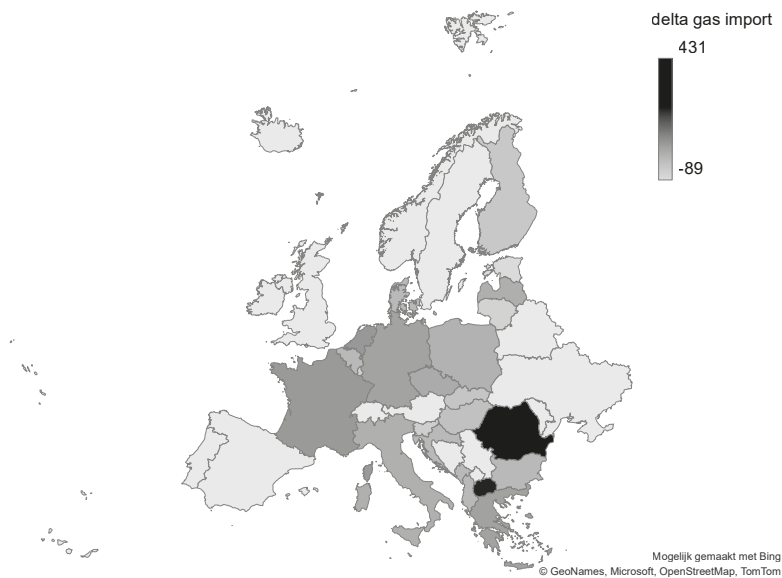


Figure 15.1f: Delta gas import from Russia 2014-2021

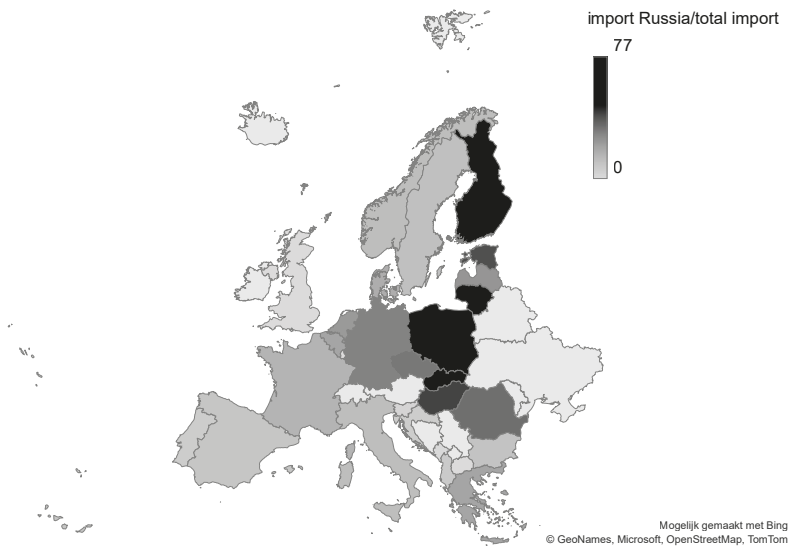


Figure 15.1g: Import oil from Russia as a percentage of total oil import 2021 (%)

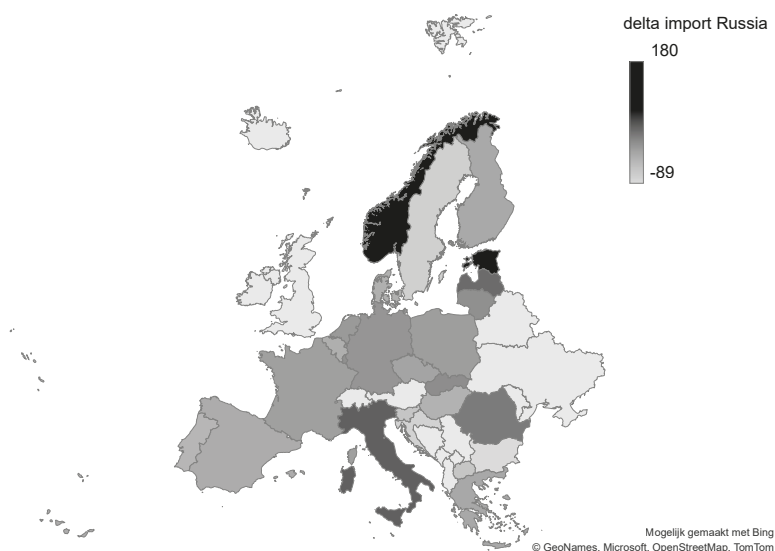


Figure 15.1h: Delta oil import from Russia 2014-2021 (%)

4.5.1 Eastern European contributions

Eastern European states (Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) contributed 2 per cent of their GDP on defence in 2021 or increased their defence spending by more than 25 per cent after the annexation of Crimea. Five states decreased the import of natural gas from Russia and two states increased the gas import. Hungary and Latvia seem to be most dependent on Russian gas, as over 95 per cent of their import in 2021 still comes from Russia. The three Baltic states increased their oil import from Russia, and Poland, the largest importer of Russian oil, managed to slightly reduce its oil imports. In sum, after the annexation of Crimea, Eastern European states responded by spending considerably more on defence. Several states responded to the call of NATO Secretary General Rasmussen to reduce their imports of Russian energy, but not all states. We argue that Eastern European states' behaviour can be largely explained by their threat perception. They are probably more willing to invest in defence than other European states because of their proximity to Russia. The higher contributions of these states do not add much to NATO military strength but show each states' commitment to NATO in the hope that the US will protect them if necessary.

4.5.2 Western European contributions

Western European states (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the UK) also increased their defence spending although to a lesser extent. Only the UK already meets the 2 per cent NATO goal in 2021. Even though Western European states spend more money on defence after the annexation of Crimea it was not until Russia's invasion in 2022 that states pledged to substantially increase their defence spending towards the 2 per cent NATO goal. Spending less of their national income on defence does not imply that Western European states are not willing and able to contribute to the EFP and Baltic Air Policing mission. Most of the states are among the highest absolute contributors to both missions. After the call of NATO Secretary General Rasmussen to reduce dependency on Russian energy, most states increased the import of Russian gas and decreased the import of Russian oil. For Western European states it is easier to become less dependent on Russian oil than gas. Due to their geographical location and wealth, Western European states have enough possibilities to import oil from other oil producing states. Becoming less dependent on Russian gas seemed to be more challenging and expensive for some Western European states.

4.5.3 Southern European contributions

Southern European states (Portugal, Spain, and Italy) spend 1.50 per cent or less of their national income on defence. After the annexation of Crimea until 2021 Italy raised its defense spending by 35.1 per cent. Spain and Portugal increased their defence spending to a lesser extent. All three Southern European states do not expect to reach the 2 per cent NATO goal in 2024. Likewise, what goes for the Western European states also goes for the Southern European states. The contributions of Spain and Italy to both missions are above average, Portugal contributes no troops to Enhanced Forward Presence and performs in the middle of the rankings for the Baltic Air Policing mission showing less commitment and solidarity. All states increased their gas imports from Russia after the annexation of Crimea and Italy also increased its oil import.

4.5.4 Northern European contributions

Of all Northern European states (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) only Finland spends 2 per cent of its GDP on defence, increasing its defence spending after the annexation of Crimea by over 25 per cent. In 2021, Sweden and Denmark spent less than 1.5 per cent of their GDP on defence. From 2014 until 2021 non-NATO states Finland and Sweden did not participate in EFP and the Baltic Air

Policing mission, while they have contributed to other NATO missions. Denmark and Norway have made an average contribution. Norway and Sweden increased their gas imports in the period 2014-2021 but are no major consumers of Russian gas. Finland imported most of its gas from Russia in 2021 but was able to decrease its import. Except for Norway all Northern European states decreased their oil imports. Norway has sufficient oil and gas fields of its own and is not dependent on Russian energy. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 Norway became Europe's new energy supplier.

4.5.5 South-Eastern European contributions

Of all South-Eastern European states (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Turkey) only Croatia and Greece spend 2 per cent or more of their national income on defence. Czechia, Greece, North Macedonia, and Romania were able to increase their relative defence spending with more than 25 per cent. Of all South-Eastern European states, Croatia contributed most troops to EFP during the period 2017-2021. The rest of the South-Eastern European states contributed less than average to the EFP mission. This changed after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022; Czechia and Hungary became the front leaders of two of the eight battlegroups. Even though several states have the capacity to contribute to the Baltic Air Policing mission, Czechia is the only country contributing fighters. Three states did not import gas from Russia. The figures of Czechia, Greece, North Macedonia and Romania show a sharp increase in their gas imports and Czechia and North Macedonia got all their gas import from Russia in 2021. Except for Romania and Turkey all South-Eastern European states managed to decrease their oil imports from Russia.

5. Conclusion

Our chapter has provided insight into how NATO members shared the burden of actions against Russian threats upon the annexation of the Crimea from 2014-2021. We used several parameters to measure member states' contributions. The findings show that NATO members responded heterogeneously to the changed security environment after the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

Although most states increased their defence spending, the rate of increase differs per region. Eastern European states show a rapid growth of defence spending after the annexation of Crimea, while other European states stayed behind. This rapid growth in defence expenditure can be explained by Eastern European states' proximity to Russia. It shows their commitment to NATO in the hope that other

members will protect them if necessary. Southern European NATO members Italy, Spain and Portugal are not expected to reach the NATO 2 per cent goal in 2024. Perhaps the perception of distance between Russia and these southern states plays a role in their more frugal defence expenditure. The impact on the economy by spending at least 2 per cent on defence is also likely to influence their behaviour.

Defence economic literature has shown that low rankings on the input dimension do not necessarily lead to low rankings on the output dimension, i.e. troops.²⁵ The same applies to this topic. Western European states spend less of national income on defence but are among the highest absolute contributors to both missions Enhanced Forward Presence and Baltic Air Policing as these countries have the capacity and willingness to contribute. The highest score of Greece (3.59 per cent) on the input parameter 'defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP' is not a good predictor for the output parameters 'contributions to Enhanced Forward Presence and Baltic Air Policing.' Greece lacks contribution to both missions. Greece's minimal contribution to the protection of the Eastern flank of Europe does not mean that Greece is a free rider when it comes to the protection of NATO territory. Greece plays a substantial role in the reception of refugees on the Southern European borders. For a complete picture of NATO members burden sharing behaviour, it is suggested to add up states' contributions to the protection of several threats on NATO territory. This goes beyond the aim of this research.

Despite NATO Secretary General Rasmussen's request to reduce dependency on Russian energy in 2014, a significant number of states increased their gas imports from Russia. Except for Luxembourg, all Western and Southern European states increased their gas imports. Three South-Eastern states did not import gas from Russia, but the gas imports of Czechia, Greece, North Macedonia and Romania show a sharp increase. In 2021, Czechia and North Macedonia imported all their gas from the Russian Federation. Also, the more vulnerable Eastern European states Latvia, Poland and Romania increased their gas imports. The import of oil and petroleum figures presents a somewhat different picture. Except for Norway, the Baltic States, Slovakia, Italy, Romania and Turkey, all European states decreased their oil and petroleum imports from Russia. Moreover, from this study, it became apparent that after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 until Russia's invasion in 2022 there was no uniform strategy in Europe on how to deal with energy imports from Russia. Contrary to the 2 per cent guideline for defence spending, no concrete agreements have been made by NATO members to reduce their energy dependence on Russia.

The lack of a uniform NATO strategy or guideline does not mean states cannot fulfill their responsibility individually. In our view the term 'responsibility sharing' is more appropriate than burden sharing, as NATO states hold an individual

²⁵ Beeres, and Bogers, "Ranking the performance," 14.

responsibility to react on Russia's aggression. The term 'responsibility' can be viewed as a bundle of obligations associated with a function.²⁶ Responsibility also includes *moral obligation*, an obligation arising out of considerations of what is 'right and wrong.'²⁷ One may question: Can it be considered responsible to continue the purchase of (more) Russian gas and oil after the annexation of Crimea? The governments of NATO members hold differing thoughts on this matter. Moreover, as a noun, 'responsibility' can be regarded to be made up of both 'response' and 'ability.' In other words, the extent to which NATO member states had the ability to respond in a constructive manner to Russian aggression. Being responsive means being able and willing to distinguish and differentiate between priorities of national and collective interest and take constructive action. For example, did governments have sufficient domestic support to lower their energy imports from Russia and to substantially raise defence expenditures? Despite the lack of substantiating figures, we claim, based on government statements, states were willing to take more far-reaching measures after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, than after the annexation of Crimea. Also, due to their geographical location and/or wealth, some states may have experienced fewer complications to decrease their dependency on Russian energy than others.

Based on the above, the results of our research do not lead to a concrete indication of under- and over contributors or less or more responsible states. We consider this inappropriate as each NATO member's reaction to Russia's aggression will always be influenced by its own geographical, political, economic and security rationales. Instead, we argue at this point there is a need for common research to delve deeper into these (national and supra-national) rationales to explain states' behaviour. In this way we expect both common learning processes and mutual understanding amongst NATO members will be furthered, which in turn will improve the alliance's sustainability in the future.

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²⁶ Bivins, "Responsibility and accountability," 20.

²⁷ Bivins, "Responsibility and accountability," 20.

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