East meets West? The EU-Japan Security and Defence Partnership in a changing international environment

César Rodrigues
Researcher in international security

Abstract

This article examines the 2024 Security and Defence Partnership (SDP) between the European Union (EU) and Japan. It argues that the agreement represents a qualitative transformation in the bilateral security relationship, elevating their engagement from a broad political dialogue to a structured, operational framework that covers a broad range of traditional and non-traditional security domains. Drawing upon policy documents, official statements, and existing scholarship on EU-Japan relations, the article reviews the background of bilateral security engagement. It analyses the geopolitical, strategic, and normative drivers behind the Partnership. It analyses three case studies – maritime security, cybersecurity, and hybrid threats, including Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) – to illustrate the ongoing implementation efforts under the SDP. The article concludes that while the Partnership is still emerging and subject to limitations and constraints, it signifies a significant step in EU-Japan security cooperation, providing a model for security arrangements with like-minded partners.

Keywords: European Union; Japan; Security and Defence Partnership; Indo-Pacific; Security cooperation.

Resumo

Oriente encontra Ocidente? A Parceria de Segurança e Defesa UE-Japão num contexto internacional em transformação.

Este artigo analisa a Parceria para a Segurança e Defesa (SDP) de 2024 entre a União Europeia (UE) e o Japão. Argumenta que o acordo representa uma transformação qualitativa nas relações bilaterais de segurança, elevando-as de um diálogo político para um quadro estruturado e operacional sobre vários domínios de segurança tradicionais e não tradicionais. Com base em documentos e na literatura sobre as relações UE-Japão, o artigo analisa a evolução da relação de segurança e examina os fatores geopolíticos, estratégicos e normativos subjacentes à Parceria. São analisados três casos – segurança marítima, cibersegurança, e ameaças híbridas – para ilustrar os esforços de implementação da SDP. O artigo conclui que, embora a Parceria esteja numa fase inicial e sujeita a limitações, constitui um passo significativo na cooperação de segurança entre a UE e o Japão, proporcionando um modelo para acordos de segurança com parceiros like-minded.

Palavras-chave: *União Europeia; Japão; Parceria para a Segurança e Defesa; Indo-Pacífico; Cooperação de segurança.*

Received: 20.07.2026
Accepted for publication: 04.08.2026
https://doi.org/10.47906/ND2026.174.04

Introduction

In recent years, the security engagement between the European Union (EU) and Japan experienced significant developments. Following decades of limited cooperation focused primarily on economic relations and diplomatic exchanges, the two actors are today expanding their partnership into the security domain, formulating approaches on both policy and working levels in response to a changing international environment. A major step in this engagement took place on 1 November 2024, when the European Union and Japan signed a Security and Defence Partnership (SDP), a comprehensive agreement for strengthening cooperation across a broad range of related areas (EEAS, 2024c). While the implementation of the SDP is still largely at the policy level and its accomplishments remain limited, the Partnership offers today concrete cooperation frameworks with tangible operational potential, marking a significant leap from previous bilateral security arrangements (Heng, 2025).

The EU-Japan security dialogue was traditionally characterized by a "capability-expectations gap" between the relationship's potential and what it actually delivered (Tsuruoka, 2008; Jingkai and Paul, 2025). For decades, economic interests primarily drove Europe's interactions in the Asia-Pacific, whereas Japan viewed the EU as a secondary actor in the region with a limited, non-military security role. Cooperation initiatives reflected mutual lack of interest, and many attempts at a stronger bilateral security engagement were often broad and unremarkable (Berkofsky, 2018, 2012). With the SDP, however, the EU and Japan adopted a new policy and discursive posture, highlighting the convergence of threat perceptions and geopolitical interests. The two sides declared that the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific is interlinked and pledged to uphold and strengthen the free and open international order. They also committed to cooperate in several concrete security and defence areas, including non-traditional domains such as cybersecurity and hybrid threats.

This paper argues that through the 2024 Security and Defence Partnership, the security dialogue between the EU and Japan evolved from a broad political partnership into a more practical, substantive security relationship. It claims that while the SDP still consists largely of a policy coordination structure, it represents a transformative step towards practical cooperation by creating an institutionalized, security-oriented dialogue and by establishing functional cooperation frameworks, some of them close to "hard" security topics. The paper finds that although the SDP offers a promising platform for EU-Japan security and defence relations, the future of the partnership will depend on factors such as each side's strategic priorities, geopolitical developments, and capabilities.

The article begins by reviewing how the EU-Japan security dialogue evolved, revisiting the creation of the SDP and analysing the main drivers behind today's

cooperation. It then looks at three cooperation tracks – maritime security, cybersecurity, and hybrid threats including FIMI – as case studies of EU-Japan cooperation under the Partnership. The paper also assesses the limits and constraints of the SDP and concludes by reflecting on the significance of the Partnership amidst the growing centrality of the Indo-Pacific.

Evolution of the EU-Japan security dialogue

The history of EU-Japan security relations was a decades-long process of convergence, influenced by a combination of world events, internal and external politics, and geopolitical transformations, that eventually produced today's alignment in security and defence. Bilateral relations between European institutions and Japan started in 1959 when the Japanese prime minister travelled to Brussels and appointed Japan's ambassador to Belgium and to the three European Communities (EC) (de Prado 2017, p. 435). Official diplomatic ties were established in 1974 with the opening of the EC delegation in Tokyo. Between the 1960s and 1970s, relations were primarily driven by economic interests and characterized by trade frictions. Dialogue on security was limited and took place in the form of broad political consultations, sometimes within a trilateral framework with the United States (Mykal, 2012, 2.3).

The end of the Cold War brought a new geopolitical reality and changes to the security ties between the EC (later EU) and Japan. On 18 July 1991, the two sides signed The Hague Declaration, a treaty that emphasized "common values and shared interests" and the institutionalization of regular political exchanges (MOFA, 1991). Through this document, Brussels and Tokyo agreed to expand their cooperation beyond trade and into peace and security, human rights, and non-traditional security areas, among other areas, reflecting their aspiration to become global actors in the post-Cold War era. Notable examples of this agenda included Brussels' non-proliferation involvement regarding North Korea's nuclear and missile programs (Howard, 1997; Wagner, 2001) and Japan's cooperation with the EU on stability, disarmament, and post-conflict reconstruction in the Western Balkans and in post-Soviet countries (Berkofsky, 2007, p. 11). Nevertheless, security was neither a distinctive nor a fully developed feature of the relationship.

On 8 December 2001, Japan and the EU adopted the Joint Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation, titled "Shaping Our Common Future". Aimed at addressing the lack of progress following The Hague Declaration, the agreement sought to "tap the unrealized potential for cooperation" based on a four-pillar framework: peace and security, economic and trade partnership, global and societal changes, and bringing together people and cultures (Watanabe, 2013, 5; MOFA, 2001). The Action Plan

proposed engagement on post-9/11 security topics such as terrorism and violent extremism, listing 100 actions of possible collaboration. Once again, Japan and the EU were unable to extend their cooperation beyond initial outlines – the exception being naval cooperation in the Gulf of Aden – and both sides failed to initiate a common security agenda. Engagement became mostly symbolic, and the momentum for security cooperation faded into a state of "benign neglect", with few tangible results (Nishida, 2024, p. 4).

The security partnership made slow but ultimately meaningful progress in the 2010s. Japan wanted to elevate relationships across Europe, with Prime Minister Shinzō Abe looking to raise awareness on East Asian security, especially in matters concerning China and the East China Sea disputes. Tokyo viewed Europe as a "norm-setting" power, but the EU was reluctant to be outspoken against China and remained largely indifferent to Asian security (Carteny and Di Stefano, 2023, p. 417). The Russian annexation of Crimea allowed Tokyo to assert that the security of Asia and Europe is common and interlinked, arguing that Russia's unilateral actions set a dangerous precedent for the East Asian context (Nishida, 2024, p. 5), an argument that would be repeated years later.

After years of intermittent exchanges and a total of 13 negotiation rounds since 2012, in April 2018 Japan and the EU reached another understanding through the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), a binding document aimed at relaunching strategic cooperation across several areas, including security (D'Ambrogio, 2019, pp. 4-5). The SPA was signed and adopted on 17 July 2018 (EEAS, 2019) and was the first-ever framework of its kind between the EU and Japan.[1] Scholars and policymakers viewed it with optimism, hoping it would provide the "long-awaited breakthrough of EU-Japan political and security cooperation in the years ahead" (Berkofsky, 2018). The SPA projected political and sectoral cooperation in 40 areas. It also emphasized shared norms and values in an increasingly hostile external environment, reflecting contextual changes such as the rise of China and Beijing's assertive behaviour, Russian hybrid threats, and President Trump's "America First" policy (Kirchner and Dorussen, 2021, p. 3). However, the SPA was once again mostly cooperative and declaratory, encouraging broad consultations but not creating a specialized defence track. Its scope was too vast and limited the potential for focused security and defence outcomes. Moreover, even though the Agreement was an improvement from previous iterations, questions remained about how to actually achieve its implementation (Berkofsky, 2020; Legrand, 2018). An important leap would be taken in 2024 with the creation of the SDP, a document specifically dedicated to security and defence.

1 The SPA was adopted in parallel with a similar agreement focused on economy, the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

The 2024 EU-Japan Security and Defence Partnership

On 1 November 2024, the EU and Japan announced in Tokyo the inauguration of the SDP, amidst a context characterized by grave security and geopolitical transformations. It was the first partnership of its kind between the EU and an Indo-Pacific country. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell declared that Japan was the EU's closest partner in the Indo-Pacific and that the new agreement opened a new chapter in bilateral relations – one that "was not about trade or economics […] but about security and defence" (EEAS, 2024b). The Partnership came after the ratification of the SPA by EU Member States earlier that year,[2] and moved EU-Japan security ties from a broad political alignment to a structured cooperation framework with concrete security and defence work streams. It also established regular mechanisms for consultation and coordination. In addition, the SDP assumed a bolder discursive posture, with references to both normative and strategic rationales. The document explicitly mentioned the defence of the rules-based international order, the growing interconnectedness of European and Indo-Pacific security, and the need to respond jointly to emerging threats, including cyberattacks, hybrid coercion, economic security risks, and challenges posed by "unilateral attempts to change the *status quo* by force" (EEAS, 2024c) – a euphemism fit for countries like China and Russia.

A common security agenda build-up

The SDP reflected the EU and Japan's increasingly pragmatic understanding of the world. Over the last decade, official security and defence documents by both actors evolved from broad, idealistic statements into a progressively realistic and pragmatic understanding of international security problem, that called for closer strategic cooperation, greater military preparedness, and a more active role in addressing emerging security challenges.

In the case of the EU, progress towards pragmatism can be seen from the 2016 Global Strategy, launched to replace the outdated European Security Strategy from 2003. The Global Strategy was criticized from the outset for its lack of concrete goals (Bargués, 2022, p. 2). However, it sought to improve defence and security by promoting strategic autonomy, resilience, multilateralism, and more robust responses to crises and threats. It also identified Asian security tensions as a direct concern for Europe. In 2021, the EU Indo-Pacific (IP) Strategy, which barely discussed hard security matters in the region and the ways the EU could contribute to addressing them (Samaan, 2024), signalled Asia's growing relevance in Brussels' political and strategic calculus. More recently, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the

2 The SPA had been provisionally applied since 2019.

EU adopted the Strategic Compass (2022), a more pragmatic framework focused on threat analysis, rapid deployment, and resilience. The document acknowledged the relevance of the Indo-Pacific and identified Japan as a preferential partner in the region (European Council, 2022; Benaglia and Crosson, 2022). Meanwhile, the EU Member States France, Germany, and the Netherlands adopted their own Indo-Pacific strategies, confirming on their national levels the strategic importance of engaging closer with Asia and its geopolitics (Samaan, 2024).

As for Japan, official security and defence policy took a sharper turn in recent years. For decades, Japan maintained an exclusively defence-oriented posture, in line with the country's constitutional pacifism, particularly through Article 9, under which Tokyo renounced war as a sovereign right and banned maintaining a war potential. External security was solely guaranteed by the U.S.–Japan Security Alliance. An initial change came with the 2013 National Security Strategy (NSS), which prescribed a more integrated, comprehensive, and proactive approach to regional and global security challenges. Then, in 2016, Prime Minister Shinzō Abe unveiled the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) concept, which sought to advance stability, connectivity, and the rule of law across the Indo-Pacific region. It reflected a more outward-looking strategic discourse that progressively identified the EU as a like-minded partner. In 2022, Japan's National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy adopted a more operational and urgent discourse, portraying the country's security environment as increasingly severe whilst confirming European countries as like-minded partners (MOFA, 2022; MOD, 2022). At the same time, security legislation was reinterpreted to allow the limited use of collective self-defence, defence expenditure was increased, military export restrictions have been relaxed, and recent debates about constitutional revision – particularly the amendment of Article 9 – suggest that Tokyo is willing to become a more active and outgoing security and defence actor (Bosack, 2026).

Drivers of cooperation

The adoption of the SDP was the culmination of a long historical and institutional process between the EU and Japan. However, their security and defence engagement was also accelerated by a set of contextual factors that made closer cooperation necessary. As shown by the two actors' strategic documents, a build-up of shared threat perceptions and strategic priorities progressively took place in their strategic calculus and pointed them closer towards cooperation. This reality helped Tokyo and Brussels to overcome longstanding hesitations about bilateral security engagement and search together for effective solutions to mutual security challenges. Such drivers of cooperation can be divided into three main categories: (i) geopolitical shifts; (ii) convergent security threats; and (iii) shared norms and values.

Geopolitical shifts. Today, the EU and Japan are navigating a complex reality (Tomkin, 2025; Pejsova, 2024). The global geopolitical landscape is shifting towards the Indo-Pacific, where economic, technological, and military power are becoming increasingly concentrated. The rise of multipolarity, persistent regional conflicts and tensions, and the erosion of the postwar international is fuelling declining confidence in established multilateral institutions. This trend coincides with the rise of revisionist powers, particularly China and Russia, but also the unpredictable behavior of the United States, a longstanding European and Japanese ally. The PRC's military build-up, political assertiveness, growing economic influence, and dominance in several critical technologies pose significant challenges to regional and global stability. The U.S., in turn, adopted under President Trump's second mandate a more volatile and transactional approach to trade, alliances, and international commitments, prompting allies and partners to reassess established assumptions about Washington's reliability on a scale that is unprecedented. American unilateral military interventions also aggravated geopolitical uncertainties and initiated perilous notions about unilateral military action. Together, these factors helped change Tokyo's and Brussels' strategic calculus, incentivizing them to diversify their security partnerships and to further explore bilateral cooperation.

Convergent security threats. For many decades, the strategic contexts of Europe and Japan were seldom shared, and their perceived top security priorities did not coincide. However, the last few years changed that assumption. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, a turning point in European security, created a precedent for illegal aggression in other parts of the world. The aggression was viewed in Tokyo with apprehension, with Prime Minister Kishida stating that "Ukraine today may be East Asia tomorrow" (AFP, 2022). China's "no-limits" partnership with Russia, in turn, provided Moscow with a much-needed lifeline, revealing a Moscow-Beijing strategic alignment while adding a global dimension to the conflict (Yeh, 2026). Similarly, North Korea's involvement in Ukraine showed that an Asian actor can directly participate in a European war (Hird et al., 2024). Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs – a longstanding concern for Japan – remain unchecked and are possibly bolstered by Moscow, potentially leading to proliferation risks in other parts of the world, including the Middle East, with implications for Europe (Crawford et al., 2026).

China also became a central theme in the EU-Japan security agenda. Beijing's assertiveness in the East China Sea, territorial disputes, and claims over Taiwan are a central concern for Japan, but they have also become relevant for Europe. China's military build-up challenges U.S. strategic superiority, especially in East Asia, putting into question U.S. political and defence commitments at a time they are no longer taken for granted. When it comes to Taiwan, an incident in the Strait could involve Japan militarily and provoke disruptions to global trade and critical supply chains, generating security and economic repercussions for Europe (Maremonti, 2026).

In that perspective, China has also become a challenge in terms of economic security, since Europe and Japan are exposed to Beijing's coercive trade practices, dependencies in critical supply chains, and superiority in many advanced technologies. Chinese leverage over rare earths, semiconductors, and key industrial components is increasingly weaponised against liberal societies, turning trade diversification, resilience, and autonomy into a shared priority for the EU and Japan (Ng, 2026).

An additional domain in the EU-Japan's security agenda is hybrid threats. In addition to economic coercion, Brussels and Tokyo look at cyberattacks, FIMI, espionage, foreign malign influence and interference, and threats to critical infrastructure and technologies as threats that undermine national (and regional) security and attack the integrity of democratic societies and institutions. States like Russia and China are perceived as actors employing hybrid methods in persistent and coordinated manners, exploiting vulnerabilities in open and free societies to advance strategic objectives below the threshold of armed conflict. Such threats have been visible both in Japan and in the EU, for example, in the form of disinformation campaigns, interference with democratic processes, and contamination of internal politics, as well as cyber intrusions targeting public institutions, strategic communications systems, or research networks (EEAS, 2026a; Lee, 2026; Yomiuri, 2025).

Shared norms and values. Despite the growing fragmentation of the liberal world order and the rise of revisionism, the EU and Japan continue to stress their normative role as "one of the basics of their influence and legitimacy on the global scene" (Niquet, 2021, 1). Instead of abandoning the values and institutions of the rules-based international governance, Tokyo and Brussels maintain a firm discursive approach to rationales such as the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, democracy, and human rights, reaffirming their commitments as like-minded partners to address common challenges. Such a posture stands in contrast with other international players and creates a situation in which Japan and the EU have to double down on their normative efforts in order to "preserve the very framework that ensures their long-term interests" (Pohlkamp, 2025). Maintaining the liberal democratic order has therefore become a crucial *raison d'être* for EU-Japan security engagement, with the SDP emerging as an important instrument to that objective (Atanassova-Cornelis and Pejsova, 2026).

2024 EU-Japan SDP – Features, Components, and Areas of Cooperation

The 2024 EU-Japan SDP was the first partnership of its kind concluded between the EU and an Indo-Pacific country. Instead of merely reaffirming broad commitments as in the past, the document highlighted a joint strategic vision and created a framework for sustained cooperation across a range of both traditional and emerging security domains. It went beyond previous engagements by focusing specifically

on security and defence, defining concrete fields of cooperation, and establishing structured channels for dialogue and consultation.
The SDP begins by acknowledging "Europe and the Indo-Pacific are highly interconnected and interdependent", and that the two actors face an "increasingly challenging and interlinked security environment." It reaffirms the EU and Japan's shared commitment to the rules-based international order, emphasizing the centrality of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the promotion of values such as the rule of law, human rights, territorial integrity, and fundamental freedoms. The document also states that relevant security domains are "no longer limited to traditional military and defence-related topics" and include non-traditional domains. Drawing upon their respective strategic documents, Tokyo and Brussels affirm their intention to "seize the momentum" for cooperation and seek to "further develop, deepen and strengthen" their cooperation on security and defence (EEAS, 2024c, paras 1-4). In doing so, the SDP establishes a general framework that is geared towards improving cooperation. It includes the following (EEAS, 2024c, paras 5-9):

- Setting up dialogue mechanisms to provide steering and oversight, with an emphasis on using existing high-level meetings and upgrading informal consultations to structured dialogue summits.
- Enhancing engagement on matters related to economic security and economic resilience under the international rules-based system.
- Exploring options for a joint Agreement on the Security of Information.
- Further developing cooperation on security and defence, including through expanding capacity building and support to partner countries.
- Cooperating in multilateral fora and engaging with like-minded partners.

Finally, the SDP proposes eleven areas of cooperation ranging from traditional security topics to emerging and unconventional threats. It combines political dialogue, operational cooperation, capacity-building, and closer coordination on regional and international issues. The proposed topics include maritime security, cyber and hybrid threats, space security, non-proliferation and disarmament, economic security, crisis management, and conflict prevention, among others (EEAS, 2024c, paras 10-32). While some of these tracks have not yet been developed from the policy level, some domains are already being pursued practically, albeit to different degrees. To illustrate the convergence of security agendas and the operationalization efforts of the 2024 SDP, three case studies are particularly relevant: maritime security, cyber issues, hybrid threats including FIMI.

Maritime Security

The first area of cooperation mentioned in the SDP is maritime security. According to the Agreement, the EU and Japan decided to deepen exchanges in this domain,

"aiming at promoting an open and rules-based maritime regional security architecture", with an emphasis on maintaining "secure sea lines of communication [SLOC] and freedoms of navigation and overflights, in accordance with international law" (EEAS, 2024c, para. 11). To that end, the two parties agree to enhance their engagement through "promoting concrete naval cooperation", conducting activities such as joint exercises and port calls, and "exploring cooperation in the framework of the EU's Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP)"[3] and with capacity building of third countries (EEAS, 2024c, para. 12).

Maritime security is the most "hard security" area covered in the SDP and a field in which the EU and Japan have collaborated for many years. Bilateral cooperation dates back to 2014, when the Japanese Self-Defence Forces (SDF) and the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR – Operation Atalanta) conducted their first joint exercise in the Gulf of Aden. Since then, there have been more than 20 joint maritime exercises between Japan and the EU, with regular operational contacts and joint ports of call. An Administrative Agreement between EUNAVFOR and the SDF was also signed in 2023 to facilitate communication, coordination, and practical naval cooperation (EEAS, 2023). Individual Member States have themselves conducted joint activities with Japanese vessels. This contributed to improving maritime interoperability and trust between Japan and the EU (Benaglia and Crosson, 2022, pp. 6-7; Pardo and Pejsova, 2024, pp. 21-23).

Historically, most of the EU-Japan maritime security cooperation has taken place in the Indian Ocean and on anti-piracy and missions to secure SLOC. However, in recent years, the geographical focus of this cooperation expanded towards the western Pacific and East Asian waters, with an emphasis on capacity building and freedom of navigation under international law. Since 2020, naval forces from European countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and France – the latter a resident Indo-Pacific power – have deployed in the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait, and other parts of the western Pacific, individually or jointly with Japan and other regional partners (Berkofsky, 2025b, 2025a). Concurrently, security initiatives like CRIMARIO[4] and ESIWA[5], two EU-sponsored programs for security and defence cooperation in Asia and the Indo-Pacific, have been helpful coordination and capacity-building instruments for EU-Japan maritime cooperation. Their accomplishments include collaboration with Southeast Asian countries on maritime governance, information sharing, and training, among others (Expertise France, 2026).

EU-Japan maritime cooperation has continued since the SDP was signed. The two sides revisit the issue regularly through the now structured dialogue on security and

3 The CMP is a foreign policy tool designed to maximize the operational coherence of Member States' assets in critical maritime regions.

4 Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific, launched in 2015.

5 Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia, launched in 2020.

defence. France, Germany, and the Netherlands occasionally send naval assets to East Asia; the discursive posture about freedom of navigation in the region remains strong, and EU-funded programs for maritime security are being renewed (Jarkovský, 2025). Despite the EU's limited capability in comparison with local actors – particularly China – maritime engagement with Japan and like-minded countries is admittedly increasing, providing an important step towards asserting freedom of navigation and the rules-based international system (Nishida, 2024, pp. 9-10).

Cyber issues

The EU and Japan have been holding regular Cyber Dialogue meetings since 2014. Under the SDP, the two actors proposed to collaborate further, namely by "enhancing regular exchanges on the cybersecurity threat landscape, respective approaches, and practical cooperative efforts" on diplomatic responses to malicious cyber activities. They also agreed to cooperate on cyber capacity building and to coordinate in international fora in matters of cyber governance (EEAS, 2024c, paras 15-16). This commitment comes at a time when threats in the cyber landscape are exponentially increasing. Not only are they borderless and used by state and non-state actors, but they are also aggravated by technological advances such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, expanding digital infrastructures and networks, and growing dependency on digital platforms (Bell, 2025).

In that context, the EU and Japan, two highly digitalized societies, share common threats and the incentives to collaborate. For many years, Japan has lagged behind in cybersecurity awareness despite increasing cyberattacks, particularly from Russian and Chinese threat actors (Nishimura, 2026). Operations such as Volt Typhoon and Salt Typhoon, or the Chinese-backed group MirrorFace, successfully targeted critical sectors in Japan, including telecommunications, major companies, infrastructure, and key utilities, exposing their vulnerabilities (Tomkin, 2025, pp. 19-20; REACT 2026). Europe also faces significant challenges in this domain, with a mix of high-volume, high-impact threats like ransomware, cyberattacks, and cyber operations from actors associated with Russia and China, as well as non-state actors, targeting European public administration, transportation, finance, and critical infrastructure across the EU (ENISA, 2025).

Bilateral engagement on these issues has gained traction in recent years. In 2022, the two actors launched the "EU–Japan Digital Partnership", under which they began collaborating in areas such as digital connectivity, cybersecurity, AI, 5G technologies, quantum computing, and semiconductor supply chain (Pardo and Pejsova, 2024, p. 16). The 6th EU-Japan Cyber Dialogue, held in Tokyo in November 2024, expanded this agenda and gathered senior stakeholders from both sides, giving it a renewed orientation under the SDP (EEAS, 2024a). The 2026 7th EU-Japan Cyber Dialogue, in

turn, was built explicitly on the first SDP summit in the previous year to advance cooperation on the evolving cyber threat landscape and on responses to malicious cyber activities. Through these efforts, Brussels and Tokyo increased their exchanges on cyber threat assessments, responses, and best practices, policy and regulatory developments, as well as crisis management and cyber defence. Information-sharing on product security, resilience, and protection of critical infrastructures has also improved. Lastly, the two sides pledged to coordinate positions internationally and to improve cooperation with international and regional partners within global cyber governance frameworks (European Commission, 2026).

The Partnership was therefore a turning point for EU-Japan cyber engagement. By pursuing a cyber issue track through the SDP, the EU and Japan raised their engagement in the field from a simple policy dialogue to strategic and practical cooperation. Similarly, this collaboration and its achievements mean that cyber matters are no longer purely a technical matter for both actors, but instead a major security issue to both parties, for which cooperation within a strategic framework is not only necessary but indispensable.

Hybrid threats and FIMI

Another example illustrating EU-Japan cooperation under the SDP pertains to hybrid threats and FIMI. Through the Agreement, the two sides decided to "deepen research and study on hybrid threats, including through close cooperation between academic institutions, think tanks, and centres of excellence on both sides." The SDP specifically mentions the Strategic Communications Education and Research Unit (SCERU) at the University of Tokyo, a project supported by EU-funded ESIWA, as a platform for enhanced cooperation. There is also an agreement to share "best practices in developing strategies and policies, including diplomatic responses", to participate jointly in exercises, and to proactively exchange information on matters related to FIMI (EEAS, 2024c, paras 17-19).

In the EU, Russian hybrid activity has increased greatly in recent years, with European countries subject to constant and systematic hostile actions combining cyber-attacks, disinformation, and drone incursions, among other activities. Moscow's invasion of Ukraine increased the scale and complexity of that threat. The EU is also increasingly targeted by China, through an approach that privileges cyber activities, economic and technological leveraging, and large-scale influence and interference operations (Tóthová and Engel, 2026). In Japan, Russian hybrid actions include cyber activities, FIMI, grey-zone military operations (sometimes in collusion with China), and espionage (MOD, 2025). However, China is probably Japan's most persistent hybrid threat, employing coordinated cyber, FIMI, economic, military, and influence activities below the threshold of armed conflict (Naito, 2025; Tatsumi

et al., 2025). Those actions take place alongside East Asian growing tensions and territorial disputes (MOD, 2025).

In this context, FIMI emerged as a central topic in the EU-Japan security agenda. Moscow's activities, more visible in Europe, are particularly sophisticated and aggressive, looking to undermine support for Ukraine, fragment the cohesion of opponent countries, polarize societies, and erode societal resilience and democratic institutions. Russia typically follows a chaotic and disruptive approach intended for short-term gains, leveraging a vast, state-sponsored ecosystem aided by proxy agents. Chinese FIMI, on the other hand, has increased considerably in recent years. Beijing primarily seeks to shape opinions, silence criticism, project a positive image of the PRC and its system of governance, and promote narratives aligned with Chinese strategic goals. It also acts more persistently in East Asia (Voo, 2024; Aoi et al., 2026), relying on a long-term, holistic approach that employs mainstream media – namely Chinese state outlets – co-opted elites, academia, cyber activities, economic levers, and self-censorship to gradually convert public and political discourse in its favour (Girardi et al., 2025, 6-8; EEAS, 2026a). This reality is further complexified by Russia-China collusions and the growing centrality of the Indo-Pacific.

Following the adoption of the SDP, EU-Japan engagement on hybrid threats and FIMI advanced considerably, indicating that cooperation on FIMI has become institutionalized rather than informal and episodic. On 11 June 2025, the two actors held their first Security and Defence Dialogue, agreeing to cooperate on areas including hybrid threats and FIMI (MOFA, 2025). Shortly after, at the 30th EU-Japan Summit (23 July 2025), in Tokyo, they launched a dedicated dialogue on FIMI as a standalone theme of the security partnership (European Commission, 2025).[6] Lastly, on 3 June 2026, the EU and Japan held their first Dialogue on FIMI, gathering senior officials from the Japanese central government, including security and intelligence agencies, alongside the EEAS, to discuss approaches to detecting and countering FIMI and to identify areas of cooperation (MOFA, 2026). Meanwhile, ESIWA-supported SCERU in Tokyo continues a high-level academic dialogue that enables much-needed exchanges among professionals and experts in the field.

Limits and Constraints

Despite the progress made towards a deeper EU-Japan security and defence cooperation, the partnership remains subject to a number of structural, political, and operational constraints that may impact its implementation and limit its long-term strategic significance. They can be categorized into four main types: institutional limitations, strategic divergences, capabilities, and political uncertainty.

6 At the second Security and Defence Dialogue (17 May 2026), FIMI also featured as one of the notable discussion topics between the parties (EEAS, 2026b).

With regard to institutional aspects, an initial limitation comes from the non-binding, dialogue-based nature of the SDP itself. Unlike NATO and the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance, the SDP does not stipulate mutual defence commitments nor enforceable legal obligations in case of conflict. The Partnership also does not establish permanent military or civilian operational structures, instead offering a framework for dialogue and cooperation that is voluntary and does not provide the security guarantees or enabling mechanisms typically associated with formal defence alliances. This structural ceiling means that EU-Japan cooperation under the SDP has a limited scope when it comes to operational mandate and measures, and that its implementation depends on sustained political commitment and the willingness of both sides to attain concrete actions.

As for strategic divergences, important differences remain in the strategic priorities of the EU and Japan despite the alignment of recent years. The EU is primarily focused on regional issues such as Russia's war against Ukraine, instability in the Middle East, pressures from the Southern Neighbourhood, and North-Atlantic and Arctic security. Japan, in turn, is more concerned with China's assertiveness and military build-up, territorial disputes in East Asia, a contingency involving Taiwan, as well as North Korea's nuclear and missile programs (Büyükarslan, 2025, p. 7). Consequently, Brussels and Tokyo's top security agendas are distinct to a large extent – both geographically and in their subjective importance – overlapping largely on complementary, non-military, and non-traditional issues that often receive less political attention than core security interests. The role of the U.S. is another key factor to consider, since most EU countries are NATO members, and the Atlantic Alliance remains the backbone of European security despite Washington's unpredictable foreign policy lately. A similar logic applies to Japan, with the Security Alliance with the U.S. keeping the sole formal guarantee against external threats. European countries and Japan are thus likely to continue prioritizing security relations with Washington rather than shifting their preferences towards each other (Niquet, 2024, pp. 9-10; Tomkin, 2025, pp. 18-19).

A similar logic applies to capabilities. Despite growing cooperation under the SDP, military asset deployment and joint activities remain more episodic than routine. And even though civilian cooperation has expanded considerably, much of it continues to rely on consultations, information exchanges, and capacity-building rather than integrated operational activities. This could be challenging given the difficulties and perhaps domestic reservations from both sides about pursuing interoperability, information sharing, and concrete know-how exchanges. The civilian component of the partnership has also grown at a faster pace than the military side, and the uneven development of cooperation areas may lead to the abandonment of some of its fields, undermining the value of the Agreement as a whole. Likewise, it is important to note that even though Europe and Japan are investing substantially in security and defence – with record defence budgets and

ambitions for military strategic autonomy – the main reason for those efforts is not the SDP nor EU-Japan cooperation, but rather the immediate threats the two actors face in their respective regions. Maintaining continuous security and defence cooperation, especially with military assets, may therefore prove expensive and politically difficult to sustain in the long term.

Finally, the continuing development of the EU-Japan security and defence cooperation is subject to political uncertainty. The SDP resulted from a Brussels-Tokyo consensus, but internal politics on each side are subject to changes, potentially impacting the relevance attributed to the Agreement and its implementation. The EU is not a unitary actor, and, in addition to its own democratic institutions, domestic politics in Member States can be a major factor of divergence, for example, by affecting national foreign policy priorities regarding China and Russia. The need for political consensus among the member states, as well as Brussels' complex institutional decision-making processes, can also hinder swift policymaking and implementation. When it comes to Japan, a similar logic of internal politics applies, with Tokyo having to balance its security needs with the country's constitutional pacifism, domestic politics, and societal reluctance to militarism and conflict. The U.S. stands once again as a crucial variable, since Washington's foreign policy and defence commitments to traditional allies can strongly impact demand in Brussels and Tokyo for closer security cooperation between Japan and the EU. The evolving international security environment, at last, especially developments involving China and Russia, may too reinforce or constrain the drive for a stronger bilateral security relationship.

Conclusions

The 2024 EU-Japan Security and Defence Partnership represented a major transformation in the bilateral security relationship. After decades of engagement focused mainly on economic interests, and a security cooperation agenda that was mostly symbolic and produced limited outcomes, Brussels and Tokyo established a structured and increasingly operational security partnership that marked a new chapter in their evolving relationship. Even though the SDP is not a formal security alliance and cooperation is still at a nascent stage, it signifies a qualitative shift from an *ad hoc* political dialogue into an institutionalized framework with concrete areas of cooperation and tangible outcomes, as shown in the maritime, cyber, and hybrid threats domains. This cooperation was driven by a combination of geopolitical, security, and normative factors, with the convergence of European and Indo-Pacific security emerging as a catalyst for closer cooperation between the two actors. Progress in EU-Japan security and defence will depend, however, on the evolution of internal and external contextual factors. Notwithstanding, the basis for a solid

and meaningful partnership is well established through the mechanisms and the practices pursued since 2024.

The SDP also signals the growing significance of the Indo-Pacific in the international security landscape. The Partnership creates space for the EU to act as a credible security actor in the region and to go beyond its traditional normative and economic role. It also highlights Japan's more proactive and outward-looking posture amidst a challenging regional context that is deteriorating the rules-based, multilateral world order that allowed Tokyo's pacifist posture for decades.

Agreements with other countries similar to the SDP, like the ones the EU signed in the meantime with India and South Korea, are also a possibility. The SDP could become a model for future EU security partnerships with other countries from Asia and other continents, particularly among nations facing challenges similar to the ones affecting Europe and Japan. The SDP also shows that, as an alternative to great power competition, middle powers can develop purposeful partnerships based on common security interests. They can do so by pursuing non-traditional agendas and areas of cooperation, which, coincidentally, are assuming today a higher relevance in the international security landscape. The coming years will reveal whether the EU-Japan SDP will indeed evolve into an active, operational partnership or if it will remain confined in bilateral politics and dialogue without delivering its full potential. Future research should assess the implementation of the Partnership across its cooperation tracks and evaluate the extent to which political commitments by Brussels and Tokyo have actually translated into meaningful and operational cooperation. Such studies could determine, through more sustained and substantive analysis, whether the SDP truly represented a major upgrade in EU-Japan security engagement or ultimately followed the same pattern of stagnation of previous attempts.

References

AFP (2022) *'Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow': Japan PM warns*. [online] France 24. Available at: https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220610-ukraine-today-could-be-east-asia-tomorrow-japan-pm-warns [Accessed: 4 July 2026].

Aoi, C., Innes, M., Martin, E. and Flores, T. (2026) Japan's 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' and Russian and Chinese Information Influence. *Defence Strategic Communications*, 270(16), pp.174-221. https://doi.org/10.30966/2018.RIGA.16.6

Atanassova-Cornelis, E. and Pejsova, E. (2026) The EU-Japan security cooperation in defence of the liberal international order: achievements and limitations. *Asia Europe Journal*, 24(1), pp.73-90.

Bargués, P. (2022) *The EU Strategic Compass: A Blueprint for a European Defensive and Securitisation Policy*. JOINT Brief. [online] Riga: JOINT. Available at: https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/joint_b_16.pdf [Accessed: 1 May 2026].

Bell, M. (2025) *Collaborative Approaches to Robust Cybersecurity*. [online] Available at: https://www.eu-japan.eu/sites/default/files/brt/otherevents/20250305_DPAstakeholderevent/2025DPA_JBCE%20Cyber%20b.pdf [Accessed: 4 June 2026].

Benaglia, S. and Crosson, D.M. (2022) *A Pillar of Stability in An Unstable World: Strengthening EU-Japan Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*. CEPS Policy Brief. [online] Brussels: Social Science Research Network. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=4135491 [Accessed: 31 May 2026].

Berkofsky, A. (2007) *The EU and Japan: a partnership in the making*. EPC Issue Paper. [online] Brussels: European Policy Centre. Available at: https://www.epc.eu/publication/The-EU-and-Japan-a-partnership-in-the-making-233994/ [Accessed: 31 May 2026].

Berkofsky, A. (2012) EU-Japan relations from 2001 to today: achievements, failures and prospects. *Japan Forum*, 24(3), pp. 265-288. https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2012.699453

Berkofsky, A. (2018) *The EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA): Good but Good Enough?* [online] Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI). Available at: https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/eu-japan-strategic-partnership-agreement-spa-good-good-enough-21392 [Accessed: 7 June 2026].

Berkofsky, A. (2020) *Moving Beyond Rhetoric? The EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement*. Issue Brief. [online] Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP). Available at: https://www.isdp.eu/publication/the-eu-japan-strategic-partnership-agreement/ [Accessed: 16 June 2026].

Berkofsky, A. (2025a) *All Dressed Up and Somewhere to Go? European Naval Deployments to the Indo-Pacific*. [online] Australian Institute of International Affairs. Available at: https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/all-dressed-up-and-somewhere-to-go-european-naval-deployments-to-the-indo-pacific/ [Accessed: 7 May 2026].

Berkofsky, A. (2025b) *Brussels and Tokyo Do the Talk, While the Navies Do the Walk*. [online] ISPI. Available at: https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/brussels-and-tokyo-do-the-talk-while-the-navies-do-the-walk-223383 [Accessed: 7 May 2026].

Bosack, M.M. (2026) *Four things to understand in Japan's constitutional debate*. [online] The Japan Times. Available at: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2026/04/17/japan/politics/constitutional-debate/ [Accessed: 28 April 2026].

Büyükarslan, B. (2025) *EU-Japan Strategic Partnership: Asian Influence on European Defence*. Infoflash. [online] Brussels: The European Land Force Commanders Organization (Finabel). Available at: [Accessed: 13 May 2026].

Carteny, A. and Di Stefano, E.T. (2023) The EU and the Indo-Pacific: The path towards a comprehensive strategy. In: *Handbook of Indo-Pacific Studies*. London: Routledge India.

Crawford, J., Erausquin, G.S. and Pawlus, W. (2026) *Evaluating Russian Support for North Korea's Nuclear Weapons*. [online] Available at: https://www.rusi.org [Accessed: 10 May 2026].

D'Ambrogio, E. (2019) *The EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)*. Briefing – International Agreements in Progress. [online] Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Ser-

vice (EPRS). Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630323/EPRS_BRI(2018)630323_EN.pdf [Accessed: 15 April 2026].

EEAS (2019) *EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)*. [online] European External Action Service (EEAS). Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/57491_en [Accessed: 16 April 2026].

EEAS (2023) *EU, Japan agree on formal arrangement to facilitate naval cooperation*. [online] European External Action Service (EEAS). Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/japan/eu-japan-agree-formal-arrangement-facilitate-naval-cooperation_en?s=169 [Accessed: 11 April 2026].

EEAS (2024a) *Cyber: EU and Japan hold 6th Cyber Dialogue in Tokyo*. [online] European External Action Service (EEAS). Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/cyber-eu-and-japan-hold-6th-cyber-dialogue-tokyo_en [Accessed: 12 May 2026].

EEAS (2024b) *HR/VP Borrell in Japan – Press conference*. [online] European External Action Service (EEAS). Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hrvp-borrell-japan-press-conference-02112024-eu-japan-security-and-defence-partnership_en [Accessed: 16 May 2026].

EEAS (2024c) *Security and Defence Partnership Between the European Union and Japan*. [online] European External Action Service (EEAS). Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-japan-security-and-defence-partnership_en [Accessed: 14 April 2026].

EEAS (2026a) *4th EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats*. [online] Brussels: European External Action Service. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2026/documents/EEAS%204th%20Threat%20Report_web%20version_1.pdf [Accessed: 4 May 2026].

EEAS (2026b) *EU-Japan: Second Security and Defence Dialogue*. [online] Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-japan-second-security-and-defence-dialogue_en [Accessed: 4 May 2026].

ENISA (2025) *EU consistently targeted by diverse yet convergent threat groups*. [online] European Union Agency for Cybersecurity. Available at: https://www.enisa.europa.eu/news/etl-2025-eu-consistently-targeted-by-diverse-yet-convergent-threat-groups [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

European Commission (2025) *Joint statement following the EU-Japan Summit 2025*. [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_25_1890 [Accessed: 18 May 2026].

European Commission (2026) *Cyber: European Union and Japan hold 7th Cyber Dialogue in Brussels*. [online] Shaping Europe's digital future. Available at: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/cyber-european-union-and-japan-hold-7th-cyber-dialogue-brussels [Accessed: 31 May 2026].

European Council (2022) *A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade*. [online] Council of the European Union. Available at: https://www.consilium.

europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/ [Accessed: 19 May 2026].

Expertise France (2026) *ESIWA+: Enhancing the European Union's Security Cooperation In and With Asia and the Indo-Pacific*. [online] Available at: https://www.expertisefrance.fr/en/projects/esiwa-enhancing-european-unions-security-cooperation-and-asia-and-indo-pacific [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Girardi, B., Ghirotto, T., Jasper, L. and Ellison, D. (2025) *Scoping the threats: FIMI operations in the Indo-Pacific and Europe*. FIMI in Focus. The Hague: Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, pp. 3-8.

Heng (2025) Still light in the darkness? Unpacking the 2024 Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership Document. *Sinopsis*. Available at: https://sinopsis.cz/en/still-light-in-the-darkness-unpacking-the-2024-japan-eu-security-and-defence-partnership-document/ [Accessed: 4 April 2026].

Hird, K., Shats, D. and O'Neil, A. (2024) *North Korea Joins Russia's War Against Ukraine: Operational and Strategic Implications in Ukraine and Northeast Asia*. Washington, D.C: Institute for the Study of War (ISW).

Howard D. (1997) EURATOM set to join KEDO board; Work at Sinpo site to begin. *Arms Control Today*, 27(3), p.30.

Jarkovský, M. (2025) *Bolstering European naval presence in the Indo-Pacific: What´s the state of play?* [online] Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS). Available at: https://ceias.eu/bolstering-european-naval-presence-in-the-indo-pacific-whats-the-state-of-play/ [Accessed: 12 April 2026].

Jingkai, S. and Paul, B. (2026) Narrowing the 'expectations deficit'? Evolving Japanese expectations of the EU as an Indo-Pacific security actor (2020-2022). *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 34(1), pp. 78-100. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2025.2525151.

Kirchner, E.J. and Dorussen, H. (2021) New horizons in EU–Japan security cooperation. *Asia Europe Journal*, 19(1), pp. 27-41. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-020-00586-z.

Lee, S.-F. (2026) *China's influence pipeline is already active in Japan's information space*. [online] Nikkei Asia. Available at: https://asia.nikkei.com/opinion/china-s-influence-pipeline-is-already-active-in-japan-s-information-space [Accessed: 5 July 2026].

Legrand, J. (2018) *EU-Japan cooperation on global and regional security - a litmus test for the EU's role as a global player?* Brussels: Policy Department for External Relations – Directorate General for External Policies of the Union.

Maremonti, F. (2026) *Stress-Testing EU-Taiwan Semiconductor Supply Chains: An Economic Security Assessment*. [online] Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). Available at: https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip2605.pdf [Accessed: 6 July 2026].

MOD (2025) *Defense of Japan*. [online] Ministry of Defense of Japan. Available at: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/press/wp/wp2025/pdf/DOJ2025_EN_Full.pdf [Accessed: 28 May 2026].

MOD (2022) *National Defense Strategy*. [online] Ministry of Defense of Japan. Available at: https://www.mod.go.jp/j/policy/agenda/guideline/strategy/pdf/strategy_en.pdf [Accessed: 16 April 2026].

MOFA (1991) *Joint Declaration on Relations between The European Community and its Member States and Japan*. [online] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/overview/declar.html [Accessed: 15 June 2026].

MOFA (2001) *An Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation*. [online] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/eu/kodo_k_e.html [Accessed: 15 June 2026].

MOFA (2025) *The 1st Japan-EU Security and Defence Dialogue*. [online] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Available at: https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/pagewe_000001_00210.html [Accessed: 16 July 2026].

MOFA (2022) *National Security Strategy of Japan*. [online] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Available at: https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/221216anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf [Accessed: 16 April 2026].

Mykal, O. (2012) *The EU-Japan Security Dialogue: Invisible but Comprehensive*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Naito, E. (2025) *Communist China's quiet influence on Japanese politics*. [online] The Japan Times. Available at: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/commentary/2025/04/30/japan/china-influence-ops-japan/ [Accessed: 15 May 2026].

Ng, G. (2026) *China's economic coercion: The case of Japan and the lesson for Europe*. [online] Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS). Available at: https://ceias.eu/chinas-economic-coercion-the-case-of-japan-and-the-lesson-for-europe/ [Accessed: 5 June 2026].

Niquet, V. (2021) *Japan and the EU: shared interests and cooperation*. Note de la FRS. Paris: Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS).

Niquet, V. (2024) *Ambitions and Limits: The Deepening Security Dialogue -Between Japan and the European Union*. Brussels: Wilfred Martens Centre for European Studies.

Nishida, I. (2024) Japan's Changing Perception of the European Union as a Security Provider in the Indo-Pacific: Basic Motivations and Renewed Interests. In: Y. Joshi, I. Nishida and D. Chaturvedi, eds. *The European Union as a Security Actor in the Indo-Pacific: Perceptions and Responses from the Region*. Singapore: Springer Nature. pp.31-46. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-4453-4_3.

Nishimura, R. (2026) *Japan Goes on the Offensive in Cybersecurity*. [online] Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI). Available at: https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/japan-goes-on-the-offensive-in-cybersecurity-229280 [Accessed: 15 June 2026].

Pardo, R.P. and Pejsova, E. (2024) *Deepening EU-Japan Cooperation*. In-Depth Analysis. [online] European Parliament. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2024/754443/EXPO_IDA(2024)754443_EN.pdf [Accessed: 6 May 2026].

Pejsova, E. (2024) *Bound by Uncertainty: What Future for EU-Japan Security Cooperation?* CSDS Policy Brief. Brussels: Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy.

Pohlkamp, E.-K. (2025) *No time to drift: Trump, China, and the urgency of a stronger EU-Japan alignment*. [online] European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). Available at: https://ecfr.eu/article/no-time-to-drift-trump-china-and-the-urgency-of-a-stronger-eu-japan-alignment/ [Accessed: 14 June 2026].

de Prado, C. (2017) Towards a Substantial EU-Japan Partnership. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 22(4), pp. 435-454. https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2017034

REACT (2026) Why Japan is Suddenly Absorbing the World´s Spare Cyber Capacity. *Cybel Angel*. Available at: https://cybelangel.com/blog/japan-cyberattacks-2026-russia-china-reallocation/ [Accessed: 13 June 2026].

Samaan, J.-L. (2024) The European Union and Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: A Lamb in the Lion's Den? In: Y. Joshi, I. Nishida and D. Chaturvedi, eds. *The European Union as a Security Actor in the Indo-Pacific: Perceptions and Responses from the Region*. Singapore: Springer Nature. pp. 15-28. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-4453-4_2

Tatsumi, Y., Rawlins, M. and Siebens, J. (2025) *Economic Coercion from the People's Republic of China*. [online] Stimson Center. Available at: https://www.stimson.org/2025/economic-coercion-from-the-peoples-republic-of-china/ [Accessed: 12 June 2026].

Tomkin, R. (2025) *Europe and Japan, a New National Security Calculus?* Washington, DC: Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA.

Tóthová, L. and Engel, D. (2026) *EU response to hybrid threats*. [Briefing] Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

Tsuruoka, M. (2008) Expectations deficit in EU-Japan relations: Why the Relationship Cannot flourish. *Current Politics and Economics of Asia*, 17(1), pp.107-126.

Voo, J. (2024) *APRSA 2024 | Chapter 5: Driving Wedges: China's Disinformation Campaigns in the Asia-Pacific*. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

Wagner A. (2001) D.P.R.K extends missile pledge as U.S. readies to resume talks. *Arms Control Today*, 31(5), pp. 21, 25.

Watanabe, H. (2013) *Japan-Europe Relations at the Multilateral Level*. Japan's Diplomacy Series. [online] Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA). Available at: https://www.jiia.or.jp/jpn/upload/160330_Hirotaka_Watanabe.pdf. [Accessed: 5 June 2026].

Yeh, E. (2026) *Funding war, courting crisis: Why China's support for Russia requires a European response – European Council on Foreign Relations*. [online] European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). Available at:<https://ecfr.eu/article/funding-war-courting-crisis-why-chinas-support-for-russia-requires-a-european-response/ [Accessed: 4 July 2026].

Yomiuri (2025) *Upper House Election: Japan 'target of foreign election interference' online; Bots Found Pushing Posts Fomenting Japan-U.S. Division*. [online] The Yomiuri Shinbun. Availa-ble at: https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/politics/politics-government/20250717-270059/ [Accessed: 5 May 2026].