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Policy Paper

New START Treaty – State, future and implications for the EU and V4

Juraj Sýkora

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Abstract

After the Cuban nuclear crisis in 1962, the US and USSR realized that cooperation between the countries is inevitable to maintain peace and decrease the risk of nuclear war. Cognizant of the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the US and USSR signed Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I), the first nuclear weapons treaty that capped the number of missiles of both countries. A lot has changed since that time. The number of nuclear weapons has never been as low as it is now.. However, new technologies, new players and new threats are posing great global risks. Relations between the US and Russia are frigid, and the treaties that were meant to protect not only their regions but also the world are collapsing. However, the year 2021 brought good news in form of a last-minute extension of the New START Treaty, the successor of SALT I. The countries now have 5 more years to negotiate how a future treaty should look, what should it should contain, and who should be part of it. Working groups have been established lately to adress the numerous issues within these negotiations. The paper will first analyze the current state of nuclear arms control, the New START treaty, what it contains and who it pertains to. The paper will then analyze the prospects towards 2026, when the extension to the treaty will expire. The European Union, which lays between two concerning superpowers, seems to be powerless in the process of creation and implementation of the treaty; nevertheless, the fact remains that if a conflict erupted, certain countries of the European Union, mainly the ones with defense systems, would be attacked. That is why it is pertinent to analyze how the EU can assure security in the region, and what activities can be pursued to maintain it. One of the countries that host defense systems is Poland, part of the V4. Therefore, the paper will analyze the positions of the V4 concerning the treaty, but also the nuclear security in the region.

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Introduction

The current situation in nuclear weapons issues can be described as stagnating. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs claimed that the nuclear risk is "higher than it has been since the darkest days of the Cold War.".[1] The world witnessed the collapse of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF), which was one of the contributors to the end of World War II. Withdrawal by the US and shortly after by Russia, came after the years of violations from the Russian side, including testing and deploying the missiles with parameters violating the INF limits.[2] Open Skies Treaty was abandoned by the US after claims that Russia wasimposing restrictions on flights over Kaliningrad. US withdrawal left Russia in an uncomfortable situation when US allies surveillance vehicles could fly over their territory, but Russia could no longer fly over American soil, so Russia abandoned the treaty as well.[3] After the alleged accusation of non-compliance, the US also withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was meant to impose restrictions on Iranian nuclear programs in exchange for sanction relief. After the withdrawal, Iran began to violate the deal provisions and increased uranium enrichment to levels incompatible with peaceful intentions.[4] The situation has been mitigated as the newly elected president of the US, Joe Biden, expressed his willingness to negotiate and conclude the deal with Iran.

As is displayed above, the last 5 years were marked by breaches, violations and withdrawls from the nuclear treaties, which were meant to secure not only the regions of signatory parties. One of the outlasting and most important treaties dedicated to the control and reduction of nuclear arms is the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New Start Treaty), which almost expired on the 5th of February 2021.

The US and Russia achieved 5 more years to negotiate the future content of the treaty, important provisions, amounts of warheads, etc. Furthermore, the US and Russia have the opportunity to negotiate the participation of other countries, which can be perceived as important players in the nuclear field.

This paper will be dedicated mainly to the New Start Treaty. The goal of the paper is to define the main pitfalls, which needs to be negotiated and solved in order to achieve an effective agreement. Modernisation of nuclear weapons and strengthening the conventional weapons represents a shift in the negotiations dynamics in contrast with talks held years ago. Therefore, to better understandment of the current and future state of New START treaty, a brief history of the treaty is merited.

Brief history of the New START Treaty

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) were held between 1969 and 1972, which concluded to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) and SALT I. The ABM Treaty prohibited missile defense systems, which could protect US and Russian territories, but permitted regional defense of 100 ground-based missile interceptors (Soviets used them to protect Moscow, whereas the US decided to protect ballistic missiles base).[5] Whereas ABM defined the use of defense systems, SALT I was dedicated to limit the

[1] "The Nuclear Risk Is "Higher Than it has been since the Darkest Days of the Cold War"," *Spiegel International,* August 6, 2020. Available online: https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/un-official-the-nuclear-risk-is-higher-than-in-the-darkest-days-of-the-cold-war-a-ab05df08-f79e-4f68-a86a-a74688c4cb90 (accessed on October 1,2021).

[2] "Blame Russian cheating, not America, for killing the INF treaty," *The Economist, February 9, 2019.* Available online: https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/02/09/blame-russian-cheating-not-america-for-killing-the-inf-treaty (accessed on October 1, 2021).

[3] "Treaty on Open Skies," Nuclear Threat Initiaive, May 27, 2021. Available online: https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-open-skies/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).

[4] "What is JCPOA?," *The Economist,* January 28, 2020. Available online: https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2020/01/28/what-is-the-jcpoa (accessed on October 1, 2021).

[5] "ABM Treaty," Arms Control Association, December, 2020. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/abmtreaty (accessed on October 1, 2021).

arms race in strategic nuclear weapons.[6] [7] SALT I restricted the US and USSR from increasing the number of intercontinental ballistic missile launchers (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers (SLBM).[8] However, it is equally important what the treaty did not limit, and that is the number of warheads. For explanation, a ballistic missile launched from missile launcher is a delivery vehicle that carries a certain number of warheads that contains explosives. If the treaty does restrict the number of missile launchers but ignores the number of warheads, countries can load more explosives on missile and increase their damage potential. SALT I was meant to be succeeded by a more extensive treaty, SALT II, which was signed in 1979. However, this treaty has never come into force because of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and apprehension of non-compliance with the treaty by both parties.[9]

In 1991 the START I treaty, the first predecessor of the current New START, was signed. George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev concluded the deal which capped the number of deployed ICBMs,SLBMs, and heavy bombers on 1,600, as well as the number of accountable deployed[10] warheads on 6,000.[11] [12] Although the treaty was signed in 1991, it came into force 3 years later due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which left Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan in possession of nuclear weapons.[13] By signing the Lisbon Protocol, all parties became part of the START, thus enabling the treaty to come into force.[14] When analysing the differences between SALT I and START I, the heightened ambitions are noteworthy since START I contained also the provision on deployed nuclear warheads and set limits on the whole nuclear triad. Nevertheless, the total number of warheads was still deemed too high from the perspective of risk of nuclear war. The power of warhead with average power can be illustrated in the example of W-76 warhead with a yield of 100 kilotons. If it was dropped on Washington DC, it would wipe out part of the city, damage all the buildings and kill 379 830 people. Furthermore, 225 900 would be injured, some acutely, others long-term due to radiation-induced cancer and similar issues.[15] All stated is the case with just one warhead out of the 6000 permitted per side by START I.

Based on the above-mentioned, the intention of the US and Russia to reduce the number of warheads was concluded in the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), which was an additional treaty to START I. It reduced the number of strategic warheads to 1,700-2,200.[16] The treaty was meant to expire in 2012, but it expired one year earlier because it was superseded by one of the most important arms control treaties, the New START.

[6] Strategic nuclear weapons cause greater damage and can hit a long distance targets.
[7] "Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)," Arms Control Association. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/treaties/strategic-arms-limitation-talks (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[8] "Strategic Arms Limitation Talks" Nuclear Threat Initiative, October 26, 2011. Available online: https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/strategic-arms-limitation-talks-salt-i-salt-ii/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[9] Ibid
[10] The word *deployed* must be emphasized because it means, that warhead is placed on the missile and is ready to use. Whereas non-deployed warheads are those in the warehouse or obsolate.
[11] Treaty also defined the subdivisions of warheads distribution, which can be seen in the article II of the treaty: https://nuke.fas.org/control/start1/text/abatext.htm (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[12] "Article-by-Article analysis of the treaty text," Federation of American Scientists. Available online: https://nuke.fas.org/control/start1/text/abatext.htm (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[13] "START I at a Glance," Arms Control Association, February, 2019. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/start1 (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[14] "Protocol to the treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms," Archive for the U.S. Department of State. Available online: https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/27389.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[15] "NUKEMAP" Nuclear Secrecy. Available online: https://nuclearsecrecy.com/nukemap/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[16] "Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on strategic offensive reduction (SORT/Treaty of Moscow)," Nuclear Threat Initiative. Available online: https://media.nti.org/documents/sort_moscow_treaty.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).

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The New START treaty after 2011

The New START treaty was signed in Prague in 2009 between the US president, Barack Obama, and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev. It came into force in 2011.[17] The treaty was the successor of the START I treaty, which expired in 2009, and superseded the SORT treaty.

Table 1: START I, SORT and New START and its provisions

	START I	SORT	New START
Permitted number of ICBMs/SLBMs or strategic bombers	1600	Not included (already in START I)	700 deployed (and 800 deployed or non-deployed launchers / bombers)
Permitted number of deployed warheads	3000-3500	1700-2200	1550

Source: https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf

As can be seen in the table (Table 1), New START reached the lowest number of deployed delivery vehicles and warheads since the cold war. One of the treaty intentions to reach *the historic goal of freeing humanity from the nuclear threat*, has not been achieved yet; however, countries verifiably fulfil their obligation to gradually reduce and limit nuclear arms in parallel with maintaining the security with their arsenals. [18] Provisions of the treaty are perceived as sufficient by all interviewees, and the years 2011-2021 has shown that the content of the treaty was implemented effectively. [19] An extraordinary system of verification was the very first of its kind, enabling parties to maintain an overview of their counterparts' arsenal via data exchange as well as via 18 annual short-notice and on-site inspections.[20] Inspections also cover random checking of the number of warheads placed on deployed missiles.[21] Despite important provisions that are included in the treaty, there are still some issues that the New START treaty is not addressing.. One such deficiency is the absence of sub-provisions of the nuclear triad.[22] Even though the provisions of the nuclear triad were defined in START I, its absence in the New START means that the parties can *determine for themselves the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms*.

New START also does not contain the limits on non-deployed warheads and missiles/bombers. [23] This deficiency is crucial since a non-deployed warhead or delivery vehicle can be promptly deployed and can pose a significant threat. In regards to the fact that the US possess 5,550 nuclear warheads and Russia 6,257[24], abandoning the treaty could have consequence in form of their quick transformation into deployed warheads. Even though the New

[17] "Threaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic arms," Archive for the U.S. Department of State. Available online: https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[18] Ibid.
[19] It was total compliance of all interviewes on this question.
[20] "New START at a Glance," Arms Control Association, February, 2021. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NewSTART (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[21] "Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on strategic offensive reduction (SORT/Treaty of Moscow)," Nuclear Threat Initiative. Available online: https://media.nti.org/documents/sort_moscow_treaty.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[22] Nuclear triad refers to land-launched nuclear missiles, nuclear-missile-armed submarines, and strategic aircraft carying nuclear arsenal.
[23] "New START at a Glance," Arms Control Association, February 2021. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NewSTART (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[24] "Status of World Nuclear Forces," Federation of American Scientists. Available online: https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).

START does not contain the limitation of non-deployed warheads and missiles, it limits the number of launchers, which reduces the capabilities of the parties. The treaty also contains provisions on monitoring of non-deployed warheads and exact rules on how to store inactive nuclear stockpiles. Furthermore, non-deployed warheads must not be located close to deployed warheads, and must be specially labelled. Monitoring of this arsenal is contained in Article XI and enables the parties to perform the inspection as well as obliges the parties to provide information about these warheads.[25] [26]

There are three more important provisions, which are not contained in the New START and represent the point of discrepancies between the US and Russia: defense systems, modernised weapons, and high yield conventional weapons.

Defense systems consist not only of interceptors with *kill vehicles*[27], but also radars and early warning systems, which can be located at ground, sea or space, and also command and control centres. Radars are meant to detect a launched enemy missile in the shortest possible time and transfer information to the control and command centre, where data are evaluated and resulting in a commensurate response.[28]

However, when the enemy missile is detected and control and command centre is ordered to react, interceptors are launched to find and destroy the enemy rocket by its kinetic energy. These missiles can be launched from ground silos, mobile truck launchers or ships, but not yet from space.[29] Despite claims by the leaders' claims, the current level of defense control is not adequate. Intercepting an ICBM is far more difficult than intercepting short or medium-range missiles. Successful intercepts have been performed only once at the end of the year 2020, but experts cannot as of this writing determine how many ICBMs defense systems are able to successfully destroy.[30]

Modernised weapons are the second provision that is not contained in New START. Even though the modernisation of weapons is not restricted by the treaty, the parties should have the right to raise questions about new emerging weapons.[31] These modernised weapons can be a crucial point of further discussions since they possess higher blast yield as well as higher speed. As stated by the expert from EPRS, some modernised weapons, such as the hypersonic glide vehicle Avangard, are limited by New START. However, there are weapons like the highly strategic Poseidon or high range cruise missile Burevestnik that are not limited by any agreement.[32]

Last but not least missing provision pertains to conventional weapons. Russia is concerned about the conventional weapons of the US since they are able to destroy targets that were possible to destroy only with nuclear weapons. A closer look at this topic will be explored later in the paper.

[25] "Threaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic arms," Archive for the U.S. Department of State. Available online: https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[26] "New START at a Glance," Arms Control Association, February 2021. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NewSTART (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[27] Rockets that are detached by missiles to hit the enemy missile.
[28] "What makes up a missile defense system?," Arms Control Association, August, 2019. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/missiledefenseataglance#makeup (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[29] "What makes up a missile defense system?," Arms Control Association, August, 2019. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/missiledefenseataglance#makeup (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[30] "US successfully intercepts ICBM with ship-launched missile in historic test," *abcNews,* November 17, 2020. Available online: https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-successfully-intercepts-icbm-ship-launched-missile-historic/story?id=74248760 (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[31] "Threaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic arms," Archive for the U.S. Department of State. Available online: https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[32] Information from interview with the expert from European Parliamentary Research Service.

New START treaty after 2026

Technological change, cold relations, emerging of new superpowers, collapsing of the security treaties and rising risk of a nuclear threat. These are a few of the new factors which can affect and complicate concluding a deal in 2026. Both parties agree that keeping the treaty in force is crucial for maintaining peace but also to avoid the arms race of the past, which contemporarily could be much more expensive but also far more dangerous, leading not only to the quantitative increase of nuclear weapons, but also qualitative development of them. However, there are some discrepancies that could complicate concluding the deal in 2026. These points are chosen by the experts and policymakers of European Union institutions, NGOs and national institutions, and are defined as the most crucial as well as problematic.

On one hand, the US definitely realizes the important benefits of the New START treaty and its relevance to US national security. Without such a treaty, the US could not verify the state of Russian nuclear weapons and put itself under threat of potential Russian aggression. It could furthermore also exacerbate the danger of miscalculations or misunderstandings that could escalate a conflict or increase tensions. The US also benefits from the limitation of nuclear warheads, among others Avangard and the Sarmat, new long-range nuclear weapons that can be loaded on an ICBM and hit the US within 30 minutes.[33] [34] On the other hand, there are threats by the Russian side that are not limited by the New START treaty.

One of them is non-strategic weapons that are capable to destroy smaller targets, for example on the battlefield and at short distances.[35] Since such weapons are not included in the treaty, countries can unilaterally choose the number of non-strategic warheads. As Russia possesses 10 times more non-strategic warheads than the US, which can be loaded on SLBMs, it can pose threats both to the US as well as neighbouring countries.[36] Discrepancies about the non-strategic weapons almost sunk the deal about the extension, alongside attempts by Donald Trump to include China into the deal, which was unsuccessful.[37]

If conventional warheads were loaded on a hypersonic cruise missile, the US could hit Russian targets without concerns about their defense systems and cause high damage.

However, Russian is the only New START country[38] that is provably possessing a hypersonic glide vehicle, which can carry non-strategical nuclear weapons [39] and could endanger the US by penetrating its defense system. Therefore, Russian claims should not be aimed at the conventional weapons of the US, since Russian weapons would penetrate American defense with less effort. However, another reservation by the Russian side is how American defense systems can devaluate the Russian nuclear arsenal and threaten their territory.

The previously analysed ABM treaty limited the number of anti-ballistic missile systems of the Soviet Union (later Russia) and the US. The treaty was effective for 2 reasons. The first is, that such a defense system can be modified to an offensive system and endanger the party's enemies. The second reason is that the development of defense anti-ballistic systems by country A encourages country B

[33] "New START Treaty," U.S. Departmentof State. Available online: https://www.state.gov/new-start/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[34] Information from interview with the expert from Permanent Representation of Slovak Republic in Brussels.
[35] " Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons," Congreassional Research Service, July 15, 2021. Available online: https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/RL32572.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[36] "The New START Treaty between the US and Russia," European Parliament Think Tank, March 22, 2021. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690523/EPRS_BRI(2021)690523_EN.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[37] "Time Running Out: Extend New START Now," Arms Control Association, October 7, 2020. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2020-10/time-running-out-extend-new-start-now (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[38] "U.S. Hypersonic Glide Vehicle Test Fails Again," Arms Control Association, September, 2021. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-09/news-briefs/us-hypersonic-glide-vehicle-test-fails-again (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[39] "Avangard," Missile Threat – CSIS Missile Defense Project, July 31, 2021. Available online: https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/avangard/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).

to increase the number of offensive weapons with the aim to penetrate such a system. [40] Everything changed in 2002 when the US stated that the treaty is no longer needed because relations between Russia and the US are better. The US abandoned the treaty and developed Ground-Based Midcourse Defense [41] and NATO missile shield in Europe.[42]

The US declares that defense systems are a form of protection from attack by North Korea or Iran and are not meant to threaten Russia, as well as the limited number of interceptors cannot overwhelm Russian missiles.[43] Nonetheless, in 2018 President Putin declared that the development of American defense systems means the *devaluation of Russia's nuclear potential. Meaning that all of our missiles could simply be intercepted.* [44]

If the missile defense was perfect and could intercept as many missiles as it is in its capacity to do so, claim by the Russian president would be logical and legitimate. However, defense systems are not perfect and cannot intercept all missiles. An interviewed NATO official claims that missile defense is effective up to 100 missiles, and if the number of rockets is higher, it cannot intercept them all.[45] The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) is even more pessimistic. According to the article *The Global Missile Defense Race: Strong Test Records and Poor Operational Performance* [46], missile defense systems can be effective against short and medium-range missiles, but it is much harder to intercept ICBM. When talking about ICBMs, the number of intercepts can be far lower, and from the information available the current highest verifiable number of intercepted missiles is 1. Concern about the effectiveness of defense systems is therefore in place linked with the concern of exaggerating its importance by the leaders.[47]

The party that should be worried about the missiles that cannot be intercepted by defense systems is not Russia, but the United States since Russia possesses hypersonic nuclear weapons such as Avangard. For now, it is included in the New START treaty, but such weapons could pose a threat in the future.[48] Russia is modernising its nuclear arsenal. However, one of the reasons for modernisation is that the Russian nuclear arsenal is or at least was obsolete in comparison with the US.[49] Thus, there are weapons in Russian possession that are not yet restricted nor limited and could pose a threat. One of them is Burevestnik, a nuclear powered ballistic missile with a range of more than 25 000km so it can be placed anywhere in Russia and can stay in the air for an extremely long time.[50] It is not deployed yet, but when it will, it will be able to carry nuclear warheads, which is the reason why it should be included in New START in 2026 or at least be part of negotiations.

The next modernised weapon is the Posseidon, a nuclear-powered underwater vehicle with a nuclear

[40] "Fact Sheet: Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty," Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, March, 2021. Available online: https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-anti-ballistic-missile-treaty/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[41] "Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) System," Missile Threat, CSIS Missile Defense Project, July 26, 2021. Available online: https://missilethreat.csis.org/system/gmd/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[42] "NATO Ballistic Missile Defense," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, July, 2016. Available online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160630_1607-factsheet-bmd-en.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[43] "The New START Treaty between the US and Russia," European Parliament Think Tank, March 22, 2021. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690523/EPRS_BRI(2021)690523_EN.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[44] "President adress to the Federal Assembly," President of Russia Office, March 1, 2018. Available online: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957 (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[45] Information provided from all interviewed experts.
[46] https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/global-missile-defense-race-strong-test-records-and-poor-operational-performance/
[47] "The Global Missile Defense Race: Strong Test Records and Poor Operational Performance," Nuclear Threat Initiative, September 16, 2020. Available online: https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/global-missile-defense-race-strong-test-records-and-poor-operational-performance/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[48] "The New START Treaty between the US and Russia," European Parliament Think Tank, March 22, 2021. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690523/EPRS_BRI(2021)690523_EN.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[49] Information from interview with the experts from NATO, EPRS, EEAS.
[50] "NTI Experts Present New Reports on New Russian Weapon Systems and their Implications," Nuclear Threat Initiative, November 20, 2019. Availbale online: https://www.nti.org/analysis/atomic-pulse/nti-experts-present-new-reports-new-russian-weapon-systems-and-their-implications/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).

warhead, which has a range of 10 000 km and could reach a depth of 1 km, hit coastal cities and cause a nuclear tsunami.[51]

Evidently, there are numerous omissions in the New START Treaty. However, the leaders of the respective countries have time to negotiate and find out common ground and solutions to these glaring omissions before they become problematic. Negotiations of the SALT II, START, SORT and New START was more about quantitative character rather than qualitative. Non-strategical weapons, conventional weapons, defense systems and modernised weapons are simply not comparable, hence leaders must find a way to assure peace from nuclear weapons in the US and Russia in particular, but also across the globe. The common ground of both parties is the same: limiting nuclear threat. For now, they must discuss the systems of the potential threat of their counterparts, such as defense systems or hypersonic glide vehicles. The future offers more challenges, for example endlessly cruising nuclear-powered missiles in outer space ready to hit the target, space launched missiles, cyberwarfare affecting security capabilities, and much more.[52]

However, there is still one point that is not solved and can not be negotiated only between the US and Russia: the participation of China in the New START treaty in 2026. China displays minimum transparency in the status of its nuclear forces; however, it is believed that it has 350 warheads presently, with numbers still rising.[53] This is one of the reasons why Donald Trump conditioned extending the treaty only if it was trilateral, thus included China. China was also invited to Vienna talks in 2020, but representatives did not come, expressing unserious behaviour from the American side.[54] Talks continued bilaterally between the US and Russia and lead to the bilateral agreement. All experts interviewed within this research claimed that China did not have any intention to participate in such a treaty, but was supporting it. All interviewed experts claimed that they cannot see a good reason for China to participate in the current situation when China has 350 warheads and the US and Russia has together almost 12,000, including the modernised weapons.[55] Ceteris paribus this argument is logical. Nevertheless, the rising number of Chinese arsenal and complicated relations with the US could pose the risk even though China has declared a no-first-use policy.[56]

Participation of China is thus not on the table right now, but the countries have time to negotiate concerning issues until 2026. Chinese representatives, but also some of the interviewed experts[57], claim that if China should be part of the treaty, more countries should also participate, especially France, the UK as well as Pakistan as they have a comparable arsenal to China. However, according to experts, such a treaty would be too complicated and unlikely to be concluded. Nevertheless, the US and Russia agreed to create two working groups to start negotiating the aforementioned issues such as the non-strategic, conventional and modernised weapons, defense systems and conduct the discussions about and with China. Such negotiations will not be easy and will require patience.

Implications for the EU and V4

This section aims to find the position of the EU towards the New START. The EU finds itself in a difficult position when the existence and effectiveness of the New START treaty is crucial for

[51] "The New START Treaty between the US and Russia," European Parliament Think Tank, March 22, 2021. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690523/EPRS_BRI(2021)690523_EN.pdf (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[52] Information from interview with the expert from NATO, EPRS.
[53] "Status of World Nuclear Forces," Federation of American Scientists. Available online: https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[54] "No Progress Toward Extending New START," Arms Control Association, July, 2020. Available online: https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-07/news/progress-toward-extending-new-start (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[55] Information from all interviewed experts.
[56] "No-First-Use Policy Explained," Union of Concerned Scientists, May 7, 2020. Available online: https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[57] Information from interview with the expert from NATO, EPRS, Pernament Representation of Slovak Republic in Brussels, EEAS.

the security in the EU region but at the same time it is not the signatory party of the treaty, hence it cannot directly influence the treaty.One of the goals of this paper was to find the answer to the question of what the can EU do to affect this treaty, how it can do it, and if it was and is doing it through information gathered from interviews and via publicly accessible sources.

Due to the US having deployed defense systems in several European NATO countries, ensuring both European security but also escalating tensions with Russia, Europe has a manifest interest in ensuring the continuous existence of these peacekeeping frameworks.[58] This is furthermore exacerbated by the fact that if a conflict occurred between the US and Russia, a significant part of the battleground would be Europe.[59] Last but not least is, decisions by the US are directly influencing the security in the European Union, such it was in the case of abandonment from INF, which creates a disproportionate risk to the EU compared to the US.[60]

Nevertheless, all experts agreed that the EU did not and does not play a role in process of creating and implementing the treaty, nor in affecting its content.[61] The treaty could be marginally influenced by the 22 NATO members in the European Union, however.[62] Thus, the primary recourse for the EU remains communicating its positions and opinions in statements and official visits to Washington. The EU did such after extending the New START treaty: "The EU welcomes the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation.".[63] The High Representative also stressed the importance of the treaty in maintaining security in Europe, but also encouraged the parties to continue in the effort of disarmament.[64]

However, these statements must be passed by all 27 countries representatives, which is sometimes very difficult due to the different interests of member countries.[65] These differences can be seen also in the approach of the EU countries to maintain security in the region. As an interviewed expert, who participated in the process of creating such statements, said: "There is the part of countries led by France, which would like to gain strategical autonomy, the second part led by Poland, which sees transatlantic relation as the guarantee of security in the region, and lastly the neutral or more peaceful group of countries such as Austria, Ireland and Malta.".[66] Even though these countries are "united in diversity", it would probably be difficult for the EU to effectively influence the New START treaty (even if it would be possible) when it may not present a united front in crucial security questions. The best the EU can do in this context is what it did before, and, according to interviewed experts, does well and efficiently: talk, creating a platform for negotiation, communicate its positions, opinions, ideas and, what is important, to some extent rely on the US.[67] The US, as a European partner and NATO ally of 22 countries, have aligning interests with the EU in the New START Treaty.[68] However, if these countries desire to be heard concerning issues by the US, they should strengthen their positions in NATO and become the partners with which the strategic decisions are coordinated. When the US withdrew from Afghanistan, other NATO members had no other

[58] "NATO Ballistic Missile Defense," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 2, 2019. Available online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/photos_112331.htm (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[59] Information from interview with the expert from EPRS.
[60] Ibid
[61] Information provided from all interviewed experts.
[62] Information from interview with the expert from Centre for European Reform.
[63] "New START extension: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union," European Council, February 3, 2021. Available online: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/02/03/new-start-extension-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[64] "New START extension: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union," European Council, February 3, 2021. Available online: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/02/03/new-start-extension-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union/ (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[65] Information from interview with the expert from Pernament Representation of Slovak Republic in Brussels.
[66] Ibid
[67] Information provided from all interviewed experts.
[68] Information from interview with the expert from EPRS.

choice but to follow[69]; when the US signed the AUKUS treaty, it did not inform its allies about such a step. In addition, the interviewed experts perceived the US' behaviour as 'undiplomatic' and undermining NATO cooperation.[70] However, the US can perceive the commitment of European countries in NATO as insufficient, since the US is the main contributor to the alliance and certain European countries do not fulfil minimum of 2 percent of GDP on defence, which is the current agreed target.[71] Thus, the better cooperation in strategic matters requires certain steps by both sides, and the results of such efforts could be projected also in the form of further coordination on nuclear weapons issues.

All interviewed experts agree that the EU does what it can in the terms of arms control, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and disarmament.[72] However, there are limitations to the EU's ability to influence treaties such as the New START. When talking about JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal, the EU is much more active[73] since the deal also encompasses France, Germany, and the EU as participating parties.[74] The EU should primarily focus on amplifying its existing efforts of appealing to the US and Russia to be more ambitious, find common grounds, revive the treaties[75] abandoned during the Trump presidency, and, since the idea about strategic autonomy is not on the table, strengthen transatlantic relation to maintain security in the region.[76]

When talking about Visegrad countries, they have total compliance in arms control and non proliferation of nuclear weapons' issues, and are aligned with the EU aims and positions, which were outlined above.[77] Even though pro-transatlantic Poland can have different positions than Hungary in terms of security policy, their positions are aligned with regards to arms control, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.[78] The V4, however, is not in a position to influence the treaty, and therefore relies on the EU to promote the region's understanding of common security and foreign policy objectives, as well as maintaining the security interests in the region.

[69] "As U.S. leaves Afghanistan, Europe sours on Biden," *Washington Post,* August 31, 2021. Available online: *https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/31/europe-america-shift-afghanistan/* (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[70] "French fury over the American-Australian sub deal," *The Economist,* September 18, 2021. Available online: https://www.economist.com/europe/2021/09/18/french-fury-over-the-american-australian-sub-deal (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[71] "Nato summit: What does the US contribute?," *BBC, June 14, 2021.* Available online: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44717074 (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[72] Information provided from all interviewed experts.
[73] Information from interview with the expert from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovak Republic, NATO.
[74] "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?," Council on Foreign Relations, August 18, 2021. Available online: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-iran-nuclear-deal (accessed on October 1, 2021).
[75] Information from interview with the expert from NICOLAIDIS, NATO, EEAS, EPRS, Ministry of Defense of Slovak Republic, Ministr of Foreign Affairs of Slovak Republic.
[76] Information from interview with the expert from EEAS.
[77] Information from interview with the expert from NICOLAIDIS, NATO, Pernament Representation of Slovak Republic in Brussels.
[78] Information from interview with the expert from NATO, Pernament Representation of Slovak Republic in Brussels.

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About the author

Juraj Sýkora is a Junior Researcher at SFPA and absolvent of the International Economic Relations at the University of Economics in Bratislava. His research focus is dedicated to security policy, specifically on nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. He also concentrates on the world economy and mutual relationships of European Union countries.

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