

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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Foreign Policy Speech
The EU and the Post-Soviet Space
06.12.2024

I will be impersonating Kaja Kallas, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. This speech is delivered at an emergency summit of the European Council, held in Tallinn, Estonia, which is symbolically chosen as a frontline state bordering Russia. It is also a symbolic location as Kaja Kallas has been prime minister of Estonia in the past. It is currently April 2026, the US has announced its withdrawal from NATO, and Georgia has just fallen under Moscow's control.

The atmosphere during this meeting is tense. Russia's continued aggression has reached a pinnacle. Russia's continuing war in Ukraine underscores the vulnerability of the eastern flank of Europe and the threat posed by Russia's neo-imperial ambitions. It is evident that Europe must react. Kaja Kallas introduces a collective military project, the *European Strategic Defense Command* (ESDC).

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed leaders of the European Union, colleagues.

We gather here in Tallinn, in the shadow of crisis. Just beyond Estonia's borders, Russia's ambitions grow more aggressive by the day. Russia's agenda is clear. Its aggression is an undeniable assault on the European order. The Georgian people are now living under the direct control of Moscow. We gather here today not as representatives of isolated nations, but as protectors of our Union and our values. The United Europe stands for freedom. And Europe is in need of protection. [*silence for emphasis*].

We are facing a critical point in history. With the United States announcing its withdrawal from NATO, Europe must take on the responsibility for her own protection. We have depended on other nations for too long [*silence for emphasis*]. We must demonstrate to the world, to ourselves, that Europe is strong and that we are united. We must demonstrate that we will not accept any threats to our sovereignty, security, or values. The challenges before us may be immense, but so is our ambition to overcome them.

The occupation of Georgia is a stark reminder of the fragility of freedom. Georgia fell because the world, we, underestimated the extent of Russia's ambitions. We cannot afford to make this mistake again, and we must be prepared. [*silence for emphasis*].

Aside from the physical aggression in Georgia and Ukraine, Russia wages a relentless campaign of disinformation, targeting not just military assets, but the very stability of our societies. From the Baltics to Portugal, Moscow sows division and confusion within our own borders. They target our democracies, seeking to erode the trust our citizens have in their governments, our institutions, and in one another.

This is why I am calling for the establishment of a joint European defence force. We have to build on this momentum to become stronger. With the United States retreating from NATO, we have no choice but to adapt. A united European army is no longer an ambition. It is an imperative. This European military project will be called the *European Strategic Defence Command* (ESDC).

The ESDC will be built on cooperation and coordination. It is based on solidarity and shared responsibility. It will ensure that no EU member state will ever stand alone. The ESDC will not only defend our physical borders, but also our digital infrastructure. It will serve as a symbol of European unity. The ESDC will enable us to respond rapidly to crises, with the capability to deploy up to 10.000 soldiers within 48 hours and up to 100.000 forces within a week. There will be a unified command structure and specialized rapid response units. A European Defence HQ with rotating leadership will be established.

As we move forward, let us not forget what is at stake. Russia's actions are not just an attack on Ukraine and Georgia; they are an attempt to weaken Europe itself. They seek to divide us. We must not let them succeed.

Colleagues, the moment for action is now. If Georgia's fall and Ukraine's pain teach us anything, it is that hesitation is our greatest enemy. Let us rise, united and determined, to protect what we hold most dear: freedom, democracy, and the sovereignty of our nations.

Let us show the strength that comes from our unity. Let us embrace innovation, defend our values, and build a future where Europe leads once again on the global stage. Let us protect Europe together.

Thank you.