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## The Northern Solidarity Model in the European Security System and Its Significance for Transformational Processes in Europe

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### ABSTRACT

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The article examines the model of Nordic solidarity as a specific form of institutional, political, defense-related and resource-based response of the Nordic countries to the crisis of European security caused by Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine. In contrast to approaches that reduce support for Ukraine to a set of military or financial aid packages, the article proposes a broader interpretation of Nordic solidarity as an operational model in which shared values, high institutional trust, a developed culture of societal resilience, regional coordination, defense readiness and long-term planning are transformed into practical security mechanisms. The methodological basis of the study combines institutional, comparative, indicator-based and analytical-synthetic approaches. The empirical base is formed using academic literature, NORDEFECO and Nordic Council of Ministers documents, Ukraine-NB8 statements, national governmental materials of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland, the Ukraine Support Tracker of the Kiel Institute and NATO defense expenditure data for 2014–2025. The article shows that Nordic solidarity has a multi-level architecture consisting of normative-value, political-communicative, institutional-coordination, defense-resource, societal-resilience and reconstruction-technological dimensions. The quantitative analysis demonstrates that military allocations by the Nordic countries to Ukraine increased substantially in 2022–2025, while their share in European military allocations rose from 11.9% in 2022 to 31.9% in 2025. At the same time, defense expenditure in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden increased both as a share of GDP and in real terms in 2014–2025, indicating a close link between support for Ukraine and the rearmament of the Nordic region itself. The article argues that the significance of this model for Ukraine lies in the transition from the role of an aid recipient to the role of a partner that contributes to European security through combat experience, technological solutions, defense-industrial cooperation and societal resilience. For Europe, Nordic solidarity functions as a mechanism of security regionalization, strengthening of the north-eastern flank, practical rethinking of strategic responsibility and transition from declarative support to shared security action.



### KEYWORDS

Nordic solidarity, Nordic countries, Ukraine, European security, NB8, NORDEFECO, NATO, military assistance, societal resilience, defense expenditure, regional coordination, transformation of Europe.



## Модель північної солідарності у системі європейської безпеки та її значення для трансформаційних процесів у Європі

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### СТАТТЯ

### АНОТАЦІЯ

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У статті досліджено модель північної солідарності як специфічний спосіб інституційної, політичної, оборонної та ресурсної відповіді Північних країн на кризу європейської безпеки, спричиненого повномасштабною агресією Росії проти України. На відміну від підходів, що зводять підтримку України до сукупності пакетів військової або фінансової допомоги, запропоновано ширше трактування північної солідарності як операційної моделі, у якій ціннісна близькість, висока інституційна довіра, розвинена культура суспільної стійкості, регіональна координація, оборонна готовність і довгострокове планування перетворюються на практичні механізми безпеки. Методичну основу дослідження становить поєднання інституційного, порівняльного, індикаторного та аналітико-синтетичного підходів. Емпіричну базу сформовано на основі академічної літератури, документів NORDEFSCO, Nordic Council of Ministers, заяв Україна – NB8, національних урядових матеріалів Данії, Норвегії, Швеції, Фінляндії та Ісландії, даних бази Ukraine Support Tracker Інституту світової економіки в Кілі і показників NATO Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries 2014–2025. Показано, що північна солідарність має багаторівневу архітектуру, яка охоплює нормативно-ціннісний, політико-комунікаційний, інституційно-координаційний, оборонно-ресурсний, суспільно-стійкісний та відбудовчо-технологічний виміри. Кількісний аналіз засвідчив, що розподілені обсяги військової допомоги Північних країн Україні істотно зросли у 2022–2025 рр., а їхня частка в сукупних європейських розподілених обсягах військової допомоги Україні підвищилася з 11,9% у 2022 р. до 31,9% у 2025 р. Паралельно оборонні видатки Данії, Фінляндії, Норвегії та Швеції у 2014–2025 рр. зросли як у частці ВВП, так і в реальному вимірі, що свідчить про зв'язок між підтримкою України та переозброєнням самої Півночі. Обґрунтовано, що значення цієї моделі для України полягає у переході від ролі реципієнта підтримки до ролі партнера, який сам робить внесок у європейську безпеку через бойовий досвід, технологічні рішення, оборонно-промислову кооперацію та стійкість суспільства. Для Європи північна солідарність виступає механізмом регіоналізації безпеки, посилення північно-східного флангу, практичного інституційного закріплення регіональної безпекової відповідальності та переходу від декларативної підтримки до спільної безпекової дії.



### КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

північна солідарність, Північні країни, Україна, європейська безпека, NB8, NORDEFSCO, NATO, військова допомога, суспільна стійкість, оборонні видатки, регіональна координація, трансформація Європи.

## 1. Introduction

The full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine has changed the content of European solidarity, moving it from a predominantly normative plane to the sphere of practical security. Until 2022, solidarity in European political discourse was mostly seen as a value basis for integration, a crisis response mechanism, or a form of support for states under external pressure. After the outbreak of the Great War, this content did not disappear, but it acquired an operational dimension: the practical weight of solidarity began to be determined not only by political statements, but also by the speed of transforming common positions into armaments, financing, sanctions, the reception of displaced persons, energy support, reconstruction, military training, and long-term institutional arrangements. The Nordic countries – Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland – are one of the most striking examples of such a transformation of solidarity into the practice of security action. Their support for Ukraine is not the sum of individual national decisions, but rather is based on a longer tradition of regional trust, high-quality governance, parliamentary consensus, public crisis preparedness, institutional cooperation, and the integration of civil and defense dimensions of security. The literature has already documented the convergence of the foreign and security policy orientations of the Nordic countries after the Russian invasion [1], the development of NORDEFECO as a format for differentiated defense integration [2], and the rethinking of the Nordic security community under the influence of Russia's war against Ukraine and the NATO shift of Finland and Sweden [3; 4]. A separate analytical problem is how Nordic solidarity has transformed from an identity and political category into a model of security action.

The relevance of the topic is determined by three interrelated circumstances. First, support for Ukraine has become part of the Nordic countries' own security adaptation, rather than a peripheral direction of foreign policy. Second, the Nordic model influences the broader European transformation, as it demonstrates the ability of a regional coalition to complement NATO, the EU, and other multilateral mechanisms through rapid coordination, long-term commitments, and high institutional trust. Third, the Ukrainian experience in defense, resilience, and technological adaptation is becoming one of the sources of renewal of European approaches to security.

## 2. Literature Review

The scientific literature on the topic of the article is formed at the intersection of several research directions. The first direction concerns the transformation of the foreign and security policy of the Nordic countries after 2014 and especially after 2022. D. Brommesson, A.-M. Ekengren and A. Michalski argue that the different foreign policy roles and national trajectories of the Nordic states are gradually converging under the influence of a common threat environment associated with Russian aggression against Ukraine [1]. For this article, this conclusion is important because it allows us to consider Northern solidarity not as a situational rhetoric of support, but as a manifestation of a deeper change in the ideas about the international order, threats and limits of foreign policy maneuver of small and medium-sized states of the North. The second direction is related to the institutional evolution of Northern security and defense cooperation. R. Bengtsson analyzes Nordic cooperation in three interrelated dimensions: military-defense, represented primarily by NORDEFECO; civil-security, associated with the Haga process; and political, which developed through the implementation of the ideas of the Stoltenberg report [2]. This approach is important for the topic of the article, as it shows that Nordic solidarity is not limited to military assistance or diplomatic statements. Its institutional basis encompasses defense, crisis preparedness, political coordination, and a broader understanding of security as the ability of society to withstand external and internal shocks. The third dimension highlights the Nordic security community as a space of trust, political proximity, and shared narratives. M. Pesu, K. Haugevik, K. Kreutz and O. Svendsen, analyzing Finnish-Norwegian relations after the Russian invasion, show that their rapid redefinition was made possible by the already existing notion of a functional and trusting Nordic security community [3]. R. Shestедt and E. Norin, comparing the Nordic countries' response to COVID-19 and Russia's war against Ukraine, argue that the Nordic community is not a static or fully guaranteed construct: different types of crises can affect the Nordic security

community differently: the COVID-19 pandemic revealed elements of fragmentation, while the Russian invasion against Ukraine strengthened a cooperative logic [4, pp. 675–677]. Nordic solidarity is not an automatic feature of the region, but requires constant institutional reproduction, political consolidation and renewal through the practice of joint action.

The fourth direction focuses on the heterogeneity of national trajectories within the North. M. Migliorati shows that the war in Ukraine did not cause a mechanically uniform reaction of the Nordic states: Finland and Sweden went through the rejection of the policy of military non-alignment, Denmark dismantled the long-standing exception to participation in the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy, while Norway retained its own specifics of relations with European security institutions [5]. Such an approach is important to avoid overgeneralization. The Nordic model of solidarity does not mean complete uniformity of national policies; its essence lies in the ability of different institutional, defense and political instruments to work within a common regional logic. The fifth direction concerns the concepts of public security, resilience and total defense in the Nordic and North-Baltic space. S. Larsson and M. Reinhardt show that the notion of public security and related national concepts have common features in the Nordic region, but do not form a completely homogeneous model: Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland have institutionalized the ideas of public protection, crisis management and security governance in different ways [6]. J. Vrange, R. Bengtsson and D. Brommesson develop this line in the context of the Nordic-Baltic space, analyzing total defense and resilience as the basis for a possible common security culture. Their conclusion is cautious: the conditions for such a culture have strengthened after the Russian invasion, but differences in the conceptualization of resilience, threat perception and preferences for interaction formats persist [7]. This is important for this article, as it allows us to consider Nordic solidarity not as a ready-made and completed model, but as a process of institutional convergence that combines defense readiness, public resilience, trust and practical coordination.

Thus, the available academic literature provides a sufficiently thorough explanation of the Nordic security convergence, the institutional evolution of NORDEFECO and related formats, the rethinking of the Nordic security community, the diversity of national trajectories, and the development of the concepts of societal security, resilience, and total defense. The question of a holistic model of Nordic solidarity in the European security system remains less developed. Existing research mainly explains individual components: security convergence, defense cooperation, crisis resilience, or national political changes. In this article, Nordic solidarity is considered as an integral model of security action that combines values, institutions, resources, political communication, defense decisions, societal resilience, and a long-term vision of European transformation.

### **3. Problem Statement**

The purpose of the article is to reveal the unique features of the Northern Solidarity model in the European security system, to analyze its internal mechanisms and external influence, and to determine the significance of this model for the establishment of Ukraine as a subject of European security and for transformational processes in Europe. To achieve the goal, the article solves the following tasks: to clarify the theoretical content of Northern Solidarity in the context of the European security crisis; to characterize its institutional architecture; to carry out a quantitative assessment of individual manifestations of operationalized solidarity through support for Ukraine and defense spending; to show the significance of this model for Ukraine and for the broader transformation of Europe.

### **4. Methods and Materials**

The methodological basis of the article is a combination of institutional, comparative, indicator and analytical-synthetic approaches. The institutional approach was used to analyze the role of the Nordic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, NORDEFECO, NB8, NATO, the EU, bilateral security agreements and national support programs for Ukraine in the formation of the Nordic model of solidarity. The comparative approach was used to compare the national mechanisms of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. The indicator approach made it possible to operationalize solidarity through the volume of support for Ukraine, the presence of multi-year programs, the

dynamics of defense spending, participation in regional coalitions and reconstruction mechanisms. The analytical-synthetic approach was used to summarize academic literature, official documents and quantitative data. The empirical basis of the study was formed from three groups of sources. The first group includes programmatic and policy documents reflecting the institutional logic of Nordic and North-Baltic coordination: Vision for Nordic Defence Cooperation 2030 [8, pp. 1-2], Vision 2030 of the Nordic Council of Ministers [9], as well as joint statements of the leaders of Ukraine and NB8 2025–2026 [10; 11]. The second group includes national government sources on long-term support to Ukraine: the Danish Support Fund for Ukraine [12], the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine [13], Swedish government materials on military support to Ukraine [14], official Finnish data on assistance to Ukraine [15], and UNDP materials on Icelandic support for Ukraine's energy sustainability [16]. The third group includes quantitative databases and reports used to empirically measure solidarity: the Ukraine Support Tracker database of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy [17] and the NATO report Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries 2014–2025 [18].

In the article, Northern solidarity is defined as the institutionally anchored ability of the Nordic countries to transform shared values, trust, regional coordination and resources into practical actions to support the security of Ukraine and Europe. This approach allows us to distinguish it from general political sympathy, humanitarian aid or one-off defense decisions. In this sense, solidarity has an operational dimension: it is assessed not only through declarations of support, but also through the sustainability of institutional mechanisms, the volume and duration of resources, the speed of decision-making, the ability to coordinate and the willingness to share risks.

## 5. Results and Discussion

After 2022, Northern Europe became one of the regions where solidarity with Ukraine most clearly took on an institutional, defensive, and resource-based form. This result was not the result of a one-time mobilization after February 24, 2022. Its prerequisites were a longer tradition of regional trust, high quality of governance, stable parliamentary practices, a developed culture of crisis preparedness, experience in interstate coordination, and the understanding of security formed in the northern political culture as a combination of defense, civil, infrastructural, and social resilience [6; 7]. After Russia's full-scale invasion, these characteristics began to work as prerequisites for rapid political coordination, mobilization of financial resources, and the transformation of civil resilience into an element of defense policy.

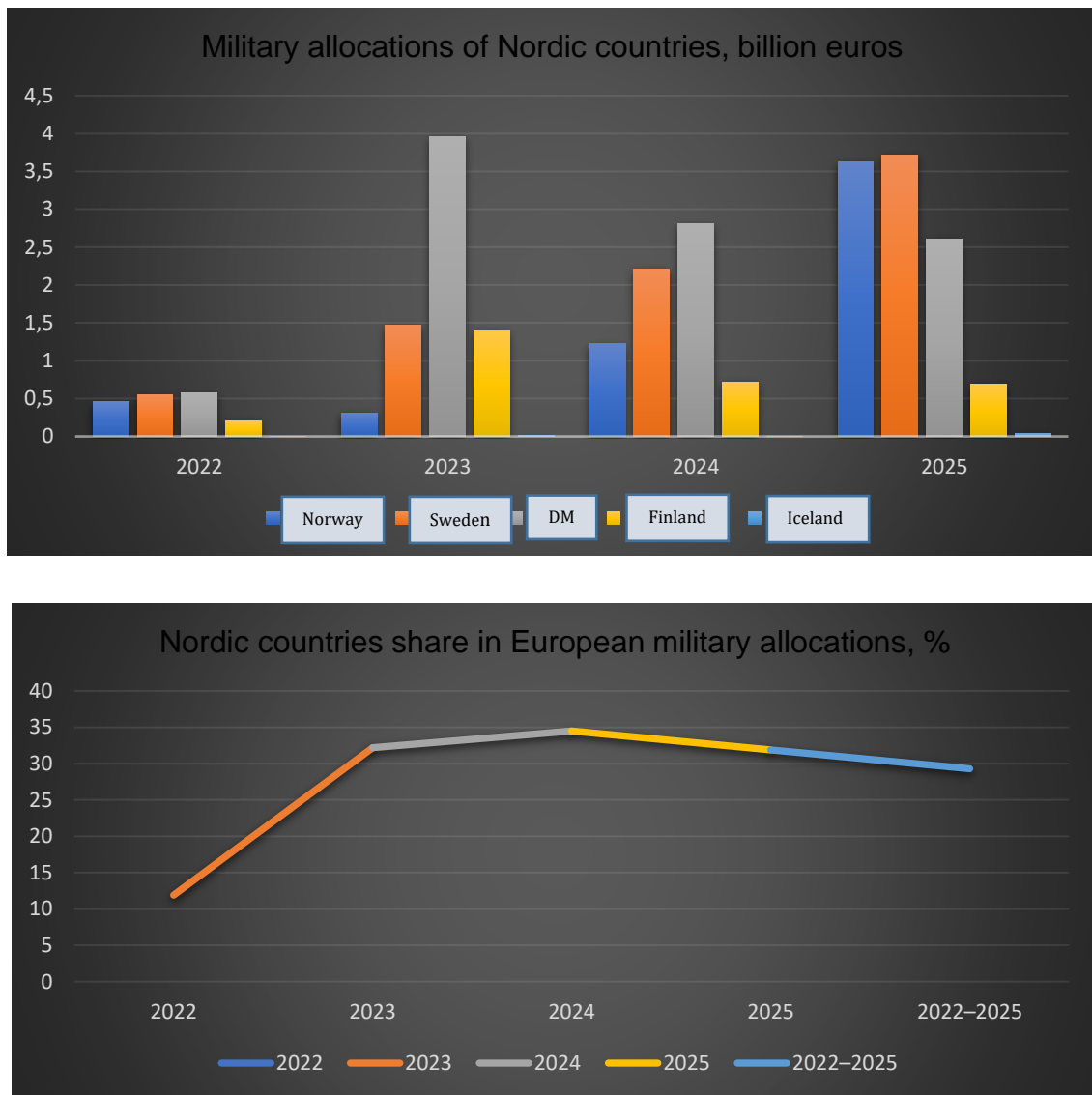
The external shock did not create northern solidarity from scratch. It accelerated the transformation of the already existing culture of cooperation into the sphere of hard security. Until 2022, the Nordic countries had different formal statuses: Denmark, Norway and Iceland were NATO members, while Finland and Sweden maintained a policy of military non-alignment. After Finland joined NATO in 2023 and Sweden in 2024, the region received a much more complete alliance alignment. However, the security solidarity of the North is not limited to formal membership in the Alliance. Its specificity lies in the ability to combine NATO, the EU, NORDEF, NB8, JEF, national support programs and bilateral agreements into a dense system of practical interaction [8]. In the broader European context, Northern solidarity has a dual nature. On the one hand, it is aimed at supporting Ukraine as a state waging a defensive war. On the other hand, support for Ukraine has become a means for the Nordic countries themselves to strengthen their own security, test their defense-industrial capabilities, strengthen regional coordination, and reassess the risks associated with Russia. The joint statement of Ukraine and the NB8 of February 24, 2025 recorded over 26 billion euros in military, financial, and humanitarian support for Ukraine [10]. The joint statement of Ukraine – NB8 of February 24, 2026 states that since the start of the full-scale war, the NB8 countries have provided Ukraine with over 42 billion euros in military, financial, and humanitarian support; the same document records 1.4 billion euros in contributions through PURL in 2025 and about 12.5 billion euros in planned military contributions for 2026 [11, p. 1]. Separately, the statement identified at least 918 million euros in support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure [11, p. 2]. Such dynamics indicate not only the buildup of resources, but also the consolidation of solidarity as a long-term security policy.

**Table 1. Operational dimensions of the Northern Solidarity model**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Empirical manifestation</b>	<b>Significance for Ukraine and Europe</b>
<b>Normative and value-based</b>	Protection of sovereignty, democracy, international law and Ukraine's right to choose its own security	Joint statements, parliamentary decisions, support for Ukraine's membership in the EU and NATO	Legitimizing Ukraine as part of the European political and security community
<b>Political and communication</b>	A coordinated public position on war, sanctions, peace and Ukraine's participation in negotiations	The principle of impossibility of making decisions on Ukraine without Ukraine's participation, NB8 statements, coordination of positions on sanctions and frozen assets	Narrowing the space for external imposition of peace conditions on Ukraine
<b>Institutional and coordination</b>	Combination of Nordic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, NORDEFECO, NB8, JEF, NATO, EU and bilateral agreements	Summits, joint statements, coalitions of capabilities, long-term programs	Transition from disparate packages to systemic interaction
<b>Defense and resource</b>	Armament, training, production financing, PURL, capability coalitions, defense-industrial cooperation	Military allocations, defense spending, support for the Ukrainian defense industry	Strengthening Ukraine's defense capabilities and deterring Russia
<b>Social sustainability</b>	Protection of critical infrastructure, energy sustainability, cybersecurity, civil preparedness	Energy funds, civil defense, total defense, support for local infrastructure	Spreading Ukrainian and Northern resilience experience to Europe
<b>Reconstruction and technological</b>	Combination of reconstruction, green energy, innovation and defense-industrial solutions	Energy support, research networks, joint production projects	Linking Ukraine's security, modernization, and European integration

Source: Formed by the authors based on [6–11; 17; 18].

The architecture of Nordic solidarity is networked, not hierarchical. The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers form the political and social framework for regional cooperation; NORDEFECO provides the defense coordination level; NB8 functions as the Nordic-Baltic political circuit; JEF and NATO provide the military-strategic integration; the EU provides the sanctions, financial, legal and reconstruction dimensions. In this configuration, Nordic solidarity operates not through a single decision-making center, but through the overlap of several formats, each of which performs its own function. A significant feature of the model is the absence of a rigid division between soft and hard security. Defense, energy sustainability, civil protection, sanctions, cybersecurity, social integration of displaced persons, research and reconstruction are considered interconnected elements. This is especially important for Ukraine, as its military experience has shown that the ability of a state to withstand a war of attrition depends not only on the army, but also on energy, local self-government, digital infrastructure, logistics, volunteer networks and international coordination. A separate level is the Nordic-Baltic interaction. In modern analytics, the Nordic-Baltic alignment is considered a space of increasingly closer security convergence, where the common perception of Russia as a strategic threat and support for Ukraine have become key factors of coordination [19]. After Finland and Sweden joined NATO, the Nordic defense cooperation received a different functional framework: it should strengthen the deterrence and defense of the Northern region and the Euro-Atlantic space, be consistent with NATO planning, ensure joint operations, military mobility, material cooperation and interaction in the field of total defense [8, pp. 1–2; 20]. In this sense, Northern Solidarity is not an alternative to NATO or the EU, but a mechanism for their practical consolidation.



**Figure 1. Distributed volumes of military assistance from the Nordic countries to Ukraine and their share in total European military allocations in 2022–2025**

Source: Built by the authors based on [17].

Unlike a simple comparison of the cumulative support of the NB8 in 2025 and 2026, Figure 1 allows us to see the real military-economic dynamics of Nordic solidarity. According to the Ukraine Support Tracker, the distributed military assistance of the five Nordic countries to Ukraine increased from €1.8 billion in 2022 to €10.7 billion in 2025. Their share in European military allocations increased from 11.9% in 2022 to 31.9% in 2025, and for the entire period 2022–2025 was 29.3%. The largest cumulative military allocations among the Nordic countries in this period were for Denmark, Sweden and Norway; Finland maintained a significant but smaller contribution in absolute terms, while Iceland, due to the lack of its own armed forces, had a different structure of participation.

This structure shows that the Nordic countries have not only supported Ukraine politically, but have also become a disproportionately large group of military donors within Europe. Their share in 2023–2025 exceeded a third or approached a third of all European military allocations, although in terms of economic scale the Nordic countries are not the largest bloc in Europe.

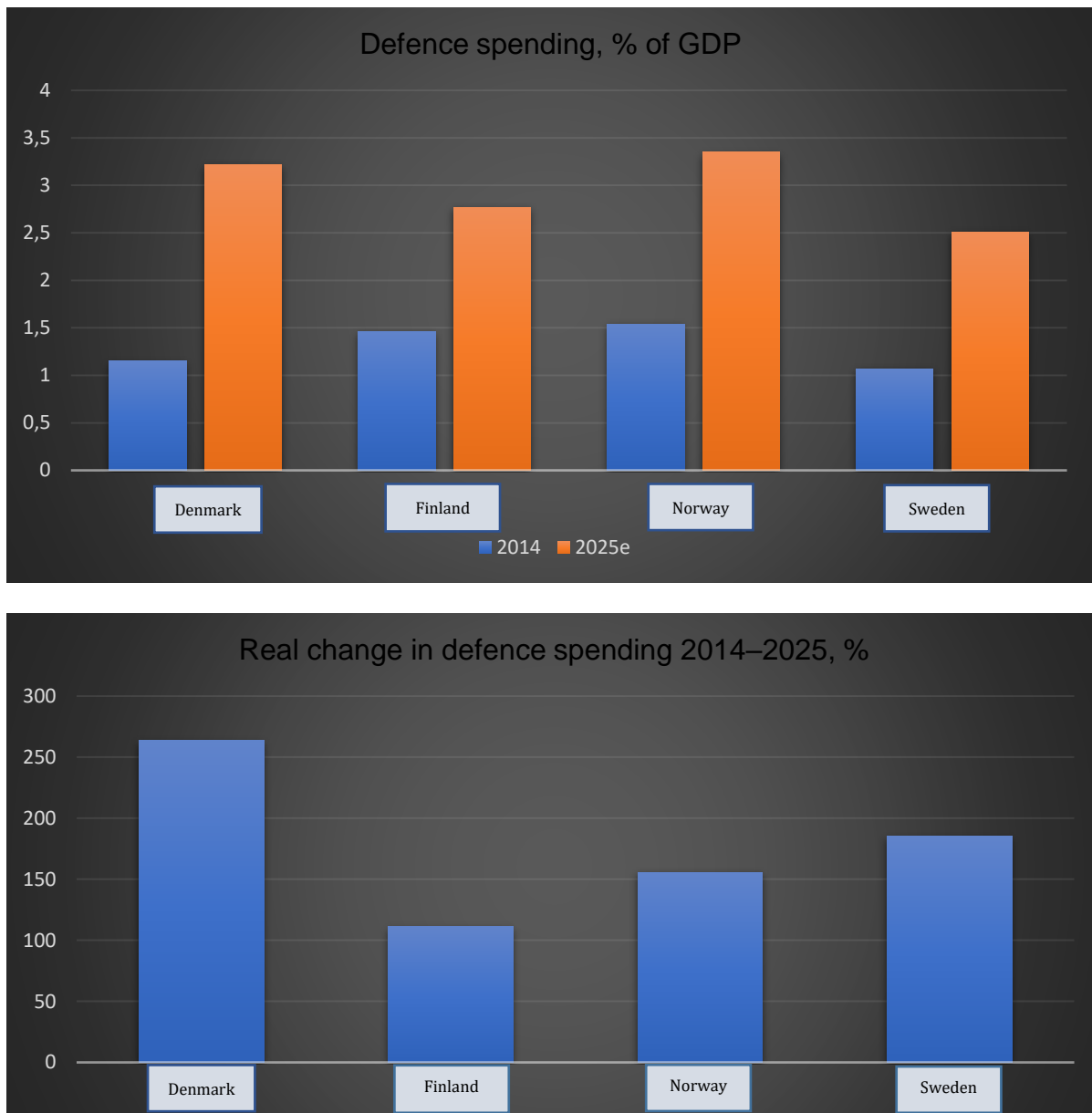
**Table 2. Quantitative profile of operationalized northern solidarity towards Ukraine**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Quantitative indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Analytical value</b>
<b>NB8 overall</b>	Over €42 billion in military, financial and humanitarian support from 2022; around €12.5 billion in planned military contributions by 2026; at least €918 million in energy support	Joint statement of the leaders of Ukraine and NB8, 24.02.2026	The regional level of solidarity goes beyond individual national packages
<b>Denmark</b>	60.4 billion Danish kroner, or about 8.1 billion euros, under the Danish Support Fund for Ukraine for 2023–2028	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark	Long-term budgetary fixation of military support and financing of Ukraine's defense needs
<b>Norway</b>	275 billion Norwegian kroner under the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine for 2023–2030	Norad / Government of Norway	One of the longest-standing European mechanisms for combining civilian and military support
<b>Sweden</b>	About 103 billion SEK in military support for Ukraine after the package of 19.02.2026	Government of Sweden	Reorientation of the policy of the new NATO member towards long-term defense support for Ukraine
<b>Finland</b>	Over €4.1 billion in total support from 2022, of which around €3.2 billion in defense material assistance	Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Ministry of Defense of Finland	Combining aid to Ukraine with rethinking one's own security after joining NATO
<b>Iceland</b>	400 million Icelandic krona, or around \$3.25 million, to support Ukraine's energy sustainability through UNDP	UNDP Ukraine	Contribution of a state without its own army through energy, humanitarian and institutional support

Source: Formed by the authors based on [11–16].

Table 2 demonstrates the unevenness, but not the fragmentation, of Nordic support. Denmark stands out with its Ukraine Fund and the development of a model for financing Ukraine's defense needs [12]. Norway has established one of the largest and longest-running European support mechanisms through the Nansen Support Programme [13]. Sweden has increased its military support to around SEK 103 billion since joining NATO [14]. Finland combines defense packages with the development of orders for its own defense industry for Ukraine [15]. Iceland, without its own armed forces, is integrated into the model through energy, humanitarian, and institutional support, which is particularly noticeable in projects to strengthen the resilience of the Ukrainian energy system [16]. The quantitative dimension of solidarity is not limited to aid to Ukraine. No less significant is the change in the defense spending of the Nordic countries themselves. According to NATO, in 2014–2025, Denmark's defense spending increased from 1.15% to 3.22% of GDP, Finland's from 1.46% to 2.77%, Norway's from 1.54% to 3.35%, and Sweden's from 1.07% to 2.51% of GDP. On average, for these four countries, the figure increased from 1.31% to 2.96% of GDP. In real terms, at 2021 prices and 2021 exchange rates, Denmark's defense spending increased by 263.6%, Sweden's by 185.6%, Norway's by 155.7%, and Finland's by 111.2% [18, pp. 9–10]. Iceland is not included in this comparison, as it does not have its own armed forces, but its participation in NATO and civil energy support mechanisms for Ukraine confirms that northern solidarity has more than just a military form.

Figure 2 demonstrates the synchronicity of two processes: the increase in support for Ukraine and the increase in the Nordic member states' own defense spending. It is accompanied by rearmament and a change in the strategic culture of the states in the region themselves. According to NATO estimates, Denmark and Norway will exceed 3% of GDP in defense spending by 2025, while Finland and Sweden significantly exceed the previous 2% target.



**Figure 2. Defense spending of the Nordic NATO member states in 2014 and 2025, % of GDP, and real change in spending in 2014–2025**

Source: Built by the authors based on [18].

The largest real growth was recorded in Denmark, which is important given the simultaneous increase in its support for Ukraine and its own defense framework. The increase in support for Ukraine occurs simultaneously with an increase in national defense spending, which transfers solidarity from the plane of foreign aid to the plane of defense planning of the Nordic states themselves. Due to this dynamic, the model of northern solidarity has three key mechanisms. The first is the mechanism of strategic coordination. The NB8 joint statements not only record support for Ukraine, but also form a common political line on the terms of peace, sanctions, frozen Russian assets, and Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration [10; 11]. The second is the mechanism of resource sustainability. Multi-year funds and programs reduce Ukraine’s dependence on random budget decisions and allow for planning defense, procurement, production, and reconstruction [12–15]. The third is the mechanism of mutual learning. Ukraine receives resources, and the Nordic countries gain experience in modern warfare, unmanned systems, air defense, cyber resilience, logistics, and energy protection. This is where the main difference between the new model and classical donor aid manifests itself. In the donor logic, the movement of resources is predominantly one-sided: from the stronger partner to the more vulnerable. In the model of northern solidarity, a bilateral security effect is formed. The Nordic countries support Ukraine, but at the same time, through Ukraine, they strengthen their own resilience, defense industry, political coordination, and regional role in Europe. Ukraine ceases to be just an addressee of

solidarity. Ukrainian military experience serves as an applied test of European approaches to air defense, unmanned systems, military logistics, energy sustainability, and defense-industrial adaptation.

**Table 3. The transformative effects of northern solidarity for Europe**

<b>Transformation line</b>	<b>Shift content</b>	<b>Empirical manifestation</b>	<b>European significance</b>
<b>From aid to shared responsibility</b>	Support for Ukraine is interpreted as part of the North's own security	Long-term programs, PURL, defense-industrial orders	Building Security Reciprocity
<b>From neutrality to allied alignment</b>	Finland and Sweden became members of NATO, which changed the security geography of the region	NORDEFECO Vision 2030, joint planning, growth of defense spending	Strengthening NATO's Northern Flank
<b>From humanitarian support to societal security</b>	Energy, civil protection, cybersecurity and resilience become components of security	UNDP projects, EU Civil Protection Mechanism, NB8 energy support	Rethinking Security as Society's Ability to Function Under Pressure
<b>From pan-European slowness to regional coalitions</b>	Small groups of states can act faster than large formats	NB8, Nordic-Baltic coordination, coalition of the willing	Regionalizing European Security Without Undermining NATO and the EU
<b>From Ukraine as a recipient to Ukraine as a partner</b>	Ukrainian experience becomes a source of security knowledge for Europe	OPC, drones, air defense, military logistics, energy sustainability	Consolidating Ukraine as a Subject of European Security

Source: Formed by the authors based on [1–8; 10–22].

The significance of Northern Solidarity for Ukraine has several levels. At the political level, it stabilizes Ukraine's international subjectivity. The formula of the impossibility of solutions regarding Ukraine without Ukraine, enshrined in the NB8 statements, limits the risk of external agreement at the expense of Ukrainian interests [10; 11]. At the defense level, the Nordic countries provide armaments, training, financing of production and participation in coalitions of capabilities. At the economic and technological level, they support energy, reconstruction, digital and research networks. NordForsk, after 2022, will finance initiatives related to the integration of Ukrainian refugees in the North-Baltic region and a network for the reconstruction of Ukraine [22].

Scientifically, Northern Solidarity mustn't dissolve Ukrainian subjectivity in external support. On the contrary, it gradually changes the balance of roles. Ukraine acts not only as a state in need of protection, but as a carrier of unique experience in modern defense. Such experiences are already influencing European thinking about unmanned systems, air defense, mobile energy, critical infrastructure protection, digital governance, volunteer networks, and civil preparedness. Through such interactions, a new type of partnership is being formed: the North transfers resources to Ukraine, and Ukraine transfers practical knowledge of high-intensity warfare to the North and Europe.

For Europe, the Northern model has a broader transformative effect. The Northern case shows a different interpretation of strategic autonomy: the ability of a regional group to act quickly and coherently within NATO and the EU, without claiming to replace these institutions. In the Northern version, autonomy manifests itself as the ability of a regional group to make decisions quickly, finance critical needs, support Ukraine, strengthen its own defense, and work within a broader Euro-Atlantic framework. Regional coordination shortens the time gap between political decision, financial commitment, and practical security effect.

Northern solidarity is also changing the geography of European security. Until 2022, the spatial focus of European security was largely associated with transatlantic relations, large Western European states and Brussels institutions. After 2022, the northeastern belt – from the Arctic and the Baltic Sea to Poland and Ukraine – has become one of the key spaces for testing new practices of deterrence, military mobility, protection of critical infrastructure and defense-industrial cooperation. This belt combines the threat from Russia, energy vulnerability, logistics support for Ukraine, military mobility, protection of maritime infrastructure and new defense-industrial projects. The value of the model is enhanced by the

fact that it operates in conditions of limited resources compared to large states. In terms of combined economic and military scale, the Nordic countries are inferior to the largest Western donors, but they compensate for this with high coherence of decisions, long-term programs and the share of military allocations in the pan-European support for Ukraine. Despite the growth of institutional and resource weight, the model has limited autonomy in relation to broader Euro-Atlantic mechanisms. Northern solidarity cannot independently replace American military power, the full financial potential of the EU, or NATO-wide deterrence. It depends on budgetary stability, political consensus, defense-industrial capabilities, and the ability to coordinate with broader institutions. In addition, different Nordic countries have different capabilities: Iceland does not have its own army, Norway has significant energy and financial resources, Denmark is developing a model for financing Ukrainian production, Finland has a long border with Russia and a strong tradition of total defense, and Sweden is rapidly restructuring its defense policy after joining NATO. These differences do not destroy the model, but require careful analysis.

The transformative significance of Northern solidarity for Europe is evident in three specific shifts. The first is the regionalization of security: the Nordic and Baltic countries are demonstrating that small and medium-sized states are capable of forming sustainable coalitions of action within NATO and the EU, narrowing the gap between political declaration and practical support. The second shift is associated with the changing role of Ukraine: it is increasingly appearing less as an object of external assistance and more as a partner whose military, technological and socio-sustainable experience influences the renewal of European approaches to defense. The third shift concerns the spatial shift of Europe's security weight to the northern and northeastern flank, where the containment of Russia, the protection of the Baltic and Arctic spaces, the logistics of supporting Ukraine, military mobility and defense-industrial cooperation are combined. In this sense, Northern solidarity does not replace pan-European institutions, but shows how regional cohesion can accelerate their practical action.

## 6. Conclusions

The model of Nordic solidarity in the European security system was formed as a response to the combination of military shock, regional trust, institutional density and a common perception of the Russian threat. Its essence lies not in declarative support for Ukraine, but in the ability of the Nordic countries to translate values, political consensus and regional coordination into long-term programs, military allocations, defense spending, energy assistance, sanctions pressure, reconstruction solutions and shared security responsibility.

The architecture of this model is multi-level. The normative-value level sets the framework for protecting sovereignty, international law and Ukraine's right to its own security choices. The political-communication level ensures unity of position on war, peace, sanctions, frozen Russian assets and the principle of the impossibility of solutions regarding Ukraine without Ukraine. The institutional-coordination level combines the Nordic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, NORDEF, NB8, JEF, NATO, EU and bilateral agreements. The defense-resource level covers military assistance, training, defense production financing, PURL, capability coalitions and the Nordic countries' own defense budgets. The societal-resilience and reconstruction-technology levels link security with energy, civil protection, critical infrastructure, research, digital solutions and reconstruction.

Quantitative data provide grounds to consider Nordic solidarity as an operational model. According to the Ukraine Support Tracker, the allocated volumes of Nordic military assistance to Ukraine increased from €1.8 billion in 2022 to €10.7 billion in 2025, and their share in the total European allocated volumes of military assistance to Ukraine increased from 11.9% to 31.9%. In parallel, the NB8 countries increased their combined military, financial, and humanitarian support to Ukraine from over €26 billion as of February 2025 to over €42 billion as of February 2026. Individual national mechanisms – the Danish Ukraine Fund, the Nansen Support Programme, Swedish military support packages, Finnish defense supplies, and Icelandic energy contributions – demonstrate a shift from reactive assistance to a long-term, entrenched policy of solidarity.

At the same time, support for Ukraine is accompanied by rearmament of the Nordic countries themselves. In 2014–2025, the defense spending of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden increased both as a share of GDP and in real terms. Support for Ukraine in the Nordic format functions as an element of the region's own security adaptation, rather than as unilateral foreign assistance; it has become part of a broader restructuring of strategic culture, defense planning, and understanding of one's own responsibility for the security of the Euro-Atlantic space.

For Ukraine, the significance of the Nordic model lies in the transition from the logic of assistance to the logic of mutual security. Ukraine remains a recipient of critical resources, but increasingly acts as a partner whose experience in high-intensity warfare, unmanned systems, air defense, mobile energy, digital resilience, critical infrastructure protection, and defense-industrial adaptation influences defense planning and approaches to resilience in Europe.

For Europe, the significance of the model lies in the formation of a regional rapid security response mechanism that does not replace NATO or the EU, but reduces the time and political gap between a joint threat assessment, a financial solution and practical support for Ukraine. The further development of this model will depend on the ability of the Nordic countries to maintain political consensus, build up defense-industrial capabilities, support Ukraine in the long term, and embed regional coordination into the pan-European and Euro-Atlantic architecture.

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