ELIAMEP's NATO Symposium for Young Researchers on Defence, Security, Foreign Policy, and Diplomacy

Title: Strategic Connectivity and Security: The Three Seas Initiative and NATO's Southeastern Flank

Theodor Skarvelis[1]

MA in International Relations, Geopolitics and Connectivity, University of Groningen

thiodorskarvelis@gmail.com

[1] *Theodor Skarvelis holds a BSc in International and European Economic Studies from the Athens University of Economics and Business. He is also an MA graduate in International Relations, following the Geopolitics and Connectivity track from the University of Groningen. He has conducted an Erasmus+ internship as an Academic Assistant at Istanbul Kültür University and internes as Research Coordinator at the Institute of International Economic Relations. His main research interests pertain to themes of Geopolitics, European Affairs, the Arctic and the Eastern Mediterranean.*

Abstract

This paper will examine the Three Seas Initiative's (3SI) strategic transformation from an infrastructure development platform into a critical security framework that strengthens NATO's southeastern flank. Initially launched in 2015 to enhance regional connectivity among thirteen EU states between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas, the initiative has evolved into a geopolitical instrument addressing vulnerabilities exposed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The analysis explores how 3SI's three pillars, energy, transport, and digital infrastructure, serve dual civilian-military purposes, enhancing regional resilience against hybrid warfare threats. Through major projects such as the Via Carpatia transport corridors and Black Sea energy diversification initiatives, the 3SI creates North-South connectivity networks that counter traditional East-West dependencies, thereby favouring Russian interests. The paper argues that the initiative significantly bolsters NATO's southeastern flank capabilities through improved military mobility, diversified energy security, and enhanced cybersecurity, while serving as a strategic counterweight to authoritarian influence in Eastern Europe.

Keywords: Three Seas Initiative, NATO, Connectivity, Eastern Europe

Table of Contents

Abstract **2**

List of Abbreviations **3**

Introduction **4**

Three Seas Initiative: Beginning and Development **5**

3SI's Importance and Opportunities for NATO **7**

Conclusion and Recommendations **12**

Bibliography **13**

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
3SI	Three Seas Initiative
3SIIF	Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund
3SUN	Three Seas University Network
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
cm	Cubic meters
EU	European Union
FSRU	Floating Storage and Regasification
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
mm	Millimeters
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
ROI	Return on Investment
USA	United States of America

Introduction

The Three Seas Initiative (3SI) is a regional forum consisting of 13 European Union countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Greece) to bolster connectivity between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black seas (*Three Seas Initiative*, 2025). The initiative plans to increase not only intra-regional connectivity but also the region's connectivity with the rest of the world along a North-South axis by attracting investments in energy, transport, and digital infrastructure. Although the forum is presented as a politically motivated economic project with the scope of infrastructural and financial convergence for integration within the EU, the geopolitical and security concerns become more and more evident, particularly since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

These concerns can be traced to the initiatives' declarations since 2022. For example, the dual-use aspect of the infrastructure projects is noted in the 3SI's Ninth Summit Joint Declaration: "*the resilience of dual-use infrastructure in the region for enhanced civilian and military mobility along the North-South axis […] represents a political goal as well as a responsible investment in our secure future and contributes to the reinforcement of the Eastern flank of NATO*" (*Three Seas Initiative*, 2024). However, the forum remains financially oriented.

Critical infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe[2] (CEE) is subject to asymmetrical Russian-backed hybrid tactics, from GPS jamming and sabotage in railways to pipeline and power cable damage (Budginaite-Froehly, 2025). Moscow's aggressiveness is ever-growing. This is evident from the recent Russian drone attack against Poland, testing NATO's reaction and capabilities (Van den Berg and Stijnman, 2025). Russia also exploits its energy supply to Europe to expand its influence in the CEE region; for instance, Hungary is heavily dependent on Russian gas. Concurrently, China, in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has expanded its influence in the CEE by investing primarily in ports, railways, airports, highways, container trade, and fiber optic cables, as well as energy projects, while fully supporting Moscow in its invasion.

Moreover, Beijing utilises BRI investments, especially the ones in the digital domain, for espionage (Putter and Bachmann, 2023, p.19). Russia and China mutually collaborate using their respective comparative advantages (energy supply, investments, sabotage, espionage) to exploit NATO members' strategic divergencies to weaken NATO's collective security (Putter and Bachmann, 2023, p.5). The CEE region is a primary target of the Sino-Russian axis, which seeks to undermine NATO's southeastern flank. The 3SI can offset this threat through strategic connectivity in its pillar domains by ensuring energy security, safe and fast transportation, and cybersecurity.

This paper discusses 3SI and how its planned connectivity could diversely benefit NATO's southeastern flank. Firstly, the research sheds light on the initiative as a whole. Secondly, it underlines how the 3SI can benefit NATO in the region. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for further development are drawn. This analysis utilises a mixed-methods qualitative approach that integrates primary sources

[2] Central and Eastern Europe is the region between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black seas.

comprising speeches, the 3SI sites, and joint declarations, as well as secondary sources comprising policy and academic papers and reports from experts and think tanks (Atlantic Council, German Marshall Fund). Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is employed to identify themes related to NATO and the 3SI, including the dual-use capabilities of the initiative's infrastructure.

Three Seas Initiative: Beginning and Development

It is worth noting the Three Seas Initiative's origins initially. In November of 2014, some months after the Russian annexation of Crimea (March of 2014), the Atlantic Council published a report titled: "*Completing Europe – From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications Union*". The report discussed the need for North-South connectivity to boost economic growth and energy security (Atlantic Council, 2014). It was a precursor to the 3SI. The following year, the Atlantic Council co-hosted with the Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović an informal high-level meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (Atlantic Council, 2015). The meeting included leaders from 12 EU states, the first 12 members of the 3SI. They examined how to boost infrastructure, energy, transport, and digital connectivity to strengthen EU integration, building on the "*Completing Europe*" report. It seems that American coordination and the annexation of Crimea laid the groundwork for CEE countries to collaborate on the 3SI.

In 2016, the first 3SI Summit took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Since then, 10 Summits have been held; this year's was in Warsaw, and the following year's will be in Croatia. The 3SI communicates its priorities and progress through concise annual Joint Declarations that match its political format: clear, consensus-based, and non-binding. These texts function as references for political will and coordination, revealing how the Initiative sees itself and adapts to new challenges over time (Jora *et al.*, 2025, p.173). Even though energy, transport, and digital infrastructure remain at the epicentre, the security implications are increasingly stressed in each summit declaration.

Table 1: Key takeaways from the 10 Joint Declarations of the 3SI's Summits[3]

[3] (Jora *et al.*, 2025, p.174)

Summit	*Key takeaways*
Dubrovnik Summit 2016	✓ Endorsed the Three Seas Initiative as an informal platform supporting political will and cross-border strategic projects in energy, transportation, digital communication, and economic development in Central and Eastern Europe. ✓ Confirmed openness to partnerships with global, state and business actors sharing EU values and principles.
Warsaw Summit 2017	✓ Defined key priorities: enhancing transportation within the TEN-T framework, advancing EU energy objectives, promoting the business-oriented nature of projects, and ensuring alignment with EU policies. ✓ Affirmed operational principles: EU membership, long-term regional vision, engagement with the private sector, and identification of modernisation drivers.
Bucharest Summit 2018	✓ Welcomed the 3SI short list of priority interconnection projects in transport, energy, and digital sectors. ✓ Marked the launch of the 3SI Business Forum and the creation of the 3SI Network of Chambers of Commerce.
Ljubljana Summit 2019	✓ Welcomed the establishment of the 3SI Investment Fund to support and finance key interconnection projects.
Tallinn Summit 2020	✓ Introduced the "Smart Connectivity" concept, integrating transport and energy infrastructure with digital platforms and services.
Sofia Summit 2021	✓ Emphasised the consolidation of the 3SI Investment Fund with wider support from member states, strategic partners, and financial institutions. ✓ Prioritised private sector investment, deeper strategic partnerships, and reinforced focus on energy security and diversification.
Riga Summit 2022	✓ Welcomed Ukraine as a partner beginning its 3SI participation process. ✓ Highlighted the 3SI's role in supporting EU policies for the Western Balkans. ✓ Acknowledged the U.S.'s financial contribution and on-going support for the 3SI Investment Fund.
Bucharest Summit 2023	✓ Welcomed the Hellenic Republic as the 13th participating state of the 3SI. ✓ Recognised the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as associated participating states.
Vilnius Summit 2024	✓ Welcomed Japan as the fourth strategic partner of the 3SI. ✓ Reaffirmed the role of the Initiative in strengthening the transatlantic partnership and in enhancing the U.S.'s strategic presence in the region.
Warsaw Summit 2025	✓ Reiterated commitment to accelerating infrastructure investments and supporting Ukraine's reconstruction within the 3SI framework. ✓ Emphasised digital innovation and green transition as emerging pillars of cooperation. ✓ Welcomed discussions on expanding partnerships with Spain and Türkiye to enhance regional connectivity and strategic outreach. ✓ Welcomed the Republic of Albania and Montenegro as associated partners.

Since 2020, the 3SI has significantly strengthened its institutional architecture beyond presidential summits. The establishment of the Foreign Ministers Meeting (June 2020), the Parliamentary Forum, and the Local Government Congress (2021) broadened the Initiative's political engagement across multiple governance levels (Romei *et al.*, 2025). A critical turning point came with the 2020 Tallinn summit's creation of a permanent visual identity and communication infrastructure, including a logo, website, and comprehensive online database of priority projects, which made 143 interconnectivity projects visible and accessible to investors. The addition of academia through the Three Seas University Network (3SUN) in 2023 embedded scientific collaboration into the Initiative's fabric, connecting universities across the region on research, innovation, and technology transfer (Romei *et al.*, 2025, p.10).

The 3SI's economic breakthrough hinged on the creation of dedicated financial instruments beginning with the annual Business Forum[4] (2018) and the Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund (3SIIF, 2019). Starting with €520 million from Polish and Romanian development banks, the SIIF attracted commitments from nine member states

[4] After Trump's propositions who participated in the 2017's Summit.

and international partners, reaching approximately €1.3 billion by 2022 with a target of €5 billion. Complementing this, the 3SI Innovation Fund (2024) mobilised an additional €1 billion for technology and clean energy sectors. Despite these achievements, the estimated infrastructure need of €530 billion to €1.15 trillion by 2030 underscores that these funds, while catalytic, remain insufficient and necessitate diversified public and private financing (Jora *et al.*, 2025, p.175). By 2024, only 14 of 143 priority projects had been completed, with 20 recording substantial progress, demonstrating slow but tangible progress in transport, energy, and digital infrastructure.

The CEE region was underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure due to its historical background, especially in areas behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. The Soviet Union disregarded the region's connectivity, and after its fall and the subsequent integration of the region's countries into the EU and NATO, connectivity developed only along the East-West axis. Thus, the CEE region fell behind not only in infrastructure but also in finances. 3SI was created to limit this disparity, with 143 ambitious projects across transport (54%), energy (39%), and digital (10%) sectors, with a budget of €111 billion, but only 37% of the total budget is secured (*Status Report of 2024*, 2024). Undoubtedly, 3SI presents numerous opportunities for the CEE region; however, security-related opportunities are not equally valued.

3SI's Importance and Opportunities for NATO

Security concerns always played an essential role in driving political developments. It is no coincidence that the North-South corridor in the CEE was proposed some months after the Russian annexation of Crimea, and the following year, a meeting was held to create the 3SI. Russian aggression prompted the region's countries to cooperate, while the USA recognised that infrastructure insufficiency and energy dependence on Russia constituted weaknesses for NATO. Consequently, the USA has coordinated and supported the initiative. For example, the USA has financed the 3SIIF with $300 million in 2023 (Nix and Brzezinski, 2025). Furthermore, the Ukrainian-Russian war has underpinned even more the security perspectives of 3SI and its usefulness. The promised strategic connectivity fortifies energy security, military logistics, and cybersecurity.

Firstly, the importance of the 3SI for NATO is evident from the map below: 3SI members aspire to develop connectivity along a North-South axis. All members are part of the EU and NATO, except Austria, which is not a member of NATO. 3SI associate partners wish to join the initiative, the EU, and NATO[5]. This underlines that regional infrastructure and economic convergence go hand in hand with EU and NATO membership, expanding and fortifying NATO's Southeastern flank. Other NATO members and allies, including Germany, Spain, Türkiye, the USA, the EU, and Japan, show great interest in engaging with the initiative.

[5] Albania is already a NATO member.

Map 1: 3SI's members, Associate and Strategic Partners[6,7]

Interestingly, some experts like Luka Juri argue that 3SI is more of a military project than a regional development one (Juri, 2024). Some have also resembled the 3SI as an economic cooperation version of the Intermarium (Kurečić, 2018). The Intermarium was a geopolitical idea proposed by Polish leader Józef Piłsudski after World War I, aiming to create a federation stretching between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. Piłsudski envisioned this federation to serve as a collective defence and political bloc against Soviet Russia and Germany (Laruelle and Rivera, 2019). Russia remains a security threat to the majority of the 3SI states, which prefer a NATO-focused defence rather than a European one and are generally more US-aligned. On the other hand, France and the EU promote EUropean defence.

Furthermore, the Initiative's geographic location means that Russia's potential threat can and should be contained in the Baltic region, especially given NATO's eastward expansion. Accordingly, the Initiative, backed by its members' forces and NATO, acts as a deterrent. 3SI is strategically placed to separate and limit the influence of two major powers, Russia and Germany. Both countries collaborated extensively in the energy sector before the Ukrainian War, with CEE being dependent on Russian energy. The 3SI offers NATO Allies an alternative engagement model to China's BRI in CEE, addressing concerns about Chinese infrastructure investments that could compromise Allied security. Therefore, it's in NATO's interest to promote 3SI and its projects.

---

[6] Author's creation.

[7] USA, Japan, and the European Commission are also strategic partners.

Regarding transportation, four flagship transport projects exemplify the military mobility opportunities the 3SI presents. Via Carpatia, extending from Lithuania to Greece, creates a critical north-south road corridor that can facilitate rapid reinforcement of NATO's southeastern flank. Rail Baltica integrates Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the European rail network with infrastructure designed to accommodate heavy military equipment transport and would hinder a Russian invasion. The Baltic railways use the Russian track gauge of 1520 mm, while the European standard is 1435 mm (Juri, 2024, p.97). There is also the road Via Baltica, which will further facilitate the region's connection. The Rail-2-Sea project connecting Poland's port of Gdansk with Romania's port of Constanta establishes a vital logistical artery spanning NATO's entire eastern frontier. Importantly, Mihail Kogălniceanu airbase is set to become NATO's biggest in Europe, located outside of Constanta (Thorpe, 2024). The above will significantly decrease road and rail traffic in CEE, where it takes two to four times longer than comparable travel in Western Europe (Nix and Brzezinski, 2025).

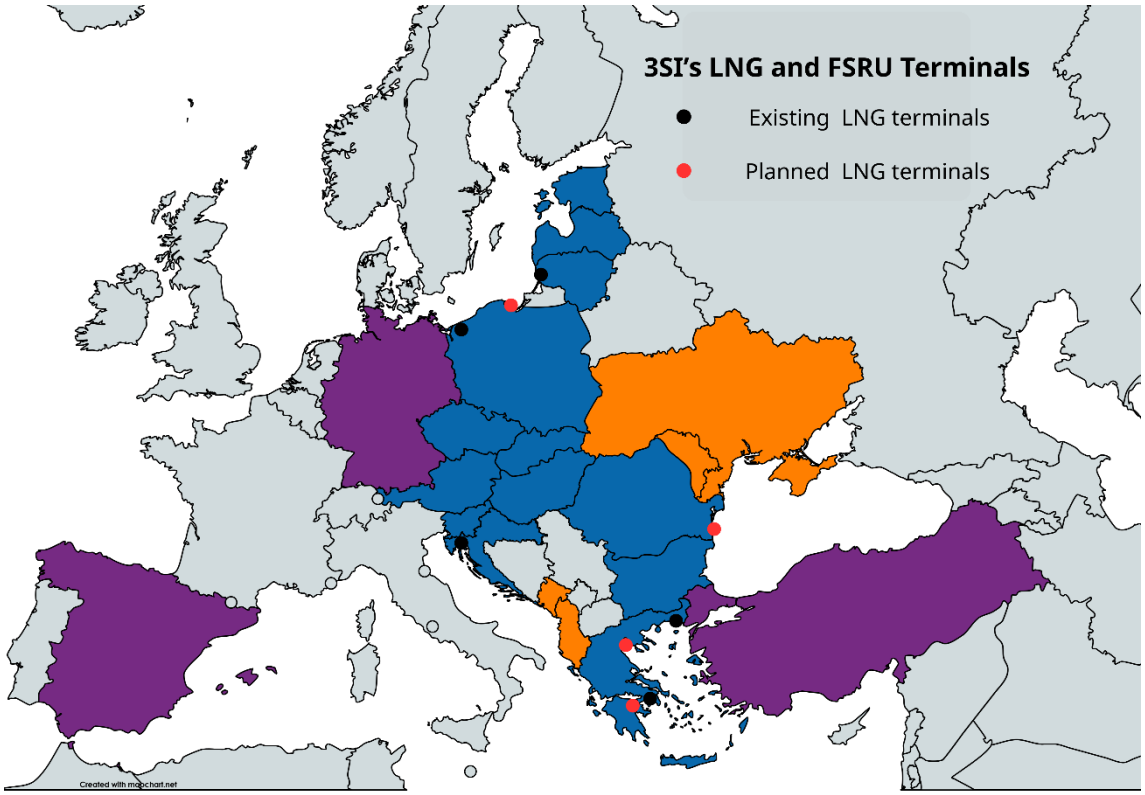
Map 2: 3SI's Main Projects[8]

Energy security plays a vital role in NATO's logistics for fueling military operations in a region seeking to extricate itself from Russian hydrocarbons. Before the Russo-Ukrainian War, 75% of 3SI countries were highly dependent on Russian gas,

[8] (Juri, 2024, p.98).

compared to only 6% of Western Europe (Bouwers, 2025). To counter this strategic vulnerability, the 3SI region has invested heavily in LNG terminals, with total capacity exceeding 32 billion cubic meters per year, approximately 25% of regional gas demand (Lazor and Vlahovic, 2025). Key terminals include Poland's Świnoujście facility, Lithuania's Klaipėda terminal connected through the Gas Interconnection Poland-Lithuania (GIPL) pipeline, Croatia's Krk FSRU, and Greece's Alexandroupolis FSRU and Revithoussa LNG Terminal near Athens. Poland and Romania plan new FSRU terminals in Gdańsk and Constanta, respectively, while Greece plans two new ones near Thessaloniki and Corinth.

Map 3: 3SI's LNG and FSRU Terminals[9]



Beyond LNG terminals, the 3SI is developing pipeline interconnectors that enable reverse gas flow capabilities and diversified supply routes. The Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria (BRUA) pipeline integrates Romanian Black Sea gas into regional markets. At the same time, the proposed Adriatic-Ionian Gas Pipeline will connect Croatia's Krk terminal through Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Albania, enabling flexible gas distribution across southeastern Europe (Lazor and Vlahovic, 2025). The Vertical Gas Corridor via the Gas Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB) encompasses Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary, and Slovakia, to diversify gas supplies away from Russian sources (Nikolov, 2025). These interconnections transform isolated national energy systems into an integrated regional network. In crises, Allied nations can redirect energy flows to support partners facing supply disruptions, enhancing collective resilience. The development of a proposed

[9] Author's creation.

regional gas price index, "3S-GasX," would further integrate markets and reduce vulnerability to external price manipulation, often conducted by Russia (Lazor and Vlahovic, 2025).

The 3SI region is set to become an interconnected energy hub through pipelines and LNG stations. However, 3SI countries also possess energy production capabilities. Particularly, Romania is a notable natural gas producer (27th-largest worldwide), covering most of its domestic demand and poised to become the EU's largest gas producer with the Neptun Deep offshore project starting in 2027, with prospective production of 100 billion cm (*Energy Connects*, 2025). Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary also produce significantly lower volumes of natural gas domestically. The Baltic countries aim to reach up to 100% renewable electricity by 2030, with substantial expansions in solar and wind power. Austria has high energy security due to a diversified energy portfolio including renewables and nuclear power. Greece has made remarkable progress in renewable energy. Recently, Helleniq Energy and Energean[10] with ExxonMobil, signed a deal for exploratory drilling in the Ionian Sea; meanwhile, a new exploratory deal between Helleniq Energy and Chevron south of Crete is under discussion (*Naftemporiki*, 2025; *eKathimerini*, 2025). Hence, 3SI states also aspire to become significant energy producers to ensure autarky and, possibly, export capabilities, thereby achieving total independence from Russian sources and secure energy resources for NATO.

Last but not least, 3SI's digital domain can enhance cybersecurity across the Alliance's eastern flank, facing persistent Russian and Chinese cyber threats. Approximately 14% of 3SI priority projects focus on digital infrastructure, including 5G network development, transport computerisation, and building resilience to digital threats. These digital capabilities support NATO's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) requirements by providing monitoring of critical infrastructure, early warning of potential disruptions, and coordinated response mechanisms (Afina, Inverarity and Unal, 2020). The integration of autonomous surveillance capabilities, unmanned systems, and AI-enhanced decision support strengthens NATO's ability to detect and respond to hybrid threats.

Particularly, the proposed "3S-GasNet" digital platform for energy infrastructure management integrates real-time data from LNG terminals, pipelines, compressor stations, and storage facilities with vessel tracking systems and AI predictive modules (Lazor and Vlahovic, 2025). Similar digital integration frameworks for transport and telecommunications infrastructure could provide NATO situational awareness across the eastern frontier. This sector offers numerous opportunities, like cloud computing, that enable threat intelligence sharing and collective defence collaboration (Shahwan Edwards *et al.*, 2021, p.8).

Overall, every 3SI investment and project generates direct or indirect positive externalities for NATO, providing multiple operational and logistical capabilities. NATO's future response readiness to a Russian attack depends on 3SI's success, which is why the USA has provided so much backing. Undoubtedly, the initiative created unprecedented opportunities for NATO to support Kyiv's Euro-Atlantic integration and thus Ukrainian sovereignty by offering energy and economic security alternatives (Golden, 2024).

[10] Greek energy companies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To conclude, the Three Seas Initiative represents a multidimensional strategic opportunity for NATO to enhance its defence posture, strengthen Allied resilience and connectivity, and deepen transatlantic cooperation across CEE. By developing dual-use infrastructure along critical north-south axes, diversifying energy supplies away from Russian dependence, advancing cybersecurity to protect critical infrastructure, and facilitating Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, 3SI directly addresses core security challenges. The convergence of infrastructure and economic development with military mobility benefits both civilian prosperity and collective defence. Infrastructure projects that reduce commercial transit times and stimulate regional economic growth simultaneously enhance NATO's ability to deploy its forces.

As the geopolitical landscape becomes increasingly intricate, 3SI offers NATO a vital framework for transforming geography into strategic connectivity and advantage. Infrastructure development and defence preparedness are increasingly inseparable dimensions of 21st-century security and can even overcome geographical barriers. The maps cannot lie. Nevertheless, 3SI's success depends on investments, economic growth, and collaboration. Although the region offers some of the best investment returns in Europe, achieving an average ROI of 8.7% in 2022, 3SIIF remains relatively underfunded (Nix and Brzezinski, 2025). The Business Forum and the 3SIIF need to attract more capital from the private sector and the strategic partners.

Besides the 3SIIF, a new defence innovation hub could be established with NATO's backing to accelerate regional defence technology development and cybersecurity, thereby embedding security directly into infrastructure planning and boosting regional deterrence (Budginaite-Froehly, 2025). Mobilising additional private and public funds is necessary; a formal 3SI-NATO fund or similar financial instruments could incentivise investment in dual-use infrastructure serving both civilian and military purposes. Additionally, coordination mechanisms between 3SI, NATO, and the EU would maximise project collaboration, reduce duplication, and align infrastructure priorities with collective defence needs.

Even though 3SI's Summit diplomacy renders cooperation more flexible, which is extremely important for its members with diverse interests, it lacks institutional depth and memory. This means a lack of coordination, stable advocacy, and stakeholder engagement. To battle this, as per the Atlantic Council, founding a 3SFI permanent secretariat is suggested, containing all its branches, to facilitate contacts and market opportunities between regional stakeholders and foreign investors (Nix and Brzezinski, 2025). Summits and Joint Declarations should continue, but only to offer guiding principles.

Finally, expanding partners' engagement, such as Ukraine's, and fostering integration with academic and innovation networks will strengthen the Initiative's institutional depth, making the 3SI a pivotal regional platform for transatlantic security, economic development, and geopolitical resilience. The initiative has evidently undergone significant institutional expansion, including the addition of new associates and strategic partners, as well as members such as Greece; however, it is in dire need of greater institutional depth. Otherwise, 3SI will end up as another failed regional project, and NATO will lose the opportunity to fortify its Southeastern Flank.

Bibliography

Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea Leaders Meeting (2015) *Atlantic Council*. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/event-recap/adriatic-baltic-back-sea-leaders-meeting/ (Accessed: 23 November 2025).

Afina, Y., Inverarity, C. and Unal, B. (2020) 'Ensuring Cyber Resilience in NATO's Command, Control and Communication Systems', *Chatham House* [Preprint]. Available at: https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/43/1/56-99/12199 (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Bouwers, S. (2025) *The Three Seas Initiative and Europe's Next Frontier of Strategic Autonomy*, *The Hague Research Institute*. Available at: https://hagueresearch.org/the-three-seas-initiative-and-europes-next-frontier-of-strategic-autonomy/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Budginaite-Froehly, J. (2025) *The case for a Three Seas Defense Innovation Hub*, *Atlantic Council*. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-case-for-a-three-seas-defense-innovation-hub/ (Accessed: 22 November 2025).

Completing Europe – From the North-South Corridor to Energy, Transportation, and Telecommunications Union (2014) *Atlantic Council*. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/completing-europe-from-the-north-south-corridor-to-energy-transportation-and-telecommunications-union/ (Accessed: 23 November 2025).

Contract talks with Chevron and Helleniq Energy in final stage (2025) *eKathimerini.com*. Available at: https://www.ekathimerini.com/economy/energy/1287327/final-stage-in-contract-talks-with-chevron-and-helleniq-energy/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Golden, K. (2024) *How Ukraine can rebuild in partnership with the Three Seas Initiative, according to leaders at Davos*, *Atlantic Council*. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/how-ukraine-can-rebuild-in-partnership-with-the-three-seas-initiative-according-to-leaders-at-davos/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Hydrocarbons: Exxon Mobil, Helleniq Energy and Energean sign agreement for the Northwest Ionian Sea (2025) *Naftemporiki*. Available at: https://www.naftemporiki.gr/english/2029861/hydrocarbons-exxon-mobil-helleniq-energy-and-energean-sign-agreement-for-the-northwest-ionian-sea/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Joint Declaration of the Ninth Summit of the Three Seas Initiative (2024) *Three Seas Initiative*. Available at: https://3seas.eu/media/news/joint-declaration-of-the-ninth-summit-of-the-three-seas-initiative (Accessed: 22 November 2025).

Jora, O.-D. *et al.* (2025) '"East-West" Convergence through "North-South" Connectivity: A Decade of the Three Seas Initiative's Contribution to the European Union', *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 25(1), pp. 169–187.

Juri, L. (2024) 'The Three Seas Initiative: Regional Cooperation or a Militaty Project for New Europe?', *University of Ljubljana Press*, (62), pp. 87–106. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4312/dela.62.87-106.

Kurečić, P. (2018) 'The Three Seas Initiative: geographical determinants, geopolitical foundations, and prospective challenges', *Croatian Geographical Bulletin*, 80(1), pp. 99–124. Available at: https://doi.org/10.21861/HGG.2018.80.01.05.

Laruelle, M. and Rivera, E. (2019) 'The Concept of Intermarium: Imagined Geographies of Central and Eastern Europe', *IFRI: Institut Français des Relations Internationales* [Preprint], (IERES Occasional Papers). Available at: https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1406150/imagined-geographies-of-central-and-eastern-europe/2020414/ (Accessed: 23 November 2025).

Lazor, I. and Vlahovic, N. (2025) *New Analysis Highlights Strategic Role of U.S. LNG in the Three Seas Initiative Region*. The New Frontier Foundation. Available at: https://newfrontier-foundation.org/new-analysis-highlights-strategic-role-of-u-s-lng-in-the-three-seas-initiative-region/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Nikolov, K. (2025) *New Vertical gas corridor to boost energy links from Greece to Ukraine by 2026*, *EUalive*. Available at: https://eualive.net/new-vertical-gas-corridor-to-boost-energy-links-from-greece-to-ukraine-by-2026/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Nix, E. and Brzezinski, I. (2025) *The Three Seas Initiative stands at an inflection point*, *Atlantic Council*. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/the-three-seas-initiative-stands-at-an-inflection-point/ (Accessed: 23 November 2025).

Putter, D. and Bachmann, S.-D. (2023) 'Russia and China expected to renew their espionage vigour', *Journal on Baltic Security*, 9(1), pp. 1–31. Available at: https://doi.org/10.57767/jobs_2023_0002.

Romania to become EU's largest gas producer as Neptun Deep starts in 2027 (2025) *Energy Connects*. Available at: https://www.energyconnects.com/news/gas-lng/2025/april/romania-to-become-eu-s-largest-gas-producer-as-neptun-deep-starts-in-2027/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Romei, S. *et al.* (2025) *Japan as a New Strategic Partner in the Three Seas Initiative: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead*. German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Shahwan Edwards, S. *et al.* (2021) *Collective cybersecurity for the Three Seas*, *Atlantic Council*. Available at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/collective-cybersecurity-for-the-three-seas/ (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Status Report of 2024 (2024). Vilnius: Three Seas Initiative. Available at: https://projects.3seas.eu/report (Accessed: 23 November 2025).

Thorpe, N. (2024) *Ukraine war: Nato expands Mihai Kogălniceanu airbase in Romania*, *BBC*. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c977wggg4pgo (Accessed: 24 November 2025).

Three Seas Summit Warsaw 2025 (2025) *Three Seas Initiative*. Available at: https://3seas.eu/en (Accessed: 22 November 2025).

Van den Berg, B. and Stijnman, E. (2025) *What the Russian drone incursion into Poland means for NATO*, *Clingendael*. Available at: https://www.clingendael.org/publication/what-russian-drone-incursion-poland-means-nato (Accessed: 22 November 2025).