



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Opinion on the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence {COM (2017) 315 final}.

This Reflection Paper follows the White Paper on the Future of Europe, presented on 1 March 2017, which sets out the main challenges and opportunities for Europe, and marks the beginning of a process of reflection on the future of the European Union.

This Reflection Paper was also part of a package adopted by the Commission on 7 June, which comprised a Communication on Launching the European Defence Fund and a Commission proposal for a Regulation on a European Defence Industrial Development Programme.

The Commission welcomes the opinion of the Riksdag and agrees that European cooperation in defence is crucial to guaranteeing the European Union's common security. In this light, the European Union Global Strategy is a key policy initiative, and the institutions of the European Union are fully committed to the implementation of its multiple strands.

The Commission would like to highlight that Member States remain in the lead of all European defence initiatives. For instance, the European Defence Fund will support and incentivise joint research, development and acquisition of capabilities which have been agreed by Member States. Permanent Structured Cooperation, which was notified by 23 Member States on 13 November and established by the Foreign Affairs Council of 11 December, will also foster further cooperation in defence while fully remaining a Member States driven process.

*Mr Urban AHLIN
Speaker of the Riksdag
SE – 100 12 STOCKHOLM*

Concerning EU-NATO complementarity, the Commission fully shares the assessment that duplications with NATO should be avoided, and thus close cooperation between the European Union and NATO is necessary. In July 2016, Presidents Juncker and Tusk and NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg signed in Warsaw a Joint Declaration, which outlined seven priority areas for cooperation and was complemented by a list of 42 actions. The implementation of the Declaration was reviewed in the spring of 2017 and follow-up is being conducted, inter alia through the adoption in December 2017 of additional 32 concrete actions for cooperation.

The Commission looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Member of the Commission*