



Questions and Answers: the Future of European Defence

Brussels, 7 June 2017

Europeans expect a Union that defends and protects them (see [Eurobarometer poll](#)). In almost all EU countries it is in their top three priorities, while around three quarters of Europeans are in favour of a common security and defence policy. If we want to deliver on their expectations, security and defence must play a more prominent role in the future of the European project. This is why the Commission presented a reflection paper today setting out scenarios for the future in the area of European defence.

The reflection paper forms part of the discussion on the future of the EU at 27, launched by the Commission's [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#) on 1 March 2017.

It outlines the main trends and challenges that will shape the future of our security and defence and on this basis, sets out options in three different scenarios for moving towards a Security and Defence Union. While not mutually exclusive, these scenarios are underpinned by different levels of ambition for the EU in doing things together in this field.

The three different scenarios are:

- **a) Security and Defence Cooperation:** the EU27 Member States would cooperate on security and defence more frequently, on a largely voluntary basis, depending on ad-hoc decisions when need arises, and rely on initial economies of scale.
- **b) Shared Security and Defence:** the EU27 Member States would move towards shared security and defence, showing greater financial and operational solidarity and would enhance their ability to project military power, fully engaging in external crisis management and building partners' security and defence capacities. Considerable economies of scale in the defence market at European scale would be in place, with favourable financing conditions across the defence supply chain.
- **c) Common Defence and Security:** the EU27 Member States would deepen cooperation and integration towards a common defence and security. Solidarity and mutual assistance would become the norm, underpinned by a certain level of integration of Member States' defence forces. Member States would have more efficient defence spending through more economies of scale, specialisation, sharing of expensive military assets and technological innovation aimed at reducing defence costs, and would be better equipped to face international competition.

Enhancing European security is a must. Member States will be in the driving seat, defining and implementing the European level of ambition with the support of EU institutions. Looking towards the future, they will decide the path they want to take and the speed they want to go at to protect our citizens.

Why is there a need for closer cooperation on security and defence in the EU?

There is a strong case for greater cooperation on security and defence in the EU. As European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in his [2016 State of the Union address](#): *"Europe can no longer afford to piggy back on the military might of others. We have to take responsibility for protecting our interests and the European way of life. It is only by working together that Europe will be able to defend itself at home and abroad."*

At a time when terrorism, hybrid threats, climate change, economic volatility and energy insecurity endanger European people and territory, closer cooperation on defence and security is more important than ever.

While Member States remain in the driving seat and are responsible for deploying security and armed forces when needed, new types of threats are best prevented and tackled by working together. The EU can facilitate and reinforce this cooperation and make the collective effort more effective. Through the unique blend of soft and hard power, using security and defence instruments alongside diplomacy, sanctions, development cooperation and trade, the EU applies an integrated

and comprehensive approach for sustainable security.

For more information on the economic and business case for greater EU cooperation on security and defence see this [Factsheet](#).

What has the European Union done on defence?

Attempts to move towards common defence have been part of the European project since its inception. In 1950, French Prime Minister René Pleven proposed a plan for far-reaching defence integration, including the setting up of a European Army and the appointment of a European Minister of Defence. After two years of negotiations, all six members of the European Coal and Steel Community signed the "Treaty establishing the European Defence Community", envisaging a common European army with 40 divisions of 13,000 soldiers in a common uniform, a common budget, joint military procurement and common institutions. In 1954, however, after ratification by the Benelux countries and Germany, the project encountered a political impasse in France, effectively putting an end to the idea of a common European defence for the next half a century.

More has been achieved in the past 2 years than in the last 60.

A stronger Europe when it comes to security and defence matters has been a priority for the Juncker Commission since it took office. To live up to the expectations of our citizens and also our partners, an ambitious set of initiatives to reinforce European security and defence policy were presented and endorsed by the European Council in December 2016, based on three key interlinked elements:

- (1) The [EU Global Strategy's Implementation Plan on security and defence](#), which sets out a new level of ambition for the Union and identifies concrete actions to fulfil it, as agreed by the Council on 14 November 2016;
- (2) The [European Defence Action Plan](#), put forward by the European Commission on 30 November 2016, with new financial tools for capability development and defence cooperation in support of European defence industry and technological innovation;
- (3) **Cooperation with NATO**: A common set of 42 proposals for the implementation of the Joint Declaration signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and endorsed by both EU and NATO Councils in December 2016 which gives a new impetus to EU-NATO cooperation.

These three strands will help the European Union to deliver more effectively on the strategic priorities identified in the EU Global Strategy, namely to protect Europe and its citizens, respond to crises and build our partners' capacities. Work on all three strands has progressed at a fast pace in recent months and will continue to build up in the run up to the European Council in June 2017.

The Commission has contributed by using all its policies to help protect the Union's citizens against [hybrid threats](#). It has also proposed to use EU development policy to build up the capacity of the security sector in partner countries.

Is this a step towards the creation of an EU army?

The Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence, or any of the discussed initiatives to foster closer cooperation on defence and security are not about creating an EU army or unnecessarily duplicating military planning and command structures that currently exist at national level and in NATO. Decisions relating to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) are in any case taken by the Council of the European Union by unanimity.

The Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence is intended to stimulate debate about creating the conditions for more defence cooperation, maximising the output and the efficiency of defence spending and providing the European Union and its Member States with the capabilities, structures, tools and financial resources that are needed to fulfil our responsibilities and security needs.

What is the common security and defence policy – CSDP?

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) was launched in 1999 to reinforce the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy. It has since become a core element of the EU's foreign policy.

The CSDP gives the EU the possibility to intervene outside its territory through civilian and military crisis management missions and operations. It enables the EU to take a leading role in peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security. This contributes also to tackling security challenges related to transnational crime, terrorism, and proliferation.

Since the deployment of the European Union Police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, over

30 civilian and military missions and operations have been launched under the CSDP. The missions are however just one aspect of the EU's integrated approach to security, alongside diplomatic action and development policy. The EU approach combines all tools — from political, to diplomatic, to military and financial tools.

See [here](#) for more information on the history of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

EU Missions and Operations

The EU currently has 15 civilian and military missions and operations outside the European Union. The missions operate either under an executive or non-executive mandate.

CSDP operations under an **executive mandate** are authorised to conduct governmental or executive tasks in support of a government, or in the absence of a governmental authority. For example, in the case of EUNAFOR Med/ Operation SOPHIA the operation has legitimate power to conduct boarding, search, seizure and diversion on the high seas of vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking and can take all necessary measures against a vessel and related assets, including through disposing of them or rendering them inoperable.

A **non-executive mission** has no such power and in most cases its mandate concentrates on tasks such as capacity building, mentoring, monitoring or training; it has no specific power to undertake activities which are the legal and rightful responsibility of the government and its ministries. For example the European Union Training Mission in Mali provides military and training advice to the Malian Armed Forces, in order to contribute to the restoration of their military capacity and enable them to conduct military operations to restore Malian territorial integrity and reduce the threats posed by terrorists.

No current CSDP operations are engaged in combat tasks. CSDP missions and operations may however act with the minimum force appropriate in self-protection according to international law and through agreed Rules of Engagement.

How are CSDP missions and operations financed?

The common costs relating to **EU military operations** are handled through the [Athena mechanism](#). Under the EU Treaties, these costs cannot be funded by the EU budget. The common costs usually encompass capabilities which are used jointly in the context of the operation, such as headquarters, administration, infrastructure or medical services on the ground. The budget for an operation is decided upon by Member States in the Athena Special Committee and it is funded by all Member States through an annual share based on their Gross National Income. Overall, however, the principle of '*costs lie where they fall*' applies, which means that each Member State pays the costs of the deployment and sustainment of their national contingent.

The common costs of **civilian CSDP missions** are financed through the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget, which is administered by the Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, under the responsibility of the High Representative/Vice-President. In the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework up to €2,076 million have been allocated, with annual commitments of around €296 million. Where operational expenditure is not charged to the EU budget, Member States bear the costs, as is the case with the salaries of seconded personnel, for example.

What is done under the implementation plan on security and defence?

In November 2016, the High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini presented an [Implementation Plan focusing on Security and Defence](#), building on the EU Global Strategy, to raise the level of ambition of the EU's security and defence policy. On this basis, the European Council agreed in December 2016 to a new level of ambition with three strategic priorities:

- **Responding to external conflicts and crises** by conducting civilian and military operations or missions more effectively;
- **Building up the capacities of our partners**, including by providing training and advice in order to enable them to better take care of their own security;
- **Protecting the Union and its citizens** by contributing with external security and defence tools to tackle the challenges and threats that can affect our internal security, including terrorism, proliferation, smuggling and trafficking, hybrid threats, and their root causes.

To achieve these goals, the European Council has agreed to:

1. Deepen defence cooperation among the Member States to ensure that Europe maintains state-of-the-art military forces and makes more efficient use of its resources by pooling and sharing assets. To this end, a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) will be launched

based on modalities which have now been agreed, with a trial run in the second half of 2017. CARD is a mechanism for Member States that will contribute to deliver on the prioritised capabilities by enhancing transparency between respective national defence plans;

- 2. take work forward on the Permanent Structured Cooperation, as foreseen in the Treaty, to strengthen cooperation between Member States in developing defence capabilities and making them available for operations within a more binding framework;
- 3. Adjust the CSDP structures and procedures in order to deploy and direct our civilian and military missions and operations faster and in a more effective and integrated manner. To this end, agreement has been found to establish, as a short term objective, a Military Planning and Conduct Capability within the EU Military Staff of the EEAS which will assume the command over the EU's non-executive military missions, at present the three EU training missions in the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia;
- 4. Improve rapid response of civilian missions and operations, as well as create conditions that will facilitate the deployment of Battlegroups. The latter includes improving their modularity, as well as consideration of more effective financing.

What is Permanent Structured Cooperation?

The EU already has the means at its disposal to move away from the current patchwork of bilateral and multilateral military cooperation to more efficient forms of defence integration. The Lisbon Treaty allows a group of like-minded Member States to strengthen their cooperation in the area of security and defence. It is open to all Member States which meet the criteria and make the necessary commitments.

Member States that decide to join a permanent structured cooperation could, in different groupings, develop capabilities jointly, invest in shared projects or create multinational formations depending on their choices. Setting up such a system would allow Member States to collaborate within a more binding framework.

The Foreign Affairs Council on 18 May 2017 agreed on the governance such a structured cooperation on defence would have, once established. The governance would consist of two layers:

- at the Council level, open to all EU Member States to ensure transparency and coordination, but only participating Member States would be entitled to vote;
- at the level of projects and initiatives, where only those Member States contributing to each specific project or initiative would be represented.

The EEAS and the European Defence Agency (EDA) will provide support for the implementation of the work on permanent structured cooperation in coordination with the Commission, which will be associated to ensure coherence with the European Defence Fund as it will be able to support eligible structured cooperation capability development projects.

What are the EU Battlegroups?

As a military component of the EU's rapid response instruments, EU Battlegroups are an integral part of the EU's capacity to react early and quickly to emerging crises and conflicts around the world. An EU Battlegroup is a multinational, combined-arms, battalion-sized force, reinforced with combat-support and combat service-support elements, offered on a rotation basis by the Member States. Battlegroups are on standby for at least a six-month period, and are able to initially sustain missions for 30 days, extendable to 120 days if resupplied appropriately. Their deployment is subject to a unanimous decision by the Council.

Their creation was formally agreed in June 2004 in response to the evolving security environment and its aim is to increase the ability of EU Member States to rapidly deploy military forces in international crisis management and to autonomously take up, at least initially, independent military missions. Although the Battlegroups reached full operational capacity on 1 January 2007 they have never been deployed. This has been in part due to uncertainties concerning the financial arrangements. At the Foreign Affairs Council on 18 May 2017 Member States decided to reinforce the preparation of the EU Battlegroups and to explore possibilities for adapting as necessary the financing arrangements and facilitate rapid decision-making and deployment in the forthcoming revision of the Athena mechanism.

What is the European Defence Fund?

Today the Commission is launching a European Defence Fund to help Member States spend taxpayer money more efficiently, reduce duplications in spending, and get better value for money. Announced by President Juncker in [September 2016](#), and backed by the [European Council in December 2016](#), the Fund will coordinate, supplement and amplify national investments in defence research, in the

development of prototypes and in the acquisition of defence equipment and technology.

The European Defence Fund will include have two strands: one focussing on research and the other on development and acquisition. The Fund will maximise the output of defence expenditure by fostering collaborative research and the joint acquisition of military assets, thus minimising duplication.

Find more information [here](#).

How is the EU cooperating with NATO?

The security of EU and NATO are interconnected — together, they can mobilise a broad range of tools to respond to challenges they are faced with and make the most efficient use of resources. The so-called Berlin Plus arrangement allows for the EU to make use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations. This substantially improved the working partnership between the EU and NATO, ensuring effective consultation, cooperation and transparency in crisis management and peace-building operations. There is one military CSDP operation currently running in this framework: Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In July 2016, the European Union and NATO leaders decided to take cooperation to a new level by signing a Joint Declaration in Warsaw.

The Declaration identified seven concrete areas of cooperation: 1) countering hybrid threats, 2) operational cooperation including at sea and on migration, 3) cyber security and defence, 4) defence capabilities, 5) defence industry and research, 6) exercises, 7) supporting Eastern and Southern partners' capacity building efforts.

On that basis, the EU (European Commission, European External Action Service and the European Defence Agency) and NATO jointly developed a common set of 42 concrete proposals for the implementation of the Joint Declaration covering all seven areas. The set was endorsed on 6 December 2016, in parallel, by the Council of the European Union and the North Atlantic Council.

Implementation remains a political priority for the EU. Significant progress is being made on each work strand: a progress report highlighting the key results will be submitted to the Foreign Affairs Council by the High Representative/Vice-President, drafted together with the Secretary-General of NATO. This includes the establishment of the European Centre for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki, the ongoing work to establish shared situational awareness through dedicated Hybrid Fusion Cells, close collaboration between strategic communication teams to counter misinformation targeting our countries and societies, cooperation and coordination between Operations Sophia and Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean, preparations for the first parallel and coordinated exercise, and coordination of security-related capacity-building projects in support of partner countries.

The implementation of the Joint Declaration and the common set of proposals gave new impetus and substance to concrete, practical cooperation between the EU and NATO, and it contributes to strengthening the Trans-Atlantic bond. A stronger EU and a stronger NATO are mutually reinforcing. EU-NATO cooperation will continue to take place in full respect of the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity, transparency and full respect for the decision-making autonomy of both organisations, as well as for the specific character of the security and defence policy of all members. It is based on shared values and principles and the commonality of interests.

In the current strategic environment, EU-NATO cooperation remains essential.

What are the next steps?

Enhancing European security is a must. Member States will be in the driving seat, defining the level of ambition with the support of the EU institutions. Looking to the future, they must now decide the path they want to take and speed they want to go at to protect Europe's citizens. The work is proceeding at a fast speed and EU leaders are expected to give further steer at the European Council in June 2017. In the run-up, a high-level conference on defence will be held in Prague on 9 June, where President Juncker will deliver the opening address.

For More Information

[Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence](#)

[European Council Conclusions, 15 December 2016](#)

Factsheet [Defending Europe](#)

[Factsheet Defence Package](#)

[Factsheet Implementation Plan on Security and Defence](#)

[Factsheet European Defence Action Plan](#)

[Factsheet EU NATO cooperation](#)

[Timeline on Common Security and Defence Policy](#)

[Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy](#)

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