



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 11.01.2018
C(2017) 54 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence {COM(2016) 315 final}.

This Reflection Paper follows the White Paper on the Future of Europe, presented on 1 March 2017, which set out the main challenges and opportunities for Europe, and marks the beginning of a reflection process 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 proposal for a Regulation on a European Defence Industrial Development Programme.

The Commission welcomes the opinion of the Camera Deputaților as well as the opportunity to respond to a number of issues raised therein.

The Commission agrees that the new geostrategic and geopolitical circumstances more than ever call for a stronger and better coordinated European defence. The Commission takes note of the Camera Deputaților's support for the third and most ambitious scenario, the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The Commission takes note of the Camera Deputaților's reflection on the limits of a decision-making system based on unanimity, and the risks that concerns of a few Member States could hamper the progress of the Defence Union project.

Concerning EU-NATO complementarity, the Commission fully shares the Camera Deputaților's assessment that close cooperation between the European Union and NATO is a foundation of Europe's collective security. 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 actions are being conducted, inter alia through the identification of further actions to be carried out jointly.

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The Commission notes the concern of the Camera Deputaților regarding the risk of a two speed European Defence Union. In that regard, it should be noted that the Commission is committed to ensure that the different programmes and tools developed under the European Defence Fund are inclusive and open to the participation of beneficiaries from all Member States, including notably small and medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Moreover, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), currently under discussion in the Council, is meant as an ambitious but also inclusive structure, open to all Member States willing to make the necessary binding commitments and to work towards meeting these. Furthermore, the governance of the Permanent Structured Cooperation, following its establishment, would offer all Member States the opportunity to become observer while only PESCO members would be involved in the decision-making.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Member of the Commission*