



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2018) 3322 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat 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.

The Reflection Paper is also part of a package adopted by the Commission on 7 June 2017, 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 agrees with the Senat that the increased competitiveness, optimised production capacity and reduced costs of the European military industrial sector contribute to stronger and better coordinated European defence.

The European Defence Fund launched in June 2017 is instrumental in that respect. It is inclusive and open to the participation of beneficiaries from all Member States. The Commission's objective is that all companies, regardless of their size and location in the Union, can benefit from the tools available. Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular, which are at the heart of innovation in Europe and critical for the supply chains, should benefit from them.

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Concerning the complementarity between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Commission fully shares the Senat's assessment that close cooperation between these is a condition for Europe's collective security. In July 2016, Presidents Juncker and Tusk and North Atlantic Treaty Organization 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. In December 2017, European Union Member States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allies decided to further strengthen and broaden cooperation by endorsing a common set of new proposals. Cooperation was expanded to key topics such as counter-terrorism and military mobility.

The Commission is fully committed to the implementation of the common set of proposals and further strengthening the cooperation between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This remains a political priority.

The Commission thanks the Senat for its support and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Member of the Commission*