

# AFTER THE EU GLOBAL STRATEGY

Consulting the experts

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SECURITY AND DEFENCE





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## **Security and defence**

**European Union**  
**Institute for Security Studies**

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*75015 Paris*

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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<hr/> <i>Jan Joel Andersson, Daniel Fiott and Antonio Missiroli</i>	
<b>Contributions</b>	<b>7</b>
<hr/>	
1. Sophia Besch, Research Fellow, Centre for European Reform	7
2. Vladimír Bilčík, Head, EU Programme, Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association	11
3. Sven Biscop, Director, Europe in the World Programme, & Jo Coelmont, Senior Associate Fellow, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations	15
4. Olivier de France, Research Director, Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques	19
5. Margriet Drent & Dick Zandee, Senior Research Fellows, Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael)	23
6. Bastian Giegerich, Director, Defence and Military Analysis, International Institute for Strategic Studies	27
7. Daniel Keohane, Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zürich	31
8. Alexander Mattelaer, Assistant Director, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel	35
9. Christian Mölling, Senior Resident Fellow, The German Marshall Fund of the United States	39
10. Vivien Pertusot, Head, Brussels Office, Institut français des relations internationales	43
11. Marcin Terlikowski, Head, European Security and Defence Economics Project, Polish Institute of International Affairs	47
12. Wolfgang Wosolobe, Brigadier General, Advisor, Austrian Ministry of Defence, former Director General of the EU Military Staff	51
<b>Annex</b>	<b>55</b>
Abbreviations	55

# Foreword

Following the publication of the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), attention now turns to implementing the strategy in five key priority areas: strengthening security and defence; investing in state and societal resilience; developing an integrated approach to conflicts and crises; promoting and supporting regional orders; and reinforcing global governance. It is now time to move from a shared vision towards common action. This is certainly the case where efforts to strengthen security and defence are concerned. As the EUGS makes clear:

*Investment in security and defence is a matter of urgency. Full spectrum defence capabilities are necessary to respond to external crises, build our partners' capacities, and guarantee Europe's safety.*

In order to ensure that the EU becomes more credible in security and defence, a specific Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) will focus on the EU's ability – primarily through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) – to respond to external conflicts and crises, build the capacities of partners affected by fragility and instability, and protect Europe. The task ahead is to define a shared level of ambition on security and defence and to identify actionable proposals for the future.

In tandem with the European Commission's forthcoming European Defence Action Plan, and hand-in-hand with the EU-NATO Joint Declaration, the implementation plan on security and defence will set capability development priorities for the EU. It will foster deeper defence cooperation and adjust structures, tools and instruments accordingly. The plan will also draw on the full potential of the Treaty and actively advance CSDP partnerships.

The EUISS has been at the forefront of efforts to stimulate thinking on EU security and defence, both in advance of and in the wake of the publication of the EUGS. The Institute organised dedicated workshops on 6 July, 20 September and 17 October that brought together approximately 20-30 leading think tank analysts and policymakers for some genuinely stimulating exchanges. And on 27-28 September the Institute co-organised a seminar in Bratislava with the Slovak Presidency of the EU to follow the informal meeting of defence ministers. Taken together, these activities have provided much food for thought for those involved in carrying the work forward on the security and defence implementation plan, thus replicating on a smaller scale the consultation and outreach exercise carried out in preparation of the EUGS itself.

In the presence of Nathalie Tocci, Special Advisor to the HR/VP, the workshop the EUISS organised on 17 October had a specific focus on the implementation plan. Leading analysts from think tanks and academia shared their thoughts and ideas with key policymakers, including the Chairman of the EU Military Committee, the Deputy Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency, the Deputy Director General of the Commission's DG Grow and, from the European External Action Service, the Director of the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate, the Deputy Civilian Operations Commander of the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capacity, and the Director of the Concepts and Capabilities Directorate at the EU Military Staff.

The workshop debate was enriching and constructive; on this basis, the EUISS invited these experts to write a short memo on their preferred level of ambition and priority areas for EU security and defence. The experts were asked to contribute thoughts on readiness, capabilities, the chain of command, financial incentives, defence cooperation and the 'protecting Europe' concept. These same analysts were also asked to think about how best to communicate the EU's endeavours in security and defence.

The EUISS has therefore consulted the experts and this volume brings these contributions together in a highly informative and readable format. The memos highlight the challenges ahead and explore new possibilities. We thank all of the experts for their thoughts and ideas.

Special thanks go to Sinéad Gillen and Zoe Stanley-Lockman for their support in organising the workshops. John-Joseph Wilkins, Gearóid Cronin, Zoe Stanley-Lockman and Rada Youssef should be particularly thanked for their assistance with editing the memos under an extremely tight deadline.

*Jan Joel Andersson, Daniel Fiott and Antonio Missiroli*

*Paris, October 2016*

# 1. Sophia Besch

*Research Fellow . Centre for European Reform*

In addition to publishing a Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) in December, all EU member states should sign a pledge to protect the security of their citizens. In what could be called ‘The European Security Pledge (ESP)’, a spirit of solidarity should take root among states that belong to the same security community and help them move past institutional affiliations – both within the EU and within Europe more broadly.

The Pledge will be signed in a difficult political context: on the one hand, Europeans clearly expect their governments to collectively take more responsibility for their safety and security. There is undoubtedly momentum for more defence cooperation: with the European Security Pledge and the European Commission’s Defence Action Plan (EDAP), the multiple strands of EU institutions’ efforts are culminating and coinciding with a clear spike in political will in EU capitals to deliver on defence.

On the other hand, the recent EU membership referendum in the UK was in many ways a reflection of a broader, Europe-wide sense of disappointment with the technocratic and inward-looking nature of EU cooperation, not least of all on defence. The European Security Pledge should demonstrate awareness of this criticism, lest it open itself up to be denounced as merely the EU’s next integrationist project.

## **CAPABILITIES AND THIRD COUNTRIES**

Two important themes should feature prominently in the ESP. Firstly, Europe cannot afford to renounce the capabilities of third states: an institutionalised network of reliable partnerships strengthens the EU’s reach and reputation as a truly global player. Secondly, Europe’s answer to security threats should not be to create more institutional structures, but rather to make better use of its combined strengths and capabilities. The EU should also follow up on statements of intent with investment in concrete deliverables.

What is more, as an overall caveat, the ESP must avoid giving the impression that the EU-27 do not grasp the reality of the UK leaving. The UK currently accounts for about a quarter of EU member states’ defence spending and almost a quarter of deployable European troops. In terms of military power and projection, the UK’s withdrawal will be to the EU’s detriment, with fewer personnel, assets and capabilities at its disposal. Once the dust of the Brexit referendum has settled, and British politicians are under less domestic pressure to publicly condemn EU defence



projects, the UK will continue to be interested in contributing to European security. However, it is unlikely that the UK will be content with a subordinated ‘trading troops for influence’ role and the British case could spur other third states to seek a bigger role themselves. Thus, in designing mechanisms of cooperation today, the ESP must account for the future association of non-EU members.

The Pledge must map out a level of military ambition. The ESP should focus on a qualitative outline of the range of tasks the EU wants to conduct. However, it is clear that if the EU-27 wants to be credible in its ambition, it must allow for effective participation of third countries in EU military operations and civilian missions. Thus, the ESP should encourage the European External Action Service (EEAS) to prioritise revisiting its formats of engagement with non-EU partners, and design individualised arrangements. The objective should be to move from a technical approach to one that is much more political, with a view to replicating NATO’s relative success in institutionalising partnerships. Should EU member states decide to preserve the EU Battlegroups (EUBGs), allowing European partner countries to participate in early stages of planning and on an equal footing, the EUBGs’ operational value could be significantly enhanced.

In the current context of highly divergent national capability levels and different levels of appreciation for an EU defence role, differentiated, multi-speed European defence cooperation is a sensible approach. Closer cooperation between a group of like-minded countries committed to coordinating defence planning and defence procurement ensures interoperability and strategic coherence that goes beyond purely regional clusters of cooperation.

## **SEIZING THE MOMENTUM**

The ESP must galvanise the current political momentum that has formed among a group of national defence ‘pioneers’ to propel Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) forward. It will be crucial to maintain the interest of member states, while at the same time giving institutions enough time to work out the detailed capability implications of an increased level of ambition. With this in mind, reviving ‘Permanent Structured Cooperation’ (PESCO) would likely take too much time to agree on participation criteria, jeopardising the current political drive. What is more, the format excludes non-EU members and thus precludes access to their capabilities. Furthermore, on the communications level, most member states still closely associate PESCO with its toxic history as a stillborn instance of European defence cooperation. The European Security Pledge should therefore instead consider using and building on NATO’s ‘Framework Nations Concept’. Firmly anchored in the spirit of EU-NATO cooperation, this would open up access to the capabilities of all European countries that strive to take responsibility for their own security.

With regard to the crucial objective of reforming the EU’s chain of command and planning capabilities, the European Security Pledge must not miss out on the opportunity to set up inclusive

structures. Instead of creating new institutional layers that risk duplicating NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), an EU Operation Headquarters (EU OHQ) must bring together existing arrangements like the EU's Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability and the EU Operations Centre. Furthermore, the consolidation of EU planning structures should again be guided by a spirit of European solidarity and leave open channels for third country participation. Thus, this initiative could also constitute an important element of enhanced EU-NATO cooperation, with both organisations able to plug in to planning arrangements and contribute according to their respective strengths.

## **CLARIFYING STRATEGIC AUTONOMY**

The ESP should reinforce the EU's previously stated ambitions on capability development and reiterate the need to invest in strategic enablers. The Security Pledge must also clarify the EU's ambitions on strategic autonomy with regard to capability development. One crucial element for achieving credibility to act independently over the long term is the Commission's security of supply agenda — designed with a view to retaining an independent European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). The ESP and the EDAP should coordinate their ambition to this end. A strong commitment to the European single market for defence in the ESP could empower the Commission in the future to enforce existing defence directives more forcefully.

Moreover, the Pledge should commit member states to deliver on developing financial incentives for cooperation in capability development. By investing at an early stage, the EU could reduce some of the risks that defence companies take when they embark on long-term projects, for example in the fields of autonomous systems, cyber defence, satellite technology research and maritime surveillance. In coordination with the EDAP, the Security Pledge should focus on ensuring the appropriate involvement of member states and industry in the process.



## 2. Vladimír Bilčík

*Head of the EU Programme . Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association*

Although the adoption of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in June 2016 seemed like a political non-event against the backdrop of the UK's decision to leave the European Union, current discussions about Europe's existential crisis have placed security and defence at the forefront of the EU's agenda.

### **A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH**

In recent weeks France and Germany have been revisiting concepts and ideas for European security and defence that date back to the 1990s. The Hungarian Prime Minister has equated the EU's defence ambitions with the need for tough protection of the Schengen zone borders. For the Czech Prime Minister, the creation of a common European army is needed in order to be able to stand up for Europe's common interests.

The Bratislava Declaration and roadmap adopted in September 2016 indicate the EU's agreement on measures for the external borders and internal safety and migration, as well as the collective call for more defence capabilities and the swift implementation of the joint EU-NATO declaration. In short, security and defence have received unprecedented political attention in the EU.

However, political talk of an 'EU army' is a double-edged sword. There is no unifying vision for a leap towards a greater EU role in security and defence. If pushed too far, the discourse of an EU army will backfire and lead to deeper divisions between larger and smaller member states, between richer and poorer countries or between governments looking warily to the East and those eyeing threats from the South.

At the same time, however, the rising public demand for greater protection of Europe does open a real window of opportunity for modest and tangible initiatives as a follow-up to the EUGS. So long as the Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) reflects realities across the whole of the EU, it could capitalise on the current momentum and it could be a first step towards a more resilient EU.

To complement the rhetoric with practical action, the SDIP should initiate a genuine assessment of the EU's available capabilities and a workable consensus on common tools, joint projects and additional capabilities. This has to be a bottom-up exercise that thoroughly examines detailed national preferences and the actual willingness of individual member states to pursue common EU security and defence.

## CONFIDENT, INCREMENTAL AND INCLUSIVE

Moreover, by focusing on the EU's capabilities, the SDIP could become a source of renewed confidence in the European political project's ability to deliver. The EUGS emphasises the need for strong institutional and democratic foundations in each of its member states, public order and safety in the Union's territory, as well as reliable European borders. Any ambition to protect citizens at home and to stop external crises from spilling over into Europe will only work with real capabilities and the readiness of EU member states to act together.

The SDIP should utilise the growing political consensus around EU security measures to push for concrete and credible defence initiatives. While an 'EU army' may be an interesting concept, it is not feasible. NATO remains the cornerstone of Europe's defence. The EU should foster new defence capabilities as long as they are interoperable with NATO requirements. The UK's impending departure from the EU means that some 80% of NATO's budgetary and military contributions will come from non-EU member states. If anything, this indicates the extent to which European defence faces an ever-widening capabilities gap.

To begin closing this gap, the EU needs an honest and complex audit of its existing defence potential – including operational and budgetary tools – to evaluate the actual usability of member state resources. The Union must also be realistic about an increasingly sovereignty-centric political mood in many member states, which focuses more and more on preserving the political *status quo* rather than leaping towards new levels of integration.

The SDIP must therefore present incremental, but discernible, improvements in common defence capabilities. Regional examples include achievable practical steps like the recently agreed-upon Czech and Slovak 'Common Sky' programme for joint air defence. In general terms, EU rules on defence procurement must follow the principle of non-discrimination and provide a level playing field for national defence industries. In order to produce capabilities rather than protect jobs, the EU needs to combine a broad definition of defence products with an emphasis on the principle of value for public money during acquisition. The SDIP must create ample space for both traditional defence demands and innovative enterprises and technology start-ups in fields like cyber defence.

The principle of inclusiveness must also guide any attempt to improve EU defence capabilities through Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). While PESCO is no longer taboo for most member states, any possible activation of PESCO in the name of EU defence should prioritise openness to others. In order to achieve both gradual progress and continued dialogue on capabilities, the SDIP could regularly assess its EU defence plans.

## CRISIS PREVENTION

In addition to multiple interpretations of the EU's defence needs, there are also competing internal interests when it comes to acting in the Union's neighbourhood. While the transformation of the EU's neighbourhood through enlargement and association agreements remains an important policy goal, its political limits have become increasingly clear in recent years. More importantly, recent conflicts in Libya, Syria and Ukraine all indicate the EU's constraints in crisis management and conflict resolution. Any solution to the crises beyond EU borders will continue to depend on other actors, such as NATO, individual member states and non-European international players.

In dealing with crises, the SDIP should therefore focus on devoting most resources to pre-emptive action to combat any further erosion of security in the European neighbourhood. To complement the primary focus on the secure democratic foundations of member states, Brussels must concentrate on stable and predictable relations with its neighbours. The EU should work towards truly comprehensive compacts with partner countries in Africa and the Middle East. New partnership agreements should aim to lower the risk of conflicts breaking out in the southern and south-eastern neighbourhoods, as well as minimise the negative spill-over effects from the neighbourhood into the Union.

The overarching motivation for the EU's recent engagement with its neighbours has been migration. However, managing the movement of people in the Union will remain a daunting task as long as partner countries in volatile regions lack the essential institutions and basic capabilities to uphold their own security. The EU should therefore invest more in the security of its neighbours and help bolster their defence structures and equipment. The transfer of skills makes sense only in places with solid structural and material foundations.

Many of the ambitions eventually detailed in the SDIP will inevitably be 'works in progress'. However, it is important to pitch the SDIP from the start as a sustainable exercise that takes into account specific political expectations for the EU's protective role, both within the Union and beyond its borders. Europe's defence needs visible results fairly quickly. It can only achieve them with most member states actively on board.



# 3. Sven Biscop & Jo Coelmont

*Director . Europe in the World Programme & Senior Associate Fellow  
Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations*

## FIRST THINGS FIRST: THE MILITARY LEVEL OF AMBITION

The Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) stands or falls on the identification of a realistic level of ambition. An unequivocal translation of the political level of ambition as expressed in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) is essential – this is a matter of credibility.

It is not necessary, however, to include figures. It is sufficient to mention the type and scale of the forces required for each kind of operation or mission of which the EU wants to be capable, for example an army corps. Putting forward a global figure, such as 60,000 or more (and it will be more), will immediately divert the discussion towards: (1) the maximum number of soldiers to be deployed without considering specific events; (2) comparing this figure to the numbers deployed on past Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations; and, eventually (3) the limits that EU member states presently encounter in sending troops abroad at short notice while dealing with the likes of terrorism, border control and NATO reaction forces.

Instead, the SDIP should provide for each and every specific task listed in the EUGS (to protect, to prevent, to intervene, etc.) and the corresponding type and scale of military units required (army corps, naval task force, carrier group, etc.). It should also stipulate that, in some instances (in view of the duration of an operation), there is a need to rotate troops. The availability of troops for rotation has to be taken into account. Furthermore, it should state the requirement to have ‘pre-identified reserve forces’ for each military operation. It is not the moment to leave when things go wrong on the ground – on the contrary. Finally, the SDIP should state that some of these operations and missions may concur and that the EU aims at strategic autonomy in implementing them.

All this will indeed end up in a ‘Headline Goal-Plus’. However, if presented as a clear table that gives an overview of the military level of ambition in the SDIP, one can hope that discussions will remain focused on the direct link between the political and military levels of ambition, and that bargaining about the upper limit on the number to be deployed can be avoided.

## CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

The military level of ambition will be the reference to identify the required capabilities. The process of acquiring those capabilities is first and foremost in the hands of member states. However, the EU institutions have a role to play as well.



It should be borne in mind that an ‘ambition’ refers to the future. Strategic autonomy must be achieved over time. The current state of affairs should not determine the military level of ambition. In this the EU Military Staff (EUMS) has an important role to play. Starting from the military level of ambition derived from the EUGS, the EUMS together with the European Defence Agency (EDA) could draw up a revised list of capability shortfalls and develop a roadmap to compensate for these shortfalls in a reasonable timeframe. This process has to start as soon as possible.

Strategic autonomy does not mean that one does not need partners, particularly NATO. The specifics of each crisis at hand will make clear the appropriate actor (the EU, the UN, NATO, country, *ad hoc* coalition) to take the lead in crisis management. Once governments have made that choice, partners can be approached. From a military point of view, partners are always crucial – even if you have a sufficient degree of autonomy to conduct the operation alone.

In order for the EU and its member states not to lose their partners and allies – in particular the US and NATO – it has to swiftly develop the required military capabilities to support the EUGS. Strategic communication on this direct link between gaining capabilities and retaining allies is of the utmost importance.

## INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

What is not on the agenda is the military chain of command within the EU. This is well described in the Lisbon Treaty, in particular with regard to the role of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the the EUMC Chairman’s access to the High Representative/Vice-President. The role of the EUMS is clear too. The EUGS does not introduce any changes into this command and control (C2) structure. There is therefore no need to worry about the military losing influence when decisions on operations are taken. Of course, ensuring participation by and input from the EUMC and EUMS in any new structures is essential.

What is on the agenda, however, is the political-strategic level: a new structure within existing structures. The SDIP could include an entity that, in response to a potential or current crisis, identifies the desired political outcome and subsequently develops a roadmap to reach the specific objectives (political, military, humanitarian, economic, etc.). The key is for such an entity to be able to undertake permanent contingency planning – even before a political mandate is given – in order to translate situational awareness into policy options as early as possible. This is crucial to allow the EU to anticipate and to prevent, rather than to simply respond to, crises. Furthermore, this layer of decision-making would be accessible to actors involved in CSDP operations and missions.

At the operational-strategic level, an Operation Headquarters (OHQ) is required. That is a strategic capability in its own right, and one that comes at a very low cost. A permanent OHQ would be able to provide all kinds of operational planning at all times – including prudent planning – and, furthermore, would ensure the conduct of all ongoing civilian, civilian-military, and military CSDP operations and missions.

Developing such an OHQ will require member states to provide additional personnel. However, this will not take place overnight but will be a process that needs to be conducted in dialogue with existing OHQs, aiming at more efficiency overall. Ultimately, the point is to develop new ways of working and to restructure existing HQs at different levels, including the five OHQs currently offered by member states. Consequently, the need for additional military planners from the member states will most likely be minimal. An EU OHQ must live up to the military level of ambition, and not the other way around. The current structure within the EU is not fit for purpose. Without an OHQ, preventive action especially is simply impossible.

It is important, finally, to note that Force Headquarters (FHQ) are not on the EU agenda. It is up to the member states to provide the FHQ. Fortunately, a series of very multinational FHQs exist. These FHQs are not fit to become the EU OHQ at the strategic level. However, FHQ personnel can certainly contribute to the establishment of an EU OHQ.

*Special recognition should go to Jo Coelmont for serving as the principal author of this piece.*



## 4. Olivier de France

*Research Director . Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques*

On 28 August 1954, French novelist Romain Gary – the then spokesperson for the French diplomatic corps – took to the UN press pulpit to advocate the creation of a European defence community, with a common budget and joint equipment programmes. On 30 August, the French Parliament opposed a veto that effectively killed off the project. Gary promptly appeared before the press again to announce that a European defence community would not materialise, because it was contrary to his country's interests. The following days saw him succumb to a crippling bout of schizophrenia, which nearly ended his diplomatic career. Although he recovered to become Goncourt laureate and a late pillar of Hollywood society, the irony of this episode will no doubt strike a chord with most, over half a century later.

For all of Europe's political achievements over the past sixty years, there is one step that seems to invariably elude it: identifying what it wants to do in the field of security and defence, and then actually doing it. It has come close to crossing the Rubicon upon a number of occasions – most recently in December 2013, when it identified what it wanted to do, drummed up the requisite political mandate, but then never completely got round to acting on it. A burst of optimism at the beginning of the previous decade similarly led to a useful few years of EU peacekeeping operations, but never reached the lofty heights that France and the UK had set their sights on at the Saint-Malo summit in 1998.

### **BEATING THE ROMAIN GARY SYNDROME**

Today, security is squarely back on the Brussels agenda, in a way it probably has not been since the Balkan wars. Brexit has raised political stakes to unprecedented levels, so that EU successes in security are likely to be scrutinised as much as its mishaps are magnified. But time is not playing into Europe's hands. If 2017 starts with France and Germany caught up in election campaigns and the rest of the Union in disarray, there is little chance of anything happening over the coming year. This in turn will make it proportionally harder for anything to happen further down the road, mainly because of a growing lack of credibility.

The best outcome would be for a palpable political mandate to emerge – one that can be taken up by national administrations at the technical level – which sets out some hard-nosed short-term deliveries (end of 2016), mid-term deliverables (2018), and the longer-term blueprint (2021-

2027). It must look like an organised response to Europe's security woes, rather than a haphazard inventory of initiatives by the Commission, the Council, and member states. In short, it should be the EU's security plan.

### THE X FACTOR

As European leaders have by now near-unanimously acknowledged, Europeans are faced with risks and threats that know few national or regional borders – because what happens in central Munich, for example, links back to what happens in Aleppo. However, they have failed to acknowledge that tackling these challenges requires a common intelligence of situations, and a sense of their own divergences in terms of threat perception, risk assessment and world views. The lack of such an in-depth exchange is detrimental to European strategic culture, strategic awareness and foresight – not to mention the fact that it is probably illegal under Article 222 of the Lisbon Treaty.

So it is essential that the debate occur among the 27 leaders – and 28 until the UK decides to leave – and not in smaller groups. This conversation needs to happen at least once a year, and should be ring-fenced as an extra session into every December summit agenda. Comparing yearly notes at 28 will increase ownership of the issue by European leaders, but action should be undertaken in smaller, committed groups, which are prepared to sign up to a detailed blueprint of objectives and constraints, and edict that their progress towards tangible targets should be monitored and verified in the interests of all.

### THE Y FACTOR

There is an unfortunate impediment to action here. The EU has unwedded the most critical pieces of the puzzle: political decisions and their consequences; ambition and follow-up; expectations and delivery; discourse and reality. Yet large-scale cooperation is impossible in security and defence without it being elbowed in from the outside. The highest-level political impulse is therefore irreplaceable, but the fallout from December 2013 shows it is probably also insufficient. So how does the EU ensure that political will trickles down into concrete action – and that political leaders do not sit back, let their national administrations deal with the follow-up, and blame Brussels when it gets bogged down?

There are different ways of encouraging ownership, monitoring and follow-up, which require neither treaty change nor excessive political capital, but a degree of commitment and creativity. Navigation in times of crisis would justify scheduling 'joint' Councils where meetings of ministers are held the day after European Councils (if necessary with a meeting of PSC/EUMC and/or

informal sessions held in-between/in parallel). There are no legal or logistical barriers to achieving this. Outside of crises, the yearly security-focused part of the December summit would endorse conclusions and task smaller groups to take up a problem at the level of ministers (defence, security, finance – jointly if necessary), during a follow-up defence review in spring. Overall, these efforts would help reconcile the rhythm of events with the rhythm of political decision-making.

In the field of security and defence, the EU can put to good use the wealth of pre-existing legal tools that it has at its disposal. But Brussels would be ill-advised to keep on interpreting problems through the lens of instruments and frameworks – the illusion that the world around it is going to adapt to EU tools and treaties has simply passed. Unending discussions about PESCO are irrelevant and counter-productive if there is no sense of what it entails, what it means or what it should achieve. It is a good instrument only if it works.

As soon as the EU starts doing what it has decided to do, the bucket list of feasible and necessary projects becomes common sense. The key building blocks should include increased transparency on planning, accounting and reporting (through a yearly defence review, facilitated by the EDA), access to significant financial incentives for binding and structural cooperation (the more cooperation there is, the more rewarding it becomes) to kick-start a virtuous circle, a common civilian-military HQ, common maritime surveillance and common air policing between countries who want to make progress.

## THE Z FACTOR

The EU should make the most of the current (no doubt short-lived) alignment of political, security and defence planets to sell its efforts under one bold and comprehensive package (with an identifiable, acronym-free name like ‘European security pact’) that addresses citizens’ concerns on security. It should be geared towards protecting Europeans – particularly those who have not benefited from the fruits of an open economy in the way the globalised elite has – by tackling threats, managing risks, and creating opportunities. As opposed to NATO, the EU is a political machine, and it should make the most of this advantage.

Being more strategic, more political, and not forgetting to show it: the X, Y and Z of European security are the three prerequisites to progress in the field, and the three antidotes to the Romain Gary syndrome. This is important not merely for the sanity of most EU observers (who will not all recover to become pillars of Hollywood society), but also because credibility is what now stands between the EU and political bankruptcy. Unless the EU starts doing what it says it wants to do, the rest is frankly immaterial.



## 5. Margriet Drent & Dick Zandee

*Senior Research Fellows . Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael)*

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) has laid down the general political level of ambition for foreign affairs, security and defence. As a follow-up, the High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) announced that a Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) can be expected by the end of 2016. To ensure that this Implementation Plan does not become a dead letter, each proposal should include a clear menu of deadlines, tasking those responsible for delivery and follow-on mechanisms. The core of the SDIP is agreeing on an actionable level of ambition. Following the EUGS text, this boils down to three core tasks for defence:

- Intervention in and stabilisation of external crises;
- Response to and protection of the EU (and its citizens) against threats; and
- Capacity-building of regional partners.

One of the most important components of the level of ambition articulated in the EUGS is that, if need be, the EU must be able to fulfil these tasks autonomously. As such, the EUGS has set the bar high for the EU's future capabilities, although it has simultaneously left the path towards achieving this ambiguous. This should be addressed as soon as possible so that work on incrementally achieving strategic autonomy can begin. The EU will prefer to work with partners, but if need be, it can also tackle defence and security tasks alone.

A SDIP should be pragmatic and should not lack ambition. This means that the EU should make better use of the tools and capabilities it already has, from Battlegroups to Treaty provisions, and start to make real operational contributions by bolstering under-staffed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations and responding to UN requests for bridging operations. At the same time, the current threat level signifies a redefinition of the tasks for CSDP as they are described in the Lisbon Treaty.

### **INTERVENTION AND STABILISATION**

The tasks of EU intervention and stabilisation should be adjusted to include modern requirements and the ability to conduct them alone. Arms proliferation, including heavy weapons, implies that EU member states' armed forces will have to be capable of engaging stronger opponents than before. European intervention or initial entry force capabilities should be able to escalate to the high end of the spectrum to stop the fighting and force armed groups to turn in their weaponry. Unfortunately, European countries are still lacking adequate forces and, more



particularly, key enablers like intelligence, strategic reconnaissance (ISR), air-to-air refuelling, precision munitions and medical evacuation.

Furthermore, special forces have to be expanded and full-scale training and exercises should also be conducted in a European context. Improved and adapted Battlegroups could be used either as an initial entry force at the battalion level, or as building blocks for a larger brigade-size intervention force. Proper strategic, operational and tactical planning and conduct capabilities are needed. This can be built on existing bodies – such as the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability and the EU Operations Centre – and would not entail the construction of a new large EU institution from scratch.

The long-term effort, based on the comprehensive approach of deploying all required civilian instruments in a coherent way with the military, will remain essential to transition from ending fighting towards stabilisation and normalisation.

## **PROTECTION OF THE EU AGAINST EXTERNAL THREATS**

The comprehensive approach has been developed for crisis management; now, it also has to apply to the protection of the EU's borders. This is not territorial defence in the classic sense, which will remain NATO's core business. However, there is certainly a complementary role for the EU to play: in areas such as hybrid threats, cybersecurity and vital civilian infrastructure, but also for CSDP in supporting resilience in EU member states and partner countries. At its southern borders, Europe is challenged by mass migration, terrorism and international crime. Here, the EU has to play the lead role in protecting European interests and securing European borders. Recent times have shown that, without military contributions, the EU is not capable of handling the problems at its borders. So, this requires a more structured approach to be incorporated into CSDP.

More than ever before, CSDP has to be connected to the EU's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) policies and to assist in managing European border security. Assets-wise, more priority should be given to smaller patrol vessels, surveillance equipment, border guards, border management capacity building (both for third countries and EU member states), maritime patrol aircraft and search and rescue equipment. Connectivity between all relevant data exchange systems also remains a key factor for more effective and timely responses to border security challenges.

## **CAPACITY-BUILDING ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

Training and assisting regional organisations and nations in capacity-building for security and crisis management is a priority. The current landscape of capacity-building is rather hazy, as

other organisations – such as NATO and the UN – and national programmes of Western countries do not always act in coordination with one another. Within the EU there is a lack of proper synchronisation between CSDP and Commission-funded activities. So, what is needed here is to avoid duplication, overlap and waste of resources between different EU actors. In addition, common policies on ‘train & equip’, in particular among individual countries, should be developed. Rules about the ‘what and how’ of equipping third parties with military materiel should be agreed upon and applied by all.

## CAPABILITIES AND COMMITMENT

A Petersberg Tasks-like agreement on the full range of CSDP tasks should be included in the SDIP. The tasks could then be elaborated in illustrative scenarios to be used for defining capability requirements and planning and development, for which the Capability Development Plan (CDP) will form the basis. A new Headline Goal exercise should be avoided. Central to designing capability requirements should be the effect that the EU seeks to achieve for the tasks defined.

Clusters of bilateral or regional defence cooperation have the best potential for deepening defence cooperation. However, clusters have to be connected in order to ensure that their efforts to maintain and improve defence capabilities contribute to the overall efforts to reduce European shortfalls. The EU and European Defence Agency (EDA) can fill this gap, using the EUGS and the SDIP as the context for change.

Member states should move from *ad hoc* multinational projects towards a systematic and structural alignment of their defence planning. What is needed is a formal accountability system. Based on agreed-upon criteria and benchmarks, member states would be annually assessed on their performance. Through the EDA, the HR/VP would act as the custodian of the data system and assess member states’ performance through annual ‘European capability improvement reports’. These reports could be discussed during a dedicated EDA ministerial steering board meeting.

The above ambitious capability and cooperation agenda is unlikely to be realised at EU-26. More than fifteen years of ESDP/CSDP have taught us that taking decisions based on unanimity results, per definition, in the lowest common denominator. To this end, PESCO could be the answer to break through the decade-long inertia on CSDP. The formation of a core group, through PESCO, should be both as inclusive as possible, and set the bar for participation high enough for real progress on correcting shortfalls and improving EU capabilities. PESCO would bring contractual certainty and could result in member states planning, procuring, pooling and investing together, thereby creating substantial synergies and economies of scale.



# 6. Bastian Giegerich

*Director . Defence and Military Analysis, International Institute for Strategic Studies*

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) refers to ‘full spectrum military capabilities across the land, air, space and maritime domains’ without providing any detail on what this might imply. In the discourse of a non-expert public, ‘full spectrum capabilities’ will be loosely translated as everything up to – and including – expeditionary high-intensity warfare. The EUGS does not clarify whether or not ‘full spectrum’ refers only to conventional capability, or whether it would include nuclear as well. The wording allows for the broadest of interpretations. Post-Brexit, France will come closest but would still fall short of this standard.

## FULL SPECTRUM IN AN EU CONTEXT

The Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP) should make sure that ‘full spectrum’ comes to mean two things in the EU context: first, the coordination of all available means in support of particular operations and missions. Full spectrum in this sense is much like comprehensiveness. In a more directly military context, full spectrum should be aligned with current military doctrine so that it actually means something to practitioners and specialists. This would imply being able to simultaneously provide offensive, defensive, crisis management and stabilisation and civil support capabilities.

Regarding current and future defence capability shortfalls, it is probably wise to acknowledge that the voluntary bottom-up process, which was at the core of capability development in the past, will inevitably produce only limited effects. At the same time, a mandatory top-down process will not be acceptable to member states, as military capability remains by and large a national prerogative. There are, however, three ways in which a soft top-down dimension can be instilled into EU-level capability development plans:

- Start with ‘Step Zero’ of defence planning by initiating a member state-driven assessment of the future character of armed conflict in order to develop and sustain a shared vision of what kind of capabilities will be required in 15+ years’ time. This can then inform capability decisions taken today.
- Continue to pursue pooling and sharing where its benefits can be measured and have only a moderate impact on national sovereignty. The European Air Transport Command (EATC) remains a good example to explain how cooperation can deliver increased performance at no extra cost. In the case of EATC, the primary mechanism is the exchange

of flight hours among participating states, which enables countries to better manage aircraft loads (i.e. fewer partial loads), avoid empty flights and give a wide range of options as to the most appropriate aircraft. These benefits can be measured, as can the savings generated for the participating member states.

- Invest in EU-owned or -leased assets. EU-level assets should focus on expensive enablers, in particular strategic intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); communications; and strategic transport. In some cases, these assets could be dual-use assets with civilian applications, possibly unlocking EU funding that is otherwise not available. The core purpose of these assets would be to help European forces to deploy, speak to each other, and understand the theatre of operations. Leasing assets might be an attractive option for stop-gap situations, in which governments need a few more years to close a recognised capability shortfall.

Overall, the EU level of ambition would be that of a ‘full spectrum’ security provider with a robust capacity for autonomous military action. The language of the EUGS does not allow for the EU to be a niche actor. Full spectrum – in the sense of comprehensiveness – remains the ambition where the true value-added of security and defence cooperation lies. Accepting a niche role would mean accepting that the vision of the EU as an international actor with global responsibility for peace and security has failed.

The three steps outlined above all aim to achieve something practical that will help Europeans to generate useful capability, understand the future character of conflict, achieve measurable economies of scale and efficiency gains through cooperation and leverage collective resources to rapidly plug recognised existing capability shortfalls. This agenda will benefit NATO as well: there is no credible, real-world scenario in which increasingly militarily capable EU member states are a problem for the Alliance. None of the three measures outlined above would redirect scarce resources away from NATO priorities.

## DEFENCE COOPERATION

The key incentives to encourage closer cooperation are money, guarantees about access to shared assets (combined with respect for national sovereignty) and scalability. Financial incentives should focus on two points: first, kick-starting cooperation through seed funding and, second, maintaining capabilities through cooperation. Seed funding can come in the form of research and development (R&D) grants, including feasibility studies, proof of concept or demonstrators and similar activities. This would reduce risk assumed by governments at the beginning of cooperative programmes and thus lower the entry barriers to cooperation. Given that the largest share of defence programme expenditure is usually not the acquisition itself

but the maintenance and operations cost over the lifespan of equipment, taking an ‘EU-stake’ in sharing those costs would be attractive. At the same time, too many financial incentives would prevent member states from having ‘financial skin in the game’ and would make them take cooperation less seriously. EU-level financial incentives should not displace national funding – for example in R&D or maintenance – but should rather complement them with the specific goal of sustaining capability through cooperation.

The ‘guaranteed access’ versus ‘sovereignty’ conundrum cannot be entirely avoided. However, past experience suggests that transferring operational control to multinational structures is possible, as long as contributing nations retain the possibility to veto the use of the assets they provide. Ironically, holding the veto card makes its use unlikely. German support during the Libya campaign under UN Security Council Resolution 1973 through the EATC – despite not formally contributing to the campaign – is a good example.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is unlikely to be a promising solution at this stage. The fundamental problem of finding the appropriate trade-off between inclusiveness and ambition has not been solved – and even the mechanism that would allow for that balance to be struck remains unclear. Such decisions remain easier outside of PESCO. Given that PESCO should only be activated if it can be successful, its time has not yet come.

## COMMUNICATING DEFENCE

While there is only limited comparative polling data available on this policy area, public support for closer European cooperation on defence matters seems to be significant, if not strong. Therefore, the communications strategy does not have to go out of its way to spend a lot of time on explaining the virtues of cooperation to citizens – they seem to understand them already. Efficiency, effectiveness and solidarity all play a part in citizens’ view of European defence cooperation. A few carefully selected success stories, crafted in accessible language, and a narrative underlining that European citizens’ intuition on the benefits of defence cooperation is indeed achievable, will help solidify positive public support.

Arguably the core audiences are decision-makers in member states, who have yet to grasp that ultimately cooperation will enable them to provide a core public good – security – underpinning their sovereignty. For example, on armaments cooperation it would be necessary to engage in an active dialogue with stakeholders in the requirements, procurement and industrial communities. This dialogue could begin with a simple question: can you name a significant international security problem that can be solved more efficiently with less cooperation?



# 7. Daniel Keohane

*Senior Researcher . Center for Security Studies, ETH Zürich*

Between the ambitious agenda set out in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) and the impending exit of the UK from the EU, drafting a ‘security and defence implementation plan’ is not easy. As shown during the British EU referendum campaign, there remains significant confusion over what EU defence policy is and is not – and not only in the UK. Catch-all phrases such as ‘European army’ can be easily misunderstood and do not reflect the reality of EU defence policy. The communication challenge therefore is considerable.

Part of the reason for this confusion is that EU defence policy is not a defence policy, let alone a plan to create an army under centralised control in Brussels. The EU is also not an inter-governmental military alliance like NATO that defends territory from attack by external states. Instead, what is commonly called ‘EU defence policy’ is the military component of EU security policies.

## THE INTERNAL-EXTERNAL CHALLENGE

Until recently, all EU military efforts were focused on international security beyond the EU’s borders, and were carried out through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) framework, housed within the EU’s foreign policy structures. This is changing slightly, due to the migrant crisis and the threat from terrorism, which are simultaneously an internal and external security challenge.

EU governments, for instance, have sent military ships to the central Mediterranean to conduct search-and-rescue operations (coordinated via the EU’s internal security framework), alongside an anti-people smuggling mission (carried out via the CSDP framework). In this light, it is more accurate to refer to EU ‘military policy’ or ‘military cooperation’ than EU ‘defence policy’.

NATO will remain the collective defence bedrock for most EU member states for the foreseeable future, in the face of Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. But the transatlantic Alliance cannot be everywhere, and Europeans increasingly have to cope with some security challenges by themselves, without help from the United States. Acting through the EU, therefore, is an important strategic option for EU member states.

It is also important to communicate that national governments are in charge of EU military policies, and that they are voluntary. Armed forces will remain national, and EU governments decide their own defence budgets, whether – and how – they cooperate with others, and whether or not they wish to participate in EU operations.



However, by encouraging and supporting member states' efforts to deepen cooperation and improve their military capabilities, not only do the member states benefit, but NATO and the UN would as well.

### THE INTEGRATED APPROACH

More clarity is also required to explain what the EU aspires to do and what it does in practice. The EU rightly takes an 'integrated approach' to conflicts and security crises. Compared with any other regional organisation, the Union has a unique ability to direct development spending alongside deploying civilian security personnel, as well as soldiers, to crisis zones. One such example is the EU's combined military and non-military efforts in and around Somalia.

In particular, three task-themes stand out in the EUGS, each with internal and external elements. First is *protection*. The EU is already conducting homeland security-style operations in the Mediterranean and demand for these may grow. But protection also applies to the so-called 'global commons', ensuring open access for global trade for instance.

Second is *crisis response*. The EU has proved it can be an effective actor in responding quickly to external crises when the will is there. Moving forth, there may be a military role for the EU in responding also to internal crises, such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters.

Third is *capacity-building*. The EU should try to bolster fragile states, a large number of which can be found across the EU's extended neighbourhood. The good news is that the EU already has some experience of helping third countries to become more resilient, particularly in training armed forces alongside law enforcement missions abroad. Capacity-building also has an internal component not only to help member states assess their resilience to internal security crises, but also to help them improve their military capabilities.

### CAPABILITIES AND USABILITY

To adequately carry out these tasks, the EU needs access to member state civilian and military resources. Thus, building on the European Defence Agency's annual defence data, at first it would be useful to conduct a 'usability audit' of not only what member states have on paper, but also what military resources are actually usable. This would be similar to the annual reports of the German Defence Ombudsman, and would help specify what the EU can do today.

Such an audit would also help identify where the greatest capability gaps are, and which types of capability-development cooperation are most needed. Granted, many of the gaps are already well known. But the effort to fill those gaps should be linked to the aim, as reiterated in the EUGS,

of 'strategic autonomy'. This concept should be defined as simply enabling the Union to act effectively when required.

Resource ambitions therefore should not focus on previous failed capability plans. On paper EU governments combined can deploy and sustain the 1999 Helsinki Headline Goal of 60,000 – but some 17 years later, this still cannot be accomplished without the help of others. And the almost ten-year-old Battlegroups rotation scheme should be scrapped, since they have never been used (keeping one on standby for 6 months can cost over €100 million). Rather, capability ambitions should focus on having adequate amounts of key enabling equipment, such as for logistics, mobility, intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR).

A usability audit would also help define a realistic level of operational ambition in the short term. The EU, as was hoped at the birth of CSDP, cannot currently carry out a robust air campaign of the scale of NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya.

To date, the largest autonomous EU military operation included under 4,000 deployed troops (to Chad in 2008-2009). Plus, national armed forces are currently committed to national, NATO, UN and *ad hoc* operations as well as EU ones. But the EU should currently be able to deploy up to a reasonable-sized peacekeeping force (circa 10,000), as the UN has done along the Israeli-Lebanese border since 2006, notably with Europeans making up the bulk of the peacekeepers over this period.

The prospect of the EU having to respond more robustly to external crises in the future cannot and should not be ruled out. But the EU would not be able to carry out such an operation autonomously until member states invest much more in enabling capabilities. There is a case therefore to aim for full-spectrum strategic autonomy by 2030 (with a concomitant defence industrial vision), while in the meantime ensuring that the EU can 'do a Lebanon if not a Libya'.

Finally, the EU should stress another comparative advantage: many of its non-military tools have military benefits. These include: applying single market rules to open up protected defence procurement; using some of its vast civil scientific research projects for military applications; and proposals for defence bonds and fiscal incentives for cooperation projects.



# 8. Alexander Mattelaer

*Assistant Director . Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) refers to ‘an appropriate level of ambition’ as a requirement for Europe’s ability to safeguard security within and beyond its borders. This term evokes far-reaching connotations, for it relates directly to Article 42(2) of the Lisbon Treaty: the progressive framing of a common defence, if and when the European Council unanimously so decides. If the EU indeed aims to protect Europe, then this will require much greater clarity over what the Union’s ‘level of ambition’ should actually be. Such an exercise in defence planning can only be undertaken with the sum of all European defence efforts as its referent.

## THE JARGON OF DEFENCE PLANNERS

‘Readiness’ is the latest buzzword in the European defence planning community. This concept blends three inter-related questions: which forces are ready, for what tasks and for when? EU member states maintain military units for a wide variety of tasks and at different readiness levels. Military tasks may relate to multinational operations, but also to national requirements. From a national perspective, armed forces constitute the foundation of the sovereign state. Their role is not just measured by their operational output, but also in terms of their deterrence value, their availability as back-up for domestic law enforcement and their function as an insurance mechanism against geostrategic shock.

Time adds a third dimension to the readiness matrix: some tasks require response times to be measured in minutes (e.g. air policing), while others can only be measured in weeks or months (e.g. the deployment of large formations). The development of new capabilities may take many years, while the time horizon for maintaining them will often extend many decades into the future. The combined set of forces of any defence establishment is intrinsically dynamic: human resources are constantly recruited, armouries need regular replenishment and training and resources determine readiness levels.

In this context, the notion of a level of ambition serves as a conceptual anchor point: what is the combined set of tasks that the armed forces are expected to undertake? Such a level of ambition serves as a defence planning benchmark, just as mission objectives guide operational planning. The planning of operations or the communication of deterrence messages can only relate to those forces that have a high readiness level. A level of ambition can be expressed in operational terms using quantitative and qualitative parameters: the ability to simultaneously conduct sev-

eral operations with specific parameters relating to time, geography and expected intensity. In this hypothetical realm, requirements for operations and deterrence missions blend into a single package. Similarly, the level of ambition can include more qualitative elements that are hard to systematically measure. The freedom of action that derives from an independent nuclear deterrent constitutes a case in point: it offers a conceptual shield against blackmail in the most unlikely circumstances.

### **PROTECTING EUROPE AND DEFENCE PLANNING**

The aspiration to define a European level of ambition reaches far beyond the present universe of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). If the political objective is to achieve a ‘gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles’, as the EUGS suggests, then the level of ambition for guiding these efforts cannot limit itself to a re-affirmation of the Helsinki Headline Goal or a similar expression of what member states wish to accomplish under an EU flag. Defence planning can only be logically coherent when encompassing the full range of tasks the armed forces are required to undertake over the complete time horizon of the capability development process.

A European level of ambition must therefore equal the sum of what member states individually expect their armed forces to achieve, independent of the institutional context in which they may operate. Any narrower conceptualisation of a European level of ambition implies that it only relates to some parameters of the defence planning matrix. Correspondingly, the potential for deep synchronisation would be severely reduced, as it would set an artificially low threshold and would continue the downward spiral of existing defence establishments.

What would such a combined European level of ambition look like? One conceptual response could be a ‘3+1’ force planning construct:

- ‘3’ – Europeans need to be ready to conduct several, mostly smaller, operations simultaneously. For the sake of simplicity, we can quantify this as at least three joint force packages and supporting enablers. As these force packages can be land-, air- or maritime-centric, the combined force pool must be multidimensional and as broad as possible.
- ‘+1’ – Europeans must prepare to undertake one major, troop-intensive, stabilisation operation autonomously. Both internal and external security contingencies may require large numbers of combat forces that no external actor may want to provide.

Given Europe’s geography, the nature of threats and the relationship that most EU member states maintain with the US, a number of planning considerations emerge naturally from the

combined expectations member states have when it comes to defence. The composition of the force pool is a critical concern, and the trade-off between costs and readiness poses an acute challenge. A balanced force pool must therefore strike an equilibrium between having sufficient forces ready for the near term while being able to adapt to long-term requirements. Similarly, another balance must be struck between so-called enablers and platforms. Despite the longstanding focus on the development of European enablers, new shortfalls are emerging with regard to platform numbers and firepower itself.

## RE-CONCEPTUALISING DEFENCE COMPETENCES

A level of ambition along the lines detailed above would meet one other important and widely shared political objective: that Europeans assume greater responsibility for their own security and contribute to a transatlantic relationship in which security burdens are shared more equitably. This raises important questions about the institutional arrangements that structure European defence. A strong European commitment to meet approximately half of NATO's level of ambition would send out an important political signal. In such a wider framework, the EU and NATO play interlocking and mutually supporting roles.

The European dimension of defence planning begins with industrial aspects and setting appropriate financial incentives. Both the European Commission and the European Defence Agency have a role to play in regulating a level playing field in defence markets and stimulating collaborative defence research and development (R&D). In addition, budgetary supervision under a sort of European 'annual coordinated review' on defence could provide an impetus to European defence cooperation rather than perpetuate defence austerity.

At the same time, the EU has a leading role to play in several types of operational scenarios, for instance relating to the extended southern neighbourhood or in meeting so-called hybrid challenges. At the higher end of the task spectrum, NATO remains the primary framework for deterrence, collective defence and operations of the highest intensity. To sustain the transatlantic partnership, Europeans have to plan to step up to the plate. Only a level of ambition that recognises these different dimensions can aspire to achieve the desired synchronisation of European defence efforts.



# 9. Christian Mölling

*Senior Resident Fellow . The German Marshall Fund of the United States*

The EU has put itself under enormous pressure to generate, by the end of the year, palpable deliverables through the Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP). The only way to offer encouraging results and thus maintain a constructive role for the EU in defence is to opt for some quick fixes and outline a convincing long-term plan.

The EU Global Strategy (EUGS) contains rich language on defence. But the EU is chronically short of capabilities that would allow deeds to follow words. Yet, in defence policy, capabilities are of prime importance. Policy objectives and the will to deploy forces are volatile – and sometimes change overnight – but having available capabilities takes years, sometimes even decades. Today's spectrum of political choices involving military means is defined by decisions from long ago. The ability to act has to be generated further in advance, especially when these choices depend on multinational capabilities.

Our allies and adversaries know this: any proclaimed EU ambition that is not backed up by capabilities amounts to a bluff that might be called at any moment. This adds to the impression that the EU continues to simply create 'Potemkin military villages'. Therefore, capabilities take precedence over political aims. This will come to the fore immediately after the issuance of the SDIP through a simple question: how fragmented is EU defence?

The dilemma for the SDIP is generating something that makes a difference in EU defence virtually overnight, with the constant of EU member state capability commitments – which, up to now, hold relevant capabilities. This dilemma can be managed either through one of two means. First would be providing a quick fix by relabelling and reorganising existing activities and capabilities, or second would be outlining a systematic approach to security and defence that allows for future integration of ideas and commitments that the member states and the Commission are only just beginning to consider.

## **GENERATE AND NATO-ISE EUROPEAN COMBAT BRIGADES**

The EU can send an important signal, and it can also support capabilities through defence cooperation, contribute to EU-NATO cooperation and give a political and military rationale to the idea of an EU Operation Headquarters (OHQ). This can be achieved through four interrelated steps:



- transfer NATO's Framework Nations Concept (FNC) into the EU;
- apply FNC principles to the EU Battlegroups (EUBGs);
- turn the EUBGs into a European Combat Brigade (a sort of 'EU Very High Readiness Joint Task Force', or EU VJTF) by increasing their size and capabilities; then
- earmark this EU VJTF for operations (in the east) in support of the EU assistance clause (Article 42(7) TEU).

The EUBGs have run out of political steam and military relevance, as they are too small to be useful in any foreseeable crisis. In contrast, the FNC has received political support from numerous European governments. It provides a more tangible and realistic answer to the demands of European defence. The FNC's core idea is to build clusters of smaller and bigger member states that generate, in coordination, key capabilities for their own cluster on a long-term basis. This principle is scalable from individual projects up to larger formations. The FNC is a renewed approach to transatlantic burden-sharing through European defence cooperation.

These reasons invite the EU to 'copy-paste' the FNC principles into its capability generation efforts. Most EU member states are members of NATO and they have thus approved the FNC, and the EUBG concept also rests on similar principles. Applying the FNC to the EUBGs would also allow for long-term cooperation of the units currently operating on a six-month rotational basis. Synchronising the EUBGs and FNC on the conceptual, doctrinal, and procedural levels would offer a transmission belt between the EU and NATO, and it would allow Finland and Sweden into the loop of NATO developments below the threshold of membership.

Turning the EUBGs into an EU-VJTF type of European Combat Brigade, able to contribute to all European defence tasks, could make the EU more relevant in defence. At the very least, this would turn the EUBGs into a brigade-size force with a greater range of capabilities, while maintaining its rapid response elements. This EU VJTF could be earmarked for operations in the east and south in support of the EU's mutual assistance clause – either jointly with NATO or independently. This would offer a range of potential deployments from crisis management up to deterrence relevant to both eastern and southern EU and NATO members.

Such tasking would immediately provide a political and military rationale for an EU OHQ, as such a capability would need access to planning and operational command and control (C2) capabilities. Such an EU C2 structure would need to be linked up with NATO's C2 structures. This would spur on the EU and NATO's work on third-party participation in high-intensity operations. Here the EU can offer the needed institutional arrangements and stability, as well as the plug-in for civilian capabilities. The decision to use these capabilities will, however, remain the sovereign decision of the member states.

## A 'LONG-TERM VISION 2040'

The EU requires a 'Long-term Vision 2040' process that can deal with the immediate challenges after the SDIP: first, to combine the different strands of work on defence capabilities, industry and the security-defence nexus (e.g. resilience, counter-terrorism, etc.); and, second, to fuse short- and long-term developments in order to provide a convincing outline for a future systematic approach to EU security and defence. Such a vision should lead to a process and focus on outcomes.

As a process the Long-term Vision would allow the EU to align the perspectives, interests and expertise of all relevant players inside and outside the EU – especially the UK and the US. It could be organised through work strands that allow private actors (civil society, defence industry, etc.) the opportunity to express their perspectives and shape the outcome. As an outcome, the Vision could offer insights into current and future capability needs, and explain how short- and long-term developments should be aligned.

Security and defence require a long-term vision: it takes years to produce capabilities and even decades to design new equipment. During this time, the strategic context changes. Quick fixes and mistakes in the early stages of strategic planning regularly backfire and undermine political legitimacy, as well as the effectiveness of European defence efforts. Decision-makers have a responsibility *vis-à-vis* the public and taxpayers. Thus, they have to mitigate the long-term risks that inevitably come with short-term policy initiatives like the SDIP. Strategic planning and vision are needed and should be based on both clear political guidance and a well-founded, deep and comprehensive reflection.

A new Vision would not be a new idea: in 2006 the European Defence Agency developed a long-term vision for capability needs, the processes and themes of which a Long-term Vision 2040 could build on. It also provides a rationale, as the 2006 vision also came at a decisive moment in European security and defence policies. Today, Europe is again at a turning point. Security is a priority and the willingness to do more on defence is gathering momentum. The EU should channel this potential to generate the most effective and efficient outcome for Europe.



# 10. Vivien Pertusot

*Head . Brussels Office, Institut français des relations internationales*

Defence cooperation is not a natural choice. Defence is a sovereign domain where pooling and sharing are viewed with suspicion, yet the past ten years have forced defence actors to adjust their views. Budgets have shrunk while capabilities have become ever more expensive to procure and maintain. It is against this background that the magical formula ‘defence cooperation’ has resurfaced. The rationale is straightforward: when faced with limited resources and numerous security challenges, pooling and sharing existing capabilities or jointly procuring new ones could offer some breathing space. Defence cooperation is re-emerging as a necessity. Initiatives have been numerous within the EU and NATO, outside multilateral institutions in ‘minilateral’ formats (such as NORDEFECO) and bilaterally (such as the far-reaching German-Dutch cooperation). By and large, many have embraced defence cooperation, although the output level is not as ambitious as might be hoped, especially at the European level.

Raising the output level is no easy feat. Many studies and political speeches typically emphasise the financial advantages of further cooperation, yet the primary incentive for cooperation has more to do with maintaining or acquiring capabilities. Those two positions are not mutually exclusive, but they underline the fact that defence cooperation has, nonetheless, established itself as a norm. The recent and modest uptick in defence budgets might weaken this development, but only to a limited extent. The question today is: what more can be done to promote the virtues of cooperation, and to what ends?

## HELP YOURSELF FIRST

Defence cooperation cannot be a substitute for robust national efforts. Cooperation is a shared interest only if all participants can contribute to the goal. It may be a tautology to start off with that argument, but it seems strangely absent from debates, which focus on mechanisms and instruments first. No mechanism, as good as it may be, can replace national efforts.

This means that European countries should devote adequate resources to sustain sufficient defence spending and ensure that their budgets are put to good use. One idea that has been mooted is to have a ‘European defence semester’, also known as the ‘annual coordinated review’. This proposal has gained momentum thanks to recent Franco-German support. It could be voluntary, boost transparency and help coordinate capability development. Harmonising defence planning and capability development across the EU can only be a long-term objective, but regular monitor-

ing and a European-level analysis on how member states spend their money on defence – without making specific recommendations – could be useful. If carried out by the EDA and endorsed by the Council, it would increase the profile of defence as an EU priority and would demonstrate its importance to all Europeans. A European defence semester could help both national and European leaders communicate that defence spending strengthens the European bond. Publicising how member states spend could also have a longer term effect: no one wants to be the black sheep in the room. This endeavour can first be voluntary, with France and Germany leading by example.

### **HELP OTHERS TO HELP YOURSELF**

Another tautology worth expanding on is that cooperation is only valued if it benefits member states. Defence cooperation should be analysed in two ways. Member states can either reap direct benefits, or cooperation could indirectly strengthen member states by collectively helping Europe.

In the first instance, a member state wants to keep existing capabilities or procure equipment. This state may cooperate with one or more countries to achieve its given objectives, as the Dutch and the Belgian navies have done for years – as well as France and the UK, Germany and the Netherlands and Nordic countries through NORDEFECO. The benefits are direct if not always immediate.

In the second instance, member states may decide to launch an EU initiative, which would help them collectively to better tackle security challenges. The project to create an Operation Headquarters (OHQ) follows this logic, as it could accelerate the EU's capacity to react to crises. The collective decision in 1980 to provide NATO with its Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) is evidence that this rationale can also lead to capabilities. Such projects do not directly benefit national armed forces, but upgrade the collective security of all the members of the group.

When defence budgets are constrained, the first rationale may prevail. Member states may indeed be more supportive of initiatives where they reap direct benefits from defence cooperation, especially because they wield greater control over the capabilities. The AWACS programme was partly possible because it is managed by a dedicated NATO agency, not by a supranational entity. The EU is less prone to follow the NATO template, which may therefore make matters quite thorny for EU-owned capabilities.

There may be a role for the EU to facilitate cooperation on less sensitive matters, such as education and training, and assist participating member states in achieving efficiency in their multinational cooperation programmes, as the European Defence Agency (EDA) has strived to do in the air-to-air refuelling programme. Other options could be to use existing provisions in the treaty.

However, it is essential to manage expectations. Despite its many supporters, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) has never been used, in great part because it gives EU institutions, namely the EDA, a monitoring role, which may not be welcome for sensitive programmes. However, more modest proposals could bear fruit. The Franco-German proposal for a logistics hub is a step in the right direction. Other capability hubs could be envisaged for in-service support of expensive capabilities. There could be clubs of A400M and F-35 users in Europe. Hubs under the auspices of PESCO could offer an appealing option.

Financial incentives could also facilitate cooperation among European countries. The EU has been pushing for a VAT exemption for programmes run by the EDA. As this initiative is barely one year old, it is too early to gauge its attractiveness. It may prove appealing to countries which do not have other means to manage multinational defence programmes. Members of the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR) may be less forthcoming, as the example of the remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS) programme illustrates, as participants chose OCCAR over the EDA to act as the managing agency for the Franco-German-Italian-Spanish definition study. For the time being, it is likely that member states will continue the same trend of cooperating in smaller, more flexible, groups outside existing organisations.

EU institutions need to appear more useful in the eyes of member states. European countries know the virtues of 'defence cooperation when necessary', but a certain reluctance remains with respect to the EU's end game. The EU remains too shy to laud cooperation efforts conducted outside its realm. Without realising it, it is implicitly critical of such efforts, but the alternative that it proposes has not garnered extensive support. The EDA could develop a platform for participating member states to share lessons learned from other clusters' cooperation programmes. This is not headline-grabbing, but could be useful for the EDA to gather information on how to be more attractive to countries and show participating member states that it is open to helping those interested in replicating initiatives carried out elsewhere in Europe.



# 11. Marcin Terlikowski

*Head . European Security and Defence Economics Project, Polish Institute of International Affairs*

For the first time, chances are that the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) implementation process will produce concrete actions to address the most fundamental issues which have long prevented the emergence of a robust EU defence policy. A paradigm shift, however, will be possible only if EU institutions and member states follow two baseline assumptions: that Europe needs to both protect and defend its citizens from a complete spectrum of military, asymmetric and non-military threats, and that a stronger European defence is prerequisite to reinvigorated transatlantic links and the viability of NATO. The political framework which has defined the EU approach to defence to date is based on an entirely different concept: the EU seeking maximum autonomy from NATO. The result has been the Union's focus on asymmetric and non-military threats, followed by the under-developed military dimension of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) – in terms of operations and capabilities – next to its civilian dimension.

The failure of this approach is now evident: over the last three years, overlapping and fast-evolving threats have demonstrated the irrelevance of the EU in security and defence. Between the EU's inertia, and the growing transatlantic rift over fair burden sharing, these threats pose an existential danger to Europe and, therefore, make it necessary to redefine the political philosophy behind European defence integration efforts. Such a paradigm shift requires an inclusive understanding of threats to which the EU wants to respond, and coherence with NATO. These two notions should act as the baseline for the definition of the European level of ambition in defence.

## **A BALANCED MIX OF CAPABILITIES**

In practice, this requires acknowledging that the protection and defence of Europe means contributing to effective deterrence and defence of EU member states against threats posed by state actors, namely Russia. No longer can European defence remain sectoral, focusing only on peace and stabilisation operations, civilian security assistance and capacity building in the EU's neighbourhood. Since NATO remains – politically and legally – the Euro-Atlantic pillar of defence, the European defence project should aim to reinforce NATO responsibilities of collective defence and deterrence by focusing more on capabilities. Europe could also use these capabilities to act autonomously on asymmetric and non-military threats.

Consequently, the European level of ambition should include a balanced mix of capabilities which would simultaneously constitute a credible contribution to NATO deterrence towards



Russia, and allow Europe to effectively – and autonomously – intervene in the European neighbourhood. This translates into reducing dependencies on US enablers like strategic transport, stand-off weapons and intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR). An appropriate level of ambition also requires investment in capabilities able to overcome Russian anti-area/access denial (A2/AD) initiatives in Central and Eastern Europe.

In response to turmoil in its neighbourhood, the EU cannot rely only on diplomacy or its economic and normative power: it has to be able to engage in the full spectrum of operations and engage in lower-end missions regardless of US involvement. European strategic autonomy should be understood as freedom to choose the time, form, extent and goals of its engagement to stabilise its own neighbourhood. This would both help defend Europe from asymmetric and non-military threats originating in crisis-torn regions, and relieve transatlantic tensions over fair burden sharing.

### THE HYBRID CHALLENGE

Countering Russian A2/AD is about denying Russia the ability to coerce Europe into a given political choice by increasing the costs of a military option in a hypothetical crisis scenario. By employing its vast A2/AD potential, Russia can effectively deprive Europe of military responses to a crisis, and then use this advantage to force Europe into certain political and economic concessions. If the European defence project is to be relevant, it cannot ignore this threat. On a practical level, the quest to develop a balanced mix of capabilities – one that would both fortify NATO and give Europe greater strategic autonomy – requires that the capability targets of the NATO Defence Planning Process (on force goals) and the Capability Development Plan are mutually reinforcing. To this end, the EUGS implementation process should take advantage of the potential articulated in the EU-NATO joint declaration.

But the European defence project can contribute to European deterrence more directly than by merely aligning with NATO. Within the emerging domain of countering hybrid warfare and the defence-industrial side of capability development, the EU has every advantage over NATO to deliver concrete actions. The European defence project should take advantage of its civil-military approach – largely absent in NATO – to develop the EU toolbox deterring and countering hybrid threats, particularly those resting upon the use of criminal groups currently infiltrating EU borders, staging illegal activities in cyberspace or spreading disinformation. The newly established European Border and Coast Guard with assets that allow the EU to track border activities – potentially including a dedicated RPAS capability, which could be instrumental in this regard – could also play a role. Consequently, the non-military dimension of hybrid warfare can become an area in which European defence concretely moves towards direct

defence of EU member states. A debate on the operationalisation of Article 42(7) of the Lisbon Treaty in this context could also be initiated.

Finally, it is only within the EU that the industrial dimension of European defence can be addressed. The planned redistributive initiatives of the European Commission (i.e. the European Defence Action Plan and the possible future European Defence Research Programme) can provide an impetus to move European research and technology (R&T) and research and development (R&D) forward so that the transatlantic defence technological gap does not broaden, particularly given the US emphasis on defence innovation *vis-à-vis* its so-called Third Offset Strategy. The threat here is that, along with a wider technological gap, interoperability and – as a result – doctrinal and political problems may emerge. Reinforcing R&T and R&D in Europe is thereby one of the preconditions for stronger transatlantic links. What is more, the financial and fiscal incentives of the European Commission can also enable more transnational EU cooperation on capability development programmes so that European forces are more interoperable and effective.

## A NEW PHILOSOPHY

The current political momentum can potentially put Europe on the road to achieve all of these goals – yet the potential could also easily lead to only a symbolic advance. The latter is likely to happen if the EU concentrates on issues which have hijacked the debate on CSDP for too long, such as the Operation Headquarters (OHQ), reform of the Athena mechanism or broadening the Battlegroups concept. Of course a positive decision on these proposals would bring some further efficiency to the EU's actions in defence. They would not enable a quantum leap, however. The same is true of revisions to PESCO or any other cluster of cooperating states. While the willingness to re-conceive European defence as a political project, and shared threat perceptions and interoperability between armed forces can enable closer cooperation, PESCO or any other exclusive grouping may easily fail. Limiting the number of cooperating states is not enough to give European defence the stimulus it needs. What is needed to re-establish the European defence project is a new political philosophy.



# 12. Wolfgang Wosolobe

**Brigadier General, Advisor** . *Austrian Ministry of Defence, former Director General of the EU Military Staff*

The implementation of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) is entering into a decisive phase where concrete steps have to be defined. From a military point of view, some overarching requirements should be respected throughout the process. Two of these requirements should be particularly highlighted because they are linked and interact with all strands of security-related action: *situational awareness* and *rapid response*.

## SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Situational awareness, highlighted in the EUGS through various angles, is indeed a prerequisite for a broad range of action. The need for an early and appropriate flow of information is not limited to crisis management. It is also indispensable for ‘capacity building’ and the ‘protection of Europe’, the other two major security-related tasks described by the EUGS. It is important to note here that the distinction between crisis management, capacity building and the protection of Europe is just one possible way to structure the broad array of actions aimed at strengthening the security of Europe and of Europeans. The three main tasks are interwoven and interdependent in many ways, as are the information requirements linked to them.

This is why situational awareness is an overarching and broad requirement. Existing tools are embedded in the European External Action Service (EEAS) and provide periodic – and sometimes *ad-hoc* – information from civilian and military sources alike. In both spheres, the availability and usability of information is entirely dependent on member state interest and a willingness to deliver. This proved to be roughly sufficient for the type, intensity and quantity of CSDP operations and actions the EU has conducted to date, provided there was at least a small group of member states prepared to deliver the bulk of necessary information.

The EUGS strongly indicates that an intensification of the EU’s security environment is likely and that there has to be a broad range of appropriate answers. Under these circumstances, there is an urgent need to enhance the situational awareness toolbox. It would be worthwhile to explore the links between situational awareness and strategic autonomy. So far the EUGS has discussed two main aspects of strategic autonomy: operational and industrial. Given that all strands, levels and phases of EU security-related action require early information, situational awareness is far more than just a sub-set of the requirements of operational strategic autonomy.

There is then a need for genuine autonomy of information, and the EU should exploit the large potential that exists to improve its situational awareness. With its delegations, operations and missions and all other forms of its presence abroad, the EU already has the basis to produce an invaluable compendium of knowledge – not just data and information – for medium- and long-term aims, as well as specific operational information for the short term. To maximise this potential, the security expertise of delegations has to be reinforced, and a systematic flow and processing of information has to be installed across all EU services beyond the EEAS. The resulting information should then be provided to the relevant decision-making bodies frequently, regularly and in a structured manner. Much of this could be implemented and produce tangible results, in the short and medium term.

In parallel, efforts to improve member states' preparedness to provide information should continue. The combination of more extensive information originating from the capitals and new, security-related information from the EU's own instruments could already provide a step-change in situational awareness. In the long term, the possibility of EU-owned technical instruments could be explored.

Even if politically complex and financially demanding, an additional pillar of information from the EU could vigorously improve the EU's strategic information autonomy. One particular area of focus would be the full utilisation of existing space assets to lead to the definition of additional requirements for the long term. In the Security and Defence Implementation Plan (SDIP), a programme for improvement of situational awareness should be established, recognising it as an overarching enabler for the full set of security-related action: policy, strategy, diplomatic action, missions and operations.

## **RAPID RESPONSE**

Situational awareness is not only a prerequisite for rapid reaction initial assessment and planning, but also for the evaluation of the expected outcome, impact and lateral effects of rapid response. Rapid response is a mode of action which can never stand alone. Like actions undertaken at normal speed, rapid response has to be embedded in the full set of comprehensive instruments. Planning has to take into account its broad medium- and long-term effects. These effects reach far beyond the immediate impact, and are crucial when action is intended to be transformed into long-term activity. All these facets of analysis and planning require the fullest possible situational awareness picture.

When discussing rapid response, the EUGS tends towards improved political and financial conditions for the deployment of the EU Battlegroups (EUBGs). The focus on EUBGs is useful and understandable, but it carries the risk of overlooking the broader aspects of rapid response. In

many ways, rapid response is much more than just Battlegroups: in the field of military rapid response, aspects of jointness, strategic reserves, follow-on forces, modularity and flexibility need to be taken into account.

Much progress has already been made on the above aspects and this work should continue to find its way into the EUGS implementation process. This will be complex because it has to take into account that a vast majority of EU member states are also NATO members and therefore have obligations under the rapid response mechanisms of the Alliance. One can therefore doubt that there is appetite for more 'rosterisation' of national military forces. Even if the EUGS does not quantify the need for military rapid response beyond mentioning the Battlegroups, it can be deduced from the strategy that the call for rapid action – and not only reaction – will grow. It will be necessary not only to ensure compatibility with NATO's rapid response, but also to take into account the frequent calls for the EU to support UN rapid reaction.

All of this leads to the need to define a set of modular forces which provides higher readiness and immediate interoperability. The level of ambition will have to take this into account from the outset. As the definition of the level of ambition is likely to start with a qualitative, rather than quantitative, description of missions, rapid response requirements should be included from the outset. Military rapid response is, as described, a function of available forces and appropriate situational awareness.

Moreover, and importantly so, each requirement of military rapid response should be cross-examined with the available command and control (C2) capacities and the speed of political decision-making processes. The added value of a more flexible and modular set of military forces available to rapid response will remain limited if it is not accompanied by sufficiently robust C2 and solid mechanisms for political decision-making.

Rapid response is more than just military action. This is particularly true for the EU, given, as frequently reiterated in the EUGS, its aspiration towards a genuine comprehensive approach. Therefore the implementation plan should, beyond a consideration of military rapid response, enquire more deeply how rapid response should be embedded in a broad set of non-military instruments.

*The views in this memo do not necessarily reflect the positions of the European Union or the Austrian Ministry of Defence and Sport.*



## ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	anti-access/area denial
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
C2	Command and control
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EATC	European Air Transport Command
EDA	European Defence Agency
EDAP	European Defence Action Plan
EDTIB	European Defence Technological and Industrial Base
EEAS	European External Action Service
ESP	European Security Pledge
EUBGs	EU Battlegroups
EUGS	EU Global Strategy
EUMC	EU Military Committee
EUMS	EU Military Staff
FHQ	Force Headquarters
FNC	Framework Nations Concept
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NORDEFCO	Nordic Defence Cooperation
OCCAR	Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation ( <i>Organisation conjointe de coopération en matière d'armement</i> )
OHQ	Operation Headquarters
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PSC	Political and Security Committee
R&D	Research and Development
R&T	Research and Technology



RPAS	Remotely piloted aircraft system
SDIP	Security and Defence Implementation Plan
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
UN	United Nations
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

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During the process of strategic reflection which led to the publication of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), a broad consensus rapidly consolidated around the need for a specific follow-up initiative on European security and defence. Events since June 2016, when the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) presented the EUGS to the European Council, have not only confirmed this strong conviction, but significantly heightened the sense of urgency underpinning it. The proliferation of security crises within and beyond the EU's borders, beginning with the gruesome series of terrorist attacks in Europe in the summer of 2016, the drama surrounding the UK's decision to leave the EU, and the consequent fear that the EU as such was in a state of existential crisis, led many to believe that security and defence could become a key arena for salvaging and perhaps relaunching the European project. It is with this hope and belief that the HR/VP decided to press the accelerator on the implementation of the EUGS, beginning with its security and defence components. In this context, the viewpoints collected in this book constitute a highly valuable contribution to the difficult work lying ahead of us.

*Nathalie Tocci*  
*Special Adviser to HR/VP Federica Mogherini*

