



**European
Movement
International**

Future of Europe The future of European defence



The terrorist attacks that have hit a number of European cities, the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, and an increasing number of cyberattacks are only some of the challenges the European Union is currently facing. These security threats, which do not stop at national borders, highlight the need for stronger European cooperation with regards to security and defence as foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty.

Defence cooperation in NATO and the EU

The European Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe stresses the need for the EU to be able to defend and protect itself in an increasingly tense world: "NATO will continue to provide security for most EU countries but Europe cannot be naïve and has to take care of its own security." The EU has been able to win many battles by making use of diplomacy but – as the White Paper states – "being a 'soft power' is no longer powerful enough when force can prevail over rules¹."



The European Movement International believes that the EU is the best platform to increase cooperation between Member States in relation to

security and defence. Facing new and complex threats in a changed geopolitical environment and coping with strained national budgets, the EU cannot rely on NATO alone to protect its citizens. With EU-NATO cooperation guided by and intensified through the EU-NATO Joint Declaration, the EU can simultaneously develop its defence capabilities to act where EU action is more appropriate.

“The EU is the best platform to increase cooperation between Member States in relation to security and defence.”

A common European defence policy

The European Movement supports the work that has already been done towards closer European defence cooperation, including the EU Global Strategy and Implementation Plan and the European Defence Action Plan. In order to reach a common European defence policy, special attention should be paid to the following issues:

Work for peace: A common European defence policy should above all be used to ensure peace on the European continent and in its neighbourhood, as well as to contribute to peace efforts across the world while defending human rights and promoting European values.

Gradual steps towards closer cooperation: Steps towards closer coop-



eration should build on the work that has already been completed following the adoption of the Global Strategy and Implementation Plan, such as the establishment of a military planning and conduct capability that will take charge of EU military training missions. Permanent Structured Cooperation as foreseen in article 46 TEU offers a functional venue for closer cooperation that can already be instigated by a small group of Member States who are willing to cooperate, and expanded with those that want to come on board later on. This process can eventually lead to a fully-fledged European Defence Union under parliamentary control. As a first step towards cooperation on the ground, the existing EU battlegroups could be deployed.

Define and defend common strategic interests: The EU's common strategic interests, as expressed in the EU Global Strategy, are a pervasive element of the EU's external policies and those of Member States. Building on this, a White Book on Security and Defence should concretise the EU's priorities in terms of capabilities. Furthermore, research and long-term strategic thinking should become a

¹ White Paper on the Future of Europe, European Commission, 1 March 2017, pages 8 and 9.

permanent feature of the work of the European External Action Service and the European Defence Agency, a task that could be aided by an independent research institution.

Intelligence sharing: increased and more structured intelligence sharing will help develop mutual understanding of common security threats and Europe's common strategic interests. Member States should make better use of institutions such as Europol and boost intelligence sharing and the exchange of national and EU security information.



European armed forces: closer European defence integration will also require a harmonisation of European armed forces, facilitating cooperation among military personnel under the umbrella of a European Defence Union. In this process, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of civilian and military personnel should be fully respected. Attention should also be paid to the social dimension of personnel working in the defence sec-

tor, including the right of association and common standards for living and working conditions in EU-led missions. Common training and education should also be pursued, which could eventually result in the creation of a European Military Academy.

European defence industry: closer cooperation in the areas of security and defence brings clear efficiency gains, estimated at €26.4 billion annually². The completion of the single market for defence and the new European Defence Fund for joint research and development will ensure a more efficient use of resources while increasing strategic competitiveness. When increasing the EU's capabilities through the European Defence Agency and the European Defence Fund, Member States should aim at achieving a highly skilled workforce.

Institutional embedding: closer cooperation in the area of defence should be coupled with a better institutional embedding, especially when the stage of a fully-fledged European Defence Union is reached. This should include a 'European Defence Semester' such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence proposed in the Global Strategy Implementation Plan; a Council format of Defence Ministers;

² The Cost of Non-Europe in Common Security and Defence Policy, European Parliamentary Research Service, December 2013, page 78.

fully-fledged Committee status for the Parliament subcommittee on Security and Defence, and parliamentary control on compliance with the rights of European military personnel.

In the challenging strategic environment the EU faces, closer defence cooperation can consolidate its global position and ensure its strategic interests. This should happen in full agreement with NATO and while pursuing an active dialogue with prospective EU members, as they also belong to the European security community. With a series of concrete Member State proposals on defence cooperation on the table, the European Commission Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence offers the chance to involve a wider audience in the debate. The ensuing debate should shape the way forward, building on the concrete developments already underway.

“Increased and more structured intelligence sharing will help develop mutual understanding of common security threats and Europe's common strategic interests.”



The European Movement

seeks to provide a platform to encourage and facilitate the active participation of citizens and stakeholders in the development of European solutions to our common challenges. We offer thought leadership on the issues that affect Europe and we give the opportunity to representatives from European associations, political parties, enterprises, trade unions, NGOs and other stakeholders, through our 39 National Councils and 34 International Associations, to work together, towards improving the way that Europe works.

European Movement International

www.europeanmovement.eu

Rue Marie-Thérèse 21

B-1000 Brussels

T +32 (0)2 508 30-88

secretariat@europeanmovement.eu

[@EMInternational](#)



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union