

## Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments 23–24 April 2018, Tallinn

### Background information

#### Session II: European security and defence

##### Changes in the field of security and defence

Security in and around Europe has been challenged during the past years. Ongoing conflicts around Europe and the emergence of terrorism on European soil have increased the awareness of security matters in Europe and among its citizens. [A Safe and Secure Europe](#) was also one of Estonia's main priorities for the EU Presidency. EU Security and Defence policy has seen a true change. Several initiatives, including the landmark decision to establish inclusive and ambitious defence cooperation – Permanent Structured Cooperation, and launching the European Defence Fund, which includes the European Defence Industrial Development Programme, will help to reinforce the defence capabilities of EU Member States. This will also benefit NATO, because new initiatives are being pursued to deepen EU-NATO cooperation in a complementary manner. Only by acting together can the EU become more efficient and stronger in ensuring security and stability in the region.

##### Permanent Structured Cooperation

A historic step was taken on 13 November 2017, when 23 EU Member States notified the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini about their intention for a closer cooperation between the EU Member States in the field of defence. [Permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\)](#) was established with a [Council Decision on 11 December 2017](#). The list of participants includes 25 EU Member States. PESCO is designed to bring more efficiency to EU defence through enhanced cooperation between Member States in the fields of investments, including defence spending, capability development and operational readiness. Military capacities developed through PESCO remain in the hands of the Member States.

The Member States participating in PESCO have made more binding commitments to one another. National implementation plans, regular assessments and evaluation processes have been established. PESCO is an outcome-oriented process that is driven forward by the Member States; it will bring added value through the implementation of diverse cooperation projects. On 6 March, the EU Ministers of Defence adopted a list of the first 17 cooperation projects and a Council Recommendation concerning an ambitious [roadmap for the implementation of PESCO](#) over the coming years. The next stocktaking is scheduled for June 2018.

##### European Defence Fund, European Defence Industrial Development Programme

[The European Defence Action Plan](#), adopted in November 2016, foresaw creating a [European Defence Fund \(EDF\)](#), which is to support collaborative research and capability development in the field of defence. A significant step was achieved in December 2017, when the Council agreed on its position for a regulation to create the [European Defence Industrial Development Programme \(EDIDP\)](#) to support the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the EU defence industry. The final decision with the EU Parliament and the Commission should be reached by May 2018, with a view of starting the implementation of projects in early 2019. The EDIDP will cover the period of 2019–2020.

##### Athena mechanism

[The Athena mechanism](#) has been put in place to finance the shared costs of the EU's military missions and operations. A review should take place every three years. Taking into account the momentum of

change in security and defence, an ambitious proposal was put forward by the Estonian Presidency in July 2017 to change some of the principles of common funding, especially with regards to [EU Battlegroups](#). These battlegroups have never been used and the idea was to eliminate the main problems to increase the likelihood of their deployment. The Council concluded most of the revision by December 2017, with work continuing during the first half of 2018.

### **Capacity Building in Security and Defence**

The [Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace](#) is one of the most flexible in the set of EU Financial Instruments for External Action. It is used to help third countries in crises. The European Commission made a proposal in June 2016 to change the mandate of this instrument by adding possibilities to combine development and security for building peace in third countries. The Estonian Presidency made a strong and successful effort to conclude the trilogues in 2017. We will now be able to financially assist military actors of our partner countries with non-lethal means, so that our partners would be able to fully benefit from the presence of EU missions. All EU financial instruments have a common end date: the end of the EU's current Multiannual Financial Framework. Currently, work is ongoing to set a new architecture for the EU Financial Instruments post-2020. The Commission will come up with a proposal in May 2018.

### **EU-NATO cooperation**

While strengthening the EU capacity to act on its own, it is also vital to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation. During 2016 and 2017, a total of 74 joint actions were agreed on in seven areas: countering hybrid threats, operational cooperation including maritime issues, cyber security and defence, defence capabilities, defence industry and research, exercises and defence, and security capacity building. Military mobility and the fight against terrorism are the newest fields of cooperation. Now the emphasis should be on the implementation of those projects. [The first progress report](#) was published in June 2017. In December 2017, the Council adopted [conclusions](#) on EU-NATO cooperation and the implementation of the [Joint Declaration](#). The next stocktaking is scheduled for June 2018.

In September 2017, a political and strategic cyber exercise – [EU Cybrid 2017](#) – was held in Tallinn during the EU Defence Ministers' meeting. It was historic in two ways: the first EU exercise held on a ministerial level and the first EU exercise in the presence of the NATO Secretary General. EU Cybrid 2017 demonstrated how seemingly technical issues can quickly become strategic and political. This exercise increased the overall readiness to address the cyber security issues and underlined the need for EU-NATO cooperation.

### **Cyber and hybrid threats**

General awareness of cyber and hybrid threats has increased significantly in recent years, which has advanced the fight against those threats. Two of the main recent breakthroughs have been the adoption of the cyber diplomacy toolbox, which provides the EU foreign policy with tools for responding, to large-scale cyber incidents, and the [cybersecurity package](#), presented by the European Commission, which states that while the EU Member States are in charge of their own cyber security, the EU encourages and supports their cooperation. Hybrid threats are still an issue where efforts must be made to raise general awareness in order to increase the resilience of our societies. Strategic Communication is one of the key issues to deal with hybrid threats and disinformation campaigns.

### **Some points for discussion:**

- 1) What measures should Europe take to better adapt to the new changed security environment and challenges?
- 2) Should the EU cooperate more in the field of security and defence?
- 3) How does the changing security situation affect European values?