

Remarks by the HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the press conference

Check against delivery!

Today in the College we had a very good and useful discussion on the European Union defence and security work.

This is a field that is top priority for European Union citizens. You see it every day, but you also see it in all opinion polls across the European Union territory, no matter what Member State, no matter what political orientation. European Union citizens put a high priority on the European Union's work on security and defence. There are high expectations from our citizens, strong political will, the EU Treaty offering the right and powerful instruments – not always and not yet fully used.

And so we had an initiative together with Vice-President [of the European Commission, Jyrki] Katainen and obviously with the strong steer by the President [of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker] to bring also the [European] Commission reflection on the future of the European Union on board of this work that is ongoing on the future – and the present – of the European Union security and defence.

It is not only a reflection on the future, but it is also a current work that is ongoing. Those of you who follow the work we do on defence on the other side of the street know that very well. And I will try to give you the broader picture and the general sense of direction and then leave to Jyrki [Katainen] the details on the reflection paper we will adopt on 7 June and the work we are doing on the European Defence Action Plan and the European Defence Fund.

The work in the European Union and across the institutions for the first time is moving fast and forward on security and defence. Just last week with the EU Defence Ministers we decided to establish the first Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) that will take over command of the EU training missions within the EU Military Staff – decision taken unanimously at 28.

We also agreed just last week to work on the governance of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO): one of the provisions of the treaties that was never put in place on security and defence, now identifying the projects that will be potential elements of a Permanent Structured Cooperation. We have decided with Ministers of Defence to remove the financial obstacles to the deployment of the EU Battlegroups – just to give you a sense of how fast and how substantially the work on defence is moving already now.

And this is why the paper we have discussed today on the future of the European Union defence does not take into consideration keeping the status quo or even doing less, but envisages different elements of a menu doing more and doing better together in the field of defence, because we see a clear

political will, a clear indication from our citizens that this is the way to go and this is exactly what we are already doing in our daily work.

Second point I would like to make is that this work is done in full coordination with NATO and I say this ahead of a special day tomorrow. It will be a special day for the EU institutions. We will be happy to host President [of the United States of America, Mr Donald] Trump, but also other presidents like the President [of France, Mr Emmanuel] Macron.

We have developed in the last six, seven months together with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg 42 different actions in 7 different fields where the European Union and NATO have started to cooperate concretely, operationally as we say when tackle military and defence issues, from maritime security to cyber security, to hybrid threats and the list continues.

The Secretary General and myself will report to our respective councils in a couple of weeks from now, jointly. This to highlight how the strengthening of the European Union work in defence in the present and in the future goes very strongly hand-in-hand with strengthening of NATO. For the European Union it is clear that a strong European Union in the field of security and defence makes NATO stronger and a strong NATO is key to European, but also to American security. I want to make this clear ahead of tomorrow that will also be an important day on this side of Brussels.

This simply because the work we can do through the European Union's means – and Jyrki will elaborate more on that – to support Member States in developing military capabilities will enable Member States to spend better by spending together and this is something that the European Union can support. Actually this is something that only the European Union can support here in Europe and so this is the way for a more efficient way of investing in defence and also in strengthening the development of capabilities in Europe.

Today we started here in the [European] Commission a very important, ambitious, pragmatic and realist reflection. I would say that this is the first time – correct me if I am wrong – that the Commission and the College take such a strong interest and such an active role in supporting the Member States' ambitions on defence and security, with future options to strengthen this ongoing work on European Union security and defence, including using all the instruments that the European Commission can mobilise – and again Jyrki will elaborate on this file. It is a good example of institutions working tougher, putting together all the instruments we have, including the financial ones.

Thank you.

Link to the video:

<https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I139221>

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[Commission debates future of European defence](#)

A stronger Europe when it comes to security and defence matters has been [a priority for the Juncker Commission](#) since it took office. President Juncker announced the creation of a European Defence Fund in his [2016 State of the Union address](#), saying: “Europe can no longer afford to piggy-back on the military might of others. (...) For European defence to be strong, the European defence industry needs to innovate.” With a worsening security situation in Europe’s neighbourhood and a [strong economic case](#) for greater cooperation on defence spending amongst EU countries, the Commission believes now is the time to make strides towards a Security and Defence Union.

High Representative Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: “Security and defence are priorities for the European Union because they are priorities for all our citizens. Since last year, we are stepping up our European defence to be more and more effective as a security provider within and beyond our borders, investing more resources, building cooperation among member states and taking forward a closer cooperation with NATO. The world is changing rapidly around us and we have to tackle new challenges every day: as the European Union, we have taken the responsibility to address these challenges.”

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki **Katainen** added: “Strengthening European security and defence requires using the available defence budgets more efficiently. Investment in defence capabilities remains in the hands of the Member States, and the EU budget cannot replace Member States’ on defence. However, there is an overwhelming economic and industrial case for greater cooperation, for example in defence research and procurement. As pressure on national budgets remains high, we need more efficient defence spending and a better use of defence capabilities.”

Today’s orientation debate will help guide the Commission’s work in the weeks to come. Ahead of the Prague high-level European conference on defence and security, on 7 June, the Commission will launch the European Defence Fund announced in the November 2016 [European Defence Action Plan](#). In parallel, it will present a longer-term reflection paper setting out possible scenarios for the future in the area of European defence. This forms part of the

discussion on the future of the EU at 27 launched with the Commission's [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#) on 1 March 2017.

There is a strong case for greater cooperation on security and defence in the EU. The threats that the EU faces do not respect national borders. Their scale is increasing. They are best tackled by working together.

A strong European defence requires a strong European defence industry. As Member States begin to increase their defence budgets, the EU can help them to spend these funds more efficiently. The lack of cooperation between Member States in the field of defence and security is estimated to cost annually between €25 billion and €100 billion. 80% of procurement and more than 90% of Research and Technology are run on a national basis. Up to 30% of annual defence expenditures could be saved through pooling of procurement (see [Factsheet](#) on the case for greater EU cooperation on security and defence).

Background

In his [political guidelines](#) in June 2014, European Commission President Juncker stated *"I believe that we need to work on a stronger Europe when it comes to security and defence matters. Yes, Europe is chiefly a 'soft power'. But even the strongest soft powers cannot make do in the long run without at least some integrated defence capacities."*

President Juncker announced the creation of a European Defence Fund in his [2016 State of the Union address](#), and at the [Bratislava Summit](#) in September 2016, the leaders of 27 Member States concluded: *"We need the EU not only to guarantee peace and democracy but also the security of our people."* In a challenging geopolitical environment, they agreed on the need to strengthen EU cooperation on external security and defence. Concretely, the December 2016 European Council should *"decide on a concrete implementation plan on security and defence and on how to make better use of the options in the Treaties, especially as regards capabilities."*

On 30 November 2016, the Commission presented the [European Defence Action Plan](#), which outlined how a European Defence Fund and other actions can support Member States' more efficient spending in joint defence capabilities, strengthen European citizens' security and foster a competitive and innovative industrial base. The initiative was welcomed by EU leaders during the European Council meetings in December 2016 and March 2017 and the Commission was given a mandate to present proposals before summer 2017.

The European Defence Action Plan is part of the broader Defence package agreed to by the EU27 in Bratislava. It is complementary to the other two work strands, namely the [Global Strategy's Implementation Plan on Security and Defence](#), which sets out a new level of ambition for the Union and identifies actions to fulfil it, as well as with the implementation of the [EU-NATO Joint Declaration](#) signed by the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission and the Secretary-General of NATO. A common set of 42 proposals are being implemented within the 7 areas identified in the Warsaw Declaration. This includes hybrid threats, which is also linked to the April 2016 [Joint Framework to counter hybrid threats](#), which in turn

builds on the [European Agenda on Security](#) adopted by the Commission in April 2015. Progress on these two strands is proceeding at a fast pace. Only last week, EU defence ministers adopted a set of conclusions which will take the work forward in the run up to the European Council in June.

The [Rome Declaration, adopted by EU leaders on 25 March 2017](#), pledged to work towards an EU27 that helps create a more competitive and integrated defence industry, and which strengthens its common security and defence in cooperation and complementarity with NATO.

The [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#) presented on 1 March 2017 set out the main challenges and opportunities for Europe in the coming decade. The White Paper marked the beginning of a process for the EU27 to decide on the future of their Union. To encourage this debate, the European Commission, together with the European Parliament and interested Member States, will host a series of 'Future of Europe Debates' across Europe's cities and regions. The White Paper is complemented by a series of reflection papers on:

For more information

[Factsheet: Defending Europe: The case for greater EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

[Adapting to technological changes, preserving European competitiveness and fundamental values in audiovisual services](#)

The Council agreed on a new system for resolving double taxation disputes between member states. Ministers also discussed a proposal for a common corporate tax base (CCTB) in the EU, aimed at reducing the administrative burden of multinational companies.

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