

Speech by Federica Mogherini, High Representative/Vice-President

Check against delivery!

Thank you.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here and in particular – if I can – to take the floor just after Rose [Gottemoeller, Deputy Secretary General of NATO], a good friend. Indeed we have been working together for quite some time, on non-proliferation first – and indeed Prague is a symbolic but also politically very relevant place to remember that non-proliferation on nuclear issues is part of our security and defence – but also now in your new capacity, as the first woman Deputy Secretary General of NATO, in a moment when women in European defence are quite many. Let me welcome here the new Minister of Defence of France, a good friend, Sylvie Goulard, who will help us pushing forward also the European defence agenda.

But beyond personal ties, I am happy to take the floor just after Rose [Gottemoeller] because this is truly an exceptional moment for cooperation between the European Union and NATO. You said it very well Rose [Gottemoeller], a strong European Union defence makes NATO strong and we are seeing this in our daily work, and a strong NATO makes the European defence strong; and to us, in the European Union, there is no doubt about that, it is self-evident.

There can be no competition between our institutions and this has been evident over the last year. The European Union has taken unprecedented steps in the field of our common security and defence so we have advanced the European Union defence. And at the very same time in parallel, we have signed – as many of you have mentioned – a EU-NATO Joint Declaration last year in Warsaw that would have been just unthinkable a few years ago. And the two things have managed to go hand in hand in parallel, perfectly well, last year and we are continuing.

This is not a declaration of intent. As Rose said, this is a practical plan for action with 42 specific fields of action – a plan that has already led to more information sharing between the European Union and NATO, more joint planning, more concrete cooperation and Jens Stoltenberg [Secretary General of NATO] and myself are already presenting in these days a joint report – also this, unthinkable a few years ago, probably a few months ago – to our respective Councils on our 42 joint actions. So, this is the time to get things done, and this is my main message today.

From our side, from the European Union side, the approach we have chosen in this last year for our work on security and defence is get things done. We have spent many years and decades with big ideological debate about the

European defence – we have been discussing about the European Defence community for the past 60 years and this is the time now to get things done and moving, and today finally, I believe we are succeeding where all previous generations have failed.

Let me be very open about this. If we are heading towards a European Union of security and defence, this is not because the United-Kingdom is leaving the European Union – I understand that today there is another story around that – or because of shifts across the Atlantic. We are doing this because we need it and we want it.

First of all, the public support for a European Union security and defence cooperation that is stronger than today is clear all across Europe, from North to South, from East to West, across the political spectrum, there is one thing that European citizens say clear and loud, they want more European Union in defence and security.

Second, because we need to ensure the security of our citizens. In the past eight, nine, ten years, the main priority for European citizens was economy. It still is, but just after the Lisbon Treaty that offers us incredible tools on security and defence, the European public opinion and political decision-making were focused on economy, economy, economy. We let a little aside the work on security and defence, forgetting or refusing to use instruments that still were there. Now our citizens all across Europe put security among the first, second priorities everywhere in Europe. So, we have a duty to deliver as Europeans.

And third, because we can do it and we need to do it the European way. Rose [Gottemoeller] quoted me, it is probably not very elegant to quote her quoting me but it is true that we have a specific European way to security. Because we have the complexity that sometimes makes things difficult, but we know that there is no single threat in the world of today that can be tackled only with one instrument, being it military or others.

We have as European Union a unique mix of tools that no other actor on the global scene has and we have the unique experience of having built regional integration through cooperation. We have our history on our side; we have decided to create the European Union when we realised that making business together was much more convenient than making war. And this is a very powerful basis to work with our partners in the world on the basis of cooperation and partnership to build security and guarantee that there is an integrated approach to security.

And we understand perfectly well in the European Union that climate change is also part of security, that humanitarian aid is also part of security, that development is also part of security. So we need to work on security also because there is a specific European way, a European added-value that the world needs today, not only the European citizens.

We do it for us, we do it also for our friends and yes, things are moving fast today. Take only this week: on Wednesday, we launched the European Defence Fund and yesterday the first command centre for our military training

missions was established in Brussels. And many believed and told me – you cannot imagine how many and how many times – that it would have proven to be impossible for us to have a first command centre in Brussels for our military and training missions or that it would take us years, decades to do it. It took us a few weeks. And we decided it together, still at 28, and we did it.

The European defence is the field where we are proving that the level of unity and speed of our decision making in the European Union is more than good, it is excellent. Some ask even if we are not going too fast – well, I am fine with that. Normally we are accused of being slow and disunited, divided. I think we are showing that the European Union can be united and deliver.

But it is true that we laid down the groundworks for these achievements a couple of years ago. When we start out mandate, I remember very well Jean-Claude [Juncker, President of the European Commission]'s address to the European Parliament in 2014 was pointing at this objective clearly. I remember as if it was yesterday in my hearing in the European Parliament. We were discussing with the Members of the European Parliament the need to use all the potential that the treaties give us in the field of security and defence. So it was really the very first days of our mandate.

Jean-Claude [Juncker, President of the European Commission] has mentioned the failure of the European Defence Community back in the 1950s, and the long-lasting scar that it has left. But in the course of the last two years, many of us, many of us, have believed that change could happen in our generation and I would say even in our mandate which is less than a generation. And, today, not in a faraway future.

And change is happening in spite of all the prophecies about an inevitable decline of the project of European integration. A little bit more than one year ago, many commentators were saying that it was the beginning of the end for the European Union. Well, I think we are far from that.

We have come to this point thanks to a broad, collective process and also because of the stubbornness of a few of us, because stubbornness sometimes is a good thing. Our Global Strategy for foreign and security policy is the product of a continent-wide consultations with governments, with parliaments, with think-tanks, students, public opinion at large and well beyond Europe with our partners and friends from East Asia to Latin America. Because the European Union is already today a global player and a global security provider.

And let me tell you that sometimes I think that in Europe we realise it much less than our partners in the world do. Our partners in the world value and need the European Union as their global partner. And throughout this process of consultations last year, we all realised very clearly that the time was ripe for bold steps forward, on European security and defence.

First, because our citizens need more security – each terrorist attack in our cities is a tragic reminder of this simple truth. And our citizens realise very well that their security requires a stronger European Union, in a world

of giants, where size matters and global threats have no borders. I often say Member States are of two kinds: the small ones and the ones that have not yet realised that they are small. This is the world we are living in. We need the size of our continent, of our Union, to be efficient on security and demand for more integration and defence has topped the Eurobarometer survey for years now, well before the British referendum and the current US administration.

We also realise that events outside of our borders are increasingly affecting our own security. The link is there. Every European citizen realises that what happens outside of Europe has an impact on our own security. I can tell you an example: just on Monday I was in the Sahel again, for my tenth visits to sub-Saharan Africa. And instability in that region inevitably brings instability to the Mediterranean which means also to Europe. And our partners there need our support to confront terrorist groups, criminal networks and gangs of traffickers of all kinds, including of human beings.

And the best way we have to support them is first of all together, as a Union, as we are doing already with three military and civilian missions in Mali and Niger, and as we have decided to do even more now. I was proud on Sunday to visit our men and women in uniforms serving in Mali under the European Union flag of so many different Member States. And I was particularly proud in Bamako to announce on Monday that the European Union is going to provide the first support to the G5 Sahel joint force to fight terrorists and criminal networks with €50 million. And I hope, I am sure others, including Member-States, will follow quickly.

A safer European Union is one that can engage outside our borders, supporting our partners in this manner or through humanitarian aid, through our development policies, and also with military means when necessary.

In over one year of consultations, we agreed on a shared vision for our external action with the Global Strategy – including the need to head towards a European Union of security and defence. It is now one year since I presented the Global Strategy [for foreign and security policies] to the European Council. Let me go back to that moment for one second.

Some predicted back then that the [Global] Strategy [for foreign and security policies] would stay in a drawer, as all the attention shifted at that time towards the outcome of the British referendum. I will not comment on the perspectives of Brexit – especially not today. But in one year, it is clear that in the European Union the vision laid out by the Global Strategy [for foreign and security policies] has already been translated into concrete action to a level that no one would have bet on back then.

The European Union is often accused to be too slow or bureaucratic. Forgive me if I make the comparison, but yesterday our British friends have gone to the polls. One year after the referendum, we still do not know the British position in the negotiations on Brexit and it seems difficult to predict when we will, because democracy often requires time, and I very much respect that – it is a complex process. But, what I know for sure is that in the same amount of time – in one year, in less than one year – on the European Union

side we have managed to defy the sceptics again and again, moving fast and with very concrete steps towards a European Union of security and defence.

We can go fast, we can go together, we can go united in the right direction – and it is not impossible, on the contrary if the direction is right, if there is a strong determination – we can make it and we are making it. Sometimes I believe we need to be a little bit more self-confident about our potential.

So, let me just mention to conclude a few, four concrete steps we have already agreed on, on security and defence and that we are doing already.

First, that we will invest together and we are setting up a coordinated annual review of national defence budgets. This is going to start this autumn and this is potentially revolutionary for the way in which Member States can spend their money on defence.

Second, we will research, produce and buy together – thanks to the European Defence Fund we have decided to establish just on Wednesday – and I would like to thank here both Elżbieta Bieńkowska [European Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs] and Jyrki Katainen [Vice-President of European Commission, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness] for the excellent work we have done together with our teams to get to this point. This is a real game-changer for the European defence industry, including the small and medium enterprises.

Third, we will train our troops together – yesterday I was in Zaragoza, in Spain, at the inauguration of a new European Airlift Training Centre and just let me tell you this: until a few years ago, our aircrews had to be trained in the United States [of America], now we have built that capability here in Europe, for all our Member States. I see that some of our partners that are not in Europe are starting to look at this also as a very attractive service and this is thanks to the remarkable work of our European Defence Agency.

And fourth, and last, we will steer our missions together – with the new command centre for military training missions, which has been established just yesterday in Brussels.

The European Union Member States, taken collectively, have the second largest defence budget in the world. Are we not a superpower? If we are together, we are. But these investments, as President Juncker said, are dispersed and fragmented in too many different directions. With coordination, joint programming, economies of scale, our defence spending can achieve much much more. What we have to work on is especially the output gap – for one euro invested how much we get out of that – and that is something we can achieve with the economy of scale with our size. This is something we all realise today. All of us, all 28 Member States, all European institutions.

Jean-Claude [Juncker, President of the European Commission] spoke of a time when only a few “believers” wanted to push towards a common European defence. Things change. This is the good news of today. Every decision we have taken on security and defence this year, every decision we are implementing including a cooperation with NATO has been the result of a decision taken by

all 28 governments – still 28, united.

We have worked on this together, with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of Defence, the Ministers of Development, in all Council formations including in the European Council with the Heads of State and Government – and I would like here to publicly thank the Czech Republic, the Prime Minister [of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka], the Foreign Minister [of the Czech Republic, Lubomir Zaoralek], the Defence Minister [Martin Stropnicky], for the excellent support that the Czech Republic has always given to this process.

We have worked on this together, all together. And also the framework for a Permanent Structured Cooperation – the sleeping beauty as Jean-Claude [Juncker, President of the European Commission] called it – on Defence is being agreed in these weeks, at 28, including those that might decide not to take part in that. Not only the Council, the Commission has provided a strong political support and the concrete, concrete instrument with the new Defence Fund. And the European Defence Agency and the EU Military staff are contributing enormously with their professionalism and expertise. And the [European] Parliament. It has discussed, endorsed and encouraged every single step of this work. Every single step.

The work we are doing belongs to all – to all Member States, to all institutions and to all European citizens. We always say we are divided – let me tell you, for sure not on European security and defence.

Today, thanks to this determination, thanks to this sense of ownership and unity, today, a European Union of security and defence is finally taking shape. Our citizens need it, our partners ask for it, and we are delivering on it. Change in the European Union is possible – I think this an overall message we can take back home – and it is a matter of political will. We have it, we are bringing change, for our European Union and for our world that – let me tell you – desperately needs a reliable, strong, credible, cooperative, effective, smart, global player as the European Union is.

Thank you very much.