

Towards a European Defence Union

FROM CLOSER INTEGRATION TO A EUROPEAN ARMY

Europe's security environment has changed dramatically in the past few years. Russia's aggressiveness, persistent instability in the Middle-East and North-Africa, increased terrorist threats within the European Union as well as a shift in the foreign policy priorities of the United States (that could become even more marked as a result of the last presidential elections) changed the basis of EU's security situation and call for Europe to take responsibility for its own security.

At present, neither individual EU Member States nor the EU as a whole have the means to protect the integrity of the European border or to play the role of stabilizer and peacemaker in the tragically unstable regions bordering Europe. On the global stage, the EU is most often a spectator rather than an actor. Only a handful of Member States have significant military capabilities and can be used only for specific missions, limited in duration and field of operation. European security still relies exclusively on NATO, which in turn depends on the United States and their capabilities. The lack of political will to direct the integration of forces at EU level and the fragmentation of defence in

national efforts has resulted in a waste of money, a loss in technological and asset capabilities and has led to an inability to act in the current unstable geopolitical environment. Closer integration in the field of security and defence would deter or even neutralise threats to the EU's territorial integrity, bring more security for European citizens, enable the EU to act and contribute to stability and peace at the EU borders, lead to more efficient military spending and enable improved protection of EU interest as well as promotion of EU values at the global level. European Defence should be built upon the principle that European security cannot be guaranteed by relying merely on military assets, but only by a comprehensive use of civilian, developmental, diplomatic, economic and military instruments available to the Union.

A strong European Defence Union, would also complement and strengthen NATO, leading to a more robust and balanced transatlantic relationship and improved effectiveness of NATO in the regions bordering the European Union. The strengthening of the EU's role as the European pillar of NATO is demanded even by the

United States and it would be of great benefit for the alliance as a whole. Furthermore, thanks to the EU's specific ability to combine both civilian and military capabilities, a European Defence Union would also affirm the EU as a transformative power contributing to the establishment of a cooperative and multilateral global order.

The implementation of a more robust Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is the first essential step towards an EU that is capable of protecting its own citizens, stabilise the regions bordering Europe and play an active role to promote European interests and values on the world stage. The proposals recently approved by the EU institutions for closer integration in security and defence go in the right direction. These proposals should be pursued without delay. Should not all EU Member States be interested – as it is to be expected - the Lisbon Treaty provides for the possibility of a 'Permanent Structured Cooperation', a system that allows a group of Member States to proceed on their own towards closer integration in the field of defence. Looking forward, the priority should be to move beyond a simple increase of intergovernmental cooperation among Member States – which has proven its limits time and again – towards true collective European defence capabilities and autonomy.

This digest aims to present the vision of the Union of European Federalists on the EU security and defence policy. A set of 10 key proposals are presented which correspond to increasingly ambitious policy macro-objectives.

PROPOSAL 1: A "COALITION OF THE WILLING" TO KICK-OFF STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION IN DEFENCE

Today, not all EU Member States are willing to proceed with closer integration in the field of security and defence. This obstacle can be overcome if willing Member States establish a **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**. This instrument is allowed by the current Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and it would enable a group of Member States to proceed with closer defence integration. PESCO can be activated rapidly and, if well designed, it would greatly strengthen cooperation among participating Member States. The Member States willing to take part in it should agree on a set of criteria as prerequisites to joining the group. The PESCO could undertake a number of projects to coordinate defence capabilities (including common training, common rules of engagement as well as structures

for a European chain of command) and of integration of their forces (see proposal 2). PESCO's assets can be made available to the EU for the purposes of its Common Foreign and Security Policy.

PROPOSAL 2: AN AMBITIOUS PESCO - ESTABLISHING A EUROPEAN INTEGRATED FORCE

Within PESCO, participating Member States should establish a **European Integrated Force**, allowing for divisions of national armies to come together in a permanent and structured fashion and to carry out missions and operations under the orders of a common European chain of command. This European Integrated Force could be built by integrating in a single structure the current EU Battlegroups, all forces currently deployed in EU missions and operations as well as all forces engaged in bilateral and multilateral forms of defence cooperation currently in place among EU Member States. This would provide the PESCO with considerable forces and assets that, by the development of a European program of integration, would shape a permanent European Integrated Force. To this effect, the PESCO should set up and rely on an EU permanent Headquarters for both civilian and military missions (see proposal 3). Crucial to the creation of an Integrated European Force is removing all obstacles to the deployment of current EU Battlegroups. In particular, the financing system should be revised so that all their costs may be fairly shared among PESCO participants and their current rotating system (with each Member State designating a contingent of its forces every six months) should be replaced by a permanent system of allocation of designated national forces to the European Integrated Force.

PROPOSAL 3: A EUROPEAN MANAGEMENT OF ALL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN MISSIONS

Today, EU military missions are run through different headquarters, voluntarily made available by Member States, and each one is selected for one specific mission. The lack of a permanent structure hinders the development of European military planning and conduct capabilities. To progress towards a European Defence Union, an EU permanent Headquarters, with centralised management of both military and civilian missions, is required. It should comprise both a **Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability** (already in place) and a **Military Planning and Conduct**

Capability, which should be created to act as permanent structure responsible for the conduct of all military CSDP missions. As the planning and conduct of both civilian and military activities would take place permanently within the same EU Headquarter, the EU's unique ability to combine civilian and military instruments at the international level, in accordance with UN rules, would be enhanced. In addition, structural synergies should be set up between the EU's permanent Headquarters and the Justice and Home Affairs agencies, notably with the newly-established European Border and Coast Guard.

PROPOSAL 4: A SINGLE MARKET FOR DEFENCE

A credible CSDP can exist, and an increase in CSDP capabilities will be possible, only if national security and defence markets become fully integrated. At present, almost 80% of the defence procurement in Europe is run at the national level, because such activities are largely run outside of EU procurement rules that would otherwise prevent national protectionism and due to obstacles to the cross-border supply of defence-related products. National protection of national military industries is incompatible both with the development of European technologies and asset capabilities and the establishment of a political union in security and defence. The current un-coordinated military spending at national level leads to limited inter-operability among forces and structural gaps in asset capabilities, as each Member States' defence budgets are too limited to invest in the most expensive assets required by modern warfare. The application of EU's internal market rules (namely competition law) to national defence procurement, combined with an EU-level public procurement and EU funding for research and technology development, would greatly incentivise the creation of a truly **European defence industry and a robust single market for defence**.

PROPOSAL 5: A EUROPEAN BUDGET FOR DEFENCE

Precondition for the establishment of a European Defence Union is the creation of a suitable funding framework for defence, both in the stage of research and development (which is essential for the development and production of assets) and in the stage of operations, enabling equitable cost sharing. In order to reduce the current military and civilian capability-expectation gaps, the EU should develop and acquire infrastructural assets and invest in projects to

support the European defence industry and develop EU-wide defence technologies and capabilities. In this sense, the creation of a European fund for defence, possible within the Lisbon Treaty, should be a matter of priority. For it to become a step-change in the way defence is financed, it should move away (at least partially) from a system of simply national contributions. It could be financed partly by a "defence tax" or the issuance of "**defence bonds**". A treaty change would be required to include such resources in the EU budget, given current explicit limitations in the Treaties. Such resources could be used to cover PESCO military expenses, research and development programmes in the field of defence, the acquisition of EU infrastructural assets and the administrative and operating costs of the EU permanent Headquarters.

PROPOSAL 6: IMPROVED DECISION MAKING AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY IN CSDP ISSUES

Decision-making on CSDP issues should be democratic and transparent. Today, CSDP is largely determined by the Council of the European Union and ultimately by the European Council i.e. by the representatives of the EU Member States, deciding at unanimity, with little parliamentary involvement and democratic accountability. Even if in the early stages increased integration in security and defence remains inter-governmental, steps could be undertaken to increase its transparency and accountability. The European Parliament sub-committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) of the Foreign Affairs Committee should become a **fully-fledged committee**. Within the Lisbon Treaty, such a new Security and Defence Committee could already strengthen its role in the scrutiny of legal acts related to the defence market as well as in procedures such as the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence proposed by the High Representative to coordinate Member States' capability development plans and defence spending. In the long run, the European Parliament should be entitled to co-legislate on all aspects of security and defence policy (capabilities, procurement, priorities, missions' mandates, geopolitical strategies etc.) on an equal footing with a **Council configuration of Defence ministers** (chaired by the High Representative) on proposals made by the European Commission. This would ensure fully democratic CSDP decision-making processes.

PROPOSAL 7: EUROPEAN TRAINING FOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Today, training, evaluation and certification are, in the main, conducted according to national criteria, hindering the possibility of civilian and military staff from different EU countries to work together. Member States lack rules on training standards and programs to improve the Europeanisation of forces and their deployment in EU missions and operations. European forces such as the Battlegroups have never been engaged in common European training operations. This is incompatible with the creation of European security capabilities. **Common European training standards** should be enhanced for both military officers and civilian practitioners, by building on experiences such as the European Security and Defence College. Complementary transnational exchange programmes for young staff should be developed in order to further strengthen the interoperability and integration capacity of national armies, including linguistic competences. A program of European training operations should be set up for the European Integrated Force.

PROPOSAL 8: FEDERAL GOVERNANCE OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE

In the immediate future, closer integration in the field of security and defence is likely to remain intergovernmental and be dependent on unanimous decision by Member States, who often have different political priorities. However, intergovernmental cooperation in the field of security and defence has repeatedly shown its limits and is the root cause of the EU's inability to act. In order for the EU to overcome these structural problems, the next treaty revision should move the EU beyond intergovernmentalism and establish a European federal framework for security and defence. The European Parliament, acting on an equal footing with the Council of defence ministers, should control CSDP by approving all strategies, international positions and the security and defence budget proposed by the Commission. At the same time, the European Commission should have a greater political and executive role in this field, building around the role of the High Representative. In addition, the Court of Justice of the European Union should be entitled to scrutinise every decision and procedure undertaken in CSDP and in EU foreign policy (in light of the Treaties and especially of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights). If this framework is established, contrarily to the current situation, **CSDP would be fully democratically accountable.**

PROPOSAL 9: FROM "INTEGRATED FORCE" TO A EUROPEAN ARMY

Whereas the creation of the European Integrated Force (see proposal 2 above) would definitely be an improvement compared to the current situation, its nature as "national forces" (recruited, formed and commanded at national level) coming together in an "integrated force", would represent a significant limitation in the path towards genuinely European autonomous capabilities. In the longer term this integrated force should evolve into a true European Army. At first, such a European Army could consist of the European Integrated Force under a new governance framework: a **single General staff** with a **single chain of command** headed by a **European Military Operations Commander** and under the political control of a **federal Political and Security Committee**. Subsequently, the European Army should progressively integrate other divisions of national forces, leading one day to European Defence becoming a European exclusive competence.

PROPOSAL 10: THE EU SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The fragmentation of the current intergovernmental institutional framework hampers the EU's effectiveness in the field of security, defence and foreign policy and the EU's role on the global stage. Reforms to enable the EU to **speak with one voice** in international relations and in international institutions should be a fundamental component of the process of building a truly European foreign, security and defence policy. The European Union should strive to obtain a **permanent seat at the Security Council of the United Nations**. In this way, the European Union would finally be a **transformative power** that contributes to a peaceful and **cooperative multilateral global order** through a broad range of policies and operational capabilities. ■

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This Policy Digest was prepared by FRANCESCO GUERZONI, Policy and Advocacy Officer, Union of European Federalists