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**“Seeking security coherence for growth and prosperity – A pillar
for Europe’s stability”**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to address this distinguished audience. I will begin my remarks with some facts of life: **First:** Security and defence are hard to build, but very easy to lose. **Second:** Security and defence never come cheap. Nevertheless, one should also think of the costs associated with an armed conflict before making aphorisms.

Today, the EU political momentum is right for the restoration and strengthening of the EU Member-States defence capabilities. This is clearly reflected on the European Commission's proposals for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. Two things need to be underlined: **First,** the Commission's decision to find practical ways to fund defence-related activities, something that until recently was not a given. **Second,** the Commission's decision to allocate a considerable amount of money to assist and complement national efforts to become something more than just national: to become **European** efforts.

From a military perspective, we are in front of the greatest, if not the unique opportunity to reshape the defence environment in Europe. This reshape must include multiple domains:

- First of all, changing the prevailing mindset that until now, did not favor cooperation. Cooperation is the new norm and the only way forward. What we expect to have is a structured cooperation that will lead us to the desired end-state following a specific, progressive, agreed and detailed plan, providing certain capabilities in a timely manner and at an affordable cost.

- Second, jointly building or adding defence capabilities, strategic or operational, for today and for tomorrow. We need to strengthen the capabilities of the national Armed Forces and enable them to form a credible, ample deterrent force.

As I said, the main problem is to change the mindset of the Member-States and make cooperation the preferred option. To that end, a number of initiatives were adopted and quickly launched:

- Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is the vehicle for this cooperation. As it stands today, national defence budgets deliver only a fraction of their potential, resulting in an unacceptably high financial bleeding of 25 to €100 billion annually. At the same time, 28 European Armed Forces operate 37 different types of armoured vehicles, 29 different types of major surface vessels and 20 types of fighter aircrafts. 25 Member-States that participate in PESCO aspire to put an end to this situation. 17 joint PESCO projects are already running, covering areas as training, capability development and operational readiness in the field of defence. A second list of another 17 projects will soon be adopted by the Council.

- European Commission backs its commitment to strengthening European defence with the European Defence Fund. Through it the Commission will be funding for the first time defence-related capability development projects. A total of €13 billion will be dedicated from 2021-2027 to collaborative capability

development (€8.9 billion) and to collaborative defence research (€4.1 billion). An additional €6.5 billion are foreseen for dual use civilian-military infrastructure projects that will enhance military mobility. And we should not forget the European Peace Facility, which will add another €10.5 billion to boost EU action on security and defence.

I think that the impact of this amount of money to the economy, multiplying them by the national contributions, is quite substantive.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We should not forget that from the Council's point of view, boosting the European economy is not the main objective. It is welcome, it is important, but not the driving factor behind the Global Strategy and its by-products (PESCO, CARD, etc.). Turning the EU Military Level of Ambition into reality is the only way to "*strengthen security and defence and to better protect European citizen*". The military has a central role in this process, defining and prioritising the defence capabilities that need to be developed. To identify these capabilities, we followed a certain methodology. The EU has agreed that it should be capable of undertaking specific types of CSDP military operations outside the Union, a number of which may be executed concurrently, namely:

- Joint Crisis Management operations,
- Joint Stabilization Operations,
- Military Rapid Response Operations,
- Air Security Operations,
- Maritime Security and Surveillance operations,
- Military Capacity Building through advisory, training mentoring, and monitoring/observation missions, and

- Provide assistance in the context of global response to natural disasters and pandemics.

The EU has also agreed since 2003 the "Helsinki Headline Goal". Quickly refreshing your memory, it called for the establishment of new political and military bodies and structures within the Council in order to enable the Union to ensure the necessary political guidance and strategic direction to military operations. That part has mostly been concluded. The Headline Goal also described an EU capability to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least 1 year military forces of up to 50.000-60.000 persons, capable of performing the full range of tasks stated in Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

This rather broad objective was made more specific in 2008. The Level of Ambition then agreed called for an EU that would be capable of carrying out a number of missions, including two concurrent operations for stabilization and political reconstruction, each employing up to 10.000 soldiers and lasting at least 2 years, drawing from the Headline Goal pool. This part of the Headline Goal we are still trying to fulfill, with a focus not so much on numbers but on units and capabilities.

The military Level of Ambition derives from types of CSDP military operations described before. It is reflected in the 5 illustrative scenarios, including agreed concurrencies. These scenarios are the following:

- Peace Enforcement,
- Stabilisation and support to capacity building,
- Conflict prevention,
- Rescue/Evacuation,
- Support to humanitarian assistance.

The concurrencies are:

- Rescue and Evacuation plus Peace Enforcement, and
- Rescue and Evacuation, plus Support to Humanitarian Assistance, plus Conflict Prevention plus Stabilisation and Support to Capacity Building in two different areas.

Each of the scenarios has undergone a detailed assessment supported by a capability requirements planning tool, resulting in a comprehensive mapping of the military capability requirements. To offer you an example, it is assessed that the Peace Enforcement scenario would need 9 maneuver brigades to cover the Initial Deployable Capability Requirements. This number rises to 18 maneuver brigades for the Total Capability Requirements.

We used these scenarios and created a catalogue of the capabilities we would need to execute them. Then we run this catalogue against what is already available to us and identified a number of High Impact Capability Goals that need to be achieved. They have been divided into 2 categories:

- Those that need to be achieved in the **short** term (until 2026) and
- Those that can be achieved in the **medium** term (until 2032).

These goals are seen as the most efficient way of pursuing the fulfilment of the Military Level of Ambition through a phased approach.

Being the end-users and the *de facto* most authoritative figures on this subject, our input has been taken into account in the 2018 EU Capability Development Priorities, which were agreed at the end of June. We expect that the development of these

capabilities will bring operational effect in the future CSDP operations and will increase EU's strategic autonomy.

Finally, the *ad hoc* capability planning process we used needs to be replaced, in order to better serve our needs. To this end we have proposed a new, 4-year cycle named "EU Headline Goal Process" that will be coordinated and synchronized with the NATO Defence Planning Process. With this realistic approach we comply with the Member-States guidance to take into consideration the "*single set of forces*" reality they face. At the same time, it is another sign of the complementarity we seek to advance between the two organisations.

Thank you for your attention.

Edited by Vasileios Loukovitis