

# The European Security and Defence Union



## Migration and refugees

Will Europe finally face the challenge?



### Adapting the EU's security and defence structures

Ioan Mircea Paşcu MEP,  
Vice-President of the European Parliament



### How to offer a decent life to refugees

Andrea Quaden,  
Humanitarian aid worker in Iraq

# Making sense of the EU initiatives on defence

The progressive framing of a common Union defence policy takes place now

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In recent months, EU institutions have experienced a Copernican revolution, organising EU support for defence together. Both external and domestic factors triggered this development.

## Time to implement a political vision

Russia's violent activities in Ukraine and Syria, fragile or failed states in the Middle East and Africa harbouring terrorists, and organised crime structures are threatening the security of EU citizens. In addition, the current US administration's repeated calls on Europeans to spend more on security has led to increased defence spending but not necessarily better spending. However, spending the taxpayer's money better is a necessity. Governments have to cooperate more to make better use of the overall amount of national defence budgets. That is around € 210 billion each year. To achieve this goal, it makes sense to

use EU procedures and the common budget as an incentive for more, better cooperative programmes and multilateral forces. On the domestic front, the provisions regarding defence in the Lisbon Treaty are the key to better understand the current initiatives. Going beyond the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), EU observers have witnessed, for a couple of months now, intensified efforts to activate those provisions. As outlined in the EU Treaty, 'the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy' takes place now, which will lead to the establishment of 'common defence' (article 42.2 TEU). In the end, it is up to the Member States to organise 'common defence' within a European Defence Union covering both operations abroad and mutual defence. In pursuing this goal, Member States implement a political vision that European Parliamentarians have developed since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

## Intergovernmental and supranational interaction

Indeed, the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty have the chance to improve our common defence. If implemented in a spirit of European integration, the European Defence Agency, as intergovernmental actor, can serve as Europe's military planning agency. In this ambitious role, the agency serves as the preferred partner for aligning common defence planning with a meaningful Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). Once Member States have a better common vision of current capabilities and future needs, they can translate those elements via the European Capability Mechanism into the Capability Development Plan (CDP). With the CDP, Member States can review input from different European sources in order to agree on common priorities for capability development. Later on, the CDP can assist as the central point of orientation for research and development (R&D) efforts at EU level.

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Photo: private

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### The definition of military needs

Once it is clear what Europe's military needs are, the supranational European Commission can take the CDP as one source for defining priorities for the European Defence Fund (EDF). With the fund, the Commission plans to provide defence research and development expenditure at an EU level with a value of € 5.5 billion per year as of 2021. If the European Parliament and the Council agree on the suggestions of the Commission, there might be future EU defence R&D programmes up

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to the level of a prototype. Before the European elections in 2019, the EU legislators should find an agreement on both the content and the exact budgetary figure of the defence fund. In current discussions, the degree of involvement of non-EU companies and the way to include ethical scrutiny remain controversial.

### Increased interoperability through PESCO

If done right, research and development efforts at an EU level would bring Europe's isolated islands of military cooperation to an end. Often mistaken as a new EU defence pact, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) aims exactly at that – building multinational forces in a reasonable way. In pursuing this goal Member States can increase the level of interoperability among European forces and set-up such reliable forces for both operations abroad and common defence.

Unfortunately, the current PESCO financing scheme refers only to the EU budget for administrative costs. However, previous experiences of the lack of cooperation in the area of research and development have been omitted. Apparently, merely dangling the carrot of the EU budget can change the mind-sets of Member States to cooperate in the field of defence. Therefore, the current intergovernmental financing scheme for the operative expenditure of PESCO might not improve Member States' readiness to cooperate. As one of the two EU budget authorities, the European Parliament is ready to start discussions with the Council on how to improve funding of PESCO projects.

### Going beyond the current EU initiatives

During recent months, new tools and initiatives have been developed within the CSDP. Nevertheless, these tools will only improve Europe's security and defence if the EU's overarching Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) gets a new boost of political will. Rather than advocating for a new intergovernmental EU Security Council, it would make sense for Member States

to improve their decision-making processes. Take the example of the run-up to the EU's mission in Georgia or the CSDP operation EUNAVFOR Sophia in the Mediterranean. In both cases, Member States generated sufficient political will before engaging with EU institutions. This highlights that we already have good institutions and procedures, but in some areas we lack common political will based on a common political assessment. Going beyond current EU initiatives will be the solution.

### European Intervention Initiative (EI2)

Countering this, President Macron's initiative of September 2017 to build a European strategic culture makes perfect sense. Only by achieving a common European threat assessment and a common way to deal with threats, will we be able to improve the EU's decision-making procedures. This is how we should understand Macron's European Intervention Initiative (EI2), and not as a competing project to PESCO. I share his view to build as soon as possible a common intervention force, a common defence budget and a common military doctrine. It is a pity that these relevant strategic goals have been omitted from the letter of intent setting up EI2 in summer 2018.

### EU White Book on Security and Defence

It is necessary, after the European Elections in 2019, that the Council and Parliament set up a process leading to an EU White Book on Security and Defence. In this White Book, Europeans have to define common defence interests and how to pursue those interests. In doing so, they could set the precedent for building a European strategic culture. This process might lead to common defence within a European Defence Union as foreseen in the Treaty of Lisbon.



#### CARD

(ed/nc, Paris) In November 2016, Member States invited the HR/VP to present proposals on the scope, modalities and content of a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The aim is to foster capability development addressing shortfalls, deepen defence cooperation, and ensure more the optimal and coherent use of defence spending plans.

The EDA, in cooperation with the European External Action Service, produced a concept paper detailing the various elements of CARD, with advice from the EU Military Committee and Member States' Defence Policy Directors, Capability Directors, and National Armaments Directors.

On the basis of that work, on 18 May 2017 the Council endorsed the modalities to establish CARD, starting in autumn 2017 with a 'trial run' involving all Member States. This should allow Member States to test, adapt and validate the approach as necessary ahead of the first full implementation of CARD in autumn 2019.

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