

EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION - BETWEEN NECESSITY AND POSSIBILITY

In the last years, Europe faced a growing number of threats and challenges, both from inside and from outside the Union, and the level of predictability on the European (and) international scene has dropped significantly. In light of these events, security and defence have rapidly turned from a topic discussed among a relatively small group of specialists into a public concern and important measures have already been adopted.

The conference “European Defence Union – between necessity and possibility”, which took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on June 22-23 2017, was initiated and organized by the Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for B&H and Kosovo, Tonino Picula, together with the Vice-President of the European Parliament and S&D Coordinator in the Security and Defence Committee, Ioan Mircea Pascu.

The purpose of this conference was to address the main security challenges Europe faces today and the principles, actions and necessary capabilities for efficiently shifting the European Security and Defence Union from just a possibility to a reality that the EU citizens need and are entitled to. Furthermore, the security situation and related problems in the Western Balkans and throughout Southeast Europe was addressed as a matter of special importance from a European perspective.

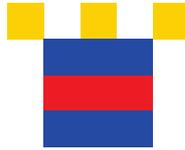
The conference was attended by CSDP and NATO high officials, members of the European Parliament, prestigious representatives of the academic and scientific communities, Ministers of defence from the neighbouring countries and some of the most renowned analysts from this region.

The conference was divided into three panels:

- 1. Common Security and Defence Policy – state of play**
- 2. Security challenges in the South-Eastern Europe**
- 3. European Defence Union - common threats, common responses**

At the Dubrovnik conference, the following conclusions and recommendations were reached:

- Following the recent developments in the security environment, “more Europe” is needed in order to provide our citizens with a more efficient protection they deserve and ask for. The European Union has advanced more in the field of security and defence (with the finality of establishing a European Defence Union) in the last two years than it has done in its entire existence;
- Security is now one of the main concerns of European citizens and the EU must fulfil its mission to effectively protect them and for doing so, the development of military capabilities became a must alongside the whole spectrum of soft power instruments;
- A set of initiatives are underway to implement the Global Strategy in the field of security and defence, to develop stronger relations between the EU and NATO and to enable Member States to engage in defence research and develop defence capabilities together;
- The EU should continue its efforts in the CSDP department, with a special focus on three areas: mobilizing instruments to help MS develop capabilities (including through the launching of PESCO and with the financial impetus offered by the newly established



European Defence Fund), improving the operation management toolbox and enhancing cooperation within the Union and with partners, especially NATO;

- NATO welcomes and supports Europe's efforts to build a stronger defence and to enhance its capabilities that would provide the basis for more effective crises response and considers that it would also strengthen the transatlantic bond and benefit NATO;
- The EU-NATO Joint Declaration and the subsequent implementation actions mark a new and substantive phase of the strategic partnership. It is important to note that although the process itself is governed by institutions, the success of the implementation of agreed common goals and actions depends on the sustained political will of the Member States;
- Emerging challenges, especially those who manifest below armed attack and do not fall under the provisions of article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, but are still extremely destabilizing, can make the EU and NATO look deeper on how they can cover more common ground. Therefore, while EU is rising its level of ambition toward hard power, NATO is obliged to address the softer security aspect, so this could provide a new area of cooperation between the two organizations;
- As internal and external security are becoming increasingly intertwined and this has a direct impact on all European citizens, the EU should be able to act effectively along the entire spectrum of internal-external security instruments, up to the level of Article 42(7) of TEU. More than ever, Europe need efficient, enhanced cooperation between CSDP, border management, law-enforcement, judicial and intelligence authorities at national and European levels;
- European security depends on peace beyond its borders, so the EU must not lose the momentum of its dominant influence in South Eastern Europe as we are witnessing increased presence of other global and regional actors, often accompanied with various destabilizing external influences and different geopolitical tendencies.
- Under the current EU enlargement policy, a credible accession process - grounded in extensive and fair conditionality – remains and important tool for promoting security by enhancing the resilience of countries in the South-Eastern Europe;
- Europe will need a long term strategic and geopolitical vision and strategy that would enable it to address the root causes of emerging and re-emerging threats and challenges instead of the effects, so it would allow the Union to act instead of react;
- While adjusting its strategy and instruments, Europe should keep in mind that the interests of all MS are equally important and only by addressing them all the EU can effectively move towards a European Union of Defence;
- The current activity of EDA as the focal point of EU's efforts in terms of defence and the planned increase of its role should be strongly supported by providing it with needed resources and political backing, thereby allowing it to play a leading and coordinating role in capability development, research and procurement, based on the defence capability priorities agreed through the CSDP. In this context, EDA should play a key role as central operator of the European Defence Fund and of the development of capabilities in PESCO when established.

Dubrovnik, 23rd June 2017