

# STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY

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Identity and defence were the two key issues debated during the events hosted by the Jacques Delors Institute in Paris on 6 and 7 October 2016, lying at the heart of the speeches delivered by European Commission President [Jean-Claude Juncker](#), by French President [François Hollande](#) and by French Prime Minister [Manuel Valls](#).

While the 1<sup>st</sup> debate of the [annual meeting](#) of our [European Steering Committee](#) dealt with [identity](#), the 2<sup>nd</sup> one proceeded to focus on defence policy, bringing together [Élisabeth Guigou](#), chair of the French National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, [Étienne Davignon](#), president of *Friends of Europe* and Belgian minister of state, and was chaired by [Nicole Gnesotto](#), titular professor of the European Union Chair at the CNAM and vice-president of the Jacques Delors Institute. This synthesis presents the main analysis and recommendations put forward, under Chatham House Rule, by the [participants](#) to this debate.

French President François Hollande linked the issues of identity and defence by stating that “European identity means being able to influence the fate of the world”. Thus if Europe is to be able to influence that fate and to guarantee its own security, it needs to adopt an ambitious European security and defence policy tailored to the reality of today's world.



## 1. The same threats and the same continuity between internal and external security

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, France invoked Article 42.7 in the Treaty on the European Union and all the European Union's member states responded in the affirmative. Since then, further terrorist attacks have hit member countries and it is important for Europe to devote greater attention to security and defence issues, particularly in response to grass-roots fears.

Yet at the same time we need to bear in mind that the Europeans have different perceptions of the threats facing us today. While there is now a collective perception of the existence of a threat, there is no common recognition of *the* collective threat's nature: for some it lies in Islamist terrorism, for others it is the Russian threat.

The terrorist attacks have highlighted the continuity that exists between external and internal threats. In view of this, we need to succeed in envisaging continuity between defence, security and foreign policy, continuity between what happens in Aleppo and what happens in Paris. In that way European defence policy can also seek to achieve internal security goals, such as putting an end to the wars that are driving millions of Syrians to seek asylum in Europe and elsewhere or combating ISIS overseas in order to curb its ability to promote terrorist attacks in Europe. By the same token, a good foreign and defence policy begins at home, with an internal strengthening of the European Union and of the European member states. There is no security without a strong economy. Without a sound defence industrial and technological base, Europe will be unable to achieve its aim of achieving European strategic autonomy. This continuity between internal and external security is enshrined in the EUGS, the EU's new global strategy. The time has now come to impart a fresh thrust to Europe's foreign policy, and that demands that more

room be made for Europe's defence policy, which must be a tool at the disposal of political authorities.

Today as in the past, the difficulty lies in the fact that foreign and defence policy has historically constituted the European nation states' main *raison d'être*. That is partly why they too often continue to make decisions on a purely national basis and in isolation from one another, rather than trying, not to transfer their sovereignty to the European level, but to exercise their several sovereignties in a manner designed to better safeguard their citizens' values, interests and security. Europe as a federation of nation states does not entail a loss of national sovereignty but constitutes an additional, complementary form of sovereignty that allows our countries to carry greater weight on the world stage.

## 2. The need for a European security and defence policy dictated by the international situation

The European Union's geostrategic situation has deteriorated considerably over the past few years. Europe today is facing a range of crises panning out on its doorstep, from Ukraine in the east to Mediterranean's southern shore in the south. In this context, a European security and defence policy is more necessary than ever in view of the positions adopted by Russia and by the United States of America.

Russia is playing a dangerous game. Its aggression against Ukraine in 2014 marked a major turning point. The annexation of Crimea calls into question the principle of the intangibility of borders, a principle that even the USSR respected after 1945. Russia's support for the East Ukraine rebels has made it an accomplice, to say the least, in the destruction of Malaysia Airlines Flight 77, thus in the death of 211 European (chiefly Dutch) citizens. Russia regularly seeks to threaten several European countries' air space. And lastly, the violence of Russia's action in Syria is worsening an already catastrophic humanitarian crisis, prompting the rebels to radicalise, and driving thousands of Syrians into exile.

While the European Union's unity over sanctions against Russia is solid, it should develop a consistent European policy towards this great neighbour. And for that policy to accompany dialogue with a firm

stance, the defence aspect must play a role in it – a secondary but nonetheless important role.



The United States' position has also undergone substantial changes. Back in 2003 it was marked by warmongering interventionism, as we saw with the invasion of Iraq. Today, as a consequence of the very seriously negative result produced by the policy pursued in Iraq and in Afghanistan, the Obama administration is adopting a prudent stance over any kind of fresh military engagement. The United States is more indecisive with regard to the position to adopt over conflicts being played out in the European Union's neighbourhood, and a Trump presidency would make the situation even more critical.

Following the presidential election in the United States and in view of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, it would be advisable to review relations between the EU, NATO, the United Kingdom and the United States. For instance, NATO forces in Europe today fall under the command of a supreme commander (SACEUR) who is a US general and of his aide (DSACEUR) who is a British general. If EU Member States wish to carry weight within NATO following the United Kingdom's exit, then DSACEUR has to become a general holding the nationality of another EU country, such as France or Germany for example.

The crisis in Syria has shone the spotlight on a singularly ironical situation. The countries that could enforce peace in Syria, namely the United States of America and Russia, are two countries that are not suffering the consequences of that war. The European Union, on the other hand, carries no weight with regard to Syria's future, yet it is the region that is taking in millions of refugees on its soil and spending billions of euro to assist Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

The European Union is finding it more difficult than ever to influence not only its allies in the region, namely Turkey, Israel and Egypt, but also the United States. These countries, just like Russia and Iran, are pursuing their own agenda and engaging in actions that can run counter to the Europeans' strategy and interests in the Middle East.

### 3. Europe's defence capacity: strength lies in pooling

While it is advisable never to overestimate any new institutional construction's impact, the establishment of a "European Union Security Council" comprising the 28 heads of state and government meeting once a year to devote their attention to security and defence issues, would be a step in the right direction and allow the EU to raise the issue to the political level it deserves, namely to the decision-making level that would make it possible to achieve arbitration and to develop synergies between the military, industrial, budget-related and security-related aspects of defence issues.

On the industrial level it is worthwhile distinguishing between two kinds of EU member states: those that both produce and buy weapons, and those that only buy them. For the former, industrial policy in the defence field is a major issue, a matter of strategic autonomy but also of industrial R&D

and of jobs. For the latter, it is primarily a matter of being able to purchase the best materiel at the best price, but at the same time it is also a tool for maintaining good diplomatic relations with those countries that supply them with arms, thus particularly with the United States of America.

In this connection, the merger of national defence industries would make it possible to consolidate the European defence industry and technology base. The creation of Airbus was a step in the right direction, as indeed is the merger of French and German tank manufacturers Nexter and KMW.

Numerous tools exist already and those European countries that wish to do so should be making broader use of them. This is the case, in particular, of enhanced cooperation in the defence field (known as "permanent structured cooperation"), of the European Defence Agency whose budget is likely to be significantly increased now that the British can no longer veto the empowerment of development projects and/or the procurement of materiel in common, and military training.

While the European Union has clearly shown its ability to overcome powerful shocks in recent years, the new threats looming over the European people's security demand more **European defence pooling** without further delay.



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