

THE EU AND OUR COLLECTIVE SECURITY: STRONGER TOGETHER!

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The people of Europe are facing a multi-faceted security challenge that they need to confront together now more than ever before, whatever the outcome of the British referendum. They need to place their “collective security” at the very heart of the European construction, underlining their recent progress in the field but also framing it within a mobilising global vision. The Jacques Delors Institutes takes a stand in this Viewpoint. This Tribune was also published on [EurActiv.com](#), [HuffingtonPost.de](#), [HuffingtonPost.es](#), [HuffingtonPost.fr](#) and [HuffingtonPost.it](#); it will be soon published on [Publico.pt](#)

1. Placing collective security (back) at the heart of the European construction

The EU’s neighbourhood is rife with threats impacting our borders and our territory: the war in Syria, the chaos in Libya, Islamist terrorism, Russian aggression and so forth. These threats have triggered a civic demand for security that may well fuel the temptation to fall back into isolationism if national and European leaders appear to lose control of the situation and fail to demonstrate that “strength lies in unity” also rings true in the sphere of security.

It was first possible to set the European project into motion because Europeans feared for their security, which was threatened by Soviet expansionism and their age-old tendency to make war with each other. It is once again to the tune of the “[ode to fear](#)” that Europe needs to be given a fresh boost in a context marked by fears climate change, unbridled finance, uncontrolled waves of immigration, and above all else threats to the security of individuals and their property.

People’s aspiration to [security must lie at the heart of an agenda](#) bringing together the EU member countries as a whole, exposed as they are in one war or another to threats looming to the east or to the south of our borders, but also on our own soil where a majority of the terrorists were born. It goes without saying that a security agenda of this kind should also mobilise the United Kingdom, a major diplomatic and military player which, while not a member of the Schengen Area, nevertheless takes part in European police and

legal cooperation due to its interdependence with the continent.

The European agenda over the coming weeks offers numerous opportunities to put collective security at the heart of a fresh boost to the European construction: the presentation of a new “European security strategy” by Federica Mogherini, the revision of the NATO strategy at the upcoming summit in Warsaw, the project of a European defence “white paper” on the part of Jean-Claude Juncker’s special adviser Michel Barnier, *et cetera*. This jumpstart appears to be all the more promising when we consider that it can rest as of right now on the recent use of new common security tools capable of providing Europe’s population with a tangible illustration of the added value brought by the EU.

2. Making the best use of Europe’s collective security tools

The activation of the mutual aid clause provided for in Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 symbolises the European people’s will to collectively face armed aggression on any given member state’s territory. In particular, it has led to joint military operations against the Islamic State, in addition to a strengthening of police cooperation among the most vulnerable countries.

The activation of the [Schengen safeguard clauses](#) has permitted the temporary revival of national border controls in certain EU countries; the use of the

“European arrest warrant” has led to the very rapid transfer of terrorists from one country to another; tougher European legislation governing the arms trade is going to make it more difficult for terrorists to operate; and the adoption and subsequent implementation of the Passenger Name Record system gives Europeans another valuable tool in their struggle against terrorism and organised crime.

The creation of “hotspots” for registering refugees and migrants in Greece and Italy does not only mark welcome [financial and technical solidarity](#) in the EU: it also prompts a [decline in the mistrust shown towards the effectiveness of controls](#) on the Schengen area’s external borders, including effort to identify terrorists.

And finally, the EU has used the other tools that it possesses to tackle instability in its neighbourhood, such as commercial and financial sanctions against Russia in the wake of the latter’s invasion of Crimea, the establishment of energy solidarity with Central European countries and Ukraine in an effort to bolster their security of supply, an increase in European aid to countries such as Turkey in order to strengthen their struggle against organised crime and so forth.

3. Strengthening Europe’s collective security architecture

The national and European authorities at this juncture need to project their vision beyond the short-term emergencies of recent years in order to promote a shared vision of Europe’s collective security architecture, combining a variety of complementary pillars on our soil, on our borders and in our neighbourhood.

It is up to these authorities to work on the creation of a “European Prosecutor General’s Office” capable of [acting effectively to hunt down criminals and terrorists](#) by rapidly mobilising the member states’ police and judiciary apparatuses; and it is up to these authorities to promote both full police cooperation within a strengthened “Europol” and the effective communication of information held by national intelligence services by promoting a European culture of exchange to complement bilateral cooperation.

It is up to the national and European authorities to succeed in completing the transformation of Frontex, which already under way, into a fully-fledged “European Border Control Corps”, which must be allotted independent logistical and human resources and be enabled to act even outside of emergency periods in order to consolidate mutual trust among the member states.

Authorities must also pool their military resources to a greater degree in order to better protect us: greater solidarity in the funding of European external operations through the Athena mechanism; an effective use of “battle groups” and new cooperation in the field of arms through industrial mergers and joint commands; a gradual strategy aiming at the implementation of a “permanent structured cooperation” in the defence sphere by those countries willing to take part; and last but by no means least, increased and improved coordination of military budgets and investments so as to avoid redundancies and to improve our intervention capacities. This “military leap” is a crucial precondition if we are to have the resources to [engage in our neighbourhood and in the world](#) without allowing our security to depend on our US allies, who play a crucial role but are eager to disengage and are thus favourable to the principle of the construction of a “European pillar” in the Atlantic alliance.

Lastly, it is up to the national and European authorities to complete this security strategy with agreements and partnerships capable of mobilising the EU’s traditional tools – financial aid, technical cooperation, trade agreements, etc. – in order to avoid relying solely on the virtues of “soft power” at a time of crisis and war in our neighbourhood.

Every country in the EU should contribute to strengthening our collective security, and that includes the United Kingdom, which will participate even better as a full member of the EU. Where security and numerous other global challenges are concerned, in any event, David Cameron is absolutely right to highlight the fact that we are “stronger together”!

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