

Eurodefense Autumn Meeting

The Hague, 10 October 2013

- First of all I should like to thank the European Movement Netherlands, in particular Mr van Eekelen, whom I know from the days of the WEU assembly, for the invitation.
- It is a genuine honour and pleasure to be with you today.
- Your session comes at a key moment.
- For 2013 is a crucial year for European Defence, as a result of the European Council meeting in December.
- This will be the first discussion of defence issues by EU Heads of State and Government in many years (since 2005).
- What can we expect from this important rendezvous?
- EU Heads of State and Government have, not surprisingly, been focussing in recent years on the economic and financial crisis. Defence – not surprisingly again – has not been on their agenda when they meet in Brussels.
- Their agenda is the financial situation, and growth, jobs, innovation.
- But we must remember that defence – and indeed defence industry - is a crucial component of a healthy economy.
- They are, moreover, also responsible for the security of their citizens and the use of their armed forces.
- Finally, Heads of State and Government alone can arbitrate on a national governmental basis on defence issues.

- Although defence is not necessarily at the forefront of their minds, recent crises have proved that military action, or at least the threat of it, remains relevant. Not every crisis can be resolved peacefully through prevention or deterrence, and the Rule of Law. This needs to be conveyed clearly, repeatedly and unambiguously to the general public.
- The ability to project force, and indeed the willingness to use force when it comes to the crunch, is thus essential, for two fundamental reasons.
 - First, because renouncing it means renouncing the need to intervene at all.
 - And second because, without it, why bother investing in high-tech capabilities in the first place, the sole justification for which is their utility as a tool to ensure our security and the protection of our interests and values.
- The bottom line is that Europe needs to remain militarily capable and credible.
- To do so, we must halt the decline in defence investment, and invest what we have in a smarter way.
- Heads of State and Government are in the unique position of re-launching European Defence this December.
- What we need in two months' time is not words, but action.
- And action notably in the area of capabilities, and a Strategic Roadmap to deliver them.
- These actions are:
 - Major Projects, for example Air-to-Air Refuelling, Communication Satellites and Drones.

- Cooperation: gone are the days when any single European nation has the means alone to field the whole spectrum of capabilities. The Franco-British Lancaster Treaty is testament to this. The larger Member States have come to the realisation of what the Netherlands, for example, has known for some time: unless you cooperate to retain key capabilities, you risk losing them altogether. Benelux is an excellent example of how regional cooperation, based on mutual trust, can work. To put it another way: pool it or lose it!
- Regional/broader level: not a contradiction, they are fully compatible.
- Incentives: but cooperation is counter-intuitive; it requires an acceptance of interdependence. What are these incentives? Ring-fencing cooperative programmes, support to R&T, VAT exemption, and greater synergies between EDA and OCCAR.
- Because sovereignty is at the heart of defence capabilities, the approach is intergovernmental.
- This choice has been made. EDA is an Agency of the Council. Our shareholders are the Ministers of Defence. So Member States play a key role. And can use EDA for any format of cooperation (from two Member States).
- But we can also build on synergies provided through the EU's range of instruments.
- It is true for operations and missions. It is also true for capabilities.
- Harnessing these synergies is vital.

- So many key technologies – those used in cyber security/defence, space systems such as satellite communications, and drones – have both civil and military applications.
- We cannot afford to pay for the same technologies twice. We therefore need to exploit all the means available to ensure that investment in innovation and technology is done intelligently, drawing on a combination of intergovernmental and community instruments.
- In EDA we are trying to help our Member States in all these areas, be it key capabilities such as Air-to-Air Refuelling, which has Netherlands as Lead Nation; maximising synergies, such as in the area of drones; or providing a natural home for cooperative capability work more generally.
- We do all that in full complementarity with NATO, our two organizations having different strengths.
- Ten years after the European Council's decision in Thessaloniki to create EDA, potential must be used on capabilities.
- Defence needs to be back on their agenda, in the way it was in the first five years of CSDP.
- And it needs to have a higher place in the minds of our citizens.
- What we need, in a nutshell, is political will, political vision, and political courage.
- The will, vision and courage that will ensure that Europe is a credible security and defence provider in a world of increasing uncertainty.

- I know you are convinced and active actors.
- Thank you.