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# Remarks by High-Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the 2017 Annual Conference of the European Defence Agency

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Remarks

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Brussels, 23 November 2017

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Thank you Jorge [Domecq, European Defence Agency Chief Executive],

Thank you all,

Madame President [of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid] - it is a honour to have you here with us.

And friends,

I am really glad to be here with you again, because I think this is the third time I open the Annual Conference of the [European Defence] Agency; and, to do this, this year, in probably the most important moment for European defence in decades.



Exactly ten days ago, I received the letter notifying that 23 Member States are ready to embark on a Permanent Structured Cooperation on defence. And, let me add, that others might join in the coming days. It was, for me, an emotional moment, and I am sure that it was also an emotional moment for many of you, who have worked hard to make this possible over the last year.

Today we are building the European Union of Security and Defence. It is not a plan anymore, it is not a dream anymore, it is reality coming true. The dream of our founding fathers and mothers is finally coming true – more than sixty years later. All the building blocks of a Security and Defence Union are finally there, today. We can now project and develop our defence capabilities together; we can buy together, to ensure that we have all the capabilities we need, while spending efficiently; and we can act together much better than before, to manage or prevent crises, to strengthen our partners, to make our citizens more secure.

We are building the Europe of defence on a continental scale, in an incredibly inclusive way. And, let me say, that this was not imaginable, not only sixty years ago, but just six months ago. You might all remember the scepticism we were facing when we were saying that this is going to happen by the end of the year, this is going to happen during the Estonian Presidency. People were saying, forget it, so many people tried this before, it never worked. As Nelson Mandela used to say, *it is always impossible until it is done*. We did it.

This is because, today, security challenges are too big for any of our Member States alone. And we know it. Everyone understands this today. Our citizens are asking for more security and more efficient budgets, and they realised that these two things together are only possible if we join forces, using the full potential of our European Union. But again, last year, six months ago, even a few months ago, at the beginning of the [Estonian] Presidency [of the Council], many believed that this would have never turned into reality. We have defied the sceptics and the Permanent Structured Cooperation is today a reality.

I would like to praise here the determination, the quality of the work, the professionalism, even the stubbornness sometimes of all our team that has made this possible, from the [European Defence] Agency to the [Estonian] Presidency, to the [European] External Action Service, to other institutions, the Council, the Commission, or the Military Staff. Everybody has played as a team and this is the result we have in front of us. This is no time for



celebration though, let me be very clear. The real journey is just starting now, this is the beginning of a new story.

The European Defence Agency was a leading force in the definition of our defence package over the last two years, not only the Permanent Structured Cooperation, but also the other components. And together with the European Union Military Staff, the [European Defence] Agency is already helping Member States assess the value of their projects for cooperation and this will be central to the success of the Permanent Structured Cooperation. You know that well.

Over the last few months, we all realised how smart the Lisbon Treaty was. Many were thinking that joining different hats and competences in one figure, in one person only, would have been impossible to manage. I think that the Lisbon Treaty provisions that give the High Representative three hats and not two, as the Vice-President of the Commission, as the High Representative and Chair of the [Foreign Affairs] Council, and as the Head of the European Defence Agency. These three roles together, in these months, in these years, have proven to be essential, key, crucial to achieve this major step on the European Union's defence.

And let me say, we have managed to have the different institutions working together as one: the Council, the Commission, the European Defence Agency. All have played their part in shaping the path towards the European Union of Security and Defence, without major turbulences, also thanks to an excellent work done by the Presidency - not only the Estonian, but also the Maltese, and the Slovak, and the previous ones, when we were already preparing the Global Strategy [for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy] to join forces as a true Union.

If we look at issues such as cyber security – that I know is the focus of our works in these days – it is clear why we still have to work together as closely as we can. Cyber threats require a response that is both civilian and military, to protect our cyberspace, we will need better technologies, better capabilities, more training and exercises, in constant coordination within our Union and with our partners. The news is that we finally have the tools to do all of this. We now have to fulfil this new potential that we have set up for ourselves. We have to explore the full range of possibilities that we have built over the last couple of years – with the [European] Commission, with the Member States, within the [European] External Action Service and the European Defence Agency.



In the last few months we have already set up a number of new initiatives and structures that will help us to do so. We established a Hybrid Fusion Cell within the [European] External Action Service, and we inaugurated – I was glad to do it personally, together with [NATO Secretary General] Jens Stoltenberg and the President [Sauli Niinistö] and Prime Minister of Finland [Juha Sipilä] – the European Centre for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki, under the leadership of Finland and other EU Member States.

The Estonian Presidency and the European Defence Agency organised the first ever exercise for European Union Defence Ministers on a “CYBRID” scenario. And, I was glad, again, that we were able to invite the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to observe this first ever exercise we have done in Tallinn.

The [European Defence] Agency has also been tasked by Member States to make proposals for the establishment of a European Cyber Defence Training and Exercise Platform. At the same time, the Joint Declaration we signed with NATO last year in Warsaw also covers cybersecurity – and NATO is a very close partner in all the work we are doing to counter hybrid threats.

Let me say that a few weeks from now, I will be glad to present, together in parallel with NATO Secretary General [Jens Stoltenberg] our second report on the implementation of our common set of actions, and look ahead for the new ones. On top of all this, the coming months will be the opportunity to launch an even greater number of cooperative projects specifically on cyber-security. But, obviously we will also continue to work at full speed and with full determination on the European defence more broadly.

The new Capability Development Plan will point at the main gaps we need to fill, and the sectors we should invest in. We will have at least three new tools to develop these capabilities.

First, the newly established Permanent Structured Cooperation. The first projects that have been presented already – there are more or less fifty – show the great potential of the Permanent Structured Cooperation, and also, let me add, the determination by Member States to explore all its possibilities.

Second, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence that is now being tested for the first



time ever: Member States have, for the first time, the opportunity to compare their spending plans, to identify shortfalls and new possibilities for cooperation.

And third, the European Defence Fund, set up by the [European] Commission. The Fund will support cooperative research and joint development, precisely for the capabilities we need the most. And here again, the European Defence Agency has great expertise, and a huge potential – which also means huge responsibility – to support Member States and the Commission in their decisions.


So, when our founding fathers and mothers tried to create a European Defence Community, back in the fifties, their project was quite simple, even if very ambitious. They had in mind a European army and a European Defence Minister. That project failed almost immediately.

I don't need to tell you in this room why I did not re-open the debate on the European army. But I remember last year in the opening of the Conference we discussed about that. It would have led us to infinite theoretical discussions and disputes, and probably to nothing concrete. We chose another way.

In a way, today, we are doing something that is even more ambitious, much more ambitious. We already have European missions and operations, sixteen of them, and we have created, for the first time ever – also this was raising a lot of scepticism before we did it, and now it is done – a single command centre, here in Brussels, for our training and advisory missions.

We are now working to build a truly European defence industry, a truly European defence market and a truly European defence research: the basis for a truly European defence.

European military trainings, to add on it, are now a concrete option, already in place. And the possibilities that the Permanent Structured Cooperation opens are immense, and I see the political will, in Member States and in all the institutions, to use this pace at the maximum possibility.

This is more than our founding fathers and mothers could ever imagine becoming true. It is even more than we could imagine just last year. Something new has just started. Everyone will have to play their role, starting of course from us, from the European Defence Agency 

and the [European] External Action Service. But all have a role to play, without overlapping, without jealousies, cooperating as we managed to do to get to this historic moment. We will have to find new ways of working together across the institutions – knowing that this is for the entire Union, for each of our citizens, for our partners, both in the region and far away.

There are a lot of expectations for us to develop our role as a security provider much more. And also for the global landscape, because these times we are living in require a responsible security provider in the world, a reliable one.

So, we have a responsibility to exercise; we have started a new way, we have today a Europe defence that gives us the tools to do much more in the European way. And I believe, that we will open this new chapter in the European Union history, not only looking at defence, but also looking at how we manage to do this, and get maybe inspiration for other sectors of European Union work, that need to go one step further than today.


Shaping the Europe of defence has been and is still entirely up to us and we are doing it. Because, Europe, at the end of the day, the European Union is what we make of it, all together.


I thank you very much.

Link to the video: <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I147082>

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